

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: TURKEY'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION,
A THREAT TO THE WEST?

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Turkey, a staunch US ally during the Cold War, experienced a transformation of its domestic and foreign policy in the last decade. It pursued a more independent foreign policy in the neighboring region, leading the critics to charge Turkey with abandoning the Western alliance and to question its commitment to strategic partnership with the United States and the EU. This dissertation uses a series of case studies on Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East and the Eurasia region to answer the question of whether the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy represent a fundamental reorientation of the country away from the Western alliance and to examine the dominant factors driving Turkish foreign policy during this period. The study concludes that Turkey's foreign policy transformation in the last decade represents a significant change in the direction of autonomy, but not a fundamental reorientation of the country away from the West. The study also finds that while international factors played an important role in preparing the ground for Turkey's foreign policy change, domestic factors, particularly Turkey's economic interests, its new foreign policy elite and their vision, and Turkish public opinion, have been the main drivers of its foreign policy change.

TURKEY'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION

A Threat to the West?

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2015

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Dedication

*To my parents, Ablikim and Dilber, who made all the sacrifices for my success in life,
To my life partner, Ferhat, whose love and support helped me overcome any challenges,
To my angels, Kurshat and Seray, who have been the joys of my life during this solo
process and beyond...*

Acknowledgements

This has been a long but rewarding journey and I finally have the opportunity to thank many people who made it all possible. My greatest gratitude goes to my dissertation chair Dr. I.M. Destler for being the best advisor anyone would like to have. He respected my views, gave me room to explore ideas on my own, and most importantly kept me on track. I am very fortunate and honored to be his student and I am indebted to him for my greatest academic achievement.

I cannot thank my committee members enough for their valuable contribution. I am happy to have this chance to express my deepest thanks to my undergraduate professor from the George Washington University, Dr. Michael Sodaro, who did not leave me alone in this journey. His invaluable advice has guided me throughout my graduate years and professional career and I am grateful for his support of my dissertation with his critical contribution to my analytical framework. I am also thankful to my committee members Dr. Virginia Haufler and Dr. Charles Foreman, whose insightful feedback greatly improved this dissertation and to Dr. William Nolte, whose profound expertise significantly contributed to the analytic line.

I would also like to acknowledge my professors who guided me throughout my graduate years by supporting my application for the Ph.D. program and by advising me during my doctoral studies. I am thankful to Dr. Tony Saich, Dr. Ashton Carter, and Dr. Joseph Nye for their valuable advice and recommendations while I was studying Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School and to Dr. Philip Joyce and Dr. Peter Reuter for their support in earning my doctoral degree in International Security and Political Economy at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.

Finally, completing this dissertation while working full-time and raising two kids would not have been possible without the patience and unwavering support of my family. My mother Dilber, who is the most hardworking person I know, sacrificed so much to support my academic achievements in life and I could not have done it without her. My father Ablikim, who is a teacher, writer, and a mentor, has introduced me to international politics since my childhood and always encouraged me to strive for better. My husband, Ferhat picked up that mantle after we decided to join our life together and he has been my source of knowledge, inspiration, and most importantly love and friendship ever since.

My 7-year old son, Kurshat, and 1-year-old daughter Seray will be happy to know that their mom can now spend the full weekends with them. Their unending energy and laughter kept me up when I felt down during the lonely process of writing a dissertation and I was motivated every single day to finalize my studies because of the yearning in their eyes just to be with their mommy. My kids were able to have some fun while their mom was in the library thanks to my loving sister and best friend, Elfidar, who has always been there for me to take care of everything I needed. Without the support of my professors and family and encouragement of relatives, close friends, and professional colleagues, this journey would have been impossible for me to complete. Thank you!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Why Turkey?

Turkey is the heir to the Ottoman Empire with territories that lie at the crossroad of Europe and Asia. It has control over the strategic straits in the Black Sea and the energy and transportation routes connecting the two continents. It is the corridor through which the energy reserves of the Caspian Sea flow to Europe, the other alternatives being Iran and Russia. It is a longstanding member of the major Western political and economic institutions. Since the mid-twentieth century, it has been a part of the Council of Europe, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, and NATO, and it signed its first Association Agreement with the European Economic Community, precursor to the European Union (EU) in 1963. Turkey is the only country that is simultaneously a member of the G-20, NATO, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Turkey's global attraction stems not only from the geopolitical identity of Turkey at the crossroads of the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasian regions, but also from its cultural identity as a modern nation state with parliamentary democratic governance, secular constitutional structure, and mainly Muslim population.¹ Home to nearly 78 million Muslims, Turkey is, with all its problems, the most advanced democracy in the Islamic world. As the Western world is fighting Islamic extremism around the world and the Arab Spring transformed many regimes in an unstable region, Turkey stands out as a model that has successfully blended Islam with democratic governance. With its involvement in conflicts from Iraq to Syria and from Georgia to

Azerbaijan, Turkey has been increasingly projecting its power outward and trying to claim its status as a regional power. Turkey's foreign policy is not only of interest to comparative political scientists who analyze foreign policy change and drivers of those changes, but also to policymakers watching the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy in an increasingly volatile region.

There has been a recent upsurge of interest in the country because Turkey experienced a significant transformation in its domestic and foreign policy in the last fifteen years.² Following chronic political instability and financial crises in 1994, 1998, and most severely in 2001, causing the Turkish Lira to plummet, inflation to go up to 80 percent and Turkish banks to fail, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002 with 34 percent of the vote, which gave it close to the two-thirds majority needed to change the constitution on its own. The AKP embraced many of the country's Islamists, nationalists, Kurds, rural conservatives, Muslim sect members, and globalized liberals and continued to benefit from and contribute to a series of institutional, economic, socio-cultural changes in the country, which in turn was reflected in significant foreign policy changes since 2002.

Institutional changes: Turkish foreign policy used to be the product of two sets of actors: state elite and governing elite. The state elite, which consists of the career military and the civilian bureaucracy dominated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been the staunch defender of the Kemalist secular ideology. The governing elite, which tended to be more representative of different values of Turkish society, including Kemalism, Islamism, and Turkish nationalism, had less influence on foreign policy. Thanks to Turkey's history of unstable coalition governments and corruption scandals, a majority of

the public trusted the military more than the governing elite in defending the secular republic. The constitutional courts and the presidency have also checked the power of any parliamentary majority to uphold the secular values.³

After the AKP came to power, the relationship between the state and governing elite became less imbalanced than in the past. The AKP governing elite emerged from the election institutionally strong with a parliamentary majority hovering around two-thirds mark and making constitutional reforms a possibility. The electoral mandate and the ensuing political stability allowed the AKP to pass the constitutional reforms that reined in the dominant role of the military, expanded the civil rights of citizens and minorities, and enacted economic reforms that further liberalized the Turkish economy with the aim of meeting the EU criteria for membership. For example, Turkey's mixed civilian-military state security courts were abolished and amendments to the anti-terror law made it more difficult to prosecute citizens based on speech alone. The AKP-dominated parliament amended Articles 76 and 78 of the constitution, making it more difficult to ban political parties and politicians from the political arena. Military representatives were removed from Turkey's Council of Higher Education and High Audio-Visual Board established after the military coup of 1980. The reforms expanded the scope of individual freedoms by granting some rights to its citizens who have Kurdish origin, such as broadcasting in Kurdish and learning Kurdish through the private institutions that teach Kurdish language.

As a result, Turkey became more representative than it was a decade ago with the declining role of the military in the political system in favor of the civilians. The reduction in the influence of the military and the traditional bureaucracy in foreign

policy-making led to changes in definition of national security and threat perceptions as well as the kind of tools used in foreign policy.⁴ As the military lost its privileged role on foreign affairs, its hard power and security-focused approach was replaced by a more pragmatic and liberal approach that prioritizes economic interests and soft power.⁵

At the same time, a more conservative, religious, and nationalist elite, reflecting the new generation of Turks who grew up questioning the top-down secularism and modernization imposed since the birth of the Republic, replaced the secular elite that had shaped Turkish foreign policy since then. The new elite has a more positive attitude toward Turkey's Ottoman past and to a lesser extent the Turkic world and feels uneasy with Turkey's unconditional support for the Western policies pursued since the Second World War. The AKP leadership did not view closer Middle Eastern relations as dichotomous or detrimental to Turkey's Western orientation at home or abroad as had been trumpeted under the military rule in the 1980s. The new Turkish leaders deemphasized the Islamic threat in the region and pursued an approach that takes advantage of the shared religion and heritage to boost economic opportunities.

Furthermore, the core leadership of the AKP comes from a political tradition that glorifies the Ottoman past as well as historical and cultural ties with the Islamic world. They favor reestablishing ties and rebuilding trust that were broken by years of neglect, enmity, and mutual mistrust. The AKP elites' background also demonstrates that they are at ease in their dealings with their Middle Eastern counterparts. Erdogan graduated from a religious vocational high school, Gul worked at the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia between 1983-1991, and Davutoglu worked as a professor at the International Islamic University of Malaysia from 1990 to 1993. Favoring a more moderate version of

secularism at home and a more activist policy in foreign affairs, Ankara, under the AKP leadership, began to exert more “soft power” in the Middle East and the Eurasia region, emphasizing closer cooperation, greater economic interdependence and conflict mediation.⁶

The new elite was able to sell its vision because its vision reflected the changing attitude of a broad segment of the Turkish public, whose opinion on such issues began to matter more during this period thanks to the institutional changes. For example, the Turkish people opposed both Gulf Wars in 1991 and in 2003 but their weak voice in 1991 could not overcome the strong commitment by the executive to the war whereas their opposition in 2003, which was stronger based on the lessons learned from the first Gulf War, played a major role in preventing the country from fully participating in the US-led War on Iraq. Turkey’s vibrant urban middle class, increasingly supported by relatively free press and social media, became more vocal and increasingly more active in foreign policy as well as in domestic policy. Pursuing a foreign policy that is not totally commensurate with the wishes of the people became a liability in the ballot box.⁷ Turkish people increasingly began to call upon their country to act and not merely watch the events on the world stage and they are increasingly willing to protest, as exemplified by the mass protests against the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and against annihilation of a natural park in Istanbul in 2013.

Economic changes: Economic liberalization measures and the export-led growth strategy implemented since the 1980s heightened the importance of economic considerations in foreign policy. In order to support Turkey’s flourishing export sector, which drives its economic growth, one of the aims of Turkish foreign policy during this

period became opening up new markets for the growing Turkish businesses.⁸ The AKP came to power with a claim of representing the groups who were outside the political, economic, and cultural elite that had dominated Turkey since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The small-scale family businesses in Anatolia who were export-oriented, well adapted for flexible production patterns, and profited from the increased role of economics in foreign policymaking, emerged as a new cadre of businessmen, called the “Anatolian Tigers.” Considering that these Anatolian Tigers constitute the core of the AKP constituency, further liberalizing the economy and creating new markets in which the export-oriented Anatolian firms could do business became important foreign policy goals.

Catering to this growing, economically oriented electorate, the AKP pursued a liberal economic policy and became a business-friendly party. A combination of reforms, IMF discipline, and the AKP’s overall management of the economy under stable political conditions have produced a significant economic transformation during this period. In 2012, Erdogan proudly claimed at a World Economic Forum in Istanbul that the Turkish economy grew at an annual rate averaging 5.3 percent in the past 10 years, faster than any country in the OECD in the late 2000s. The country’s GDP increased from \$196 billion in 2001 to \$813 billion in 2014 in nominal US dollar terms, making Turkey one of the world’s top twenty economies and raising its ambition to join the top ten economies within the next ten years. Its average national income per capita increased from around \$3000 to \$10,500 during this period. Foreign investment also increased from \$30 billion in 2001 to \$160 billion in 2014 while its total foreign trade increased from \$72 billion to \$400 billion. At the same time, inflation declined from 55 percent in 2001 to 9 percent in

2014 and the general government gross debt decreased from 77 percent of GDP to 33 percent.

Socio-cultural changes: Turkish leaders could not easily ignore the positive public sentiment supporting closer relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors, especially if these sentiments are espoused by powerful commercial interests. As a result of the institutional reforms, a new set of interest groups, which had previously had no say in Turkish foreign policy, were empowered. Civil society groups—in particular, business associations such as the Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK), the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TUSIAD), and the Confederation of Businessmen, and Industrialists (TUSKON)—actively lobby the government on foreign policy questions. MUSIAD has played an active role in the party since its establishment; many MUSIAD members have joined the AKP to complete the organization of the local offices of the party in Anatolian cities.⁹ The organization's influence stems from a shared worldview with the party and overlapping informal personal networks; as the MUSIAD supports the AKP, so did the policies of the AKP to continue to generate support from the organization's members during the election.

The EU also contributed to the process of increasing NGO influence on foreign policy issues by giving funds to NGO-prepared projects and supporting the wider democratization project in Turkey. Key civil society organizations representing the newly emerging conservative bourgeoisie, which is the main component of the government's electoral support base at the grassroots level, emerged as central actors in Turkey's foreign policy initiatives, with the aim of exploring new market opportunities and creating business partnership networks for their own clientele.¹⁰ These business

associations have also actively participated in trade negotiations and in the promotion of other contacts with their Middle Eastern and European counterparts. TUKSON with its 33,260 membership and MUSIAD with its 5,200 members have been actively pursuing international business by organizing foreign conferences, delegations, and exchanges. The business community began to organize the AKP's state visits and many businessmen accompanied state leaders at their official visits.

Institutionally, these business associations can affect Turkish foreign policy in two ways.¹¹ First, they create platforms for interaction with the state by bringing together business community members and policymakers in large-scale international business events or trade summits, and by facilitating business participation in state leaders' official visits, thereby creating opportunities for direct contacts with policymakers. Then President Gul carried out 70 visits during his first three years in office attended by a total of 2,670 businessmen, and they created a business volume of around \$20 billion. Second, these business associations, especially the DEIK, are represented in the Joint Economic Commission meetings, which are held on a bilateral inter-governmental basis with foreign countries, and the associations directly contribute to policy formulation as the two countries negotiate a road map for the future of their economic relations and formulate their policies.¹² The business associations' mobilization behind the policies formulated by the state serves to provide greater legitimacy for the policies in question and help to create concrete results in the form of higher trade and investment figures.

As a result of these changes at the institutional, economic, and socio-cultural level as well as at the systemic level, Turkish foreign policy experienced significant changes. Turkey's international environment and its relative power position have changed

dramatically starting in the 1990s with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had posed an existential threat to Turkey's autonomy. The end of the Cold War also created a maneuvering space for Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East and Eurasia. As Turkey became stronger politically and economically into the 2000s, Turkish officials have gained the self-confidence to break out of their traditionally passive foreign policy framework and began to pursue their security and economic interests more independently and assertively.

Ankara's more proactive, assertive, and multidimensional foreign policy during this period marks a significant change from its previous policy of non-interference and uni-dimensional foreign policy. Turkey launched many initiatives to improve relations with its former adversaries through high-level diplomatic visits and increased economic engagement during this period. It institutionalized the gains in improved relations by signing various agreements from military cooperation to free trade agreements. In the process, Turkey also aimed to contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East and Eurasia by working to resolve existing conflicts, increasing the stakes for instability through greater economic interdependence, and by actively participating in efforts to counter terrorism in these regions.

Why this dissertation?

The Republic of Turkey since its birth in 1923 anchored itself firmly in the Western establishment. Following the principles of its founder Ataturk, Turkey embraced the West and reformed itself to become a part of the Western civilization. During the Cold War era, Turkish foreign policy was aimed at warding off the Soviet threat, protecting the Turkish interests vis-à-vis Greece and Cyprus, strengthening ties with the

United States and NATO, furthering Turkey's integration with Western Europe, and defending against terrorism supported by neighbors like Syria, Iraq and Iran.

Turkey followed a very passive and reactive foreign policy in international affairs with the exception of Turkish forces' intervention in Cyprus in 1974, but it supported the US foreign policy initiatives almost unconditionally during this period and the US supported Turkey as a Western bulwark against the Soviet Union. The 1947 Truman Doctrine provided for large amounts of US financial assistance to Turkey to fight the communists and Turkey sent some 25,000 troops to fight alongside the US forces under the auspices of the UN in the Korean War.¹³ It became an active member of NATO and closely cooperated with the US and other NATO members in the area of missile defense. Turkey's assistance was critical to the Gulf War in 1991 and it sent around 1,700 troops to Afghanistan to head the Kabul Regional Command and its Incirlik Air Base is critical to support military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Turkey was also the first Muslim country to recognize a critical US ally, Israel. Turkey became a great friend of Israel in the non-friendly Middle East and Tel Aviv became a major arms supplier to Ankara.

In the last decade or so, however, Turkey ceased to follow a uni-dimensional foreign policy defined through the lens of the NATO alliance and the US interests. It began to assert itself more aggressively and pursued a proactive and more multi-dimensional foreign policy that was sometimes at odds with the Western interests. Turkey surprised the US in 2003 by voting not to allow Washington to open a northern front to invade Iraq from the Turkish territory. In 2006, Ankara hosted a high-ranking delegation of Hamas, designated as a terrorist organization by the US and Israel. In 2009, then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan walked out of a live conference in Davos in

protest to its longtime ally Israel's policies in Gaza, making the headlines in the Middle Eastern media. Ankara downgraded diplomatic relations with Israel in 2010 when the Israeli forces raided a flotilla led by a Turkish non-governmental organization heading toward Gaza in defiance of sanctions, killing 9 Turks aboard. Also in 2010, Turkey, then a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), shocked the West by voting against sanctions punishing Iran for its nuclear program.

Ankara's unusual assertiveness has led critics to charge Turkey with turning its back on the West and moving toward the East, questioning Turkey's new orientation and its ongoing commitment to strategic partnership with the United States and the EU. A debate over "who lost Turkey" and questioning Turkey's reliability as a NATO ally flourished in the media and policy circles. Some claimed that Turkey's recent foreign policy with a greater regional engagement with the Middle East constitutes a form of "neo-Ottomanism" that gives primacy to religious-based cultural affinities in expanding its sphere of influence in the region.¹⁴ These critics argued that Ankara's increased activism in the Middle East and Prime Minister Erdogan's popularity in the Arab streets as the champion of the Palestinian cause raise concerns about the party's Islamic past.

These arguments led some in the policy circles to charge that the religiously-oriented AKP, which was formed from the remnants of the Islamist Welfare Party, gravitated Turkey toward the Islamic world away from its western anchor. Turkish Prime Minister's critique of Israel's military intervention in Gaza and Ankara's intention to play a mediator role in the Iran's nuclear problem compounded such criticisms.¹⁵ Gareth Jenkins suggested that the AKP constitutes a form of political Islam; while apparently running West, it in fact aims to head East, and in doing so, it employs an authoritarian

and conservative governance, which has increased fear, insecurity and social polarization in Turkey.¹⁶ The heavy crackdown of the protests in 2013 exacerbated such fears. Soner Cagaptay from the Near East Institute charged the AKP with being an “Islamist party,” viewing “the world as composed of religious blocks,” and working on “anti-Western, anti-US and anti-Israeli initiatives.”¹⁷ US policymakers wondered what course Turkey is likely to take in the future and whether it will remain committed to its Western alliance, which was the main question asked in a 2010 hearing organized by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The Western media has naturally picked sensational stories to highlight Turkey’s actions that are seemingly contradictory to the Western interests without a deeper exploration of the driving forces behind those actions. The frequently expressed view was that the West had lost Turkey and that Ankara had joined the non-liberal club, which includes China, Iran, and Russia. The academic and the policy world brought some nuances to this view, but mostly treated the subject through a descriptive or historical narrative without a systemic analysis.

This study aims to unpack some of the assumptions about Turkey’s new orientation and challenge the frequently held view that Turkey has fundamentally shifted its foreign policy away from the West. What kind of foreign policy doctrine Turkey adheres to, and whether Ankara is abandoning the Western alliance, interests, and values and reorienting itself to the East is the main research question of this study. It attempts to answer the fundamental question of whither Turkey, a strategically important ally aspiring to be a regional power in an unstable region. In the process, it aims to shed light on Turkey’s motives, or the factors driving its foreign policy, which will have important

policy implications. The study's analysis of the driving factors of foreign policy change at the domestic and international levels of analyses also hopes to contribute to the literature on foreign policy change in middle-power countries and to the literature on the determinants of Turkish foreign policy.

How will this study be conducted?

In order to examine Turkey's foreign policy behavior in depth, this study uses the case study method and analyzes Turkish foreign policy in two different regions where Turkey has been the most active and added new dimension to its existing foreign policy, namely the Middle East and the Eurasia region. Each case study will include within-case analysis of several countries and areas in that region: Iran, Iraq, Syria and Israel in the case of Middle East, and Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus in the Eurasia region.

To systemically analyze the factors affecting Ankara's foreign policy actions and assess whether this change is a fundamental reorientation of its foreign policy, this study uses the congruence method of hypothesis testing. It entails establishing two hypotheses, determining the value of predicted policy changes for each hypothesis, and then comparing the observed value of policy changes with the earlier predictions. If the actual policy outcome is consistent with the predictions, then the possibility of a causal relationship is strengthened. The study uses the congruence method, combined with before and after analyses, as a methodology to examine the evidence supporting the two hypotheses. In the process, it analyzes which factors are dominant in Turkey's foreign policy behavior.

Each case study begins by laying out the two hypotheses, the predictions based on these hypotheses, and the parameters used in these predictions. It then provides a brief

overview of Turkey's foreign policy in that region. Each mini case starts with a historical analysis of Turkish foreign policy before 2002 and then it presents the evidence for the predictions of each hypothesis. Each case concludes with a summary of the findings and analysis and an overall conclusion, following the completion of the mini cases, presents the results of individual cases by identifying the common threads within an analytic framework.

Hypothesis A, which reflects the frequently-expressed view, states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in the Middle East and Eurasia.

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in the Middle East and Eurasia and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies' vision for the Middle East and Eurasia and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Hypothesis B, which is my argument, states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy

in the Middle East and Eurasia does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in the Middle East and Eurasia.

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for the Middle East and the Eurasia region and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Prediction 3: Turkey's bilateral trade would increase with the Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries as well as with the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with the Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

Data for this study mainly come from official documents, government sources, industry reports, and media sources. The case study uses evidence from the firsthand account of events in speeches, interviews, and official government documents regarding policymakers' intentions and reactions. This is complemented by analytic and descriptive accounts of what has actually happened in Turkish foreign policy in the last decade, which are found in secondary sources such as books, academic journals, and media reports. The empirical evidence for the case study comes from two main sources. The quantitative data on trade, investment, and economic growth figures are mainly pulled from the government agencies, industry, and media reporting. They are presented in graphs and constitute important evidence for the economic reasons behind certain policy actions. The qualitative data, such as public opinion surveys, are drawn from official websites and policy papers. These survey results are useful in measuring public opinion

and analyzing its impact on foreign policy actions.

Because the thrust of the case study relies on Turkey's foreign policy actions, which are mostly reported in the media and policy articles, this study invested most of its efforts in obtaining and analyzing the events data. Unlike content analysis, which only focuses on the automatic repetition of certain words to assess the importance of an event or idea, I built a detailed chronological timeline of Turkish foreign policy from 1923 till present. Mining through the data for Turkish foreign policy actions, as reported in the open sources, I carefully recorded significant, relevant, and time-sensitive events in a timeline. That allowed me to make comparisons among relevant policy actions and analyze the correlation among various events with an attention to specific timing and sequence. Having a long list of all the government actions in one place also allowed me to analyze whether an event would provide support for the predominant or alternative hypothesis without ignoring the evidence that run counter to my argument.

The proposed dissertation first provides an overview of Turkey's foreign policy from the founding of the Republic in 1923 until 2000 in Chapter 2 to prepare the reader with the literature on Turkey's historical background. The Chapter 3 on theoretical framework introduces the literature on foreign policy change, on domestic and international level of analyses drawn from international relations theory, and on Turkish foreign policy. In Chapter 4, the case study on the Middle East is presented. It examines Turkish foreign policy in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Israel. The Chapter 5 presents the case study on Eurasia. It analyzes Turkey's foreign policy in Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Finally, the Chapter 6 summarizes the results of the case studies, provides an analysis of the dominant factors driving Turkish foreign policy in these regions, and

draws policy implications for the West and for others that are trying to understand the future direction of Turkey's foreign policy. The implications also provide opportunities for the West to influence Turkey's foreign policy behavior and offer useful analysis to ease our understanding of foreign policy behavior of other countries at similar levels of development with similar level of influence.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY (1923-2000)

2.1. The Early Republican Years Between Two World Wars (1923-1945)

The year 1923 marks the birth of the Turkish Republic from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. When the Ottomans came out of the First World War on the side of the losers, the thirty-sixth and last of the Ottoman sultans Mehmet VI Vahdettin had to sign but never ratified or implemented the infamous Treaty of Sevres in 1920, which stipulated the following: Greece would receive the remaining portion of the Empire's European territory as well as Izmir and its hinterland in western Anatolia. Turks would abandon all Arab lands. An independent Armenian republic in the east and an autonomous Kurdish region in the southeast would be formed. France, Italy, and Britain could carve out "spheres of influence" from the remaining Anatolian heartland. Capitulations—the rights and privileges given to the Christians that were abolished during the war—would be restored and the Straits would be demilitarized and placed under international control. Turks were only allowed to keep a small part of desolate central Anatolia, under various restrictions. The impact of the Sevres Treaty, known as the "Sevres syndrome" haunted the Turkish memory for the coming years and even today justifies some suspicions about the Western powers' ambition to split up Turkey.

As the six-centuries-old empire that had led the Islamic world and controlled much of the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean disintegrated, the Nationalists organized around Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the father of the Turks, refused to accept the Sevres Treaty and fought the War of Independence to oust the foreigners from Anatolia and overturn the terms of the treaty.¹⁸ The fierce national struggle for independence

forced the Western Allies to accept the Ankara government led by Ataturk with the signature of the Treaty of Lausanne, which recognized the territory and sovereignty of Turkey. The Turkish Republic officially declared its independence on 29 October 1923. The new Turkey was a small nation-state and a parliamentary democracy, founded not on expansionist principles but on maintaining the existing status quo. It sought to break with the Ottoman past and disown its legacy, but it also inherited an experienced bureaucracy and an educated official class from the empire. This elite group of administrators, under Ataturk's guidance and within the one-party authoritarian regime led by the Republican People's Party (CHP), formed the foundation of Turkey's modernizing elite. This elite dominated the political scene and imposed radical changes from the top.¹⁹ Ataturk twice attempted to allow opposition, but when the new parties, including the Progressive Republican Party founded in 1924, threatened his own authority, they were closed down.

The period between the end of WWI and WWII was marked by a realist foreign policy. Even though Russia had become the archenemy of the Ottomans since the 17th century because of Russia's expansionist policies and the course of conflict over the past four centuries—World War I was the last of the thirteen Russo-Turkish wars—which had generated mutual distrust, relations with the Soviet Union were good during this period. Russia supplied political and material support to Turkey and signed the Treaty of Neutrality and Non-aggression of 1925 with Turkey. Turkey tried to maintain its neutrality during the Second World War while remaining suspicious of the Soviets.²⁰ Even though the Turks fought the Greeks, who had territorial claims on the Turkish lands during its Independence War, they pursued détente with Greece and relations were relatively stable during this period.

Ataturk never accepted the idea of a “mandate” or a “protectorate,” but he was not against alliances or making political and military agreements with other countries. He played a leading role in the establishment of the Balkan Pact.²¹ While arguing for realism, Ataturk denounced both pan-Islamism (unity of all Muslims) and pan-Turkism (unity of all Turkic-origin peoples) as inappropriate goals. He tried to break away from the Islamic past by abolishing the caliphate in 1923 and declaring Turkey a secular Republic. By choosing a democratic system of government and dismissing the idea of an Islam-protector nation, the new Turkish state wanted to build peaceful relations with western Christian countries. Ataturk also spearheaded mandatory social reforms, forbidding the fez, veil, and attires connected to Islam in favor of Western hats and suits, abolishing the Islamic law, and adopting the Swiss civil code and the Italian penal code. He replaced the Arabic script with Latin alphabet and launched a literacy campaign around the country.

For the next several decades, Turkey followed Ataturk’s advice, “peace at home, peace abroad,” which advocates strengthening territorial integrity at home and avoiding adventurism abroad. That led to a more isolationist policy. Because of foreign interventions, privileges granted to foreigners, and the capitulations, the Ottoman Empire to a large extent had lost its independence in its last years. Hence, after the War of Independence, Ataturk’s main concern in the country’s foreign policy was complete independence by which he meant “complete economic, financial, judicial, military, cultural independence and freedom in all matters.”²² He wanted to preserve the national territory encompassed by the armistice line of 1918 and to renounce any other territorial claims. Satisfied with its new borders and territory settled by the Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey did not want military adventurism. Turkey also ensured peace with the Western

powers by renouncing its claims on Mosul and Western Thrace.

While strictly guarding its independence, Turkey gradually tried to reestablish its links to the Western world and become a part of the Western civilization, which Atatürk believed was superior.²³ Despite the fact that Turkey had fought against the western powers during the First World War and the War of Independence, it adopted a Western orientation and the secular western culture. A prominent Turkey scholar, Mustafa Aydin argued that the western modernization began after a series of Ottoman defeats at the hands of the western powers and that most Ottoman and Turkish modernizers did agree upon one basic assumption that “there is no second civilization; civilization means European civilization and it must be imported with both its roses and thorns.”²⁴

The Kemalist principles naturally guided Turkey’s western orientation in foreign policy. His ideological guidance, derived from his political principles—Republicanism, Nationalism, Secularism, Populism, Statism, and Reformism—were written into the Constitution in 1937. Republicanism represents popular sovereignty, freedom and equality before the law and constituted a doctrinal barrier against a return to the Sultanate and the Caliphate. Nationalism constitutes the meaning of Turkish-nation state in place of Ottomanist or Pan-Turanist ambitions. Atatürk had the task of introducing people who were attached to a religion or a dynasty to the idea of nationhood. He realistically chose to base Turkish nationalism on a common citizenship instead of “ethnicity.” Secularism is more than the separation of religion and the state; it is the embrace of democracy over theocracy, covering all aspects of political, social and cultural life. Populism holds up the equality of citizens and denies the existence of social classes in Turkish society. Statism forms the basis of Turkey’s path of economic development, and Reformism is an

evolutionary ideal and aims to protect the results of the Turkish reforms from counterrevolutions.

Although the pre-war Turkish Republic had adopted the Western institutions and values for modernization and economic development, it refrained from any action that would make it dependent on Western powers, militarily or economically, during the interwar period. As a result, Turkish foreign policy, while neutral, was independent in nature, and maintained its principle of non-interference. It signed the Sadabad Pact in 1937 with Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan to adhere to the noninterference principle and suppressed any subversive movement or communist infiltration associated with ethnic minority demands. It signed pact with the UK and France promising to protect each other in case of a Mediterranean War unless it obliged Turkey into an armed conflict with Russia.

Heavily reliant on German trade in the pre-war years, Ankara could not afford to break its ties with Berlin either. In 1941, it signed a Friendship and Non-aggression Treaty with Germany to balance its diplomatic links with the main belligerent parties, which Turkish diplomats called “active neutrality.”²⁵ At the Cairo Summit in 1943, Turkish President Inonu met with the allied leaders and reluctantly agreed in principle to enter the Second World War with a joint plan of action and provision of further military equipment to buy time. Under pressure, Ankara broke off diplomatic relations with Berlin and entered the war on 21 February 1945 as a symbolic gesture by which time the conflict was virtually over.²⁶

2.2. Coups and Turmoil in Turkish Politics and the Cold War (1945-1980)

This period began with the end of the Second World War and beginning of a multiparty democracy in Turkish politics, but it quickly turned disorderly with the start of the Cold War and the three military coups, followed by turbulence in domestic politics between the left and the right as well as with the rise of Islamism, nationalism, and ethnic movements. The nature of the international system changed from balance of power to bipolar structure during this period, which made it unrealistic for a middle-range power like Turkey to maintain neutrality. At Yalta in 1945, Stalin expressed his desire to take control of the Turkish Straits, openly stating “it was impossible to accept a situation in which Turkey has a hand on Russia’s throat.”²⁷ The Soviet Union sent a note on 7 June 1945, demanding the placement of the Soviet bases on the Straits and territorial adjustments in the Soviet-Turkish border as the price for renewing the Treaty of Friendship and Non-aggression of 1925. The Soviet Union also helped the short-lived Kurdish republic of Mahabad to be formed in Iran and gave asylum to its leader Masoud Barzani.²⁸

Consequently, Turkey came out of its isolationist shell and closely aligned itself with the West against the Soviet threat. Great Britain’s declaration in March 1946 that its 1939 Treaty of Alliance with Turkey was still in force, obliging it to help Ankara in the event of aggression calmed Turkey’s fears. Turkey felt further relief with the arrival of the battleship Missouri carrying the remains of Turkish Ambassador Munir Ertegun who had died in Washington during the War, because Ankara perceived it as a sign of the US readiness to protect Turkey.²⁹ Under the Truman Doctrine, which promised to support free people who were resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside

pressures, Turkey was essential for the preservation of order in the Middle East; American aid began to flow to Turkey in 1947.³⁰

In 1946, the Americans and the British backed Turkey in its rejection of the Soviet demands and the US announced its intention to maintain a permanent naval presence in the Mediterranean.³¹ The US also pledged military assistance through the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan for reconstruction in Europe promised more funds. The US was not only the leader of the Western democracies but it was also the only country capable of helping Turkey financially at that time. Turkey became an active participant of Western alliances. It was one of the founding members of the Organization for European Economic Conference in 1948, which became OECD in 1961. It became a member of the Council of Europe, applied for an associate status in the European Economic Community (EC) in 1959 and initialed an Association Agreement (AA) as a first step to EC membership four years later. In 1952, it was admitted to the NATO together with Greece and the Article 5 was extended to cover armed attacks on the territory of Turkey, providing security guarantees that Ankara needed. Ankara and Washington also signed a bilateral agreement in 1959, stipulating that the US would come to Turkey's aid in the event of "direct or indirect" aggression.³²

As the Turkish-Western alliance became stronger, Turkey began to defend the Western, especially American, interests in the Middle East. It sided with the US in the Suez Crisis in 1956. When the US-Syrian crisis was heating up, Turkey massed troops on the border with Syria in 1957 in reaction to a potential seizure of power by the Communist party. Ankara allowed the US to use the Incirlik air base during the Lebanese Crisis and to deploy Jupiter missiles on Turkish soil. When the Iraqi monarchy, with

which Ankara signed a treaty of cooperation and mutual assistance in 1955, was overthrown by coup, Turkey called for a Western military intervention in Iraq to restore the monarchy. Turkey also sent 25,000 troops to fight alongside the US soldiers under the UN auspices.

Turkey's western-dependent foreign policy came at the expense of its relations with the Arab countries and the Third World in general, however. The historical legacy of the Ottoman ruler and Ataturk's pro-secular reforms had already generated Arab resentment towards the Turks. The unsettled question of Hatay province—Syria was forced by France to cede it to Turkey—was still a matter of tension between Turkey and Syria. Turkey initially opposed the partition of Palestine, but changed her stance and became the first Muslim country to recognize Israel in 1949.³³

Turkey's efforts in 1951 to establish the Middle East Defense Organization failed but it took the lead in 1955 to create the Baghdad Pact, a short-lived, US-backed attempt to bring every nation in the region into an alliance against the Soviet Union. Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and the UK joined, but many Arab countries, especially Egypt, strongly opposed it.³⁴ By 1958, Turkey had signed a secret accord with Israel and Iran, joining forces against the Arabs. Ankara also took France's side in opposing Algerian independence.³⁵ Turkey's western orientation during this period raised the Arab mistrust of Turkey as Ankara was regarded as a pawn of the West. Egyptian President Nasser publicly declared Turkey *persona non grata* in the Arab world.³⁶ Turkey's defense of the Eastern alliance at the Bandung Conference, with harsh attacks on the non-alignment, socialism and communism, led to its further isolation from the Third world.³⁷

Turkey's Western alignment was strongly supported by the Democrats that came to power in Turkey's first free and multiparty elections. The Democrat Party leader Adnan Menderes, who won all the elections between 1950 and 1960, effectively ended Ataturk's Republican Party's twenty-seven years of monopoly on governmental policymaking and moved away from Ataturk's cautious foreign policy, edging closer to the US. After the early successes of his liberal economic policy, his ambitious pursuit of uncoordinated development policies caused Turkey's economy to deteriorate after 1953, and the government faced bankruptcy with increasing foreign trade deficit.³⁸ Turkey accepted a stabilization program coordinated by the US, Germany, the UK, the European Payments Union, and the IMF. The consortium rescheduled Turkey's debts and provided an aid package of \$359 million.

Prime Minister Menderes' liberal reforms aimed at pleasing the pious Muslim constituency such as bringing back religious imam hatip schools and fasting month of Ramadan faced swift criticism from the intellectuals in the universities, the elites in the bureaucracy, and most importantly from the military which considers itself a staunch defender of the secular Republic. As the political repression led to violent student demonstrations, the military stepped in imposing the first coup of the Turkish Republic on 27 May 1960, which resulted in the execution of the Prime Minister Menderes and two of his ministers. The military's attempt to restore democracy with the 1965 elections, brought to power the new Justice Party, the successor of the Democrat Party—cancelling the effect of the 1960 coup—and an openly socialist party for the first time in its history.

The close relations with the West, especially with the US, did not last long. The Turkish-American friendship, which began with the Truman Doctrine and flourished in

the 1950s, began to cool down during the 1960s and deteriorated in the 1970s. The 1960s brought a period of détente with some slowdown in the superpower rivalry and increased the role for the secondary states in world politics with the “Group of 77” on the economic stage and the “Non-aligned countries” on the political stage as the representatives of the Third World countries. Turkey’s unstable coalitions and military coups resulted in a less coherent foreign policy and created a wedge between Turkey and the West. Disappointed with the West’s reaction to its foreign policy during the 1960s and 1970s, especially on the Cyprus issue, Turkey began to pursue a more independent foreign policy; it had détente with the eastern bloc and engaged in rapprochement efforts with the Third World through the non-aligned movement.

The 1964 Cyprus crisis marked a turning point in Turkish-American relations; it also forced the Turkish leaders to realize that their unqualified pro-western alignment left it isolated in the world. Turkey had a historical opposition to Cyprus’ union with Greece and it became a matter of national pride. Turkey resisted the Greek control of Cyprus since the 1950s fearing that it would create a security threat to Ankara. There was also an emotional need to protect the Turkish community on the island against the Greek majority. Therefore, when the government of Archbishop Makarios moved in December 1963 to subvert the constitutional provisions of the original settlement to accrue more power to the dominant Greek community and ethnic consolidation of the territory, accompanied by attacks on the Turkish Cypriot minority, violent clashes erupted between the two communities in Cyprus.³⁹ Ankara initially sought the NATO’s support but the NATO countries were reluctant to interfere with the disagreement between the two members of the alliance. Turkey had expected American support and probably

mistakenly assumed that Ankara was relatively more important to the US than Athens.⁴⁰

Frustrated by the United States and NATO's neutrality on Cyprus and faced with public outcry at home, Prime Minister Ismet Inonu informed allies that Turkey had decided on a unilateral intervention. The US response, the Johnson letter of 1964, shocked the Turkish public when it was leaked to the press. It warned Ankara that if a Turkish military intervention precipitated the Soviet involvement, the US would not feel obliged to uphold its NATO commitment to come to Turkey's defense and ruled out the use of US military equipment for a Turkish intervention.⁴¹ The famous letter, which would haunt Turkish memory until this day, made Turkey realize that its national interests were no longer identical to those of the US or the Western alliances and it began to re-examine its foreign relations vis-à-vis the West, especially the US.⁴² It also provoked an anti-American backlash in the form of demonstrations in August 1964 and made a lasting impact on the Turkish-US relations.⁴³ The bilateral relations were further strained with the Cuban missile deal when the US removed the Jupiter missiles from Turkey in exchange for the Soviet missiles in Cuba without consulting the Turkish government. It also made Turkey to realize that it could become a target for a Soviet nuclear attack because of the US bases in Turkey.^{44,45}

In the aftermath of the Cyprus crisis, several factors, including Ankara's desire for the Soviet economic assistance, growing anti-American sentiment, and the Soviet Union's abandonment of its harsh policy towards Ankara moved Turkey closer to the Soviet Union.⁴⁶ It helped that in 1953, three months after Stalin's death, the Soviet government renounced its territorial claims on Turkey's eastern provinces and its desire to control the Straits.⁴⁷ Turkey's attempt to secure Moscow's support for its position on

Cyprus extended the visits between Turkey and the Soviet Union, increased bilateral trade, and led to the start of the Soviet aid program for Turkey.⁴⁸

At the same time, Turkey attempted to improve its relations with the non-aligned countries, especially those in the Middle East. The lack of the Third World support in the UN for the Turkish position on Cyprus was a stark reminder to Turkey that its policy toward the non-aligned nations, particularly the Middle East, had isolated it from the rest of the world. Turkey's position on the Arab-Israeli War was one of guarded neutrality to avoid upsetting the US, the Soviet Union, and the Arab nations. It voted in the UN for the Yugoslav resolution calling for Israel's withdrawal from the captured Arab territories but abstained on the Soviet resolution that labeled Israel an aggressor.⁴⁹ Turkey also joined Iran and Pakistan in the creation of the Regional Cooperation for Development, an economic and cultural agreement parallel to the Central Treaty Organization. In 1973, Turkey denied the US the use of American bases in Turkey to resupply the Israeli forces during the Arab-Israeli war, while allowing the Russian planes to use its airspace to support the Syrians.⁵⁰

Although Turkey's multi-faceted foreign policy and restrained position in the Cyprus crisis paid off, Turkey's internal conflicts resulted in inactivity in the foreign policy area. After the 1960 coup, the military junta introduced a more liberal Constitution and the new system of proportional representation that allowed smaller parties to enter the parliament made it increasingly difficult for a single party to obtain a majority, resulting in a series of weak and ineffective coalition governments. The new system also created a plural society with the protection of fundamental rights, preparing the ground for people's movements such as the socialist movement that advocated closer ties with

the non-aligned and communist countries and ran an anti-American campaign throughout the country.⁵¹ Other smaller parties supporting nationalistic and religious ideas also emerged in the free atmosphere of this period.

What began in the late 1960s as peaceful student demonstrations against poor social and educational conditions grew radical, became polarized between the right and the left, and turned into bloody armed clashes in the 1970s. While the leftists were anti-imperialists and attacked Turkey's alliance with the West, the rightists were strongly anti-Communist and opposed the Soviet imperialism. The chaos triggered a second military "coup by memorandum" in 1971 when the military sent a message to Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel on 12 March for his cabinet to resign and imposed martial law. Dealing with increasing instability generated by political violence and terrorism, Turkish Government went back to isolation on the international front and pursued a passive foreign policy.

Against this background, another Cyprus crisis erupted in 1974, which not only intensified the animosity between Greece and Turkey, but also badly damaged the Turkish-American relations. Emboldened by the Turkish restraints and the US policy in the prior Cyprus crisis, the Greek junta staged a coup against Cypriot President Makarios in 1974. Turkey's new Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, who came to power advocating a more independent foreign policy to serve Turkish national interests, led Turkish forces to intervene and occupy part of the island. The US Congress, under pressure from the Greek-American community, imposed an arms embargo on Turkey. In 1975, Turkish government suspended activities at all the American bases in Turkey except for those related to NATO. The embargo was partially lifted in late 1975 and fully lifted in the

summer of 1978.

As the UN General Assembly vote on Cyprus showed 94 to 1 against Turkey with 27 abstentions, Turkey realized that its efforts at improving relations with the Third World had failed miserably, leading Ankara to increase its efforts to expand relations with the non-aligned and Arab countries.⁵² It became a full member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 1976. Economic factors also contributed to Turkey's desire to expand its relations to with the Soviet Union and the oil-rich Arabs. The first Turkey-Iraq oil pipeline was constructed in 1976. Although Turkey achieved high economic growth rate in the 1970s, averaging 7 to 8 percent annually, it was without any significant increase in exports and was financed by heavy foreign loans. Furthermore, economic recession in Europe, the global energy crisis of the mid-1970s, and a dramatic rise in military expenditure following the 1974 Cyprus crisis, as a result of the US arms embargo and the arms race with Greece, negatively affected Turkey's economy.⁵³

By the end of the 1970s, thirteen weak coalition governments had swapped power and the political instability increased with more than 5,240 fatalities and delayed socio-economic development.⁵⁴ As a weakened Turkey was trying to adjust to its neighborhood with the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and the Islamic revolution in Iran, Turkish generals did not tolerate the big march led by the leader of the pro-Islamic coalition party, Necmettin Erbakan, calling for the imposition of Islamic Sharia law. On 12 September 1980, Turkish military, led by Chief of Staff General Kenan Evren, removed the elected government citing the non-functioning of the state.⁵⁵

2.3. Return to Democracy and Reforms in Turkey and the End of the Cold War (1980-2000)

When the three-year military rule formally handed power over to civilians in December 1983, a period of multiparty democracy took on hold with the rise of an influential Turkish statesman Turgut Ozal, who was behind Turkey's economic reforms and opening to the West. However, the prolonged governance by the military dictatorship and the transitional democracy thereafter limited Turkey's options in the foreign policy arena. The end of the Cold War ended the game Turkey had played for 45 years in conducting its foreign policy and created a new game with unknown rules. It challenged Turkey's traditional policy of isolationism from regional conflicts and reduced Turkey's value as the West's bastion against the Soviet threat. Turkey realized it no longer could entrust its security to NATO membership and the US nuclear umbrella and had to focus on its domestic and regional problems instead. Major domestic and international events during this period will be examined below.

Political and Security Issues: The 1982 constitution, prepared by the military regime, strengthened the executive within the state and favored the president against the cabinet, paving the way for Prime Minister and later President Turgut Ozal to consolidate power and impose his vision. This planted the seeds of potential clashes between the opinions of the executive and the General Staff in a country where the military played a larger role in determining the country's national interest. The struggle between the secular establishment and the elected Islamist government reached its peak in February 1997; the generals dictated their terms to curb the rise of political Islam, including the

closure of religious schools, tighter control of religious foundations, and dismissal of civil servants suspected of Islamist sympathies.

In an indirect military intervention, also known as the soft coup, prime minister resigned and the coalition government broke off. The Islamist Welfare Party was dissolved for its anti-secular policies by the Constitutional Court in 1998 and its successor Virtue Party was also closed down in 2001. Under the dominance of the military, all channels of public expression were suppressed and the role of public opinion in foreign policymaking was minimal. The PKK-led insurgency by 1989 began to threaten the stability of the Turkish state, and the country suffered from high casualties and the punitive economic cost of the insurgency.⁵⁶ Between 1984 and 1999, the internal struggle killed 40,000 people and consumed in military expenditures alone, an estimated \$120 billion, nearly the equivalent of Turkey's average annual GDP during this period.⁵⁷ In March 1995, Turkish military launched one of the largest military operations in its history involving 35,000 troops to destroy the camps of the PKK and bases in northern Iraq. This intervention was decided mainly by the military based on national security concerns and did not involve any debate in public or the parliament or any consultations with the international community.⁵⁸

Economic Issues: Prime Minister Ozal, influenced by the American ideas during his tenure as a World Bank official in 1971 to 1973, introduced a liberal economic order in the 1980s and eased foreign trade and investment, resulting in economic growth. However, the 1990s experienced a turbulent period of political instability with weak and ineffective coalition governments combined with crises in Turkish economy. It began with large labor unrest in 1991, a massive financial crisis and recession in 1994, and a

banking crisis in 2000-2001. A devastating earthquake in 1999 reduced the GDP by 6.1 percent that year. Between 1992 and 2000, Turkey had suffered average annual inflation of over 80 percent. Turkey's banking system collapsed in 2000, the value of the Turkish lira fell by half, and the Turkish economy shrank by 9.4 percent in 2001, creating massive unemployment and loss of confidence in the economy.⁵⁹ Despite the breakdown of almost all of the previous stand-by programs for Turkey, the IMF stepped in with an emergency \$16 billion loan in February 2001 and the veteran World Bank official Kemal Dervis was brought in as the Minister of the Economy to restructure Turkey's failed financial system.⁶⁰

Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East: With the end of the Cold War, the threat from the Soviet Union was replaced by threats from Syria, Iran, and Iraq.⁶¹ The instability and insecurity reigning within Turkey and its immediate neighborhood culminated in a national security-centered understanding of foreign policy following the period of liberalization.⁶² The military establishment and the MFA, which perceived threats to Turkey's territorial integrity and unity from Turkey's neighborhood, including northern Iraq, Iran, and Syria, dominated the foreign Policymaking. Lack of a clear division of borders with the Arab world following the First World War was an important source of conflict; Mosul and Kirkuk's incorporation into British-mandated Iraq, rather than to Turkey, and Turkey's France-sanctioned-take-over of Hatay or Alexandretta were sensitive topics. Turkey's \$32 billion worth South-East Anatolian Project (GAP) built during the Iran-Iraq war to harness the headwaters of the Tigris-Euphrates river system brought enormous economic benefits to Turkey. However, it was a source of tension with Turkey's Arab rivals, especially with Syria and Iraq, which depend on the water from

Turkey for their agricultural production in the downstream.

The Turkish-Iranian relations were also tumultuous despite the maintenance of good relations during the era of Reza Shah and Atatürk. Turkey's wariness towards Iran after the Islamic Revolution, which threatens Turkey's secular order, turned into a rivalry for trade and influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia after 1991. Iran accused Turkey of harboring opposition groups such as the Mujahedin-e Khalq and Turkey accused Iran of supporting Turkish Kurd rebels.⁶³ Relations with the Middle Eastern countries were also strained due to the Turkish military's close relations with Israel; Ankara drew strong criticism at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation meeting in Tehran in 1997.⁶⁴

The brief tenure of the Islamist-led coalition government between 1996 and 1997 witnessed an attempt by the Islamist Welfare Party to establish closer ties with the Islamic world. Then Prime Minister Erbakan visited the Islamic countries in Asia, made an Africa tour, and launched the idea of D-8 composed of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Turkey also increased economic cooperation with the Islamic countries during this period; it signed a \$23 billion natural gas deal with Iran. The party's foreign policy initiatives did not alter Turkey's pro-Western foreign policy orientation however; it was during this time that a historic security agreement was signed with Israel.⁶⁵ The peace making between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel during the 1990s gave room for Turkey to publicly improve its relations with Israel. Turkish military signed a military training co-operation accord with Israel in February 1996 and concluded a \$1 billion deal with the Israeli Aircraft Industries to upgrade the 54 F-4 Phantom fighter-bombers in 1997.⁶⁶ President Demirel visited Israel in March 1996, first ever by a Turkish president, and signed a free trade treaty with Israel.⁶⁷

Foreign Policy Towards Eurasia: As the century-old security threat to Turkey disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it also created a vacuum where the new threats and risks emerged on Turkey's borders. Regional conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo in the Balkans and the conflicts over Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya and Abkhazia in the Caucasus awakened Turkey to the danger of involvement in such conflicts with no immediate threats to its borders. Ankara maintained a neutral policy of non-intervention and inactivity to remain on good terms with both sides.⁶⁸ The newly independent Turkic states opened a new front where Turkey could strive for influence and economic benefits. Turkey was the first country to recognize and open an embassy in Central Asia. The leaders of Turkey and the Turkic countries of Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—first came together at the World Economic Forum in Davos in February 1992, and Turkey proposed the formation of a trading group, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in the same year.

However, as then Prime Minister Ozal began to unveil his vision of a free trade zone and increase diplomatic ties and economic interdependence with the region, the Central Asian countries—having just been freed from a superpower—had doubts about falling under the tutelage of another power. The Turkish-Russian ties cautiously increased towards the end of the 1990s, mainly through closer economic cooperation. Bilateral trade rose from \$0.4 million in 1986 to \$1.9 billion in 1990,⁶⁹ and Turkey concluded a new deal with Gazprom to raise gas exports through the existing pipeline by a further 8 billion cum (bcm) by the year 2002, followed by the \$20 billion Blue Stream accord following the visit of the Russian prime minister.⁷⁰

Foreign Policy Towards Europe: Turkish protectionism in the 1970s, Prime

Minister Ecevit's suspension of the institutional arrangements under the Association Agreement in 1978, and the 1980 coup resulted in a freeze in bilateral diplomatic relations. The European Community-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee was suspended in 1980 in protest against the coup and only reconvened in 1989. Greece's accession to the then European Community (EC) in 1980 resulted in the blocking of various economic assistance packages. Despite the tense diplomatic and political relations, commercial relations were largely unaffected.⁷¹ Turkish exports to Europe took off as the economy became more export-oriented with Turkey jumping from the 40th to the 18th place in terms of the EC's imports from the world between 1980 and 1990. As the Turkish economy grew, European exports to Turkey also grew with Turkey rising from the 27th to the 12th place in terms of the EC's exports to the world during the same period.⁷² Ankara applied for membership in the EC in 1987 and signed the Customs Union (CU) with its successor, the EU, in 1995. As a result of the CU, imports from the EU rose by 35 percent to \$22.7 billion in the first year of the CU alone, raising Turkey's status to the 7th place in the EU's list of most valuable export markets.⁷³ In 1991, nearly 59 percent of all tourists in Turkey were from the EU countries.

However, when the EU decided not to include Turkey on a list of candidates for EU membership at its Luxembourg summit while giving the green light for full accession to the Eastern European countries—former members of the rival Communist faction—Turkey felt deep resentment. Turkey's Kurdish policy and problems with Cyprus further strained the relations with the EU. Turkey's relations with Greece deteriorated with the declaration of independence by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in December 1983 and escalated to almost an open military conflict over the Aegean continental shelf

in 1987. Ozal reacted fast to defuse the crisis and met with the Greek prime minister—the first visit to Athens by a Turkish prime minister in 46 years—where the two leaders agreed not to threaten each other with war, set up a hotline, hold annual meetings, and develop bilateral ties on cultural affairs, tourism, trade and investment.⁷⁴ A year later, however, the two countries began bickering over the old issues of Cyprus and territorial rights in the Aegean Sea and came close to a military confrontation in 1996. Ankara used the threats of military action against Athens until both sides engineered a great normalization after 1999.⁷⁵ The EU finally granted Turkey the candidate status in December 1999, upgrading the Turkish-EU relations and providing a new impetus to political reforms.

Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the US: The Ozal governments in late 1980s and early 1990s followed a policy of maintaining close relations with the United States as the undisputed leader of the world; strategic cooperation between the two countries reached its peak during the 1990-1991 Gulf War. Turkish Prime Minister Ozal unequivocally supported the US position despite facing confrontation from his ministers and even from the generals. He swiftly closed the two oil pipelines traversing Turkey from Iraq and allowed the Allied warplanes to bomb targets from the NATO airbase at Incirlik, but the institutional opposition prevented him from opening a land front.⁷⁶⁷⁷

The Iraq-Kuwait crisis left the majority of the Turks with disappointment and resentment because of the creation of a safe haven for the Kurdish terrorists in the northeastern Iraq and of the economic costs of the crisis. According to Turks, the cost included supporting 450,000 Kurdish refugees in Turkey and over \$35 billion in lost economic revenues to sanctions. These experiences would remain in Turkish memory ten

years later when the US made new promises to compensate Turkey for the costs of another war in Iraq.

During this period, despite the emergence of instability in the Balkans, which highlighted the need for a strong security organization, there were continuous debates about the usefulness or even existence of NATO, which Turkey regarded as an institutional anchor that kept Turkey strategically a part of the West.⁷⁸ Morton Abramowitz, the US Ambassador to Turkey during the Gulf crisis, declared, “the imperatives that once drove US-Turkish relations such as the NATO, bases, and military assistance are rapidly disappearing.” In 1992, the US reduced its 10,000 military servicemen in Turkey by half and replaced military grants with loans at commercial rates.⁷⁹ As Turkey continued to give its unequivocal support for the US and the NATO initiatives in the Middle East, Eurasia, and Europe, Ankara increasingly felt that its value in the eyes of the West was diminishing and its interests were not fully accounted for.

2.4. Conclusion

When the Turkish Republic was born out of the remnants of the Ottoman Empire, it sought to focus on internal political and economic development and maintain an isolationist, non-interventionist, and neutral foreign policy. It adopted the Western institutions and values, renounced its Islamic heritage and its historical ties to the former Ottoman territories, and made peace with its historic enemy, the Soviet Union. However, to the chagrin of Ataturk, it was unable to achieve peace neither at home nor abroad. As a result of top-down modernization, suppression of Turkic, Islamic as well as Kurdish identities, and of the military-dominated, authoritarian structure of the state institutions, internal conflicts often flared up in tandem with the international events. Turkey had

four military coups, including one soft coup, hanged an elected, popular prime minister, experienced severe economic crises and political violence between the left and the right, and saw the rise of Islamism, nationalism, and ethnic movements.

During the Cold War, Turkey came out of its isolationist shell and closely aligned itself with the West against the Soviet threat, but became disappointed with the West's reaction to its foreign policy during the 1960s and 1970s following its military intervention in Cyprus. The economic liberalization and more active involvement in the world affairs in the 1980s were followed by political instability, rising Kurdish insurgency, and economic crises in late 1990s, and the military-dominated elite maintained a defensive security-dominated foreign policy.

Ankara fully embraced the Western framework with its active participation in the NATO, adoption of the Customs Union with Europe, defense of the Western interests at the expense of its relations with the other non-aligned countries in the world, including the Middle East. However, its relations with the West, the US in particular, also had its ups and downs. The Turkish-US relations were strained by the Johnson letter and the US arms embargo following the Cyprus crisis, removal of the Jupiter missiles, and by Turkey's rapprochement with Russia and the Middle East. Turkey resented Europe's denial of EU membership to Turkey and its criticisms of Ankara's human rights record, including its treatment of the Kurds, as well as the US Congress' threats of recognizing the "Armenian Genocide."

Amid Turkey's resentment towards the West, domestic problems stemming from the political instability and economic crises, and the diplomatic tensions with most of its neighbors in early 2000s, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Abdullah Gul—former members of

the Islamist party that was closed down after the soft military coup in 1997—founded the Justice and Development Party (AKP) promising change. In the historic 2002 elections, Turkish people completely swept the right-of-center political parties of the 1980s and 1990s out of the parliament and brought to power the new AKP with a 34 percent of the vote. The Turks gave this newly formed party close to the two-thirds majority needed to change the constitution on its own, in the first single-party government in more than a decade and the first two-party parliament since the 1950s.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This dissertation aims to answer two questions. First is to what extent does Turkey's foreign policy transformation in the last decade represent a fundamental reorientation of the country away from the Western alliance? Second question is what are the dominant factors driving Turkish foreign policy during this period? To answer these questions, this chapter introduces the theoretical framework that serves as the foundation for the case studies in the subsequent chapters. In line with the two research questions, the first part of the literature review examines some of the major works in foreign policy change to help us analyze the scope and degree of the changes in Turkish foreign policy. It concludes by applying a framework to understand foreign policy change to Turkey's foreign policy transformation in the last decade. The second part of the literature review attempts to create a framework to analyze the factors driving these changes by discussing international and domestic approaches and the theories that feed into these approaches. Finally, it presents the research methodology and the data for the study.

3.1. Literature on Foreign Policy Change

Studies in foreign policy change and realignment, which is the focus of this dissertation, began to flourish in the 1980s, and accelerated with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent political and economic developments in a multi-polar world. A prominent scholar of foreign policy analysis, James Rosenau argues, "political organism is always experiencing both continuities and change...in response to internal developments and external circumstances."⁸⁰ Rosenau contends that domestic and international developments can mutually reinforce each other and foreign policy shifts,

“when the developments at home give rise to new needs and wants with respect to their environment, or when developments abroad give rise to political threats to their essential structures.”

Jerel Rosati defines change as “foreign policy phenomena that experience broad alteration, ranging from more modest shifts to major foreign policy restructuring.”⁸¹ He argues that the “interaction of the state, the society, and the global environment produces a dialectical process where governmental foreign policy evolves through different cycles or phases over time; from a period of stability in which continuity in policy tends to prevail to a period of transition.” For Rosati, the periods of transition may produce four major outcomes: *intensification* (strengthening of status quo), *refinement* (minor alterations), *reform* (moderate amendments in orientation of foreign policy) and *restructuring* (profound changes in foreign policy programs and orientation).

In his seminal work, *Why Nations Realign*, Kalevi Holsti differentiates between incremental foreign policy change and restructuring; the latter occurs more abruptly and fundamentally than sporadic change.⁸² He identifies four major types of restructuring: *isolation*, *self-reliance*, *dependence*, and *diversification*. In his study of foreign policy change in 25 countries, he finds that the developed countries are less likely to restructure foreign policy because they are more satisfied with the existing patterns of relations. The periphery states, however, are more likely to reorient because they are not satisfied with the international distribution of power.

In terms of the analyzing the foreign policy change, Andriole et al. offers five levels of analysis to investigate foreign policy behavior in comparative analysis.⁸³ It includes the individual, group, state, inter or multistate, and global or systemic levels of

analysis, emphasizing that a driver for foreign policy change could come from any of these levels. The authors also introduce five components of foreign policy behavior. The *psychological component* is related to the values, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and cognitions of relevant decision makers. The *political component* includes variables relating to the political performance of a state such as its constitutional structure, party competition, institutional and bureaucratic factors, interest group activities, and public opinion. The *societal component* includes a variety of economic factors, including economic performance and the rate of economic growth. The *interstate component* is related to external realities of a state such as bloc and alliance membership and interstate organizations. Finally, the *global component* consists of all international systemic factors which affect foreign policy behavior such as a state's position in the interstate sociopolitical and physical environment, geographic position, systemic status rank, level of systemic conflict and international systemic power stratification pattern such as multipolarity or bipolarity.

According to Gustavsson's model of foreign policy change, change is driven by international and domestic developments.⁸⁴ He defines international developments as "power relations and the traditional military aspects of national security," and domestic factors as composed of political aspect which includes "support from voters, political parties and societal actors to uphold a certain foreign policy," and of economic aspect which refers to "GDP growth, the rate of inflation and the level of unemployment in addition to institutional conditions influencing the relationship between the state and the parties of the labor market." Gustavsson argues that foreign policymakers are constantly pulled among competing policy alternatives and their actions are socially constructed so

that the cyclical feedbacks in internal and external environment can have a significant impact on the decision-making process.

Ikenberry et al. proposes three major approaches in foreign policymaking in its examination of American economic foreign policy.⁸⁵ First is the *international* or *system-centered approach* in which international trade policies are shaped by norms enshrined in international regimes and by opportunities and limitations imposed by nation state's relative position in global economy. It includes *World Systems Theory*, which explains foreign economic policy as function of the processes and contradictions within international capitalism, and *Hegemonic Stability Theory* which argues that a nation state's position in the international economy shapes its foreign economic policy. This approach views government officials as responding to a particular set of opportunities and constraints that a nation's position in international system creates at any moment in time.

Their second approach, *society-centered approach*, views the government as a relatively passive actor responding to the interests of the groups or coalitions that dominate the struggle for influence within the policy arena. It contends that the domestic politics, not external forces, determine the policy decisions. This approach encompasses the *Interest Group Theory*, which draws on *Pluralist theory* and posits that policy is the outcome of a competitive struggle among affected groups for influence over policy decisions. The last approach, which they term as *State-centered approach*, emphasizes policy constraints imposed by institutional relationships within the government. According to this approach, foreign economic policy is highly constrained by domestic institutional relationships that have persisted over time and by the ability of state officials

to realize their objectives within the boundaries of both international and domestic constraints. Executive officials act as independent actors within these constraints to manipulate policy outcomes according to their personal preferences and perceptions of “national interest.”

In his insightful analysis of North American Free Trade Agreement, Frederick Mayer uses the common three-level taxonomy—international level analysis, domestic level analysis, and individual actors—proposed by Kenneth Waltz and adds three modes of politics—rational choice, institutional process, and symbolic response—which make assumptions about the nature of political behavior and processes.⁸⁶ *Rational choice* posits that the behavior of actors in the system is determined by rational thinking. According to *institutional process*, preexisting institutions where politics, rules, norms, routines, and other institutions limit options for action and at least partially predetermine their selection determine the behavior of actors. *Symbolic response* emphasizes that the political behavior is rather a response to the way in which political circumstances are symbolically constructed so that symbols, including language, ideas, and narratives, affect not only what actors believe about the world and thus how they predict the consequences of action, but also how they value the actions available to them.

Kenneth Waltz in his influential book *Man, the State, and War* distinguishes three levels of causation for war, which he calls “images”: the individual, the state, and the international system.⁸⁷ Joseph Nye argues that explanations at the level of the individual are not sufficient because it may blind us to the unintended consequences of individual acts caused by the larger systems in which individuals operate.⁸⁸ The second level of analysis, the nature of the state or society, is the view from the inside out, explaining

outcomes by what is happening inside the states. The system level of analysis is explanation from the outside in, looking at the way the overall system constrains state action.

Finally, Charles Hermann identifies a useful framework with four graduated levels to analyze foreign policy change.⁸⁹ First is the shift in efforts and methods to achieve certain goals which he names *adjustment changes*. Second change is the *program changes*, which refer to qualitative changes in methodology and instruments of statecraft. Third is the redirection of goals and aspirations of the state's foreign policy machinery which he calls *problem/goal changes*. Finally, the fourth change, *international orientation change*, is the most fundamental shift in foreign policy direction and it involves the redirection of the actor's entire orientation toward world affairs.

Altunisik and Martin apply Charles Hermann's definition of four categories of change—the adjustment change, program change, goal change and international orientation change—to Turkey's foreign policy.⁹⁰ There clearly has been an *adjustment change*, referring to a change in the level of effort. Although Turkey was involved in the Middle East in the 1990s, their activities were largely limited to Turkey's immediate neighbors, mostly tied to the Kurdish issue and focused on security relations. In 2000s, however, Turkey's activism became region wide and went beyond security relations.⁹¹ When Turkey began its economic liberalization in 1980s, there was an effort to improve trade and investment with the Middle East, which continued in the 1990s but the level of effort has significantly accelerated after the AKP came to power in the 2000s. Turkey's involvement in the Middle East became more comprehensive, multi-faceted, and deep.

Turkey's AKP also went through a *program change*, referring to changes in

methods or means without any change in purposes. In the 2000s, Turkey mainly pursued its goals through diplomatic negotiation rather than military force. It focused on its soft power assets, emphasized engagement, promoted economic interdependence, and advanced its mediation role. This is in contrast to Turkish foreign policy in the region for most of the 1990s, which was highly securitized and relied on mostly military means—balancing alliances, military threats and interventions. For example, the National Security Document stated in 1995 that the gravest threat to Turkish national security is “irredentism” and “religious fundamentalism” in clear reference to Syria and Iran. The military was able to build a secular alliance against these threat perceptions.

It’s safe to argue that Turkey has also experienced a *goal change*. Unlike the 1990s, the AKP policy moved from a deeper relationship with the region and clearly aimed for regional leadership. In the 2000s, Turkey’s relations with the Middle East went in line with the domestic needs. The promotion of economic relations with the Middle East served the domestic goal of consolidating Anatolian businesses, which played an important role in the rise of the AKP while an anti-Israeli rhetoric served to garner support domestically to further discredit the military, the sole supporter of the Turkish-Israeli alignment in the 1990s.

As for the international reorientation in Turkish foreign policy, Turkey’s problematic relationship with and rhetoric about Israel and its cozying up to Iran led critics in the US and EU to claim that Turkey was shifting its axis, moving away from its traditional Western orientation to the East, namely the Middle Eastern and Islamic world. Whether Turkey really changed the direction of its foreign policy and reoriented itself towards the East is the main question of this dissertation.

3.2. Literature on Levels of Analyses To Explain Foreign Policy Change

The second research question this dissertation attempts to answer involves the major factors driving Turkey's foreign policy changes in the last decade. The impetus behind these policy changes provides a useful framework to understand Turkey's actions in the past and project the future trajectory of Turkish foreign policy, which will have important policy implications. In order to place the analysis on the drivers of foreign policy change in a theoretical context and help us analyze the reasons for change, the following section will introduce the literature on international and domestic levels of analysis and the theoretical framework that underpins these approaches.

3.2.1. International or Systemic Approach

Building on Andriole et al., Ikenberry et al., Mayer and Waltz's definition of international level of analysis, this approach views foreign policy actions through the lens of international structure, a state's relative position in the distribution of power and interactions among states. States shift the course of foreign policy and adjust alliance patterns in line with shifting dynamics of external security. Theoretical underpinnings of the system-centered approach are drawn from the realist school of international politics. According to classical realism, state is the unit of analysis, and the first priority for a state is to ensure its survival in an anarchic, self-help system; states with more power, usually defined in military strategic terms, stand better a chance of surviving.⁹²

Neorealism, or structural realism, advanced by Waltz holds that the interaction of states can be explained by the distribution of power in the international system.⁹³ It takes states with "whatever tradition, habits, objectives, desires and forms of government they

may have,” and “abstract from every attribute of states except their capabilities.” Waltz argues that states respond according to their position in the international political structure, and forge alliances to ensure survival in an anarchic international system. Stephen Walt agrees that the perception of the external threat is the main incentive for the alliance-making strategies of states.⁹⁴

John Mearsheimer adds that states shift the course of foreign policy or alliance patterns when the nature, extent and direction of external threats undergo profound changes.⁹⁵ According to Waltz, “states seek their own preservation and, at maximum, drive for universal domination,” and they “worry about their survival and the worry conditions their behavior.” Waltz later explains that despite changes constantly taking place in the relations of nations, the basic structure continues to be anarchic, and states strive to maintain their position in the system, each fending for itself with or without the cooperation of others.⁹⁶ The anarchic nature of the international system suggests that the states strive to ensure their security and gain as much power as possible to maintain their relative security. Thus, the relative material power is conceived as the most important commodity of influence in an anarchic world, and security interests persistently determine states’ behavior.

Schweller and Wohlforth in its evaluation of realism’s response to the end of the Cold War, establish the links between realism’s core assumptions and the specific theories and causal mechanisms that realist theories would expect to lie behind changes.⁹⁷ According to the authors, realism claims that the conflict groups are the key actors in world politics, power is the fundamental feature of international politics, the essential nature of international politics is conflictual, and the necessity and reason of the state

trump morality and ethics when these values conflict. The most basic realist proposition is that states recognize and respond to shifts in their relative power. That is, similarly placed units, despite variations in their internal qualities behave similarly and produce outcomes that fall within expected ranges. Thus, it's not the power of the idea, as liberals and constructivists suggest, but rather the power behind the idea that explains its acceptance and apparent causal significance. Because realists see interests and ideas as a function of relative power, changes in relative power produce changes in interests. Robert Gilpin concurs: "As the power of a state increases, the relative cost of changing the system and of thereby achieving the state's goal decreases."⁹⁸

Legro and Moravcsik differentiate realism from other contending theories by also laying out realism's core assumptions. They observe that the realists like E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz sought to highlight the manipulation, accumulation and balancing power by sober unsentimental statesmen, focusing on the limits imposed on states by the international distribution of material sources, and viewed realism as the bulwark against claims about the autonomous influence of democracy, ideology, economic integration, law and institutions on world politics.

First core assumption of the realists is the existence of a set of "conflict groups," each organized as a unitary political actor that rationally pursues distinctive goals within an anarchic setting. The second realist assumption is that state preferences are fixed and uniformly conflictual. That assumption, realists claim, releases them from the "reductionist" temptation to seek the causes of state behavior in the messy process of domestic preference formation and from the "moralist" temptation to expect that ideas influence the material structure of world politics. The third and pivotal assumption is the

primacy of material capabilities. In other words, interstate bargaining outcomes reflect the relative cost of threats and inducements, which is directly proportional to the distribution of material resources.

In contrast to theories that emphasize the role of issue-specific coordination, persuasive appeals to shared cultural norms or identities, relative preference intensity, international institutions or collective norms in shaping bargaining outcomes, realism stresses the ability of states, absent a common international sovereign to coerce or bribe their counterparts. According to the authors, Morgenthau and Waltz consistently dismiss ideals, domestic institutions, economic interests, psychology and other sources of state preferences.

A brief survey of the literature on Turkish foreign policy reveals that the predominant interpretation of Turkish foreign policy has been within the realist mode, which viewed Turkish foreign policy as dominated by security concerns and constrained by international factors such as World War II, the Cold War and the formation of the European Union. It holds that Turkish foreign policy makers are concerned with Turkey's survival, its national security, and territorial integrity, which is under constant threat from foreign powers. There is a wide body of literature on the impact of the altered balance of power and institutional changes resulting from the end of the Cold War. Sayari⁹⁹ and Karaosmanoglu¹⁰⁰ highlight such factors at a time when Turkish foreign policy was in its early stages of transformation. The current Foreign Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoglu's seminal work also references the importance of geopolitical factors, including the influence of Turkey's strong historical and cultural connections to its neighbors.¹⁰¹

There is also a growing body of literature on the “Europeanization” process that has had an impact on Turkish foreign policy. Aydin and Acikmese employ the concept of “conditionality” and Europeanization to examine the impact of the EU’s “conditionality” principle and the need to meet certain criteria for EU membership on Turkey’s foreign policy transformation.¹⁰² Ziya Onis highlights the role of the EU in gradually transforming 1990s “coercive regional power” Turkey into a “benign power.”¹⁰³ Mesut Ozcan¹⁰⁴ and Burak Akcapar¹⁰⁵ also stress the impact of Europeanization on Turkish foreign policy, with particular attention to the Middle East.

Drawing from the literature on realism, this international approach looks at the international structure, a state’s relative position in the distribution of power and interactions among states to explain the transformation in Turkish foreign policy. Turkey’s international environment and Ankara’s relative power position have changed dramatically starting in the 1990s with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had posed an existential threat to Turkey’s autonomy. As Turkey became stronger and its neighbors got weaker, Turkish officials have gained the self-confidence to break out of their traditionally passive foreign policy framework. Tripling of Turkey’s GDP in the last decade, raising its status to the 16th largest economy in the world and the fastest growing economy in the OECD, have contributed to Turkey’s increased confidence as an influential regional player.

This approach claims international factors and realism determine Turkish foreign policy encouraging Turkey to increase power politics in its foreign policy behavior. The altered polarity of the international system and Turkey’s increased military and economic capabilities would allow Turkey to act more independently from the United States and its

Western allies. Because it does not face a Soviet threat with the end of the Cold War, Ankara would be less in need of NATO protection. As an economically powerful country with fewer security concerns, Turkey would not try hard to join the EU to avoid surrendering its sovereignty and transfer its national decision-making powers to a supranational organization. It would act more independently from its Western allies and refrain from multilateral institutions, weakening its relations with the US and Europe, but it would also continue to cooperate with its traditional Western allies against emerging security threats. In doing so, it would ignore domestic interests and moral considerations because survival and maintaining its power would be the priority in foreign policymaking.

3.2.2. Domestic Dynamics Approach

Domestic dynamics approach, on the other hand, places the determinants of states' foreign policy behavior and international relations within the nation state. It holds that foreign policy change is driven by domestic political, economic, and social factors, and that the foreign policy outcome is determined by factors including the state structure, state-society relationship, state identity, domestic decision-making process, bureaucratic politics, internal power struggle, and ideological legitimization.

The domestic-based approach has two theoretical dimensions, liberal and constructivist thoughts, which lie behind the domestic political, economic and ideological interests. Liberalism does not view states as unitary actors with national interest as neorealism does and explains the states' foreign policy behavior on the basis of domestic factors, emphasizing societal ideas, interests, and institutions. According to Andrew Moravcsik, liberalism states that state- society relations—the relationship of states

to the domestic and transnational social context in which they are embedded—have a fundamental impact on state behavior in world politics.¹⁰⁶ Liberal foreign policy analysis focuses on whether individual rights, domestic commercial interests, or complicated combination of both together with republican institutions and international perceptions shape foreign policy. He argues that liberal theory stresses the causal importance of state-society relations as shaped by domestic institutions (i.e. democratic peace), by economic interdependence (i.e. endogenous tariff theory), and by ideas about national, political, and socioeconomic public goods provision (i.e. theories about the relationship between nationalism and conflict).

Ann Marie Slaughter argues, “the fundamental actors in politics are members of domestic society, understood as individuals and privately constituted groups seeking to promote their independent interests.”¹⁰⁷ According to Slaughter, liberalism analyzes “state behavior primarily as a function of the constraints placed on state actors by being embedded in domestic and transnational civil society,” and “all governments represent some segment of domestic society, whose interests are reflected in state policy.” Rosenau agrees that the foreign policies of developing countries are shaped by their “internal needs—by the needs of elites for identity and prestige, by the need of charismatic leaders to sustain their charisma, by the need of in-groups to divert attention away from domestic problems and thereby to placate their opposition.”¹⁰⁸

David Baldwin argues that neoliberalism, a variant of liberalism, has four subsets.¹⁰⁹ First, ideational or sociological liberalism stresses the impact on state behavior of conflict and compatibility among collective social values or identities, and views configuration of domestic social identities and values as a basic determinant of state

preferences and of interstate conflict and cooperation. Second, commercial liberalism emphasizes the impact on state behavior of gains and losses to individuals and groups in society from transnational economic interchange, which create pressure on domestic governments to facilitate or block such exchanges through appropriate foreign economic and security policies. Third, republican liberalism stresses the impact on state behavior of varying forms of domestic representation and resulting incentives for social groups to engage in rent-seeking. It emphasizes the ways in which domestic institutions and practices aggregate social identities and economic interests, transforming them into state policy with the predicted policy being in favor of the governing coalition or powerful domestic groups. Finally, liberal institutionalism argues that the way toward peace and prosperity is to create integrated communities and supranational organizations, regimes and institutions that govern anarchic system and encourage cooperation and multilateralism.

Hermann argues liberalism's core assumption is that the rulers and their regime who make foreign policy decisions depend for their continuance on the support of certain constituencies.¹¹⁰ These are entities whose endorsement and compliance are necessary to legitimize and sustain the regime. They may be members of a ruling political party, the political clients in a client-patron system, a dominant religious or ethnic group, military officers, major landowners, interest groups and associations, or the leaders of key sectors of society. Changes in the policy preferences or in the dominant alignment of these constituencies or changes in the nature of the political system trigger changes in foreign policy. According to Hermann, domestic politics may affect foreign policy through several dynamics. First, issues become a centerpiece in the struggle for political power

where competing political leaders and their supporters use a foreign policy position to differentiate themselves from opponents. Second, the attitudes or beliefs of the dominant domestic constituents undergo a profound change. Third, a realignment occurs with the essential constituents of a regime or a revolution and other transformation of the political system takes place. Another source of foreign policy change that falls under this category is the bureaucratic decision making which holds the premise that contemporary foreign policy tends to be conducted by individuals in organizations so one must examine the bureaucratic conditions governing the policy process to understand foreign policy change.

Constructivism, which is presented by some of its proponents as a theory separate from the mainstream realism and liberalism, falls under the domestic dynamics approach and provides the theoretical foundation for the second dimension of this approach by emphasizing the role of identities and ideological aspirations in driving foreign policy actions. Constructivist school holds that identity, rather than material capabilities or distribution of power in international system defines interests, and identity can be fueled by national history, cultures, norms, ideologies, and intersubjective interactions.

Alexander Wendt agrees that intersubjectively constructed identities, norms, and aspirations define how individuals and states interpret the concepts of power and interest.¹¹¹ He argues that “states do not have a ‘portfolio’ of interests that they carry around independent of social context; instead, they define their interests in the process of defining situations.” Thus, identity can explain anarchy and cooperation in international relations. He develops the concept of a “structure of identity and interest” and contends that “without assumptions about the structure of identities and interests in the system,

Waltz's definition of structure cannot predict the content or dynamics of anarchy." Wendt further challenges the core neorealist premise that anarchy forces states into recurrent security competitions, arguing that whether a system is conflictual or peaceful is a function not of anarchy and power, but of the shared culture created through discursive social practices.¹¹² He convincingly makes the case that "anarchy is what states make of it," and that spirals of hostility, arms racing, and war are not inevitable; if states fall into such conflicts, it is the result of their own social practices.

While Waltz argues for extreme parsimony and focus only on structure, liberals and constructivists argue that Waltz's concept of system explains very little.¹¹³ The structural explanation says little about why the bipolarity of alliances took 30 years to develop and does not allow for the possibly crucial role of leadership. Neorealism, which rests very heavily on the systemic level of analysis, says that states act similarly because of the international system. Nye disagrees, arguing that states are not black boxes and that domestic politics matter.¹¹⁴ Liberalism rests heavily on the proposition that states will act similarly if they have similar domestic societies. Nye explains that there are three strands of this liberal thinking: economic, social, and political. The political strand includes institutions and democracy. The economic strand focuses heavily on trade. Liberal economic argument says trade may not prevent war, but it does lead to changes in how states see their opportunities, which in turn may lead to a social structure that is less inclined to war. For example, they argue that realists do not pay enough attention to domestic politics and the way that Japan has changed as a result of economic opportunities.

The social strand of liberalism argues that person-to-person contacts reduce

conflict by promoting understanding. Transnational society affects what people in a democracy want from their foreign policy. The social strand of liberalism emphasizes the role of institutions, which provide information and a framework that shapes expectations and reduce the effect of anarchy that the realists assume. For realists, a state's position in the international system determines its national interests and predicts its foreign policies. Liberals and constructivists provide a richer account of how state preferences and national interests are formed. The definition of the national interests depends in large part on the type of domestic society and culture a state has. For example, a domestic society that values economic welfare and places heavy emphasis on trade, or that views wars against other democracies as illegitimate, defines its national interests very differently from a despotic state that is similarly positioned in the international system.

The end of the Cold War ended the reign of realism and accelerated the turn toward cultural, sociological and domestic approaches to the study of world politics. Many studies of foreign policy analysis emphasized the domestic structures and politics shaping the foreign policy of states. Mesquita and Lalman explore whether states go to war because external pressures have weighed so heavily upon them as to give them little or no choice if they wish to survive or because domestic political factors have led states to aggression.¹¹⁵ They conclude, “a perspective attentive to the domestic origins of foreign policy demands gives a richer and empirically more reliable representation of foreign affairs than a realist emphasis.”

Jack Snyder provides an account of overexpansion of the major great powers since the nineteenth century and argues that domestic pressures often outweigh international ones, especially in the calculations of national leaders of great powers.¹¹⁶ To

understand why overexpansion occurs, he argues that we need to understand the dynamics of policy formation within the nation-state, and especially the role of competing interest groups within various political structures. According to Snyder, self-serving imperialist groups “hijack the state” and pervert national policy in the pursuit of their private interests, thus, interest groups, including big corporations, the ruling class and the military, benefit from imperial, militarist and expansionist policies.

John Owen argues that in democratic countries where citizens have leverage over foreign policy decision-making, political leaders are less likely to take an action that deceives the public.¹¹⁷ According to Owen, in liberal democratic countries, public opinion considers all other “liberal democratic” countries legitimate, thus, these countries solve their conflicts through negotiations because of the pressure from the public opinion. He concludes liberal ideology and domestic democratic institutions shape foreign policy, and thus domestic politics is the most important determinant of foreign behavior.

Ruggie outlines constructivist empirical studies documenting the impact of principled beliefs on patterns of international outcomes.¹¹⁸ His study includes decolonization, international support for termination of apartheid, growing significance of human rights, role of multilateral norms in stabilizing the consequence of rapid international change, increasingly non-discriminatory humanitarian interventions, and emergence of weapons taboos, among other subjects.

In his examination of Turkish foreign policy and identity, Umut Uzer highlights three important factors explaining the motives behind foreign policy outcomes.¹¹⁹ First factor is ideas. He argues that social construction of ideational factors and their respective influence on state behavior are key explanatory variables. Primarily shared ideas rather

than material forces determine structures and construct state identities and interests. Second factor is identity. Defined as a “sense of self,” identity denotes the creation of statehood and nationhood emanating from particular ideologies within that identity. Norms are the third factor and they determine the proper behavior of states by either directly constituting state identity or by influencing the policy outcomes of existing state identities.

Uzer argues that norms, such as racial equality in Germany and anti-militarism in Japan, offer predictive power as they draw the framework of what is right and what is wrong. He adds, norms do not determine foreign policies of various states but rather limit the number of policies that can be chosen. The cultural dimension of Turkish foreign policy has to take into account the Islamic or ethnic solidarity toward Muslims, Turks and other ethnic groups that live inside and outside the boundaries of Turkey. This, however, is balanced by Turkey’s Western orientation, which entails not only a preference for Western states in its foreign policy but also a view of the Western world with its democracy and lifestyle as something to be emulated and internalized.

Brent Sasley, in his examination of Turkish foreign policy in Central Asia through the constructivist lens, argues that Turkish foreign policy is best explained by a reference to its identity, and offers three main competing national identities in Turkey that have prescribed the parameters within which domestic and foreign policy is made.¹²⁰ First is the Western-oriented identity, called Kemalism, which has been the dominant paradigm since the birth of the Republic in 1923 until the end of the Cold War. This identity, based on Ataturk’s wholesale acceptance of Western civilization blended with Turkish nationalism, is sacredly upheld by the security establishment, including the military,

National Security Council, and at that time the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Kemalist ideology presents Ataturk's motto, "peace at home, peace abroad," as the guiding principle of Turkish foreign policy. Adventurism, often labeled as Enver Pashatism with reference to the leader of Turkey—who as one of the leaders of the Young Turk government trekked to Central Asia to participate in the Basmachi Revolt against the Soviet Union in the early 1920s—is always condemned by the Kemalist cadres. Because Enver Pasha is perceived to be responsible for the Ottoman Empire's entry into the First World War and hence its dissolution, the Kemalists label an activist foreign policy as adventurism with disastrous consequences.¹²¹

The second one is the Turkic-identity, sometimes called Pan-Turkism, which emphasizes Turkey's Turkic roots stretching over the Eurasia region as far as to the northwestern China. Pan-Turkism, Sasley argues, was born in the twilight era of the Ottoman Empire when the Ottoman intellectuals wanted to strengthen the Turkish core to stanch the empire's decline. After the establishment of the Turkish republic, pan-Turkism, adopted by the right and the nationalists, competed with Kemalism but their desire to form a union of Turkic states never gained traction with the majority of Turks. The third one is Turkey's Muslim identity, sometimes incorrectly referred to as pan-Islamism, also goes back to the Ottoman Empire's historic role as the leader of the Islamic world through caliphate, which Ataturk abolished. Turkey's Muslim identity became more prominent in several game-changing elections in Turkish history, but it has always been suppressed by the secular establishment through coups or other means because the military was concerned about preventing a Turkish Muslim identity from becoming the framework for Turkish politics.¹²²

A growing number of studies began to examine the transformation of Turkish foreign policy through the lens of domestic political and economic developments since the 2000s. The rise of the AKP to power is seen as an important factor impacting Turkish foreign policy.¹²³ There seems to be consensus in the literature that it would be an exaggeration to claim that there is an “Islamization” of Turkish foreign policy under the AKP. Mustafa Aydin argues that the Islamist considerations are more likely to be used as a cover rather than as an actual motivation behind foreign policy preferences.¹²⁴ Cerit-Mazlum and Dogan highlight the impact of democratization, coupled with the growing role of civil society and interest groups on Turkish foreign policy.¹²⁵

Bahar Rumelili shows the role of civil society in supporting growing cooperation between Greece and Turkey.¹²⁶ William Hale provides a survey of Turkey’s expanding commercial and trade relations in the 1980s,¹²⁷ and Sencer Ayata examines how economic liberalization helped create a new business class influencing government policies.¹²⁸ Onis and Yilmaz underline the importance of economic factors, in particular trade, on the improvements in Greek-Turkish relations.¹²⁹ Aydin, in his survey of Turkish foreign policy, highlights how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as early as in the late 1980s and early 1990s, began to pay more attention to economic considerations.¹³⁰

There is also an increasing academic interest in examining the transformation of Turkish foreign policy from the perspective of ideational factors, attributing the changes to a reformulation of how the Turkish state defines its own identity.¹³¹¹³² Altunisik and Tur¹³³ and Aras and Polat¹³⁴ also explain the transformation in Turkish foreign policy toward Iran and Syria through the lens of constructivist factors. Foreign Minister Davutoglu’s famous book *Strategic Depth* argues that besides geopolitical advantages,

Turkey also enjoys strong historical and cultural connections to the surrounding region. His ideas depicting Turkey as a central country and developing a “zero problem policy” with neighboring countries have become closely associated with the transformation of Turkish foreign policy. Aydın surveys Turkish foreign policy, examining a range of factors falling into different approaches, and argues that constructivist factors are increasingly shaping Turkish foreign policy in the twenty-first century.¹³⁵

According to this domestic dynamics approach, domestic factors—more politically active and economically oriented Turkish public, and the changing dynamics in the domestic institutions, actors, and ideologies—are dominant in driving the changes in Turkish foreign policy behavior. In contrast to realist framework, liberalism and constructivism capture the state level of analysis, which focuses on the domestic dynamics within a state and domestic institutional relationships, and the society-centered analysis, which views domestic politics, interests groups, and influential actors as the determinants of policy outcomes.¹³⁶

There has been a major transformation in Turkey’s internal political and economic dynamics during this period. After experiencing three military coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980, and one soft coup in 1997, and suffering from years of unstable and weak coalition governments, Turkish public finally gave one party—the AKP—the power to form a government without the need of a coalition. This provided stability and efficiency that allowed the AKP to pass the Constitutional reforms that reined in the role of the military and expanded the civil rights required by the EU membership as well as economic reforms that further liberalized Turkey’s economy. As a result, many argue that Turkey has become more democratic¹³⁷ and free-market oriented.

The AKP was lauded for bringing more civilian control over the military and for increasing the participation of its citizens in the democratic processes to bring Turkey in line with the EU's democratic standards. It is worth noting that the AKP was criticized in recent years for taking controversial steps constraining the freedom of expression, for using heavy police force to clamp on the demonstrations of 2013, and for backsliding Turkey's democratization project, especially following a domestic conflict with a religious figure. This internal political crisis will remain outside the scope of this study.

Turkish public opinion does count in Turkey's foreign policy today, if not directly in the policy-making process, through its influence on the decision makers. A foreign policy that is not commensurate with the wishes of the people might lead to punishment in the ballot box by the voters.¹³⁸ Turkey's vibrant urban middle class, increasingly supported by free press and social media, has become more vocal and increasingly more active in foreign policy as well as in domestic policy, evidenced by their increasing willingness to protest. Turkish people want to see their country to act and not merely watch the events on the world stage. Around 95 percent of the Turkish public opposed the US invasion in 2003, and Turks almost universally share the government's view that Israeli-Palestinian stalemate has persisted too long and that what is happening to the Palestinians is unfair. The percentage of those in Turkey who say Turkey should act in close cooperation with the countries of the Middle East on international matters doubled from 10 percent in 2009 to 20 percent in 2010, according to the opinion polls conducted by the German Marshall Fund in Washington.

The AKP's trio of powerful decision-makers—Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Abdullah Gul and Ahmet Davutoglu—who have rotated their responsibilities as the president,

prime minister, and foreign minister among themselves, has proved to be the strongest proponents of activism in foreign policy to raise Turkey's status as a stable, prosperous, and influential regional player. Erdogan, former Mayor of Istanbul under the Islamist Welfare Party, long-time prime minister and current president, was one of the younger generation of politicians that advocated for a more moderate political view and formed the AKP in 2001 with his friends, including Gul.¹³⁹ Gul, former foreign minister, prime minister, and president, has broad international experience, having lived in both the UK and Saudi Arabia and works in tandem with the government party to which he had been affiliated.¹⁴⁰

Davutoglu, Erdogan's chief foreign policy advisor before his appointment as foreign minister in 2009, and current prime minister is a respected academic and the visionary figure behind Turkey's strategic vision and policy of "zero problems with neighbors." His strategic thinking has liberal elements such as soft power, conflict resolution, and promotion of economic interdependence.¹⁴¹ In his book *Strategic Depth*, he argues that Turkey possesses "strategic depth" due to its history and geographic position and it should not be content with a regional role in the Balkans or the Middle East because it is a central power. In Davutoglu's view, Turkey as a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf, and Black Sea country, can simultaneously exercise influence in all these regions and claim a global strategic role. He advocates Turkey taking a proactive policy commensurate to its historic and geographic depth.

Turkey's economic liberalization that began in the 1980s and accelerated since the 2000s, provided opportunities for the previously-dormant Anatolian Turks to come to

the urban centers of commerce. This movement led to the emergence of a new cadre of businessmen, called the “Anatolian tigers,” that are export-oriented and have profited from the increased role of economics in foreign policymaking. Considering that these Anatolian tigers constitute the core of the AKP constituency, liberalizing the economy and creating new markets in which the export-oriented Turkish firms could do business have become important foreign policy goals.¹⁴² This reverses the famous axiom “trade following flag” to “flag following trade” since the new growth of investment and export markets are not in the traditional Western market but in the Middle East and Eurasia.

Onis explains that key civil society organizations representing the newly emerging conservative bourgeoisie, which is the main component of the government’s electoral support base at the grassroots level, including the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) and The Islamic Association of Independent Businessmen (MUSIAD), emerged as central actors in Turkey’s foreign policy initiatives, with the aim of exploring new market opportunities and creating business partnership networks for their own clientele.¹⁴³ The rising middle class, which is more conservative and concerned with domestic economy and Turkey’s status in the world, resented the past dominance of the secular military and the Western-oriented Turkish elite, and supported causes that will allow them to continue their business ventures abroad. Their staunch support for the AKP assured the party’s continuous success in the subsequent elections.

3.3. Dissertation’s Analytical Framework

The literature on foreign policy change and the levels of analyses to explain foreign policy change provides the theoretical background to frame the two hypotheses that help us answer the overarching question of whether Turkey is abandoning

its Western orientation. The analytical framework on the international and domestic approaches allows us to form our predictions and analyze the reasons for an observed foreign policy action.

Hypothesis A states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in the Middle East and Eurasia.

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in the Middle East and Eurasia and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies' vision for the Middle East and Eurasia and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Hypothesis B, which is my argument, states that recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East and Eurasia does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in the Middle East and Eurasia.

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for the Middle East and the Eurasia region and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Prediction 3: Turkey's bilateral trade would increase with the Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries as well as with the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with the Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

3.4. Research Methodology

The main purpose of this dissertation is to explore the causes of the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy and determine whether these changes mean Turkey's departure from the Western framework. In order to test the two hypotheses and analyze the reasons for these foreign policy changes, I will conduct case studies in two regional areas, Middle East and Eurasia. In each region, I will examine Turkey's foreign policy behavior towards several countries—Iran, Iraq, Syria and Israel in the Middle East, and Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus in Eurasia—and analyze Turkey's actions vis-à-vis the interests of the Western powers, mainly the EU and the US.

The case study method allows the researcher to thoroughly examine the international and domestic environment by looking at each case in depth. Case studies are useful in explaining a political phenomenon by taking a hypothesis and testing it against real life events. George and Bennett suggest the within-case method of causal interpretation, which includes congruence method, can function as an alternative to controlled comparison in scientific research.¹⁴⁴ Controlled experiments in international politics do not exist because it is impossible to hold other factors constant

while looking at the one factor that changes. It involves many variables and changes occurring at the same time and these events have too many causes, but as analysts we still want to sort out causes to analyze the patterns and trends and to understand which ones are stronger than others.

As explained by George and Bennett, the congruence method forms the basic methodological foundation of this study. It essentially entails establishing the value of independent and dependent variables in the case at hand and comparing the observed value of dependent variable with earlier predictions given the observed independent variables. If the outcome of the dependent variable is consistent with the predictions, then the possibility of a causal relationship is strengthened. In order to assess the possible causal significance of congruity in a case, the researcher should ask first, if the consistency is spurious or of possible causal significance; and second if the independent variable is a necessary condition for the outcome of the dependent variable, and how much explanatory or predictive power it has.

The study uses the congruence method, combined with before and after analyses, as a methodology to analyze the evidence. It entails establishing two hypotheses, determining the value of predicted policy changes for each hypothesis, and then comparing the observed value of policy changes with the earlier predictions. If the actual Turkish foreign policy behavior is consistent with the predicted policy action identified in either hypothesis, it would provide support for a causal interpretation. Thus, the degree of consistency between the predictions of the hypotheses and the observed values of Turkish foreign policy behavior can be regarded as the most important indication of its explanatory power. In the process, it analyzes which factors are dominant in Turkey's

foreign policy behavior.

Each case study begins by laying out the hypothesis A and hypothesis B, the predictions based on these hypotheses and the parameters for these predictions. It then provides a brief overview of Turkey's foreign policy in that region. Each mini case starts with a historical analysis of Turkish foreign policy before 2002 and then it presents the evidence for the predictions of each hypothesis. Each case concludes with a summary of the findings and analysis and an overall conclusion, following the completion of the mini cases, presents the results of individual cases by identifying the common threads within an analytic framework.

3.5. Data

Data for this study mainly come from official documents, government sources, industry reports, and media sources. The case study will use evidence from the firsthand account of events in speeches, interviews, and official government documents regarding policymakers' intentions and reactions. This is complemented by analytic and descriptive accounts of what has actually happened in Turkish foreign policy in the last decade, which are found in secondary sources such as books, academic journals, and media reports. The empirical evidence for the case study comes from two main sources. The quantitative data on trade, investment, and economic growth figures are mainly pulled from the government agencies, industry, and media reporting. They are presented in graphs and constitute important evidence for the economic reasons behind certain policy actions. The qualitative data, such as public opinion surveys, are drawn from official websites and policy papers. These survey results are useful in measuring public opinion and analyzing its impact on foreign policy actions.

Because the thrust of the case study relies on Turkey's foreign policy actions, which are mostly reported in the media and policy articles, this study invested most of its efforts in obtaining and analyzing the events data. Unlike content analysis, which only focuses on the automatic repetition of certain words to assess the importance of an event or idea, I built a detailed chronological timeline of Turkish foreign policy from 1923 till present. Mining through the data for Turkish foreign policy actions, as reported in the open sources, I carefully stored significant, relevant, and time-sensitive events in a timeline. That allowed me to make comparisons among relevant policy actions and analyze the correlation among various events with an attention to specific timing and sequence. Having a long list of all the government actions in one place also allowed me to analyze whether an event would provide support for the predominant or alternative hypothesis without ignoring the evidence that run counter to my argument.

CHAPTER 4: TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

This dissertation aims to answer the question of whether the recent transformation in Turkish foreign policy is a fundamental reorientation of the country towards the East and abandoning of the Western alliance. In order to answer this question, the study examines the changes in Turkish foreign policy and analyzes the factors driving these changes using international and domestic levels of analyses and the framework of realism and liberalism introduced in the previous chapter. This chapter conducts a series of case studies and uses the congruence method of hypothesis testing to examine Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East. It assesses whether Turkey's policy in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Israel—the countries toward which Turkey exhibited significant foreign policy changes—demonstrates a shift away from Ankara's anchorage in the Western framework.

The first section lays out the two hypotheses for the case study and the next section provides an overview of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East through a brief readout of Turkey's foreign policy in the region before and after 2002. Then it conducts four mini cases on Turkish foreign policy towards Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Israel. Each case begins with a brief recount of Turkey's foreign policy towards this region before 2002. It then analyzes the available evidence against the predictions of the two hypotheses. Finally, it concludes by summarizing the findings on whether Turkey's foreign policy transformation is a fundamental reorientation of the country and by identifying those factors that are dominant in driving Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East.

4.1. THE CASE STUDY FRAMEWORK

Hypothesis A: It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in the Middle East.

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in the Middle East and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies' vision for the Middle East and Eurasia and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Hypothesis B: It states that recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East and Eurasia does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in the Middle East.

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for the Middle East

and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Prediction 3: Turkey's bilateral trade would increase with both the Middle East and the West. Turkey would seek greater integration with the Middle Eastern countries but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

Parameters for the Predictions: Before Turkey's foreign policy actions are examined under these predictions, it's useful to define the parameters for the West's broader expectations from Turkey. The US, the EU, and other NATO partners expect or prefer a Turkey that closely supports and cooperates with the Western policies and interests in the region. They want Turkey to refrain from destabilizing actions in the Middle East, support Western counterterrorism efforts, and contribute to regional stability, economic development, good governance, rule of law, and promotion of democratic and secular values. The EU also expects Turkey to continue the democratization process and launch liberal political and economic reforms to meet the EU membership criteria.

Specifically, Turkey's pursuit of closer economic relations with unfriendly regimes in the region is at least acceptable to the Western countries, but entering into military alliances or forming deeper security ties with these countries is unacceptable to both the US and the EU. The US and the EU want Turkey to uphold international norms and rule of law when it comes to dealing with the regional problems and expect Turkey to join efforts to eliminate terrorism in the region. The US and the EU policies toward specific countries may differ from each other and their policies may change depending on the specific timeframe during the last fifteen years, but I will attempt to highlight basic

expectations and acceptable behavior towards the countries examined in the case studies.

On Iran, the West wants a stable and peaceful Iran and expects Ankara to treat Tehran cautiously. Specifically, the US expects Turkey to support its policy of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Increased trade and investment ties with Iran are somewhat acceptable while enhancing military ties would raise eyebrows. The EU is more lenient toward increasing economic ties between Turkey and Iran and finds Turkey's diplomatic rapprochement with Iran more acceptable. The EU also supports policies that would allow Turkey to facilitate Iranian energy resources to be exported to Europe.

On Iraq, the US expected Turkey to refrain from forging closer ties to Iraq and join efforts to remove Saddam before the Iraq war while the major EU countries expected Turkey to join efforts at a diplomatic solution to avert a war. In the aftermath of the war, the US and the EU expect Turkey to contribute to reconstruction, political reconciliation and economic development efforts and support the functioning of the Iraqi government. Following the rise of ISIS threat, the US and the EU expect Turkey to cooperate closely with the Western security forces to eliminate the terrorist threat. Turkey's support for the extremist forces in the region and destabilizing actions in Iraq would be unacceptable to the West.

On Syria, before the Arab Spring-inspired protests and the ensuing violence, the US expected Turkey to refrain from entering into a military alliance with Syria against the Western interests in the region. The EU probably found Ankara's efforts at improving diplomatic and economic relations with Damascus acceptable. Following Assad's use of force against his people and the escalation of violence, the US and the EU expected

Turkey to support the Western efforts to hasten Assad's fall. Turkey's increased trade ties with Syria were somewhat acceptable to the West but close military ties while the violence continued would exceed the Western limits; both the US and the EU expected Turkey to cease its ties with Syria after the violence. They found Turkey's obstinate insistence on removing Assad from power before Ankara could fully support the fight against the ISIS frustrating but workable, however, any overt Turkish support for the extremist forces, which would derail the Western efforts at fighting terrorism in the region, would be unacceptable to the West.

On Israel, the US desires Turkey to stay on good terms with Israel to realize cooperation with its two close allies in the Middle East. While Turkey's refusal to improve diplomatic relations with Israel until Tel Aviv apologizes and compensates for the killing of nine Turks in 2010 appears to be understood by the US given President Obama's efforts to broker an Israeli apology, Washington probably expects Ankara to restore political, diplomatic, and security relations with Israel to garner support for US policies in the region. The EU is less rigid when it comes to maintaining an open dialogue with Hamas or deteriorating security ties with Israel, and more accepting of Turkey's emotional support for the Palestinians. Any potential military alliance Ankara could forge against the Western ally in the region would exacerbate the regional instability and jeopardize the US and the EU's goals in the region.

4.2. OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Turkey's policy in the Middle East was marked by decades of mutual mistrust and tension since the birth of the Republic. Ankara has maintained its inward-looking and defensive policy approach towards international relations and remained mostly cautious towards the region until the 1970s and 1980s. The Kemalist elite in Turkey perceived the Middle East as a backward zone of conflict and preferred to deal with it only when it threatened Turkey's national security. Likewise, the Arab public saw the Kemalist revolution in Turkey as a denial of the country's Islamic heritage.¹⁴⁵

During the Cold War, the Western, mostly the US, foreign and security policy approach towards the region shaped Turkey's policy regarding the Middle East and the Arab nationalist currents grew suspicious and resentful of Turkey's role as a pro-Western bastion.¹⁴⁶ Following Ankara's tense relations with the West in response to Turkey's intervention into northern Cyprus in the 1970s, Turkey attempted to seek closer relations with its neighbors in the region for a brief period, but by large, Turkish Republic stuck to its Kemalist policy of non-entanglement. When Turkey did get involved—including its decision to join the Western coalition against Saddam in the first Gulf War, its use of military threats to compel Syria to renounce support for the PKK, and its sparring with Iran over Tehran's support for the PKK—its involvement was controversial and led to a deterioration in its relations with the Middle Eastern neighbors. Turkey's exports to the Middle East dropped from 27 percent of total exports in 1987 to 14 percent in 1993 and the imports dropped from 19 to 11 percent during the same period.¹⁴⁷

After the end of the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy remained in line with that of the US and major European powers. Especially in the 1990s, the Turkish political and

military elite considered the Middle East as a source of threat and the defense establishment— exercising its influence through the National Security Council—became more prominent in the formulation of Turkey’s policies vis-à-vis the Middle East. The National Security Policy Document of 1992 listed Syria, Iraq, and Iran as Turkey’s main sources of threat following Kurdish separatism.¹⁴⁸ Feeling increasingly encircled by “hostile” neighbors, Turkey securitized its foreign policy in the 1990s and saw the developments in world politics through this lens. As a result, Ankara avoided close diplomatic and economic ties with its Middle Eastern neighbors and actively supported the activities of the NATO, its chief security partnership. Although Turkey had some involvement in the Middle East during the 1990s—it had a stint of warmer relations with the Arab countries under the Islamist-led coalition government—its activities were largely limited to Turkey’s immediate neighbors and mainly tied to the Kurdish issue.

Following the AKP’s rise to power in 2002, Ankara broadened its long-atrophied relations with Muslim and non-Muslim neighbors in the Middle East through its active diplomatic and economic involvement. It became increasingly willing to serve as an intermediary in crises between the United States and the Middle East and among the Middle Eastern countries. Turkey’s deepening political ties to the region, marked by increasing diplomatic visits, political agreements, and commercial activities, significantly raised its clout in the region, reversing decades of hostility and mistrust towards Ankara at least in the eyes of the Arab public.

The Arab states in 2004 helped elect the first Turk to the office of Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The Arab League was among those organizations and states that made diplomatic representations to Brussels in support

of Ankara's EU case.¹⁴⁹ In 2006, Erdogan became the first prime minister to address an Arab League Summit, which granted Turkey the "permanent guest" status. Around seventy-five percent of the people surveyed in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Syria in 2009 viewed Turkey as a "model for the synthesis of Islam and democracy."¹⁵⁰ Also in 2009, the Arab states joined a host of Asian, African, and Western nations in supporting Turkey's successful bid for a rotating seat on the UNSC.

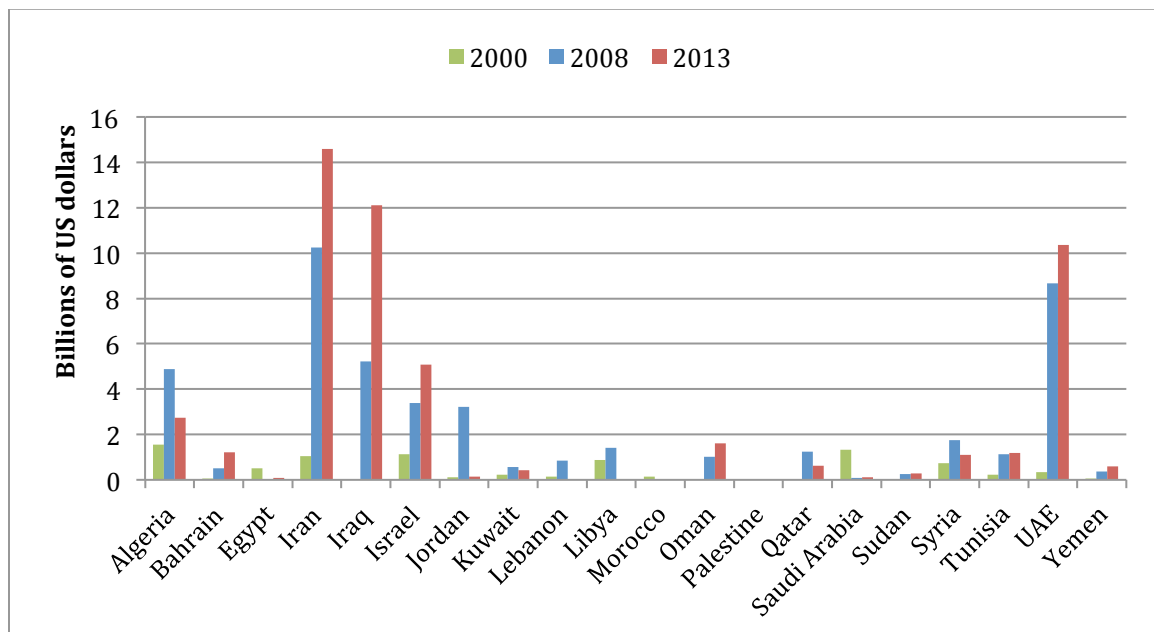
Economic liberalization measures and the export-led growth strategy, implemented since the 1980s, have heightened the importance of economic considerations in foreign policy. As a result, a major Turkish foreign policy goal during this period was opening up new markets in support of the growing Turkish businesses. Turkey's phenomenal economic growth in the last decade helped Ankara increase its ties with its neighbors and build economic interdependence with formerly hostile countries like Iran, Iraq, and Syria. In turn, growing Turkish economic interests in its Middle Eastern neighbors have raised Turkey's stakes in a peaceful and stable region, reinforcing Turkish foreign policy objectives to promote peace and regional integration in the Middle East.¹⁵¹

As a result, the volume of trade between Turkey and its Middle Eastern neighbors has sharply increased (see figure 1). During the 1990s, Turkish exports to the Middle Eastern countries rarely exceeded \$3 billion per year and remained stable, but after 2002, the volume of Turkish exports experienced a strong and sustained growth, reaching \$60 billion in 2008 but falling back to \$47 billion in 2013. Even though Turkey ran a trade deficit with the Western world, exacerbating its current account deficit, it enjoyed a trade surplus with the Middle East. Between 1954 and 1999, the total number of Middle

Eastern companies in Turkey amounted to only 842 but this number was 438 in the year 2006 alone. The percentage of industrial goods that created complementarities with the Middle Eastern countries increased and new industrial centers in Anatolia began to eye new markets in the Middle East.¹⁵² Thanks to the liberal visa policy and economic opportunities, people-to-people exchanges significantly increased during this period through touristic visits, establishment of Turkish civil society groups in the Middle East, and cultural exchanges through education and Turkish satellite television programs.

The following hypothesis testing section will examine Turkey’s foreign policy after the AKP came to power to assess whether its foreign policy in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Israel—the countries toward which Turkey exhibited significant foreign policy changes—demonstrates a shift away from Ankara’s place in the Western framework.

Figure 1: Turkey’s Total Trade (Exports plus Imports) with the Middle Eastern Countries between 2000 and 2013¹⁵³



4.3 TESTING HYPOTHESES

1. IRAN

Before 2002

Turkey has historically seen its Shia neighbor to the east as an imperial and religious rival. The Ottomans were historically the defenders of the Sunni Islam against the Shia Iranians. Even though Ataturk's Turkey became a secular and Western model for Iran's Pahlavi dynasty during the first half of the twentieth century—during which the two sides enjoyed good relations—bilateral ties sharply deteriorated with the Islamic revolution in 1979.¹⁵⁴ When the Supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini emphasized spreading the Islamic revolution to Turkey, the historic rivalry reemerged between secular Turkey and Islamic Iran.¹⁵⁵ Turkey maintained its non-involvement policy during the Iran-Iraq War and even had a stint of improved relations with Iran under Turkey's Islamist-led coalition government of 1996-1997. It was during this time that Turkey signed a \$23 billion deal for the delivery of natural gas from Iran to Turkey and took a leadership role in the establishment of the Developing-8 (D-8), a Muslim version of G8, which included Iran.¹⁵⁶

During most of the 1990s, however, the Turkish military was concerned that Tehran tolerated the PKK's (Kurdistan Workers' Party) terroristic activities inside Iran and offered a safe haven for the militants that the Turkish security forces were pursuing,¹⁵⁷ therefore, bilateral relations were tense and marked by one crisis after another. In 1994 and again in 1999, Turkish fighter planes struck PKK camps in Iran, reportedly hitting Iranian border villages.¹⁵⁸ In April 1996, the two sides exchanged accusations of espionage and support for terrorism. In July of the same year, the

PKK mounted an attack on a Turkish military post on the Iranian border and the Turkish president visited the border and harshly criticized Iran.¹⁵⁹ In January 1997, Turkey accused Iran of supplying the PKK with heavy weapons, including Katyusha rockets.¹⁶⁰

Turkey's heightened concerns over the rise of political Islam added to a growing sensitivity toward alleged Iranian attempts to "export" the Islamic revolution. Diplomatic relations were ruptured for a time in 1997 when the Iranian ambassador to Turkey called for the adoption of the Islamist Sharia system in Turkey at a Jerusalem Day speech in Ankara. The Turkish military responded to this incident, known as the Baqeri incident, by sending in tanks, arresting the Islamist Welfare Party mayor, expelling the Iranian ambassador, and removing Turkey's Islamist Prime Minister from his post in a soft coup.

Also, in December 1997, then President Demirel left the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) summit in Tehran early, when his Iranian hosts tried to censure Turkey for its close relations with Israel. In 1999, Demirel called Turkey's Virtue Party parliamentarian, head-scarved Merve Kavakci an acting agent provocateur in the service of Iran. Turkey and Iran also took opposing positions on the Armenia-Azeri conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh and Iran accused Turkey of inciting separatism among its Azeri minority as well as harboring the Mujahideen al-Kalq, a violent opponent to the Iranian regime.¹⁶¹ During these tumultuous years in bilateral relations, Turkey has often pursued a policy in close collaboration or consultation with the West, and Iran resented Turkey's role as a close ally of Washington and Tel Aviv.

Turkish foreign policy towards Iran after the AKP came to power will be examined below.

Hypothesis A: *It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy*

stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in the Middle East.

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Iran and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Evidence:

International factors such as the end of the Cold War and the break-up of the Soviet Union, which posed an existential threat to Turkey, ushered in a new thinking in Ankara that Turkey no longer needed protection from the Western security umbrella, namely the NATO. A series of domestic political and economic events and rhetoric from the Turkish leadership in the 2000s seemed to suggest that Turkey indeed was warming up to Iran in opposition to the policies held by the US and to a lesser extent the EU. Turkey maintained close political ties to Iran through high-level diplomatic visits despite the Western attempts to isolate Iran, complicating the Western efforts to stop Iran from building nuclear weapons.

In 2002, Turkey's president visited Iran and called for new priorities in building economic relations between Ankara and Tehran shortly after President Bush declared Iran as a part of the "axis of evil."¹⁶² In August 2008, Turkey was the first NATO member to formally invite Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmedinejad. In the same month, Erdogan gave a speech at the Brookings Institution in Washington, calling for total nuclear disarmament and arguing that the countries that ask Iran to drop nuclear weapons

should get rid of their own nuclear arsenal.¹⁶³ In late 2009, Ankara abstained from an International Atomic Agency sanctions resolution against Iran. In an interview with BBC in March 2010, Erdogan characterized the accusations that Iran was developing nuclear weapons as rumors.

Turkish Iranian rapprochement culminated in June 2010 when Turkey, together with Brazil as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, voted against the harsher UN sanctions against Iran.¹⁶⁴ Then Foreign Minister Davutoglu publicly called the sanctions “baseless, entirely provocative and biased,”¹⁶⁵ while the deputy prime minister in 2010 declared that Turkish banks and companies were free to trade with Iran.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, Erdogan met with the Iranian leaders in 2012 amid speculations of a possible strike by the Israeli and the US forces on the Iranian nuclear facilities.

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies’ vision for Iran and its foreign policy initiatives in Iran would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

During the AKP’s tenure, Turkish policymakers embarked many foreign policy initiatives that would deepen bilateral relations and move Ankara closer to Tehran. Turkey and Iran solidified their bilateral security ties by signing security cooperation agreements in 2004 and 2008, and the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), agreeing to cooperate in air, land, and sea transportation. In 2006, Iran’s ambassador in Ankara has called for Turkey, Iran, and Syria to adopt a joint position on the Kurdish issues, lest “the US carve pieces from us for a Kurdish state.”¹⁶⁷ In June 2008, Turkey and Iran undertook a coordinated air strike in the Kandil Mountains against the PKK and its affiliates.¹⁶⁸¹⁶⁹

In June 2009, Turkey recognized Ahmedinejad's reelection despite fraud claims and then Turkish President Gul visited Tehran on a day when a Green movement protest was scheduled. In October of that year, Erdogan claimed the Iranian leader was his friend and close ally, and asserted that he shared a common vision of the region with Iran.¹⁷⁰ Erdogan's January 2014 visit to Iran, establishment of the Turkish-Iranian High Level Cooperation Council during his visit, and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's June 2014 visit to Turkey—the first of its kind since 1996—further strengthened the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Turkey would almost certainly not participate in or even facilitate an Israeli or US attack on Iran unless Tehran's actions became truly threatening to Ankara.¹⁷¹ Turks fear that American military action against its neighbor, especially after the Iraq war and the turmoil in Syria, will further destabilize the region. To some in Ankara, Iran cooperates closely against the PKK militants while Washington is reluctant to take action against the PKK in support of Turkish interests.¹⁷²

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Evidence:

Turkey's rising economic status—as the world's 16th largest economy and one of the fastest growing economies in the OECD—increased its confidence in pursuing autonomous foreign economic policy without being constrained by the EU. At the same time the economic crises engulfing the EU made the EU membership less attractive, Turkey resented the EU's decision to admit countries like Bulgaria that are poorer than

Turkey while rejecting Turkey.

In 2007, Turkish Foreign Trade Minister announced that Turkey would sign preferential trade agreements with eighteen Islamic countries, including Iran. In 2010, Erdogan floated the idea of a free trade agreement with Iran stating, “Why can’t we establish unobstructed trade mechanism with Iran as we did before with the EU?”¹⁷³¹⁷⁴ When Turkey lifted visa requirements with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iran for the creation of a “Samgen,” replicating the Schengen visa-free zone of the EU, Davutoglu said, “we are lifting borders that were artificially laid and becoming the people of one hinterland. We are turning economic cooperation into an economic unity.”¹⁷⁵

During Erdogan’s January 2014 visit to Tehran, both sides concluded negotiations to enact a preferential trade agreement to reduce tariff barriers between the two countries.¹⁷⁶ This reciprocal tariff cuts agreement or preferential trade agreement falls short of a free trade regime and despite the tariff reduction deal, the sanctions imposed on Iran over its nuclear program remain a major obstacle to increasing bilateral trade. Furthermore, any attempt to grant preferential trade status to Iran could create problems for Turkey in its relations with the EU because all of Turkey’s tariff barriers with third parties must be harmonized with those of the EU under the terms of Turkey’s 1995 Customs Union agreement with the EU.

Despite US opposition, the Turkish government reiterated its determination to go ahead with major investments in the Iranian energy sector.¹⁷⁷ Turkey and Iran cooperate closely in the energy field; Iran is Turkey’s top oil importer. In 2007, Turkey and Iran announced plans for a strategic alliance based on a joint venture in the field of energy despite US pressure on Turkey to shun Iran. They agreed to seal two new energy deals,

one allowing the Turkish Petroleum Corporation to explore for oil and natural gas in Iran and another for the transfer of gas from Turkmenistan to Turkey and on to Europe via a pipeline that passes through Iran, although these plans have not been carried out in the wake of the international sanctions.¹⁷⁸ During the visit of the Iranian president to Turkey in 2008 after a disputed election, which angered Washington, Turkey and Iran made an agreement to transport 30 billion cubic meters (bcm) of Iranian and Turkmen gas into Turkey and the EU.

Hypothesis B: *It states that recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Iran.

Evidence:

Turkey has never advocated that Iran should acquire nuclear bombs nor supported Tehran's nuclear ambitions, hence, Ankara's Iranian policy at the fundamental level does not run counter to the Western policy. At the tactical level, however, Ankara's method of dealing with the Iranian nuclear problem—which favors diplomatic solution and opposes economic sanctions or military action to protect Turkish security and economic interests—diverges from that of Washington and Tel Aviv. Despite Erdogan's occasional, erratic, and populist rhetoric, Ankara has publicly and repeatedly called for Tehran's need to satisfy international concerns over its nuclear developments.¹⁷⁹ Erdogan openly stated his government's position on Iran: “Turkey officially recognizes the right of Iran, a

member of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to develop nuclear technology, provided that it remains on a peaceful track and allows for the application of full-scope safeguard inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in a way that would lend the utmost confidence to the international community about its intentions.”¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, Turkey would not welcome any major gain in prestige by Iran, even if Tehran is highly unlikely to use the nuclear weapons against Turkey, because Ankara still sees Iran as a rival for regional influence despite seeking closer diplomatic and economic ties with Tehran. In fact, if the Turkish-Iranian relations experience fallout, Turkey’s NATO membership would provide a security umbrella to Turkey against a potential Iranian attack.¹⁸¹

Turkish officials have reservations about imposing economic and other kinds of sanctions against Iran by the UNSC or by individual countries because these sanctions severely hurt Iran’s neighbors and key economic partners, which include Turkey. The Gulf War experience and the UN sanctions imposed on Iraq taught Turkey how detrimental they could be for its economy and for regional stability.¹⁸² Any military attack or economic sanctions would hurt Turkey’s own citizens who live near Iran and whose livelihood depends on cross-border trade. That is why the Turkish officials argue that the best way to prevent Iran from seeking nuclear weapons is to address the underlying sources of insecurity that might induce Tehran to seek the weapons. Turkish leaders have urged the US and other allies to offer Iran security pledges in return for reciprocal Iranian guarantees that Tehran will not use its nuclear activities for military purposes.¹⁸³

Davutoglu emphasized that Ankara-based policy would exhaust all means of

diplomacy in order to mediate between the regimes and the people.¹⁸⁴ To that end, Turkey actively promoted and expressed support for the ongoing nuclear talks between Iran and the West. Turkey's position also reveals the divergent views between Brussels and Washington because Ankara is more likely to follow the EU line than the US line on how to handle Iran's nuclear problem.¹⁸⁵ The troika meetings between Turkey, the EU, and Iran contributed to the harmonization of Turkish-EU policies on Iran's nuclear program.¹⁸⁶ The EU's twin-track strategy on Iran's nuclear program—seeking to maintain a dialogue with Tehran while not excluding future UN sanctions—is similar to Turkey's approach.¹⁸⁷ Turkey also sought to facilitate P5+1 talks even though then President Gul's shuttle diplomacy between the principal actors, Condoleezza Rice, Javier Solana, Mohammed el Baradei, and Ali Larijani proved futile in the end.¹⁸⁸

Turkey's "no" vote in the UNSC should be viewed from Ankara's perspective within that context. Prior to the vote, Turkish and Brazilian leaders had made significant efforts on a deal—that was originally proposed by the US—to persuade their Iranian counterparts to agree to swap their low-enriched uranium with enriched rods for a medical research reactor through an exchange that would take place in Turkey. When their efforts, which the pundits assessed to be unexpectedly successful,¹⁸⁹ were sidelined by the UNSC decision to impose new sanctions against Iran, Ankara, together with Brazil, displayed its anger by voting against the sanctions, causing tension with Washington. Deputy Chairman of the AKP Omer Celik said, "some people have mischaracterized our vote against further sanctions as Turkey siding with Iran against the US, but in truth it revealed that we are pursuing common objectives in different ways." He further argued, "we prefer diplomacy and negotiations with Iran because sanctions

don't work,” and “if we don't keep talks between the West and Iran going, instability will once again unfold throughout the Middle East region, from Iraq to Lebanon.”¹⁹⁰

When the UN sanctions were imposed despite Ankara's efforts to prevent it, Turkey accepted that it would abide by the UN sanctions though it sought some exceptions to the more sweeping restrictions imposed on Tehran by the US and the EU. Then President Gul expressed Turkey's mood at that time: “If the demand is for Turkey not to have any trade, any economic relations with Iran, it would be unfair to Turkey.”¹⁹¹ Despite opposing the sanctions for economic reasons, however, Turkey nevertheless complied with the majority of them; sanctions were a primary factor for delaying the implementation of a \$23 billion energy agreement Ankara signed with Tehran in 1996.¹⁹²

More importantly, in November 2010, several months after the “no” vote, Turkey approved the deployment of the anti-missile radar system in its territory at NATO Lisbon Summit, a move that the Iranians vehemently opposed but Washington considered an important component of European security.¹⁹³ According to a prominent Turkey scholar, Graham Fuller, Turkey, an elected member of the IAEA board, will almost surely side with the international consensus when forced to choose sides, whatever that will be, but not necessarily with the US or Israeli position, given Ankara's strong preference for internationally-sanctioned options on other issues.¹⁹⁴

Even though the international media hastily interpreted Turkey's “no” vote as a non-permanent member of the UNSC as Turkey abandoning the West, the vote has not paralyzed the Turkish-American relations. In October 2010, four months after the vote, the US and Turkey launched a cabinet-level economic commission, the Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation and the Turkey-US Business

Council.¹⁹⁵ President Obama and Prime Minister Erdogan had a “frank” conversation on the bilateral relationship in June 2011 in Canada. In December of that year, Vice President Biden reinforced Washington’s interest in increasing economic ties with Turkey when he traveled to Istanbul for the Global Entrepreneurship Summit that Turkey hosted.¹⁹⁶

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies’ vision for Iran and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Evidence:

Turkey has certainly pursued more independent foreign policy initiatives in the region after the AKP came to power, raising eyebrows in the West. It took a less security-oriented approach to Iran by pursuing political, economic, and cultural cooperation. The mutual trust between the Turks and the Iranians increased under the AKP, which had no ideological problems with the Shiism. The AKP made major efforts to improve ties with Iran as a part of its policies to eliminate problems with neighbors and pursued multidimensional and proactive foreign policy to achieve regional stability and economic interdependence.¹⁹⁷ Turkey’s vision for a stable and peaceful Iran that cannot threaten its neighbors with nuclear capability, which would then contribute to regional peace and economic integration, is in line with the interests of the US and the EU.

Changes in Turkey’s political leadership and foreign policymaking institutions enabled Ankara to pursue closer diplomatic and economic ties with Iran compared with the previous governments that saw Iran as a fundamental security threat. Turkey’s new foreign policy mechanism gave more voice to the elected, civilian leaders and to the

public opinion. Turkish foreign policy used to be the product of the state elite and the governing elite. The state elite, which consisted of the career military and the civilian bureaucracy dominated by the MFA, was the guardian of the Kemalist ideology. The governing elite, which tended to be more representative of the values of Turkey's societal peripheries, including Kemalism, Islamism, and Turkish nationalism, had less influence on foreign policy, particularly during Turkey's history of unstable coalition governments.

Since November 2002, however, the AKP governing elite emerged from the election institutionally strong with its majority close to the two-thirds mark, making constitutional reforms a possibility. Its formation of a single party government promised greater coherence in the office and stability in the country. As a part of the requirements for the EU membership, the AKP carried out legal and institutional reforms to limit the role of the military in the political sphere and the balance of forces transformed in favor of the civilian government. In contrast, Turkish military is far more hawkish about Iran than Turkey's civilian officials. The old Kemalist worldview still tends to project the source of domestic problems, such as the resurgence of Islam in Turkey, on foreign enemies and Iran symbolizes the "Islamic threat."¹⁹⁸ As late as the 1990s, the Turkish military used its strategic rapprochement with Israel as a strategic card to play against Iran as needed.

The Turkish public opinion supported the AKP's pursuit of closer economic ties with Iran and the government's policy on Iran tracked closely with the general mood in public. In a June 2003 poll on a possible US-Iranian confrontation, 55 percent of Turks stated that they would prefer to remain neutral on the matter. While just under 24 percent actually favored siding with Iran, less than 17 percent wanted to side with the US.¹⁹⁹ The

Turkish vote against sanctions on Iran at the UNSC is not so surprising considering that only around 48 percent of the Turks were concerned about Iran acquiring nuclear weapons in 2010, according to the Transatlantic Survey by the German Marshall Fund. This is in sharp contrast with the US respondents at 86 percent and the EU at 79 percent. The intensity of concern is also substantial as 49 percent of the EU respondents and 69 percent of the Americans were very concerned about Iran having nuclear weapons. In Turkey, only 18 percent were very concerned and 36 percent of Turks were not at all concerned.

Although Turkey viewed the prospect of Iranian nuclear weapons negatively, this issue was not a top priority—when compared to the Kurdish issue—within the Turkish public at the time, even for the Turkish military.²⁰⁰ Turkish people disapproved coercive measures against Iran and displayed higher levels of acceptance for the prospect of a nuclear Iran. When presented with multiple options for dealing with Iran’s nuclear program in 2010, around 25 percent of the Turkish respondents were willing to accept that Iran could acquire nuclear weapons while only 6 percent of EU respondents and 4 percent in the United States were willing to do so. Considering Turkey has extensive economic ties with Iran, it is not surprising that support for economic sanctions on Iran was fairly low in Turkey at 24 percent, compared to American support at 40 percent.

Another major motivation for Ankara’s pursuit of closer diplomatic and economic relations with Iran is its economic interests. In 2014, Erdoğan traveled to Iran with his ministers for economy, energy and development in the hope of pursuing lucrative contracts in the aftermath of easing of sanctions against Iran.²⁰¹ Ankara views the potential opening of Iran to the West as a strategic opportunity to reduce the impact of

Turkey's own economic challenges, which threaten to reduce the AKP's grip on power in an election year. Declining bilateral trade due to sanctions is a major reason why Turkey has been active in the P5+1 talks, hoping a nuclear negotiation that would ease economic sanctions on Iran would allow tariffs to fall and trade to flow normally again between the two countries.²⁰²

Amid the tense situation in Yemen because of Iran's support of the Shia groups, which raised tension with Turkey, Erdogan visited Tehran in April 2015 to lower the price Turkey pays for the 10 bcm of natural gas it purchases annually from Iran, reportedly to ask for a 25 percent reduction.²⁰³²⁰⁴ Turkey has even taken Iran to international arbitration over the pricing of natural gas, complaining that Iran charges 25-30 percent more than other suppliers. Turkey pays \$490 for 1,000 cubic meters of Iranian gas, a price said to be \$155 and \$55 more than what it pays for the Azeri and Russian gas, respectively.²⁰⁵

As Turkish-American relations improved because of the unity of vision for the region, the Turkish-Iranian ties began to deteriorate in recent years, especially after the Arab Spring. The AKP has encouraged the new Arab regimes to follow Turkey's secular model, whereas the Iranian government would want to expand the interests of the Shia population.²⁰⁶ Turkey and Iran came head to head over their policies in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen where Turkey was irked by Iran's support of the Shia Muslims, exacerbating sectarian conflicts and instability. In April 2015, Erdogan declared "Iran and the terrorist groups must withdraw from Yemen," drawing a blunt response from Iranian Foreign Minister, who stated "it would be better if those who have created irreparable damages with their strategic blunders and lofty politics would adopt responsible policies."²⁰⁷²⁰⁸

Turkish public opinion is also beginning to sway away from Iran. According to the Transatlantic Survey conducted by the German Marshall fund, when asked about Iran's nuclear program in 2013, 12 percent of the Turks, down from 25 percent in 2010, said Turkey should accept that Iran could acquire nuclear weapons and 6 percent of the Turks, up from 3 percent in 2010, said Turkey should take military action against Iran. There is no significant change in the public opinion of the US or the EU during those years.

Prediction 3: Turkey's bilateral trade would increase with both Iran and the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with Iran but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

Evidence:

Turkey's economic ties with Iran increased commensurate with the increase in the overall trade thanks to Turkey's booming economy in the last decade. With a trade volume of \$22 billion in 2012—from around \$1 billion in 2002—Iran was Turkey's fourth-largest trading partner (Figure 2).²⁰⁹ There are several reasons for Turkey's increased economic cooperation with Iran. First, Turkey is heavily dependent on Iranian oil and gas for its energy needs, which are estimated to rise further to satisfy Ankara's growing industrialization. Iran is Turkey's largest energy supplier in the Middle East and the second largest in the world after Russia. Ankara imported 51 percent of its oil from Iran in 2011 though it went down to 35 percent in 2012. It imported 21 percent of its natural gas from Iran in 2011 though it also went down to 18 percent in 2012 (see figure 3).²¹⁰ As a result, the share of the Middle East in Turkey's overall trade increased between 2002 and 2013, causing some decrease in the EU and the US share, but this

increase, similar to that of Russia, is mainly due to the rising energy imports from Iran and Iraq (see figure 4).

Figure 2: Turkey's Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Iran since 1998²¹¹

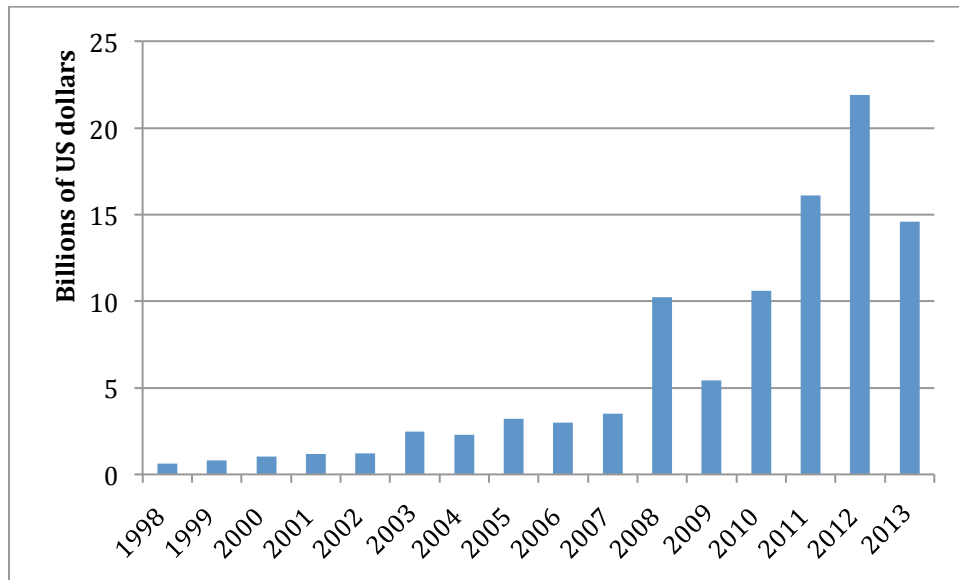
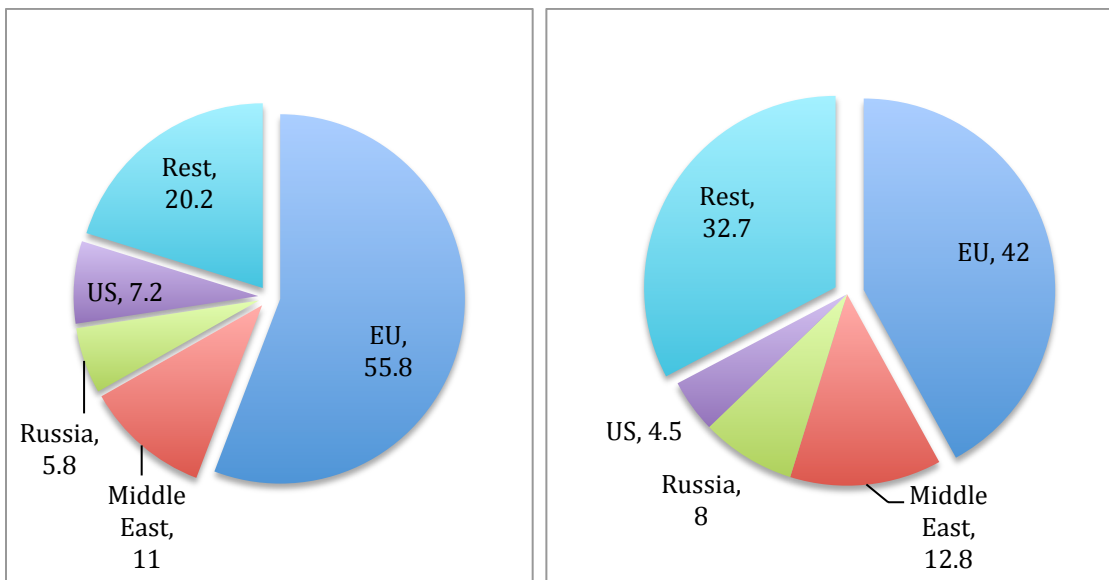


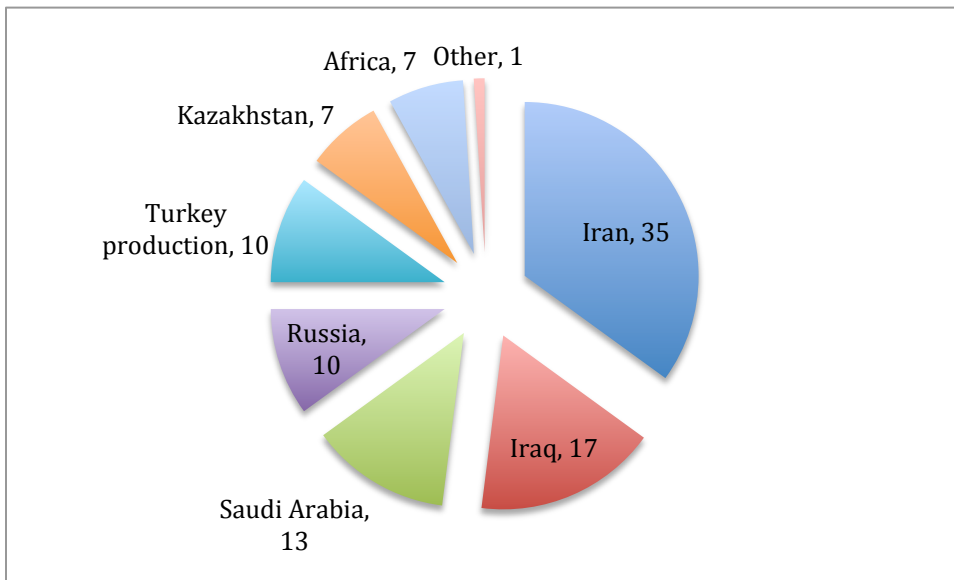
Figure 3: Turkey's Main Trade Partners in 2002 and 2013²¹²



According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), Turkey is likely to see the fastest medium-to long-term growth in energy demand among the IEA member countries,

which include some of the world’s largest consumers of energy. Within the last decade, Turkish electricity demand has increased by 63 percent and power sector accounted for 48 percent of natural gas consumption in 2011. Turkey’s energy use will continue to grow at an annual growth rate of around 4.5 percent from 2015 to 2030, approximately doubling over the next decade.

Figure 4: Turkey’s 2012 Crude Oil Supply Mix²¹³



Secondly, Turkish businesses and interest groups played a crucial role in the expansion of economic ties between Ankara and Tehran. The AKP came to power with a claim of representing the groups who were outside the political, economic, and cultural elite that had dominated Turkey since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The small-scale family businesses in Anatolia, who were dynamic, well-adapted for flexible production patterns, and able to compete in international markets, emerged as a new cadre of businessmen, called the “Anatolian Tigers.” Considering that these Anatolian Tigers—who were export-oriented and profited from the increased role of economics in

foreign policymaking—constitute the core of the AKP constituency, it became an important foreign policy goal for the AKP to liberalize and create new markets. The Vice President of the Middle East-Africa-Gulf region committee of the Turkish Business Council expressed these sentiments in a 2012 interview, “What’s changed in the last ten years is that the government in Turkey is now thinking from a business perspective; it is changing its politics to comply with the interests of Turkish companies.”²¹⁴ Some scholars began to call the AKP “the party of the rising devout bourgeoisie.” Then Foreign Minister Davutoglu acknowledged in a 2011 interview that the business community in Turkey has become “one of the driving forces of foreign policy.”²¹⁵

With the victory of the AKP in 2002, a new set of interest groups, which had previously had no say in Turkish foreign policy, were empowered. Business associations, such as the Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK), the Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association (TUSIAD) and the Confederation of Businessmen, and Industrialists (TUSKON), now actively lobby the government on foreign policy questions. The Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (MUSIAD) has played an active role in the party since its establishment; many MUSIAD members have joined the AKP to complete the organization of the local offices of the party in Anatolian cities.²¹⁶ During a business meeting in 2010 chaired by Erdogan and Iranian Vice President Reza Rahimi and attended by more than a hundred business leaders from both countries, the two countries pledged to triple bilateral trade and even floated the idea of a free trade agreement. This was possible mainly because of the active lobbying of the Turkey-Iran Business Group, which has been seeking to advance the interests of Turkish businesses and has contributed to Turkey’s outreach policy towards

Iran.

Business interests and lobby groups generally emphasize greater trade and investment regardless of the direction. Thus, while exploring new markets in the East, Turkey's interest groups also strongly supported maintaining their longstanding ties to its traditional economic partners, the EU countries. Even the conservative MUSIAD argued for Turkey's accession to the EU in search of a democratic anchor to guarantee freedom for political activity. Muslim businessmen have also acknowledged that they function in an economy that is increasingly geared to external markets and specifically to Europe because they recognize that EU membership could stimulate foreign investments and thereby increase the overall level of economic prosperity in the country.

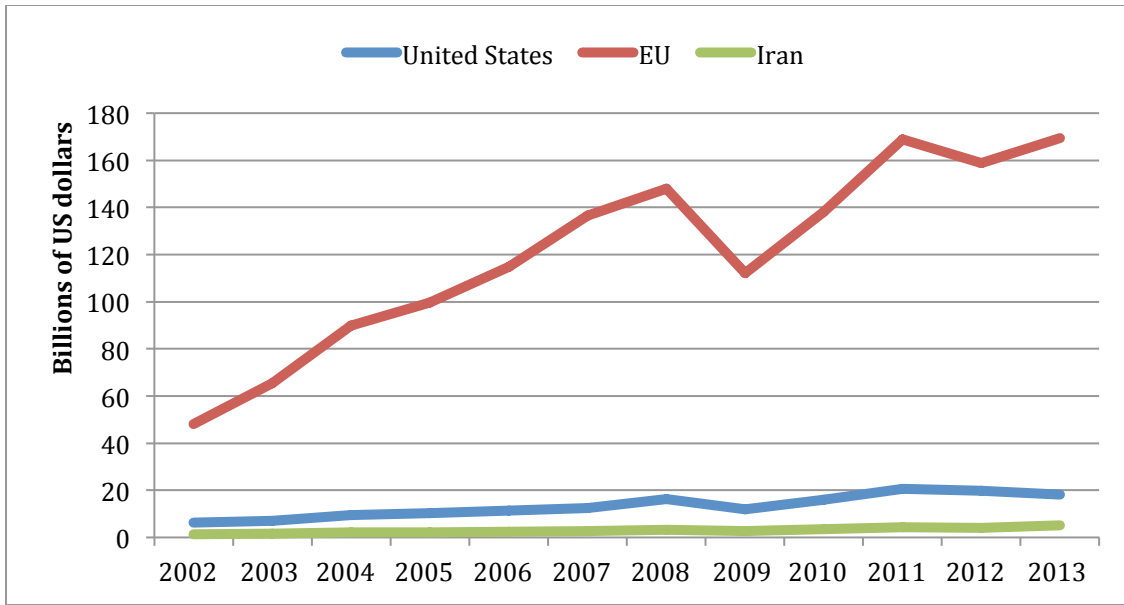
These businessmen also developed a new kind of relationship with the European countries; they collect the savings of tens of thousands of Turkish immigrants in Europe and invest these in joint ventures in Turkey.²¹⁷ Especially earlier in its terms, the AKP chose the EU as a top policy priority to win the support of the Euro-enthusiast business community and widen its scope of action in domestic politics by ensuring civilian control over the military. The government is aware that only a buoyant economy will maintain the government's popular support and the single most powerful group of support for the party, the Islamic bourgeoisie, is enthusiastic about developing economic relations with the Western world, upon which the majority of Turkey's economic performance depends.

Turkey's trade with the EU—Ankara's largest trading partner with whom Ankara has a Customs Union—also increased from \$48 billion in 2002 to \$169 billion in 2013 despite the 2008-09 financial crises and the Eurozone crisis of 2012, which represent the only dips in the bilateral trade during this period (see Figure 5). There is no evidence

suggesting that Turkey intends to give up its pursuit of EU membership or reduce economic ties with the US to increase economic cooperation with Iran despite the stalled EU membership process in the second half of the 2000s.

While Turkey was working on expanding its Customs Union with the EU and seeking a free trade agreement with the US during the first three quarters of 2014, the bilateral trade with Iran declined to \$10 billion. The declining trade was mainly because of the high tariffs each country implemented on the other despite a preferential trade agreement of 2014 that was supposed to boost trade. Around 85 percent of Turkey's import from Iran is oil and gas, which constitute around 60 percent of total bilateral trade volume and Turkey exports a variety of products, including stones, plastic and wood products.²¹⁸ Furthermore, while Turkey's trade with the EU and the US are on an upward trajectory, bilateral trade with Iran is on a downward trajectory because the political problems in the region.

Figure 5: Turkey's Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Iran in Comparison to its Total Trade with EU and US²¹⁹



Turkey’s energy deals with Iran suit the EU’s interests even though they are opposed by Washington, a point of divergence between the two pillars of the Western alliance. Turkey pledged \$2 billion for marketing and transporting Iranian natural gas and it is also planning to facilitate the export of Iranian oil via pipelines to Europe. In April 2015, Iranian Foreign Minister said Iran could serve as a reliable and steady partner for the European community in terms of natural gas needs. “Iran is on par with Russia, enjoys all the needed resources to provide gas to Europe,” he said.²²⁰ The EU strongly favors the import of Iranian energy to avoid excessive reliance on the Russian energy sources, an effort that could gain in importance following the Ukraine crisis, but Washington and Israel have opposed these moves.

Conclusion:

The preponderance of the evidence shows that Turkey’s recent rapprochement with Iran does not indicate a fundamental reorientation away from the Western alliance or interests. Turkey seeks closer diplomatic and economic relationship with Iran but its

policies largely conform to the policies of the West, namely the US and the EU to a greater extent. The interests of Ankara and Washington may seem at odds at times—bilateral relations have never been perfectly smooth in the past—but the differences between the United States and Turkey regarding Iran’s nuclear program are largely over tactics, not strategic goals. Given its dependence on the Iranian energy and Iran’s ability to step up its support for the PKK, Turkey has a strong stake in preventing relations with Iran from deteriorating too badly. Thus, Ankara will seek to retain a degree of flexibility regarding its policy toward Iran and may be hesitant to support some U.S. initiatives, which Ankara deems, conflict with broader Turkish national interests vis-à-vis Iran.²²¹ Because Ankara does not view Tehran as a major threat, it opposes any military intervention by outside powers, including the US and Israel, in its neighborhood.²²²

The evidence in the case study demonstrates that the Turkish-Iranian relations are not fundamentally strong. Turkey fears that Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons could lead to a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Despite the government’s desire to maintain good relations with Iran for its economic and security interests, Turkey and Iran continue to be rivals, rather than close partners. The two states have fundamentally different political ideologies and different national and strategic interests. They have a different vision for the region unlike the relationship between Ankara and Washington or Brussels. Ankara and Tehran are on the opposing sides on major conflicts and bilateral tension is bound to erupt from time to time. Assad’s downfall would be a serious strategic blow to Iran and could result in the growth of Turkey’s influence. The sectarian conflict between the Shia and the Sunni has drawn Turkey and Iran into the Iraqi conflict as well as in Yemen on opposite sides.

The case study evidence demonstrates that the driving factors in Turkey's pursuit of closer relations with Iran include maintaining a stable regional environment and its bilateral trade with Iran, particularly the flow of vital energy supplies.²²³ A political leadership, which is more comfortable with embracing Iran than the previous military establishment, and a public—including active business groups—which does not view Iran as a security threat and supports closer economic and cultural ties with a fellow Muslim country, have contributed to the expansion of Turkey's relationship with Iran.

2. IRAQ

Before 2002

Turkish-Iraqi relations have been marked by tension over the Kurdish militants threatening Turkey's security interests and scarce water resources. The Kurdish political entity in northern Iraq was considered one of the top threats against Turkey's national unity because it was considered a direct extension of the PKK problem inside Turkey. Ankara's Iraq policy has been a dilemma between its desire to obtain energy resources from Iraq and its security interests to root out the PKK havens across the border.²²⁴ In 1977, Turkey launched the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) to meet its hydroelectric and irrigation needs by constructing more than twenty dams on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, hurting downstream Iraq and causing a rupture in its relations with Baghdad.

During the 1991 Gulf War, Turkish Government firmly allied with the US-led forces by securing its southeastern border with Iraq and served as a base from which the allied attacks were launched into the country. In April 1991, the Kurdish refugee crisis sparked by the war forced Ankara to reckon with the Kurdish "safe haven" in northern Iraq. After the Iraq War, the PKK militants continued to commit more attacks against the Turkish military and security forces from the mountainous Iraqi border, and the Turkish armed forces undertook a brief military incursion into northern Iraq in the spring of 1997. Turkey also suspended trade and energy relations with Iraq for the better part of two decades. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein criticized Turkey's policy of permitting the US and British planes to use the Incirlik air base to strike Iraqi targets and reportedly allowed the PKK in 1998 to open an office in Baghdad.²²⁵ Iraq even threatened to attack Turkey in 1999 if Ankara continued to allow the US and Britain to use its territory to bomb

Iraq.²²⁶

Hypothesis A: *It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in the Middle East.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Iraq and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Evidence:

Turkey's opposition to the Iraq War is usually cited as a prime example of Turkey abandoning the Western alliance. Turkish parliament voted in March 2003 to reject the US request to open a northern front in Turkey to launch its troops in Iraq. The "no" vote took Washington by surprise and harmed to the US-Turkish relations. Washington had to readjust its war plans; some even claimed the victory could have been achieved much faster with more lasting results had Turkey allowed the US forces to use its territory as it did in the first Gulf War.

The US-Turkish relations were further damaged in July 2003 when the US army forces in northern Iraq detained eleven Turkish special forces commandos suspected of planning to participate in the assassination of a local Kurdish politician. The Turkish soldiers were released in forty-eight hours but they were photographed hooded and treated as prisoners by the US, causing an outcry in Turkey for injuring national pride. The Turkish General Staff spoke of "the worst crisis of confidence" between Ankara and

Washington for more than fifty years, and then Foreign Minister Gul warned, “this harm cannot be forgotten.”²²⁷ The Turks heavily criticized the US policies for creating an autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq that facilitated the PKK terrorist operations against Turkey.²²⁸ The unfounded perception that the US sided with the Kurds in Iraq at the expense of the Turkish security concerns deepened.²²⁹ These perceptions were pervasive among the Turkish public, leading to the rise of anti-Americanism in Turkey. A national survey carried out in Turkey in 2004 showed that one-third of those surveyed identified the US as “the greatest threat to the world peace.”²³⁰

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies’ vision for Iraq and its foreign policy initiatives in Iraq would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Evidence:

The structural changes, such as Turkey’s relative economic and military power and the power vacuum in the Middle Eastern geopolitics in a multipolar world, have prepared a fertile ground for Turkey to pursue a more autonomous agenda and create its own sphere of influence. Turkey had some contentious exchanges with Iraq after the AKP came to power, including amassing of Turkish troops on its border with Iraq on several occasions since 2003. In 2007, Turkey began massing forces on the Iraqi border and declared that if Washington or the Iraqi Kurdish leaders did not rein in the PKK terrorists, the Turkish army would do it itself. The Turkish parliament voted overwhelmingly to authorize a military incursion into Iraq and the US opposed it fearing that it would destabilize the relatively peaceful part of Iraq. Following several PKK attacks that killed dozens of Turks, Turkey conducted a brief military incursion into

northern Iraq in February 2008. Moreover, the rise of the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria in 2014 increased the Western criticism of Turkey for not doing enough to combat the terrorist group, calling into question Turkey's NATO membership.²³¹

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Evidence:

Turkey's trade with Iraq, specifically northern Iraq, dramatically increased during this period together with increasing diplomatic engagement. In 2008, the Turkish special representative for Iraq made an official visit to the KRG and then Foreign Minister Davutoglu paid a visit to the KRG as a part of Ankara's efforts to end its conflict with the PKK and establish closer cooperation on issues ranging from economic, strategic, and social programs. In 2009, Davutoglu met with KRG President Masud Barzani in Iraq. In that year, Turkey and the northern Iraq created the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council, which included the signing of over forty major agreements between Turkey and Iraq, created a free trade area, and lifted visa requirements, all of which have been instrumental to further the regional integration. The two countries signed an MOU for Technical, Training and Scientific Cooperation, contributing to Iraq's development and stability.²³²

While trade with the Middle East increased during this period, the level of public support for EU membership declined mainly because of the perception that the EU used double-standards against Turkey.²³³ France, Greece and Cyprus closed several chapters of the accession criteria, Germany began floating the idea of "Privileged Partnership,"

which is short of membership, and the political discourse among the right-wing European politicians began to humiliate the Turks who began to lose enthusiasm for the membership.²³⁴ According to the German Marshall Fund's 2010 Transatlantic Trends survey, the level of Turkish respondents who were still enthusiastic about EU membership dropped to 38 percent from 73 percent in 2004. Among the youth, the number opposed to EU membership dropped to 30.8 percent as the feelings have grown across Turkey that Europe has treated a successful Turkey with insufficient respect.²³⁵

Hypothesis B: *It states that recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Iraq.

Evidence:

Turkey had long-standing tension with Saddam's Iraq but it also feared a military invasion in the country that would force Saddam out of power would open the Pandora's box in Iraq, causing sectarian conflicts, increasing the PKK threat on Turkey's border, and exacerbating regional instability.²³⁶ Turks vividly remember the devastating consequences of the first Gulf War, in which Ankara fully participated. According to Turks, this included supporting 450,000 Kurdish refugees in Turkey and over \$35 billion in lost economic revenues to sanctions, and the PKK insurgency increased after the war. That's why the Turks opposed a destabilizing military invasion, especially a unilateral one, in its neighborhood even though Ankara agreed with the West at the strategic level

that Saddam Hussein was a threat to the world peace.

Ankara, prior to the war, made substantial efforts to thwart the war and maintain regional peace. It launched the Istanbul Declaration, bringing together six of Iraq's neighbors, including Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, to head off a military attack on Baghdad.²³⁷ The EU convened a special summit on Iraq and the Middle East in February 2003 to agree on a common position in the crisis and acknowledged Turkey's efforts at a peaceful solution to the problem with a declaration after the Summit.²³⁸

Turkey's lack of technical support for the Iraq war, stemming from its leadership's opposition to a military conflict next door and strong public opinion against the conflict, is hardly unique. Many European countries also opposed the war, leading France to block a UNSC vote and forcing the US to take a unilateral action against Iraq without the UN backing. This division reflects some of the differences in policies among the NATO members towards the occupation of Iraq. The fact that France and Germany opposed the attack on Iraq in early 2003 probably also influenced the decision of the Turkish policymakers who consider their EU membership agenda a priority.

Nevertheless, despite denying the use of the Turkish soil as a land base in 2003, Ankara allowed Washington to use the Turkish airbase at Incirlik to support military and logistical needs in Iraq and Afghanistan; the base has been particularly important for NATO and US power projection in the Middle East, including in the 1991 Iraq War. A subsequent Turkish Parliament vote in October 2003 approved the deployment of ten thousand Turkish troops to Iraq even though they were not deployed because of Kurdish fears of Turkey's intentions in Iraq. The US later reportedly stationed Predator drones in Incirlik and sold three Super Cobra helicopters to Turkey.²³⁹ The AKP sought to work

closely with the military in security policy, especially as it relates to Iraq to avoid any disagreements. It also made efforts to eschew a direct confrontation with Washington since the fall of Saddam.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, Turkey stepped up its cooperation with the international community in the fight against ISIS despite its initial reluctance to get involved. It maintained, however, that the cross border operations into Syria and Iraq are mainly a defensive measure to avert a potential attack from these territories on Turkey.²⁴¹

Similar to the opposition to the Iraq War elsewhere, including those in the US, Turkish people's strong opposition to the war, which played an important role in Ankara's decision, was mainly the result of Turkey's democratization efforts in the last decade. First, as a result of Turkey's political transformation under the AKP government, which included extensive political reforms and restructuring of the judiciary and civil-military relations, the military and the traditional bureaucracy saw its influence decline in the foreign policymaking.²⁴² In 2013, a milestone law was approved by the Turkish parliament, rolling back the notorious Article 35 that provided justification for the military to intervene domestically in order to protect the Turkish homeland against domestic enemies, limiting the military's domestic role. With the military taking the back seat before the crucial 1 March vote, it was clear that the classic triangle consisting of the prime minister, foreign ministry, and the military was no longer intact.

Secondly, the Turkish Parliament, which was traditionally not a key player in Turkish foreign policy, was responsible for the decision to oppose the US plans and they were responsive to the public opinion.²⁴³ An overwhelming majority of the Turkish people strongly opposed the occupation of Iraq because they feared the war would have significant economic costs similar to the first Gulf War; the lack of a clear UN mandate

also reduced the legitimacy of the war in the eyes of Turkish people. Even back in 1991, the majority of the Turks had opposed the Turkish government's support for the Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, but their voice did not count as much back then and then President Ozal's personal commitment had played a major role in Turkey's participation. Turks also worried that a military invasion would have detrimental effects on regional stability, including a refugee crisis similar to the one in 1991, and could lead to an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq.²⁴⁴

In the lead up to the crucial parliamentary vote, the government had actually negotiated with the US over how Turkey would be compensated for its cooperation so the "no" vote surprised the Americans and perhaps even the government. The parliament members had been besieged by phone calls, letters, and faxes from their constituencies, who were appealing for a "no-vote." The opinion polls, the day before the vote, showed 95 percent of the population was against a war in Iraq. On 1 March 2003, the day of voting, around 45,000 people demonstrated against a war on the streets of Ankara. The major opposition party, CHP, traditionally close to the military, was openly against allowing the US troops to transit; whereas a strong majority of AKP deputies followed Erdogan's call to support the deal, all of the Kemalist CHP voted against it.²⁴⁵

In the end, the incentives for joining, such as the reward of \$6 billion grant that could have been leveraged into \$24 billion in low cost loans and the right for Turkish troops to enter northern Iraq with the American troops did not diminish the strong opposition. Even though more deputies (264) voted in favor of the motion to approve US access than against (250), 19 abstentions meant that the motion did not receive the required majority of votes cast (267 of the 533 votes) and the motion failed.²⁴⁶ According

to the Transatlantic Survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund a year later, 71 percent of the Turkish respondents approved the government's decision not to send troops to Iraq and 72 percent disapproved President Bush's handling of international policies. Similar to the trends in Europe, 88 percent of the Turks said the war in Iraq was not worth the loss of life and other costs.

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for Iraq and its foreign policy initiatives in Iraq would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Evidence:

Despite the spike in tension after Turkey's vote, Turkish-American ties gradually began to improve because of the unity of vision between the two countries. Official visits started a year later with Erdogan's visit to the US in January 2004 and a return visit by President Bush in June on the eve of the NATO Summit in Istanbul. Two years later, Secretary of State Rice and Foreign Minister Gul signed a conceptual document titled "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership" that stressed the "strong bonds of friendship, alliance, mutual trust, unity of vision and shared set of values and ideas."²⁴⁷ The advanced strategic partnership envisioned close bilateral cooperation on a wide range of areas, such as promoting peace and stability in the broader Middle East through democracy, fostering stability and prosperity in a unified Iraq, and countering terrorism, including the fight against the PKK and its affiliates.²⁴⁸

In November 2007, Erdogan met Bush in Washington to discuss the unilateral operation that Turkey was going to carry out in northern Iraq and the meeting was fruitful

in resolving the problem as Bush characterized Turkey “America’s strategic partner” and designated the PKK as a common enemy of Iraq, Turkey and the United States. As a result, a tripartite coordination mechanism against the PKK was set up and the US promised to supply the Turkish armed forces with real time intelligence on the PKK bases and movements in the region.²⁴⁹ By December, after a series of violent PKK attacks that killed more than forty Turkish civilians and soldiers, Washington had abandoned its opposition to Turkish cross-border operations and backed Ankara as Turkey undertook air strikes and raids on PKK positions in northern Iraq.²⁵⁰ President Gul’s visit in January 2008 included discussions on various aspects of regional cooperation, including energy projects and the situation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq. Despite the high-level political interaction, however, Bush’s tenure marked the lowest support among the Turkish public for US policies with a 12 percent of the Turks favoring Washington’s recent policies when Bush left office in 2008.²⁵¹

President Obama’s major foreign policy priorities included a declarative document that included “Restoring the Strategic Partnership with Turkey” where “a close relationship with a stable, democratic, Western-oriented Republic of Turkey” was defined as “an important US national interest.”²⁵² President Obama’s visit to Turkey in April 2009 on his first overseas visit after the elections, his efforts to revise the Bush legacy in the US-Turkey relations, and his use of the term “model partnership” in describing the Turkish-American relations generated a lot of goodwill in Ankara’s eyes.²⁵³

The Turkish-US relations received a boost as the AKP’s new policy towards the Kurds reduced the tension between Ankara and Irbil. Since Washington would prefer to see Turkey, rather than Iran, as the most influential neighbor to Iraq, Ankara and

Washington's interests in the region began to converge.²⁵⁴ Ironically, the AKP government's new political approach, known as the "Kurdish opening" or "Democratic opening" to solve Turkey's PKK problem and remove the armed aspect of the Kurdish question led some in Turkey to accuse the AKP of putting into practice a US plan that allegedly aims to divide Turkey.²⁵⁵ However, the US military withdrawal from Iraq removed another source of tension and gave Turkey a greater incentive to cooperate with Washington to influence the developments in Iraq,²⁵⁶ leading to an improvement of bilateral relations in recent years.

Despite some tension with the Central Iraq due to Ankara's close ties with the KRG, Turkey's vision for a secure, stable, and economically prosperous Iraq is completely in line with the interests of the EU and the US. After the invasion, Ankara tried to play a productive role in Iraq, except for a 2008 incursion to root out Kurdish terrorists. By the mid-2000s, Turks' traditional perception of "insecurity" towards northern Iraq changed and the Turkish-Iraqi relations, especially with the KRG, have improved considerably since 2008. Turkish Government acknowledged that the Kurdish problem could not be solved by military force alone and began to view it as a major opportunity rather than a threat to the Turkish state. The contacts between Turkish civil society and business organizations and the Iraqi leaders contributed to the stability in northern Iraq. Ankara became an important partner in the reconstruction, economic development, and territorial integrity of the country in line with the US policy.²⁵⁷

Despite being Sunni, Ankara mostly refrained from playing a sectarian card in Iraq but rather sought to maintain the sectarian balance by developing ties with various Sunni and Shiite Arab groups in Iraq.²⁵⁸ It facilitated the process of bringing together the

Iraqi Sunni groups and the US authorities in Iraq, contributing to attempts to convince the Sunni groups to participate in the 2005 Iraqi elections.²⁵⁹ Davutoglu visited Irbil and Baghdad in 2010 to persuade various ethnic and sectarian groups to solve their problems in order to overcome the government crisis.²⁶⁰ In 2012, Ankara worked to overcome sectarian divisions in Iraq by inviting the Iraqi Sunni and Shiite leaders to Istanbul for a conference to seek political reconciliation and establish dialog mechanisms, but the conference never came together. Two months later, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), under the Turkish leadership, worked to reinvigorate the Mecca agreement of 2006 in which the Iraqi factions and political parties agreed to an OIC-led plan to end the political violence.

Since the advent of the Arab Spring, Turkey has played a major role in trying to promote stability and democratic values in the Middle East. Turkey emerged as the de facto protector of the Iraqi Kurds, the most pro-American element of the Iraqi population, against the Shiite-dominated government of the prime minister and its Iranian backers. Turkish government supported—though viewed skeptically by the Kemalist opposition²⁶¹—the United States’ Greater Middle East Initiative while stressing that the reforms should come from within the region and not be imposed from outside. This stance is very much in line with the attitude of the Europeans. In 2009, Turkey, Iraq, and the US established a trilateral mechanism to coordinate actions against the PKK; a year later, Turkey opened a Turkish consulate in the region. Then Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, accompanied by the ministers of Energy and Foreign Affairs, visited Irbil in 2011 and emphasized Turkey was ending its policy of denying the presence of the Kurds. The US and the EU welcomed Turkey’s constructive approach toward the KRG.

Secretary of State Rice said Turkey has built a bridge with Iraqi Kurds despite the undeniable problems that persist, and the European Commission's consecutive progress report acknowledged Turkey's efforts towards achieving national reconciliation, security, and peace in Iraq.

In addition to bilateral cooperation on trade, energy and transportation, which will be discussed below, Turkey has also been training the Iraqi security forces, organizing seminars for the Iraqi political parties, diplomats, media representatives, and health personnel. It hosted an enlarged meeting of Iraq's neighboring countries to support national reconciliation and stabilization in the country. According to Fuller, Turkey's quest for EU membership and desire to maintain good relations with US policies place at least as much of a constraint on Turkish freedom of action in northern Iraq because Ankara is well aware that the EU would not tolerate any military intervention by Turkey.²⁶²

Turkey's warmer approach toward Iraq is mainly the result of several trends in Turkey including democratization efforts—which changed the foreign policy institutions and the tools—the leadership's vision—that changed the foreign policy approach—and the economic factors, which will be explained in the next section.²⁶³ As the military lost its privileged role on foreign affairs and security issues, its hard power approach was replaced by a more balanced and pragmatic strategy, giving priority to economic interests and soft power.²⁶⁴ At the same time, the Kemalist state elite that shaped Turkish foreign policy since the end of World War II was replaced by a more conservative, religious, and nationalist elite that has a more positive attitude toward Turkey's Ottoman past.²⁶⁵ Turkey's "reengagement" with the Middle East, including Iraq, has been greatly

facilitated by the AKP's historical memory and ideas about Turkey's place in the region. Relations with Iraq is a priority in the new foreign policy vision of Ahmet Davutoglu, who has been the main architect of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East, first as the chief advisor to the prime minister, then as the foreign minister, and currently as the prime minister. Davutoglu's ideology goes beyond economic integration; he envisions Turkey pursuing a value-based foreign policy based on universal values of human rights, democracy, good governance, transparency, and rule of law.²⁶⁶ President Obama's three major principles of foreign policy—dialogue, multilateralism, and engagement—fit well with Turkey's new foreign policy vision.²⁶⁷

Davutoglu argues that Turkey's Middle East policy should be based on four principles: providing common security for the whole region, giving priority to dialogue to solve crises, economic interdependence, and cultural coexistence. In 2007, Turkey initiated the "Extended Neighboring Countries of Iraq" based on the principle of common security and dialogue. It internationalized the Iraq issue by promoting its management within the framework of the UN together with the involvement of regional powers. In a 2009 visit to Baghdad, then Foreign Minister Davutoglu said, "we do not only see Iraq as a friend and a neighbor but a great partner that we will shape our future with and a country which we should integrate with." Turkey's slogan for Iraq was "common destiny, common history, common future." By the end of 2000s, Turkey was holding joint cabinet meetings with Iraq, where the two sides debated possibilities for further integration.

Prediction 3: Turkey's bilateral trade would increase with both Iraq and the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with Iraq but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

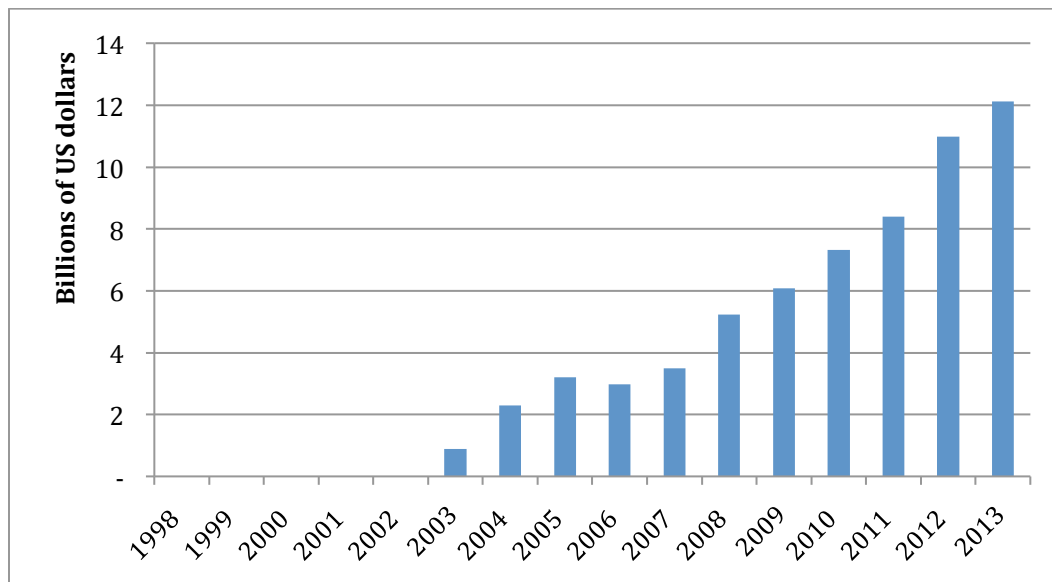
Evidence:

In parallel with the diplomatic and political developments, Turkey's economic relations with northern Iraq have also boomed, creating economic interdependence along the border. Bilateral trade with Iraq is important for Turkey's energy security and export sector. Turkey's role in the Iraqi economy is also significant as a provider of agricultural produce and consumer goods, as a source of water, as a consumer of Iraqi oil, and as a transit point for the export of Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean. Growing economic ties with Irbil helped Ankara soften its political approach to the KRG and build more cooperative relations with Irbil, contributing to the stability and economic development in northern Iraq, an important Western policy objective.

Turkey's trade volume with Iraq, including exports and imports, increased from non-existent in 2002 to \$12 billion in 2013 (see figure 6) and Iraq was Turkey's second-largest export partner in 2013 following Germany.²⁶⁸ Turkish private sector has invested large sums into the KRG and is the single most dominant economic force there. As much as 80 percent of the FDI in northern Iraq comes from Turkey and northern Iraq is an important market, where 48 percent out of the 2,300 foreign companies are Turkish, making investment that exceeded 700 million in 2013.^{269,270} Turkish construction firms have already carried out dozens of modern high-profile projects, including the construction of Kurdistan's "presidential" palace in Irbil, television networks, international airports, universities, bridges, highways, and urban infrastructure. The Turkish Airlines maintains regular flights to Kurdish cities in Iraq,²⁷¹ and around 50,000 Turkish citizens work in northern Iraq, primarily in the construction sector. Khalid Salih, Chief Advisor of the Prime Minister of the Regional Administration, expressed his

gratitude for Turkish investment in northern Iraq in 2009 by stating that, “we would like to see Turkey as an investor in our region. We are ready to give any support needed.”

Figure 6: Turkey’s Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Iraq since 1998²⁷²



Iraq also contributes to Turkey’s energy security; it is Turkey’s second-largest oil supplier, accounting for 17 percent in 2012.²⁷³ The Kirkuk-Yumurtalik oil pipeline, which has been operational since 2009 and can reach a total capacity of 71 million tons annually, is the only functioning oil pipeline from the Middle East to Turkey.²⁷⁴ When the KRG began providing various foreign companies with licenses to dig for oil in northern Iraq,²⁷⁵ Turkish State Company Turkish Petroleum (TPAO) was awarded 50 percent ownership for development, production and services in Siba and Mansuriah,²⁷⁷ and \$318 million service contract to drill 45 wells in Iraq’s supergiant Rumaila oilfield.²⁷⁸ TPAO is active in Maisan with a 15 percent share, in Badra with a 10 percent share, and in the form of a 2008 MOU to explore for gas.²⁷⁹ Turkey also supplies the region’s electricity.²⁸⁰ During a 2012 visit to Ankara, KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani met with then President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan, as well as Turkish

Energy Minister Yilmaz, and the discussions on the opening of two more border gates, and joint oil and gas explorations in the oil-rich northern Iraq dominated the meeting.²⁸¹ In January 2015, Turkey and Iraq signed new protocols and agreements on oil, natural gas and electricity following the visit of Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister to Baghdad.²⁸²

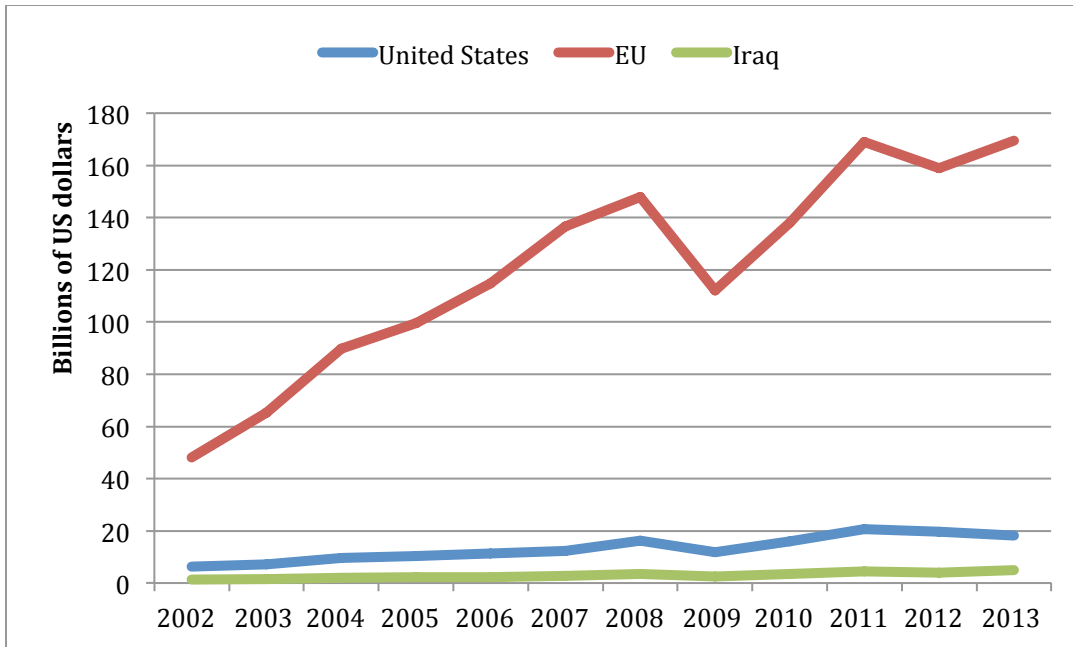
As in the case of Iran, the business lobby groups have been influential on the foreign policymaking as the business elite began to explore economic and financial opportunities in the neighboring countries, and backed the state in its efforts to stabilize the region for the sake of their business interests. The weight and influence of these bilateral economic relations increased with the powerful ties between the Iraqi Kurds and major actors on Turkey's political front; major opposition parties, including Turkey's anti-Kurdish nationalist party, are also linked with families and corporations that have economic interests in northern Iraq.²⁸³

Institutionally, these business associations can affect Turkish foreign policy in two ways. First, they create platforms for interaction with the state by bringing together business community members and policymakers in large-scale international business events or trade summits, and by facilitating business participation in state leaders' official visits, thereby creating opportunities for direct contacts with policymakers. Second, these business associations, especially the DEIK, are represented in the Joint Economic Commission meetings, which are held on a bilateral inter-governmental basis with foreign countries and they directly contribute to policy formulation.²⁸⁴ The business associations' mobilization behind the policies formulated by the state serves to provide greater legitimacy to the policies, contributing to higher trade and investment figures. In a

2004 interview, Davutoglu, then an advisor to Prime Minister Erdogan, acknowledged that Turkey's economic interdependence as a result of its export-led growth model, which requires outreach to new markets for national products and essential inputs, renders the business community a central driver for policy choices.²⁸⁵

The volume of the bilateral Turkish-Iraqi trade is a phenomenal increase, but when compared to the trade volume Turkey has with the EU, it barely makes it to the chart (see figure 7). While Turkey runs around \$6 billion trade deficit with the United States, almost 98 percent of the trade with Iraq constitutes Turkey's exports to Iraq, easing Turkey's trade deficit. Even though the increase in Turkish-US trade—which rose from \$6 billion in 2002 to \$18 billion in 2013—has not been as dramatic due to a variety of factors, including the global financial crisis, geographic distance, and the explicit US laws limiting defense trade, there is a high potential for increasing US-Turkey trade especially in military goods. The US has traditionally been the leading supplier of defense goods and services to Turkey, which persisted despite the end of formal security assistance. The Turkish military has a strong preference for US technology but the unpredictability of US arms export policies, which have linked defense trade to Turkey's policy on Cyprus and human rights concerns, led Turkey to diversify its defense-industrial relationships, with significant new purchases from Israel, Russia, Europe and China.

Figure 7: Turkey's Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Iraq in Comparison to its Trade with EU and US²⁸⁶



Conclusion:

The preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that Turkey’s policy in Iraq, northern Iraq in particular, does not indicate a fundamental reorientation away from the Western alliance. Turkey’s “no” vote on the Iraqi invasion, which borne out of strong public opposition to the war as was the case in Europe and elsewhere, was one of the most cited examples supporting the claim that “Turkey is abandoning the West.” However, Turkey’s lack of tactical support for a destabilizing military invasion in its neighborhood does not reflect Turkey’s divergence in strategic vision or interests from its Western allies on Iraq.

Following the war, Turkey has been a helpful ally for the US policy towards Iraq not just for refraining from destabilizing Iraq but also for contributing to political stability and economic development in Iraq as well as to the peace and prosperity in the region. Turkey’s policy goals and vision for the region have mostly been in line with the policies of the US and perhaps to a greater extent with the EU. The new Turkish leadership

seeks to elevate Turkey's status as a regional player with both political and economic power, but it also desires to create a stable and prosperous region that is economically interdependent with which Turkey can trade and maintain close diplomatic relationship. The US and the EU have an interest in Turkey's closer ties with northern Iraq because it would serve as a stabilizing force, contribute to the viability of the government, and aid in its economic development, especially by facilitating the transportation of northern Iraqi oil and other goods to the West.²⁸⁷

Turkey's foreign policy in Iraq highlights the importance of political leadership, public opinion, and business interests, factors that gained greater influence on foreign policymaking during the transformation of the past decade. Turkey's new leaders envision a new role for Turkey at the center, not at the periphery, a new regional order with politically stable and economically viable countries that have no conflict with Turkey, and they desire to raise Turkey's economic status to join the ranks of the top ten economies in the world. These goals are in line with the desires of the public and the businesses; despite occasional policy disagreements with the West on tactical level, these goals are largely consistent with the interests of Turkey's Western allies and international norms.

3. SYRIA

Before 2002:

Since Turkey's independence, Turkish-Syrian relations have been strained by tension resulting from several long-standing disputes. First is an entrenched dispute over the province of Hatay (Alexandretta), which France ceded to Turkey in 1939 and Syria claimed to be a part of its territory until recently. Second is Syria's implacable opposition to Turkey's control over the Euphrates waters; Syria, as a downstream nation always claimed water rights to parts of the Euphrates River that flows through Turkey.²⁸⁸ Third, the Kurdish separatist movement in southeastern Anatolia has also historically plagued the Turkish-Syrian relations. From the inception of the violence, Turkey consistently argued that Syria was the organization's major backer, and accused Damascus of supporting the PKK to leverage this "water controversy" while Syria accused Ankara of violating Syria's water rights with the development of dams for the Southeastern Anatolia Project.²⁸⁹

Bilateral relations deteriorated further in the late 1990s when Syria sought to overcome the impasse over the water issues by openly supporting the PKK and signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement with Greece, agreeing to allow the Greek aircraft to use its air bases in a conflict with Turkey in 1995. In turn, Turkey signed defense cooperation agreements with Israel to coerce Syria into dropping its support for the PKK. In that year, Syria, Egypt, and the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council met in Syria and issued the Damascus Declaration criticizing Turkey's water policies.²⁹⁰ In early 1998, Syrian Ambassador to the US raised the sensitive issue of the province of Hatay and Turkish authorities protested at what they considered to be an irredentist claim from Syria

directed at Turkey's territorial integrity. In September 1998, Turkish Chief of General Staff argued that because of Syrian support for the PKK, there actually was an undeclared war going on between Turkey and Syria. The Turkish-Syrian tension reached a crisis point in October 1998 when Turkey threatened to invade Syria if Damascus did not cease supporting the PKK. Syria gave into the threat, expelling the PKK leader Ocalan and closing the PKK training camps.

Hypothesis A: *It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in the Middle East.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Syria and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Evidence:

Turkish rapprochement with Syria in the mid-2000s was not in line with the US policy to isolate Damascus.²⁹¹ Syrian President Bashar al-Assad visited Ankara in January 2004—the first trip by a Syrian president since its independence in 1946—and the Syrian leadership recognized the international legal framework accepting Turkish borders and Iraq's territorial integrity.²⁹² In December 2004, then Prime Minister Erdogan reciprocated by visiting Damascus to resolve the border disputes with Syria and sign a bilateral free-trade agreement.²⁹³ Turkish president visited Syria also in 2005 at a time when Syria was under American and European pressure to withdraw its troops from

Lebanon. A Turkish observer noted that Turkey's clearing of the nearly 450-mile long, 1500-foot wide minefield, which was planted at the height of the Cold War in 1952 between the two countries, is the best evidence of Ankara's changing attitude towards Damascus.²⁹⁴

With the rise of the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS) in 2014, Turkey received criticism from the West for not doing enough to combat the terrorist group as it swept across Syria and Iraq and seized nearly half of the strategic border town of Kobani. Turkey's reluctance to join the anti-ISIS alliance unless it establishes a no-fly zone and a safe haven on the Syrian side of the border and air strikes are extended to include targets linked to the regime of the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, strained relations with its NATO allies.²⁹⁵²⁹⁶

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies' vision for Syria and its foreign policy initiatives in Syria would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Evidence:

Turkey pursued closer diplomatic and economic ties with Syria when the US characterized the country as a "rogue state" and tried to isolate it diplomatically and economically. The number of Turkish tourists to Syria increased from almost nothing in the late 1990s to nearly 250,000 in 2007. Even when the Arab Spring-sparked protests took hold and the West began to shun Damascus, Turkey had maintained communication with Syria, placing Ankara at odds with the Western policy and leading the international media to condemn Turkey's lack of respect for international norms.

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading

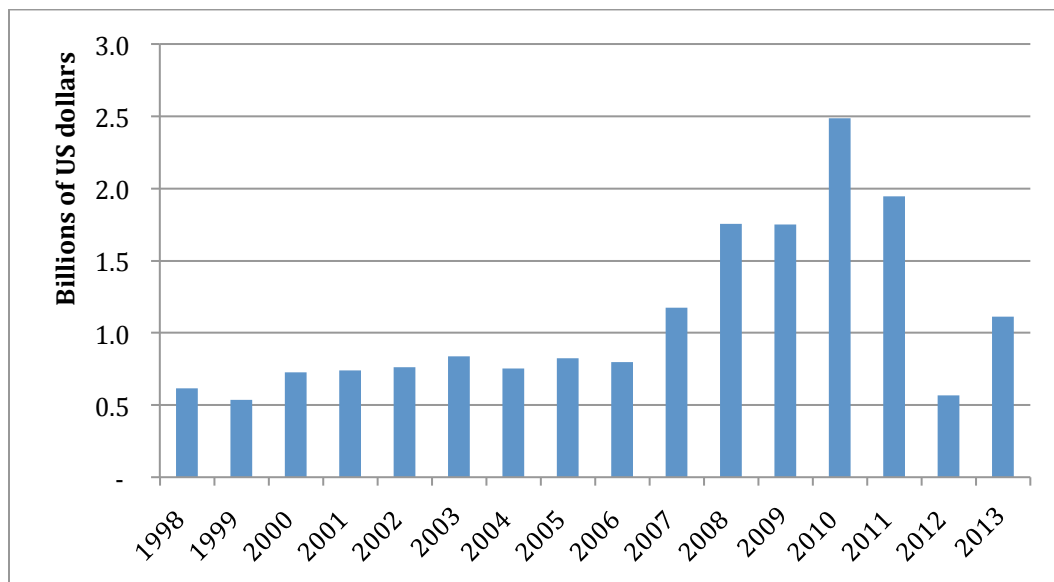
blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Evidence:

Turkey's increased economic ties with its southern neighbors, including Syria, in the mid-2000s is often highlighted as Turkey giving up on EU membership, especially because of Turkey's efforts to include Syria in the free trade area in the region. In 2004, then Prime Minister Erdogan traveled to Syria, where he signed economic and security agreements, followed by a presidential visit. In 2006, Ankara and Damascus agreed to establish a free-trade zone and the countries established a joint company for oil exploration.²⁹⁷ Between 2005 and 2007, the Syrian authorities approved more than thirty Turkish investment projects in the country with a total value of over \$150 million.

Bilateral trade significantly increased after the Free Trade Agreement that went into effect in 2007 (see figure 8). Then Prime Minister Erdogan defined Turkey's initiative to create a free trade zone and remove visa requirement between Turkey, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon as the "Samgen" process (Sam means Damascus in Turkish), implying a Turkish desire to establish an EU-like institution in the Middle East with Turkey in the leading position.²⁹⁸ These four countries desiring closer economic and cultural integration formed the "Levant Quartet" in December 2010. Davutoglu described the lifting of visa restrictions as "the first step of turning economic cooperation into economic unity."

Figure 8: Turkey's Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Syria since 1998²⁹⁹



Hypothesis B: *It states that recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West. Specifically:*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Syria.

Evidence:

Turkey's independent and controversial policy of embracing Syria after the AKP came to power had its limits. Even though its initial policy toward Syria was at odds with the US policy, Ankara made a 180-degree turn when the violence erupted in the country, bringing its policy closer to the Western line and showed that Turkey is still bound by its responsibilities as a NATO member.³⁰⁰ When the turmoil in Syria began, Turkey's initial response was to try to convince the Assad regime to reform. Then Foreign Minister Davutoglu visited Damascus over 60 times since 2003. Assad repeatedly made

personal promises to both Davutoglu and Erdogan, who had embraced him as a “brother,” but failed to deliver. As Damascus began suppressing public protests, Erdogan responded angrily to what he felt was a personal betrayal by stating that Turkey had lost all trust and confidence in the Syrian leadership and Ankara began to take a harder stance against the Assad regime. It lent military and logistical support to external, armed opposition forces, such as the Syrian National Council of resistance, which took up residence in Turkey.³⁰¹ Ankara began to apply the sanctions that the EU had imposed beforehand, closed the land border with Syria, and provided safe haven for not only the non-violent opposition movements, but also the Free Syrian Army.³⁰²

Turkey stopped short of a direct military action, however, and initially discouraged western-armed intervention.³⁰³ External factors such as the Arab Spring that took hold in the Arab countries played a major role in changing Turkish foreign policy towards Syria. In the face of the impasse in Syria, Ankara increasingly felt it must “go with the tide of history” in the uprising, as it did towards the developments in the other countries of the Arab Spring, and worked to hasten Assad’s collapse. Turkey’s reaction actually went beyond the Western reaction in ending the Assad regime; it began facilitating heavier arming of the Syrian opposition with external weapons sources and urged the West to do the same.

However, as Turkey swung to the other side of the pendulum, the West began to scale down its position and dropped its plans for outright military action to remove Assad. This change in Western policy once again left Ankara increasingly isolated in the project of removing Assad from power. Furthermore, the AKP faced growing domestic opposition to its Syrian policies as the Syrian refugee flow into Turkey reached 1 million

in 2014.³⁰⁴ When asked whether they would support military intervention in Syria in 2013, 72 percent of Turkish people said Turkey should stay out entirely, a 15-percentage point increase from 2012, similar to the opposition from the EU and the US at 72 percent and 62 percent, respectively. At that point, Turkey also scaled down its ambitions in line with the Western policy, though it maintained the rhetoric about its desire to end the Assad regime. In a 2012 downing of a Turkish reconnaissance plane, possibly by a Syrian anti-aircraft fire, Turkish government decided to invoke the Article 4 in the NATO treaty, which provides for urgent consultations if a member considers its security interests are threatened. Turkey secured a very favorable NATO statement condemning Syria's action and expressing strong support for Turkey. As Russia and China blocked strong UN Security Council actions against Syria, the interests of Ankara and Washington began to converge.³⁰⁵

Turkey's reluctance to get involved in the ISIS is a tactical difference in approach rather than in strategic vision. Turkey vehemently condemns the ISIS—Erdogan likened it to cancer in the Muslim community—and wants to root out the ISIS terrorists. However, Ankara argues that the root cause of the problem lies within the Syrian regime and the regime's violent suppression of the people provided breathing room for terrorists, leading to the creation of the ISIS. Thus, Turkey insisted that the coalition forces should first establish a no-fly zone and a safe haven on the Syrian side of the border and air strikes should include targets linked to the Syrian regime. Turkey did step up its cooperation with the international community on the ISIS further, but it maintained that the cross border operations into Syria and Iraq would be mainly a defensive measure to avert an attack from these territories on Turkey because direct involvement in Syria

would have been politically unpopular especially before the June 2015 elections.³⁰⁶

Turkey is more vulnerable to a spill over from the crisis than the other allies because it shares a 900 km border with Syria, experiences regular direct spill over from the conflict, and it also risks retaliation from the ISIS, which has a network inside Turkey. For example, an ISIS attack on Turkish tourist resorts would devastate Turkey's tourist economy, which accounts for 10 percent of its national economy.

Despite refusing to give unconditional support to the efforts that do not include the removal of Assad, Turkey allowed the use of its air space, opened up humanitarian assistance corridors to northern Syria, and cooperated with the allies on information sharing. Ankara has also contributed to the international humanitarian efforts by accepting the Syrian refugees; it claims to have taken nearly 1 million Syrian refugees so far and it bears the bulk of the burden in terms of their necessities.³⁰⁷ The October 2014 motion at the parliament gave permission for cross-border military operations into Iraq and Syria and for foreign troop deployments on Turkish soil, allowing the US-led coalition to use its territory to launch attacks. The US and Turkey signed a deal to train and equip moderate Syrian rebels as a part of a program that aims to prepare at least 5,000 rebels a year to fight against ISIS.³⁰⁸³⁰⁹

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for Syria and its foreign policy initiatives in Syria would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Evidence:

Even though Washington and Brussels had disagreements with Ankara for maintaining its close relations with Syria as the protests broke out and later for strongly

advocating military action against Syria when the regime began to kill people en masse, both the Western countries and Turkey have the same vision for Syria; they both desire a stable, economically prosperous, and democratic Syria that is at peace with its neighbors and that can contribute to the regional security. Turkey believed closer ties with Damascus would help Ankara, at least until the violence broke out, to nudge Syria towards greater reform and compliance with the Western demands such as ceasing support for terrorist networks in the region and improving relations with Israel. For example, during the 2005 meetings in Damascus, then Foreign Minister Gul and President Sezer emphasized the need for domestic reform, argued for the withdrawal of the Syrian forces from Lebanon and sought assurance that the international terrorists do not enter Iraq from the Syrian territory.³¹⁰

Turkey had also made significant efforts to improve its relations with Syria prior to the Arab Spring. After the signing of Adana Accords in 1998, Syria had closed down the PKK training camps and both countries agreed to establish a direct phone link and appoint special representatives for diplomatic missions. Starting in 2003, Davutoglu began to court Syria, pulled troops back from the borders, removed the vast minefields in the border regions, lifted visa requirements, and opened up the country to increased trade. Between 1999 and 2010, 51 protocols were signed on trade, development, and cultural exchanges based on the slogan of “common destiny, history and future.”³¹¹ Davutoglu said, “we must respect the borders between us but we also have to diminish the meaning of those borders and build new regional orders. Have there ever been as many wars between Turks and Arabs as there have been between France and Germany? If those two countries are erasing their borders without it being considered some kind of imposed

hegemony, why should it be different in our case? Our economic and cultural borders will extend beyond our political borders, but this is a function of geography, it's not some kind of hegemony.”³¹²

Turkey's foreign policy initiatives to promote peace in the region by acting as a mediator until the violence broke out in Syria, reinforce the Western interests and values in the region. Turkey also sought to mediate between Syria and Israel, and Syria and Iraq.³¹³ Ankara made significant efforts to broker Syrian-Israeli dialogue beginning in 2004. Four rounds of indirect talks were ultimately held, but claimed Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza cut off the fifth round. Even though the mediation brought no results in resolving the conflict, it showed Turkey as a trustworthy player in the region both to the Arabs and to Israel until 2009.

Turkey played a mediator role in Syria's troubled relations with Iraq after a series of bombs exploded in Baghdad's Green Zone in 2009. The Maliki government blamed the Syrian government for the bombings, held Damascus responsible for supporting terrorist activities and destabilizing Iraq, and recalled the Iraqi ambassador. Davutoglu traveled to Baghdad and Damascus to communicate their message to each other. In the period that followed, Turkey brought the foreign ministers of Iraq and Syria together in Istanbul. Turkey not only mediated the crisis, it also invited both countries to establish a tripartite border security mechanism aimed at combating the PKK, al-Qaeda, and the Ba'athist forces in Iraq.³¹⁴ Turkey again attempted to mediate between the Syrians and Saudis over a micro-crisis involving the quasi-cancellation of a state visit by the king of Saudi Arabia to Syria in September 2009 due to tensions between Damascus and Riyadh. With the help of Turkey's last minute interventions, the visit took place in October 2009.

Syrian President al-Assad said in an interview that it had “full trust in Turkey,” and believed that Turkey could “speak for them.”³¹⁵

Turkey even worked with the EU as a channel for a Syrian-EU dialog. The EU saw Damascus as a possible key to future peace settlement and liberal economic change in the Middle East; Ankara and the EU shared a vision that economic openings in the Middle Eastern states could lead inevitably towards a gradual liberalization of the political order and encouraged Syria to develop new economic and legal institutions in conformity with EU trade practices. Davutoglu participated in then French President Sarkozy’s meeting with Assad, Javier Solana, and the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security, in Damascus in January 2009. During the joint press conference of Sarkozy and Assad, Sarkozy expressed his appreciation for Davutoglu’s active contribution to the process.³¹⁶ According to the progress report of 2006 for Turkey, the level of harmonization of Turkey with the EU in terms of foreign and security policy stood around 96 percent. The report mentioned Turkey’s participation in the UN, NATO, and EU-led operations and highlighted the examples of harmonization in the policies towards Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan as positive developments.³¹⁷ On Syria, Turkey seems to be more closely following the EU line,³¹⁸ since the EU’s policy towards Syria differs from that of the US, which branded Syria as a “rogue state.”

Turkey’s foreign policy in Syria was heavily influenced by Davutoglu’s new vision for Turkey’s role in the Middle East. Davutoglu defined the historical tense relations with Syria as a costly luxury for the two states that share such a long common border, pointing to major opportunities awaiting vigorous bilateral development, mostly in water, agriculture, trade, and communications. Davutoglu’s “zero problems with

neighbors” principle, which aims to erase the perception of a country “surrounded by enemies” that had permeated the Turkish psychology and become the bedrock of the security state. Davutoglu sharply challenged the traditional security-based and western “realist” school of Turkish foreign policy that holds nation states are driven primarily by “interests and threats posed by enemies.” He tried to resolve existing bilateral disputes with neighbors, exemplified by its efforts to launch high-level political dialogue with Syria and build stronger ties with the KRG in Iraq. He sought to court different alliances to avoid overdependence on any single alliance and prioritize dialogue and cooperation over coercion and confrontation.

Davutoglu’s policy also envisions creating economic interdependence with the surrounding countries, which has been instrumental in Turkey’s pursuit of economic relations with the Middle Eastern countries. By establishing interdependence in the region through free movement of goods and people, Davutoglu’s expectation is not only the creation of a venue for Turkey’s exports and business activities but also the achievement of regional peace.³¹⁹³²⁰ Since the second half of 2009, Turkey established high-level strategic council meetings with Syria where bilateral political, economic and security issues were discussed and abolished visa requirements with Syria.

Davutoglu’s principle on the balance between security and democracy helps explain Ankara’s changing foreign policy in Syria that seemed inconsistent to many in the outside world. According to Davutoglu, Turkey pursued a three-stage diplomacy in Syria based on security concerns and respect for freedom. It first initiated bilateral engagement with the regime and worked hard to convince it to introduce reforms. When it could not convince the administration to stop the violence and implement reforms,

Ankara severed ties with the Baath regime. In late April 2012, then Foreign Minister Davutoğlu said, "peace and stability can be restored in Syria, not with the Baath regime but with a new political system which takes its legitimacy from the people."³²¹³²² After September 2013, Turkey launched a regional initiative in concert with the Arab League to resolve the conflict; when that failed, it moved to the international stage and supported the resolution presented to the UNSC, which was vetoed by Russia and China. After the failure of a UNSC resolution and a range of initiatives that demanded President Assad to delegate his authority, Ankara amplified its anti-Assad rhetoric and has been at the center of humanitarian efforts and arming the Free Syrian Army.

Prediction 3: Turkey's bilateral trade would increase with both Syria and the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with Syria but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

Evidence:

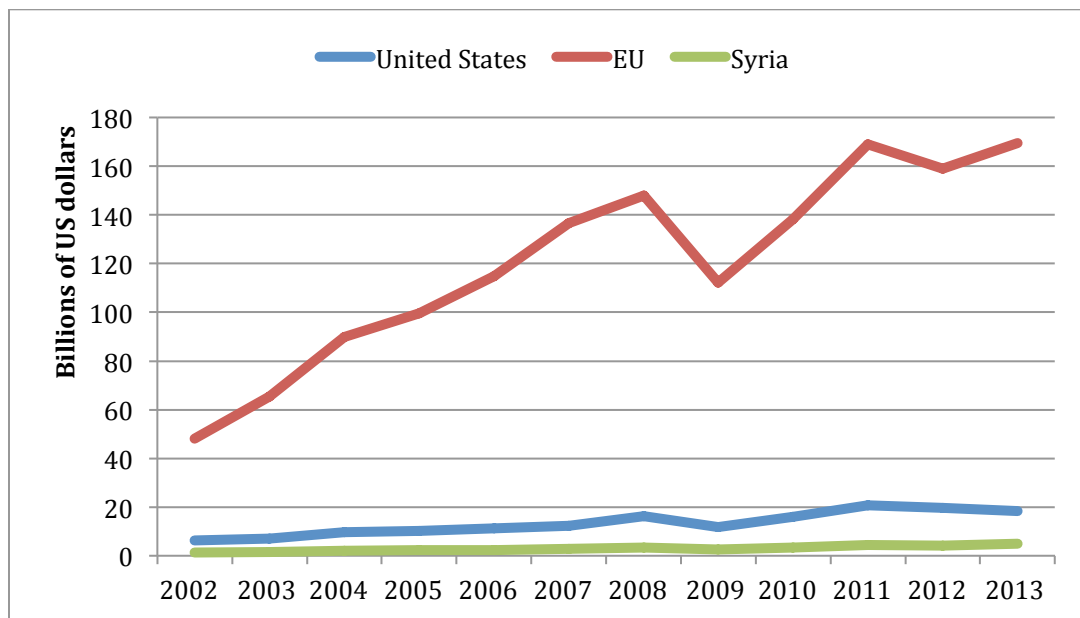
Turkey's trade ties with Syria increased during the AKP's tenure, consistent with the overall increase in trade from \$1 billion in 2002 to \$2.5 billion in 2010, but the bilateral trade also declined back to where it originally was at \$1 billion in 2013 after the turmoil in Syria, reflecting the deteriorating diplomatic relations between the two countries.³²³ Around 94 percent of Turkey's trade with Syria was Turkish exports, including agricultural products, machinery and consumer goods, contributing to Turkey's current account surplus. Turkey viewed Syria as a gateway for Turkish goods to the Gulf and Syria saw Turkey as a gateway to the EU.³²⁴

Turkey's politically active business associations also played a role in increasing trade and investment in Syria by actively participating in trade negotiations and in the

promotion of other contacts with their Middle Eastern counterparts. Most of AKP’s state visits began to be organized by the business community and many businessmen accompanied state leaders at their official visits. Turkey’s increased investment in Syria could explain its initial intransigence to follow the Western lead in criticizing Syria’s domestic policy, providing Ankara with disincentives to sever ties with Damascus.

Even when the bilateral trade was at its peak, the trade volume between Turkey and Syria was still minimal compared to Turkey’s trade with the EU and to a lesser extent the US. (see figure 9). When Turkey reversed its policy of seeking economic interdependence with Syria, the bilateral trade tumbled and free trade regime was annulled. Ankara imposed sanctions, which includes a 30 percent tax on products coming from Syria, a freeze of Syrian government assets in Turkey, and a ban on financial transactions with Syria’s Central Bank, to the detriment of Turkish businesses.

Figure 9: Turkey’s Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Syria in Comparison to its Total Trade with EU and US³²⁵



Conclusion:

The evidence on Turkey's foreign policy in Syria highlights the challenges stemming from the Arab Spring to Turkey's regional policy of pursuing close diplomatic and economic ties with neighboring countries. It also showcases some differences in the way Ankara and the US approaches to change a regime that is difficult to deal with. Turkey's initial approach to Syria, which was to keep close diplomatic, political, and economic ties and use that leverage to nudge Damascus toward reform, differed from the containment policy of the West, particularly the US, Israel, and to a lesser extent the EU. Ankara thought it could replicate the policies it pursued elsewhere and achieve zero problems with all its neighbors and create economic interdependence, which it hoped would lead to stability in the region.

The Arab Spring changed its calculus, however, forcing Turkey to make a choice, and despite its initial hesitation, Turkey chose to stay on the side of its Western allies and the international consensus in condemning Assad because Turkey shares the Western vision for Syria at the strategic level. Having placed its entire stakes in the opposition, Ankara's policy went even further than the Western stance and demanded a regime change. That approach is not against the Western interests since the US and the EU also called Assad to step down and to respect the wishes of his people. Despite serious security risks, Turkey also agreed to work with the coalition forces in its fight against the ISIS and provided critical logistical and military support. Thus, the majority of the evidence indicates that Turkey's changing foreign policy actions in Syria does not demonstrate a fundamental reorientation away from the Western alliance or interests. It

does indicate, however, that Turkey would not shy away from taking a more independent approach than the West when its national interests are at stake.

In terms of the drivers of Turkey's foreign policy in Syria, Turkish leaders' vision for Turkey's role in the Middle East and commercial interests, which are enhanced by positive public sentiment, seem to be the main factors affecting foreign policy decisions in Syria. Turkish people's positive view of the Syrians—a sizeable Syrian Turkish population lives in southern Turkey—and commercial links, which provide livelihood for those living near the Syrian border, played an important role in accelerating the initial warming of bilateral ties. Ultimately, it was the AKP leaders' vision—getting Turkey out of the “hostile neighborhood” mentality and creating an economically interdependent and stable neighborhood in order to elevate Turkey's status as an influential regional player—that steered the foreign policy direction in Syria.

4. ISRAEL

Before 2002:

Turkey was a refuge for Europe's persecuted Jews in the 1940s and the first predominantly Muslim state to recognize the state of Israel in 1949. It then pursued close relations with Israel as a NATO member and the US ally. Mindful of its policy of non-involvement and wary of reaction from the Arab world, Ankara tried to maintain an uneasy balance between Israel and the Arab states in the 1960s, but despite immense pressure from the Arab governments, Ankara never considered breaking relations with Israel completely. Alignment with Israel, largely resulting from a redefinition of Turkish regional security concerns, constituted one of the most important aspects of the post-Cold War Turkish foreign policy.

However, bilateral tension flared up from time to time—after the Suez War in 1956 and when Israel declared East Jerusalem its capital in 1980—leading Turkey to downgrade its level of diplomatic representation. However, bilateral relations dramatically improved in the 1990s. In 1991, Ankara upgraded its relations with Israel to the ambassadorial level and Turkey and Israel signed a tourism agreement in 1992, followed by a framework agreement in 1993 comprising of economic cooperation and educational exchanges. Turkey's tourism sector boomed with 300,000 Israeli tourists visiting Turkey every year. In 1994, Turkish prime minister visited Israel and the two countries signed cooperation agreements in the field of environment, telecom, and drug trafficking.³²⁶ Both sides also discussed a free trade agreement, which was ultimately signed in 1996 and came into force in in 1997. Another agreement on mutual

encouragement and protection of investment was signed in 1996 and entered into force in 1998, and the Turkish-Israeli Business Council actively contributed to the flourishing bilateral trade which increased by 600 percent between 1990 and 1998.

As the tension with the Middle Eastern countries increased, Turkish policymakers, especially the military, believed that strategic cooperation with Israel would solve their problems by posing a deterrent to Syria and Iran.³²⁷ The framework for the Turkish-Israeli security cooperation was sealed in two agreements; the Military Training and Cooperation Agreement signed in February 1996 in which Turkey and Israel agreed to conduct joint training including air force training missions in each other's airspace.³²⁸ The second agreement was signed in August 1996 and provided for technology transfer, training, intelligence sharing, and regular biannual "strategic dialogue" meetings between the two countries' security and foreign policy officials.³²⁹ Turkey, Israel, and the US held a trilateral search-and-rescue exercise off the coast of Israel in 1998 and again in 1999 and this exercise became a symbol of deepening strategic alignment between Ankara and Jerusalem, drawing angry protests from Iran and some Arab countries. As a result of the close strategic relations, Israel became a major source of arms import for Turkey and Ankara was able to enlist the help of the pro-Israel lobby and Jewish American organizations in the US.³³⁰

Hypothesis A: *It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in the Middle East.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Israel and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Evidence:

Turkey's more critical position toward Israel and occasional harsh rhetoric criticizing Israel's policy in the Palestinian territories led to a deterioration of its relations with Tel Aviv, which also negatively affected its relations with the West. Erdogan and Gul have occasionally spoken out sharply against Israel's policies toward the Palestinians, particularly under the right-wing governments of Ariel Sharon and later Ehud Olmert. In 2004, Erdogan said Israel's assassination of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin was a "terrorist act," and postponed his visit to Israel in reaction.³³¹ A few months later, Erdogan criticized Israel's policy in Gaza, describing it as "state-sponsored terrorism." Turkey also supported the Palestinian bid for statehood with non-member status in the UN.

When Washington and Tel Aviv were trying to isolate Hamas, which they labeled as a terrorist organization, the AKP government issued an unofficial invitation to Khalid Mashal, a leading Hamas leader, to visit Ankara.³³² Representatives of the American Jewish Committee called the meeting a "tragic mistake" that would have "serious repercussions not only among the governments of Western democracies but the Jewish community in the United States and around the world and with those friends of Turkey."³³³ When Hamas won the Palestinian election in 2006, Turkish prime minister took a position different than that of his EU and US counterparts and recognized Hamas as the legitimate government of the Palestinians, arguing that the international

community must respect the Palestinians' decision.

Relations with the US further deteriorated in 2006 when Turkish leaders denounced Washington's failure to call for a cease-fire during Israel's war with Hizballah in Lebanon. Erdogan said that it was "unthinkable to remain silent in the face of this new understanding of power, this new culture of violence which defiles the sense of justice," and that the war was "fuelling violence and further strengthening terrorism." Then Foreign Minister Gul warned that US support for Israel's actions could turn Turks and others in the Middle East against the US.³³⁴ "Moderate liberal people are becoming anti-American and anti-EU," Gul warned.³³⁵ The AKP did not write Hamas and Hizballah off as "terrorists" but instead insisted upon dialog, arguing for the need to include these actors as indispensable political elements in a regional solution, much to the dismay of Washington and Tel Aviv.³³⁶ At the Davos World Economic Forum in 2009, immediately after Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, Erdogan accused Israel of crimes against humanity. In 2009, Davutoglu cancelled his visit to Israel when he understood he would not be allowed to enter Gaza or meet Hamas officials during the visit.

Ankara cancelled its participation of a joint NATO manoeuvre in Turkey with Israel's participation in reaction to Israel's blockade of transfer of materials to build homes in Gaza. The diplomatic relations became tense when the Israeli Deputy Ministry of Foreign Affairs Danny Ayalon publicly humiliated Turkey's ambassador to Israel in early 2010. The relations fell to an all-time low with the Mavi Marmara incident of May 2010 when an international left-wing private relief flotilla set sail from Turkey, with the government's knowledge and with the intent of delivering food and medicines to Gaza to peacefully break the Israeli blockade of Gaza. Israeli commandos attacked the flotilla on

the high seas, leading to the death of nine Turks.³³⁷ In late 2011, Turkey downgraded its diplomatic relations to the second-secretary level in protest against Israel's refusal to apologize or pay compensation for the deaths of eight Turkish citizens and a Turkish American. Ankara also froze or cancelled military contacts with Israel. It vetoed Israel's request to open an office in NATO and refused to permit the data gathered at NATO anti-ballistic missile radar stations on Turkish soil to be passed to Israel.³³⁸ Although, Israel's decision to relax its blockade on Gaza, allowing the transfer of some basic necessities, and Netanyahu's US-brokered apology to Turkey in March 2013 mollified some of the tension, the new violence in Gaza in fall 2014 triggered public protests in Turkey, leading Israel to evacuate all non-essential diplomatic staff from Turkey.

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies' vision for Israel and its foreign policy initiatives in Israel and Palestinian territories would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Evidence:

The AKP government pursued a more critical line towards Israel while maintaining a more conciliatory approach to the Palestinians, which are not in line with the Western policies. Several factors, including the changes in domestic institutions, prevailing attitudes in public opinion, and the AKP leaders' new foreign policy doctrine are mainly responsible for this policy behavior. First of all, the military, which was the strongest advocate in Turkey for closer ties with Israel, has seen its role in foreign policy diminish since the AKP came to power. For the military, Israel represented an "anti-Islamic" symbol, a source of valuable high-tech military transfers, and a facilitator of access to the US Congress. Israeli arms sales to Turkey exceeded \$1 billion from 2000 to

2004, and the two countries highly institutionalized the military and strategic consultation.³³⁹

Turkish public has respect for Israel's democracy and military success but it has greater sympathies towards the Palestinians and expresses anger at Israel's policy towards the Palestinians. Most Turks readily distinguish between Turkey's 120,000 Jewish population, which they have a high degree of tolerance and respect toward, and the state of Israel, for which they have no popular affection.³⁴⁰ In a 2000 opinion poll, 63 percent of Turks stated that Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque were of importance to them and 60 percent demanded a more active Turkish role in defense of the Palestinian people. The Jerusalem issue in Turkey is not simply an "Islamist issue" but also an abiding part of Turkey's historical, religious, cultural, and emotional ties with Jerusalem.³⁴¹ In a 2004 poll within Turkey, two-thirds of those surveyed believed that Turkey should side with the Palestinians while only 3 percent favored siding with Israel.³⁴² In a 2007 study conducted by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, Turks viewed Palestinians more favorably as a nationality than any other national group at 47 percent while only 5 percent viewed Israel with favor.

The Turkish leaders increasingly capitalized on the people's pro-Palestinian attitude in order to derive electoral benefits.³⁴³ Two months before the local elections of March 2009, Erdogan used the annual World Economic Forum platform in Davos to further his domestic political goals by pressing Israeli President Shimon Peres on the Gaza War. When Erdogan returned to Turkey, thousands mobilized at the airport to greet him and hail him as a leader that scolded Peres and Israel. Lebanon's *As Safir* newspaper wrote, "Erdogan proved once again that he is more Arab and human than most Arab

rulers.”³⁴⁴ When Turkey cancelled joint military exercises with Israel in October 2009, Erdogan cited public opinion as the reasoning behind this decision stating that his decision was “in accordance with his people’s conscience.”³⁴⁵

The AKP’s regional policy of zero problems with neighbors also led to a shift in its relations with Israel where close security ties with Tel Aviv was no longer essential to Turkey’s foreign policy. Ankara’s policy of maintaining peaceful relations with neighbors considerably decreased the Syrian and Iraqi threats to Turkey and reduced Israel’s strategic value to Ankara, especially in late 2000s. Erdogan’s sense of self-greatness as a Muslim leader probably also played a role in shaping foreign policy decisions, especially as the decisionmaking in Ankara gradually began to be centered around his personality. As a savvy politician deeply attuned to the hearts and minds of the Anatolian heartland, Erdogan’s espousal of a more critical rhetoric toward Israel since its Gaza operations and his sensationalized eruption at Davos gained him subsequent outburst of support both in Turkey and in the Arab world.³⁴⁶

Erdogan’s fiery rhetoric is not confined to Israel, however. Beyond the Middle East, Erdogan has the reputation of speaking brashly to arouse populist support on issues as diverse as the Armenian residents in Turkey, the Kurdish question, the H1N1 flu, and most recently the interest rates.³⁴⁷ Anti-Israeli rhetoric is not confined to Erdogan either. The AKP government’s immediate predecessor, a staunchly secular government, was also quite harsh in its objections to the Israeli policy towards the Palestinians. In a joint press conference in Ankara in 2001, the left-wing Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit rejected Israeli Prime Minister Sharon’s claim that the Palestinian leader Arafat supports terror. In 2002, Ecevit described Sharon’s policy towards the Palestinians as “genocide.”³⁴⁸

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Evidence:

Turkey already had a free trade agreement with Israel since the late 1990s and since then the bilateral trade steadily increased despite deteriorating diplomatic relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv (see figure 10). Though at a much lower volume, Turkish trade with the Palestinians also increased during this period (see figure 11). Turkey signed a free trade agreement with the Palestinian authorities in 2004, but the trade volume only reached \$76 million in 2013, almost all of which was Turkish exports of agricultural products, machinery, and consumer goods.

Figure 10: Turkey's Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Israel since 1998³⁴⁹

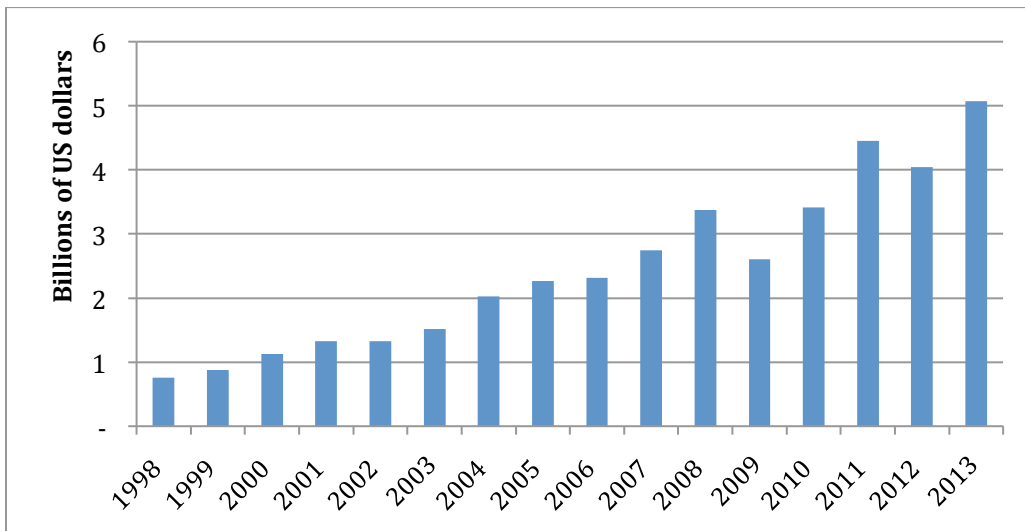
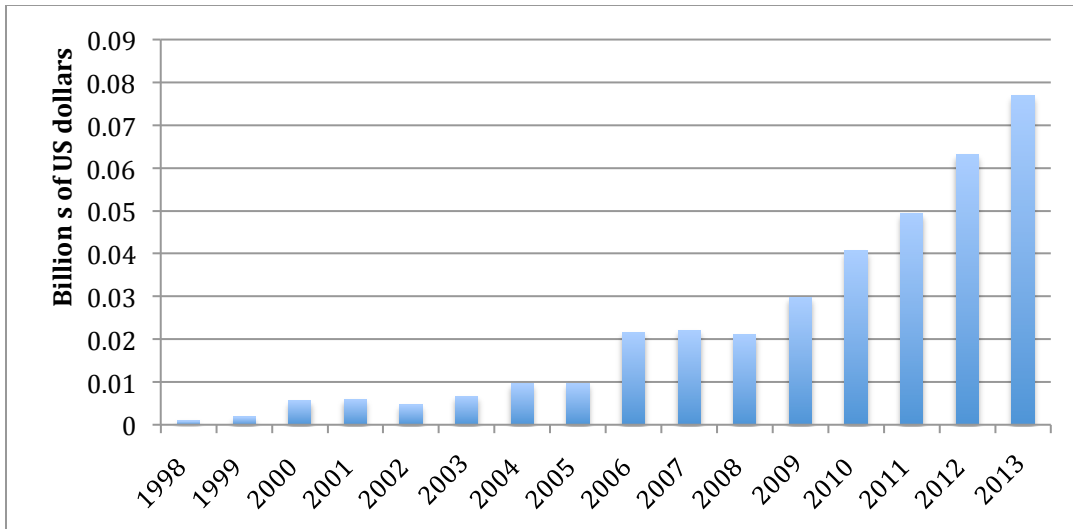


Figure 11: Turkey's Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with the Palestinian Territory since 1998³⁵⁰



Hypothesis B: *It states that recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey’s foreign policy in the Middle East does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.*

Prediction 1: **Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Israel.**

Evidence:

The AKP government has asserted some independence from the West, especially from the US, in its policies towards the Israeli and Palestinian conflict and at times defied the US policy by refusing to cooperate with Israel on defense-related matters. However, at the fundamental level, Ankara’s position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains in line with the Western policies. Despite bilateral tension and harsh rhetoric towards Israel’s policies, Ankara has maintained basic diplomatic relations and its bilateral trade with Tel Aviv substantially increased during this period. Turkish leaders also made some positive diplomatic gestures towards Israel before the flotilla incident. In 2005, then

Prime Minister Erdogan visited the Yad Vashem holocaust memorial in Israel and Erdogan and Ariel Sharon established a hotline for the exchange of intelligence on terrorism-related issues. In 2007, Shimon Peres became the first Israeli president to address the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. That year, Turkey and Israel concluded negotiations over the Med Stream project, an offshore water pipeline to connect Turkey and Israel across the Mediterranean. In 2008, Turkey and Israel agreed to the construction of an oil pipeline between Ceyhan and Ashkelon. Despite Turkey's criticism of 2006 Lebanon war, Turkish-Israeli military cooperation had continued apace in the late 2000s through joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and defense-industrial cooperation.³⁵¹

Ankara believes that the inclusion of Hamas, shunned by the West as a terrorist organization, as a major Palestinian political player is indispensable to a final peace settlement and sought to use its influence to bring Hamas to the table. Ankara tried to maintain diplomatic ties with Hamas after its election victory. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that all related parties should respect the result of democratically conducted elections and that it would be against democratic principles if outside actors attempted to weaken the newly elected order by imposing economic measures against the Palestinian administration. Ankara claimed that Hamas was in search of allies in the Middle East to end the economic and political blockade it faced from the international system and that if Ankara did not intervene, the only possible exit for HAMAS would be the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah axis.³⁵² Ibrahim Kalin, chief foreign policy advisor to Erdogan in 2010 said, “in principle, we believe that it is in Israel’s interest to lift the blockade of Gaza and establish some mechanism of international inspections because the blockade created a

humanitarian disaster for the 1.5 million Palestinians living in Gaza, and it cornered the Hamas government in a way that was only going to lead to further violence.” He further argued, “we are trying to bring Palestinian Authority and Hamas officials together so they can talk with the Israelis, which is also a core US goal.”³⁵³

Because Turkey firmly supports a two-state solution for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in line with Western interests, it sought to motivate Hamas to help resolve the conflict. Top political operatives from Hamas have visited Ankara and Turkey sought to mediate the political split between Hamas and Fatah leadership in the West Bank as a part of an effort to build coherent negotiating parties on both sides. At the same time, Erdogan made a strong appeal to Hamas to renounce terror and drop its policy of non-recognition of Israel, a vital Israeli and Western objective.³⁵⁴ In both 2006 and 2011, Turkey’s president informed the Hamas leader that it must come to recognize Israel’s existence as a part of any peace settlement.³⁵⁵

The Turkish-American relations did not necessarily suffer as the Turkish-Israeli diplomatic relations deteriorated. During President Obama’s April 2009 visit to Turkey, four months after the Davos incident, both presidents pledged to strengthen the economic pillar of the relationship.³⁵⁶ In 2013, during Obama’s visit to Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu offered a formal apology to Turkey for its attack on the ship Mavi Marmara, fulfilling one of Ankara’s major preconditions for the restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel. Moreover, the US remained Ankara’s closest foreign defense partner and a major source of Turkish military technology, and Turkey’s defense policy remains tightly integrated with NATO, which reinforces Turkish-US bilateral military ties. Ankara is one of the few NATO countries that sustain NATO’s nuclear sharing arrangement. Turkish

warships support important NATO maritime security operations and goals in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean and Turkish soldiers support the ISAF in Afghanistan. Ankara also plays an important role in promoting NATO's energy security by serving as a vital conduit for oil and gas reaching Europe from Eurasia.³⁵⁷

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for Israel and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Evidence:

Turkey's more conciliatory approach of communicating with Hamas, defending the Palestinians' rights, and at times harsh rhetoric against Israel have raised concerns about Ankara turning away from the West. However, Turkey's strategic vision for the region is in line with the Western vision for the region. Ankara has made the resolution of Israeli-Palestinian conflict a main pillar of its goals in the region and acted as a mediator using diplomatic means to achieve regional peace and stability. Ankara also extended diplomatic efforts for peaceful resolution of the Syrian-Israeli conflicts.³⁵⁸

Turkey declared that talking to Hamas was a part of its official strategy to "talk to all parties" and communicate its messages of democracy and dialogue with every group and sect in the region.³⁵⁹ Unlike the US, the EU has been supportive of Turkey's diplomatic outreach to Hamas for the resolution of the conflict. At least in the early 2000s, Turkey and the EU consulted each other on many issues including the Palestinian issue. After some complaints from both the EU and Turkey about the lack of consultation about framing a policy towards Hamas and the developments in the Palestinian territories, officials from the EU's accession commission consulted with the Turkish

officials on framing a policy towards the Palestinians. According to Davutoglu, the EU would generally ask the opinion of Turkey after reaching a conclusion but before issuing it and that Turkey would generally support these common positions.³⁶⁰

Davutoglu met with Mashal twice in Syria. His second visit came as a result of then French President Sarkozy's request for help from Erdogan. Turkey was part of a mediation process between Hamas and international actors while maintaining regular contacts with Fatah. Professor Richard Falk, the UN's special rapporteur on the Palestinian territories, highlighted Turkey's importance to Hamas's engagement. In reference to the invitation of Hamas in 2006, the rapporteur said, "it is tragic that this effort failed and was at the time criticized. In retrospect, both the wellbeing of the Gazan civilian population and the security of Israel would have greatly benefited by taking advantage of the Turkish initiative and moving to implement the readiness of Hamas to establish a long-term truce."³⁶¹ Some pundits even claimed that Ankara's engagement with Hamas, similar to Norway and Switzerland, could provide opportunities to the West in the resolution of the conflict since Ankara remains one of the few western channels to engage Hamas.³⁶²

Davutoglu's foreign policy doctrine is a major driving factor in its policy towards Israel and Palestine. According to Davutoglu, Ankara advocates a political order based on dialog and multi-dimension, an economic order based on justice and equality, and a cultural order based on inclusiveness and peace.³⁶³ His new diplomatic approach aims to enable Turkey not to be a "bridge" but a "central" country in the region and that requires Ankara to pursue proactive and preemptive peace diplomacy by mediating between Israel and Syria, the Sunnis and the Shiites in Iraq, and contribute to reconciliation efforts in

Lebanon and Palestine. His “rhythmic diplomacy” calls for a more active involvement in all international organizations as evidenced in its non-permanent membership of the UNSC, membership in the G-20, and participation in the African Union, Gulf Cooperation Council, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Arab League.³⁶⁴

Turkey’s value-based foreign policy was a major determinant of its support for the people in the Arab spring, namely in Tunisia, Egypt, and later Syria. The AKP leaders’ regional ambitions as a protector and defender of the people’s rights, including those of the Palestinians, also contribute to Ankara’s policy in the region. In his post-election victory speech in June 2011, then Prime Minister Erdogan chose to speak as a Middle Eastern leader; he said, “all friendly and brotherly nations from Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut, Cairo, Tunis, Skopje, Sarajevo, Baku and Nicosia...the hopes of victims and the oppressed have won. We will become much more active in regional and global affairs. We will take on a more effective role. We will call, as we have, for rights in our region, for justice, for the rule of law, for freedom, and democracy.”³⁶⁵ According to an Arab Public Opinion poll in 2010, Turkey was the country playing the most constructive role in the region, and Erdogan rose among the Arab respondents to the “most admired leader” status in 2010 when he did not even appear in the previous poll of the most admired world leaders in 2008.³⁶⁶

The AKP leadership did not view closer Middle Eastern relations as dichotomous or detrimental to Turkey’s Western orientation at home or abroad as had been trumpeted under the military rule in the 1980s. The Turkish leaders deemphasized the Islamic threat in the region and pursued an approach that takes advantage of the shared religion and heritage to boost economic opportunities. The core leadership of the AKP comes from a

political tradition that glorifies the Ottoman past as well as historical and cultural ties with the Islamic world. Their background also demonstrates that they are at ease in their dealings with their Middle Eastern counterparts. Erdogan graduated from a religious vocational high school, Gul worked at the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia between 1983-1991, and Davutoglu worked as a professor at the International Islamic University of Malaysia from 1990 to 1993. Favoring a more moderate version of secularism at home and a more activist policy in foreign affairs, Ankara, under the AKP leadership, began to exert more “soft power” in the Middle East, emphasizing economic cooperation, greater interdependence, and conflict mediation.³⁶⁷

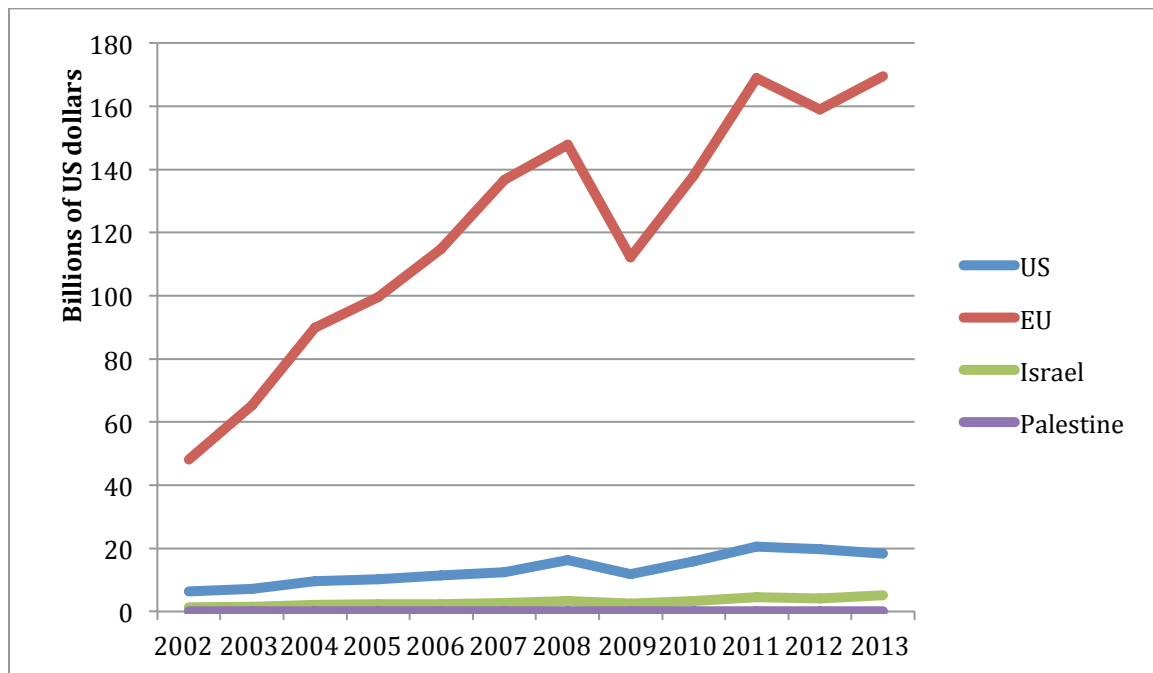
Prediction 3: Turkey’s bilateral trade would increase with Israel as well as with the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with Israel but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

Evidence:

In line with the general trend, Turkey’s trade with both Israel and Palestine increased during this period. Despite the diplomatic fallout with Israel, bilateral trade did not decrease; the two dips in trade correspond to the global and European financial crises of 2009 and 2012. Economic ties remained strong during the AKP’s tenure and continued its rise even after the flotilla incident. In fact, while Turkey’s trade with the Middle Eastern countries decreased following the Arab Spring, it didn’t decline with Israel. The Turkish-Palestinian trade also increased, but the volume is insignificant—\$76 million in 2013 in comparison with \$5 billion with Israel or \$169 billion with the EU (see figure 10). Thus, business interests with the Palestinians are unlikely to enter into the calculation as the government makes foreign policy decisions regarding the conflict.

After the Free Trade Agreement was signed with Israel in 1997, bilateral trade figures had reached \$2 billion by 2004 and \$5 billion in 2013. In 2004, Turkey agreed to sell 50 million cubic meters of water annually to Israel and signed an \$800 million contract to build and manage three energy plants in Israel.³⁶⁸ In 2005, Erdogan proposed to Israel the creation of a new pipeline that would provide Ceyhan oil to Haifa via a pipeline through Cyprus.³⁶⁹ In 2007, Turkey and Israel agreed to build a pipeline system connecting Black Sea to the Red Sea. Israel has also invested in Turkish agricultural development.³⁷⁰ Turkey was a popular tourist destination for Israel, bringing \$1.85 billion in revenues, at least until the flotilla incident in 2010.³⁷¹ However, Turkey's trade with Israel is not vital to Ankara. It sells iron, steel, machinery, consumer goods and apparel to Israel and buys from it mineral fuel and machinery that are easily substitutable. On the other hand, Turkey is Israel's sixth-leading export destination.

Figure 12: Turkey's Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Israel and the Palestinian territory in Comparison to its Total Trade with the EU and the US³⁷²



Conclusion:

The divergence between the Turkish and the US policy is greater on the Israeli-Palestinian issue than on other issues treated in this study. Turkey's more critical line towards Israel, stemming from the view of its leadership and the longstanding public sympathy for the Palestinians, is not consistent with the interests of its Western allies, namely the US and to a lesser extent the EU. The AKP leadership's foreign policy doctrine aims to elevate Turkey's regional influence by creating a network of stable and prosperous countries with which Turkey shares close political and economic ties. That required Ankara to improve its relations with countries like Iran and Syria so it no longer necessitated the maintenance of security ties with Israel. In that sense, the strategic relationship between the two countries was very much a product of unique circumstances in the 1990s so a sharp adjustment to a new "normal" was inevitable.

Also, Turkey's regional influence, advancement of its economic interests with Arab leaders, and the leadership's domestic popularity increased the attractiveness of speaking out on behalf of the Palestinians, further deteriorating its relationship with Israel.³⁷³ The Palestinian example highlights that the AKP prioritizes economic interests of its constituents, as in the case of Sudan and Libya, but when economic interests and the electorate's ideological views are in conflict, the government tends to give more weight to the vocal ideology as in the case of Palestine and Syria.

However, Turkey's more independent stance towards Israel does not prove a fundamental reorientation from the Western framework during the AKP period. Turkey's relationship with Israel has always been rocky; both sides had recalled ambassadors or

relegated the diplomatic representation down to the secretariat level several times before 2002 and the staunchly pro-secular governments before the AKP had also used harsh rhetoric against Israel in support of the Palestinians. At the fundamental level, Ankara's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains in line with the Western policies.

Turkey is firmly committed to the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and actually made significant efforts to mediate between the two sides as well as with Israel and Syria before its relations soured with Israel. On how to handle the conflict, Ankara believes that maintaining a dialogue with major stakeholders, including Hamas, is essential to reach a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

However, democratization process with the EU's membership criteria and decline of the security threats led to the diminishing the role of the military and increasing role of the public opinion, leading to a policy change in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Turkish public is very sensitive to the sufferings of the Palestinian people. During the 1990s when the security concerns were high, the governments and foreign policymakers, including the formerly influential military bureaucracy, were able to ignore the criticisms of the public in its relations with Israel.³⁷⁴ Turkey's closer ties to the Palestinian leaders that the West shuns also stems from the convergence of Turkish public opinion favoring the Palestinians and the AKP leaders approach to the resolution of the conflict that emphasizes dialog with all partners.

Furthermore, Ankara has robust economic relationship with Tel Aviv, which also suggests that in the case of Israel, Turkey's economic interests could prevent the political fallout between the two countries. Bilateral diplomatic and economic relations improved recently following the Arab Spring and Israel's apology for the flotilla deaths. While

Turkish trade with the Middle East declined in recent years, its trade with Israel did not. Despite the ups and downs in its relations with Israel, Turkey's foreign policy direction has not shifted away from the Western framework; it still actively participates in NATO activities, wants to be an EU member, and values its strategic partnership with the US.

4.4. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that Turkey has been pursuing a more active and independent foreign policy in the Middle East since the AKP came to power and its approaches have, at times, differed from those of its Western allies. It voted against the sanctions on Iran at the UNSC. It denied the US the use of Turkish soil as a base to launch the Iraqi invasion. It sought closer diplomatic and economic ties with Syria when the West tried to isolate it. It maintained communication with Hamas, which the West labeled as terrorist, and used harsh rhetoric and critical diplomacy towards Israel in support of the rights of the Palestinians.

However, as explained in the case study, when we take a closer look at the context beyond the media highlights, Turkey's disagreements with the Western policies have mostly been over competing priorities and different approaches to regional challenges, rather than over the fundamental values and interests. On how to handle the Iranian nuclear problem and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Ankara displayed a modest movement towards positions that create tension with the West. Turkey believed sanctions against Iran would not work and create regional instability. Ankara was convinced that maintaining a dialogue with major stakeholders, including Hamas, could help reach a solution to the conflict and believed that the blockade or other Israeli operations in the Palestinian territories were counterproductive. Prominent Turkey scholar Taspinar describes AKP's Turkey as Turkish Gaullism, increasingly acting on its own in search of full sovereignty, greater influence, and most importantly Turkish national pride; France sought a nuclear deterrent, pursued realpolitik, and left the NATO military structure under Charles de Gaulle.³⁷⁵

On the critical issues related to the region's stability and development, Ankara's position is at minimum compatible and in most instances strongly supportive of, Western interests. Turkey opposes a nuclear Iran and its stance on many regional issues from Iraq to Syria to Yemen is opposite to the Iranian stance. Ankara opposed the Iraq war fearing it would destabilize the region and hurt its economic interests, but it cooperates with the US in contributing to the resolution of the sectarian conflict, stability, and economic development in the country.

Despite its initial hesitation for similar reasons, Turkey's policy in Syria is in line with the US interests; it also supports the Western fight against the ISIS though it advocates ending the Assad regime first. Despite its rhetoric and divergent views and approaches, Turkey is committed to the two-state solution in Israel and hopes for the resolution of the conflict. Ibrahim Kalin, chief foreign policy adviser to Erdogan said in 2010 that "if you look at the issues, we are working together with the United States; we see a lot of convergence. We have fully cooperated on Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan, the Caucasus, and the Balkans. So the fact that we disagree on style in terms of addressing Iran's nuclear problem doesn't mean our strategic alliance is in jeopardy. On the contrary, the list of issues we work together is long."³⁷⁶

Domestic factors such as economic interests, transformation of domestic institutions, and prominence of public opinion as a result of Turkey's democratization process, and the foreign policy vision of the AKP leadership stand out as the main drivers of Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East. Admittedly, international-level, structural factors, including the end of the Cold War, the Soviet threat, and the bipolar world order, the political vacuum in the Middle Eastern geopolitics following the Arab Spring as well

as Turkey's rising economic status relative to its counterparts in the region have created the necessary preconditions for the emergence of Turkey's new multi-dimensional and proactive regional policy that is less dependent on its Western partners. The EU's perceived condescending approach to Turkey's accession that hurt the Turks' national pride and several high-profile incidents that increased the Turks' mistrust of the US also contributed to Turkey's search for a new role and adoption of a more multi-faceted approach to the region.

However, only with a single-party government, which enjoyed a parliamentary majority and ushered in political stability and strong economic growth, that the Turkish foreign policymakers found a fertile ground to adopt a new approach to policymaking. Thanks to the EU-inspired democratization process, Turkish foreign policymaking moved from a military-dominated, closed-door process to involve more democratic debates among the public and decisionmaking by the elected civilian leaders. That process resulted in a less security-oriented and more liberal approach to the Middle East that emphasizes soft power, peaceful reconciliation, and greater economic interdependence, an approach that takes into account Turkish people's sensitivities towards people with whom they share similar history, religion, and geography.

Public opinion has never mattered this much in Turkey's history. In a Transatlantic Survey by the German Marshall Fund in 2004, 75 percent of the Turkish respondents said Turkey should take an active part in world affairs. This foreign policy activism was simultaneously accompanied and reinforced by a rapid expansion of Turkey's external trade and investment flows into the Middle Eastern region, providing new markets for Turkey's increasingly politically active entrepreneurial class and

resulting in an impressive growth for Turkey, which tripled its GDP in nominal US dollar terms in the past decade. For example, Turkish businesses make up the majority of construction sector in the Middle East and when its indirect contribution is taken into account, construction sector accounts for close to 30 percent of GDP and creates employment for nearly 2 million people.³⁷⁷ Finally, more than Erdogan's personality and populist rhetoric, it is Davutoglu's foreign policy vision, which stretches from pragmatic to ideological, that had a profound impact on Turkey's recent activism in the Middle East. His foreign policy doctrine advocates the necessity of pursuing a multidimensional foreign policy that views its relations with US, EU, and the Middle East as complementary.

In sum, the majority of the evidence on Turkish foreign policy behavior in the Middle East demonstrates that Turkey has not reoriented its foreign policy direction from the West to the East. Prominent Turkey scholar Ian Lesser observed that in spite of all accusation of Turkey's dramatic foreign policy reorientation and widely discussed "end of the alliance," these crises were very rarely ideologically driven and manifested a "strategic drift," not a radical "shift of ideological axis."³⁷⁸ However, Turkey's transformation in the last decade means that the West has to reckon with a more confident and assertive Turkey that claims a greater role and influence in the region without shaking its firm alliance with the West.

On most accounts, a more democratic and secular Turkey has values and interests that are closer to those of the West and that translate into similar positions on most policy issues. A worthy distinction needs to be made between the US and the EU where Turkey's new foreign policy emphasis on increasing active diplomacy, economic

interdependence, and soft power for regional peace and prosperity is more in line with the EU policy in the region.

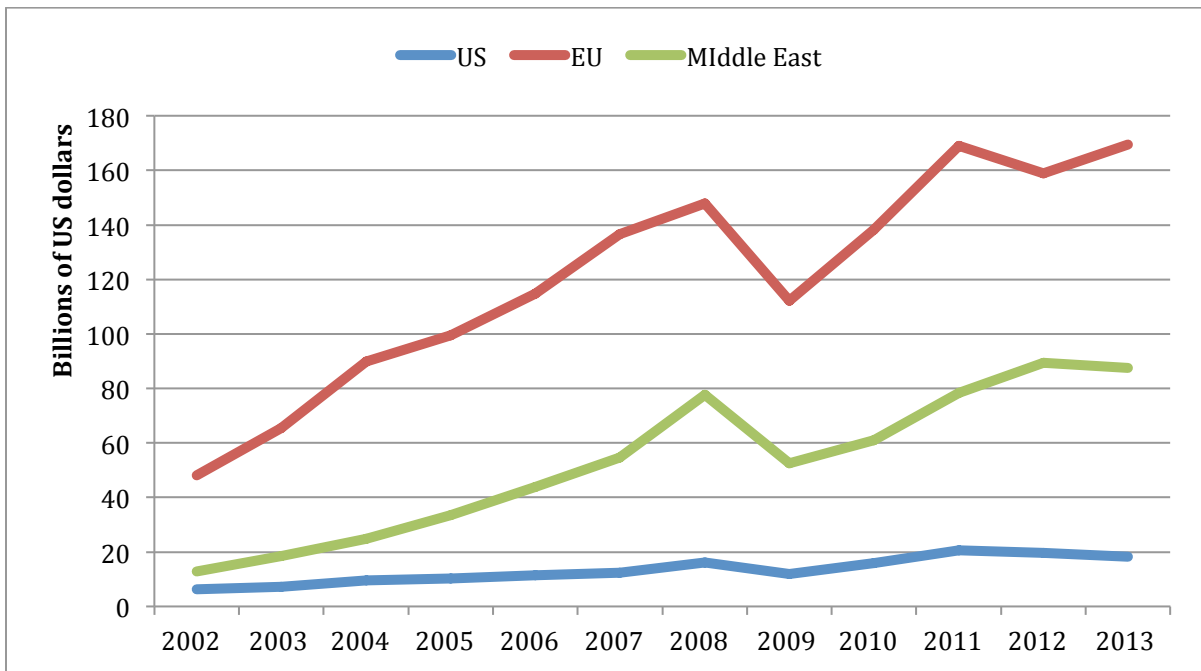
The Middle East, however, is immensely different from Turkey. Turkey's national identity is ethno-culturally different from that of the Arab world. Institutionally, Turkey has enjoyed more democratic institutions and processes since the birth of the Republic. Despite the recent restrictions on media and personal freedom, the country undoubtedly is more democratic than those Arab countries in the region replete with authoritarian governments. As the only Muslim member of NATO, Turkey boasts the second-biggest land forces in NATO after the US and its GDP is higher than that of any country in the Middle East and more than the combined GDP's of Iran, Iraq, and Syria.³⁷⁹

The changes in Turkish foreign policy in the past decade symbolize the shifting preferences of Turkish leadership from meeting the expectations of Western partners to securing Turkey's own national interests, rather than Turkey's turning away from the West to the East or from the secular Europe to the Islamist Arab world. For today's Turkey, NATO is the security framework that Ankara binds itself to and places its trust in against some threats in the Middle East.

The majority of Turkey's trade is still with Europe (see figure 13), not the Middle East. Despite the slow membership process for various reasons, including some that are not in Ankara's control, Turkey still very much wants to become an EU member. In a 2010 article pleading for Turkey's EU membership, Davutoglu said: "the enlarged portfolio of our foreign policy now encompasses a wide spectrum of geographical areas, organizations and issues, without a fundamental change in its priorities... Turkey is not reorienting its foreign policy, as some argue nowadays. While Turkey pursues a policy of

constructive engagement in its neighborhood and beyond, full integration with the EU is and will remain the priority. I want to make it clear: Membership in the EU is Turkey’s strategic choice and this objective is one of the most important projects of the Republican era.”³⁸⁰ Turkish people would rather go to Paris or Rome for vacation than to Tehran or Riyadh and they would send their kids to universities in Washington or London rather than to Cairo or Dubai. As Gul argued Turkey’s active involvement in its region and multilateral relations with the countries in the Middle East is not an option to replace its connections with Europe and that the security and stability of Europe and the Middle East are complementary.³⁸¹

Figure 13: Turkey’s Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Middle East, EU and US³⁸²



CHAPTER 5: TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN EURASIA

This dissertation aims to answer the question of whether the recent transformation in Turkish foreign policy is a fundamental reorientation of the country towards the East and abandoning of the Western alliance. In order to answer this question, the study examines the changes in Turkish foreign policy and analyzes the factors driving these changes using international and domestic levels of analyses derived from the framework of realism and liberalism introduced in chapter 3. This chapter conducts a case study and uses the congruence method of hypothesis testing to examine Turkey's foreign policy in the Eurasia region and assess whether its policy in Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus demonstrates fundamental a shift away from Ankara's anchorage in the Western framework.

The first section lays out the main hypotheses for the case study and the next section introduces the changes in Turkish foreign policy in Eurasia through a brief readout of Turkey's foreign policy in the region before and after 2002. Then it conducts three mini cases on Turkish foreign policy towards Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Each case begins with a brief recount of Turkey's foreign policy towards this region before 2002. It then analyzes the available evidence against the predictions of the two hypotheses. Finally, it concludes by summarizing the findings on whether Turkey's foreign policy transformation is a fundamental reorientation of the country and by identifying those factors that are dominant in driving Turkish foreign policy in Eurasia.

5.1. THE CASE STUDY FRAMEWORK

Hypothesis A: It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in Eurasia.

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Eurasia and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies' vision for the Eurasia region and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the Eurasia region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Hypothesis B: It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy in Eurasia does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Eurasia.

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for the Eurasia region and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Prediction 3: Turkey's bilateral trade would increase with both the Eurasian and the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with the Eurasia region but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

Parameters for the Predictions: Before Turkey's foreign policy actions are examined under these predictions, it is useful to define the parameters for the West's broader expectations from Turkey. The US, the EU, and other NATO partners expect or prefer a Turkey that closely supports and cooperates with the Western policies and interests in the region. They want Turkey to aid the Western counterterrorism efforts, support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the regional countries, and contribute to regional stability, economic development, good governance, rule of law, and promotion of democratic and secular values in the region.

The US and the EU want Turkey to uphold international norms and rule of law when it comes to dealing with the regional problems and expect Turkey to join Western efforts to fight terrorism in the region. The EU also expects Turkey to continue the democratization process and launch liberal political and economic reforms to meet the EU membership criteria. The US and the EU policies toward specific countries may differ from each other and their policies may change depending on the specific timeframe under examination, but I will attempt to highlight basic expectations and acceptable behavior towards the countries examined in the case studies.

On Russia, the US expects Turkey to oppose Russian aggression in the region, including in Georgia and Ukraine, and support the Western efforts in opposing Russia's attempt to create an exclusive sphere of influence in its neighborhood. Turkey's close economic ties with Russia because of its energy dependence on Moscow are acceptable

to the West, especially to the EU, which is also struggling to reduce its dependence on Moscow. However, entering into a military alliance with Russia would be an unacceptable redline to both the US, the EU, and other NATO partners.

On Central Asia and the Caucasus, the West expects Turkey to uphold international norms and contribute to the regional peace and stability. They want Turkey to aid the efforts to develop the region's economy and integrate the regional economies through improved energy and transportation infrastructure. The US and EU positions converge in this region but the EU is more excited about the prospects of Turkey's facilitation of the transfer of the Caspian energy sources to Europe to improve its energy security and expects Turkey to contribute to the efforts to spread democratic and secular values in the region.

5.2. OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE IN EURASIA

Turkey's Eurasia policy was completely dominated by its relations with the Soviet Union, which was historically an adversary and a security threat to Turkey and its predecessor the Ottoman Empire. Stalin's efforts to gain control of the Turkish Straits after the Second World War prompted Turkey to abandon Ataturk's policy of neutrality and join the Western alliance against the Soviet Union by seeking membership in the NATO. During this period, Turkey consciously refrained from cultivating contacts with the Turkic and Muslim populations beyond its border and tamed its pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic ambitions because of Russia's sensitivity toward its control over the non-Russian nationalities.

International factors such as the end of the Cold War and the bipolar world had an impact on Turkish foreign policy toward Eurasia. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia's territorial borders had receded far from Turkey and Ankara began to see Russia not as an enemy but a normal state it could cooperate with; however, the opening up of the new "Turkic world" sparked new political rivalries between Turkey and Russia. Ankara saw Central Asia and the Caucasus as a new field for expanding Turkish influence in the 1990s and Turkey's foreign policy objectives in the region included contributing to the regional economic development, providing direct support to the regional states' state-building efforts, and helping them integrate into the global system. Turkey became the first country to recognize the independence of all the Central Asian and the Caucasian countries. It established a new directorate in 1992 dealing with the Commonwealth of Independent States and established the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) to provide development assistance and coordinate Turkey's

economic and socio-cultural relations with these countries. Ankara even floated an ambitious goal for a Turkic Common Market and a Turkic Bank.

While Turkey sought to become a role model for the post-Soviet Turkic states in Eurasia, with active support of the US and the EU, the Russian federation saw a rival country undermining its political presence in the region and weakening its control over the region's energy resources. Turkish inroads into Central Asia were viewed as "plots" to encircle Russia, reinforcing Moscow's suspicion that Turkey and other Western powers wanted to isolate Russia from its allies in the Middle East. As a result, Russia sought to minimize Turkey's influence in the region; for example, it threatened Turkey with a nuclear retaliation if Ankara intervened in 1992 when the Russian-backed Armenia defeated Azerbaijan militarily and took over Nagorno-Karabakh, creating a frozen conflict that Russia can manipulate to its advantage.³⁸³

International factors such as the tension between Russia and the West put Turkey and Russia at odds with each other; the two countries experienced a series of political frictions in the 1990s, especially as Russia viewed Turkey as a vehicle for NATO's expansion in the South Caucasus. However, the economic dimension of the bilateral relations obliged both countries to keep their geopolitical competition at least on a manageable level. Bilateral tension peaked in 1993 to 1996, when the Russian security forces meddled in Azerbaijan, provoking the overthrow of the pro-Turkish president, and in 1994 when the Russian combat units in Georgia assisted the Abkhazians in a failed secessionist bid.³⁸⁴ In 1997, Russia threatened to sell the SAM-300-PMU-1 missiles, which could reach into southern Turkey, to the Greek Cypriot government. In 1999, the Russian Air Force general declared that Russia was stationing S-300 missiles and MiG-

29 fighters in Armenia to protect it against threats from Turkey and NATO.³⁸⁵

At the fundamental level, the US and the EU have been supportive of Turkey's increasing role in Eurasia as a secular and democratic country with a pro-Western outlook. They gave diplomatic backing to the oil and gas pipelines connecting the region to the West. These initiatives supported Turkey's geopolitical interests while blocking Iran's access to the Caspian energy and preventing the reassertion of Russian hegemony in the region.³⁸⁶ Washington and Ankara worked closely to strengthen ties to Georgia and Azerbaijan and encouraged both countries to adopt a stronger pro-Western position, a strategic cooperation that was further strengthened by the war on terrorism following the September 11 terrorist attacks.

In 2001, the Bush administration succeeded in repealing the Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which, introduced by the Armenian lobby, barred direct US government support to Azerbaijan.³⁸⁷ The Bush and Clinton administrations emphasized Turkey's pivotal role in the region. In a 1998 testimony before the House Foreign Relations subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Assistant Secretary for Energy Policy and International Affairs Robert Gee declared that Turkey needs support because it is an "anchor of stability" in a troubled region. Later that year, the US Eximbank, Trade and Development Agency, and the US-based Overseas Private Investment Corporation awarded the Turkish state pipeline company BOTAS a project credit of \$823,000 to enable Turkey to tap the US expertise on technical, financial, environmental, and legal matters for the construction of an oil pipeline from Azerbaijan. Also in 1999, the US Caspian Finance Center, the first of its kind, opened in Ankara to assist the US companies interested in investing in the Caspian energy market.³⁸⁸

The Turkish-Russian relations gradually began to improve thanks to both countries' strong economic interests and reached a level of close partnership by the 2000s, a time when the West began questioning the continuing importance of Turkey as the peace dividends of the end of the Cold War swept in. The US Congress became hesitant about approving arms sales to Turkey, and some European states, such as Norway, Germany, and Belgium, questioned or cancelled the sale of offensive weapons to Turkey. As a result, the Turkish security establishment assessed that it was in the interest of Turkey to have good relations with Moscow to strengthen its position in the Western security structures and began to actively include Russia in its regional cooperation initiatives.³⁸⁹

The members of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which Turkey launched in 1989 and includes Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine, signed an agreement in Istanbul in 1992 to promote cooperation in the fields of energy, transportation, communications, information and ecology. In 2000, Turkey initiated the establishment of a "Caucasus Stability Pact" under OSCE's surveillance, involving Russia and the Caucasus countries. In 2001, it created a "strategic triangle" between Russia, Turkey, and the Central Asian countries for enhanced consultation on regional political matters. Also that year, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, and Georgia officially launched the Black Sea Force to foster cooperation between the littoral countries of the Black Sea, bringing together Ankara and Moscow within the framework of a joint military force for the first time in their five hundred years of diplomatic relations.³⁹⁰ Turkey and Russia also deepened regional cooperation in late 2001 through the "Action Plan for Cooperation in Eurasia,"

the first official document that described the Turkish-Russian relations as a “multidimensional partnership.”³⁹¹

Admittedly, the political tension between Ankara and Moscow had begun to decline even before the AKP came power, especially since 2000, but following the rise of the AKP, the Turkish-Russian economic and political partnership was upgraded with four high-level visits between the two countries in 2009 and the establishment of an Intergovernmental High Level Cooperation Council in 2010. A Turkish diplomat even described Ankara’s regular political dialog with Moscow in 2006 as the “most regular and substantial” the Foreign Ministry has with any country.³⁹² Economic ties between the two countries received a significant boost during this period with high profile energy deals and a substantial increase in bilateral trade. Russian public opinion toward Turkey was also positive during this period. In a 2005 poll in Russia, 71 percent of the Russians displayed a positive attitude toward Turkey with 51 percent considering it a reliable trade and economic partner, 16 percent seeing it as a fraternal country, and only 3 percent thinking that Turkey is an enemy country and a probable rival.³⁹³

After the AKP came to power, Turkey increased its engagement with the Central Asia region, albeit at a much lesser degree than its outreach to the Middle East. Ankara’s policy for the region—contributing to a stable, independent, and economically prosperous Central Asia to help these countries build free market economies and functioning democracies—has largely been in line with the Western interests in the region.³⁹⁴ The US backing played an important role in reinforcing Turkish outreach toward Central Asia. Ankara’s policy after 2002 was more pragmatic than its ideological outreach in the 1990s; it emphasized pragmatic concerns such as mutual economic interests and the

region's socio-economic development rather than lofty political goals based on ethnic and cultural affinities.

During this period, Turkey has continued to support the region's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and its socio-economic and democratic development through its development organization TIKA, but it prioritized stability and energy security. It aimed to facilitate energy relations between the region and Europe that advance the project of transforming Turkey into an energy hub, but it maintained a delicate balance between its interests and the Western objectives on the one hand and the interests of the other major powers, including Russia, China, Iran, and India, on the other hand. Turkey's trade volume with the Central Asian countries reached \$7.5 billion in 2013, making Turkey one of the Central Asian states' top trading partners. Turkey supplemented its economic ties with high-level diplomatic visits to the region. It established the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council mechanisms with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the Cooperation Council with Tajikistan.³⁹⁵

Turkey's political and economic ties to the Caucasus region deepened during this period, even more than Ankara's ties with Central Asia because of geographical proximity and Turkey's energy interests. The AKP government valued its relations with the Caucasus region also because these countries created a buffer zone between Turkey and its historic rival Russia. Ankara has strongly supported the territorial integrity and independence of these countries to balance Russia's influence in the region and out of fear that any instability and power politics played in the region could spill over into Turkey's own territory. In addition to historical, cultural, and linguistic connections to the region—many Turkish citizens can trace their origins back to the Caucasus—Turkey's

pragmatic economic and foreign policy considerations, including Ankara's need for energy supplies, have also shaped its attitude towards the region.³⁹⁶ Turkey is the largest trade partner for Georgia and Azerbaijan and one of the largest investors in these countries. Bilateral trade more than tripled during the AKP period reaching nearly \$1.7 billion for Georgia and nearly \$3.2 billion for Azerbaijan.

Turkey had the backing of the US and the EU in its political and economic engagement with the Caucasus region and supported the Western interests in the region at the expense of Russia. Economic relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia deepened with the launching of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (BTC), which Russia strongly opposed because it would provide an alternative venue for the Azeri energy resources to reach Europe bypassing Russia. Turkey believed the BTC oil pipeline and gas pipelines from Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan would enable the newly independent states to decrease their dependence on Russia and strengthen ties with Turkey.³⁹⁷ The US strongly supported these projects as a non-Russian and non-Iranian outlet for Caspian energy and former President Clinton even witnessed the signing of a commitment to BTC by Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey. The EU was also a big supporter of these energy projects because it enhanced its energy security by reducing their dependence on energy imports from Russia.

Turkey's foreign policy toward Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus after the AKP came to power will be examined in the following sections.

5.3 TESTING HYPOTHESES

1. RUSSIA

Before 2002

While the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union eliminated an existential threat to Turkey, the Turkish-Russian relations suffered mutual mistrust because of the historical enmity from the Ottoman Era, clashing worldviews and national interests in Eurasia, and Russia's resentment of Turkish and Western involvement in Russia's backyard.³⁹⁸ The Russians felt uncomfortable about the strategic implications of Turkey's alliance with the US within the NATO—which sponsored Partnership for Peace-related activities in the region—and the Western involvement in the transportation of Eurasian energy resources through Turkey bypassing Russia.

Regional conflicts and instabilities in the Balkans, the south Caucasus, and the Middle East highlighted the two countries' often clashing political, economic, and cultural interests. For example, in the two major post-Cold War crises in the former Yugoslavia—in Bosnia and Kosovo—Russia sided with the Serbs and Turkey sided with Bosnian Muslims and Kosovars, actively supporting the NATO's punitive actions against the Serbs. Relations among the Greeks, Greek Cypriots, and the Russians flourished in the 1990s leading Ankara to perceive an evolving anti-Turkish entente. For example, Russia offered to sell the Greek Cypriots the S-300 air-defense systems, deployment of which would have radically changed the eastern Mediterranean military balance. In the 1992-1993 Armenian-Azerbaijani war over Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia sided with Armenia and Turkey supported Azerbaijan. In the Middle East, the Turkish military's large-scale operations in northern Iraq against the PKK irked the Russian Government

and the Russian Duma appealed to President Boris Yeltsin in 1998 to grant political asylum to Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK leader who had fled to Russia following his expulsion from Syria. The Russians also alleged Turkish complicity in support of Grozny during the 1994-1996 Russo-Chechen war.

Despite these bilateral frictions however, Turkey and Russia found a way to resolve conflicts, ease political tension, and deepen bilateral cooperation to enhance mutual trust. Following a series of deadly collisions in the Turkish straits, Turkey unilaterally imposed new traffic regulations in the Straits in 1994 despite strong objection from Russia, the Straits' primary foreign user. Confronted with Turkish resistance following the International Maritime Organization's endorsement of Turkey's position in 1995, Russia sought Bulgarian and Greek cooperation in developing a pipeline from Bulgaria to Greece, bypassing the Straits.³⁹⁹ Turkey's subsequent revision of the traffic rules somewhat eased the tension. Similarly, Russia's deployment of military equipment in the northern Caucasus in excess of the limits set by the 1990 treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe caused bilateral tension, but Ankara and Moscow found a compromise on each other's treaty ceiling during 1998 and 1999, resolving a major discord.

The Turkish-Russian rapprochement accompanied the increasing economic ties between the two countries, especially in trade, construction, and tourism, deepening their economic interdependence. In 1992, Turkey and Russia signed the Friendship Treaty, which formed the fundamental basis for the Turkish Russian relations in the post-Soviet era. In the mid-1990s when the Western nations refused to sell weapons that could be used against its Kurdish rebels, Turkey became the first NATO country to buy arms,

rifles, and helicopters from Russia.⁴⁰⁰ In 1993, Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, who chose Moscow as the destination of her first foreign visit, stated that Russia and Turkey viewed the world from “practically the same” position and praised the relationship that was entering a new stage based on mutually beneficial cooperation rather than competition.⁴⁰¹ Then came Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin’s official visit to Turkey in December 1997—the first in twenty-five years by a Russian or Soviet head of government—to sign a \$20-billion Blue Stream Accord. According to the gas deal, Russia would supply Turkey with as much as 16 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas per year over a 25-year period via a new 1,200 km pipeline under the Black Sea.⁴⁰² This visit came on the heels of the EU’s Luxembourg summit decision, which had seemingly closed the door to Turkey’s prospects for full EU membership.⁴⁰³ In 2001, the foreign ministers of Turkey and Russia signed the Action Plan for Cooperation in Eurasia, creating a Russian-Turkish High-Level Joint Working Group and a Caucasus Task Force.

Turkey’s outreach to Russia to improve bilateral relations began before the AKP came to power, but it significantly accelerated and the bilateral relations substantially deepened under the AKP rule. Turkey’s foreign policy toward Russia after the AKP came to power will be examined below.

Hypothesis A: *It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara’s foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in Eurasia.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its

NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, toward Russia and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Evidence:

Turkey's close diplomatic and economic ties to Russia led Ankara to take positions on regional and international issues that created tension with the West. During the Georgian crisis of 2008, Turkey did not strongly condemn Russia's military aggression against Georgia. Turkish policymakers acted carefully in order to minimize the tension during the crisis and the Caucasus Stability Cooperation Platform that Ankara put forward with Russia and the three Caucasian countries excluded major Western powers such as the US and the EU. The United States complained that it was not informed about the Platform beforehand, undermining the Turkish-US-Azeri-Georgian geopolitical bloc that had emerged in the second half of the 1990s.⁴⁰⁴

During the Russian-Georgian conflict, Moscow pressured Ankara to uphold the Montreux Convention and not allow the passage of the US navy, which was delivering humanitarian aid to Georgia via the Bosphorus, out of fear that it could be transferring military equipment. When the US requested official permission from the Turkish authorities for the passage of two NATO-flagged vessels to the Black Sea through the Straits, Turkey strictly applied the rules of the 1936 Montreux Convention, which limits the foreign ships' number, total tonnage, and duration of stay in the black Sea. Having placed its decision on this basis and putting a 21-day restriction on the presence of the American vessels in the Black Sea waters, Ankara tried to maintain a delicate balance between the two major powers, raising questions about Turkey's loyalty to the NATO.⁴⁰⁵

During that time, the Russian customs officials were inspecting Turkish trucks at

the border posts to Russia with exceptional diligence, taking the trucks to a red lane and checking them one by one. Many in Turkey interpreted the difficulties the Turkish trucks faced as Kremlin's punishment for Ankara's permission to the entry of US ships into the Black Sea.⁴⁰⁶ However, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov quickly asserted that there could be no politics involved in trade.⁴⁰⁷⁴⁰⁸ This friction did not hurt Turkish-Russian relations and the two countries signed an agreement on simplified customs procedure within a month.⁴⁰⁹ A year later, then President Gul and Medvedev signed a political declaration affirming the status of Turkish-Russian relations as a "multidimensional strengthened partnership,"⁴¹⁰ and established the "High Level Cooperation Council" in 2010.

International factors such as Turkey's frustration with the US policies in the Middle East, such as the Iraq War, and the EU's slow rolling in granting Turkey accession to the Union played an important role in Ankara's rapprochement with Moscow. During the periods of increasing tension with Washington, some Turkish military officials even made an emotional call for a military reorientation towards Moscow rather than to Washington.⁴¹¹ In December 2002, Erdogan met with Putin and they reached a consensus about the need to solve the Iraqi conflict through peaceful means.⁴¹² After announcing Turkey's candidacy in 1999, the EU had not started accession talks with Turkey over divergent issues such as broadcasting and educating in the Kurdish language, abolition of the death penalty, and solution of the Cyprus problem. In response, Secretary of the Turkish National Security Council General Tuncer Kilinc proposed—though immediately rejected both by the Turkish General Staff and the government—the formation of a "Russian-Turkish-Iranian axis" to stand against the EU's

“unacceptable” requests.⁴¹³ The Turkish-EU relations further deteriorated after 2004 when the Greek Cypriot government entered the EU with the claim of representing the whole island, including the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, despite protests from Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.⁴¹⁴

The deepening of the ties with Moscow was also visible in international platforms; Turkey supported Russia’s quest to join the World Trade Organization and Moscow’s desire to obtain an observer status at the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation. Russia supported Turkey’s observer role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)—in which Turkey became a dialogue partner in 2013—and Turkey’s bid for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC.⁴¹⁵ Furthermore, Ankara chose not to extend NATO’s Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean to the Black Sea to placate Russia.

More recently, Turkey refused to join the US and the EU sanctions against Russia for Moscow’s annexation of Crimea and support for rebel groups in Eastern Ukraine. Turkey continued to pursue investment deals in Russia ranging from the agricultural sector to the automobile. For example, a Turkish shoe producer inked a \$100-million contract to provide boots for the Russian military. Turkey’s decision to boost exports to Russia, following Moscow’s decision to impose countersanctions on western food products, tainted its pro-Western image. In September 2014, a Turkish exporters’ association announced tentative plans to nearly triple food exports to Russia to \$3 billion by 2015. The Foreign Ministry of Greece, an EU member whose food products were banned in Russia, issued a statement in August 2014 implying that Turkey was cheating its European allies by trying to increase its trade with Russia.⁴¹⁶

Ankara also looks to Russia as well as to China for a number of military procurement projects, in addition to building its own defense industry, raising fears in the West that Turkey is reducing its military dependence on NATO allies. The Russian S-300 or S-400 missile systems are attractive to the Turkish military industry's proposed multi-billion dollar long-range missile defense project.⁴¹⁷⁴¹⁸ NATO allies are concerned that Turkey—which has the second-largest land force in NATO after the US—is making an aggressive push to carve out a more independent military, risking its decades-long alliance with the West, just as both sides seek each other's help to counter security threats, particularly in the battle against the Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq.⁴¹⁹

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies' vision for Russia and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Evidence:

While the Western powers focused on incorporating the former Soviet Union countries into the orbit of the EU and NATO, and maintain a lukewarm relationship with Russia in the 2000s, Turkey asserted its independence by actively seeking closer ties with Russia on political, security, and economic matters. Putin made a historic visit to Turkey in 2004, the first Russian head of state to visit Turkey in the last 32 years, and the two sides signed a Joint Declaration on Deepening of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership. The declaration recognized both countries as Eurasian powers with shared interest in security and stability in the Caucasus, Afghanistan, and the Middle East, and emphasized the need to cooperate more via the Intergovernmental Commission on Military, Technical and Defense Industry Cooperation.⁴²⁰

Also in 2004, Turkey proposed to Russia a new security initiative known as the Black Sea Harmony that would entail joint naval maneuvers. When the first two of these maneuvers was carried out in 2006, it caused anxiety in the West, fearing Turkey may increasingly seek to make the Black Sea primarily the province of the riparian Black Sea powers and discourage great power rivalry within it. In 2005, Putin and Erdogan met four times, including a seven-hour meeting in Sochi, and the two sides extended their cooperation in military and defense sector. Russia even allowed Turkish president to make an official visit to the Russian Republic of Tatarstan, an ethnically Turkic nation, in 2005.

Despite the past political tension between Ankara and Moscow for Russia's support for the PKK and Turkey's sympathy for the Chechen Muslims, the two countries also reached a common understanding on terrorism that was solidified in a joint declaration in 2004. With increasing bilateral ties and deepening Russian cooperation against terrorism and separatism, Turkey also became less vocal on the Chechen issue. In 2004, Erdogan called for a joint action against terrorism and peaceful settlement of the Chechen issue "within the framework of Russia's territorial integrity."⁴²¹

Domestic factors such as pro-Russian sentiments among some groups inside the Turkish armed forces and the rising sympathy for Russia among the Turkish public, especially as the economic interdependency strengthened, also played a role in increasing Turkish-Russian ties. Turkey has no openly anti-Russian faction in the Turkish parliament in the post-Soviet era, not even the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) known for its ultranationalist ideology and its strong support for the Turkic peoples of the region, has an anti-Russian agenda. The Turkish-Russian relations did not suffer when

the MHP was a part of the governing coalition in 1999 despite the renewed Russian-Chechen fighting in late 1999. On the contrary, there was a small group of neo-nationalists in Turkey who favored the formation of a strategic axis between Turkey and Russia against the West. It sympathized with the idea of Eurasianism with an emphasis on a kind of “geopolitical alliance” to be formed between the countries of Eurasia though neither Turkish nor Russian government showed any sign of an intention to form a Eurasian alliance with each other.⁴²²

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the Eurasia region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Evidence:

Turkey significantly increased its trade with Russia as well as with other BRIC countries of Brazil, India, and China during this period. Ankara also rhetorically expressed interest in joining some Eurasian blocs and pursued energy deals with Russia, which could undermine the EU’s energy security. Turkey’s total trade—exports and imports—with Russia, one of its major trading partners, increased dramatically during the AKP period from \$5 billion in 2002 to nearly \$37.5 billion in 2014, mainly driven by Russia’s energy exports to Turkey (see figure 14). Turkey imported 10 percent of its oil and 56 percent of its natural gas from Russia in 2012.⁴²³ Russia is the biggest market for Turkish contractors and Turkey is the top destination for Russian tourists. While both Russian and the Western trade with Turkey increased from 2002 to 2013, the proportion of Ankara’s trade with Moscow as well as with Beijing increased more than its trade with Brussels and Washington (see figure 15).

Figure 14: Turkey's Trade with Russia since 1998⁴²⁴

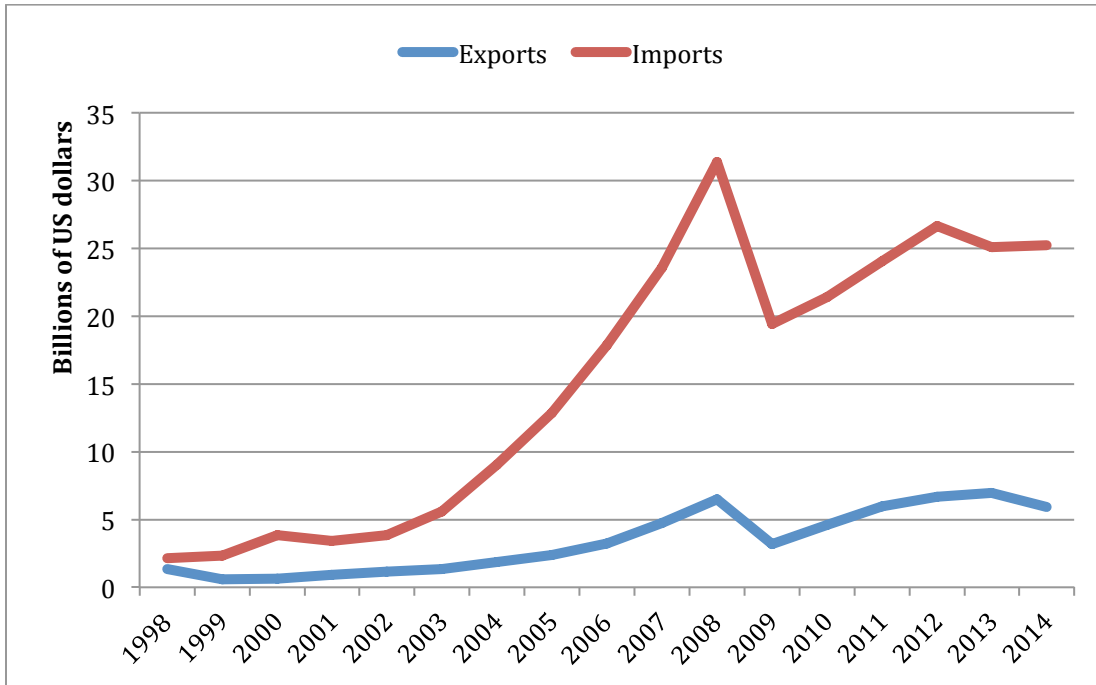
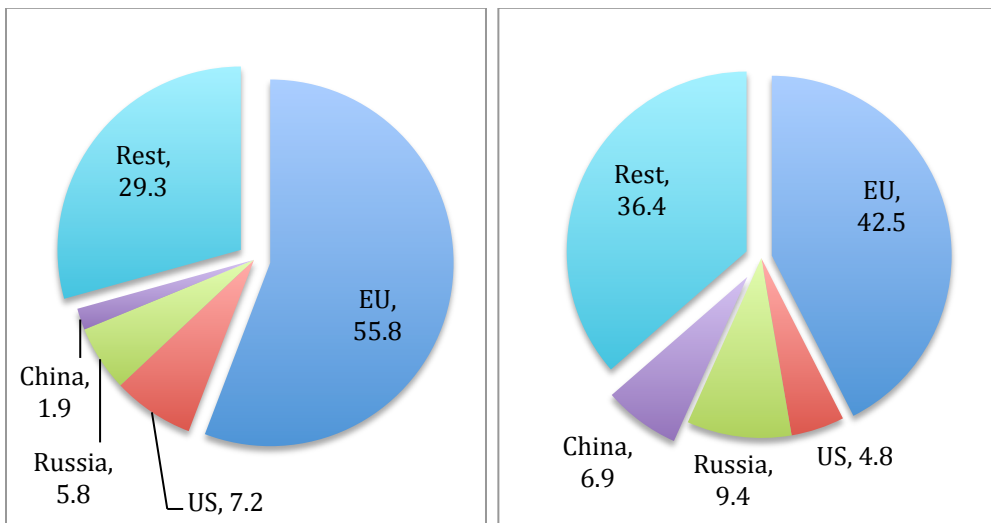


Figure 15: Turkey's Main Trade Partners in 2002 and 2014⁴²⁵



Erdogan sometimes expressed his frustration with the stalling EU progress through empty rhetoric about leaving the EU. In 2013, he said, “when things go so poorly, you inevitably...seek other paths. That’s why I recently said to Mr. Putin: ‘Take us into the Shanghai Five; do it and we will say farewell to the EU, leave it

altogether. Why all this stalling?”⁴²⁶ Ironically, as Erdogan was telling his interviewer that Turkey might join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the American, German and Dutch troops were busy setting up the Patriot batteries along Turkey’s southern border to protect the country from the Syrian missiles.⁴²⁷ Erdogan’s rhetoric also came at a time when the public support for continuing the EU process was at a historic low. A survey by the Istanbul-based Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies found that only 33 percent of those surveyed believed Turkey should continue working towards joining the EU over the next five years.

As the prospect of full Turkish membership in the EU remains elusive, many Turkish intellectuals, politicians, and opinion makers began to talk about alternative futures for Turkey with different geographical priorities and different identities.⁴²⁸ Around the time when the US-EU free trade talks through the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership were taking place, Turkey rhetorically floated the idea of joining the Customs Union of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus, fully knowing that becoming a member of the Russia-led Customs Union would make Ankara ineligible to become an EU member in the future. During a visit by then Russian president Medvedev in 2010, the two countries reached an agreement to abolish the visa requirement for stays less than 30 days,⁴²⁹ while Ankara maintains visa requirements for many EU members. Bilateral trade and investment received a boost from the visa-free regime and from the non-stop ferry service between the ports of Kavkaz, Russia and Samsun, Turkey that carry railcars across the sea from Russia to Turkey.

Turkey, similar to some Eastern European countries, has at times undercut its European counterparts to gain an upper-hand in the energy trade with Russia. In 2009,

only three weeks after the signing of the EU-backed Nabucco project—which would link natural gas resources of Azerbaijan and possibly Iran, Iraq and Turkmenistan to Europe through Turkey bypassing Russia—Russian prime minister visited Turkey with proposals to lay the South Stream pipeline on the Black Sea bed. Turkey reacted positively to because of Ankara’s high dependence on Russia for its energy needs even though Russia’s proposal for the South Stream pipeline was considered the main rival to the Nabucco line. At that time, Turkish leaders publicly said that national interests rather than a change of orientation toward Moscow had been the driver of heightened cooperation with Russia.⁴³⁰

During the late 2014 state visit of the president of Russia, which has been experiencing economic downturn under the Western sanctions, Putin surprised the world by suspending its plans for the South Stream and announcing that it would run pipes to Turkey instead; Putin also called Turkey a “strategic partner.” This Turkish Stream, which is estimated to cost around \$10 billion as opposed to the \$40 billion cost for the South Stream, is slated to be completed by December 2016 and could funnel up to 63 bcm of gas under the Black Sea from Russia to Turkey and on to Greece and the EU. Russia’s Gazprom’s Chief Executive said “Turkish Stream is now the only pipeline” and warned if Europe wants more Russian gas then it will need to find its own way to tap into the Turkish stream.⁴³¹

The West was not happy with Gazprom’s decision on the Turkish stream. The EU had opposed Russia’s previous proposal for the South Stream fearing that it would increase Russia’s dominance of the European gas market, but Gazprom’s plan to shift the Russian gas that now flow to Europe through Ukraine to the new pipeline through Turkey

would further weaken Kiev in its struggle with Moscow.⁴³² Brussels warned Moscow that it has long-term contractual obligations to supply its gas to Europe through Ukraine, plunging Ankara to the middle ground between the West and Russia.⁴³³ According to some Turkish officials, Turkish Government appears to be trying to use Gazprom's need for a face-saving alternative to the South Stream as leverage to negotiate lower prices for Russian gas.⁴³⁴ The Russian leader pledged a 6 percent discount on the price of the 14 bcm of gas available for sale annually to Turkey from the pipeline. However, the deal would further increase Turkey's gas dependency on Russia to over 75 percent and would place the country more firmly in the Russian energy camp.⁴³⁵

Hypothesis B: *It states that recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy in the Eurasia region does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, towards Russia.

Evidence:

Turkey's foreign policy under the AKP government, which emphasizes eliminating Turkey's problems with neighbors, prioritizing pragmatic economic interests, and maintaining multidimensional foreign policy, significantly improved Ankara's relations with Moscow. Even though Turkey has refrained from taking sides in any "Russia vs. the West" struggles—because of its energy dependency on Russia—and had some tactical differences with the West on some foreign policy approaches against Russia, Ankara has maintained its support for the Western policy towards Moscow at the

fundamental level. Erdogan's words in 2008 sums up Turkish leaders' thinking: "America is our ally and the Russian Federation is an important neighbor. Russia is our number one trade partner. We are obtaining two-thirds of our energy from Russia. We act in accordance to our national interest... We cannot ignore Russia."⁴³⁶

Davutoglu's principles of zero problems with neighbors and multidimensional foreign policy have played an important role in shaping Ankara's policy toward Russia.⁴³⁷ Turkish politicians have made developing bilateral political and economic relations with Russia a priority and consider Russia a necessary partner for regional peace and stability in Eurasia.⁴³⁸ Turks also don't see its relations with Russia as a zero-sum game, believing that Ankara's longstanding ties to the West do not preclude it from seeking closer ties to Moscow. Davutoglu stated that "Turkish-Russian relations constituted an integral component of Turkey's multidimensional foreign policy," in an article he wrote for a Russian journal. Addressing the crowd in a Turkish think tank in Washington in 2009, Davutoglu said, "We are not involved in a bipolar world anymore. It means our good relations with Russia are not an alternative to the EU. Or our model partnership with the United States is not a new partnership against Russia."⁴³⁹

Turkey has been a staunch supporter for strengthening the sovereignty and economy of the former Soviet Union (FSU) countries—an important US and EU objective in the region. Ankara's efforts to bolster the region's political and economic independence put it at odds with Moscow's efforts in increasing the FSU countries' dependence on Russia to keep them in its orbit. Turkey is also helping some FSU countries develop their militaries, offsetting their security dependence on Russia.⁴⁴⁰ The five-day war in August 2008 between Russia and Georgia actually demonstrated the

fragility of the Turkish-Russian relationship. Ankara has close political, economic, and military relations with Georgia and felt uneasy about the risks posed by the war on regional stability in the neighboring Caucasus. Some Russian newspapers even accused Turkey, together with the US, of being responsible for the crisis, on the grounds that it was one of the two major suppliers of military aid to Georgia.⁴⁴¹ Even though Turkey's reaction to Russia during the Georgia war was muted, Ankara consistently maintained its principled stance on Georgia's territorial integrity and it was one of the first countries to send humanitarian aid to Georgia immediately after the conflict.

Again, during the Ukraine crisis, Turkey tried to maintain that balance among its priorities: its strong commitment to its NATO allies and Western values, including the international norms and rule of law, its sympathy for the Crimean Tatars—Turks' ethnic brethren—and its economic dependence on Russia, decreasing Ankara's autonomy in foreign policy. Some 250 people protested Russia's takeover of Crimea in front of the Russian Consulate in Istanbul, chanting "Turkey, help your brothers!" in March 2014.⁴⁴²

Then Foreign Minister Davutoglu was one of the first envoys to meet with Ukraine's new government in Kyiv in February 2014 following months of protests that led to the ouster of the country's pro-Russian president. He said, "for Turkey, Ukraine's territorial integrity, stability, and prosperity are crucial. Crimea is of great importance to Turkey as it is doorway to Ukraine. It is also important due to the presence of Tatars and Turkey's cultural heritage."⁴⁴³ Turkey condemned Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 in line with the positions adopted by the US and the EU, and stressed its support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, maintaining that Crimea is part of Ukraine.⁴⁴⁴ More recently, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in May 2015 ahead of a

NATO meeting that “nothing can justify Russia's actions in Ukraine and other ex-Soviet states, Ukraine, Crimea, Georgia” in a strong criticism of Russia. He further added that Turkey was ready to play a “constructive role” in the disputes between Russia and the West over Ukraine.⁴⁴⁵ Ankara did not join the West, however, in its sanctions toward Russia because Ankara depends on energy imports from Russia and as a result, it is more vulnerable than the EU. Several EU countries, including France, Germany and Italy, were also reluctant to impose severe sanctions for fear of igniting a trade war and jeopardizing their gas supplies from Russia.⁴⁴⁶

Turkey’s increasing arms trade with Russia is also a part of its multidimensional foreign policy, probably based on its past troubles with the West in arms trade, and it does not necessarily mean Ankara is abandoning the military alliance. The U.S. imposed an arms embargo on Turkey for more than three years following Ankara’s 1974 military intervention in Cyprus. During the 1991 Gulf War and 2003 Iraq War, NATO allies agreed only after long and contentious discussions to deploy the Patriots system to protect Turkey.⁴⁴⁷ More recently, some military officials in Ankara have been warning of a possible arms embargo from Washington. In December 2014, Congress approved the transfer of several naval frigates to Mexico and Taiwan, excluding Turkey, which had been slated as one of the original recipients, over concerns about its policies toward Israel and Cyprus.⁴⁴⁸

Despite these trade frictions, the US arms sales to Turkey totaled \$2.7 billion in 2013 and the military relationship between the two sides is one of the strongest elements of the bilateral relationship.⁴⁴⁹ Furthermore, Turkey’s arms purchase from Russia is in line with the general trend of Turkish efforts at diversifying its arms supplies,

exemplified by increasing military purchases from China and heavy emphasis on local arms production.⁴⁵⁰ In March, Prime Minister Davutoglu said, “a nation that does not have its own defense industry cannot have a claim to independence.”⁴⁵¹

The Turkish Government allayed NATO’s fears from Turkey’s attempt to build its own defense industry and seek military technology from non-Western allies by highlighting that Ankara closely cooperates with its NATO allies against security threats such as the Islamic extremism in the region. The government said it deported around 1,000 would-be jihadists and boosted intelligence sharing to combat the Islamic State. In March, Turkey allowed the US to deploy armed drones at the Incirlik Air Base to help fight the militants. Since 2013, Ankara has hosted 750 NATO troops and five Patriot batteries from the alliance, joined NATO’s antipiracy operation off Africa’s coast, and participated in the U.K.-hosted Joint Warrior drill. In early 2015, NATO spokeswoman Carmen Romero said, “Turkey contributes to strengthening our collective defense in response to Russia’s aggressive actions against Ukraine, and Turkey is also making a significant contribution to our missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan.”⁴⁵²

Turkish public values and strongly supports the NATO alliance but they also want their government to take a more independent approach to regional challenges, including the Russian aggression, in line with the national interests. According to the German Marshall Fund’s Transatlantic survey in 2013, 49 percent of the Turks thought the NATO was still essential to the country’s security. When asked what Turkey should do in managing relations with Russia, 40 percent of the Turks said it should take an independent approach. However, 19 percent said it should work closely with the EU and 27 percent said it should work closely with the US, compared with only 9 percent of the

ten EU countries—including Germany, France, Italy, UK—that said the EU should work closely with the US.⁴⁵³

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for the region and its foreign policy initiatives toward Russia would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Evidence:

Despite the high-level diplomatic visits and close economic ties between Ankara and Moscow and Turkish politicians' empty rhetoric, Turkey inherently does not trust Russia, with whom the Turks fought for centuries, and does not share Russia's vision for the region. Therefore, Ankara's relationship with Moscow is vulnerable to changing external factors and is likely to deteriorate as their fundamentally divergent views and interests come to the surface. Turkey and Russia stand practically on the opposing sides of the recent international conflicts. The conflict in Syria is one of the most important arenas of geopolitical rivalry between Turkey and Russia. While Russia is the biggest supporter of the Syrian leadership, Ankara supports logistically the opposition forces in northern Syria, informally supplying them with weapons and providing them with intelligence data and medical treatment. Ankara also directly countered Russia's engagement in Syria; in 2012 Turkey twice forced Syrian and Armenian airplanes carrying Russian military equipment for Syria to land.⁴⁵⁴

Moscow is a key military ally to Turkey's main regional rivals, including Armenia, Cyprus, and Greece. The policies of Ankara and Moscow also diverge on other issues such as the independence of Kosovo, Iran's nuclear program, and Cyprus. Russia is the main military ally of Cyprus, which perceives Turkey as the key threat to its

security. At the end of October 2014, Russia conducted naval exercises with the Cypriot and Israeli navy for three days in waters east of Cyprus. Russia provided political support to the Greek Cypriots by blocking Turkey's attempts in the UNSC, as a non-permanent member, to lift the economic sanctions on the Turkish Cypriots. Medvedev even paid a visit to Nicosia in 2010, emphasizing Russia's close economic and political relations with the Greek Cypriots.⁴⁵⁵

Despite showing ostensible support for the Turkish-Armenian political normalization process, Kremlin still seems to be "reluctant to welcome too close a rapprochement between Turkey and its main strategic ally in the Caucasus."⁴⁵⁶ Russia's strong support for the Armenian claim of a genocide, which Turkey does not recognize, also strained bilateral relations in the past. More recently, Russia's Duma approved a resolution in 2015 declaring that the Ottomans had committed genocide against their Armenian subjects in 1915. Putin's use of the word "genocide" for the centennial commemoration of the killings led to political fallout. The Turkish foreign ministry released a statement that said, "taking into account the mass atrocities and exiles in Caucasus, in the Central Asia and Eastern Europe committed by Russia for a century; collective punishment methods such as Holodomor as well as inhumane practices especially against Turkish and Muslim people in Russia's own history, we consider that Russia is best-suited to know what exactly "genocide" and its legal dimension are."⁴⁵⁷

The Turkish-Russian relations are not immune from the ongoing energy competition between the West and Russia and the two countries compete in providing alternative routes to transfer Central Asian and Caucasian energy resources to Europe. Ankara has strongly supported the Eurasian states' efforts to join the Euro-Atlantic

institutions and energy initiatives circumventing Russia.⁴⁵⁸ Russia regards the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum oil pipeline supported by Turkey, US, and the EU as an obstacle to its oil trade and challenge to its status in the Caspian basin. Turkey's energy dependence on Russia, Ankara's Achilles heel, which explains Turkey's support for Russia's latest proposal for the Turkish Stream, portend that the Turkish-Russian relations will fall short of becoming a strategic partnership against the US and the EU. Turkey, just like the EU, has an interest in reducing its energy dependence on Moscow and it has supported the EU-backed regional energy projects such as importing gas from Azerbaijan through a Trans-Caspian pipeline.

Following the Russian gas cutoff to Ukraine in 2006 as a punishment for the "orange revolution," Europeans, who depend on the Russian gas through the Ukrainian pipeline, began to search for alternative energy transportation projects to reduce their dependence on Russian energy. The previously mentioned EU-backed Nabucco project envisioned a pipeline to carry the Caspian and Middle Eastern natural gas via Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary to Austria, bypassing Russia. Turkey joined the project while refusing to participate in Russia's Blue Stream II proposal, which would carry Central Asian gas into Europe through Turkey via a pipeline to be built in parallel with the Blue Stream, causing resentment in Moscow. On the Turkish stream, Ankara also claimed that the new pipeline bypassing the troubled areas in Ukraine could actually enhance the EU's energy security.

Turkey's Caucasian ethnic minorities, supported by active ethnically-based lobbies, also had some impact on Turkey's rhetoric against the Russian moves but did not translate into real action in support of these minorities. Before Russia took over Crimea,

Davutoglu expressed his concern about how the developments in Crimea might impact the Tatars, Turks' ethnic and religious kin, and his ministry issued a statement in March 2014, calling the referendum on whether the region should become part of Russia as a "wrong" move. There are more Tatars in Turkey than there are in Crimea and three times more ethnic Abkhaz living in Turkey than in Abkhazia, Georgia. Turkey's Abkhazians have powerful ethnic lobbies that advocate for Turkey's recognition of Abkhazia's independence and for Turkey's support for the Abkhazians in their conflict with Georgia, a move that Turkey has been reluctant to take because it strongly supports Georgia's territorial integrity. In line with the EU's policy in the region, Turkey has tried to find ways to develop beneficial trade relations with Abkhazia after it was recognized as a de facto independent state by Russia in 2008 with the goal of reducing Abkhazia's dependence on Russia.⁴⁵⁹

Despite having divergent visions on strategic issues, domestic economic interests have been a major factor that drove Turkey and Russia to form a kind of "silent solidarity" for the resolution of regional security matters. Successful management of their significant energy projects, such as the Turkish Stream and the Akkuyu nuclear plant project, requires a certain degree of stability and predictability in Turkish-Russian relations. Turkish scholar Ersen argues if it had not been for the economic links between the two countries, Turkish-Russian relations could have suffered serious blows due to political problems. As a result of the energy competition and Russia's takeover of Crimea, earlier pro-Russian sentiment in the Turkish public began to fade away and concerns about Putin's aggression replaced the empty rhetoric about the formation of a Turkish-Russian axis in the region. According to the German Marshall Fund's

Transatlantic survey in 2013, 68 of Turks had unfavorable opinion of Russia, up from 46 percent in 2010 though the numbers for US and the EU are also high at 61 percent and 51 percent, respectively.

Prediction 3: Turkey's bilateral trade would increase with both Russia and the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with Russia but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

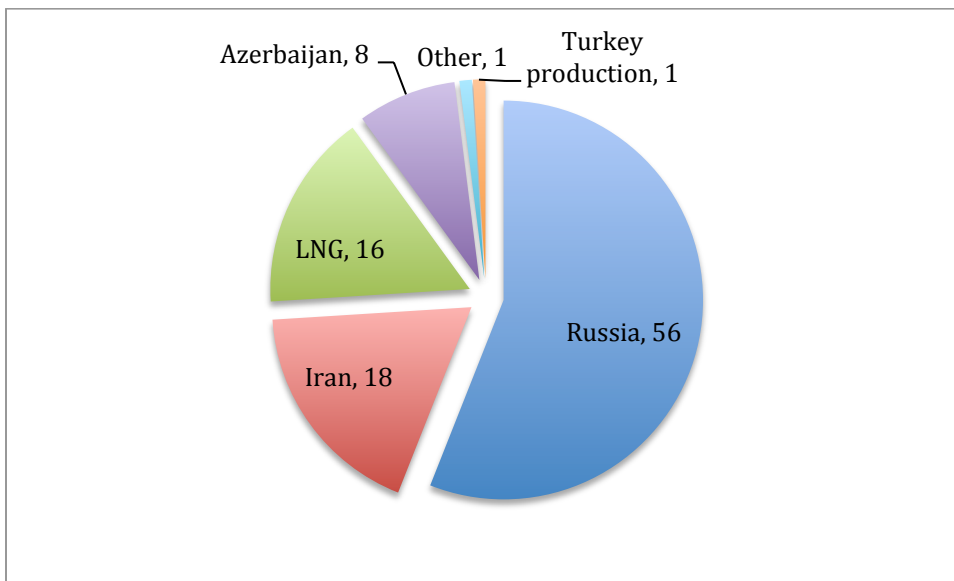
Evidence:

Turkey's overall trade increased with Russia and the West as well as with other countries like China, commensurate with the rise in its GDP during this period. Turkey, after the EU, was Gazprom's second-largest market and Russia is Turkey's most reliable energy supplier and single largest supplier of natural gas. Thanks to the direct link beneath the Black Sea to Russia, the flow of gas from Russia has never been disrupted; Russia even increased the export volume when Iran briefly suspended gas exports to Turkey. During Putin's visit to Turkey in 2009, the two sides signed a number of energy-related agreements involving the expansion of the pipeline network in the Black Sea, providing crude oil for the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline, building of the gas storage depots, and power plants in Turkey; a Russian-Turkish consortium won the tender for constructing the first Turkish nuclear plant in southern Turkey.

Turkey's greater economic ties with Russia is inevitable given it currently meets more than half of its energy needs with exports from Russia and its rapidly growing economy will need even more. In 2013, Turkey had the highest consumer energy prices among the 34 members of the OECD and its electricity demand is expected to grow at a rate of seven percent per year through 2020. According to the International Energy

Agency (IEA), Turkey's energy use will continue to grow at an annual growth rate of around 4.5 percent from 2015 to 2030 and will approximately double over the next decade, one of the fastest growths in energy demand of countries in the OECD. The IEA expects the electricity demand growth to increase at an even faster pace.⁴⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, Russia's share of Turkey's total trade increased while that of the EU and the US declined during this period because Turkey's energy imports from Russia significantly increased (see Figure 17).

Figure 16: Turkey's Natural Gas Supply Mix in 2012 (in percentages)⁴⁶¹



Turkey's business interest groups have also played an important role in increasing Russian-Turkish economic ties as well as maintaining Turkey's EU ties. Parts of the Turkish business community have developed a strong economic stake in trade with Russia. For example, Turkish construction firms such as GAMA, Tekfen, and ENKA have substantial investments in Russia and constitute an important domestic lobby for trade with Russia.⁴⁶² During then Prime Minister Erdogan's 2005 trip to Moscow, six hundred Turkish businessmen accompanied him to expand an already

booming bilateral trade in the fields of construction, retail sales, banking, telecommunications, food and beverage, glass, and machine industries. Some Turkish officials lamented that their government gives gas deals with Russia an undue priority over other energy projects because of effective lobbying by private Turkish construction companies that hold substantial Russian investments.⁴⁶³

During a joint news conference, Erdogan thanked for the share given to Turkish contractors in building for the Winter Olympics and asked for a similar share for the 2018 World Cup, demonstrating the business-minded government's motivation. In St. Petersburg, the two countries' leaders agreed that the bilateral trade volume, now nearly \$38 billion, should reach \$100 billion by 2020. The head of the largest private commercial and financial conglomerate, Koc, in Turkey foresees Turkey's greatest future economic opportunities as lying mainly in Russian and Middle Eastern markets although he made sure to emphasize that the Western markets will remain important.⁴⁶⁴

Turkey's economic ties with the West, especially the EU, have indeed remained strong even though the EU membership process lost its momentum towards the late 2000s. Bilateral trade with the EU at nearly \$170 billion in 2013 is five times the bilateral trade with Russia. The average FDI in Turkey, which had stayed below \$1 billion before 2000, increased to 15.8 billion in 2006 and to \$100 billion in 2013,⁴⁶⁵⁴⁶⁶ and the three quarters of that foreign investment still come from the EU member countries. Despite Erdogan's occasional rhetoric criticizing the slowing accession process due to various issues, Turkey has been committed to its EU membership goal. Right after Erdogan made those comments about the Shanghai Cooperation Organization being "a better, much stronger" club in 2013, he invited EU ambassadors to dinner, playing down his remarks

and trying to convince them that he really does take the relationship seriously.⁴⁶⁷

Admittedly, the accession process was stalled mainly because of some European members' intransigence, especially Cyprus' politically motivated move to block some chapters, and Turkey's lack of political will to complete the necessary reforms. However, in 2013, the EU started negotiations with Ankara on regional affairs, the first time in three years it opened up a new policy area with Turkey.⁴⁶⁸ In October 2014, President Erdogan stated that the EU membership in the bloc remains his long-term strategic goal and the government has rolled out plans for overhauls that would ease its EU path.⁴⁶⁹ In May 2015, Turkey and EU announced a framework for expanding its decades-long Customs Union (CU); two sides will discuss extending the CU to include services, government contracting, and most agricultural goods. This agreement serves to anchor Turkey and the EU members' trade interests in parallel with their close cooperation over the past year on intelligence sharing and security ties to stem the flow of Western fighters to the self-declared Islamic State and to other extremist militant groups in Syria and Iraq.⁴⁷⁰

The role of the NGOs and interest groups has been very constructive in maintaining and increasing Turkey's relations with the EU. Turkey's biggest employers group, Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TUSIAD), has a foreign policy forum, which airs its pro-EU views and it closely works with the universities in this respect. Other economic organizations and think tanks, including the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB), which represents the small business community, Economic Policies Research Institute, and Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation strongly support the European agenda, defining one of the aims of

their foreign policy program as to “contribute to the harmonization of Turkey with the EU.”⁴⁷¹ TUSIAD, TOBB, and the Foundation for Economic Development, have lobbied in the European capitals for Turkey’s EU membership and strongly support the government’s activities for EU membership.⁴⁷²

Turkey also continued to seek closer economic ties with the US during this period. Turkey and the US have a Cabinet-level mechanism for discussing the US-Turkish commercial and economic relations through the Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation (FSECC). In 2013, the two countries set up a High Level Committee to provide a venue for a dialogue between officials from the Turkish Ministry of Economy and the Office of the US Trade Representative as an intergovernmental forum where both sides can develop the idea of a free trade agreement between Turkey and the US. The United States Chamber of Commerce (USCC) and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) have also been working on the idea of a bilateral free trade agreement. In a forthcoming report, the USCC is advocating the idea of a formal “TTIP+3”—the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership the US and the EU are working on—that would bring Turkey, Canada, and Mexico into a “second TTIP round” or a “comprehensive US-Turkey free trade agreement following the conclusion of any TTIP agreement between the United States and the EU.”⁴⁷³

Conclusion:

Turkey’s relations with Russia provide a difficult case to test Turkey’s Western orientation because Turkey’s policy positions or lack thereof, which are strongly

motivated by its economic interests, at times have complicated the Western policies in the region. However, the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that while Turkey and the West sometimes opt for different approaches towards Russia at the tactical level, their interests at the strategic level are closely aligned.

Turkey's response to the Georgian and the Ukrainian crises, and Ankara's pursuit of energy deals with Russia provide evidence for an autonomous foreign policy that prioritizes Turkey's national interests. However, when viewed within its specific context, the lack of a strong response from Turkey—a middle-power state that is much weaker than Russia and has energy dependency on Moscow—is acceptable to the West, just like Ankara's need to continue its energy trade with Russia that is under the Western sanctions is understood by Turkey's Western allies. In this case, Turkey acted more like an autonomous-minded European ally than an adversary.

When it comes to the overarching vision for the region, the preponderance of the evidence shows that Turkey shares the same vision with its Western allies for the region. Turkey strongly supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the former Soviet Union countries and fundamentally opposes Russian aggression in the region. To that end, Turkey has been supporting the security and economic independence of Central Asian and the South Caucasus countries while making efforts to avoid an open geopolitical confrontation with Russia. Turkey and Russia have been on the opposite sides regarding many international conflicts before and after the AKP came to power, including the conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, Syria, Iran, the Azeri-Armenian frozen conflict, and the Ukrainian crisis. Russia militarily and economically supports Turkey's rivals, including Armenia and Cyprus. Turkey's foreign policy principles towards the

regional conflicts, which emphasize dialogue, diplomacy, and economic interdependency for regional peace and prosperity, have been in line with the policies of the US and the EU even though Turkey's approach on emphasizing engagement with rather than containment of Russia differs from that of the US.

As for the drivers of Turkey's foreign policy towards Russia, first of all, international factors such as the end of the Cold War and the bipolar world order and Turkey's stalling EU accession bid had a major impact on warming Turkish-Russian relationship. After announcing Turkey's candidacy in 1999, the EU did not start accession talks with Turkey because of divergent issues such as broadcasting and educating in the Kurdish language, abolition of the death penalty, and solution of the Cyprus problem. Turkey felt betrayed when the Greek Cypriot government entered the EU and rejected the UN plan that the Turkish Cypriots accepted.⁴⁷⁴

Second, Turkish leaders' new foreign policy doctrine, which stresses eliminating conflicts with neighbors and maintaining multidimensional foreign policy, also played a role in Turkey's efforts to maintain closer political and economic ties with Russia and to involve Russia in regional peace efforts. Turkey believes that antagonizing Moscow would destabilize the region and considers Russia as a key party to the resolution of the frozen conflicts in the region.

Third, and most importantly, domestic economic interests, especially Turkey's energy needs, have created powerful incentives to deepen its relationship with Russia and raise it to a higher level of partnership. The energy and trade links between Ankara and Moscow have forced both countries to keep their geopolitical competition and political conflicts at a manageable level. With a trade volume of nearly \$40 billion, rivaled only

by the EU as a bloc, it is understandable why neither Turkey nor Russia wants to antagonize each other despite their diverging interests about emerging political crises in the region. Considering Turkey's energy dependence on Russia and their future joint projects, both countries have strong incentives to maintain stable political relations.

However, Turkish-Russian relationship is bound to experience tension in the future because Turkey and Russia do not have common strategic interests for the regional conflicts at the fundamental level and their increasing economic ties have not eliminated the longstanding mutual mistrust. Pragmatic economic interests of two "trading states" or naked opportunism, rather than well-formulated long-term strategies, have been the real driving force behind the rapprochement between Ankara and Moscow.

Russia is Turkey's major trading partner and the finalization of the Blue Stream pipeline elevated Turkey's status as one of the major recipients of Russian natural gas in Europe. The future of the bilateral energy projects, including the recent Turkish stream, requires the maintenance of a friendly atmosphere based on Richard Rosecrance's "trading state" logic. Yet, the Turkish-Russian relations are not fully institutionalized. Currently, the main motor of bilateral relations between the two countries is the personal dialogue between Erdogan and Putin, resembling the Turkish leaders' energetic cooperation with the Syrian leadership before the Arab Spring.⁴⁷⁵

2. CENTRAL ASIA

Before 2002

The collapse of the Soviet Union opened a world of newly independent Turkic states and Turkey enthusiastically embraced them, becoming the first country to recognize their independence in 1991. Then Prime Minister Demirel declared that a “gigantic Turkish world” was emerging from “the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China,” and spoke of forming an “association” of Turkish states. Then President Ozal announced the next century would be “the century of the Turks.” Central Asians were also excited to have found a long-lost relative. Kazakhstan’s president declared in 1992 that the establishment of official relations between the two countries satisfied “the longing which the Turkish and Kazakh peoples had been feeling for each other for years.”

Turkmenistan’s president noted “our peoples, who were separated artificially in the past, are now coming together again.” Uzbekistan’s President asserted that Turkey was “the most suitable country and the one closest to us in terms of both geography and the policy it is conducting.”⁴⁷⁶

This euphoria did not last long, however. Turkey believed its ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural affinities would pave the way for closer ties and rising Turkish influence, but its initial foray into the region had limited success for several reasons. Turkey lacked the financial and diplomatic resources to play a substantial economic and political role; autocratic Central Asian leaders quickly lost enthusiasm for the Turkish model, which emphasized democracy, secularism, and a free market economy; and finally, the Russian influence on Central Asia was much deeper and entrenched than previously thought. The first Turkic summit in Ankara in 1992 produced little of

substance; the Central Asians, having just emerged from 70 years of Soviet colonialization, did not want to replace one form of domination by another.⁴⁷⁷ Ironically, at the summit of “Turkish-speaking states” in Istanbul in 2001, most of the heads of state spoke Russian, not Turkish. With this realization, Turkey began to focus on economic issues, socio-cultural development, and education, mainly through the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA).⁴⁷⁸ It provided around \$1 billion in foreign aid to Central Asian countries in the last 20 years, one-fourth of its total foreign aid in the same period. In 1999, Turkey was the second-largest investor in Central Asia after Russia and its trade with the region stood around \$1 billion.⁴⁷⁹ Turkey offered to take around 10,000 students from the Turkic republics each year and opened up Turkish schools. Turkish businesses began to set up shops, hotels, and construction companies in Central Asia.⁴⁸⁰

The US and the EU promoted Turkey’s secularism, democratic structure, and market economy as a good model to the Central Asians. For example, US President Bush senior declared Turkey as a model for the Turkish Republics.⁴⁸¹ Turkey’s policy in the region was in line with the US policy underpinned by the 1999 Silk Road Strategy Act, which amended the US Foreign Assistance Act to provide a mandate for the support of the economic and political independence of the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus.⁴⁸² The EU also supported the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia project to fund the development of a transportation corridor from the Black Sea to Central Asia, which would link the region into existing trans-European networks.

Turkish foreign policy towards Central Asia after the AKP came to power will be examined below.

Hypothesis A: *It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in Eurasia.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Central Asia and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Evidence:

There is not enough evidence for the Turkish opposition to the Western policies in Central Asia because Turkish and Western interests are well-aligned in the region aside from the Turkish leadership's occasional rhetoric expressing interest in joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which includes China, Russia and the four Central Asian states.

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies' vision for the Central Asia region and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Evidence:

There were some Western concerns in late 1990s and early 2000s, that Turkey was trying to carve out its own sphere of influence in Central Asia and create a Union of Turkic-Muslim states on ideological grounds. Davutoglu's book *Strategic Depth* seemed to lend credence to that view. He argued that Turkey's character requires making full use of its "natural sphere of influence," opening up to former Ottoman territories, and

adjoining regions inhabited by the Turkic and Muslim peoples. According to Davutoglu, “Turkey’s national interest lies in the proper utilization of its geography” which would make it possible for Turkey to become the “central country” it is destined to be.⁴⁸³

However, Turkey’s foreign policy actions do not support such attempt to carve out its own sphere of influence at the expense of the West and there is insufficient evidence to claim Turkey’s vision for Central Asia differs from that of its Western allies.

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the Eurasia region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Evidence:

Turkey’s policy of increasing economic interdependence in the region and promoting free trade areas, in addition to some pro-Eurasian rhetoric, have raised some low-level concern about Ankara’s orientation. The Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey has established a framework, titled the “Turkey-Eurasia Foreign Trade Bridge,” which aims to connect the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Caspian Sea regions and to transform the region into a free trade zone. In its 2007 convention, it hosted 72 bureaucrats from Eurasian countries, 500 businesspeople from 12 Eurasian countries, and 1,200 Turkish businessmen to explore joint business opportunities.⁴⁸⁴

Turkey and the Turkic Republics also cooperate through the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which was founded by Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan in 1990, and also includes Azerbaijan and the five Central Asian countries. The organization aims to improve economic cooperation, including through free movement of goods, harmonization of customs, and removal of

visas.⁴⁸⁵ Turkey has already removed visa requirements for the Central Asian countries, greatly easing the movement of goods and labor. Erdogan also floated the idea of joining the Customs Union of Kazakhstan, Russia, and Belarus, even though becoming a Customs Union member would make Ankara ineligible to become a EU member in the future.

Hypothesis B: *It states that recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy in the Eurasia region does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in Central Asia.

Evidence:

Turkey's policy in Central Asia, which aims at bolstering the independence and economic development of these countries, maintaining the regional stability, and ensuring its energy security, is in line with the US and EU policies in the region. In a 2012 interview with an Egyptian outlet, then Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu stated that Turkey's primary objectives toward Central Asian countries have concentrated on supporting "the efforts for a working democracy and free-market economy, political and economic reform process, political and economic stability and prosperity in the region." He also emphasized that Turkey hopes to "contribute to the emergence of an environment conducive to regional cooperation, support their vocation toward Euro-Atlantic institutions, and to assist them to benefit from their own energy resources."⁴⁸⁶

The US policy toward Central Asia has historically been aimed at strengthening

the independence of the Central Asian states and checking on the ambitions of Russia and Iran in the region. After the war in Afghanistan, the US began to pay more attention to the region from the security perspective to support the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan, maintain regional stability, keep out religious terrorism, and to improve regional connectivity and integration for a stable and prosperous Central and South Asia region. Washington used to have an air base in Uzbekistan until 2006 and a transit center in Kyrgyzstan until 2014. In a recent address at the Brookings Institution, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed Washington's three important objectives in the region, which included strengthening partnerships to advance mutual security, forging closer economic ties, and advancing and advocating for improved governance and human rights." Blinken cited Washington's New Silk Road initiative aimed at helping develop the region's connectivity."⁴⁸⁷

EU member countries supported the US policies in the region, mainly through the NATO activities in Afghanistan, and later through increased trade and promotion of democratic values via outlets such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE). In 2005, the EU created the position of Central Asia representative and in 2007 it adopted the "European Union and Central Asia Strategy for a New Partnership" document for a more comprehensive approach under the guidance of Germany. As Russia increased its influence on the former Soviet countries, exemplified by the Ukrainian natural gas crisis in 2008—when Russia cut off gas to Ukraine for political reasons and caused gas shortages in Europe—the EU began to develop a direct relationship with Central Asia with the aim of ending these states' dependence on Russia and diversifying its energy resources. This goal suits the interests of the Central Asian

states as well, especially that of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, who want to transport its vast oil and natural gas resources to the world market via non-Russian routes. A recent 476-page report from the International Energy Agency stated that the EU's energy security increasingly depends on the production in and safe transit of energy goods through the neighboring countries," and highlighted Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan as emerging oil and gas powerhouses.⁴⁸⁸

Turkey has fully supported the US and the EU policies in Central Asia. In early 2000s, the US hailed Turkey as a secular and democratic model for the Central Asian states, and provided diplomatic and economic support to reinforce Turkey's position as a vital participant in the region's political and economic development. Ankara's policies in the region, which aim at maintaining regional peace, stability, and prosperity, are in line with Washington's objectives. As a NATO member, Turkey was a strong supporter of the war in Afghanistan. Ankara deployed around 1,750 Turkish troops and reconstruction teams as a part of the International Security Assistance Force and used Turkish aid to promote post-conflict reconstruction and capacity building.⁴⁸⁹ In order to maintain regional stability in Central and South Asia, Turkey spearheaded the Istanbul process with the participation of 14 regional countries. It supports the nations and regional and international organizations that aim to tackle the challenges facing the regional countries and contribute to peace and stability in Afghanistan and in the wider region through capacity building efforts.⁴⁹⁰

When the Uzbekistani security forces killed hundreds of people during a violent protest in 2005, known as the Andijon Massacre, the US was critical of the country's human rights violations, leading to the closure of its base in the country. The EU placed

an embargo on Uzbekistan though it was unable to continue the embargo due to Russia and China's opposition. Turkey also condemned Uzbekistan's crackdown on protestors, leading to the closure of many Turkish businesses and freezing of bilateral relations for the next decade.

Turkey's desire to become an energy hub between Central Asia and Europe and its policy to support the Central Asian states' economic development to reduce their dependence on Russia were also in line with the US and the EU's energy policy for the region. Kazakhstan was able to export a small volume of oil through Azerbaijan and Turkey is actively involved in the talks about various Southern gas corridor projects to bring Turkmen gas through Azerbaijan and Turkey to Europe.

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for the Central Asia region and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Evidence:

Turkey's vision for the region, "a stable, independent and prosperous Central Asia" according to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, is similar to the vision of its Western allies. Turkey has shown less appetite for asserting its independence in Central Asia, compared to its approach in the Middle East and made it clear that it has no intention of creating a Turkic sphere of influence that would complicate the Western interests in the region. Then Foreign Minister Gul also underlined the pragmatism of Turkish policies by stating in 2004 that Turkey's foreign policy in Eurasia was not guided by "ideological, emotional or narrow national considerations."⁴⁹¹

Turkey has been a staunch supporter of the political and economic sovereignty of

the Central Asian states by engaging them through high-level diplomacy and helping them integrate with the global market. In 2009, Ankara signed a Strategic Partnership treaty with Astana during the visit of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and established the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC). Turkey and Kazakhstan expanded the areas of cooperation during Erdogan's visit in May 2012. In October of that year, Kazakhstan's president visited Turkey for the first meeting of the HLSCC. During the foreign minister's visit in 2013, the Joint Strategic Planning meeting was held under the HLSCC.⁴⁹² Turkey also established the HLSCC with Kyrgyzstan in 2011. During Erdogan's visit to the country in 2013, he said Kyrgyzstan's democracy had given Turkey hope, while his counterpart responded that Turkey was a model for the development of Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁹³ Turkmen president's two visits to Turkey in 2012 brought the two countries together in various joint projects for investment. Turkish president visited the country in 2013 and the prime minister paid another visit in 2014.⁴⁹⁴

Turkey also supported close cooperation with Central Asian states in the international organizations, such as the OSCE, Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Turkic Council, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Economic Cooperation organization, and sought to contribute to the regional peace and stability by mediating between the parties in Central Asia. Ankara actively supported Kazakhstan's bid to join the World Trade Organization and to the rotating lead of the OSCE. Turkey sought to mediate disputes over oil and gas fields in the Caspian between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. Ankara has actively cooperated with the Central Asian countries through the CICA, which aims to enhance peace, security, and stability in Asia.⁴⁹⁵ On the 9th Summit of the Heads of State of Turkish Speaking Countries in Nakhchivan in 2009, the

leaders signed an agreement to establish the Council of Cooperation of Turkish Speaking States, also known as the Turkic Council; its first Summit was held in Kazakhstan in 2011.⁴⁹⁶

Growing pluralism in Turkey and increasing emphasis on economic and socio-cultural issues—as the Foreign Ministry’s role has increased at the expense of the military—played an important role on Turkish foreign policy toward Central Asia. The ministries of Culture and Energy, nongovernmental agencies, and the business interest groups, such as the construction industry, have exerted substantial influence on foreign policy. The Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA), set up in 1992, plays an important role in Central Asia by facilitating the activities of businessmen, organizing cultural exchanges, and assisting in socio-economic development projects such as building hospitals and schools. Almost half of the assistance Turkey provides to Central Asia goes to social infrastructure. The Hizmet movement—the followers of Turkish religious scholar Fetullah Gulen—has also played an important unofficial role in promoting Turkish interests in Central Asia, especially in the field of education, though the movement’s recent fights with the current government in Turkey may result in waning of its influence. Turkey also provides scholarships of higher education to students from the Turkic communities, bringing over 10,000 students to Turkey every year, and the Turkish Ministry of Education and civil societal organizations have opened over 300 schools in these countries.⁴⁹⁷

Turkey’s new “value-based” foreign policy principles, which aim to develop soft power in Central Asia, are also in line with the US, especially with the EU foreign policy. Gul stated that Turkey does not look at its environment and to the international system

from a security perspective.⁴⁹⁸ Davutoglu's five principles—which include balance between freedom and security, zero problems with neighbors, multi-dimensional and multi-track policies, a pro-active diplomatic discourse, and transition to rhythmic diplomacy—are also in conformity with the EU's "Good neighbor" policy and its agenda for Turkey. The EU requires the applicant countries to settle their differences with their neighbors in a peaceful way and have good neighborly relations before becoming members.⁴⁹⁹⁵⁰⁰

Turkey's policy priorities in Central Asia, which include ensuring that these new states acquire the necessary abilities to establish stability and security to effectively cope with regional and domestic problems, is backed by civil society activities. TIKA's role has only grown under the new Turkish foreign policy. In 2009, half of Turkey's Official Development Aid, around \$665 million, went to Central Asia and the Caucasus. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were among the three largest recipients of Turkish aid.⁵⁰¹ These funds sponsored projects in economic and industrial infrastructure development, health and education sectors, academic cooperation between Turkish and Eurasian universities, internship programs in Turkey for Central Asian and Caucasian university students, Turkish language programs, and the promotion of business and trade.⁵⁰²

In addition to encouraging the republics to adopt the Latin alphabet instead of Cyrillic, Turkey established many Turkish Culture Centers and schools including several universities. Kazakhstan's president publicly praised the importance of Turkish schools in Kazakhstan. In April 2015, Erdogan visited Kazakhstan and made \$800 million dollar deal and discussed areas of cooperation in energy and transportation, including the possibility of connecting Zhezkazgan-Beineu railway with a new Akhalkalaki (Georgia) -

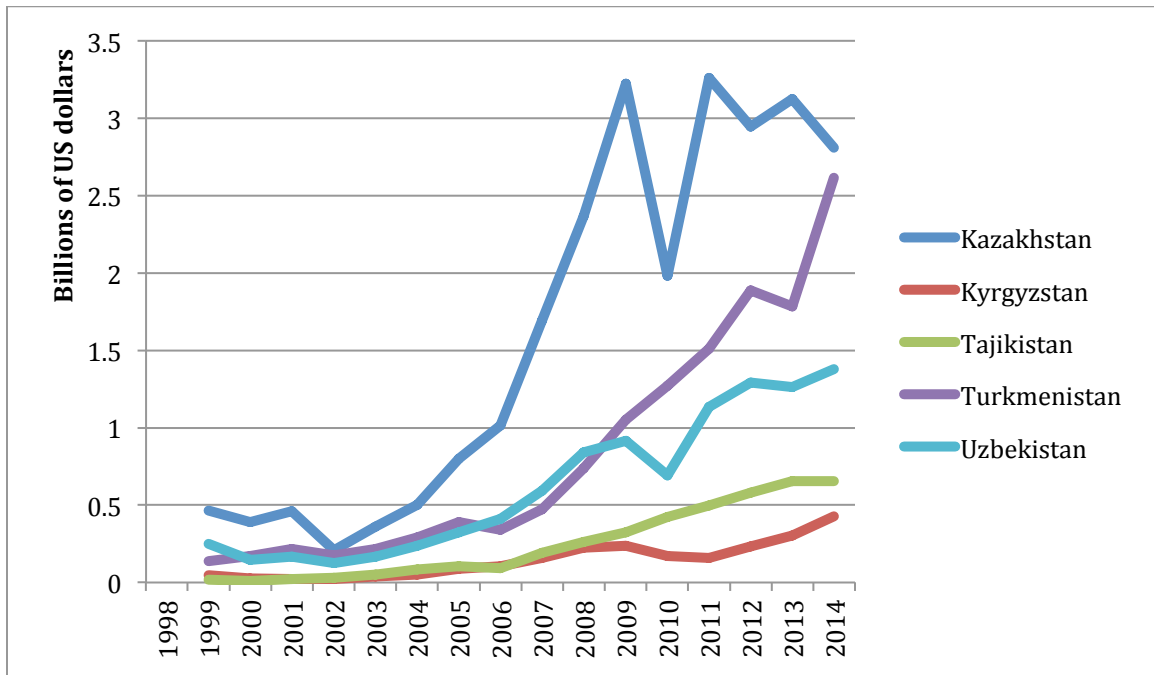
Kars (Turkey) railway line, which is under construction. That line would give Kazakhstan access to the European countries through the port of Baku and Istanbul on the new railway tunnel Marmaray.⁵⁰³

Prediction 3: Turkey's bilateral trade would increase with both the Central Asian and the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with the Central Asian countries but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

Evidence:

Turkey's trade and investment with the Central Asian countries increased during the AKP period and Ankara's increasing engagement with the region on energy trade and transportation greatly benefit the EU's energy security and Washington's goal of reducing Russian influence in the region. Turkey's trade volume with the region reached \$7.5 in 2013 with Turkish investment exceeding \$5 billion (see Figure 18). Turkish contractors' projects exceed \$50 billion with more than 2000 Turkish companies operating on the ground, according to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey also signed bilateral agreements with the Central Asian countries such as the Turkey-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Commission to improve bilateral trade relations between the two countries. Following a series of diplomatic visits, Turkey and Kazakhstan signed a Strategic Partnership Treaty in 2009.⁵⁰⁴ Following an official visit by the Tajikistani president to Turkey in 2006 and a series of reciprocal visits, the two countries' presidents participated in the Tajik-Turkish Business Forum conducted in 2009. Turkey's Joint Economic Commissions with the countries of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan were also held in 2008, 2008 and 2009, respectively.⁵⁰⁵

Figure 17: Turkey's Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with Central Asian Countries⁵⁰⁶



Turkey's economic interests—providing alternative outlets for Turkish exporting businesses and investors and seeking alternative sources of energy to reduce its dependence on Russia and Iran—also influenced Turkish foreign policy in Central Asia. Turkish business groups played a significant role in this regard. Under the AKP, the small-scale family businesses in Anatolia, which are more dynamic, flexible, and able to make inroads without a great deal of capital, emerged as a new cadre of businessmen in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). These SMEs, key to Turkey's rapid economic growth, were increasingly active in Turkey's expanding businesses in Central Asia. In 2007, the representatives of the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges and a large number of businesspeople accompanied then President Gul in his trip to Turkmenistan, where Turkish contractors account for nearly 90 percent of all construction project, according to the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Turkey's potential role as an energy bridge between Central Asia and Europe, which would increase its attractiveness to the EU member countries, also entered in Ankara's policy calculus. Davutoglu stated in a 2013 paper that Turkey's approach to Central Asia is based on several principles, which include abstaining from destructive competition, fostering cooperation in the Asia-Europe region, and harmonizing its regional interests with the EU membership process and its trans-Atlantic alliance relations.⁵⁰⁷

Despite stalling reforms on the road to EU membership, Ankara has recently shown a renewed interest in its EU bid. After moving to the presidency in 2014, Erdogan said the EU membership in the bloc remains his long-term strategic goal and the government made concrete plans to revive the process.⁵⁰⁸ In fact, Turkey's access to the EU markets made Ankara even more attractive to the Central Asian states that are trying to increase economic cooperation with the West to reduce their dependence on Russia.⁵⁰⁹ While the SMEs are more active in Central Asia and the Middle East, larger Turkish corporations have generally focused on the more established markets in Europe, where Turkey enjoys duty-free access via a customs union.

Conclusion:

Turkish foreign policy in Central Asia under the AKP government has focused on the region's stability, economic prosperity, and integration with the world. The region is one area where Turkey's interests and the Western interests are the most aligned, evidenced by the lack of examples where Turkish and the Western policies or interests clash. Turkey's active political and economic engagement in the region increases Turkey's stake in the regional stability and contributes to the efforts aimed at rooting out

religious terrorism in the region. Increasing Turkish influence in Central Asia also reduces the influence of Russia, which has become more aggressive recently, and Iran, which has the potential of spreading its Islamic ideology, even though Ankara has made efforts to maintain a balanced policy and eschewed competition in the region. Ankara's efforts at becoming an energy bridge between Central Asia and Europe enhances Turkey's and the EU's energy security while helping the Central Asian countries develop further ties with the West and reduce their dependence on Russia.

International factors such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and opening up of the new Turkic world as well as the domestic factors, including the Turkish leaders' new foreign policy concept, which emphasizes zero problems with neighbors and proactive foreign policy to increase Turkey's influence and soft power, have played an important role in Ankara's outreach to the region. However, Turkey's economic interests, increasing Turkish exports and investment in the region—advanced by strong business lobbies—and Turkey's desire to benefit from the region's vast energy resources had even greater impact on Turkey's policy in the region. Turkish trade with the regional economies is dominated by Turkey's exports, contributing to its trade surplus with the region. While Turkey is a top trading partner for almost all of the Central Asian states, no Central Asian country lies within the list of Turkey's top 20 trading partners.

Turkey's outreach to Central Asia has its limitations, however. Compared to Turkey's policy in the region in the 1990s, its new foreign policy has moderate and more realistic goals to achieve. Turkey had high hopes of integrating the Turkic republics into the Western-oriented political-economic structures in the 1990s, but due to a host of complex issues with Central Asian post-Soviet regimes, Ankara abandoned the idea of

promoting democratic reforms in favor a focus on regional security. In line with Turkey's ill-matched political and economic capabilities—as opposed to Beijing's massive spending spree on the regional gas pipelines and infrastructure projects, or Kremlin's coercive actions in the region—Turkish policymakers have generally maintained a low political profile in the region that is consistent with a strategy of non-interference.

On the socio-cultural front, the AKP showed much more interest in Central Asia than did the earlier Islamist Welfare Party, partly because the AKP received a great deal of electoral support from the nationalist strongholds in central Anatolia who support close Turkish ties with Central Asia. However, the Turkish leaders are unlikely to let Ankara's ties with Central Asia outweigh its strong economic ties to Russia.⁵¹⁰ As then Prime Minister Gul stated, Turkey would “pursue cooperative relations that do not harm either party's interests in line with good-neighborly practices with the Russian Federation, and in line with our cultural affinities with the Central Asian and Caucasian Republics.”⁵¹¹

3. THE CAUCASUS

Before 2002:

The collapse of the Soviet Union created opportunities for Turkey in the energy-rich Caucasus region and Turkey became one of the first countries to recognize these countries' independence. The presidents of Georgia and Azerbaijan publicly professed friendship for Turkey and sought intensified cooperation soon after independence. In 1991, President Ozal became the first Turkish president to visit Baku and in 1992, then president of Azerbaijan visited Ankara to sign the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. At the opening of a Turkish channel in Baku in 1998, Azerbaijani president praised Turkey as Azerbaijan's closest friend and supporter,⁵¹² and Georgia signed its first defense cooperation agreement with Turkey in 1997.

In contrast, the Turkish-Armenian relations remain strained by the legacy of the massacre of the Ottoman Armenians in 1915-1916 and more recently by the frozen conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian-populated enclave in Azerbaijan. Turkish-Armenian relations are marked by deep mutual mistrust between the two countries and occasionally led to clashes with Russia, Armenia's main supporter and security guarantor in the region. Turkish officials still remember the number of Turkish diplomats assassinated in the 1980s by members of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia.⁵¹³ Turkish officials also suspected that the Armenian nationalists had close links with the PKK, providing bases in Armenia and supplying them with weaponry.⁵¹⁴ Turkey recognized Armenia's independence in 1991 like that of other former Soviet states, opened a consulate in Yerevan, but did not establish full diplomatic relations because of its failure to conclude a bilateral accord in which the Armenians would

renounce their claims to the Turkish territory. Turkey also maintained it would not normalize diplomatic relations until Yerevan withdraws its forces from all the territory it occupied in Azerbaijan.⁵¹⁵

The escalation of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh forestalled any possible moves towards normalization of relations. In 1992, the Turkish armed forces held maneuvers near the border with Armenia, prompting the Russian commander of the Commonwealth of Independent States Armed Forces to declare that a Turkish military intervention could lead to a Third World War. The opposition leftists party leader Ecevit called for the launching of air strikes against Armenia and then Turkish prime minister warned that she would ask the parliament for authorization to go to war if Armenia attacked Nakhichevan. Then Turkish president calmed the situation arguing that such war would be perceived by the outside world as a Christian-Muslim struggle and damage relations with the US. Following Armenia's extension of its occupation of the Azerbaijani territory by capturing Kelbajar, Turkey imposed an embargo on Armenia in 1993. Ankara lifted its blockade in 1995 after the hostilities had ceased and under diplomatic pressure from the US.⁵¹⁶ Bilateral tension somewhat eased in late 1990s with the Turkish state minister's official visit to Yerevan in 1999 and a reciprocal visit from the Armenian president.

Turkey's past relations with Georgia and Azerbaijan were not without conflict either, but both sides were eager to resolve the problems quickly to maintain mutual trust. Even though Turkey had been a firm supporter of Azerbaijan's sovereignty, the two countries experienced tension when the ultranationalist groups connected to the Turkish intelligence tried but failed to overthrow pro-Russian President Haydar Aliyev in a

planned coup to restore the former pro-Turkish president, who was overthrown by Russian help. Relations were quickly restored, however, with both sides making an effort to continue diplomatic visits and security cooperation.

Because the Ottomans had ruled what is now southwest Georgia until the late nineteenth century, there are around 750,000 Abkhazians in Turkey, nearly three times more Abkhazians than those in Georgia.⁵¹⁷ Georgian authorities were concerned about this community's pressure on the Turkish government to adopt a more supportive line towards the Abkhazians. Immediately after the Soviet breakup, central authorities in Georgia were also suspicious of Turkey's possible links with the Muslim-populated Ajaria, a region seeking more autonomy from Tbilisi. Turkey worked to increase mutual trust with the Georgians by increasing high-level visits and signing several defense agreements in 1997 and 1999.⁵¹⁸ By 1995, Georgia was able to reduce its dependence on Russia and cultivate closer ties with Turkey, prompting Yeltsin to warn against "any attempt to drive a wedge between the Caucasus and Russia," referring to Turkey.⁵¹⁹

While engaging with the Caucasian countries, Turkey tried to maintain a balanced foreign policy by including Russia into the regional frameworks. In 2000, Turkey and Russia launched a joint initiative to create a "South Caucasus Stability Pact," similar to the Balkans Stability Pact. It would be open to the OSCE members, base its principles on the OSCE norms and values, increase Turkey's regional profile, and enhance the Western involvement and Russian cooperation in the region.⁵²⁰ However, continuous disputes over Nagorno-Karabakh and Moscow's lack of enthusiasm inhibited its implementation.

At the same time, Turkey was concerned about Russia's aggressive policy toward Turkey's neighbors in the Caucasus, which could threaten Turkey's security. Moscow

dragged its feet in withdrawing from its base in Georgia, which it agreed to vacate by 2001, introduced a visa regime for Georgians working in Russia, and periodically cut off gas to Georgia to exert political pressure. Russia also sought to use the separatist tendencies in Abkhazia and South Ossetia to put pressure on Georgia during this period; the Russian Duma amended a law in 2002, allowing the residents of these territories to become Russian citizens. Turkey also worried that a serious shift in Georgia's position back toward Russia could endanger the plans for the BTC pipeline and leave Azerbaijan more exposed. In 2001, Russia also signed a series of defense agreements with Armenia, broadening defense cooperation and strengthening Moscow's military position in the region. Turkey was irked by Russia's decision to supply Armenia with MIG-29s and S-300 missiles, deployed in the Russian bases in Armenia.⁵²¹

Turkey's foreign policy in the Caucasus after the AKP came to power will be examined below.

Hypothesis A: *It states that the recent changes in Turkish foreign policy stemming from international and domestic level factors indicate a fundamental reorientation of Ankara's foreign policy away from the US and the EU in favor of a completely autonomous regional power that would try to limit the Western influence in Eurasia.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely oppose or confound the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in the Caucasus region and take a stance systematically at odds with the Western interests.

Evidence:

Turkey's strained relationship with Armenia is a major point of contention in

Ankara's relations with its Western allies. Efforts by the Armenian lobby in the US and in European countries to introduce genocide resolutions condemning Turkey for the massacre of the Armenians in 1915 have exacerbated these tensions and continue to damage the Turkish-Western relations.⁵²² The Turkish-French relations were damaged when the French Parliament passed a resolution making it illegal to deny the "Armenian genocide."

The Armenian lobbies around the world gained momentum for the centennial anniversary of the killings in April 2015. Pope's use of the word "genocide" led Turkey to summon the Vatican ambassador and recall its ambassador. The European Parliament passed a resolution using the word "genocide" to describe the 1915 killing of Armenians and Germany also used the word "genocide," further straining the Turkish-EU relations.⁵²³ Erdogan lashed out at France, Germany, and Austria as well as at Russian president, who also called the killings "genocide." Erdogan accused the European leaders of supporting "claims constructed on Armenian lies," and said "they should first, one-by-one, clean the stains on their own histories."⁵²⁴

The Armenian issue has also created tension in the Turkish-US relations. A non-binding resolution calling the World War I-era killing of Armenians genocide narrowly passed by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives under the pressures of the Armenian diaspora in March 2010, leading Turkey to recall its ambassador. Turkish General Mehmet Yasar Buyukanit warned that Turkey's "military relations with the US would never be as they were in the past" if the House passed the measure. In an October poll in Turkey, 73 percent of Turks surveyed said that if the House passed the resolution, their opinion of the US would decline, and 83 percent said

that they would oppose Turkish assistance to the US in Iraq.⁵²⁵ The measure failed to pass. In April 2015, even though President Obama stopped short of using the term in his annual message, opting instead for the Armenian term Medz Yeghern (great catastrophe), in his speech commemorating the centennial anniversary of the killings, Erdogan, nevertheless, accused the US of siding with Armenia.⁵²⁶⁵²⁷

Prediction 2: Turkey would not share its Western allies' vision for the Caucasus region and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would exceed the bounds of what the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners consider acceptable.

Evidence:

Turkey's closing of its border with Armenia and lack of diplomatic representation because of unresolved territorial issues and Armenia's takeover of Nagorno Karabakh, remains as the sticking point in Turkish-Western relations. Turkey's attempt at maintaining a balanced foreign policy towards the region between Russia and the West has at times drawn negative reaction from the US and the EU. Turkey's reluctance to take a stronger stance along the side of the Georgians during the Georgian-Russian war of 2008 was criticized as Ankara appeasing Moscow's aggression. Turkey felt squeezed between the demands of its important economic partner Russia and its long-term allies, the US and the NATO as well as the Georgians. The Turkish citizens of north Caucasian-origin, including Abkhazians, Ossetians, and Georgians took to the streets demanding actions from the government during the crisis.⁵²⁸

Prediction 3: Turkey would orient its trade towards non-Western trading blocs that try to limit the influence of the West in the Eurasia region and it would reject or give up its pursuit of EU membership.

Evidence:

Turkey's efforts at increasing economic interdependence in the region and promoting free trade areas could lead to some concern about Ankara's economic orientation to the region. Turkey signed a Free Trade Agreement with Georgia in 2007 and lifted visa applications for 90 day-stays, leading to increased trade and investment in the region.⁵²⁹ In fact, Turkish and Georgian citizens are able to travel to each other's country with their national identity documents, without even passports. Turkish-Azeri trade ties also increased during the AKP period, especially after the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline (BTC) became operational in 2006, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline (BTE) became operational in 2007, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway was launched in 2007.⁵³⁰

During this time, Ankara's EU accession process significantly slowed down, however. Some European countries such as France and Germany kept raising barriers to the EU entry, insisting that Turkey was too big, too poor and above all too Muslim to qualify. In November 2013, the head of the influential Turkish Industry and Business Association said they were "deeply worried about the impression that Turkey and the EU are drifting apart."⁵³¹

Hypothesis B: *It states that recent changes in Turkish foreign policy resulting from international and domestic level factors demonstrate that while there is a significant change in the direction of autonomy, Turkey's foreign policy in the Eurasia region does not represent a fundamental shift away from the West.*

Prediction 1: Turkey would largely support or conform to the policies of its NATO allies, specifically the US and the EU, in the Caucasus.

Evidence:

Turkey's support for the sovereignty and economic development of Georgia and Azerbaijan contributes to the EU and the US policies in the region. Turkey has been a key country supporting Georgia's NATO membership and helping Georgia to reform its armed forces to match the NATO standards. After the "Rose Revolution" in Georgia, Tbilisi's relations with NATO have rapidly improved under the Individual Partnership Action Plan. Turkey maintained close political and economic ties with Azerbaijan and supported Baku's efforts to transport its energy resources to Europe through Turkey, helping Azerbaijan reduce its dependence on Russia. These efforts contribute to the EU's goals for energy security—which became even more important after the Russian intervention in Ukraine—and to the US objective of decreasing Russian influence in the region. A recent International Energy Agency report discusses the Southern Gas Corridor projects, including the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) that are expected to carry Caspian gas, specifically Azeri gas, to Europe reducing the EU's dependence on Russia.⁵³² A ground-breaking ceremony to prepare the backbone of the TANAP took place in Turkey in March 2015.

In line with the desires of its Western allies, Turkey took some small steps to improve its lack of political relations with Armenia during the AKP period, but the efforts failed mostly because of the opposing voices from the Armenian diaspora and Turkish nationalists. Erdogan proposed in 2005 to turn the highly contentious issue of past Ottoman massacres of Armenians over to an international scholarly panel for resolution, arguing against leaving it to politicians to pass a historical judgment. However, the Armenians rejected it and put forward its own proposal in 2007 to establish

alternative commissions to discuss various outstanding issues between the two countries after the normalization of diplomatic relations. In 2007, Turkey opened the historical Armenian Church in Van as a museum and an Armenian committee came to Turkey for the opening ceremony but the expected visits from the Armenian foreign minister or the minister of culture to commemorate the opening did not take place, missing another chance to thaw the bilateral relations.

Then Foreign Minister Davutoglu expressed Turkish desire to have good relations with Armenia in 2008, stating that Turkey does not see Armenia as a threat or enemy.⁵³³ That year, a group of 200 Turkish intellectuals issued an apology for what they call “the Great Catastrophe that the Ottoman Armenians were subjected to in 1915” and expressed their shared feelings of pain with their Armenian brothers. Then Turkish President Gul accepted an invitation from his Armenian counterpart to watch a soccer match in September 2008 in a first-ever visit of a Turkish head of state to Yerevan, paving the way for the Turkish-Armenian framework agreement toward reconciliation in April 2009. The Protocol on Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, signed with Armenia in Zurich in October 2009 identified a roadmap for normalization of bilateral relations in a mutually satisfactory manner. The official statement from the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs was positive, but the Turkish nationalists took to the streets to protest against the agreement, while the Dashnaktsutyun party in Armenia withdrew from the ruling coalition in protest against the talks with Turkey.

Hopes for normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations were dashed when a strong anti-Turkish group led by the Armenian Tasnaktsutyun Party, which had strong economic and political links with the Armenian Diaspora, expressed its opposition to any

rapprochement with Turkey. Turkish prime minister also announced in 2009 that Turkey would not open its land border with Armenia unless Yerevan ends the occupation of the Azeri territory. In April 2010, Armenian president declared that his government would unilaterally postpone the ratification of the Protocol within the Armenian parliament to a future term.

However, in a rare public speech in April 2014, then Prime Minister Erdogan offered “condolences” for the mass killing of Armenians during the Ottoman era and said he was “sorry” for what happened. Even though the critics pointed out that Erdogan’s statement fell short of acknowledging what happened, which would have been a politically unpopular move before the presidential elections later that year and parliamentary elections in 2015, it nonetheless shows the change in Turkey’s pluralistic society, which allows discourse and debate on such sensitive topics as the Kurdish and Armenian issues.⁵³⁴⁵³⁵ The recent friction with the world leaders during the centennial commemoration of the tragedy probably will continue to strain Turkey’s relations with Armenia.

At the height of the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement, Turkey’s close ally Azerbaijan expressed its displeasure for Turkey’s normalization of relations before the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh issue. At the time when Turkey and Armenia were preparing the framework for normalization process, Baku made a deal to accept Moscow’s purchase offer for its 500 million cm gas per annum to be sold to Dagestan; Turkey had counted on these reserves in justifying the existence of the Nabucco pipeline project.⁵³⁶ When the normalization process failed with the Armenian president’s suspension of the Protocols, Turkey realized that its foreign policy goals in the region can

only be resolved with restoring the former Turkish-Azerbaijani relations and swiftly returned to its former policy line and reiterated Azerbaijani claims over the lands under the occupation of Yerevan. Baku welcomed the change by making an official visit to Ankara in December 2009, which also seemed to ease the problems between the two states over the price of gas.⁵³⁷

Prediction 2: Turkey would share its Western allies' vision for the Caucasus region and its foreign policy initiatives in the region would be acceptable to the US, the EU, and its other NATO partners.

Evidence:

Turkey's vision for the region during the AKP period, with strong emphasis on supporting the sovereignty, economic development, and global integration of the countries in the Caucasus, has been in line with the US and the EU's vision for the region. Turkey has strongly supported the Caucasus countries in their efforts to modernize and strengthen ties with the West since their independence.⁵³⁸ Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia all signed up for the NATO's Partnership for Peace programs, but the NATO has been circumspect about Russia's interests in the South Caucasus because Russia remains extremely suspicious of the role of the US and NATO in the region. Ankara concluded an "Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance" with Azerbaijan in 2010 and issued a Joint Statement on the establishment of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council, consolidating the legal framework for expanding bilateral relations. Georgia and Turkey signed the Declaration of Friendship and Cooperation in 2004 and Ankara continued to support improvements in Georgia's defense sector.

The AKP's policy of zero problems with neighbors, proactive diplomacy, and use of soft power to achieve regional peace and economic interdependence played an important role in its Caucasian policy. Ankara has also made efforts to achieve comprehensive peace in the South Caucasus, in line with the interests of its Western allies, believing that regional cooperation opportunities will encourage the parties towards a settlement.⁵³⁹ Turkish politicians pursued trilateral talks with Armenia and Azerbaijan for the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations and for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Then Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan met with both Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts in 2008 in the hope of finding a solution to the problem.⁵⁴⁰ Turkey also actively participated in the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group, which seeks a peaceful, just, and lasting settlement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In December 2013, then Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu attended the gathering of foreign ministers from the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in Yerevan, the first senior Turkish official's visit to Armenia since the failure of the 2009 signings of a framework agreement on reconciliation. He said he was motivated by a desire to promote peace in the South Caucasus, but his Armenian counterpart said bilateral ties can only be normalized "without any preconditions," referring to Ankara's previous demands that Armenia return the occupied territories around Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan.⁵⁴¹

Turkey has tremendous soft power in Azerbaijan as its relations with Azerbaijan is close to "one nation, two states" in the words of the Azerbaijani President Aliyev. Their strategic relations received a further boost from the oil and gas pipeline connections

benefitting both countries' political and economic interests. Azerbaijan went so far as to allow direct flights from Baku to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus when international support was needed for the Turkish case.⁵⁴² Turkish-Azeri relations have also been developing in education and cultural spheres. Azeri students come to Turkey for education and young diplomats receive training by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are 15 middle schools and 11 high schools as well as a university in Azerbaijan that were opened with direct Turkish investment and contribution. Turkish television programs are widely watched in Azerbaijan and Turkey was behind the push towards the reintroduction of the Latin alphabet in Azerbaijan, bringing the two languages even closer.⁵⁴³

Turkey also made efforts to find a peaceful resolution to Georgia's Abkhazia problem while continuing to support the territorial integrity of Georgia. Mostly influenced by the demands of Turkish citizens of both Georgian and North Caucasian origin, Turkey tried to bring the two sides together and offered alternative openings, but its efforts proved fruitless. When the tension between Georgia and Russia heightened and Russia's retaliation by ceasing the delivery of gas in the winter of 2007 led to gas shortages in Georgia, Turkey allowed natural gas destined for Turkey to be diverted to Georgia to help out.⁵⁴⁴ When the conflict broke out, Turkey immediately sent 100,000 tons of food aid and started a project to build 100 houses for refugees in Gori, near South Ossetia. The Turkish company TAV continued the operation of Tbilisi airport during the military conflict.⁵⁴⁵

After its initial muted reaction to the Russia-Georgia war in 2008, Ankara became rather active with Erdogan's direct involvement and proposal for a multilateral

diplomatic initiative, the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform.⁵⁴⁶ The Platform brought together Turkey and Russia with the three Caucasus countries, called for economic and energy cooperation among the countries, and highlighted the importance of regional peace and stability. Although this is not a completely new idea—then Turkish President Demirel had proposed the Caucasus Stability Pact in 2000—the initiative provided a forum for communication to wound the scars of the August crisis, sought to contribute to regional peace efforts with the inclusion of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and improved the conditions for Turkey’s opening up towards Armenia in 2009.⁵⁴⁷ Erdogan publicly stated his hope that the Platform would contribute to the efforts for the establishment of peace and stability in the region. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia have responded positively to the offer, praising it as a constructive attempt.⁵⁴⁸ Even though this platform drew some resentment in Washington, the EU gave green light to the initiative and the EU progress report on Turkey’s accession negotiations positively mentioned the project.⁵⁴⁹ The NATO also expressed support for the platform, calling it a constructive step for security in the wider Black Sea region with reference to Turkey’s policy line during the crisis.⁵⁵⁰

Prediction 3: Turkey’s bilateral trade would increase with both the Caucasian and the Western countries. Turkey would seek greater integration with the Caucasian countries but it would also pursue EU membership and closer economic ties with the US.

Evidence:

Turkey’s efforts to forge closer economic cooperation with the Caucasus countries and increasing energy links between the Caucasus and Europe are in line with

the Western interests. Ankara calculated that its aim to have stronger influence within the Caucasus region increases Ankara's importance and value to the Western world and contributes to its desire to join the EU. Davutoglu stated in his book *Strategic Depth* that "if Turkey does not have a solid stance in Asia, it would have very limited chances with the EU." Indeed, the EU Commission's 2014 Progress Report also stressed Turkey's vital strategic location in terms of developments in the Black Sea region and the Middle East, and recommended deepening the cooperation between Ankara and the EU in a host of areas of concern to both sides.⁵⁵¹

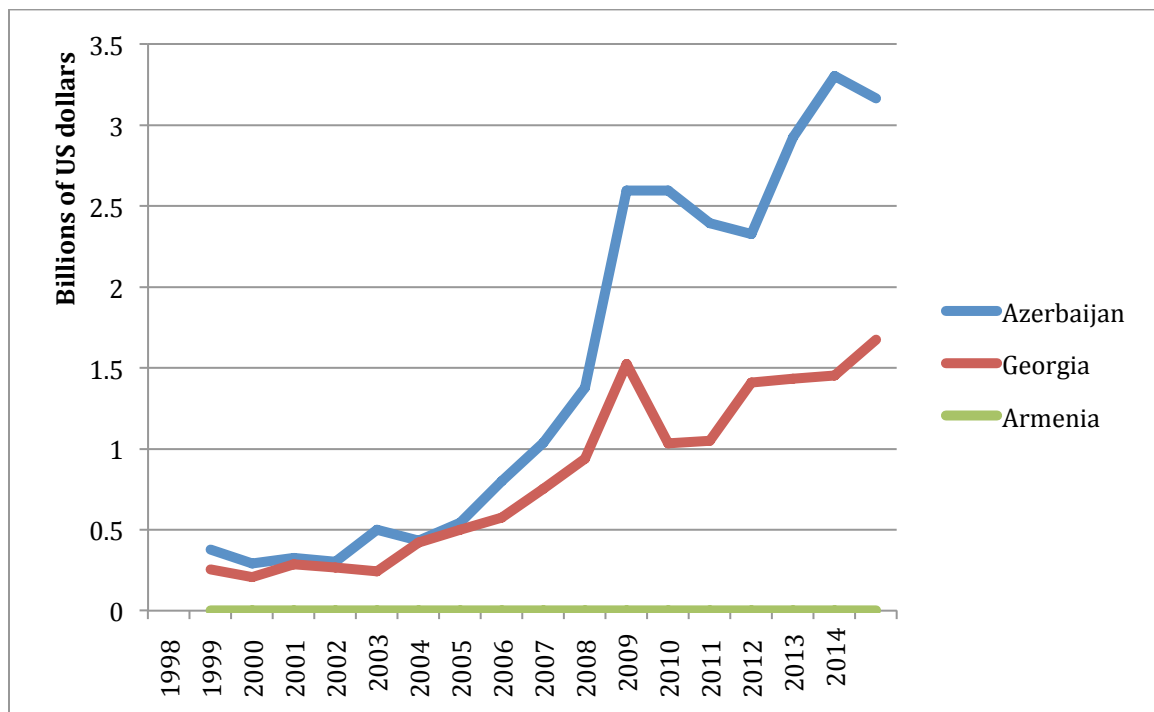
Turkey is the largest trade partner for Georgia and Azerbaijan and one of the largest investors in these countries. Bilateral trade increased from around \$0.3 billion in 2002 to around \$1.7 billion with Georgia and nearly \$3.2 billion with Azerbaijan, dominated by Azerbaijan's gas exports to the country (see figure 19). Turkey and Georgia signed a Free Trade Agreement in 2007, which lifted visa applications for 90 day-stays.⁵⁵² The Batumi airport on Georgia's Black Sea coast, which was built and operated by a Turkish company, functions as a joint Turkish-Georgian facility, allowing Turkish citizens traveling to Turkish towns without a passport.

Aside from the trade in oil and gas, Turkish investments in Azerbaijan's non-energy sector also increased, contributing to Azerbaijan's economic diversification. Some 1,200 Turkish companies operate in Azerbaijan's various sectors, including telecommunication, transportation, confection, marketing, furniture, banking, and building construction.⁵⁵³

Increasingly, Azerbaijan also began to invest in Turkey. On the day Turkey and Azerbaijan sealed agreements on the transit of Azeri gas to the European markets through

the Southern Corridor, Azerbaijan inaugurated the \$5 billion Petkim project, one of the largest chemical plants in Turkey, owned by the Azeri state company, and laid the foundation for the construction of a new oil refinery, also owned by the Azeri state company. Azerbaijan also invested more than \$500 million in the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway.⁵⁵⁴⁵⁵⁵

Figure 18: Turkey’s Total Trade (Exports + Imports) with the Caucasus⁵⁵⁶



Energy security was one of the AKP government’s priorities because of Turkey’s heavy dependence on Iran and Russia for its energy needs. The government strongly supported the idea of becoming a “regional energy hub” and undertook policies designed to strengthen its connections to the Caspian resources through Georgia and Azerbaijan during this period.⁵⁵⁷ Turkey made a deal with Azerbaijan and Georgia to construct an oil pipeline from Baku through Tbilisi to Ceyhan on Turkey’s Mediterranean coast, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which became operational in 2006. The US and the EU

strongly supported this project because it would enhance the European energy security and reduce Russia's as well as Iran's leverage in the region.⁵⁵⁸ It invalidated the Russian efforts to use a northern pipeline route from Baku to the Russian port of Novorossiysk on the Black Sea to transport the South Caspian oil to maintain its political leverage over these countries. In addition to the BTC oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline became operational in March 2007 and began to deliver gas from Shah Deniz of Azerbaijan. This project effectively ended Georgia's gas dependency on Russia, provided an important alternative route for Azerbaijan to transport its gas to Europe, and reduced Russia's and Iran's leverage over Turkey.⁵⁵⁹

Turkey also promoted the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad connection, dubbed the "Iron Silk Road," to create a direct railroad transportation between Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Even though strong opposition from the Armenian lobby in the US for bypassing Armenia prevented the American official investment for the project, the railroad connects Turkey and the Caucasus to Europe without having to pass through Iran or Russia. Therefore, it is of a strategic value to the Caucasus countries, to Turkey, and to Europe. The three countries signed the project in May 2005 and it is slated for completion in 2016.⁵⁶⁰

Even though there is no trade connection between Turkey and Armenia, trade through the third countries, such as Georgia, has been increasing. There is considerable informal trade between Turkey and Armenia as the air routes link the two countries. Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council, which plays an important role in thawing of the bilateral relations, argued the indirect trade volume through third parties reached over \$300 million by the end of 2009 and could easily reach up to \$500 million

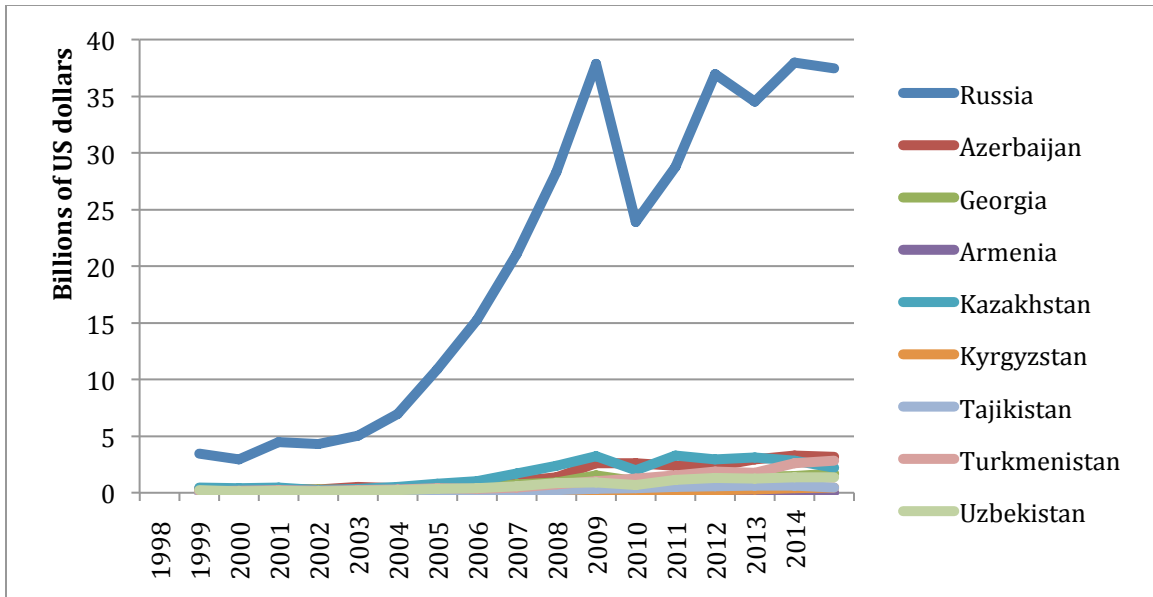
in the case of normalized political relations.⁵⁶¹ Because of the economic problems in Armenia, an estimated 70,000 Armenian citizens are still working illegally in Turkey according to the Turkish officials.⁵⁶²

Conclusion:

Turkish foreign policy in the South Caucasus under the AKP government has emphasized regional peace, economic prosperity, and integration with the West. The region is another area after Central Asia where Turkey's interests and the Western interests are well-aligned, except for the Armenian issue. Turkey has made substantial efforts in mediating between the countries to resolve frozen conflicts by creating opportunities to increase the dialogue and building trust, but its attempts at normalizing relations with Armenia have been limited. Turkey strongly supported economic integration with Georgia and Azerbaijan by boosting bilateral trade and facilitating their trade with the world. Ankara strongly supported the new energy and transportation infrastructure in the region, which would bolster economic independence and economic integration of the Caucasus countries and contribute to the energy security of Europe.

In the process, Turkey remained firmly committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Caucasus countries while maintaining its non-interference policy to refrain from directly clashing with Russia and to avoid being caught in the Russia vs. West debate. The high trade volume between Turkey and Russia also serves as a major deterrent to any initiative that may be construed as Turkey opposing Russian interests (see figure 20).

Figure 19: Turkey's Trade (Exports + Imports) with Russia Compared to Other Eurasian Countries⁵⁶³



In fact, Turkey’s economic and security interests with Russia trumped ethnic, cultural, and religious considerations during this period. Turkey chose not to play the ethnic card to avoid angering Moscow. Although cultural, linguistic, and religious affinities were probably the initial stimulants of closer ties, Ankara’s new attitude toward the region was based more on pragmatic economic and foreign policy considerations than on simple nationalist rhetoric or sentimental concerns.⁵⁶⁴ Turkey, which is home to 3 million Circassians and had backed the Chechens in the 1994-96 Chechen-Russian war, did not support them during the Second Chechen-Russian war in 2000. Erdogan, by attending the opening of the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014, did not heed the call from the Circassians who were mourning the 1864 Grand Exile and placed ads in newspapers saying, “Mr. Prime Minister, please don’t go to Sochi.”⁵⁶⁵ Turkey also is home to the Abkhazians who have a strong ethnically-based lobby in Turkey, but Ankara did not let these issues deteriorate its relations with Georgia. Ankara condemned Russia’s takeover of Crimea, home to the ethnic Turkic Tatars, but stopped short of an action to avoid

upsetting Russia. In spite of Turkey's caution, however, Russia remains suspicious of Turkey's ambitions in the Caucasus.

As for the drivers of the Turkish foreign policy, international factors such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's aggressive attempts to keep the Caucasus countries in its orbit in late 2000s, and the Western reaction to Russia's aggression had a significant impact on Turkey's policies for the neighboring Caucasus region. Turkey had a stake in the resolution of the conflicts in the neighborhood because the spillover effects of any instability would threaten its own security. Domestic factors such as Turkey's economic interests, mainly the energy deals, and the Turkish leadership's new foreign policy concept emphasizing zero problems with neighbors, multidimensional foreign policy, and proactive diplomacy to increase Turkey's influence in the region also played an important role in Turkey's economic and diplomatic outreach to the region.

5.4. CONCLUSION

The preponderance of the evidence indicates that Turkey's transformation in Eurasia does not represent a fundamental shift in Ankara's foreign policy. On Turkey's relations with Russia, especially in its arms trade, energy deals, and lack of a strong reaction from Ankara towards Russia's aggressive policies because of its energy dependency on Moscow, we see a modest movement of Ankara toward positions that create tension with the West. However, on the critical issues of upholding the norms of international law and maintaining the world order in this part of the region, supporting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Central Asian and the Caucasus countries, and providing for Europe's energy security, Turkey's position is at minimum compatible with, and in most instances strongly supportive of, Western interests.

Turkey's foreign policy actions in Central Asia and the Caucasus are almost fully supportive of the Western policies, with the exception of the unusual case of Armenia. Turkey's vision for the region is in line with the Western interests while it is fundamentally at odds with the Russian interests. The clash of Turkish-Russian interests in the region stems from their differing vision for a regional order in Eurasia. Turkey aims to solidify the newly gained independence of those states and bolster their economic development, which could decrease their dependence on Moscow. Turkey also desires to become a major actor in the region to benefit from economic and security cooperation while increasing its influence and elevating its status as an energy hub in the region; Ankara remains wary about Russia's geopolitical ambitions in the region, especially Moscow's close military ties to Armenia.

Unlike the natural alignment of Turkish and Western interests in Central Asia and

the Caucasus, Turkey's warming relations with Russia and its more accommodating policy approach towards Moscow because of its close economic ties, do pose some challenges to the West. This view is likely to raise more concerns following Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine. However, at the fundamental level, Turkey's strategic interests and vision for the region are not in line with the Russian interests. Turkey and Russia have been on the opposite sides of the many international conflicts before and after the AKP came to power, ranging from the conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, Syria, Iran, the Nagorno-Karabakh, and Ukraine. Turkey's principles towards these conflicts, which emphasize diplomacy and promotion of economic interdependence for regional peace and prosperity, have been in line with the policies of the US and the EU.

Turkey's policy towards Russia resembles an independent-minded European country. Again the French example is apt here. France was the first country to start making business deals with China when the world shunned Beijing for its violent crackdown in the Tiananmen Massacre of 1989. France was also another European country that vehemently opposed the Iraq war and that was reluctant to impose sanctions against Russia after the latter's takeover of Crimea.

Turkey's foreign policy actions in the Eurasia region highlight three important drivers of its foreign policy: systemic changes in the region, Turkey's economic interests, and its leadership's new foreign policy principles. First, the collapse of the Soviet Union opened the door to the Caucasus and Central Asia for Turkey while sapping Russia's power. The emergence of independent republics rendered Turkey as one of the important players in the region, more so for the Caucasus, where Ankara previously had only a marginal influence and no active involvement. Turkey's growing political, security, and

economic outreach to the region during the AKP coincided with Russia's increasingly aggressive approach to the regional issues to keep the former Soviet Union countries in its orbit.

Ankara acknowledges that the same democratization and Europeanization processes that helped Turkey to achieve its remarkable economic and political developments in the last decade help create spillover commercial and diplomatic effects into its relations with its Eurasian neighbors. Also, Turkey's closer relations with Russia during the 2003-2006 and 2009-2010 period coincide with Turkey's relatively cooler relations with the West, suggesting that the trends in Turkey's relations with the US and EU at the international level continued to exert a considerable degree of influence on the evolution of Turkey's relations with Russia.⁵⁶⁶ Russia vs. the West dynamics, especially after Russia's takeover of Crimea and the Western sanctions against Russia, will increasingly define the regional dynamics and test the limits of the Turkish foreign policy.

Secondly, Ankara's foreign policy in the region satisfies its goal of quenching the ever-increasing thirst for energy, exploring new venues for growing Turkish entrepreneurs, and curbing the country's expanding energy dependence on Russia. It also contributes to Turkey's aspiration to attain significant weight within the Eurasian energy politics to boost its global position, especially in the eyes of Brussels and Washington.⁵⁶⁷

Thirdly, Davutoglu's foreign policy principles had a profound impact on Turkey's foreign policy changes in Eurasia. Turkey aims to position itself as a "central country" in the words of Davutoglu, at the intersection of a geographically strategic region, as a key Eurasian power within the EU. Turkey embraced multidimensional foreign policy

concept to balance its relations with Russia and the West and to maintain its critical economic ties to Moscow. Ankara pursued a proactive diplomacy in its outreach to Central Asia and the Caucasus to increase Turkey's soft power in the region, to mitigate regional tension, and contribute to regional peace, stability, and economic prosperity.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation conducts case studies on Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East and Eurasia and examines whether the changes in its foreign policy indicate a fundamental shift from its Western orientation. It concludes that Turkey's foreign policy transformation in the last decade represents a significant change in the direction of autonomy, but not a fundamental reorientation of the country away from the Western framework. The study also finds that while international factors played an important role in preparing the ground for Turkey's transformation, domestic factors, particularly Turkey's economic interests, its new foreign policy elite and their vision, and Turkish public opinion, have been the main drivers of its foreign policy.

More specifically, first of all, Turkish government's critical attitude towards Israel's policy, mainly stemming from strong public opposition to Israel's policies in the Palestinian territories, constitutes the greatest divergence from the Western position. A series of diplomatic row between Turkey and Israel culminated in the flotilla incident in 2010 which led Turkey to downgrade its diplomatic relations to the second-secretary level, break military contacts and refuse the NATO's cooperation with Israel. Although relations somewhat improved after Israel's US-brokered apology in 2013, the new violence in Gaza in fall 2014 triggered protests in Turkey, leading Israel to evacuate all non-essential diplomatic staff from Turkey.

However, at the fundamental level, Ankara's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains in line with the Western policies. Turkey is firmly committed to the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and actually made significant efforts to mediate between the two sides as well as with Israel and Syria before its relations

soured with Israel. On how to handle the conflict, Ankara's position diverges from the US and to a lesser extent from the EU because Ankara is convinced that maintaining a dialogue with major stakeholders, including Hamas, can help reach a solution to the conflict and believes that the blockade or other Israeli operations in the Palestinian territories are counterproductive. In line with the Western interests, Turkey continuously urged the group to recognize Israel, renounce violence, and uphold all the international agreements between the Palestinian authority and Israel.

Secondly, on some issues affecting Turkey's security and economic interests and regional stability, Ankara has adopted divergent priorities and advocated different approaches, resulting in a modest movement toward positions that create tension with the West. For example, Ankara opposed the Iraq War because it feared the removal of a central authority in Iraq would cause sectarian conflicts, increase the PKK threat on Turkey's border, and exacerbate regional instability. Turks remember the devastating consequences of the first Gulf War, which increased PKK insurgency and cost, according to Turks, over \$35 billion in lost economic revenues to sanctions as well as the burden of supporting 450,000 Kurdish refugees in Turkey. Thus, a great majority of the public, 95 percent according to a poll the day before the war, was against the war. Nevertheless, despite denying the use of the Turkish soil as a land base in 2003, Ankara allowed Washington to use the Turkish airbase at Incirlik to support military and logistical needs in Iraq and Afghanistan. After the Iraq war, Ankara worked to facilitate the process of bringing together different factional groups in Iraq such as convincing the Sunnis to participate in the political elections and sought to establish dialog mechanisms and build trust, contributing to political reconciliation and relative stability in the country. With the

rise of the ISIS, Ankara supports the Western fight against the terrorist group but it advocates first ending the Assad regime, which it believes is the root cause of extremism and violence in the region.

Turkey voted against the sanctions on Iran but Turkey also opposes Tehran's nuclear ambitions so its Iranian policy at the fundamental level does not run counter to the Western policy. At the tactical level, however, Ankara's method of dealing with the Iranian nuclear problem—which favors diplomatic solution and opposes economic sanctions or military action to protect Turkish security and economic interests—diverges from that of Washington and Tel Aviv. Prior to Turkey's no vote, Turkish and Brazilian leaders had made significant efforts on a swap deal with their Iranian counterparts but when their efforts, which the pundits assessed to be unexpectedly successful, were sidelined by the UNSC decision to impose new sanctions against Iran, Ankara, together with Brazil, voted against the sanctions. In November 2010, several months after the “no” vote, Turkey approved the deployment of anti-missile radar system in its territory at NATO Lisbon Summit, a move that the Iranians vehemently opposed but Washington considered an important component of European security

Thirdly, on the critical issues of maintaining the regional peace and stability in the Middle East, protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Central Asian and the Caucasus countries, and upholding the international norms and liberal political and economic order, Turkey's position is at minimum compatible with, and in most instances strongly supportive of, Western interests. Turkey fundamentally opposes a nuclear Iran and its stance on many regional issues from Iraq to Syria to Yemen is opposite to the Iranian stance. As a NATO member, Turkey was a strong supporter of the war in

Afghanistan. Ankara deployed around 1,750 Turkish troops and reconstruction teams as a part of the International Security Assistance Force and used Turkish aid to promote post-conflict reconstruction and capacity building. Turkey wants peace and prosperity in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Israel. To that end, Ankara made mediating efforts to resolve a series of conflicts, including those between Israel and Palestine, Syria and Israel, Syria and Iraq, Iran and the West, and Syria and the West.

Even though Turkey tried to maintain a balanced foreign policy towards Russia and failed to strongly condemn Russia's actions or fully participate in the sanctions because of its economic dependence on Moscow, Turkey also opposes Russian aggression in the region and wants to see a Russia that is respectful towards the existing international order. It strongly supports the Central Asian and the Caucasus countries' territorial integrity and integration with the global community. Ankara facilitated the export of their energy resources to the West bypassing Russia and made efforts for peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and Ossetia, and Ukraine.

6.1. Direction of Turkish Foreign Policy

Chapter 3 introduced Charles Hermann's simple framework for identifying foreign policy change.⁵⁶⁸ First is the shift in efforts and methods to achieve certain goals which he names *adjustment changes*. Second change is the *program changes*, which refer to qualitative changes in methodology and instruments of statecraft. Third is the redirection of goals and aspirations of the state's foreign policy machinery which he calls *problem/goal changes*. Finally, the fourth change, *international orientation change*, is the most fundamental shift in foreign policy direction and it involves the redirection of

the actor's entire orientation toward world affairs. Using this framework, I will summarize below the study's findings on the direction of Turkey's foreign policy.

Turkey has been pursuing a more independent and diversified foreign policy

Turkish foreign policy has gone through a remarkable transformation in the last decade. As Turkey became more active, independent, and assertive, especially in the Middle East and the Eurasia region, it has experienced adjustment, program, and goal changes during this period.

Adjustment Changes: Turkish foreign policy has certainly experienced shifts in efforts and methods in its engagement with the neighboring countries. After the AKP came to power, Turkey pursued a more proactive diplomacy seeking greater economic integration with the Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries. Turkish leaders' diplomatic engagement with these countries dramatically increased, exemplified by several high-level visits a year, establishment of the High Level Cooperation Council mechanisms with countries ranging from Iran and Iraq to Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, and the signing of friendship and security treaties with countries as diverse as Russia, Syria, and Georgia. Turkey's bilateral trade with twenty Middle Eastern countries increased from nearly \$10 billion in 2002 to around \$47 billion in 2013 and its trade with Eurasian countries, including Russia, increased from nearly \$7 billion in 2002 to around \$45 billion in 2013. Then President Gul (2007-2014) carried out nearly 70 visits during his first three years in office, attended by a total of 2,670 businessmen, and created a business volume of around \$20 billion. Turkey also reached several major energy deals with Iran, Iraq, Russia, and Azerbaijan during this period, significantly increasing its oil and gas imports from these countries.

Program Changes: Turkish policymakers made qualitative changes to Turkey's foreign policy instruments and redefined the principles of Turkish foreign policy during this period. Turkey's new foreign policy concept stressed a balanced approach, proactive diplomacy, and use of soft power, and deemphasized the previous focus on security. Ahmet Davutoglu, the architect of Turkey's new foreign policy, sharply challenged the traditional security-based, realist school of Turkish foreign policy—which states nations are driven primarily by interests and threats posed by enemies—and embraced a more liberal understanding of foreign policy. The AKP made major efforts to improve ties with the Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries as an essential part of its policies to eliminate problems with neighbors and pursue a multidimensional foreign policy to achieve regional stability. With a diminished sense of insecurity resulting from the normalization of Turkey's relations with most of its neighbors, Ankara took a less security-oriented approach to its former adversaries, including Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Russia, and pursued closer political, cultural, and especially economic cooperation with these countries.

Goal Changes: Turkey's vision for the region did not dramatically change with the rise of the AKP but it can be argued that Ankara's goals and aspirations changed with its rising economic and soft power. Turkey's new leaders envisioned a new role for Turkey at the center, not at the periphery, and a new regional order with politically stable and economically viable countries that have no conflict with Turkey. They desired to raise Turkey's economic status to join the ranks of the top ten economies in the world and elevate Turkey's status as a stable, prosperous, and influential regional player in an equally stable and prosperous region.

To that end, Turkey sought to avoid conflicts and ease tension in the region and

resolve existing bilateral disputes with its neighbors. For example, under heavy pressure from the Turkish public, Ankara made substantial efforts to ward off the war on Iraq and in the end, the Turkish parliament voted in March 2003 to reject the US request to open a northern front in Turkey to launch its troops in Iraq. After the war, Ankara worked to facilitate the process of bringing together different factional groups in Iraq, contributing to political reconciliation and relative stability in the country. Turkey also made mediating efforts to resolve a series of conflicts, including those between Israel and Palestine, Syria and Israel, Iran and the West, Syria and the West, , Georgia and the Abkhazians, and Azerbaijan and Armenia.⁵⁶⁹

Turkey still remains firmly in the Western alliance

Turkish foreign policy changes since the AKP came to power provide evidence for adjustment, program, and goal changes, but there is insufficient evidence to support the argument for the redirection of Turkey's orientation away from the West. There is no doubt that Turkey has been pursuing a more active and independent foreign policy in the Middle East and Eurasia since the AKP came to power. At times, its policies have been at odds with the interests of its Western allies, especially with that of Washington. However, as evidenced throughout the case study, when we take a closer look at the context beyond the media highlights, Turkey's disagreements with the Western policies have mostly been over competing priorities and different approaches to regional challenges, rather than over a divergence of fundamental values and interests.

In other words, the differences between the United States and Turkey regarding Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestinian territories, ISIS, and Russia, are largely over tactics, not over strategic goals or vision. In a speech at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in February 2004, then Foreign Minister Gul defined the three main axis of the Turkish Foreign Policy. He said the relations with the Western world, Europe and Euro-Atlantic Institutions, come first. Second is Turkey's relations with the Middle East, and third is the relations with the Eurasian world. Gul argued that Turkey's active involvement in its region and multilateral relations with the countries in the Middle East is not an option to replace its connections with Europe and that the security and stability of Europe and the Middle East are complementary.⁵⁷⁰

Speaking to Charlie Rose in a 2011 interview, then Prime Minister Erdogan defended Turkey's presence in the Middle East and said "France, Germany, and the US are all there, why can't we be there. It's very logical for us to be there because we have common history, culture, and long borders with these countries."⁵⁷¹

Turkey's Western orientation is not only a consequence of longstanding collective defense engagements and foreign trade links with Europe and the US, but also a natural outcome of cultural connections, especially with Western Europe since the first modernization efforts of the Ottoman state began at the end of the eighteenth century.⁵⁷²

For many Turks, joining the EU became synonymous with the final push toward realizing Ataturk's dream of joining the contemporary civilization. For them, Turkey as a member of the EU would become economically prosperous, politically stable, and democratic.⁵⁷³

According to a prominent Turkish scholar, Turkey has two main foreign policy objectives: to make Turkey an integral part of the EU and to proactively pursue the goal of helping to create an environment of security, stability, prosperity, friendship, and cooperation all around itself.⁵⁷⁴

After the AKP came to power, Turkish government strongly supported the EU

membership and passed more political and economic reforms than any of its secularist predecessors to meet the EU criteria, earning Turkey EU candidate status in 2005. The second part of 2000s was not as productive, however, as both sides dragged their feet in making progress and the EU fatigue sapped Turkish public's enthusiasm for the Union. The European leaders' questioning of whether Turkey fits in the EU, their proposals short of membership, and the admission of Cyprus without the resolution of the conflict raised Turkish resentment at perceived EU double standard.

Turkey and the US, for the most part, share common goals and values such as the rule of law, democracy, free market economy, regional stability, and promotion of peace and prosperity. However, the US-Turkish relations have never been smooth in the past; bilateral ties suffered when Turkey denied the US the use of American bases in Turkey to resupply the Israeli forces during the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 and when the US sent the Johnson letter and imposed arms embargo on Turkey following the Turkey's intervention in Cyprus in 1974. Despite some tension in the past, however, the United States and Turkey have enjoyed a long-standing, tested friendship based on shared values and a common agenda for positive change on regional and global issues. The United States has staunchly defended Turkey's interests against the Soviet threat during the Cold War, strongly advocated Turkey's EU membership, and supported Turkey's outreach into Central Asia and the Caucasus. When their approaches have diverged, such as in the dispute over UNSC actions against Iran during the summer of 2010, the ability of the two states to handle the fallout has paid dividends for an enhanced partnership going forward.⁵⁷⁵

This study contributes to some of the debates surrounding the "Europeanist" and

“Atlanticist” foreign policy trends or the tension between pro-European and pro-American forces by highlighting that Turkish foreign policy has been closer to the EU’s line on many foreign policy issues. Turkey had strong relations with the US beginning with the Cold War and their close relationship has been a source of concern for some countries within the EU, fearing that Turkey would be a second “Trojan horse” of the US, after the UK. The United States’ unilateral approach during the Iraq war brought Turkey and the EU closer together in their common multilateral approach. Many European countries, including France and Germany, also opposed the Iraq war, forcing the US to take a unilateral action against Iraq without the UN backing. Most Turks came to view the US as responsible for destabilizing its own backyard after the Iraq War and for the first time tipped the alliance in favor of Europe over the US both among the Turkish leadership and the public.

Turkey and the EU hold similar viewpoints on the issues of Iraq’s future, Iran’s nuclear policies, transformation of the Middle East region, and the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. For example, Davutoglu met with the Palestinian leader Mashal twice in Syria and his second visit came as a result of then French President Sarkozy’s request for help from Erdogan. Both the EU and Turkey favor the revitalization of the peace process and believe Israel’s policy of expanding home construction in Gaza is detrimental to the peace process. According to Davutoglu, Turkey and the EU’s paths almost always converge: “Turkey seeks to establish peace, stability and security in the Middle East; to further integrate the Balkans with the Euro-Atlantic community; to bolster democracy and peaceful resolution of conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia; to contribute to enhanced energy supply and security of Europe; to strengthen security and stability in

Afghanistan and South Asia. So does the EU.”⁵⁷⁶

A Turkey that is more independent and more representative of the views of its people, but still remains within the Western framework and international order, can actually become more stable than the one that implements the Western policies against the opposition from its own people. The AKP, so far, has not gone to the either extreme by completely overturning Turkey’s political and cultural traditions like some of its predecessors did. That’s the sign of a normal state and is more stable than the one that tries hard to move closer to the West and risks creating an opposition that takes the country to the opposing extreme. Iran’s Shah regime before the Islamic revolution and Russia’s Yeltsin before the nationalist movement that allowed Putin’s ascendance provide some recent examples.

A prominent Turkey scholar Larabee argues that Turkey’s greater engagement in the Middle East is a part of the gradual diversification of Turkish foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. Turkey is rediscovering the region of which it has historically been an integral part. Especially under the Ottomans, Turkey was the dominant power in the Middle East. Its Republican period, with an emphasis on noninvolvement in the Middle Eastern affairs, was an anomaly, and Turkey’s current activism is a return to a more traditional pattern.⁵⁷⁷

Turkey scholars Gordon and Taspinar also argue that whereas the Islamist coalition government of the 1996-1997 sought to create an Islamic alliance with Muslim countries such as Libya, Iran, Malaysia, and Indonesia as an explicit alternative to the West, the AKP leaders today want to reach out to the East to complement their ties to the West, not replace them. Their vision, which builds on the approach of former President

Ozal, who began the liberalization movement in Turkey, is one in which Turkey rediscovers its imperial legacy and seeks a new national consensus within which the country's multiple identities can coexist. In that sense, this new emphasis on the Ottoman legacy is not about Islamization but rather about counterbalancing what its proponents see as Kemalism's obsession with Turkey's Western identity.⁵⁷⁸ The AKP represents moderate Muslims that are at peace with Turkey's past, Islamic tradition, and secular nature, and do not face an opposition that demands the exact opposite of its major foreign and domestic policies. Currently, the opposition in Turkey does not advocate a radically different approach to Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East and Eurasia.

Policy Implications

A new Turkey that is more active and assertive in the world affairs, as opposed to the old Turkey that is isolationist, neutral, and sometimes belligerent, can actually contribute to the global stability and prosperity. Turkey's more self-confident and assertive stance in relations with regional states may actually improve Turkey's image in the eyes of Western partners from a trouble-maker suffering tensions with most of its neighbors to a problem-solver contributing to peace and stability in the region.

Turkey can become a stabilizing force in the region. Ankara can use its increasing influence in the Middle East and Eurasia to contribute to the resolution of regional conflicts. Turkey's efforts for a peaceful solution in Iraq before the invasion and its initiatives for democratic rehabilitation of the country afterwards are often cited as Turkey's meaningful contribution to the regional peace efforts. Turkey's maintenance of an open dialogue with Hamas could actually help convince the organization to eventually meet the demands of the Middle East Quartet, which include recognizing Israel,

renouncing violence, and upholding all the international agreements between the Palestinian authority and Israel. Ankara might have some leverage in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because of its influence in Azerbaijan; it can also contribute to the efforts to find a peaceful resolution to Georgia's Abkhazia problem.

An annual poll of Turkey's standing in the Middle East in 2012 indicate that the Middle Eastern people perceived Turkey more positively than any other country in the world, with a 78 percent rating, though Turkey's popularity dropped a little bit after the Arab Spring and Turkey's continuing support to the Muslim Brotherhood. Around 77 percent of the Middle Easterners believed that Turkey contributes positively to regional peace compared to contributions from the EU, UN, Russia, the US, China or NATO in a decreasing order. Israel was perceived as the greatest threat to peace in the region with 47 percent of the vote, followed by the US at 24 percent, and then Iran at 11 percent. The Middle Eastern public also perceived Turkey as a trusted interlocutor and 61 percent of the respondents saw Turkey as a model for the region.⁵⁷⁹

However, Turkey's efforts at mediation can bear fruit only if undertaken in tandem with the United States. It can play a useful role as a go-between for the West and actors such as Hamas, Iran, and Muslim Brotherhood. For that it has to maintain its value as an honest broker. If and when the US engages in a peace process in the Middle East, Turkey's role will have value, but it will still be secondary.⁵⁸⁰ Furthermore, Turkey imports nearly all of its oil and natural gas supplies, up from 87 percent of oil in 2010 and 98 percent of its natural gas supply in 2009,⁵⁸¹ and most of this comes from Russia and Iran, creating a significant vulnerability restricting its freedom of action.

Turkey is uniquely positioned to bridge the Eastern and Western values and help

spread international values of democracy, free market economy, and global civilization.

Turkey has turned to the West in its modernization efforts since the birth of the Republic and the West is the epitome of democracy, human rights, and civilization for many Turks. At the same time, Turkey is the inheritor of the Ottoman Empire and feels a particular responsibility for relations between the East and the West. With its unique history and political culture, Turkey is well positioned to fill the chasm between the Eastern and Western traditions and political culture. Turkey never had a history of Western domination, occupation, or colonization. It voluntarily chose the western model of secularization and democracy; even though it was the state elites that initially decided to adopt the Western systems, foreign forces did not impose them on Turkey. Islam in Turkey is mainly cultural, not ideological or political, and even though the majority of Turkish people are religiously conservative, they are secular-minded and respect democracy and rule of law.

To a significant degree, Turkey has succeeded in establishing the roots of secularism, namely the logic of state is superior to the logic of religion. Historians argue that the tradition of secularism is even older than the Republic itself; in the Ottoman Empire, religion through religious law did not dominate decision-making. Surveys show that the Turkish population is religious but not fundamentally religious, and the majority is opposed to religion playing a role in political life.⁵⁸² The great majority of the population prefers to vote for parties with more moderate political affiliations and they reject any introduction of Islamic law.

Despite the recent heavy-handed tendencies of President Erdogan—who said when he first came to power, “Islam is a religion, democracy is a way of ruling”⁵⁸³—

Turkey has decades-long experience in democratic institutions and enjoys relatively free media presence; Turkish people have more voice than their counterparts in the Middle East or Eurasia. Turkey's Gezi protests in 2014 involved a conglomerate of young Turks, including the leftists and environmentalists, who protested the destruction of a park for the construction of a grand mall, but it later turned into an anti-government protest with a heavy use of police force. These protests were more Paris in 1968, when student occupation protests against capitalism, consumerism, and traditional institutions turned into a countrywide social revolution, than the Tahrir Square protests in Egypt in 2011. It was not a Middle Eastern revolt against an oppressive regime that denied freedom and basic rights for its people. It was a European revolt where people demanded better quality of life and reacted to the authoritarian tilt in their representative government, possibly inspired by the Western values.

Turkey's geographic disposition and close historical and cultural ties across a vast landscape have endowed it with the potential to promote dialogue and interaction among civilizations. Turkey, together with Spain, launched the "Alliance of Civilizations" initiative in 2004, drawing over 140 participating countries and international institutions. It also launched in 2010 with Finland the "Friends of Mediation" group, which exists within the framework of the "Mediation for Peace initiative," reaching 48 members. While being predominantly Sunni, Turkey has good relations with the Shiite countries such as Iran and the Shiite people such as the Azeris, and it enjoys the credibility to mediate between sectarian groups in Iraq and Lebanon, by its nature as neither an Arab nor an Israeli.⁵⁸⁴ Turkey can serve as a role model for Arab countries; its reengagement with the Middle East could strengthen the moderate and pragmatic Islamic elements in

the region, and serve as a counterbalance to Iran's radical influence.

The West and Turkey have common interest in facilitating the Middle Eastern countries' peaceful transition to democracy. Seventy-five percent of the people surveyed in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia and Syria in 2009 viewed Turkey as a "model for the synthesis of Islam and democracy."⁵⁸⁵ The Arab Awakening challenged Turkey's policy of zero problems with neighbors and destabilized the region, but Turkey sought to support the people against embattled autocratic regimes of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen.⁵⁸⁶ When Turkey assumed the chairmanship of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the 2004 OIC foreign ministers' summit in Istanbul, it marked the first time the chairmanship was decided through an open election at the demand of Turkey. Ankara also established a transparent democratic process within the OIC and placed emphasis on such concepts as democratization, human rights, rule of law, good governance, accountability, transparency, and gender equality.⁵⁸⁷

A democratic and secular Turkey can also contribute to the newly independent Central Asian and Caucasian states' attempts toward integration with the Western world by promoting the Western-style institutions and norms in a region that is open to Iranian penetration and its brand of fundamentalist Islam. Over time, Turkish-generated calls for reform, political liberalization, and a tempering of regional confrontations in the Middle East will come from a credible, strong, and independent regional voice, which may ultimately facilitate changes that are in the long-term interests of the West.

Turkey can contribute to global humanitarian efforts. With 228 missions abroad, Turkey has one of the largest diplomatic representations worldwide, complementing its ability to be a responsible global actor. Turkey contributes to peace through its

humanitarian, reconciliation, and mediation efforts and initiatives. It kept an open door policy for all Syrians and Iraqis fleeing violence in their countries and so far more than 1.7 million Syrians have found shelters in Turkey. According to the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, Turkey has become the third largest donor worldwide with its 1.6 billion dollars of official aid; in terms of humanitarian aid-national income per capita ratio, Turkey ranks as the first country worldwide. Turkey took over the G-20 presidency in 2015 and is preparing to host the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

Turkey can be a more valuable partner on global security and counterterrorism efforts. The AKP government's proactivism in diplomacy has paved the way for Turkey to take a more active role in international organizations such as the UN and the OIC and establish relations not just in the Middle East and Eurasia but also in Africa and Latin America. Turkey participated in the Balkans UN Kosovo Force and UN Police Mission in Kosovo and the EU's Police Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the EU-led Police Mission in Macedonia.⁵⁸⁸ Turkey also participated in peace-making and peace-enforcing operations in Somalia, Albania, and Georgia, and contributed to international observation groups on the Iran-Iraq border and later on the Iraq-Kuwait border.

Turkey's active political and economic engagement in the region increases Turkey's stake in the regional stability and its willingness to contribute to the efforts aimed at rooting out religious terrorism in the region. Following the 9/11 attacks, when NATO invoked the Article 5—the collective defense clause of the Washington Treaty declaring the attacks against the US as attacks against all its members—Turkey was among the first countries to join the coalition forces to fight against terrorism. It permitted all American and coalition countries' aircraft to use the Turkish airspace and

provided troops for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.⁵⁸⁹ Turkey assumed the command of the ISAF II Afghanistan and contributed 1,400 troops between June 2002 and February 2003. Turkey assumed the command of ISAF IV between February and August 2005. It assisted with peacekeeping tasks in Afghanistan and sent ninety elite troops to support the training of the Northern Alliance to fight terrorism and assist with humanitarian efforts.⁵⁹⁰ Turkey also co-chairs along with the US the “Global Counter Terrorism Forum,” launched in 2011, and co-chairs with the EU the Horn of Africa region Working Group of the forum.⁵⁹¹

Turkey can be a key contributor to the Western energy security, which has gained more importance after the Russian aggression in Ukraine. Turkey can play an increasingly important role in facilitating energy trade between Central Asia, Caucasus and Europe as the EU looks toward the region to enhance its energy security especially after the Ukrainian crisis and increased Russian aggression.⁵⁹² The EU has recently been pushing for an energy union and a single market for power and gas to facilitate better connections between member states and curb Russia’s dominant position. Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan as the source of energy and Georgia and Turkey as transit countries play a crucial role in reaching this goal. The EU, keen on lessening its dependence on Russia for energy supplies, met with the Azeri and Turkmen officials in May 2015 and reportedly reached a mutual understanding on the Southern gas corridor project, which would bring Turkmen gas to Europe across Caspian Sea to feed the European direction by 2019.⁵⁹³

The European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso stated in 2009 that energy security was “one of these cases where we can show to the European public opinion how important Turkey is for the EU.”⁵⁹⁴ Foreign ministers of Sweden and Italy

argued in an article that Turkey was a key actor in the realm of energy security and argued for Turkey's EU accession.⁵⁹⁵ The enlargement commissioner, Olli Rehn went so far as to say, "the EU and Turkey share essential strategic interests in security, economy and dialogue of civilizations. That is one of the reasons why the EU decided to open negotiations with Turkey."⁵⁹⁶

6.2. Drivers of Turkish Foreign Policy

A closer examination of Turkish foreign policy during this period reveals that international factors such as the end of the Cold War, disintegration of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the bipolar world order, prospects for Turkey's EU membership, and the recent Arab Spring had profound impact on Turkish foreign policy. However, this study assesses that its it the domestic factors—Turkey's economic interests, new foreign policy elite and their vision, and Turkish public opinion—that have been the main factors behind Turkey's foreign policy transformation during the last decade.

6.2.1. Main International Factors

1) *The end of the Cold war* and the collapse of the Soviet Union eliminated an existential threat to Turkey and ushered in a new thinking in Ankara that Turkey no longer needed protection from the Western security umbrella, namely the NATO. Turkey began to view Russia less as an adversary and more like a business partner and Turkish-Russian rapprochement began to take shape. The altered polarity of the international system and Turkey's increased military and economic capabilities allowed Turkey to act more independently from the United States and its Western allies. At the same time, the

collapse of the Soviet Union opened the door for Turkey to the Caucasus and Central Asia. The emergence of independent republics rendered Turkey as one of the important players in the region, more so for the Caucasus, where it previously had only a marginal influence and no active involvement. Turkey's growing political, security, and economic outreach to the region during the AKP coincided with Russia's increasingly aggressive approach to the regional issues to keep the former Soviet Union countries in its orbit.

2) *The European Union's* Luxembourg Summit decision in 1997 not to grant candidate status to Turkey is often cited as an important factor in Turkey's search for alternatives in the East, forging closer ties with Russia and the Middle East. Turkey's closer relations with Russia during the 2003-2006 and 2009-2010 periods coincide with Turkey's relatively cooler relations with the West, suggesting the trends in Turkey's relations with the US and the EU at the international level continued to exert a considerable degree of influence on the evolution of Turkey's relations with Russia.⁵⁹⁷ Defense Secretary Robert Gates said, if the country appears to be moving eastward, it is "in no small part because it was pushed by some in Europe refusing to give Turkey the kind of organic link to the West that Turkey sought."⁵⁹⁸ More importantly, however, the prospects for EU membership provided an impetus for Turkish policymakers in pushing forward political and economic reforms which transformed domestic political institutions, including the foreign policymaking institutions, and eventually contributed to the EU decision to grant Turkey the candidacy in 2005.

Europeanization has impacted Turkey's foreign policy approach with less emphasis on military security and balance of power-driven hard power and more emphasis on the use of civilian instruments such as international law, diplomacy, and soft

power. The AKP won in 2002 by adopting an aggressively pro-EU political platform and building on the efforts begun under the previous government, the AKP government passed an impressive series of liberal reforms with a commitment to a democratic reform process guided by the EU's "Copenhagen Criteria" for membership. Admittedly, reduction in the military's power suited the AKP's interest but the reforms made Turkey more democratic by increasing the civilian control of the government policies. The Turkish Grand National Assembly passed no fewer than seven comprehensive legislative reform packages and a variety of major constitutional amendments under the auspices of two AKP governments.

The role of the traditional central players in Turkish foreign policy-making, particularly that of the Turkish armed forces, has decreased. Turkey's mixed civilian-military state security courts were abolished, an entirely new penal code was established, and death penalty was banned. Amendments to the anti-terror law made it more difficult to prosecute citizens based on speech alone. The AKP-dominated parliament amended Articles 76 and 78 of the constitution, making it more difficult to ban political parties and politicians from the political arena. Military representatives were removed from Turkey's Council of Higher Education and High Audio-Visual Board established after the military coup of 1980. It expanded the scope of individual freedoms by granting some rights to citizens with Kurdish origin, such as broadcasting in Kurdish and learning Kurdish through the private institutions that teach Kurdish language. The EU also contributed to the process of increasing NGO influence on foreign policy issues by giving funds to NGO-prepared projects and supporting the wider democratization project in Turkey.

In addition to its indirect impact on Turkish foreign policy by inducing reforms

that changed the domestic political institutions, the prospect of EU membership also had a direct influence in softening the Turkish position and nudging its policy towards a line closer to that of the EU. Turkey's non-interventionist policy in Iraq and its decision not to allow the transfer of US soldiers to Iraq took into account the EU's position on the Iraq war and the requirements to meet the membership criteria. Major EU countries such as France and Germany had opposed the war. Turkey also took into consideration that the transfer of 62,000 US troops would require extra measures and re-imposition of emergency rule in the southeast Turkey, which would conflict with the EU agenda and jeopardize the overall democratization and peaceful development process for the country.

While the longstanding Turkish-Greek hostility began to improve after the "earthquake diplomacy" conducted in 1999 with an increasing rapprochement in the fields of tourism, civil society, and trade between the two countries, Turkish foreign policy regarding the Cyprus issue took a more accommodative position. Ankara abandoned its confrontationalist attitude before the referendum on the UN backed Annan Plan. That Turkish Cypriots supported a "yes" vote, in contrast to the Greek Cypriots' "no" vote in the referendum, was a turning point in Turkey's approach towards the Cyprus issue.⁵⁹⁹

The EU candidature also had a positive impact on the Turkish economy and the stabilization of the economy strengthens Turkey's foreign policy priorities. The business community, which has close connections with the European business circles, has advocated a more dovish position on foreign policy issues. The EU prioritizes economics-based options in foreign policy and believes that an increasing economic interdependency with other countries leads to moderation in foreign policy.⁶⁰⁰ Ankara

also acknowledges that the same democratization and Europeanization processes that have helped Turkey to achieve its remarkable economic and political developments in the last decade help create spillover commercial and diplomatic effects into its relations with its Middle Eastern and Eurasian neighbors.

3) *The Arab spring* has seriously challenged Turkey's new foreign policy vision and dented its appeal in the Middle East, creating a dilemma between stability and democracy. Ankara was stuck between many competing principles and desires between working with regional "realities," and siding with the "forces of history," and between maintaining good working relations with all regional states by limiting western military intervention into regional affairs and demonstrating to Washington that Ankara's approach to problems can be effective in solving regional issues.⁶⁰¹ Turkey chose to support the people's power and sought to play a role in spreading freedom and securing stability, which complicated its balanced policy in the Middle East.

For example, in Syria, despite its initial hesitation, Turkey chose to stay on the side of its Western allies and the international consensus in condemning Assad because it shares the Western vision for a stable and prosperous region. Having placed its entire stakes in the opposition, Ankara's policy went even further than the Western stance; it demanded a regime change and facilitated heavier arming of the Syrian opposition with external weapons sources, which alienated many Turkish fans in the Middle East. Erdogan's popularity also took a hit when his government adamantly stood by the elected Morsi Government that created some instability in Egypt despite the Western acceptance of the new government that overthrew it.

6.2.2. Main Domestic Factors

1. *Economic Interests*

This study finds that Turkey's economic interests are one of the most important drivers of its foreign policy during this period. The AKP came to power with a claim of representing the groups who were outside the political, economic, and cultural elite that had dominated Turkey since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Considering that these Anatolian Tigers—who were export-oriented and profited from the increased role of economics in foreign policymaking—constitute the core of the AKP constituency, it became an important foreign policy goal for the AKP to liberalize and create new markets in which the export-oriented Anatolian firms could do business. Then Foreign Minister Davutoglu acknowledged in a 2011 interview that the business community in Turkey has become “one of the driving forces of foreign policy.”⁶⁰²

Turkey's foreign policy activism was simultaneously accompanied and reinforced by a rapid expansion of Turkey's external trade and investment flows into the Middle Eastern region, providing new markets for Turkey's increasingly politically active entrepreneurial class and resulting in an impressive growth for Turkey, which tripled its GDP in nominal US dollar terms in the past decade. Ankara's foreign policy in the Eurasia region satisfies its goal of quenching its ever-increasing thirst for energy and exploring new venues for growing Turkish entrepreneurs. Turkey's trade with the Middle East increased by nearly 900 percent and its trade with Russia increased by around 700 percent during this period. Turkish businesses make up the majority of construction sector in the Middle East; when its indirect contribution is taken into account, construction sector accounts for close to 30 percent of Turkey's GDP and creates

employment for nearly 2 million people.⁶⁰³ Despite the diplomatic fallout, Ankara has maintained robust economic relationship with Tel Aviv and the bilateral trade continued to rise even after the flotilla incident.

Turkey's energy needs to support its growing economy had a major influence on Ankara's foreign policy choices. Turkey and Russia have been on the opposite sides regarding many international conflicts before and after the AKP came to power, including the conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, Syria, Iran, the Azeri-Armenian frozen conflict, and the Ukrainian crisis, however, the energy and trade links between Ankara and Moscow have forced both countries to keep their geopolitical competition and political conflicts on a manageable level. With a trade volume of nearly \$40 billion, rivaled only by the EU as a bloc, neither Turkey nor Russia wants to antagonize each other despite their diverging interests about emerging political crises in the region. Turkey, after the EU, was Gazprom's second-largest market and Russia is Turkey's most reliable energy supplier and single largest supplier of natural gas. In 2012, Russia provided 10 percent of its oil and 56 percent of its natural gas. Considering Turkey's energy dependence on Russia and their future joint projects, both countries have strong incentives to maintain stable political relations.

Similarly, even though Ankara and Tehran are on the opposing sides on major conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, Turkey's energy dependence on Iran ensures that Turkey has a strong stake in preventing relations with Iran from deteriorating too badly. Iran, in 2012, provided 35 percent of Turkey's oil and 18 percent of its natural gas, which raised the bilateral trade volume to \$22 billion in 2012 from around \$1 billion in 2002. And Turkey is likely to see the fastest medium-to long-term growth in energy demand

among the IEA member countries and its energy use is expected to double over the next decade.

Policy Implications

Turkey's economic interests drive many of its foreign policy decisions and maintaining the high economic growth achieved in the last decade is a must for Turkey's electorally savvy policymakers. Increasing trade and investment with Turkey and anchoring it firmly in the Western economic alliances—such as the EU and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership—could nudge Turkey's foreign policy behavior towards a line that is more accommodative to the Western interests.

The European Union Membership: The EU's 2005 decision to formally start accession talks with Turkey not only transformed Turkey's political and economic institutions, paving way for a more democratic and peaceful Turkey, but it also gave hopes to the people in the Middle East that a Muslim country could join the EU and that Turkey's EU entry could help them modernize and live in peace with the West.⁶⁰⁴ A stable, Western-oriented, liberal Turkey on a clear path toward EU membership would serve as a growing market for Western goods and a potential contributor to the labor forces Europe will need.⁶⁰⁵ Turkey already has a Customs Union with the EU countries and the EU membership would institutionalize Turkey's trade and investment ties with the EU through free movement of goods, capital, and labor.

However, according to a 2013 EU status report, membership talks with Turkey have stalemated since 2012 because of the difficulties in reaching a solution to the conflict in Cyprus, Turkish government's recent anti-democratic measures, transparent objection of major EU members to Turkey's acceptance, the crisis in the

Eurozone, and the political tension due to Turkey's refusal to recognize the Armenian suffering. France, Greece, and Cyprus closed several chapters of the accession criteria, Germany began floating the idea of "Privileged Partnership" short of membership, and the political discourse among the right-wing European politicians began to hurt the national pride of the Turks who also began to lose enthusiasm for the membership.⁶⁰⁶ Statements like the one uttered by the French President Sarkozy that Turkey is "not a European country" and that EU membership for Turkey would "kill the very idea of European integration," have so far been counterproductive.⁶⁰⁷

Turkey feels deep resentment towards Cyprus' accession to the EU without resolving the conflict in the island and Cyprus' opposition to Turkey's accession as an EU member. Cyprus had seemed to pursue a peaceful settlement of the dispute in the island before the accession and support the UN's Annan Plan just before its EU accession in May 2004. Greece prevented any concrete demand from other countries for the resolution of the problem before the accession with the threat to veto eastern enlargement. When Cyprus felt secure in its membership, the Greek Cypriot leadership opposed the plan and the EU Commissioner of enlargement Gunter Verheugen declared that he had been deceived and the attitude of the Cypriot administration was just opposite of its former stance.⁶⁰⁸

Furthermore, the AKP government took domestic political risks and reversed the long-standing Turkish policy by pressing the Turkish Cypriots to accept a political compromise on the island, which it hoped, would enhance Turkey's chances of joining the EU. When the referendum failed, the government had to defend its policy against charges at home that it sold out its Turkish brethren while getting little in return. The

AKP government made another concession in 2005 to extend its Customs Union with the EU to the newest EU members, including Cyprus, as a precondition to start accession negotiations with Brussels. However, in 2006, Cyprus tried to stop negotiations with Turkey and got the EU to agree to partial suspensions of accession negotiations.

The waning of the EU's influence on Turkish policies coincided with the democratic backsliding in Turkey. Ankara's crackdown on anti-government protests in June 2013, which left five people dead, prompted a postponement of the EU decision on renewing talks until November 2013. Erdogan's complaints about the EU's ambivalent attitude towards Turkey by stating that "if you do not want Turkey, come out and say it openly. Don't put us off" is a response to the yearning for an "honorable" stance vis-à-vis the EU among the Turkish public, nationalist groups, and civil and military elites.⁶⁰⁹ Turks perceived that the EU excluded Turkey not because of rational reasons but because Turkey belongs to a different culture and religion, accusing the EU of following "racist" policies.⁶¹⁰ According to the German Marshall Fund's 2010 Transatlantic Trends survey, the level of Turkish respondents who are still enthusiastic about EU membership dropped to 38 percent from 73 percent in 2004.

Because of the lack of commitment from the EU and waning enthusiasm among the Turkish public, Turkish leaders were able to push the EU down on its agenda with impunity. However, greater political and economic engagement with Ankara on the membership can revitalize the dragging process. The recent signs, including increased interest among the Turkish public for the EU and the agreement to expand the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU provide some encouraging signs.

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP): Turkey's inclusion in the

TTIP—higher level free trade agreement between the US and the EU—or signing a parallel free trade agreement with the US would serve as a crucial step to anchor Turkey firmly in the Western alliance. Prominent Turkish scholar Kemal Kirisci argued in a Brookings paper that Turkey’s involvement in TTIP would not only benefit the economy of both sides but also help consolidate and strengthen Turkey’s democracy through a continued expansion of the principles of accountability, transparency, and rule of law.⁶¹¹

As a part of the National Export Initiative, Turkey is one of the six next-tier markets to which the US hopes to increase exports. Turkey’s active entrepreneurial sector makes it an ideal partner country for commercial initiatives and a free trade agreement between the two countries—expanding on the 1990 Bilateral Investment Treaty and the 1999 Turkey-US Trade and Investment Framework Agreement—would be mutually beneficial.⁶¹² US businesses could also benefit from partnering with Turkish companies that have more experience in the Middle East and Eurasia region.⁶¹³ Erdogan wrote a personal letter on the subject to President Obama and Davutoglu brought up the issue with Secretary of State John Kerry during the latter’s visit to Turkey in March 2013. A series of governmental and civil society actors have also been advocating for the US and the EU support for the idea.

According to Kirisci, Turkey’s exclusion from the TTIP while maintaining a Customs Union with the EU would damage Turkey’s economic interests. The EU’s common commercial policy that Turkey must adhere to stipulated that every time the EU signs a new free trade agreement with a third party, Turkey must launch its own initiative to conclude a similar agreement with that country. Otherwise, goods from these third parties would enter Turkey via the EU without reciprocal preferential access being

granted for Turkish goods. That means, if the TTIP comes into force without Turkey's inclusion in one way or another, the US products would be able to enter the Turkish market freely without duties, while Turkey would continue to face duties and other limitations, especially in the form of non-tariff barriers in the American market.⁶¹⁴

Kirisci further argues that the exclusion of Turkey from this new emerging international structure, composed of TTIP and TPP—Trans-Pacific Partnership or a free trade agreement with WTO-plus standards with 11 East Asian and Pacific countries, excluding China—risks pushing Turkey into the arms of those countries that challenge the Western economic order, such as Russia and China. If Turkey becomes a partner in TTIP or alternatively signs a parallel free trade agreement with the US, it would create a win-win situation for all involved parties and also greatly benefit Turkey's economic development and democratization process.

2. New Foreign Policy Elite and Their Vision

Turkey's remarkable transformation in the last decade would not have been possible without the institutional framework of a single-party government that enjoyed a parliamentary majority and ushered in political stability and strong economic growth. That institutional stability prepared a fertile ground for Turkish foreign policymakers to adopt a new, visionary approach to policymaking. In November 2002, the AKP governing elite emerged from the election institutionally strong with its majority hovering around two-thirds mark and making constitutional reforms a possibility. Its formation of a single party government promised greater coherence in the office and stability in the country.

Thanks to the EU-inspired

democratic transformation, Turkish

foreign policymaking moved from a military-dominated, closed-door process to involve more debates among the public and decision making by the elected civilian leaders. That process resulted in a less security-oriented and more liberal approach to the Middle East and Eurasia that emphasizes soft power, peaceful reconciliation, and greater economic interdependence and takes into account Turkish people's sensitivities towards people with whom they share similar history, religion, and geography.

Ironically, many Kemalists, who once were the Western-oriented clique, have now turned against the West because of their suspicion of the AKP's agenda. The military, which already had concerns about the EU's minority rights agenda vis-à-vis the Kurds, became unwilling to embrace Turkey's EU agenda while the AKP passed more pro-EU legal reforms than most of the previous secularist governments in Turkish history in its first three years in government.⁶¹⁵ As a result, the challenge to Turkey's Western orientation came from not the Islamist politicians but from the secularist establishment that claimed the AKP was pursuing a hidden Islamic agenda and blamed the US and the EU for supporting it. The Western praise of Turkey as a "moderate Islamic country" only exacerbated the fears of the secularists who do not want their country to be an experiment in "moderate Islamization."⁶¹⁶

The institutional changes in the foreign policymaking were possible with coming to power of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Abdullah Gul, and Ahmet Davutoglu, who spearheaded Turkey's foreign policy through different government positions during the AKP years. These leaders strongly believed Turkey has a historical responsibility for the well being of the nations in the former Ottoman territories and hoped to increase Turkey's regional influence, leading to criticisms that the AKP has a neo-Ottoman

agenda.

Ahmet Davutoglu is the main architect behind Turkey's new foreign policy concept. Davutoglu's foreign policy vision, which stretches from pragmatic to ideological, had a profound impact on Turkey's recent activism in the Middle East and Eurasia. Davutoglu argued that Turkey is a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf, and Black Sea country and it can simultaneously exercise influence in all these regions and claim a global strategic role. His new diplomatic approach aims to enable Turkey not to be merely a "bridge" but a "central" country in the region. That requires Ankara to pursue a proactive and preemptive peace diplomacy by mediating between Israel and Syria, Sunnis and the Shiites in Iraq and contributing to reconciliation efforts in Lebanon and Palestine.

Davutoglu's "zero problems with neighbors" principle, which aims to eliminate the perception of a country "surrounded by enemies" that had permeated the Turkish psychology, and his foreign policy doctrine that advocates the necessity of pursuing a multidimensional foreign policy shaped Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries. Turkey embraced multidimensional foreign policy concept to balance its relations with Russia and the West and maintain its critical economic ties to Moscow. Turkey's value-based foreign policy was a major determinant of its support for the people in the Arab spring, namely in Tunisia, Egypt, and later in Syria. His "rhythmic diplomacy" calls for a more active involvement in all international organizations as evidenced in its non-permanent membership of the UNSC, membership in the G-20, and participation in the African Union, Gulf Cooperation Council, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Arab League.⁶¹⁷

Davutoglu's policy also envisions creating economic interdependence with the surrounding countries, which has been instrumental in Turkey's pursuit of economic relations with the Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries. By establishing interdependence in the region through free movement of goods and people, Davutoglu's expectation is not only the creation of a venue for Turkey's exports and business activities but also the achievement of regional peace.⁶¹⁸⁶¹⁹ Ankara pursued a proactive diplomacy in its outreach to Central Asia and the Caucasus to increase Turkey's soft power in the region, reduce tension, and contribute to regional peace, stability, and economic prosperity.

However, it's worth noting that AKP's policies are not simply the product of a few new AKP leaders; they tap into deeper roots in Turkish geopolitics. Turkey's democratically elected leaders such as Turgut Ozal had pursued similar goals of liberalizing the country and increasing outreach to the neighboring Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries in the past. The AKP has significantly accelerated these efforts and established the outlines and future direction of Turkish foreign policy for a long time to come. Almost all parties in Turkey support the expansion of Turkish economic interests into the Middle East, as well as into Asia, Africa, and Latin America, particularly in view of the EU's reluctance to accept Turkey into the EU.⁶²⁰ Even if the AKP loses ground in the future, any successor party is unlikely to depart sharply from most of the principles set by the party, particularly on the new dimensions of the foreign policy that include the Middle East and Eurasia.⁶²¹

Policy Implications

Turkish leadership's actions in the last decade demonstrate Ankara's desire to assert some independence and end Turkey's subservient position to the Western countries. With an economy that is the 6th largest economy in Europe and the 16th largest in the world and with an army that is the second largest land army in NATO after the US, an increasingly confident Turkey seeks to have a say in regional affairs. Turkey's economic and political ties with China, Russia, Brazil, and Japan indicate that Turkey is not only active in the former Ottoman territories or in the Muslim countries but vies for a bigger role in the region as well as a greater say in the international affairs.

As a result, Turkey seeks more equal partnership from the US and the EU countries and expects the US to acknowledge the "new Turkey" with its diverse set of aspirations, interests, and policies that may not always align with those of the US. Disagreements will arise but Turkey has shown that it has no interest in jeopardizing its strong ties with the EU and the US. Stephen Hardley, a former US national security adviser said, Turkey's dramatic changes in the last decade make it ripe for a stronger collaboration with the United States, but the terms of the relationship need to be changed in order to create a new framework for cooperation that would let the countries "meet as equals." The Turks want to claim more central places in the emerging system of international relations and not likely to agree to an inferior status that Brussels might want to offer them. Most Turks feel they are not getting the respect they deserve from the West, particularly from Europe and the United States,⁶²² and Turkish leaders want their Western counterparts to respect their redlines in relation to the Kurdish issue, Armenian issue, and the Cyprus issue.

Despite the alarm bells played by some policy wonks that Turkey has become

Islamized with the AKP's coming to power, prominent Turkey scholars Gordon and Taspinar argue that the threat to Turkey's Western orientation today is not so much Islamization but growing nationalism and frustration with the United States and Europe.⁶²³ A majority of Turks still want to see their country firmly anchored in the West, but their patience is wearing thin because of what they perceive to be Western double standards and neglect of Turkish national security interests on matters such as the Kurdish, Armenian, and the Cyprus issues.⁶²⁴ The Kemalists believe the AKP government is too soft on the Kurdish separatists and the Cyprus issue, which encourages even a harder line from the AKP toward the problem.⁶²⁵

Turkey wants to see the US as an ally who will help Ankara fight the PKK, Turkey's number one domestic security threat, not as an adversary who will place arms embargo on Turkey. In the mid-1990s, Turkey became the first NATO country to buy arms, rifles, and helicopters from Russia because the Western nations refused to sell weapons that could be used against its Kurdish rebels.⁶²⁶ Gordon and Taspinar argue that there are ways to minimize the Turkish perception that Americans and Europeans do not take Turkish interests into account. They would include exercising the Western leverage over the Iraqi Kurds to rein in the forces threatening Turkey's security, promoting a mutually beneficial bargain between Turkey and the Kurds of Iraq, or at the very least expressing an understanding and respect for Turkey's sensitivity towards the Kurdish issue. Statements like that of the US commander in charge of northern Iraq who, when asked about why Turkey considers the PKK such a serious threat, said "I have no idea. You'll have to ask Turkey," could reflect as the US indifference to cross-border terrorist attacks the Turks have suffered. It also contributes to the Turkish people's feeling that

their leaders must act unilaterally and more independently to protect their own national interests.⁶²⁷

The Armenian issue has also been the sticking point in Turkey's relations with the West and the Western governments' recognition of the Armenian suffering in 1915 as genocide has further alienated and angered Turkey, undermining efforts to promote reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia and exacerbating Turkish nationalism. Even liberal Turks, who acknowledge that atrocities were committed, have trouble understanding why foreign legislatures should be determining how to characterize the actions of their Ottoman predecessors 100 years ago. This is an issue that ultimately needs Turkey to face up to its past, but showing sensitivity towards this thorny issue, encouraging the resolution of the relevant Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and assuring that Turkey's acknowledgment need not trigger Armenian territorial and financial demands for compensation would be steps in the right direction, according to Gordon and Taspinar.⁶²⁸

Turkish leaders, who are sensitive toward the Western attitude on this issue, are reportedly linking Turkey's purchase of a multi billion-dollar air-defense system to whether the bidder countries recognize the "Armenian genocide." Even though Turkey denied that there was a political subtext to its decision to give the Chinese company the contract in the face of pressure from its NATO allies, Ankara did not finalize its decision over the missile defense system winner before the centennial anniversary of the 1915 incidents so that it could see the US and French positions on the genocide claims before awarding a sizeable contract to a bidder from these countries.⁶²⁹

The third sensitive issue that requires constructive dialogue and support is the

Cyprus issue. Turkish leaders still remember the Johnson letter and the US arms embargo after Turkey's 1974 intervention in Cyprus. Turks believe that their politically difficult efforts to promote a political settlement on the island were not reciprocated by the Greek Cypriots, and that Europe and the US have not lived up to their promises to reward the Turkish Cypriots for their willingness to compromise while the Greek Cypriots were rewarded with EU membership. Greek Cypriots feel secure in their status as full members of the EU and might see little reason for compromise, but the West, especially the EU, which has some leverage over both parties, can nudge them closer to reach a political settlement, similar to the Annan Plan that failed. That would benefit both sides and contribute to the regional peace and stability.⁶³⁰

President Obama's major foreign policy priorities, which included a declarative document titled "Restoring the Strategic Partnership with Turkey" where "a close relationship with a stable, democratic, Western-oriented Republic of Turkey" was defined as "an important US national interest,"⁶³¹ was an encouraging sign. Turkish feelings about the US improved following Washington's intelligence cooperation contributing to the capture of the PKK leader in 1999 and its agreement in 2008 to support Turkish military action against the PKK in Iraq.⁶³² Turkey appreciated the US support for Turkey's EU membership and for the oil and gas pipelines from the Caucasus to Europe via Turkey, such as the BTC and BTE. President Obama's visit to Turkey in April 2009 on his first overseas trip after the elections, his efforts to revise the Bush legacy in US-Turkey relations, and his use of the term "model partnership" in describing Turkish-American relations generated a lot of goodwill in Ankara's eyes.⁶³³ Despite the rhetoric, the Turks probably appreciated Obama's decision not to use the word "genocide" in his

speech for the centennial commemoration, unlike some of his European counterparts.

3. Turkish Public Opinion

In the 1990s, the role of the Turkish public opinion was marginal and the Turkish people did not show much interest in foreign policy. However, the AKP's wide-ranging EU reform program implemented in 2003 and 2004 gave more power to the Turkish public that came to matter more in the formulation of Turkish foreign policy. Turkish public's opinion played an important role in Turkish policymakers' efforts at forging closer political and economic ties with the Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries. Turkish people have increasingly become a proponent of a more independent and active foreign policy in the region, reflected in the government's foreign policy activism. In a Transatlantic Survey by the German Marshall Fund in 2004, 75 percent of the Turkish respondents said Turkey should take an active part in world affairs.

Turkish people naturally show sympathy for causes reflective of the Turkish population. Davutoglu said in a 2010 *Foreign Policy* article: "There are more Bosnians in Turkey than in Bosnia-Herzegovina, more Albanians than in Kosovo, more Chechens than in Chechnya, more Abkhazians than in the Abkhaz region in Georgia, and a significant number of Azeris and Georgians," noting the effect of these conflicts on domestic politics in Turkey. Davutoglu argued that Turkey experiences regional tensions at home and faces public demands to pursue an active foreign policy to secure the peace and security of these communities so its foreign policy is shaped by the priorities of its citizens.⁶³⁴

There is little serious public criticism of AKP's policy toward Israel because Israeli policies are broadly unpopular with the general public that sympathize more

with the Palestinians. There are strong elements of nationalism on the part of both the Nationalist Movement Party and the People's Republican Party, main opposition parties that are similarly unsympathetic to Israel, making it quite unlikely that any post-AKP government in Turkey would significantly reverse the current foreign policy.⁶³⁵ In the 2004 transatlantic survey, when asked about Turkish people's feeling toward certain countries with 100 being very warm, Turks gave 52 for Palestinians, 34 for Iran in contrast to 28 for the US and 13 for Israel. In 2008, this number only fell to 44 for Palestinians and 32 for Iran but 14 for the US and 8 for Israel.

At the same time, new obstacles to the EU accession, perceived injustice in Cyprus, growing global recognition of the "Armenian genocide," the Western sympathy for Kurdish nationalist aspirations, and several high-profile incidents that hurt the Turks' national identity are all major factors forcing the Turks to question the value of their longstanding pro-Western geostrategic commitments.⁶³⁶ Growing nationalism and frustration with the United States and Europe is evident in the broad anti-Westernism in Turkish society. According to a poll conducted by the German Marshall Fund in 2006, 81 percent of Turks disapproved and only 7 percent approved of President Bush's handling of international policies. According to another poll conducted by the Pew Charitable Trusts in 2006, only 12 percent of Turks viewed the US positively. Anti-Americanism among the public, which increased after the invasion of Iraq, sympathy toward the Palestinians and consideration of Iraq, Iran, and Syria as non-enemies translated into an approach to the Middle East that has sometimes conflicted with that of Washington.⁶³⁷ The opinion polls, the day before the crucial parliamentary vote, showed 95 percent of the population was against a war in Iraq. On 1 March 2003, the day of voting, around

45,000 people demonstrated against a war on the streets of Ankara.

Policy Implications

Unfortunately, the rise of the impact of public opinion in Turkey rose at the same time with the rising anti-US sentiments in public opinion, which is too high for a country that has been a staunch US ally for decades. Part of the reason for the anti-Americanism in the early 2000s was the perception that the US was not helping Turkey enough to eliminate the PKK activities in northern Iraq. Turks heavily criticized the US policies for creating an autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq that facilitated the PKK terrorist operations against Turkey⁶³⁸ and the unfounded perception that the US sided with the Kurds in Iraq at the expense of the Turkish security concerns deepened.⁶³⁹ Increasingly nationalist streaks in Turkish society, evidenced by the rising popularity of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and flourishing of nationalist movies, exacerbate this situation.

Because the electorate's opinion has a substantial impact on foreign policy, showing sensitivities to the issues that are redlines for the majority of Turks, including the Kurdish, Cyprus, and the Armenian issue, would go a long way in minimizing anti-Westernism in Turkey. A long-time Turkey observer Ilnur Cevik claims that Erdoğan, when he was a prime minister, kept a close watch over the pulse of the voters through weekly opinion polls. He would see how the voters reacted to controversial issues and if they were to the detriment of the government, he would not hesitate to abruptly abandon his stance. That partially explains the escalation in Erdogan's erratic and harsh rhetoric against Israel or the West prior to elections.

Improving the US image in Turkey also requires an understanding of how

Turkish people can easily be influenced by stories that are sensationalized in Turkish media and hurt their national pride and insult their sense of identity. The 2003 capture of eleven Turkish Special Forces soldiers by the US forces in Iraq, and their transportation in hoods in front of the cameras caused a national outcry against the US for injuring national pride given the sacred importance of the strength and dignity of the soldier in Turkish society. Some Turkish papers made reference to the 1964 crisis in Cyprus and Johnson's letter of threat to remove the NATO support if Turkey militarily intervened in Cyprus.

Another example of an innocently minor issue causing such disproportionate response would be President Obama's picture speaking on the phone with a bat in his right hand with a caption that reads: "President Obama talks on the phone with Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey in the Oval Office, 2012." Turkish politicians and columnists immediately began to comment on its symbolic meaning. The members of the opposition Republican People's Party suggested the photo showed that Erdogan received orders from the US. Some recalled Roosevelt's foreign policy idiom of the era, "speak softly and carry a big stick," and some others called it an implicit insult to Turkey and its citizens with many images circulating in social media in reaction.

Turkey's future trends look positive, however. As the violence in the Middle East persists and Russia remains embroiled in the Ukrainian crisis, Turkish people seem to realize that their future is within the Western framework. Recently, both Turkey's trade with the West and the public opinion toward the West have been on a positive trajectory. Turkey's exports to the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, have dropped dramatically. For example, Turkish exports to Egypt and Iran fell by 10 and 61 percent

respectively between 2012 and 2014 and the exports to the Arab world dropped by 5 percent. Similarly, Turkey's exports to Russia and Ukraine between 2013 and 2014 fell by 15 and 21 percent, respectively. Given the chaos reigning in Turkey's neighborhood, these trends are likely to continue in the near future. Meanwhile, however, exports to the recession-stricken EU increased by 9 percent and to the US by 13 percent during the same period. These numbers are likely to increase following the EU's decision to expand its Customs Union with Turkey in May 2015.⁶⁴⁰

Following a serious drop in interest for EU membership in late 2000s, Turkish people's enthusiasm for the EU seems to be increasing. When asked about whether the EU would be a good thing or bad thing in 2014 according to the German Marshall Fund's poll, 53 percent, up from 43 percent in 2010, said it would be a good thing while 29 percent, down from 35 percent in 2010, thought it would be a bad thing. When asked about why, 29 percent of the Turks said it would be good because the EU strengthened the EU countries' economies, compared to only 16 percent of those from the big EU 10 countries that agreed with the statement.

According to the Transatlantic Survey in 2014, 28 percent of the Turks said it should work closely with the EU on international matters, up from 20 percent in 2008; 10 percent said it should work closely with the US, up from 3 percent in 2008, 14 percent said it should work closely with the Middle Eastern countries, down from 20 percent in 2010. These results are nearly back to the 2008 figures. Those who wanted Turkey to act alone also dropped from 48 percent in 2008 to 33 percent in 2014. On the question of whether NATO is essential to the country's security, 49 percent of the Turks think it's still essential, up from 30 percent in 2010.

6.3. Concluding Remarks

In upholding the hypothesis B, which argues that Turkey's foreign policy actions represent a significant shift in autonomy but not a fundamental reorientation, this dissertation highlights that it's unhelpful to view Turkey in "hypothesis A" terms as a country experiencing reorientation of its foreign policy in favor of a completely autonomous power that tries to limit the Western influence in these regions. Turkey is not lost, yet; labeling Turkey as "lost to the East," "abandoning the West," or worse as an adversary could actually become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Turkey is not Iran. Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution that ended the close alliance with the US during the Shah period, Iran completely reoriented the country's direction by acting like a total adversary to the US and pursuing policies that are completely against the Western interests. Iran supported regional terrorist networks, including Hizballah, which the US lists as a terrorist organization, and sought to create instability in the region to increase its influence. To spread its brand of Islam and raise its Shia profile in the Muslim world, it has intervened in regional conflicts in Syria and Yemen, inflaming conflicts and contributing to instability. Turkey on the other hand cooperates closely with the West to root out terrorism in the region and pursues active diplomacy to mediate between parties for the resolution of conflicts and to create economic interdependence for regional peace and stability. Turkey tries to stay above the sectarian divide and strives to promote democratic and secular values in the Middle East and Eurasia region. Turkey's leader criticizes Israeli policies but the Iranian leader vows to eradicate Israel from the map of the world.

Turkey is not Russia. After the Second World War, Turkey adopted a long-term

multi-faceted strategy of integrating into the European “core”; it became a NATO member and was put on the waiting list for joining the EU. Russia, on the contrary, till early 1990s regarded the NATO as the main threat to its national security and tried to compete with the EU by promoting its own integration project in Eastern Europe. Turkey constitutes a natural geographical extension of Europe, major underutilized repositories of human capital, and investment opportunities that could give a boost to the stagnant EU economies and serve as a buffer to the unstable southern EU borders. While Turkey seeks to become an EU member with the help of the US, Russia’s recent actions in Ukraine demonstrate that it seeks to challenge the US and the EU.

Turkey is not opposing the international order created by the West or breaking the international rule of law by acting aggressively. Both Turkey and Russia may want to pursue a sphere of influence in the region but Russia is trying to bring its former colonies into its orbit with disregard to their sovereignty and territorial integrity. On the other hand, Turkey is contributing to the regional order and stability by making efforts to resolve disputes and by attracting other countries to build economic interdependence through its soft power and respect for their sovereignty. Turkey’s initiatives to create a free trade area with the Middle Eastern countries or to establish regional forums to enhance cooperation—unlike Russia’s Eurasian Economic Union or China’s Shanghai Cooperation Organization—are not intended to limit the influence of the Western countries and institutions.

Turkey is more like France. Its more nationalist, independent, self-confident and defiant strategic orientation is a Turkish variant of Gaullism, in the words of a Turkey scholar Taspinar.⁶⁴¹ Turkish Gaullism means increasingly acting on its own in search of

full sovereignty, greater influence, and most importantly Turkish national pride. France sought a nuclear deterrent, pursued realpolitik, and left the NATO military structure under Charles de Gaulle. France was the first country to initiate the rapprochement with China when the West shunned the country for its massacre of peaceful students protests in Tiananmen. France opposed the US invasion of Iraq, along with Germany, and voted against it in the UNSC, forcing the US to wage the war unilaterally without the UN backing. It opposed the harsher sanctions against Russia after the Ukraine crisis and it only cancelled its arms exports to Russia after heavy pressure from the US and the EU.

Turkey can disagree with the approaches of Washington and Brussels, just like France, but it is an ally, not an adversary. Turkey's move toward being a "normal" power that pursues its own interests in ways sometimes frustrated the US and the EU, but it generally behaves in a way that is consistent with multilateral norms. Turkish autonomy has certainly increased, but Ankara generally operates within the bounds acceptable to the West and its move toward "normal" autonomy should not be perceived as a threat.

Perhaps the bigger worry for the West is not Turkey's reorientation but its recent restrictions on freedom and democracy and their implications for Turkey's stability. Maintenance of a democratic Turkey, which was once hailed as a model for the Central Asian republics and the Islamic world, has important implications not just for Turkey but for the people yearning for freedom and democracy in the surrounding region beset by authoritarianism and violence.

Despite the impressive array of political and economic reforms passed during the AKP's first two terms that increased the rights of the Kurdish minority and improved the lives of millions of people, the Turkish government is increasingly being criticized over

its breach of freedom of expression and the rule of law. When the protests broke out in 2013 over the construction of a mall, which would demolish the Gezi Park in Central Istanbul, the police used heavy-handed tactics to suppress the protests, resulting in five fatalities. Instead of calming down the situation, Erdogan inflamed the protests by belittling the protestors and their demands. The government also became more aggressive towards media, which were already weak by the Western standards, by jailing journalists and censoring the media, most recently banning Twitter and Youtube. The government's order to revoke licenses and cancel deals with groups associated with Mr. Gulen, the religious scholar who fell out of the AKP's favor, and charges against the military officers, the AKP's archrivals, on the grounds of conspiring to stage a coup raise questions about the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in the country.

President Erdogan's majoritarian view of democracy led to growing concerns among a significant minority of Turks about his increasingly divisive leadership. He has done more than any previous leader to resolve the country's Kurdish conflict and his populist triumph moved Turkish politics from the domain of elites and empowered the heartland's devout Muslims and conservative entrepreneurs. His party ended the dominance of the Turkish military, which toppled four elected governments since 1960, and his proposals to change the 1982 Constitution, reminiscent of the military coup, and establish a more representative Constitutional court, not dominated by the old secular elite, are not necessarily anti-democratic. However, while catering to the majority of the Turks who voted for him, he was accused of ignoring the voice of the other half, increasing fears that Turkey could become more polarized and descend into instability in an already unstable region.

Turkey's electorate probably punished Erdogan's authoritarian leanings in the June 2015 parliamentary elections by ending the AKP's 13-year single-party rule, complicating President Erdogan's plans to get a two-thirds majority to boost his presidential powers. However, the AKP, which won 40.8 percent of the vote and the 258 out of 550 seats in the parliament, is still the dominant party in the country and its electoral appeal is likely to remain for many years to come because the central component of the regime—the conservative entrepreneurial class and the pious majority that were neglected by its secular predecessors—continue to support the AKP's growth-inducing economic policies and social policies.

It will be interesting to watch how Turkey's foreign policy would unfold if its internal politics gradually returns to a period of authoritarianism like the one under the military's dominance. A good indicator of which direction Turkey is heading could be the course of women's rights in Turkey. If Turkey, which gave the right to vote to women before many of the European countries and lectured the Muslim countries at the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation about gender equality, begins to restrict the women's rights beyond the limits acceptable to most Turkish women, there is a very good reason to worry.

The AKP also needs to realize—the recent parliamentary elections could serve as a wake up call—that its power is limited as 13 years have passed and the party may gradually be losing some of its vitality and vision. The economy slowed to 2.8 percent growth in 2014 after averaging 5 percent in the last decade. The AKP may now have peaked in its decade-long strong performance and the corruption allegations have tarnished the party's image. Erdogan's blustering, at times erratic, style has recently

started winning him more enemies.⁶⁴² Turkey does not enjoy a deeply-rooted geo-cultural sphere of influence based on sectarian solidarity like Iran, it does not speak the language of the Middle Eastern region, and it does not champion a religious ideology that would help spread its influence like Saudi Arabia. The only power that will pave the way for the Turkish sphere of influence in the region will be its own democratic and economic appeal,⁶⁴³ strengthening of which would suit the long term interests of Turkey as well as its Western allies.

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