

**HENRY M. JACKSON SCHOOL  
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

---



UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

# **ABANDONMENT OR ENGAGEMENT: RECALIBRATING US-TURKEY RELATIONS**



**TASK FORCE**

The Donald c. Hellmann Task Force Program

**2022**

## Acknowledgements

---

*This Task Force report would not have been possible without the exceptional support from our faculty advisor Professor Reşat Kasaba, whose expertise, guidance and encouragement has inspired us throughout this project. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to Lauren Dobrovolny for her continued help and dedicated support throughout our project. We give a special thanks to John Koenig for contributing his valuable time and experience, as well as Emily Keller for sharing her advice and knowledge. Lastly, we are immensely grateful towards Jess Baily for sharing his time, expertise, and critique.*

# **Abandonment or Engagement:** *Recalibrating US-Turkey relations*

Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies  
University of Washington, Seattle  
Task Force Report Winter 2022

---

## **Faculty Advisor**

Reşat Kasaba

Anne H. H. and Kenneth B. Pyle Professor of American Foreign Policy  
Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies

## **Evaluator**

Ambassador Jess Baily (ret)

## **Coordinators/Editors**

Violet Collins

Yolanda Yang

## **Authors**

Adam Aley

Omar Ashraf

Ryan Aust

Nate Constan

Thomas Hilverda

Noah Gruenert

Vanessa Pei

Nicholas Swedin

Mariam Tesfaye

Kristina Yang

Sydney Young

## Table of Contents

---

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>List of Contributors</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Section I: Exploring Turkey and the US</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Domestic Policy and Trends in Turkey</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Turkish Foreign Policy</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>At a Crossroads: The Turkey-US Relationship</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Section II: Turkey’s Neighbors</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Turkey and the Gulf States: Reconciling Strained Relations</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Turkey and the Syrian Civil War</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Turkish Relations in the Mediterranean</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Section III: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Periphery</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>The Caucasus and Central Asia: Turkey’s Foreign Policy Frontier</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Turkey in Africa</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Section IV: Turkey and American Adversaries</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Turkey and Russia</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Chinese-Turkish Relations: At Odds with the US</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Turkey and Iran</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Policy Recommendations</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>107</b>

## List of Figures

---

### Section I

1.1 Map of Kurdistan(Özoğlu, 2014) .....	7
1.2 Turkey's GDP Sputter(World Economic Forum, 2015) .....	9
1.3 Decline of the Lira (Middle East Eye, 2020) .....	10
1.4 Turkey's Main Export Partners (Turkey Trade Data, 2020) .....	10
1.5 LNG Imports by Source-Europe(billion cubic meters)(Bp Global).....	21
1.6 Annual EU27 Natural Gas Domestic Production and Imports(TWh).....	22

### Section II

2.1 Map of Areas of Control in Syria (Deir Ez-Zor and Qamishli, 2018) .....	38
2.2 Map of Turkish Military Operation Zones (Khayrallah al-Hilu, 2020) .....	42
2.3 Map of East-Med Pipeline (Euronews, 2020).....	49
2.4 Migrant Arrivals in Greece, 2014-2020 (Migration Policy, 2021).....	51
2.5 Map of Turkish-Libyan Maritime Deal (Anadolu Agency, 2021).....	54

### Section III

3.1 Map of Turkey-Azerbaijan Route through Zangezur Corridor (TRT World, 2021)....	60
3.2 Map of Turkey's Major Oil and Natural Gas Transit Pipelines(U.S. Energy Information Administration and IHS EDIN, 2017).....	62
3.3 Map of Turkey's Primary Focuses in Africa (Tesfaye, 2022).....	70
3.4 Map of The Middle East Eye (Amin, 2018).....	73
3.5 Map of Turkish Military Influence in the Sahel (Crisis Group, 2021).....	74

### Section IV

4.1 Map of TurkStream Gas Pipeline (Deutsche Welle, 2018).....	81
4.2 Map of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine (BBC News, 2022).....	85
4.3 Map of Routes of Belt and Road Initiative (AsiaGreen).....	88
4.4 Turkey-China Trade Values (Kulaksiz, 2019).....	90
4.5 Map of Iranian Oil and Natural Gas Transportation (World Energy Atlas).....	99

## Executive Summary

*Violet Collins*

Recent changes in Turkey's domestic and foreign policy, as well as in the general international community, demand a reevaluation and recalibration of American-Turkish relations. Under President Erdoğan, Turkey has implemented foreign policy that is increasingly at odds with American preferences and interests, as exemplified by the Turkish government's use of a hard-power approach to foreign policy and its choices to pursue expansionist goals. With recent developments in Ukraine and in broader international relations, the U.S. should carefully consider how it wishes to protect its interests and priorities both near and far its sphere of influence.

This Task Force will evaluate changes within Turkish policy and priorities and discuss their causes and implications on American interests and actions abroad. Based on our research and analysis, this Task Force proposes that in reassessing America's relationship with Turkey, policymakers should choose to follow a path towards engagement and alliance rather than abandonment in order to put the U.S. in the best position to protect its interests globally. In considering the options going forward, re-engaging with Turkey will be to the advantage of the U.S. given the nation's geographic importance and status as a regional power in a tenuous part of the world.

Overall, we propose that the U.S. should re-engage with Turkey through the establishment and maintenance of a transaction-based bilateral relationship around shared interests and priorities. This Task Force proposes the following major policy recommendations:

- I. The U.S. should respect Turkey's foreign policy decisions despite their growing divergence from American policy demands and interests. Respecting Turkey's desire to act as an independent and influential regional power would provide the U.S. with a capable ally in a geographically important area of the world.
- II. American policymakers should take advantage of Turkey's independent foreign policy choices in order to protect and advance American interests in regions of the world where the U.S. lacks major influence. A strong and supported Turkey has the potential to provide the U.S. with a reliable and formidable ally with the capability to fill power vacuums left behind by the U.S. as America refocuses its attention on China and other parts of the world.

- III. The United States should reassess its relationship with Turkey in order to build a stronger and more sustainable partnership. Given Turkey's assertive and emboldened policy choices, a durable alliance will require bilateral effort from both sides around shared interests and common goals. This Task Force identifies energy as a topic in which the U.S. and Turkey could develop mutually beneficial policies.
- IV. The United States must abandon the assumption that allies will strictly follow American interests and actions in bilateral partnerships. In today's global community, the United States stands to benefit greatly from strong and reliable friends. Therefore, the United States should incentivize Turkey to improve and reform its human rights practices through third-party institutions and multilateral agreements, rather than through condemnation and sanctions. This will also serve to include Turkey in multilateral institutions and international organizations in a role that Erdoğan's government wishes to assume.

In proposing these policies, this Task Force recognizes that human rights are an incredibly important dimension of foreign policy, and we are fully aware of Turkey's dismal human rights record under Erdoğan's leadership. This Task Force has chosen to propose policies related more towards the economic and geopolitical aspects of the Turkey-America relationship. In order to address human rights, we advocate for a re-establishment of strong and prosperous relations with Turkey that can later evolve to include key policies around human rights, rather than making alignment on human rights a requirement to forging a relationship. We believe this will be more sustainable and more likely to succeed and produce results across all aspects of policy in the future.

Regardless of leadership, status, or interests, Turkey will remain a geographically important nation, and the United States still has much to gain from a relationship with a strong regional ally in this part of the world. Through an alliance with Turkey, the United States stands to have a seat at the table in an area of the world that it cannot always commit militarily and materially, but where there are still strong American interests.

## Introduction

*Violet Collins*

Like most other states, the US has implemented a foreign policy approach of aligning with nations with which it has a shared set of interests. While the US-Turkey relationship has been a tenuous one since the beginning, recent developments in Turkey's policies towards its neighbors and in the broader international community demand a reevaluation of this alliance and the goals that US policymakers have going forward regarding Turkey.

From the Turkish perspective, a positive relationship with the US has provided security and ties to the West, whereas for American foreign policy, Turkey has been important geographically due to American security concerns during the Cold War as well as during the War on Terror in the Middle East. Despite these prior periods of collaboration, recent developments concerning Turkey's domestic and international policies have been at odds with American interests and values. Looking at Turkey's transition through the previous decades, the state has gone from acting out of the interest of its relationship with the United States to developing a sense of Turkish nationalism and self confidence, as evident in policies motivated solely by Turkish interests and priorities. As the Turkish economy and the government's self confidence grew during the first half of AKP rule, Turkish policy became increasingly expansive throughout the region.

The latter half of Erdoğan and the AKP's dominance has been marked more by fear and insecurity, following the Arab Spring movements, 2008 global recession, and the Syrian Revolution. This shift towards sentiments of fear and insecurity in the Turkish government has been seen in the reorientation of their policy towards border concerns and their utilization of foreign policy successes and expansion to overcome domestic difficulties and discontent. Under the leadership of Erdoğan and the AKP the last five years, Turkey has seen the retreat from Kemalist secularism, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and political Islam, and ongoing economic instability. In the international arena, Erdoğan has pushed Turkey's foreign policy along a path that aims to see Turkey recognized as an important global actor, while simultaneously utilizing foreign policy at home as a means of legitimizing AKP rule and quelling domestic dissatisfaction.

In considering the relationship between these countries, the ways in which both are undergoing change complicates an already strained alliance. For the United States, this includes navigating rivalry with China, which is increasingly at the forefront of American foreign policy, as well as deciding what

role the US will play going forward in the global community. Regardless of the role that policymakers and politicians would like to see the United States play in the world, the US will need to continue making efforts to contain rivals such as Iran and Russia and protecting American interests around the globe. This transition in American foreign policy and international outlook has created a power vacuum in regions where American presence and interest was once strong, namely the Middle East. The use of “America First” rhetoric and shift in overall mindset during the previous administration put a strain on America’s relationship with not only its tenuous alliances but also its stronger friendships. On the Turkish side, Erdoğan and Turkish leadership have oscillated between implementing expansionist, aggressive policy independent of their ally’s interests and concerns, and more moderate, conciliatory approaches prioritizing a strengthening of ties with neighbors.

Despite being removed from each other culturally and geographically, Turkey and the US have found use for each other in the past, and there’s no doubt that both sides have the potential to continue benefiting from a positive relationship. What will emerge as an important factor is whether or not Turkey- or Erdoğan’s- interests and visions for foreign policy stand completely at odds with that of the United States. While Erdoğan stands in opposition to many American interests and foreign policy objectives, it is possible that he will continue to have electoral success, which is a possibility that American policymakers need to anticipate. Turkey could be a valuable ally for advancing American interests due to its geopolitical importance, participation in NATO, relative size, and engagement with democracy and democratic institutions in the past. Because of Turkey’s relevance in the international community, engagement and allyship should be a priority of the United States as a stronger bilateral relationship could provide the opportunity for the US to protect its interests in an ever-shifting region of the world as well as advance American policies and priorities with regards to rivals like Iran, China, and Russia.

This Task Force will first explore the internal and external factors behind these recent shifts in Turkey’s policies, as well as how the relationship between the United States and Turkey has developed and changed in recent years. The chapters that follow will examine Turkey’s current relationship and policies with regards to its neighbors in the Gulf and Eastern Mediterranean, and will discuss Turkey’s involvement in the Syrian Civil War as well as Turkey’s ongoing policies in Africa and the Caucasus. Finally, our last section will discuss and analyze Turkey’s relationships with major American rivals. In each of these sections, we will make recommendations for how the United States should maintain a productive relationship with Turkey while continuing to safeguard its own interests.

## I: Exploring Turkey and the US

In the first section of our Task Force, we explore the intricacies of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), laying the foundation for subsequent sections. These chapters explore Turkey's complex internal issues while assessing the influence of these domestic problems on Turkey's geopolitical relationships (particularly with the West). Erdoğan and the AKP's decisions have exacerbated and strained the U.S.-Turkey relations. Turkey is a state divided; a societal tug of war between secularism and resacralization fueled by authoritarianism and Islamisation. Further, their quest for autonomy and recognition as a legitimate global power must not deter the United States from mending this relationship. These chapters aim to identify key domestic and foreign policy decisions that can aid our overarching policy recommendations and respond to the question; what will U.S.-Turkey relations look like moving forward?

## Domestic Policy and Trends in Turkey

*Nate Constan*

Since his election to the prime minister in 2003, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) has driven his country through a period of extraordinary change. In merely two decades, Erdoğan has completely transformed Turkish politics, averted a military coup, and rewritten the constitution, shifting the largely ceremonial role of the president to a position that resembles a dictator. Through persistence and resilience, Erdoğan and the AKP have uprooted Turkish politics and are shaping a narrative of uncertainty and prejudice marked by the decline of Kemalist secularism, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, and enduring economic instability. The shifting of Turkey's foreign policy has been largely influenced by internal political and economic issues. The AKP's adoption of pan-Islamist positions since their rise to power in 2002 offers much-needed context in understanding diplomatic relations between the United States and Turkey. Politicized Islam has become the new norm under Erdoğan and has been at the forefront of U.S.-Turkey relations under the Trump administration and now, the Biden administration. With the upcoming 2023 elections in Turkey, a level of uncertainty pervades relations between the two NATO allies.

### Political Reorientation: The Abandonment of Atatürk's Westernized Turkey

The modern Republic of Turkey has been heavily shaped by the forces of laiklik, or secularism, and Islamism. The Sunni Islamic state that was the Ottoman Empire fell 100 years ago, yet the empire has left behind a significant legacy that Turks have struggled to grasp. Following the fall of the Ottoman Empire, military leader Mustafa Kemal became the uncontested president of the newly founded Turkish Republic. Kemal, better known as "Atatürk," put forward the ideological blueprint that would become the keystone to Turkish westernization and modernity; Kemalism. This ideology centered around Turkish nationalism and secularism. Kemal's ideology forgot the Ottoman past and accepted a new, Westernized future with open arms. Guarded and held in check by military and civilian officials, Kemalism proved resilient and endured through thick and thin (with the Kemalist military staging three coups d'état.)<sup>1</sup> But the election on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002, proved to be "the nail in the coffin" for Kemalism.

Following the ban of the Fazilet Partisi (FP) in June of 2001, Erdoğan and various Turkish politicians founded the AKP. Erdoğan's previous accomplishments, including his stint as mayor of Istanbul, solidified him as a popular politician within the newly founded party, leading to his election to the prime minister in 2003. Prior to his election, Erdoğan was jailed for four months after reciting a

---

<sup>1</sup> Baran, Zeyno. "Is Kemalism Dead in Turkey?" *Hoover Institution*, Dec. 2010.

controversial Islamo-nationalist and militarist poem, which greatly offended Kemalist elites. His priority as a new prime minister? Maintain his “democratic” image with the Kemalist military still powerful. However, his persecution painted the prime minister as courageous in “the face of the victimizing evil Kemalist elite...” and found the leader popular among many Islamist groups.<sup>2</sup> During Erdoğan’s first two terms as prime minister, he cleverly appropriated Kemalist rhetoric to fit his agenda. For example, in Kemalist belief, there is no disagreement between the activities of the party and the good of the state, military, and whole nation of Turkey. This is the Kemalist principle of *milli irade* (national will).<sup>3</sup> The concept of *milli irade* rationalizes Erdoğan’s legitimacy due to the AKP’s continued electoral success. Additionally, this Kemalist law perpetuates the view that opposition is to be conceived as a “menace to national interests” and produces the illusion that Republic and democracy are inseparable.<sup>4</sup> The results? Substantial public support for authoritarian leanings if democratic institutions remain intact. Erdoğan garnered public support at all costs. In 2007, Erdoğan credited the AKP’s win to Turkey’s democratic and secular values, a perfect example of his ability to utilize Turkey’s socioeconomic rifts to gain popular support. In the same year, the AKP subverted the balance of power held in check by Kemalism by introducing the direct election of the president. The AKP candidate, foreign minister Abdullah Gul, was elected president despite the Turkish military’s clear lack of support for the Islamist leader, putting a heavy strain on Turkish politics.

With the AKP now in power and Erdoğan in the driver’s seat, the power struggle between Kemalist secularism and religious conservatism became central to the Justice and Development Party’s efforts. Through the utilization of conservative and religious discourse, Erdoğan gained ground as an Islamist populist leader. In a recent study, Erdoğan was labeled ‘very populist’, with a populism score of 1.5 out of 2.0 from 2014-2018 (his first term as the president of Turkey).<sup>5</sup> The adoption of pan-Islamist positions has propelled Erdoğan to new heights. A perfect example of this is the state-sponsored blending of Turkish and Muslim identity. Over the last decade, Turkey’s Directorate of Religious Affairs, or Diyanet, has become increasingly more powerful and noticeable within Turkey. Diyanet’s budget has increased fourfold to ₺12.9 billion, roughly 23 times the Diyanet budget in 2002.<sup>6</sup> In 2017, Ali Erbas, a conservative cleric close with Erdoğan, was appointed head of Diyanet. The Directorate of Religious Affairs has become one of Turkey’s largest state institutions and established itself as a disruptor to Turkish secularism. Erbas has advocated children be required to take Quran lessons, directly supporting Erdoğan’s call for a “religious generation to be raised [and] indoctrinated with conservative Islamic

<sup>2</sup> Yilmaz, Ihsan. “Erdoğan's Political Journey: From Victimised Muslim Democrat to Authoritarian, Islamist Populist.” *ECPS*, 2 Apr. 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Cantelmo, Maria. “The Fall of Kemalism and the New Face of Political Islam: 20 Crucial Years in Turkey’s History (1980-2002).” *Athens Journal of History*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, Paul, et al. “Revealed: The Rise and Rise of Populist Rhetoric.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, Mar. 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Bellut, Daniel. “Turkey's Diyanet Religious Body Threatens Secularism.” *DW.COM*, Sept. 2021.

values.”<sup>7</sup> Islam in Turkey is reaching all aspects of Turkish politics, including the Education Ministry and even Ankara’s Court of Cassation where Erdoğan and Erbas attended the Opening Ceremony of the Judicial Year alongside the court’s president Mehmet Akarca. All three have positioned themselves as an enemy of the judiciary, with Akarca publicly supporting “a search for a new constitution.”<sup>8</sup> The spread of Islam and the radicalization of Diyanet throughout Turkish politics directly undermines the United States’ view of Turkey as a secular nation. The United States must recognize Diyanet’s far reaching power and influence as a method of Islamizing many aspects of Turkish politics to fit Erdoğan and the AKP’s political agenda.

Despite Erdoğan’s use of state institutions for political leverage, polls continue to show a decline in popularity for the president and the AKP. All eyes are focused on the upcoming 2023 election, which will either see a revert to parliamentarism or the continuance of Erdoğan’s “illustrious” presidentialism that he installed following the 2016 Coup d’état attempt. The attempted coup marked a significant turning point in Turkey’s political history, and its failure further helped solidify Erdoğan’s far-reaching power over Turkey. For example, in early 2011, Turkish top military commanders “resigned en masse,” a product of the military’s dwindling political power under the AKP and the protest over the mass arrests of military generals suspected of conspiracy against the state.<sup>9</sup> Following the mass resignation, Erdoğan exercised his sweeping civilian authority over the country’s military by promoting his own choice, General Necdet Ozel, to become the senior military commander. The installment of AKP aligned officials to the country’s military was “effectively the end of the military’s role in Turkish democracy.”<sup>10</sup> During the Coup d’état attempt over eroding secularism, democratic rule and the AKP’s disregard for human rights, the military’s role as the protectorate of secularism was divided. Only 1.5% of the country’s armed forces took part in the failed coup.<sup>11</sup> Erdoğan’s control of the military has cemented him as an authoritarian leader, perfectly positioning him for a power grab seen by the acquisition of new, far-reaching executive powers granted via constitutional changes in a referendum in 2017. This should be a cause for concern for the United States, as Erdoğan and the AKP have installed themselves into seemingly every level of the judiciary, military, and state institutions. Additionally, the erosion of democracy and human rights in Turkey, plus the construction of Erdoğan’s \$1.2 billion Presidential Complex, indicates that the populist leader and the AKP may be here to stay.

---

<sup>7</sup> Bellut, Daniel. “Turkey’s Diyanet Religious Body Threatens Secularism.” *DW.COM*, Sept. 2021.

<sup>8</sup> María Martín, José. “Turkey’s Judiciary Calls on Ali Erbas to Tone It Down.” *Atalayar*, 10 Sept. 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Tuysuz, Gul, and Sabrina Tavernise. “Top Generals Quit in Group, Stunning Turks.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 29 July 2011.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> BBC. “Turkey Coup Attempt: Nearly 9,000 Soldiers Joined Plot - Army.” *BBC News*, BBC, 27 July 2016.

## The Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK) and the Kurdish Question



Figure 1.1 Map of Kurdistan (Özoğlu, 2014)<sup>12</sup>

The Kurdish people are one of the world's largest ethnic groups without a nation, with sizable numbers in the Middle East, including Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. The dispersion of the Kurdish peoples across the Middle East has created fear over the culture's potential for a united Kurdistan. Since a large Kurdish population resides in eastern Turkey, Erdoğan and the AKP have worries over the Kurdish question. Historically, Turkey has persecuted and suppressed the Kurdish people. In the 1980s, the Turkish state detained 70,000 people, of which 20,000 were reportedly Kurds who were peacefully protesting for cultural rights. Additionally, the Turkish government has arrested nearly 82,000 Kurds in Kurdish provinces.<sup>13</sup> Turkey has historically defended these arrests, citing Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish penal code; to "...protect the economic institutions and social foundations of the nation" and to seek imprisonment for people who seek to "...destroy the political and legal order of the state."<sup>14</sup> Turkey's conflict with militants of the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK) has spanned the last four decades, but this most recent chapter of conflict between the PKK and Turkey is entering one of its deadliest chapters. Recognized by the European Union, the United States, and Turkey as a terrorist organization, the PKK has long fought for equal rights and Kurdish autonomy within the Turkish state through consistent military attacks (except for ceasefires from 1999-2004 and 2013-2015). In the winter of 2015, the

<sup>12</sup> Özoğlu, Hakan. "Lessons From the Idea. and Rejection, of Kurdistan." *The New York Times*, July 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Callimanopoulos, Dominique. "Kurdish Repression in Turkey." *Cultural Survival*, 1 June 1982.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

conflict's fatality rate peaked after PKK-backed militias attempted to claim control of territories in Turkey's southeast urban districts.<sup>15</sup>

For Turkey, the establishment of an independent Kurdish state poses a great threat. Roughly 15 million (≈50% of the Middle East Kurdish population) reside in Turkey. The PKK and the Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG) have increasingly agitated the Turkish government under Erdoğan and have been very successful abroad, especially in Syria. If an independent state is established in Syria, it would greatly accelerate secessionist movements within Turkey. Erdoğan and the AKP have vocalized a desire to create a buffer or security zone on the Syrian-Turkish border as a bolster for potential secessionist movements. In 2019, Russia backed this move by Turkey to create a buffer zone between Kurdish-occupied Syria. United States-Turkish relations on the Kurdish question remain a gray area and have proven strenuous. Syria and Iraq still have pockets of ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah (ISIS) militants. The US and PKK share this common enemy, which has led to the US providing arms for Kurdish groups such as the Syrian YPG (despite their label as a terrorist organization by the EU, US, and Turkey)<sup>16</sup>. This relationship has put a strain on US-Turkey relations and is further stretched by Russia and Turkey's growing relationship. Additionally, the YPG is currently holding many ISIS prisoners in very insecure prisons in Kurdish-occupied Syria. If Turkey were to engage in an offensive along the buffer zone, the YPG would have to mobilize all their troops to the border, leaving these ISIS prisoners unguarded and vulnerable to liberation, essentially resetting progress made by the US-sponsored YPG. The Kurdish question is highly complicated and recently, has become very polarized in terms of US sponsorship for the Kurds and Turkey's partnership with Russia.

Turkey has historically aspired to convince the international community that Kurds are 'terrorists' via anti-Kurdish campaigns. This anti-Kurdish sentiment includes denying Kurdish identity by the state, banning the teaching of the Kurdish language, and even institutionalized racism through academics, with the state paying schools to teach theories that denied the existence of Kurds. A perfect example of this is known as the "kurt-kart theory," which denied the existence of the Kurdish ethnicity and asserted that the culture was merely Turks whose name was derived from the sound of their feet made in the snow of southeast Turkey.<sup>17</sup> Turkey uses anti-Kurdish sentiment and their "terrorist" label to rationalize military encroachment on predominantly Kurdish areas.

---

<sup>15</sup> International Crisis Group. "Turkey's PKK Conflict: A Visual Explainer." *Crisis Group*, 7 Jan. 2022.

<sup>16</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. "Conflict between Turkey and Armed Kurdish Groups | Global Conflict Tracker." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, Jan. 2022.

<sup>17</sup> "MGK paid academics to write on 'kart kurt theory,' commission report says." *Today's Zaman*. 25 November 2012.

## The Turkish Economy: A Deepening Crisis

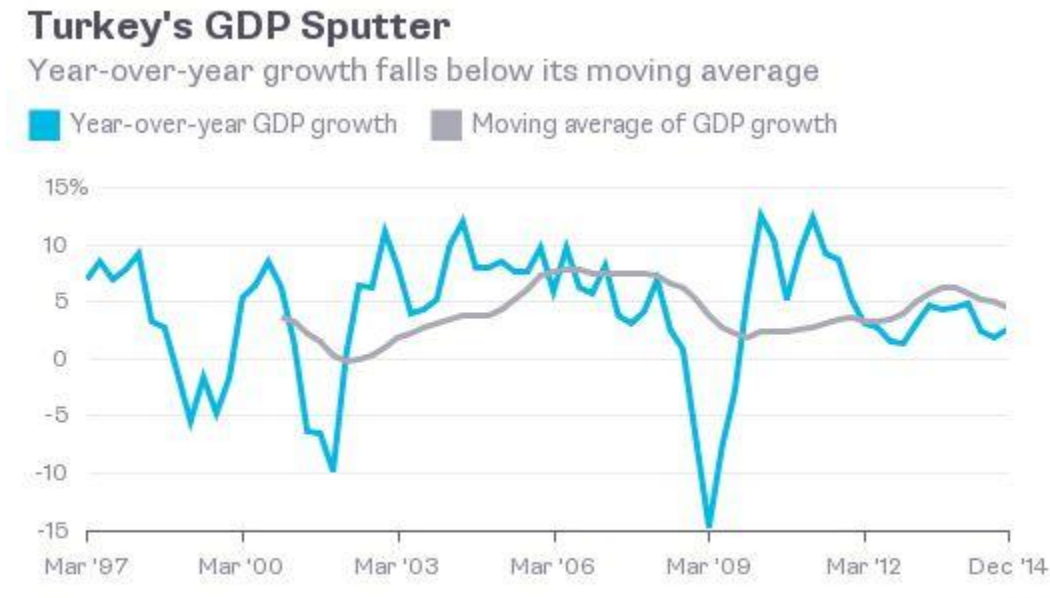


Figure 1.2 Turkey's GDP Sputter (World Economic Forum, 2015)<sup>18</sup>

Taking advantage of the 2001 Turkish economic crisis, the AKP won power on promises to fix the struggling Turkish economy of the 1990s. Today, the Turkish Lira (₺) stands at roughly ₺13.62 against \$1 US Dollar.<sup>19</sup> The promise of economic stability and prosperity has been hindered heavily by Erdoğan's adoption of pan-Islamist positions, leaving Turkey in an ever-worsening economic crisis. Erdoğan has utilized 'Islamonomics,' specifically the concept of *riba*, which according to Islamic scholars prohibits "unequal exchanges or charges and fees for borrowing that can result in the payment of interest."<sup>20</sup> This concept is clearly on display in Turkey. Erdoğan has publicly advocated that keeping interest rates low will yield lower inflation; "I repeat here, as you already know my fight against interest rates; we will lower interest rates as we have done already. Inflation will decline as well."<sup>21</sup> Most economists hold the opposite to be true; high interest rates curb inflation. In Turkey today, there is no evidence that Erdoğan exercising *riba* is curbing inflation. Inflation remains at a 19-year high, with annual inflation expected to reach 48%.<sup>22</sup> The current crisis is a consequence of Erdoğan's centralizing power, which has hollowed out Turkish financial institutions.

<sup>18</sup> Hutt, Rosamond. "4 Things to Know about Turkey's Economy." World Economic Forum, Nov. 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Reuters. "Turkish Lira Weakens Ahead of Cenbank Inflation Report." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 27 Jan. 2022.

<sup>20</sup> Ayub, Mohammed. "What Is Riba in Islam?" *Qardus*, Sept. 2021.

<sup>21</sup> Yilmaz, Ugur. "Turkey's Erdoğan Vows to Continue Lowering Interest Rates." *Bloomberg.com*, Bloomberg, Jan. 2022.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

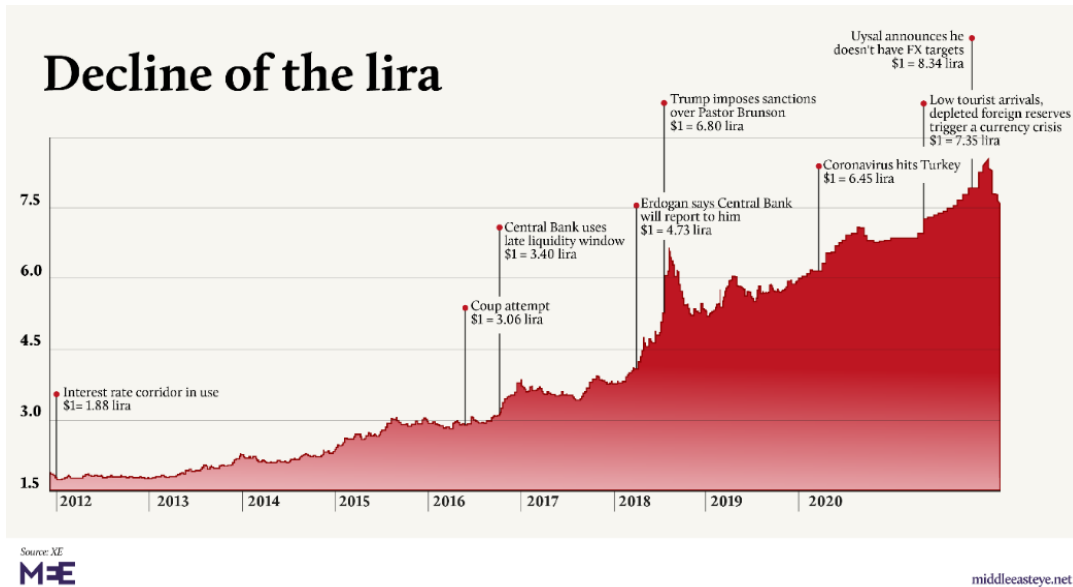


Figure 1.3 Decline of the Lira (Middle East Eye, 2020)<sup>23</sup>

The perfect example of how consequential the centralization of power has been in Turkey is the Central Bank. In essence, President Erdoğan controls the levers of the Turkish central bank. This lack of independence and constant political interference has crippled the central bank. Since 2019, there have been four governors of the central bank, of which three of the four were fired by Erdoğan. The most recent appointee, Sahap Kavcioglu, is also a critic of high interest rates. As interest remains low, the deepening economic crisis has had far-reaching impacts. Foreign investment has already left the country and the burden of post-pandemic inflation is greatly affecting the cost of living for Turkish citizens. Erdoğan has absolute control not only over the country's politics, but central institutions, such as the banks.

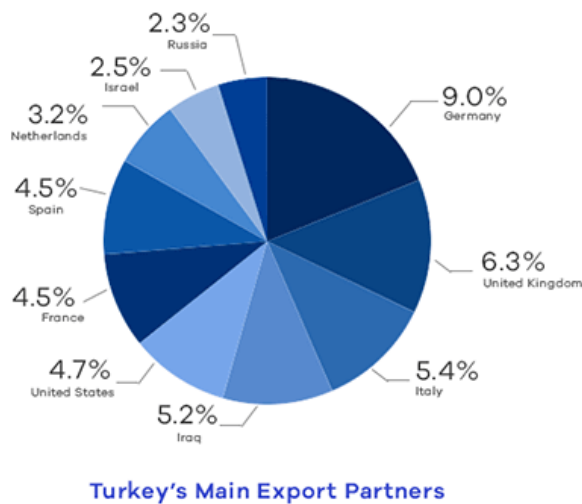


Figure 1.4 Turkey's Main Export Partners (Turkey Trade Data, 2020)<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Middle East Eye. "Turkey's Lira: The Story of an Epic Downfall." Middle East Eye, Nov. 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Turkey Trade Data. "Turkey Export Data." Turkey Export Data | Turkey Customs Data | Turkey Trade Data, 2020.

Erdoğan's belief in *riba* has ultimately worsened Turkey's economy. With the upcoming election in 2023, it is in Erdoğan's interest to prioritize the Turkish economy. By doing so, Erdoğan will not only fix the economy, but he will redeem much needed political leverage ahead of the upcoming 2023 election. Additionally, Turkey's struggling economy is perhaps the United States' greatest leverage point for foreign policy. Turkey is largely economically and militarily dependent on its Western allies, with eight of Turkey's top-ten export markets being NATO allies.<sup>25</sup> In an effort to defend the lira, Turkey has exhausted its foreign currency reserves and is desperate for external financing, which provides great leverage regarding United States-Turkish foreign policy.

At the very least, the United States can expect Erdoğan to blame the self-inflicted Turkish economic disparities on the West. The United States must be cautious prior to the 2023 elections when navigating Turkish political and economic issues so that Erdoğan cannot rally nationalist support. The United States and European Union cannot save Turkish democracy from Erdoğan and the AKP, but the Biden administration should still reinvigorate support for human rights, reinvestment in public diplomacy, and Western economic practices in Turkey. Even if this support does not catalyze change in Turkey, it is important for Erdoğan, the AKP, and the Turkish public to know the United States' stance on Turkey's domestic issues.

---

<sup>25</sup> Hananel Director, Sam, et al. "Flashpoints in U.S.-Turkey Relations in 2021." *Center for American Progress*, 19 Jan. 2021.

## Turkish Foreign Policy

*Kristina Yang*

There is one overarching theme surrounding Turkey's foreign policy that has remained relatively constant since the beginning of the Republic in 1923. Many past rulers have implemented foreign policy inspired by the idea of reviving Turkey's former power status as a great empire; Erdoğan is no exception. In some ways, his policies are a continuation of his predecessors, all of whom strived to revive Turkey's greatness. However, Erdoğan's difference lies in his more recent foreign policy choices that have distanced Turkey from the West. While in the past, Turkey latched its foreign policy onto the West to accelerate its return to greatness, Erdoğan has chosen to assert Turkey's power as an autonomous Muslim nation. This chapter will examine the changing trends in Turkey's foreign policy, particularly focusing on how Erdoğan has transformed it under his leadership. By analyzing these shifting trends, this chapter will argue that Erdoğan's shift in Turkish foreign policy is motivated by two key features: First, Erdoğan's ambition to have Turkey recognized as a global power; and second, Erdoğan's strategy of using Turkey's foreign policy to legitimize his rule in order to garner popular support and keep his party in power. While these two motivating factors serve as reasoning to Erdoğan's foreign policy choices, it is important to note that Erdoğan's authoritarian disposition also plays a large role in how Turkish foreign policy has panned out.

### Background – Before the AKP

Before Erdoğan came to power, Turkey perceived itself as a middle power that could cover up its weak international bargaining power by siding with a global superpower like the U.S.<sup>26</sup> As a result, Turkish foreign policy followed the course of American and European preferences, leading it to be perceived as a reliable ally to the West. During the Cold War, Turkey was a loyal participant in the Western alliance and became a NATO member in 1952.<sup>27</sup> Even in the post-Cold War era, Ankara played an active role in the 1990 Gulf War and acquired new roles supporting the Western world post 9/11.<sup>28</sup> In essence, Turkey embraced a foreign policy model that sought security in the democratic West. The West became Turkey's "foreign policy bedrock" that anchored its security and role in global politics.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Turkey did not consider itself a part of the Middle East and rather, wanted to be seen as a

---

<sup>26</sup> Cagaptay, Soner. *Erdoğan's Empire: Turkey and the Politics of the Middle East*. S.I.: I B TAURIS, 2021, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Muftuler Bac, Meltem. "Turkey's Grand Strategy in the Context of Global and Regional Challenges." *Perceptions* 25, no. 2 (2020): 178+. *Gale Academic OneFile* (accessed February 22, 2022). <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A661246528/AONE?u=anon~5618b1ae&sid=googleScholar&xid=5c27ac52>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Weise, Zia. "Turkey's Balkan comeback", *Politico* website (17 May 2018).

European country.<sup>30</sup> Thus, when interacting with the Middle East, Turkey ensured it was not contradicting its Turkish-Western ties. While Turkey did extend relationships to non-Western countries during this time, it chose relationships that would complement its ‘bedrock’ ties with the U.S, EU, and NATO. For example, in the 1990s, Turkey built close ties with Azerbaijan and Georgia (under US approval) through the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline (BTC). This pipeline was meant to bring Azeri oil through Georgia and into Turkey where it could be shipped internationally.<sup>31</sup> This BTC project symbolizes Turkish foreign policy during the 1990s: initiating new relations with non-Western actors, but all under its main relationship with the US and the West.

### The First Decade of AKP Rule

When Erdoğan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) first took power, they carried out past foreign policy trends of seeking acceptance from the West. The reasoning for this is that from the start, the AKP faced skepticism from secular elites due to their Islamist founders.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the AKP made conscious efforts to improve human rights practices and encourage a vibrant civil society.<sup>33</sup> Turkey also assumed a neutral mediator role between Israel and Syria and started receiving recognition for its use of soft power for humanitarian causes. Some researchers even praised Turkey as a ‘vibrant democracy that in spite of its imperfections, is seen as an example of reform in the region.’<sup>34</sup> Although interdependence was the driving motive of Turkey’s foreign policy during this time, Erdoğan would frequently speak out against what he perceived to be an unjust world order. Erdoğan’s vision is summed up in his mantra, “the world is larger than five.”<sup>35</sup> This statement was a reference to the UN Security Council that Erdoğan believed needed reform to reflect the accurate divisions of powers around the world.

Erdoğan began to signal the birth of a new wave of Turkish foreign policy that rejected the past West-centric model. This new foreign policy model would come to be known as ‘Strategic Depth,’ dubbed by Erdoğan’s foreign policy advisor Ahmet Davutoglu. Under Strategic Depth, the goal was to restore Turkey’s Ottoman-era greatness in the Middle East, Balkans and beyond —under the guise of friendly neighborly relationships.<sup>36</sup> Davutoglu argued that Turkey had multiple regional identities that could not be reduced to a single entity. Thus, he advocated for a multifaceted foreign policy that embraced

---

<sup>30</sup> Almuedo, Ana. “New Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Middle East: Neither so New, nor so Turkish.” IEMed. European Institute of the Mediterranean, September 15, 2011.

<https://www.iemed.org/publication/new-turkish-foreign-policy-towards-the-middle-east-neither-so-new-nor-so-turkish/>.

<sup>31</sup> Cagaptay, Soner. *Erdoğan's Empire*, 17.

<sup>32</sup> Barkey, Henri J. “How Erdoğan Muscled Turkey to the Center of the World Stage.” For Erdoğan, Turkish Foreign Policy Was Always Meant to Be Assertive. *World Politics Review*. Accessed February 23, 2022.

<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29178/for-erdogan-turkish-foreign-policy-was-always-meant-to-be-assertive>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Kutlay, Mustafa, and Ziya Öniş. “Turkish Foreign Policy in a Post-Western Order: Strategic Autonomy or New Forms of Dependence?” *International Affairs* 97, no. 4 (July 1, 2021): 1085–1104. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iab094>.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Akyol, Mustafa. “The problem with Turkey’s Zero Problems Plan”, *New York Times* (29 June 2016).

Arab and Muslim-majority countries. By strengthening relations with countries of shared cultural affinity, Turkey would revitalize its geostrategic potential, ultimately strengthening the country's global standing.<sup>37</sup> According to Davutoglu, "Turkey, by means of its geographic location and cultural heritage, is an inseparable part of this near land zone. Turkey's political, economic, and cultural weight internationally will depend on its activity and performance in this zone."<sup>38</sup> Davutoglu did not necessarily advocate a total abandonment of the West; rather, he affirmed that Turkey's historically close ties with the West prevented it from gaining the strategic depth it could otherwise reach through friendly relations with its Muslim-majority neighbors. Evidently, the future role Davutoglu and Erdoğan saw for their nation was that of central power, destined to become a leader in the Muslim world. This new Strategic Depth model foreshadows Turkey's recent foreign policy trends that prioritize Ankara's goals, at the expense of its Western partners, like the US.

### **A Shift in Turkey's Foreign Policy**

Turkey's foreign policy approach shifted around 2010 from interdependence and cooperation to strategic autonomy and coercive diplomacy. Although Erdoğan had spoken out in the past about his grievances with Turkey's role in the international order, the timing of this shift was not by coincidence. In 2010, Turkey's top military officers publicly challenged Erdoğan by attempting and failing to veto the AKP's Abdullah Gul to the presidency.<sup>39</sup> This led Erdoğan to push the military out of politics and transform Turkey's parliamentary system into a presidential one that centralized rule into Erdoğan's hands. With power consolidated in the president, civil society came under attack as dissent was no longer tolerated. On July 15, 2016, Turkish military officers aligned with the Gulen movement attempted a coup d'état, which ultimately failed due to poor planning but resulted in close to 300 deaths.<sup>40</sup> The bombing of Turkey's capital, Ankara, traumatized the nation since it had not faced a direct military attack in more than six hundred years.<sup>41</sup> These events instilled fear in the government that their positions of power were in jeopardy; thus, creating a need for the AKP to garner public support. In order to bolster Erdoğan's popularity, the coup was used to persuade the public that Turkey should distance itself from the West. Given that the coup's alleged plotter, Fethullah Gulen, is residing in self-imposed exile in the U.S., Erdoğan and his supporters have created a narrative that Washington and other foreign opponents are plotting to remove him from power through coups carried out by domestic proxies. Furthermore, the fact

---

<sup>37</sup> Murinson, Alexander. "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign." *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 6 (2006): 945–64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512>.

<sup>38</sup> Davutoğlu, Ahmet, *Turkic Republics since Independence: Towards a Common Future* (Ankara: SAM, Center for Strategic Research, 2013).

<sup>39</sup> Muftuler, Bac, Meltem. *Turkey's Grand Strategy*.

<sup>40</sup> Jacinto, Leela, "Turkey's Post-Coup Purge and Erdoğan's Private Army," *Foreign Policy*, July 13, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/13/turkeys-post-coup-purge-and-erdogans-private-army-sadat-perincek-gulen/>.

<sup>41</sup> Cagaptay, Soner. *Erdoğan's Empire*, 22.

that the US and EU condemned Erdoğan's reaction to the coup more strongly than the coup itself legitimizes Erdoğan's anti-Western narrative. Western governments have taken a legal approach asking for more evidence on suspected coup plotters; but from Erdoğan's perspective, "friends don't harbor terror suspects."<sup>42</sup> Erdoğan described the coup attempt as a "gift from god," allowing him to "cleanse the army" and purge the country's elite from enemies.<sup>43</sup> This foreign policy approach based on strong anti-Western sentiment is a key mechanism for amassing domestic support.

By portraying the West as acting against Turkey's national interests, Erdoğan also legitimizes his vision of restoring Turkey's Ottoman glories as an autonomous power. Since 2003, Erdoğan has flooded the country's political system with conservative Islam. A key thread of Turkish political Islamist thought involves conspiracy theories that the West is "tirelessly working to undermine good Muslims."<sup>44</sup> Sevki Yilmaz, one of Erdoğan's fellow politicians in the RP said at a political gathering in 1991, "For years, the West has been planning another military coup. But, the CIA, the American agents, in these past years have been unable to find the right conditions to carry it out."<sup>45</sup> The reason, according to Yilmaz, is that the Muslim youth has prevented the West from infiltrating their universities. Yilmaz adds, "anarchy has been prevented from entering the universities and Islam has fortified Turkey against the West's tireless attempts to sow discord in the country and the West is disturbed by this."<sup>46</sup> The protagonists in this narrative are Turkey's Muslim communities whom Erdoğan has coined as the "real children of Turkey."<sup>47</sup> The antagonists are Western proxies who are scheming to destabilize Turkey and undermine its 'real children.' This anti-Western rhetoric combined with Erdoğan's pro-Ottoman foreign policy goals provides his supporters a vision of power and glory involving an appreciation for their shared religious identities. Essentially, this tidy narrative has legitimized Turkey's place in global politics by making Turkey's Muslim communities proud to be Muslims again.

### **New Assertiveness in Foreign Policy**

Over the past few years, Turkey's foreign policy has become increasingly assertive due to Erdoğan's goal of charting a more independent course for Turkey. Erdoğan sees a multipolar world with Turkey emerging as a competitive global power, separated from its history of compliance with the West<sup>48</sup>.

---

<sup>42</sup> Sloat, Amanda. "The West's Turkey Conundrum." Brookings, February 14, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-wests-turkey-conundrum/>.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Dombey, Daniel. 'Erdoğan attacks 'traitors' and foreign media for Turkey protests', *Financial Times*, website, 18 June, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> Cagaptay, Soner. *Erdoğan's Empire*, 39.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>48</sup> Valansi, Karel. "Turkey Has Flipped the Script on Its Regional Isolation but Will It Amount to Real Change?" Atlantic Council, October 12, 2021. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysource/turkey-has-flipped-the-script-on-its-regional-isolation-but-will-it-amount-to-real-change/>.

Toward that end, he has implemented a transactional approach towards traditional allies and strengthened ties with neighbors. In Libya, bilateral deals with the Tripoli government were signed to revise naval boundaries in exchange for a security pact in November 2019 and to station Turkish military forces in January 2020.<sup>49</sup> This activism in the Eastern Mediterranean continued in June 2020 when the Turkish navy opposed NATO and EU suspicions surrounding a cargo boat (suspected of transporting weapons) headed to Libya.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, in February and March of 2020, Turkey undermined the EU by transporting thousands of refugees residing in Turkey to the Turkish-Greek land border, only to be denied when the EU kept borders closed.<sup>51</sup> This deterioration in Western ties has gone hand in hand with increasing tensions with NATO. Turkey's purchase of a Russian S-400 missile system has resulted in U.S. sanctions and a decision by Washington to expel Turkey from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program.<sup>52</sup>

Evidently, Erdoğan rejects Turkey's self-perceived, middle-power status and envisions a foreign policy where Turkey is not always loyal to the West. Instead, Erdoğan views foreign affairs through a "balance of power lens, one that is often transactional."<sup>53</sup> When looking at the case of Turkey's purchase of Russian missiles, it seems that the West's reaction is demanding Turkey to choose a side. Ankara, however, does not wish to choose a side, since Turkey is a sovereign state that should be able to purchase arms from whomever it likes free from Western consequences. In essence, Turkey perceives itself as its own distinct side in pursuit of individual strategic autonomy. Considering Turkey's new assertiveness in foreign policy, restraint and understanding from both parties will be required to prevent a break in U.S.-Turkish relations<sup>54</sup>. Moving forward, the U.S. should respect Turkish goals of strategic autonomy and realize that Turkey's ambitions no longer cater towards American preferences. By embracing more balanced relations and refraining from reactionary consequences, the US can benefit by maintaining a strong ally in a geographically important region of the world.

## Conclusion

While domestic politics have contributed largely to changes in Turkey's foreign policy, we must not forget that a ruler's individual character traits can play a large role as well. Erdoğan has gained international notoriety as a controversial authoritarian whose demands must be checked. In political

---

<sup>49</sup> Siccardi, Francesco and Pierini, Marc, "Understanding Turkey's Direction: Three Scenarios," Carnegie Europe, accessed February 24, 2022, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/12/09/understanding-turkey-s-direction-three-scenarios-pub-85936>.

<sup>50</sup> Herszenhorn, David M., Rym Momtaz, and Jacopo Barigazzi. "Rough Seas for NATO as Turkey Clashes with Allies." POLITICO. POLITICO, July 3, 2020. <https://www.politico.eu/article/rough-seas-for-nato-as-turkey-clashes-with-allies/>.

<sup>51</sup> Wilks, Andrew. "Turkey Opens Gates into Europe as Migrants Gather on Border." AP NEWS. Associated Press, February 29, 2020. <https://apnews.com/article/ap-top-news-syria-turkey-recep-tayyip-Erdoğan-greece-42a117912dd5a6a7ba407298a89563f>

<sup>52</sup> Siccardi, Francesco and Pierini, Marc, "Understanding Turkey's Direction"

<sup>53</sup> Dalacoura, Katerina. "Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Power Projection and Post-Ideological Politics." *International Affairs* 97, no. 4 (2021): 1125–42. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiab082>.

<sup>54</sup> Ülgen, Sinan. "Redefining the U.S.-Turkey Relationship." Carnegie Europe. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 26, 2021. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/07/26/redefining-u.s.-turkey-relationship-pub-85016>.

discourse, he has been grouped with Russia's Vladimir Putin and China's Xi Jinping as three of the most contentious authoritarian leaders.<sup>55</sup> With few checks and balances to rein Erdoğan in, this may prove to be problematic for Western leaders, especially considering the anti-Western rhetoric that is fueling Turkish foreign policy. It is becoming clear that Turkey's view of the world has changed and maybe at odds with historically close U.S. ties. In Washington, the main frame for U.S. foreign policy is competition between global powers; Ankara, however, sees the world very differently. From Turkey's point of view, the rise of China and Russia's increased activism are seen more as opportunities than threats. Turkish policymakers are interpreting the rise of new global powers as a sign of a lasting emergence of a multipolar world order. Thus, Turkey is working to reposition itself within this multipolar order to reach its goal of recognized power. In the following chapter, we will examine these U.S.-Turkey relations in-depth and the possible tensions that may arise.

---

<sup>55</sup> Barkey, Henri J. "How Erdoğan Muscled Turkey to the Center of the World Stage."

## At a Crossroads: The Turkey-US Relationship

*Thomas Hilverda*

Before President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's and his Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi's (AKP) rise to power in the 1990s, and at the beginning of his party's tenure in the early 2000s, Turkey's multi-party system pursued democratic reforms, including progress on women's rights, amendments to its civil code limiting the role of its military in government, abolition of the death penalty, and engagement with its Kurdish population as harmonization packages seeking E.U. approval to make Turkey a candidate member state, which it achieved in 2005.<sup>56</sup> E.U. countries then revealed their deeply held beliefs about Turkey's incompatibility with the E.U.. The European bloc and Turkey have engaged on a transactional basis since. This process kicked-off democratic backsliding, but was not a causal factor, as Erdoğan's deft political maneuvering and will for power along with the AKP's use of Turkey's long suppressed, but prominent political Islam was central to Turkey's turn towards authoritarianism. The AKP built a multi-level organizational capacity centered around Islam to provide services to burgeoning urban populations in Istanbul who had migrated there and to urban centers in the previous three decades. This support emanated out into rural areas and districts through kinship networks and built the AKP a loyal base and eventually majoritarian electoral support, centered on Islamic piety, from within the Kemalist-secularism civic, military, and political order from which it had long been excluded.

Turkey's current lack of liberal democratic freedoms, poor human rights record, and increasing authoritarian characteristics should not be seen as at odds with U.S. interests in the region because there is a national identity of secularism and a moderate section of society in Turkey who want a more balanced power structure. By accepting Turkey's independent foreign policy aimed at cementing its sought-after leadership role in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, and simultaneously, as a semi-moderated and semi-secularized Muslim majority nation; the U.S. should assess its interests in the region, act on those interests where politically possible, and not disengage from Erdoğan's Turkey; instead seeking to build a constructive partnership, while refusing to simply appease Erdoğan and extract concessions in reasonable transactions. One draw of this policy shift would be increasing the now vital ability of the U.S. to compete with Russia and China in the region based on cooperation, not intervention.

Turkey is a bridge between the East and West –geographically and historically– and is a valuable long-term ally because of its now latent secularism and liberalism in a region not known for its separation of political power within states; or pillarization, where groups holding power within a nation state, who would otherwise be in competition, work together to uphold a common political order. Underlying the

---

<sup>56</sup> Akkoyunlu, Karabekir, Kalypso Nicolaidis, and Kerem Öktem. "The Western Condition: Turkey, the US and the EU in the New Middle East." *South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX)* (2013).

previous statement is the belief that a more democratic Turkey is preferable to the U.S. However, this should not be expected in the medium-term where Turkey will sit on the fence between democracy and its current state of autocracy. Rather than pursue a policy of intervention or disengagement, U.S. foreign policy needs to pursue constructive cooperation, as it puts its trust in Turkey's historical trends towards and cultural ties with a democratic and liberal state. Showing this measured faith would have a positive effect on how Turkish citizens view the U.S. and may lessen Erdoğan's ability to mobilize political support through anti-Western rhetoric. Turkey need not be a bastion of liberalism in the Middle East because –although many have been eroded– its civic gains in education, income levels, women's rights, and healthcare will have lasting implications for the direction its polity will take their country.

### **The Case for a Closer U.S.-Turkey Relationship**

The Trump administration's years of abandoning U.S. leadership in traditionally powerful international organizations such as NATO, the U.N., and the special relationship with the E.U. made the U.S. an unreliable ally and appeared weak to rivals seeking to drive a wedge into this previously dominant global order. China and Russia especially sought to exploit the growing rift in the Western bulwark. China presented itself as a reliable and ideologically neutral alternative in development and alliance to the U.S. Russia sought to undermine E.U. and NATO unity as a proxy both for increasing its own power and for decreasing the dominant power of the Western alliance. China's rise coupled with a lack of coherent U.S. policy in the Middle East fomented Turkey's political elites to ascribe to the idea of a slow "decline of the west."<sup>57</sup> A feeling only vindicated by the lack of boundaries the U.S. set under former President Trump on Authoritarian countries in middle power situations like Turkey and Saudi Arabia which took the opportunity to act with near impunity in their regions. Turkey engaged in markedly independent foreign policy in Northern Syria and Azerbaijan as Erdoğan and political elites sought to cement Turkey's middle power status. In short, Turkey's recent pull away from the West has implications for U.S. interests in the Middle East, NATO, and Europe because of its geographic-strategic proximity to both Europe and the Middle East and its cultural heritage as a bridge between two cultural blocks historically at odds; the latter a conflict zone where world politics often play out.

The Biden administration indicated to Turkey its intentions for relations between the countries with Biden's belated acknowledgement of Erdoğan's congratulations and use of the term 'genocide' when describing the Armenian massacres during World War I signaling to Turkey it can either be in on the project of rebuilding the western alliance, or out, –as the backroom bargaining and personalized politics which were the norm in relations between former President Trump have ended. Yet, the Biden

---

<sup>57</sup> Balta, Evren, and Soli Özel. 2021. "Turkey's Foreign Policy: Opportunities and Constraints in a New Era." *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 88 (2): 539–60.

Administration has renewed U.S. commitments “[...] to repair transatlantic ties, restore NATO cohesion, and promote democratic governance and the unity of the E.U. [...]”<sup>58</sup> and relations with Erdoğan’s Turkey will be integral to this goal. President Biden’s pick for Ambassador to NATO, Julianne Smith, has written extensively about the importance of the U.S. presenting a unified West to the challenges of the rising activity of Russia and China abroad, along with the economic power of China. Turkey’s increasing role in NATO through the arming of Ukraine and dealings with Russia means addressing recent ruptures in bilateral relations between it and the U.S. will inevitably play into the Biden administration’s goal of repairing the U.S.’s alliance with NATO and the E.U.

### **Opportunities for Cooperation**

Under Erdoğan, Turkey’s foreign policy has been characterized by its autonomy and opportunism, with hard power implementation in various conflict zones in the region: Azerbaijan, Libya, and Syria. Erdoğan’s regional foreign policy has not aligned with U.S. interests in the region, especially on the issue of American military support for the Syrian Kurdish forces, who, along with Turkey’s own Kurdish population have historically been oppressed as they are viewed as a threat to Turkey’s national identity as a homogenous Turkic nation and territorial integrity. Although Turkey is leaning away from republican nationalism in favor of Ottoman Islamism,<sup>59</sup> both domestically and in its foreign policy, U.S. and Turkish interests are intertwined. Despite the shift in Turkey’s domestic political alignment with the West, Turkey and the U.S. have common interests in reinstating Turkey as a predictable member of NATO and reimagining a place for Turkey in the Western power framework which allows it to act autonomously, both domestically and internationally, unlike its Cold War role of conformity. For the U.S., these common interests include Turkey’s geostrategic importance to the Ukraine conflict as it controls traffic in the Dardanelles and Bosphorus Straits under the Montreux Convention, solving the question of an ISIS resurgence via Turkey recognizing the Syrian Kurds on its Northeastern border, and showing Russia NATO is unified against its invasion of Ukraine. However, there are obstacles to cooperation between the U.S. and Turkey with regard to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Turkey has vital interests in maintaining a workable relationship with Russia and this is likely to continue. Despite Erdoğan’s strong condemnation of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine; Turkey will seek to balance its competing interests, on the one hand as a part of NATO and the EU Customs Union, and on the other, needing Russian pipeline gas, technology for its nuclear reactor being built by Rosatom, and a large export market in its dire economic situation. Having allowed six Russian warships to enter the Black Sea in February under the pretext of military drills, even as the U.S. warned of the buildup of an invasion force, Erdoğan is deftly balancing Russia and

---

<sup>58</sup> Smith, Julianne. 2016. “Strains on the European Union: Implications for American Foreign Policy.”

<sup>59</sup> Hintz, Lisel. 2016. “‘Take It Outside!’ National Identity Contestation in the Foreign Policy Arena.” *European Journal of International Relations* 22 (2): 335–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066115588205>

NATO. For Turkey, benefits include lessening its reliance on Russian pipeline gas in favor of more Qatari Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), further inclusion into NATO military programs, and even negotiation on the U.S. support of the Kurdish SPD in Syria.

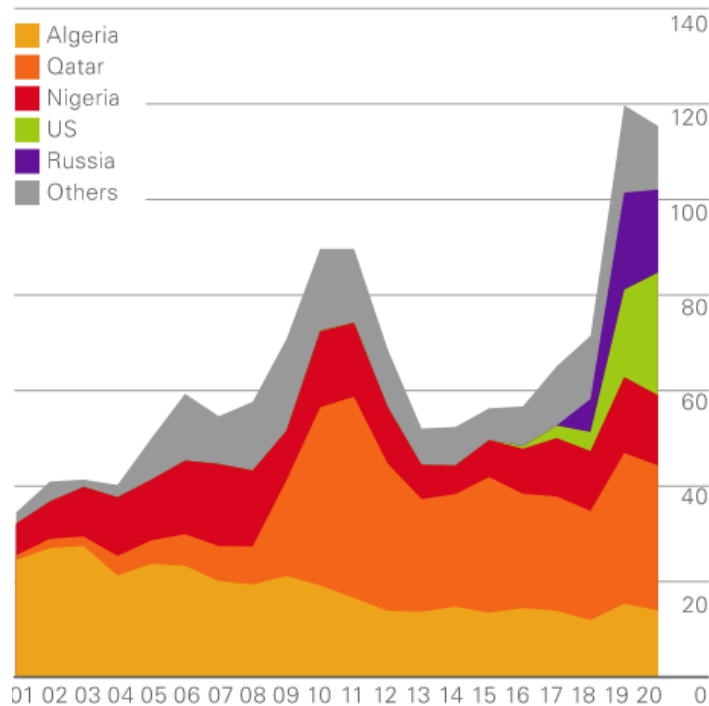


Figure 1.5 LNG Imports by Source-Europe(billion cubic meters)(Bp Global)<sup>60</sup>

The Biden administration recently designated Qatar as a non-NATO close ally.<sup>61</sup> This would appear to be separate from the U.S.’s relationship with Turkey, but as Qatar and Turkey relations are at their closest,<sup>62</sup> expanding trade and military cooperation since before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the non-NATO close ally designation indicates the U.S. needs Qatar in an eminent foreign policy maneuver. The opportunity for the U.S. to engage Turkey through this channel is now open. Qatar is the largest exporter of LNG to Europe which competes with Russia’s pipeline exports (Figure 1.5). Germany has suspended the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022.<sup>63</sup> Plans laid in 2019 to ship U.S. LNG to Germany and Qatar’s five-year 10 billion

<sup>60</sup> “Natural Gas | Energy Economics | Home.” n.d. Bp Global. Accessed February 24, 2022.<https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/natural-gas>.

<sup>61</sup> Shear, Michael D. “Biden Designates Qatar as a Major Non-NATO Ally.” *The New York Times*, January 31, 2022, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/31/us/politics/biden-qatar-nato.html>.

<sup>62</sup> Farooq, Umar. “Turkish Firms Eye Boon in Deepening Bilateral Ties with Qatar,” February 7, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/10/hlturkish-firms-eye-boon-in-deepening-bilateral-ties-with-qatar>

<sup>63</sup> Escritt, Thomas, and Sarah Marsh. 2022. “How a German State Helped Moscow Push a Pipeline, Weakening Ukraine.” *Reuters*, February 24, 2022, sec.

Energy.<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/how-german-state-helped-moscow-push-pipeline-weakening-ukraine-2022-02-24/>.

euro investment plan to construct an LNG terminal in the country now fit with the U.S. battery of sanctions to disincentivize Russia from occupying Ukraine. Turkey’s cooperation with Qatar, much like the U.S.-Germany-Qatar maneuver, could fit into the NATO supra-sanctions strategy of restricting Russia’s available export markets for energy, particularly natural gas. Qatar Petroleum, the country’s state-owned oil and gas company, hired the Turkish company Tekfen for a \$400 million-dollar project to exploit one of its largest LNG fields. Qatar is currently in talks with the EU and the US to find a workaround to EU dependency on Russian pipeline gas, and supply the EU with additional LNG, amid the invasion of Ukraine. This creates a supply problem for LNG if the total amount of LNG available does not increase it has to come from Asia, where most of Qatar’s exports are now.<sup>64</sup> However, a person briefed on these talks said “[...] Qatar will greatly increase its LNG production over the next few years.”<sup>65</sup> With relations at a record high point, Qatar will likely export more LNG to Turkey as its supply increases in the coming years and thus lessen Turkey’s dependency on Russia. While this diversification of its gas supply will undoubtedly help Turkey be less reliant on Russia, it is not in the same position as the EU economically, or in terms of producing its own gas(Figure 1.6). Turkey will remain largely reliant on Russian pipeline gas as it is Russia’s second largest natural gas importer after Germany -with Iraq, Iran, and Azerbaijan presenting the only alternative sources of pipeline gas- and thus will need to continue to balance cooperation with NATO and appeasing Russia.

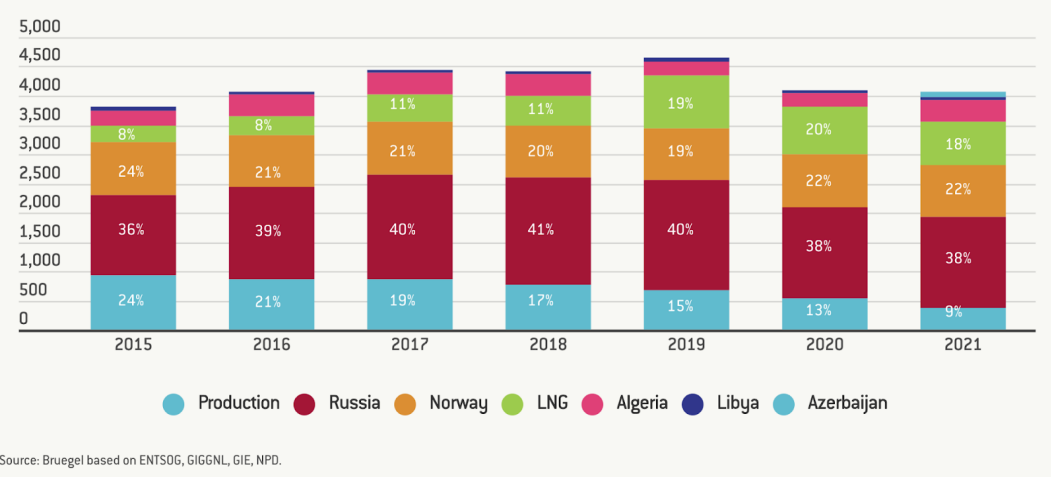


Figure 1.6 Annual EU27 Natural Gas Domestic Production and Imports(TWh)

Former U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus John Koenig said in the last 20 years the U.S. has retracted its policy of military activism and interventionism in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean and

<sup>64</sup> McWilliams, Ben, George Zachmann, Giovanni Sgaravatti, and Simone Tagliapietra. 2022. “Can Europe Survive Painlessly without Russian Gas?” *Bruegel* (blog). January 27, 2022. <https://www.bruegel.org/2022/01/can-europe-survive-painlessly-without-russian-gas/>.

<sup>65</sup> England, Andrew, David Sheppard, and Derek Brower. 2022. “US in Talks with Qatar over Gas Supplies to Europe in Event of Ukraine Invasion.” *Financial Times*, January 22, 2022. <https://www.ft.com/content/1ac9a0b9-5e93-4d1c-8f9b-d3a16db2467a>.

instead pursued a line of policy characterized by its “restrained” interaction with the region.<sup>66</sup> He advocates that this attitude of restraint be overarching in future negotiations with the region because such a perspective stems from an honest accounting of how limited U.S. interests have become –where once we dreamed of transformative change, we have now sidelined those grandiose ambitions in favor of a realistic change. The clear logic of this argument holds significant traction and is backed by the former Ambassador’s decades of firsthand experience seeking to negotiate an end to the Cyprus conflict, but the U.S. should not disengage, especially in light of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine because the cohesion of NATO and the Western alliance will not be rebuilt in a vacuum, and the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East will need to be addressed with a mutual understanding of direction to draw together the former allies. Restraint and facilitation from the sidelines are good policy themes for the U.S. to pursue, especially where U.S. interests are limited, but there should also be a strong acknowledgement that the U.S. should not isolate itself from a region where it has invested so much. President Joe Biden knows this, and although he hasn’t been as vocal or visible in its dealings with the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean as the last administration was –instead preferring to focus on domestic issues like infrastructure, the federal government’s COVID-19 response, and international issues like reassuring U.S. support for NATO and in the Pacific– his administration is beginning to involve itself in the Middle East and will continue to do so.

Appeasing Erdoğan by withdrawing U.S. support for Syrian Kurdish SDP and YPG, in a move similar to former President Trump’s withdrawal of U.S. forces in an effort to tout the defeat of ISIS, is not in U.S. interests. Assuming this obstacle to a closer U.S.-Turkey relationship remains, what other avenues can the U.S. pursue in order to lessen Turkey’s reliance on Russia? How can the U.S. facilitate dialogue between Kurdish stakeholders within Turkey and those outside of Turkey to stop armed conflict and violence? While such a goal seems unattainable, the other options; including giving up support for the Kurdish SPD, or continued lack of rights and security for Turkey’s southwestern Kurds, are exceedingly bleak. Buying time with talks could be worth the cost to the U.S. of transacting with Erdoğan. It would also begin to negate Erdoğan’s domestic policy tool of claiming to be the sole protect Turkey against terrorism and could put Kurdish interests back into the political awareness of the country, simply by being in negotiations with the ruling AKP. That being said it would be hard to convince Erdoğan to approach reconciliation on the Kurdish issue unless it appeared to be a better deal for him than for the U.S. Erdoğan and the AKP have positioned Turkey in public opinion as being under attack from Western-meddling so any approach for a deal would have to be careful not to spur this anti-Western sentiment such as implying the U.S. would like to see fairer elections or would be willing to release sanctions. One place where

---

<sup>66</sup> Koenig, John. 2022. “‘Restraint’ in Action: America and the Eastern Mediterranean.” *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune* (blog). February 4, 2022. <https://jstribune.com/koenig-restraint-in-action-america-and-the-eastmed/>.

Turkey and the U.S. have found common ground is with military cooperation with U.S. trust in Turkey starting during its entrance NATO in 1952 and as a reliable ally during the Cold War on through its use of Incirlik air base during the height of U.S. intervention in Iraq between 1990 and 2003 and in Afghanistan, all the way up until Turkey's recent role in overseeing security during the final days of the Kabul Airport evacuation. Why not continue engaging Turkey on these grounds? The U.S. could help Turkey's hard power in the region by allowing them to rejoin the F-35 program and making membership conditional on opening talks to stop military action against the Kurdish SDP in Syria. This would realign Turkey within NATO and send a strong message to Russia that there is a modern military power with substantial interests in Ukraine, and respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity. If Russia feels surrounded by NATO expansion and lashes out by invading Ukraine, a weakening of its ties to Turkey could lead to cutting Turkey off from its natural gas exports. Such a move would cut both ways because Russia depends on Turkey importing its natural gas. The U.S. can attract Turkey to NATO by allowing it to realize its ambitions for regional power and autonomy. This would show Turkey that NATO values its cooperation, the U.S. takes its interests seriously, and being loyal to NATO is more valuable than to Russia.

### **Obstacles to cooperation: Erdoğan's continued Authoritarianism and Implications for Turkey's Foreign Policy**

Despite his current authoritarian grip on power Erdoğan finds himself at something of a crossroads. Most observers agree the ruling AKP will create an authoritarian environment where democratic elections serve only to affirm the AKP's majoritarian mandate. The outcome of the election will likely draw his government's mandate into question because increasing economic pressure has led to coalition building in formerly fractured parties who are backed by a sizable section of Turkish society. Turkey's authoritarian regime does not have the same hegemonic grip on power as Russia or China does. Russia, as a petro-state, has autonomy from economic shocks unrelated to petroleum; it transacts with the E.U. and Turkey, selling natural gas and converting its reserves to Rubles, gold, and Renminbi, instead of U.S. dollars. Turkey, on the other hand, is strongly lacking in its supply of petroleum and energy resources. It depends on energy imports and borrowing from foreign banks, but rising inflation, Erdoğan's insistence on keeping interest rates low, and international credit drying up as lenders lose confidence in the Lira's value mean that Turkey will be hard-pressed to find benefactors to aid its economy. Therefore, the elections in Turkey in 2023 will inevitably be a referendum on his handling of the economy. Although Turkey has a fairly strong history of democratic elections and political parties that pillarized society, any opposition to Erdoğan would need to form a coalition with a unifying message, and attract those from the

ruling coalition of the AKP and MHP who share common ground.<sup>67</sup> Erdoğan continues to sit on the fence between complete authoritarianism with no opposition, and giving weight –if mostly symbolic– to Turkey’s recent history of democratic elections by allowing opposition parties to participate, albeit in a limited capacity. Much like the suppression of political Islam allowed for his party’s rise he cannot suppress Turkey’s now latent Kemalist-secularism and Kurdish constituency forever, even if the military’s tutelary role in Turkey’s democracy has been dismantled by the AKP.

As the bedrock of AKP support, Turkey’s strong economic growth has faltered. Erdoğan has had to use political polarization against secularists and Kurds to draw in support as society is hurt by rising inflation and an increasingly dire economic situation. Polarization has caused a situation where “both sides are determined to oppose [each other]”<sup>68</sup> and where Erdoğan’s political edifice of Turkey’s pious Islamic society, urban business elites, and the middle class who benefitted from Turkey’s economic rise since 2002, is starting to show cracks.

The U.S. provided training, military support, and helped arm the YPG and SPD Syrian-Kurdish rebels during the Syrian Civil War.<sup>69</sup> This was in direct conflict with Erdoğan’s ruling AKP party’s interest of not having an autonomous Kurdish state spring up on its South-Eastern border with Syria and Iraq. Turkish military action in Syria and the lack of a substantial U.S. presence in Syria allowed Erdoğan to strike a blow to the possibility of a sovereign Kurdish state. It is possible Erdoğan would work with the U.S. to negotiate long-term peace with the YPG and SPD to show he is reintegrating Turkey with the U.S.-led international system at a time of dire economic prospects for his country. Such cooperation with Erdoğan’s ruling AKP as U.S. foreign policy would require the deal to appear sufficiently more beneficial to him than to the U.S. In the process, the U.S. would gain a foothold with Erdoğan and make some effort at reconciliation with the Kurds after Trump’s administration abandoned Kurdish forces in Syria and gave Turkey the green light on military action.

Allowing Turkey back into the U.S. led F-35 program in return for Turkey’s increased reliability within the NATO framework and in return for Erdoğan’s regime’s acceptance of Kurdish forces in Northwestern Syria and/or an agreement that Turkey never activate its S-400 missile defense system would accomplish two U.S. policy goals in the region at once. The first is that Turkey would be a more formidable ally against Russia in the Black Sea, Syria, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine. The second is having Turkey more firmly within the NATO framework would allow the U.S. to shift its focus out of the Middle East and onto the far more pressing concerns presented by China and Russia. However, the U.S. must contend with its own domestic political situation where a deadlocked Senate could derail any foreign

---

<sup>67</sup> Arat, Yeşim, and Şevket Pamuk. 2019. *Turkey between Democracy and Authoritarianism*. Cambridge New York, NY Port Melbourne, VIC: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>68</sup> Arat, Yeşim, and Şevket Pamuk. 2019.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

policy action taken by the President or lawmakers because of partisan loyalty, making any F-35 deal with Turkey difficult.

With Russia on the offensive and unafraid to use its hard power now may be the time for the U.S. and its allies to cement Turkey within NATO, before it veers down a path of rapprochement with Russia. Given Erdoğan's opportunism and repeated use of foreign policy to strengthen his domestic image the U.S. will need to put offers on the table to receive any concessions. This would give Erdoğan the chance to bolster his image of appearing to assert Turkey's rightful place as a peer to the West, leading up to the 2023 presidential elections and amid his country's economic woes which even his supporters blame him for. Regardless of the outcome of the 2023 election in Turkey, the U.S. strengthening ties with the country will have a positive effect on how Turks view the West and in the long-term may have repercussions for the country's democracy.

## **Conclusion**

The goal of U.S. policy towards Turkey, and the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, more broadly, is to show the U.S. is changing its tack as a player in the new multi-polar world order and is no longer interested in projecting its own hegemony, but will seek to engage in constructive arenas with other countries as partners, rather than as junior partners under its tutelage. This means using its extensive ties to international organizations, business groups, and the E.U. to pursue constructivist arenas in which to work with diverse countries. The U.S. will increasingly need to work with not only diverse countries, but with diverse regimes. The U.S. should have an honest accounting of the will of such countries to change their political systems: as the examples of Afghanistan clearly shows. Working with regimes that are aligned against democratic ideology is better than working against foes united. This will be different from the Cold-War Blob ideology of projecting democracy at any cost because it will be driven by a realistic survey of both U.S. interests and U.S. ability to pursue them. China has risen to near-peer or peer status and this has shifted the world order to one where the U.S. must abandon its bid to democratize the world. The U.S. should work with Turkey in spite of non-aligning political circumstances and pursue change slowly, if need be.

## II: Turkey's Neighbors

With regard to Turkey's neighbors, our Task Force focused on Turkey's engaging foreign policy with the Gulf states, Syria, and the Balkans. In the Gulf, Erdoğan and the AKP have transitioned towards active reconciliation efforts. Turkey's previously strained relations with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel have improved in the past year as trade deals, and cooperation agreements highlight the efforts to solve the domestic economic crisis. At the centerpiece of Turkey's foreign policy, the country's involvement in Syria has been significant in impacting U.S. relations- and Chapter 5 serves to explore Turkey's growing role in the Syrian Civil War in this regard. Building on Erdoğan's expansionist policies in neighboring states, Turkey's motives for increasing presence in Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, France, and Israel are evaluated in Chapter 6. Turkey's involvement in the Mediterranean stems from a plethora of factors, and this chapter aims to discover how oil, drilling, energy, territory, and military advantages plunged Ankara into these regions. Furthermore, it is imperative to note Turkey's growing presence in Iraq as another key neighboring region. Turkey's long history of PKK opposition has produced dozens of military bases on Iraqi soil, and the recent expansion of militarized zones raises fear of a Turkish invasion of the country.<sup>70</sup> It is also worth noting that the complex relations between Turkey and Iran, ranging from amity to enmity, required independent inclusion in the report and are instead focused on in isolation in Chapter 11.

---

<sup>70</sup> Foltyn, Simona. "Turkey's Expanding Militarized Zones in Iraq Raise Fears of Invasion, Frustrate Civilians." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, December 30, 2021.

## Turkey and the Gulf States: Reconciling Strained Relations

*Omar Ashraf*

The AKP's increasingly vulnerable position approaching the 2023 elections has since given way to reconciliation and detente efforts with Gulf rivals. In a January 2022 interview, Erdoğan expressed the direction of foreign policy goals in recent years, stating, "We have entered a new era that prioritizes dialogue and reconciliation[...]With good momentum in relations with the Gulf countries, Turkey's principled and well-intentioned attitude towards the Gulf region is being better understood."<sup>71</sup>

### History of Turkey's Involvement in the Gulf

Prior to the Arab Spring, Turkey maintained strong relations with the Western world and was a staunch U.S. ally as the only Islamic country with a secular democratic government. Turkey's involvement in the Western landscape was also summarized by its status as a reliable Western ally since becoming a key NATO member in 1952. Turkey's strategic positioning served as a bridge between the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Europe. The 2000s saw a period of rapid globalization across the world, which Turkey was initially an integral part of, leveraging its position within the Western world as a candidate member of the European Union. However, as the economy of the Western world collapsed and damage from the global economic recession was realized in 2008, Turkey began to detach itself from the Western world and shift some of that focus to its neighbors in the Gulf. The Arab Spring marked a key shift in this mentality, as regimes that mirrored the model of Turkey's success began to fall, threatening the emergence of populist ideology. As revolutions, turmoils, and political instability emerged during this period of uncertainty, the U.S. shifted its attention towards China and the Europe Union stalled accession talks with Turkey due to domestic and external problems, an independent and proactive anti-Western attitude emerged within Turkey.

Following the 2008 Financial Crisis, Turkey and other key actors in the Gulf, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE, engaged in strategic dialogue, accelerated by conflicts in Israel, Iraq, Palestine, and Israel, as well as other disputes. Although Turkey and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) formed a High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) as a multilateral framework to address issues in 2008, the two sides began to diverge on key issues. This, coupled with Turkey's desire to expand militarily and economically, brought about turbulent relations within the Gulf as a whole.

---

<sup>71</sup> Erbay, Nur. "New Era Ahead as Turkey Unravels Knots in Foreign Policy." Daily Sabah. Daily Sabah, January 27, 2022.

## Turkey and Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia and Turkey have had opposing regime structures and cultural differences that have often marked a sense of rivalry and distrust. For instance, the difference in cultural norms between Ankara and Riyadh contributed to a sense of early divergence. Saudi Arabia, as an extremely conservative Islamic state, has historically policed civilian conduct, held limited rights for women, and followed laws built on Muslim values. On the other hand, Turkey emerged as a secular state, and the first-ever Islamic society to do so, prior to a shift towards a vision of pan-Islamism under the AKP.

Following the Arab Spring, the Middle East was left with a power vacuum with a diminishing role of U.S. influence. Relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia were initially pleasant following the Arab Spring as both countries opposed Bashar al-Assad's rule and financed anti-Assad non-state actors. Ankara and Riyadh diverged when it came to Turkey's backing for Saudi opposed Muslim Brotherhood in the Egyptian coup of 2013. When the Muslim Brotherhood member and Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi were removed by Saudi-backed Abdul Fattah el-Sisi, tensions between the two Middle Eastern states emerged.<sup>72</sup>

With the Arab Spring bringing discontent and instability in the region, there was an increase in cross-border military operations carried out by Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia notably took part in an operation in Yemen in 2015, and Turkey's involvement in northern Syria in 2019 added to the state of divergence. Protests for political reforms demanding an end to oppressive regimes raised the threat of ungoverned neighbors in the Middle East, which opened up the possibility of strengthening domestic standing. The Yemen crisis, in particular, was devastating from a casualty standpoint, with over 100,000 people killed and millions displaced by 2019. Incoming Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi's failure to consolidate power in a country rattled by infighting between political and military elites invoked a request to the GCC and UN Security Council for immediate and urgent support. Operation Decisive Storm was underway on March 25, 2015, with efforts led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. As a bid for domestic support and international legitimacy, the Saudi-backed operation was notorious for its bombardment strategy drawing condemnation from the international community.<sup>73</sup>

Turkey's stance in this crisis was initially unclear as the message from Ankara was of support for the Saudi-led mission against Houthis. However, Erdoğan has made it clear in recent years that Yemen is not Turkey's foreign policy priority and the preference is not to involve itself in a proxy war in this region. To confirm this sentiment, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu stated that, "we said we can give every kind of support, including intelligence, but not military support."<sup>74</sup> As Erdoğan's January

---

<sup>72</sup> Yegin, Mehmet. "Turkey's Reaction to the Coup in Egypt in Comparison with the US and Israel." *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 18, no. 4 (2016): 407–21.

<sup>73</sup> Nyadera, Israel Nyaburi, and Michael Otieno Kisaka. 2020. "Contemporary Conflicts, Crossborder Military Operations, and the Declining Role of the UN: The Case of Turkey and Saudi Arabia." *Domes* (Milwaukee, Wis.) 29 (1): 92–108

<sup>74</sup> Cengiz, Sinem. "How to Read Turkey's Stance on the Yemen Crisis." *Al Arabiya News*. Al Arabiya News, March 29, 2015.

2021 interview sheds light on Turkey's goal to "maximize cooperation with Gulf nations," an official statement from Ankara also condemned Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia— a stance not previously aligned with Turkey's favorable attitude towards Houthi operations in Yemen.

Turkey, on the other hand, plunged into a cross-border operation of its own over the nationalist sentiment to expel Syrian Kurdish militants. On October 9, 2019, Erdoğan launched Operation Peace Spring which funneled Turkish troops to Syria, taking the towns of Abiad, Ras Al Ain, and Halaf in the provinces of Raqqa and Al-Hasakah. The operation, displacing over 200,000 people from northern Syria, brought stern criticism and opposition directed at Turkey and the United States from coalitions in the Gulf, especially the Saudi regime. However, with growing pressure from within the Middle East, and a lack of international support, the Turkish government opted to halt the operation.<sup>75</sup> The ramifications of Turkey's actions in Syria continue to this day, with continuing attempts made by the Turkish allies in Qatar to arrange a meeting for potential rapprochement between both parties. In recent years, rising oil prices coupled with Turkey's domestic economic crisis and desperate need for hard currency have handed Saudi Arabia financial leverage in a conversation to reconcile relations.

The murder of Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul further catalyzed turbulent relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. In 2017, Khashoggi's monthly column in the Washington Post during self-imposed exile directly criticized the policies of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the son of King Salman and Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler. Following a visit to the Saudi Consulate on October 2, 2018, Khashoggi was killed while resisting deportation to Saudi Arabia. Tensions between Ankara and Riyadh reached a boiling point as Turkish officials claimed 15 Saudi agents and three intelligence officers arrived in Istanbul, prior to removing security cameras and surveillance footage in preparation for Khashoggi's assassination. On November 2, Erdoğan declared that Khashoggi, "was killed in cold blood by a death squad," and that the order to kill the journalist, "came from the highest levels of the Saudi Government." While 20 Saudi nationals were charged with the murder in March 2020, Saudi Arabia rejected Turkey's extradition request as the convicted were instead put on trial in absentia in Istanbul.<sup>76</sup> Although the incident strongly affected Turkish relations with the Saudi government, the trial continued to remain in deadlock without the cooperation of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. These tensions led to an informal Saudi boycott of Turkish goods, although Erdoğan's camp proceeded to soften criticism of the Saudi government, normalizing ties after phone correspondence with King Salman in May 2021.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Nyadera, Israel Nyaburi, and Michael Otieno Kisaka. 2020. "Contemporary Conflicts, Crossborder Military Operations, and the Declining Role of the UN: The Case of Turkey and Saudi Arabia." *Domes* (Milwaukee, Wis.) 29 (1): 92–108

<sup>76</sup> BBC News. 2021. "Jamal Khashoggi: All You Need to Know about Saudi Journalist's Death." BBC News. BBC, February 24, 2021.

<sup>77</sup> Kucukgocmen, Ali. "Turkish Trial in Khashoggi Killing 'Nearing Deadlock' -Journalism Watchdog." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, November 23, 2021.

Turkey's expanding influence in the Middle East and a foreign policy shaped on a proliferating alliance with Qatar's pan-Islamism have brought about clashes with Saudi Arabia across key geopolitical regions. Up until 2021, continuous disputes for influence on opposite sides, such as the Sudan crisis, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and involvement in the Israeli-Palestine problem, had greatly deteriorated diplomatic relations between the two nations. However, with domestic economic, political, and social issues arising, Ankara has pivoted noticeably towards reconciliation attempts in the last two years. To progress Turkish-Saudi ties moving forward, Erdoğan announced a visit to Saudi Arabia in February 2022– the first visit by the Turkish president since the 2018 murder of Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents in Istanbul. The planned visit to Saudi Arabia comes at a strategic moment for Turkey, marking an effort to improve domestic unrest and avoid another currency crisis caused by Erdoğan's economic policies.

### **Turkey and the UAE**

The United Arab Emirates has also maintained intricate relations with Turkey under the AKP in recent years. In the last decade, both Turkey and the UAE established themselves as financial hubs within the Middle East, benefitting from a bilateral trade volume of \$11 billion in 2022. With a steady increase in UAE's exports to Turkey since 2008, the UAE has become one of Turkey's largest trading partners. Turkey's proximity to the UAE and strong cultural relations granted mutual investment opportunities in FDI projects such as real estate, energy, light, tourism, and Turkey's strong textile sector. In 2010, the UAE government introduced the UAE Vision 2021 Strategic Plan which increased trade volume and Emirati investment in Turkey's real estate projects as both nations transitioned towards privatization. Meanwhile, Turkish presence in the UAE also increased with construction companies leading developments in the country.<sup>78</sup> As recently as November 24 2021, Erdoğan and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed met in Ankara to sign accords on energy and technology investments, further solidifying the strong financial ties between the two nations.

Turkish expansionism under Erdoğan introduced several clashes over influence in the strategic Gulf. Much like the turning point with Saudi Arabia, the AKP's Turkey began to diverge politically from the UAE's interests after supporting the Muslim Brotherhood against Egypt President Sisi.<sup>79</sup> This attitude, however, has since changed as, despite its pan-Islamic regional isolation and eight years of hostility, Turkey is engaged in diplomacy with the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, expressing enthusiasm in mending ties. Although Turkey and Qatar had an early alignment with Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey's recent domestic political and economic struggles have forced the country to reconsider supporting the

---

<sup>78</sup> Nsour, Mohammad. " Economic Cooperation between the United Arab Emirates and Turkey: Legal and Policy Considerations", Arab Law Quarterly 33, 1 (2019): 5-34

<sup>79</sup> Phillips, Christopher. 2017. "Eyes Bigger Than Stomachs: Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in Syria." Middle East Policy 24 (1). Wiley Subscription Services, Inc: 36–47

non-state actor now appearing to be a losing horse in Egypt. Another source of tension between the two countries emerged during the July 15, 2016 coup d'état attempt against the Erdoğan government. A strong belief in the Turkish camp that UAE had supported the coup was conveyed by some media outlets close to Erdoğan, as the incident served as a wake-up call for the administration with regard to diplomatic relations. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu proclaimed, “we know that a country gave three billion dollars of financial support to the coup attempts in Turkey,” in reference to the UAE, marking a key milestone in the rift of Ankara’s relations with Abu Dhabi.<sup>80</sup> Overall, officials from the UAE viewed Turkish expansionism under Erdoğan in regions such as Sudan, Syria, Iraq, and Libya as a threat to peace in the Middle East, further intensifying existing tensions.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the Abraham Accords of August 2020 marked another point of recent divergence in foreign policy as Turkey condemned the establishment of diplomatic relations between two of its proxy rivals, Israel and the UAE. The Turkish government threatened to suspend diplomatic relations and recall its ambassador from Abu Dhabi over the Israel-UAE agreement.<sup>82</sup>

Much like the case for Turkey’s foreign policy moving forward with Saudi Arabia, however, Erdoğan is looking to actively rebuild and reconcile relations with the other half of this Gulf axis. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan’s visit to Ankara in November 2021 marked the first in years as the two countries resolved frayed ties and penned a \$5 billion currency swap deal, along with investments in technology and energy to mark the transition towards detente between the two rivals.

## Turkey and Qatar

In contrast to Saudi Arabia and the UAE’s foreign policy in the Gulf, Turkey and Qatar have maintained consistently strong relations. The AKP rule aligned closely with the Qatar government's Emir Hamad al-Thani in that both shared a common agenda of Islamist connections and revolutionary movement. Turkey and Qatar both relied on personal ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, especially as the outbreak of Arab Spring further amplified the pan-Islamic notion in regional politics.

Effectively, Turkey and Qatar strengthened ties over similar agendas in Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia— patronizing non-state actors and rejecting the designation of groups like Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist entities.<sup>83</sup> The initial success of this foreign policy in Egypt and Tunisia gave rise to the first confrontation between Turkey-Qatar and Saudi-UAE relations. Turkey and Qatar invested heavily in support of revolutionary movements that could bring Muslim Brotherhood-dominated

---

<sup>80</sup> Sheiko, Youssef. “The United Arab Emirates: Turkey's New Rival.” The Washington Institute, February 16, 2018.

<sup>81</sup> Aydıntaşbaş, Asli, and Cinzia Bianco. “Useful Enemies: How the Turkey-UAE Rivalry Is Remaking the ...,” March 15, 2021.

<sup>82</sup> Egeresi, Zoltán. “How the Abraham Accords Affected the Turkish Foreign Policy?” Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 2020.

<sup>83</sup> Foizee, Bahauddin. “Shared Regional Agendas Are Stimulating the Rapid Rise of Turkey-Qatar Cooperation.” Middle East Monitor, April 1, 2017.

governments to power through Islamic foundations. Dealing with economic struggles and domestic uprising, Turkey and Qatar hoped to capitalize on the networks created for non-state actors to fill the power vacuum in the Middle East, whereas the other big players in the Gulf strived to maintain the status quo of traditional authoritarian regimes. Moreover, as Qatar faced a series of clashes with the opposing axis, such as serious pressure in 2013 over housing Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood members, Turkey came to Qatar's defense, condemning acts and shifting blame towards the Western world.<sup>84</sup>

Turkey and Qatar found themselves in a weakened position against Saudi Arabia and the UAE following the decline in U.S. support for the Syrian opposition and the coup in Egypt. Both Turkey and Qatar had become heavily dependent on each other for foreign policy in the Gulf, and hence this new position left Turkey in need of reconciling relations elsewhere. Since the 2000s, Turkey and Qatar have engaged in several political and economic agreements— with military agreements signed in 2007 and 2015, and Qatar acquiring its first-ever drones from Turkey in 2012. As of 2016, Turkey began bolstering military ties with Qatar, fast-tracking the deployment of Turkish troops following Saudi Arabia and the UAE's severing of ties with the nation. Currently, over 3,000 Turkish soldiers are positioned in Qatar. Hamad and Erdoğan jointly introduced the creation of a Turkish military base within Qatar, further strengthening military ties.

### **Turkey and Israel**

Much like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, Turkey's relationship with Israel has grown increasingly challenging in recent years, following the threat of Turkish expansionist policies. Turkey and Israel maintained strong relations early on, as Turkey was the first Muslim majority country to recognize Israel as a state in 1949. In late August 1958, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion met with Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes to discuss a secret peripheral alliance that promised diplomatic, economic, and military cooperation between the two countries. As both countries developed an identity in the Middle East, Turkey increasingly supported the Arab world's opposition to Israel. Israel's efforts to achieve territorial gains through the Six-Day War in 1967 were met by Turkish criticism over the occupation of Palestinian territories, marking the beginning of strained relations.<sup>85</sup>

Initially, Turkey and Israel also had a similar foreign policy in Syria, and concerns surrounding the existing regime plunged the two nations into an important bilateral relationship during the 1990s. The two nations signed numerous strategic and military agreements in this period to advance shared goals. However, this golden age in diplomatic relations abruptly ended in crisis as the collapse of Camp David negotiations and the start of the Second Intifada marked the turning point in the early 2000s. Tensions

---

<sup>84</sup> Yüksel, Engin, and Haşim Tekineş. "Front Matter." *Turkey's Love-in with Qatar: A Marriage of Convenience*. Clingendael Institute, 2021.

<sup>85</sup> Guzansky, Yoel. 2021. "Israel's Periphery Doctrines: Then and Now." *Middle East Policy* 28 (3-4): 88–100.

grew as the AKP took power, and this was marked by then Turkey president Ahmet Necdet Sezer's strong reaction against the Israel Defence Force's activities against Palestinian demonstrators. Palestine remained a sticking point of disputes between the two nations as political tensions continued to rise. The peak of damaged relations appeared at the end of 2008, following an Israeli operation in Gaza that terminated a Turkish attempt to mediate disputes between Syria and Israel. Tensions flared at the Davos Crisis where Erdoğan stormed out of a debate with Israeli president Shimon Peres after a heated exchange. Erdoğan publicly criticized Israel's foreign policy and conduct in Gaza at the World Economic Forum in January 2008, stating that "I find it very sad that people applaud what you said. You killed people. And I think that it is very wrong," highlighting the rift between the two nations. Then, in 2010, Israeli forces killed nine Turkish citizens on board a convoy of six ships carrying pro-Palestinian activists and 10,000 tons of humanitarian aid. The Gaza Flotilla incident marked a boiling point in Turkey-Israel relations, encouraging Erdoğan to label the raid as "state terrorism," withdraw Turkey's ambassador from Tel Aviv, and downgrade diplomatic relations in 2011.<sup>86</sup>

To address changes in foreign policy following this turbulent period, Erdoğan set three conditions for normalizing relations with Israel. These included a formal apology for the Gaza Flotilla incident, a compensation package for the families of citizens, and the lifting of the Gaza blockade. A statement released by the Israeli Prime Minister's office finally expressed Israel's apology to the Turkish people for mistakes during the incident that cost lives, allowing the two sides to finally negotiate regarding a compensation package. However, talks regarding Turkey's third condition of lifting the Gaza blockade stalled, continuing to strain relations between the two countries.<sup>87</sup>

Following the Erdoğan government's realization that the improvement of relations in the Middle East was paramount in restoring order and shifting its foreign policy towards cooperation, the two sides progressed negotiations. The final deal announced in 2016 provided various concessions to Turkey such as a \$20 million humanitarian fund as well as the right to undergo reconstruction projects in Gaza.<sup>88</sup> Since 2017, numerous delegations have visited each country, using opportunities to build on this partnership. Challenges in bilateral ties remain to be addressed, and a standout issue would be to produce an efficient crisis management system. Recent developments have emerged, however, including Turkey-Israel negotiating terms for a visit in January 2022 by Israeli President Isaac Herzog to Ankara, which would be the first Israeli presidential visit since 2007.

---

<sup>86</sup> BBC News. "Mavi Marmara: Why Did Israel Stop the Gaza Flotilla?" BBC News. BBC, June 27, 2016.

<sup>87</sup> Kilic B. Kanat, Jackson Hannon; Turkey-Israel Relations in the New Era: Opportunities and Challenges. *Mediterranean Quarterly* 1 December 2017; 28 (4): 64–86.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

## U.S. Response to Turkey's Developments in the Gulf

Facing increasingly united and organized rivals in the 2023 presidential elections, Erdoğan and the AKP have shown signs of cooperation in the Middle East over rediscovered mutual interests. Turkey's coalition with the Gulf was first strengthened under the premise of protecting against Iran's regional influence following the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The Arab Spring protests marked a turning point in Turkey's foreign policy, driving it away from the other Gulf countries with growing support for the Muslim Brotherhood. Gradually, Turkey's competition for strategic influence in the Middle East led to a clash over the support for, and boycott of, Qatar. For the U.S., developments towards detente in Turkey-Gulf relations are strategically favorable in de-escalating regional instability. Turkey's recent steps to ease tensions with UAE, in particular, have ramped up following the election of President Joe Biden. Saudi Arabia and the UAE also lifted an embargo on Qatar, further signifying the easing of old tensions.

To a large extent, Turkey's reconciliation with the Gulf can be viewed as an effort to promote domestic economic recovery and political stability.<sup>89</sup> David Mack, former deputy assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs and U.S. ambassador to the UAE, noted in a recent interview that, "The U.S. has occasionally difficult but important relations with both countries. He added that, "the rivalry has not served U.S. interests," and, "Washington wants to see them put their feud in the past."<sup>90</sup> The recent developments in Turkey's reconciliation efforts with the Gulf represent a sweeping normalization of diplomatic relations. The recent rapprochement also aligns with the Biden Administration's decreasing presence in the region, signaling the new Middle East of shared interests.<sup>91</sup> For Turkey, the improved relations represent a lifeline for the ongoing economic hardships and spiraling inflation. Despite previously sharing turbulent relations with Israel, by February 2022, Turkey managed to exceed \$6 billion in trade with the country, including over \$4.5 billion in Turkish exports to Tel Aviv, highlighting the significant increase in trade cooperation.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, Erdoğan's visit to Abu Dhabi on February 14, 2022, marked the signing of 13 cooperation agreements on a bilateral investment deal involving trade, industry, and health between Turkey and the UAE.<sup>93</sup> A deliberate effort to improve relations with previous rivals marks a sea-change in Turkey-Gulf relations and one that will benefit U.S. interests if sustainable. From a U.S. perspective, the rapprochement could also mark a shift away from Ankara's support of the Muslim

---

<sup>89</sup> Aydın, Selçuk, and Hamdullah Baycar. "Israel, the Gulf and Turkey: Why Is Everyone Making up in the Middle East?" Middle East Eye, February 23, 2022.

<sup>90</sup> Küçük, Yusuf Kenan, Sima Aldardari, Ambassador William Roebuck, and Ambassador Douglas A. Silliman. "Eyes on U.S., Regional Concerns, UAE and Turkey Improve Ties." Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, September 10, 2021.

<sup>91</sup> Svetlova, Ksenia. "The Middle East Is Realigning as Israel's Ties with Other Nations Warm." The Jerusalem Post | JPost.com, September 12, 2021.

<sup>92</sup> Zakheim, Dov S. "Thanks to the Ukraine Crisis, Turkey and Israel Have Begun to Reconcile." TheHill. The Hill, February 18, 2022.

<sup>93</sup> Kucukgocmen, Ali. "Turkey, UAE Sign Agreements on Trade, Industry during Erdoğan Visit." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, February 14, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-erdogan-visits-uae-first-time-decade-2022-02-14/>.

Brotherhood, which remains a national security threat for Abu Dhabi and Riyadh. Overall, the U.S. benefits from stronger, more predictable bilateral ties and long-term collaboration in the Middle East, as it signals long-awaited regional stabilization.

## Turkey and the Syrian Civil War

*Sydney Young*

Syria has long been one of the main countries in Turkey's sphere of influence within the Middle East. Shared borders, history, and security issues have shaped Turkey and Syria's bilateral relations. As a result of the Syrian Civil War, these relations have devolved from tense conciliation to military occupation and distrust. In many respects, the Syrian security dilemma is also the Turkish security dilemma. This shared challenge and the countries' close proximity have shaped how Turkey has protected its interests, not only along its borders but also within the borders of Syria. The result of this interconnected geopolitical sphere is a national security dilemma that has fueled Turkey's aggressive new foreign policy plan. In order for the U.S. to learn how to engage with Turkey as a more assertive global actor, it is critical that we assess Turkey's role in the Syrian Civil War and how the Syrian conflict will shape U.S. policy recommendations for the region.

The United States' military assistance for the People's Protection Units (YPG), the Syrian affiliate of the Turkish Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), has been a long-standing source of friction between the two countries since World War I.<sup>94</sup> Turkey has been fighting the PKK, a Marxist-separatist guerrilla organization recognized as a terrorist organization by both the US and Turkey, for the past four decades. The US, on the other hand, has backed the YPG because it has shown to be the strongest force on the ground in fighting ISIS. If the Assad government ever were to dissolve, a semi-autonomous Kurdish local government in northern Syria is quite likely to emerge. With the Kurdish regional government in Iraq, a newly constituted Kurdish region in Syria, and Iran's own Kurdish area, Turkey's southern borders will soon be dominated by Kurdish organizations.<sup>95</sup> Turkey's fears concerning the growth of an autonomous Kurdish government, alongside anxieties surrounding a mass influx of refugees displaced from Syria, not only act as the incentive for Turkish involvement and occupation in Syria, but they may also provide grounds for negotiation with Turkey in the future U.S. policy recommendations. Any negotiation with Turkey going forward must address the issue of Kurdish autonomy within the region, and the U.S. may also have to reassess its alliance with the YPG if Turkish-U.S. bilateral relations are to improve.

Recently in February of 2022, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, the Islamic State's leader, was killed during a military raid in a Syrian hideout near the Turkish border. This is the same fate as his predecessor, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, throwing doubt on Turkey's claims of a decisive fight against the terrorist group.<sup>96</sup> Although the territory where al-Qurayshi was discovered remains beyond the authority

---

<sup>94</sup> Gürçay, "The U.S.-YPG Relationship: U.S. Foreign Policy & the Future of the Kurds in Syria and Turkey".

<sup>95</sup> Taşpınar, "The Arab Spring and the Kurdish Awakening".

<sup>96</sup> Tastekin, "US Raid Raises Questions on Turkey's Commitment vs. Islamic State".

of Turkish-backed forces, the Turkish military watchtower at Bukulmez station can readily observe Atme and neighboring villages. Given the intelligence reports indicating that al-Qurayshi, like his predecessor, relied on a web of couriers to command the group, Turkey's failure to uncover unusual activity in the region raises even more questions.<sup>97</sup> The Turkish government views Islamic State as a beneficial instrument in its struggle against Syrian Kurdish factions, which is one of the main reasons why Islamic State fighters prefer to seek refuge in Turkey. As a result, Turkey's policies against ISIS are riddled with discrepancies.<sup>98</sup> This controversy is only one in a long list, reflecting that now more than ever, a sustainable U.S. policy recommendation is needed as tensions continue to rise in the region. If the U.S. wants to effectively fight ISIS, the Turkish Security Dilemma and the Kurdish issue must be considered when constructing a policy recommendation.



Figure 2.1 Map of Areas of Control in Syria (Deir Ez-Zor and Qamishli, 2018)<sup>99</sup>

At the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, the Turkish government increased its efforts to resolve its conflict with the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party from 2013 to 2015. (PKK). During that time, Turkey and the PKK established a ceasefire while negotiating the PKK's demobilization from the military and allying with the United States against Assad militia.<sup>100</sup> However, in July of 2015, the ceasefire ended and the conflict between the Turkish government and the PKK resumed.<sup>101</sup> Turkey's interest in engaging with the PKK lies in preventing the secession of an autonomous Kurdish government within Turkey. Beyond Turkey, Syrian Kurdish fighters have been fighting the Islamic State, primarily as part of the SDF

<sup>97</sup> Tastekin, "US Raid Raises Questions on Turkey's Commitment vs. Islamic State".

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Deir Ez- Zor and Qamishli. "Can Syria's Kurds Keep Control of Their Territory?" The Economist. The Economist Newspaper, January 25, 2018.

<sup>100</sup> Hoffman, "The State of the Turkish-Kurdish Conflict".

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

(a US-backed alliance of Arab and Kurdish troops), and have established a semi-autonomous territory in northern Syria.

The conflict between Syria and Turkey has not only negatively impacted relations between those countries, but served as one of many catalysts in the deterioration of U.S.-Turkish relations. In the early years of the Syrian Civil War, Turkey's stance on the 2011 Syrian uprising and subsequent efforts to overthrow the Bashar al-Assad regime aligned with that of the United States and other Western powers. In 2012, Turkey and the U.S. supported the "Syrian opposition," those seeking to overthrow the ruling coalition of President Bashar al-Assad. The Assad regime Drought and pre-existing economic imbalances under the Assad administration contributed to the first nonviolent pro-reform protests, which took place in 2011, riding the wave of Arab Spring events. Tensions rose as a result of the regime's severe military crackdown, and by September 2011, the peaceful demonstrations had evolved into an armed insurgency. Diverting from the tentative peace Turkey had struck with Syria since 1998, Turkish President Erdoğan repeatedly called for regime change in Damascus.<sup>102</sup> This was a diversion from the Turkish government's traditional policy of isolationism that it had adopted since 1998.

### **Turkish Domestic Policy**

Domestically, Turkey used the Syrian conflict as a pretext to restrict Kurdish rights and limit Kurds' parliamentary presence in order to secure a historic constitutional amendment in 2017. In the years afterward, President Erdoğan has been able to encourage nationalism and rally citizens around critical election dates. Finally, following the failed coup attempt in July 2016, the Turkish government's Syria policy helped to reassert President Erdoğan's authority and restore the legitimacy of the Turkish Armed Forces.<sup>103</sup> Turkey's involvement in the Syrian conflict has also given President Erdoğan new leverage over the EU when it comes to determining where to relocate Syrian refugees. As recently as 2021, European Union leaders approved plans to grant Turkey additional 3 billion euros (\$3.6 billion) over the next three years to help the country provide new assistance to Syrian refugees on its soil and strengthen border controls. Essentially, Turkey is being paid to prevent the flow of Syrian refugees to Europe. Since the early stages of the Syrian civil war, resolving the issue of almost 4 million Syrian refugees in Turkey has been a top priority for the Turkish government. Turkey's actions in Syria, which are based on the Turkish government's increasingly nationalist attitude and policies, have aimed to undermine political opposition and rally the Turkish people around the flag in the run-up to crucial elections, thereby solidifying Erdoğan's control. Given Turkey's growing security dilemma, domestic policy reflects the

---

<sup>102</sup> Siccardi, "How Syria Changed Turkey's Foreign Policy".

<sup>103</sup> Siccardi, "How Syria Changed Turkey's Foreign Policy".

government's desire to retake control through the centralization and re-Islamization of state infrastructure, and a more aggressive, outward-looking foreign policy.

Part of the reason for the rapid growth of Turkish security development is the tension between the Turkish government and the Kurdish ethnic minority. The struggle between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has continued for decades. Turkey, the U.S. and the EU have labeled the PKK a terrorist group. Syria has often supported the PKK by sheltering its fighters. Turkey's failure to assist Kurdish forces in their fight against the Islamic State in Kobani in late 2014, and the terrorist group's subsequent defeat by a YPG-led coalition, struck the ultimate blow to the peace process. Ankara began to feel threatened by the establishment of an increasingly autonomous Kurdish entity along Turkey's southern border, which could, to some extent, count on Western help. In their newfound dominance in northern Syria, the Kurds believed they had as strong a hand as ever: it didn't seem far-fetched.

Syria has often supported the PKK by sheltering its fighters. Turkey's failure to assist Kurdish forces in their fight against the Islamic State in Kobani in late 2014, and the terrorist group's subsequent defeat by a YPG-led coalition, struck the ultimate blow to the peace process. Ankara began to feel threatened by the establishment of an increasingly autonomous Kurdish entity along Turkey's southern border, which could, to some extent, count on Western help. In their newfound dominance in northern Syria, the Kurds believed they had as strong a hand as ever: it didn't seem far-fetched.

The shift in the United States' relationship with the Syrian Kurds from humanitarian relief to a strategic partnership as a non-state ally and asset demonstrates the Kurdistan Region's growing importance in Middle Eastern international relations. The formation of the United States Kurdistan Business Council (USKBC) in April 2012 helped to strengthen KRG–US commercial cooperation. President Masud Barzani of the Kurdistan Region visited Washington, D.C. in the same month and convened with then President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden.

### **Turkish Interests in Syria**

Relations between Turkey and Syria have been tense going back decades, as Islamists see the secular state that buried the caliphate as a betrayal, while Arab nationalists haven't forgotten that Turks were their former colonizers. Between 2003 to 2011, the two states reached a notable diplomatic thaw. However, following this decade of generally amicable relations with Syria, Turkey denounced Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in 2011 for his harsh crackdown on protests, and later that year joined a number of other countries in calling for his removal. Turkey has always been a vocal proponent supporting Syrian dissidents. In May 2011, Syrian opposition activists met in Istanbul to discuss regime change, and Turkey hosted Colonel Riad al-Asaad, the leader of the Free Syrian Army. Turkey has been

training Syrian Army defectors on its soil since the beginning of the war, under the supervision of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MT), from which the Free Syrian Army (FSA) arose in July 2011. The MT started arming and training the FSA in May 2012, as well as providing them with a base of operations.

Once Syrian forces shot down a Turkish military jet in June 2012, tensions between Syria and Turkey deteriorated rapidly, and border confrontations occurred in October 2012. On August 24, 2016, the Turkish Armed Forces declared Operation Euphrates Shield, a direct military incursion into Syria aimed primarily at the Islamic State of Iraq. Tensions continued to rise when at least 3,000 Syrian refugees fled Syria as a result of occurrences like the Syrian army offensive in Jisr ash-Shugur in June 2011.

### Current Turkish Operations

The first Turkish forces entered Syria on August 24, 2016, as part of Operation Euphrates Shield. This operation launched a five-year sequence of Turkish military activities in northern Syria. The Turkish government's involvement in Syria is a watershed point in Turkey's internal and foreign policies. This involvement has broad popular appeal in Turkey<sup>104</sup>, and has contributed to President Erdoğan and the AKP's ability to retain power during the politically uncertain times following the 2016 coup attempt.<sup>105</sup> The goals of Operation Euphrates Shield can be summarized as follows: removing from the region the Islamic State's fighters, regaining control of a strip of land connecting Kurdish cantons to the east and west of the river, and re-establishing Turkish military power in the region.<sup>106</sup>

The following January, Turkish forces started a second operation. After an intense air campaign, Turkish forces executed Operation Olive Branch by deploying a mix of classic Turkish-made military procedures, counterterrorism tactics, and new military technology. The key objectives of this operation were to remove the YPG from Afrin Canton and to discourage the U.S. from continuing to collaborate with Kurdish troops, as well as to determine where to locate Syrian refugees sponsored by Turkey.

In March 2020, Turkish forces launched Operation Spring Shield. The Syrian regime's push on Idlib, the final pocket of Syrian land controlled by rebel troops, was halted by a series of Turkish drone strikes. The operation was done in less than a week when President Erdoğan traveled to Moscow to sign one of several ceasefire agreements, one example of many of Turkey developing alliances with other regional actors in order to further Turkish interests abroad. As a result, he was able to retain a Turkish presence in the area and prevent refugees from entering Turkey. The key objectives of this operation were to block the Syrian Arab Army's push against Idlib and stop the slaughter of Syrian citizens while also stopping more refugees from entering Turkey.

---

<sup>104</sup> Getmansky, Sinmazdemir, and Zeitsoff, "Most Turks Support the Syrian Invasion. Here's Why".

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Siccardi, "How Syria Changed Turkey's Foreign Policy".

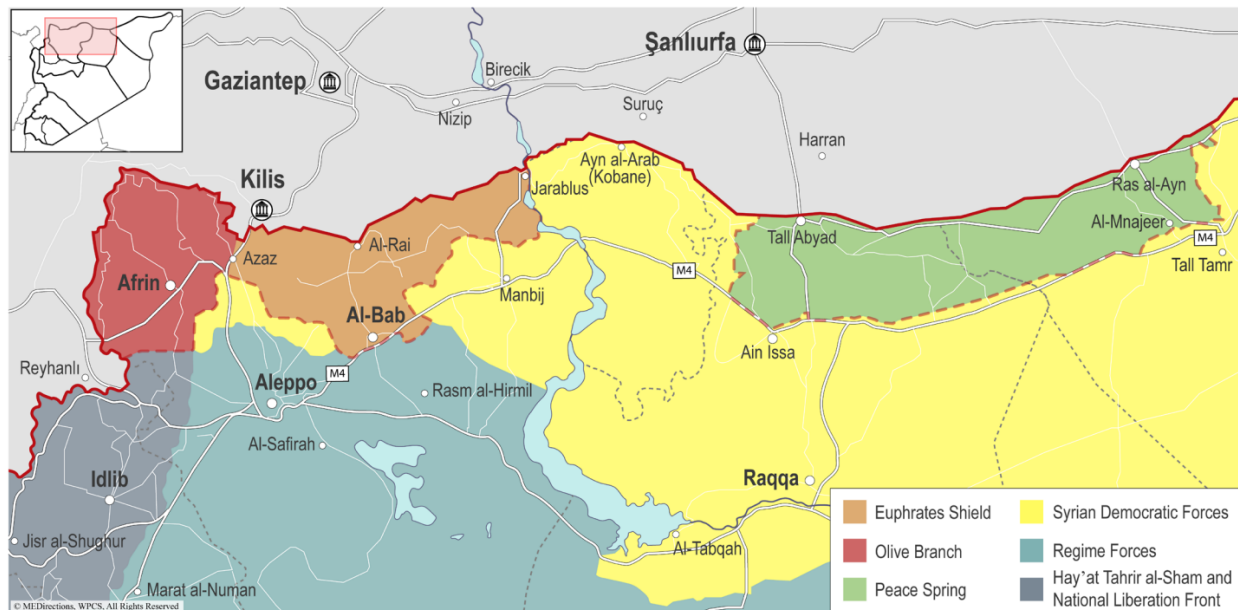


Figure 2.2 Map of Turkish Military Operation Zones (Khayrallah al-Hilu, 2020)<sup>107</sup>

### Russo-Turkish Collaboration in Syria

Since 2011, the conflict in Syria has contributed to the development of the relationship between Russia and Turkey. Russia has supported President Assad’s regime from the start. Russia has made significant investments in the Syrian crisis, and since the uprising in March 2011, it has backed the Assad regime. Much of Syria’s phosphate production has been seized by Russia. Russia operates the port of Tartus in western Syria, near the developing Russian military installation, in collaboration with a Syrian state enterprise. To secure their substantial investment, Russia intervened militarily in 2015 to prevent Assad’s fall, allowing the regime to retake control of much of Syria.

As its relationship with Russia develops, Turkey’s goals have shifted away from regime change in Damascus to the weakening of YPG forces. The Russia-Turkey relationship has benefited both parties in different ways. In particular, Turkey has successfully eliminated any traces of Kurdish presence on its Syrian border and is well positioned to participate in any political process that would bring the Syrian conflict to a close. President Erdoğan has also been able to use his relationship with Russian President Putin to improve his international profile and gain Russian backing in crucial economic sectors like energy and tourism.

Russia has been able to re-establish Assad’s grip over much of Syria. With U.S. soldiers withdrawing from Syria’s north, Russia has taken advantage of Turkey’s tensions with the Kurds to move

<sup>107</sup> Al-Hilu, Khayrallah. “The Turkish Intervention in Northern Syria: One Strategy, Discrepant Policies.” *Wartime and Post-Conflict in Syria*, December 21, 2021.

the YPG closer to the regime.<sup>108</sup> Russia has gained power over Turkey by using the situation on the ground, particularly in Idlib. Despite Russia's refusal to share technology with Turkey on the S-400 systems, Turkey has proceeded with the acquisition. Washington is concerned about the move because acquisition could clear a similar path for other countries, such as India.<sup>109</sup> This reflects changing power dynamics in the Middle East as Turkey diverges from its longstanding alliance with the U.S., and the growing relationship between Turkey and hostile states must be considered in a future policy recommendation.

### **Turkey and the EU: Multilateral Relations**

Since the early stages of the Syrian civil war, resolving the issue of Syrian refugees in Turkey has been a top goal of the Turkish government, as well as a driving force behind Turkey's policy towards Syria and the EU. This goal has also assisted President Erdoğan, who relied on the matter of Syrian refugees to legitimize Turkey's military intervention in Syria and to persuade the EU to provide financing and renegotiate Eastern Mediterranean maritime borders.<sup>110</sup> Between 2011 and 2021, 3.6 million Syrian refugees arrived in Turkey, marking the country's largest dramatic demographic upheaval in almost a century.<sup>111</sup> When nearly 1 million Syrian migrants arrived in Turkey in 2014, the situation became exceptionally tense.<sup>112</sup>

The Turkish government reinforced its control over its southern border in the years that followed the influx of Syrian refugees, and began preparing the establishment of safe zones in northern Syria for moving them. Meanwhile, social tensions in Turkey between Syrian and Turkish populations began to upset local communities, potentially contributing to the AKP's defeat in municipal elections in March 2019.<sup>113</sup>

Turkey has used the management of refugee flows to apply political pressure against the EU since the November 2015 and March 2016 EU-Turkey refugee agreements. In late 2019, President Erdoğan vowed to "open the gates" to Europe for millions of Syrian refugees in Turkey in response to European leaders' rejection of Operation Peace Spring.<sup>114</sup>

President Erdoğan made good on his threat in February 2020, a few days after the Baiyun attack and the return of unrest in Idlib. Thousands of migrants and refugees began congregating at Turkey's border with Greece after the Turkish government unilaterally opened its gates to the EU. The operation

---

<sup>108</sup> Pinar Tank, "Turkey's Geopolitical Maelstrom".

<sup>109</sup> Dalay, Galip. "US-Turkey Relations Will Remain Crisis-Ridden for a Long Time to Come".

<sup>110</sup> Sinem Adar, "Rethinking EU-Turkey Cooperation Over Migration".

<sup>111</sup> World Bank, "10 Years On, Turkey Continues Its Support for an Ever-Growing Number of Syrian Refugees".

<sup>112</sup> Makovsky, "Turkey's Refugee Dilemma: Tiptoeing Toward Integration".

<sup>113</sup> International Crisis Group, "Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions".

<sup>114</sup> Council of the European Union, "Outcome of the Meeting: 3720th Council Meeting".

failed due to the EU's solidarity with Greece, which sealed the border.<sup>115</sup> However, the movement of refugees gave Turkey the opportunity to execute Operation Spring Shield.

In March 2021, President Erdoğan again utilized refugees as a political tool. On the tenth anniversary of the start of the Syrian civil war and ahead of the European Council meeting later that month, President Erdoğan reminded European leaders that the "most sensible option" for the West in regard to Syria is to "throw their weight behind Turkey" and that "failure to share Turkey's burden may result in new waves of migration towards Europe."<sup>116</sup> Additionally, the refugee agreements between the EU and Turkey have become a model for Europe's approach of outsourcing migration management to its neighbors.<sup>117</sup>

Promoting a long-term political solution for Syria's future would allow the EU to manage Turkey's power over Syrian refugee flows. The EU, however, has a poor track record in this regard. The EU has never been a part of any significant diplomatic process involving Syria. Further, Brussels has struggled to identify effective means to support Syrian civil society and the Syrian people. Europeans, in general, have been wary of taking any action that could strengthen the Assad administration.<sup>118</sup>

During this time, Turkey established many de facto client provinces from the territories conquered during its military operations in Syria,<sup>119</sup> Turkey oversees these pockets of territory: Kilis and Gaziantep for the zone taken by Operation Euphrates Shield, Hatay for Afrin Canton, and Şanlıurfa for the strip of land between Tel Abyad and Ras al-Ain. Turkey has integrated local businesses and infrastructure into the Turkish system in all three areas, to varying degrees, by becoming the primary source of services, humanitarian aid, and security.<sup>120</sup> If and when a united Syrian government is formed under UN Security Council Resolution 2254, the status of these territories will be a critical issue. A long term occupation of Northern Syria in post-war reconstruction would allow the Turkish government to align reconstruction and humanitarian efforts to benefit Turkey's new and aggressive foreign policy plan. After all, the only sustainable long-term solution to the current conflict in Syria is an inclusive and Syrian-led political process, and too much interference on behalf of Turkish foreign policy interests may derail post-war reconstruction.

## Turkey and the US

As a result of Turkey's military activities in Syria, its relations with the U.S. have become increasingly tense. The U.S.' support for Syrian Kurds has enraged Turkey's authorities. Further, the most

---

<sup>115</sup> Council of the European Union, "Statement on the Situation at the EU's External Borders".

<sup>116</sup> Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "The West Should Help Turkey End Syria's Civil War".

<sup>117</sup> Terry, "The EU-Turkey Deal, Five Years On: A Frayed and Controversial But Enduring Blueprint".

<sup>118</sup> Barnes-Dacey, "Society Max: How Europe Can Help Syrians Survive Assad and Coronavirus".

<sup>119</sup> Hoffman, Makovsky, "Northern Syria Security Dynamics and the Refugee Crisis".

<sup>120</sup> Sinem Adar, "Turkish Intervention in Syria Heightens Authoritarianism in Turkey and Fragmentation in Syria".

contentious issue in U.S.-Turkey relations—Turkey’s adoption of the Russian S-400 missile system—is inextricably linked to the Syrian situation. The decision to adopt this missile system was made as part of a geopolitical realignment between Turkey and Russia that has helped both nations achieve their respective goals in Syria; Russia’s primary interest in the region is the survival of Syrian President Bashar al-regime Assad's and Turkey's is the weakening of the Syrian Kurds.

### **American Interests in Syria**

The main priorities of the U.S. in Syria are the eradication of ISIS, the restriction of the use and proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and the nations’ proximity to major geopolitical powers, some hostile to the United States.<sup>121</sup> As stated by the U.S. Department of State, Syria has been on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism since the list’s inception in 1979 because of its continued support of terrorism and terrorist groups, its prior occupation of Lebanon, the pursuit of WMD and missile programs, and deployment of chemical weapons, as well as its continued efforts to undermine US and international stabilization efforts in Iraq and Syria.

Furthermore, Syria is a hotspot for proxy conflicts, including those between the US and Russia, Israel and Iran, Russia and Turkey, and Turkey and the US-backed Kurds. Another key concern is the refugee load on neighboring nations and Europe, where a massive influx of refugees has fueled populist backlash.<sup>122</sup> The United States' current approach, which focuses on isolating and penalizing Syria, has only worked to damage the country's already-devastated economy, but has failed to generate behavioral change.<sup>123</sup> Attempts to organize, train, and equip opposition groups in the past to compel Assad to alter course or step down were also futile. Instead, Syria's reliance on Russia and Iran has grown stronger as a result of these actions.

### **Conclusion**

If the U.S. chooses engagement with Turkey, Syria will be the flashpoint for much of the renegotiation of geopolitical lines between the United States and Turkey. Even when taking into account the Turkish Security Dilemma, the Kurdish issue, the refugee crisis, and the growing authoritarianism of Turkish domestic policy, there is no one right answer. However, our best chance for engaging with Turkey during and after the Syrian Civil War is to acknowledge their growing assertiveness on the geopolitical stage, while still standing ground on the promotion of U.S. policy interests. The US should utilize multilateral agreements with other state actors and international organizations to share the burden of the refugee crisis and ease some of the Turkish Security Dilemma. Additionally, the U.S. may want to

---

<sup>121</sup> Feltman and Balian “The United States Needs a New Syria Policy”.

<sup>122</sup> Siccardi, “How Syria Changed Turkey's Foreign Policy”.

<sup>123</sup> Feltman and Balian “The United States Needs a New Syria Policy”.

consider re-evaluating its alliances with PKK-associated forces within Syria in order to mend the U.S.—Turkish relations, while still advocating for Kurdish rights within the region. Reversing punitive sanctions set by the Trump administration and promoting Turkey as a global power aligned with the U.S. is the best course for de-escalating the current regional security dilemma, and to revive our alliance with Turkey in the spirit of partnership rather than Cold-War paternalism.

## Turkish Relations in the Mediterranean

*Nicholas Swedin*

Turkey's attempt to become a major power in the Eastern Mediterranean region has created significant tensions in many states, including Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, France, and Israel. Ankara's disregard for international law and partnership with Libya has created political side picking, territorial disputes, and naval unrest throughout the region. Paramount to the conflicts in this region is the struggle for energy and particularly the discovery of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean. This region has become the latest drilling hotspot of the world, with an estimated 122 trillion cubic feet of potential gas.<sup>124</sup> This newly discovered resource is great news for much of the world, looking to ween off Russian natural gas exports.<sup>125</sup> Most of the surrounding countries have created alliances and collaborated on proposals such as the "EastMed" pipeline, which connects Egypt and Israel drilling zones to their immediate neighbors Greece and Cyprus, and then to Italy.<sup>126</sup> This strategy is garnering support from the EU.<sup>127</sup> For the most part, the newfound energy has forced the Eastern Mediterranean states to work together and seek diplomacy throughout the region. Turkey's unilateral approach has isolated itself from the rest of the Eastern Mediterranean. Ankara continues to create rifts between European, Asian, and African states alike over its operations.

The United States looks to capitalize on the Eastern Mediterranean oil rush as well. In December 2020, U.S. congress included a sizable spending bill that puts the U.S. in the middle of the fray. The bill will help the United States militarize the region as well as reap its gas benefits which will be discussed at greater lengths throughout the report.<sup>128</sup> Although energy seems to be the U.S.'s number one prerogative in the region, the state has also dipped its toes in regional stability talks. However, the two subjects are undeniably tied together as energy is becoming the primary shaper of political ties.

### Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus

Discrepancies over energy, territory, and military power have created a multitude of disagreements between Greece/Cyprus and Turkey. Over the last few decades, little progress has been made between these three states, with little hope on the horizon.

A central dispute between these EU states and Turkey is Cyprus's status. Turkey's invasion and current occupation of the Northern part of the island in 1974 have ignited ongoing pressure in the area.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> "Will Natural Gas Isolate Turkey And Integrate Israel In The Eastern Mediterranean?" Forbes. October 22, 2020.

<sup>125</sup> "Leaders of Greece, Israel, Cyprus to Sign Gas Pipeline Deal." CourthouseNewsService. January, 2, 2020.

<sup>126</sup> "Eastern Mediterranean Turns Into Source of Gas and Conflict." CourthouseNewsService. August, 20, 2020.

<sup>127</sup> "EU-Turkey Relation in 2021." Maple Institute. January, 1st, 2021.

<sup>128</sup> "Joe Biden's Manifesto for Greek Americans and U.S.-Greece Relations." Greek Reporter. October 15, 2020.

<sup>129</sup> "Biden Expresses Commitment to Strong US-Cyprus Relations." Greek Reporter. March, 3, 2021.

Despite international outcry and resistance, Turkey has justified their occupation of Northern Cyprus as protection of the sizable, yet minority, Cypriot-Turk population. The independent section of Cyprus has been a member of the EU since 2004, yet, Turkey does not recognize Cyprus as a state.<sup>130</sup>

Turkey's partial occupation is motivated by economic, strategic, and natural energy interests. The Turkish government has been attempting to drill inside an exploration area that nearly all states in the world claim to be possessed by Cyprus. Erdoğan has stated that his country deserves at least 44% of the drilling in the Cyprus territory as these shelves are inhabited by the majority Cypriot-Turkish populations.<sup>131</sup> Most of this energy which Turkey seeks is sent from Cyprus to France and Italy through the corporation Eni. Illegal Turkish drilling in the summer of 2020 has led to Turkey being labeled a "pirate state" by Cyprus government officials.<sup>132</sup> Similarly, the EU has pushed back on Turkey's drilling, threatening to freeze economic assets and order a Turkish travel ban. As a retort, Erdoğan has threatened to send Islamic State Criminals into the European Union. Turkey has also militarized Northern Cyprus, giving them drones in 2019 (Bayraktar TB2).<sup>133</sup> Little is known about the purpose of the drone's function. No solution seems part to be in the near or distant future.

Cyprus's most important political partner is its Northwestern neighbor, Greece. The Greeks have ethnic ties to the island, as Cyprus is majority Greek, and are constantly critiquing and criticizing Turkey over its foreign policy. Greece's distaste for Turkey was confirmed in the 1990s when the state vetoed Turkey's ascension talks in joining the E.U.<sup>134</sup> On the subject of energy, Greece has called Turkey "weak" for its drilling on Northern Cyprus.<sup>135</sup> Turkey has also claimed a right to some of Greece's continental shelves, even conducting seismic research on Greek soil. This was met with naval pushback from the E.U and the U.S. navy which sent USS Hershel Woody Williams to the island of Crete in 2019.<sup>136</sup> However, U.S. officials did not give details on the Navy's purpose. Airspace boundaries between the two powers have also been frequently contested. Beyond territorial and militaristic disputes, Turkey and Greece, being closely located, experience a significant amount of ethnic crossover. In a 2017 visit to Greece, Erdoğan went to the North-Eastern part of the country to meet roughly 150,000 Greek Muslims. Erdoğan left in frustration as this minority group has a lower standard of living compared to their orthodox counterparts. This minority group tends to support Erdoğan as many of them identify as ethnic Turks.<sup>137</sup> Similarly, the majority of Cypriots are of Greek descent. The cultural and physical divide between the island has only heightened the bitterness between the two states. In most recent news, the two states are

---

<sup>130</sup> "Biden Expresses Commitment to Strong US-Cyprus Relations." Greek Reporter. March, 3, 2021.

<sup>131</sup> "Israel back Cyprus as Turkey moves gas drill into its waters." The Times of Israel. October, 7, 2019.

<sup>132</sup> "Israel back Cyprus as Turkey moves gas drill into its waters." The Times of Israel. October, 7, 2019.

<sup>133</sup> "Turkey Delivers Bayraktar TB2 drone to Northern Cyprus" TheDefensePost. December, 16, 2019.

<sup>134</sup> "Issues of Greek - Turkish Relations." The Hellenic Republic. January, 31, 2022.

<sup>135</sup> "US Warship Arrives in Crete as Greece-Turkey Standoff Escalates" VOA. August, 19, 2020.

<sup>136</sup> "US Warship Arrives in Crete as Greece-Turkey Standoff Escalates" VOA. August, 19, 2020.

<sup>137</sup> "On Historic Trip, Turkey's Erdoğan Meets Muslims in Greece" AP News. December, 8, 2017.

beginning to escalate disputes over the Greek-controlled Aegean islands that sit between the two countries. The Turkey-initiated claim for the land is most likely an attempt to gain territory to legally harvest the large pockets of oil throughout the Aegean sea.<sup>138</sup>

The United States, aligned with the rest of the world order, has recently emphasized its backing of the de-escalation of Turkish forces in Cyprus. In a message over the summer of 2021, President Biden called Cyprus a “significant partner” and supports the Bicomunal Bizonal Federation plan which, drafted in 1979, involves a full Turkish withdrawal from the island. The U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs committee claims “America diplomacy [is] fully engaged” in Cyprus, and hopes to improve Greek-American relations in the process. Putting its money where its mouth is, the U.S. is now part funding an innovative security site in Cyprus.<sup>139</sup> The U.S. also plans on helping monitor security/territory breaches throughout the island’s coastline. According to U.S. ambassador to Cyprus, Michael Klosson, the United States is interested in their growing “trans-Atlantic partnership” with Cyprus. This relationship is more than economical as the ambassador also stated a stronger partnership would give the U.S. an upper hand against security issues such as “arms deals” and internal conflicts within the island. According to the latest provisions made by the U.S. Congress, the U.S. has lifted an arms embargo on Cyprus put in place in 1987 to ease tensions on the island; funneling military aid to Cyprus.<sup>140</sup>



Figure 2.3 Map of East-Med Pipeline (Euronews, 2020)<sup>141</sup>

<sup>138</sup> “Turkish-Greek Geopolitical Dispute over the Aegan Sea and its Archipelago.” Armenian Weekly. January 28, 2022.

<sup>139</sup> “US Warship Arrives in Crete as Greece-Turkey Standoff Escalates” VOA. August, 19, 2020.

<sup>140</sup> “Biden Expresses Commitment to Strong US-Cyprus Relations.” Greek Reporter. March, 3, 2021.

<sup>141</sup> Israel, Greece and Cyprus sign deal for EastMed gas pipeline.” 02/01/2020.

Like Cyprus, Greece also experiences excellent bilateral relations with the United States. As a member of the “3 + 1 format (Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and the United States),” launched in 2019 in Jerusalem, both states look to improve stability in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Security cooperation is a cornerstone in this partnership. The U.S. has shown its interest in security by funding Greek law enforcement, border security, a nationwide Visa Program, and AI investment.<sup>142</sup> The two states look to bolster stronger economic relations through the Adriatic Pipeline and other energy deals.

Israel, the American-backed, Near Eastern neighbor, has had its sights set on drilling for decades. In the 1990s Israel was the first state to discover large gas reservoirs of the East Mediterranean shelf.<sup>143</sup> Israel has burst onto the international energy stage with its offshore drilling capacity. Israel hopes to use their energy access to improve regional relationships. As a member of the potential EastMed pipeline and the East Mediterranean Gas Forum, including the likes of Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Jordan, Italy, and the Palestinian Authority, signed in 2020, there is good reason to think that regional correspondences are improving.<sup>144</sup> However, there is citizen-led pushback in Israel as the oil will entrench the country in greater climate-unfriendly dependency, however, the Israeli government has countered this campaign citing its peacemaking and clean energy capabilities.

The United States is in a favorable position with Greece, Cyprus, and Israel. As it stands, All four countries are working together to improve their economic and political standing. The states have a reason for excitement as their partnership over natural gas has signaled cleaner energy solutions, profit, and a fresh take on East Mediterranean diplomacy.<sup>145</sup> The continuous support of peace in Cyprus and Israel will pay dividends as it will propel the U.S. directly in the Mediterranean gas race.

## **Turkey and the EU**

Relations between the EU and Turkey have been a long and winding road, dealing with issues regarding natural resources, human rights, and immigration. Kemal Ataturk's rise in 1923 signaled a secular and/or westernized future for the Turkish Government. Over time Turkey joined NATO, was involved with the U.S. Marshall Plan, entered the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Economic Community (EEC). Since the EU's conception in 1959 Europe eyed Ankara as a potential member. Throughout the later 90s and early 2000s, Ankara instilled thirty-four amendments to the Turkish constitution and introduced eight packages of legislation to better fit EU qualifications.<sup>146</sup> Tensions began with the introduction of Cyprus, and some former

---

<sup>142</sup> “Joe Biden’s Manifesto for Greek Americans and U.S.-Greece Relations.” Greek Reporter. October, 15, 2020.

<sup>143</sup> “Eastern Mediterranean Turns Into Source of Gas and Conflict.” CourthouseNewsService. August, 20, 2020.

<sup>144</sup> “East-Med Gas Forum evolves as Israel, Egypt enhance cooperation.” AL-MONITOR. September, 22, 2020.

<sup>145</sup> “Leaders of Greece, Israel, Cyprus to Sign Gas Pipeline Deal.” CourthouseNewsService. January, 2, 2020.

<sup>146</sup> “Turkey and the EU: A Difficult but Critical Relationship.” CIDOB. September, 2021.

Eastern Bloc countries into the EU, which in Turkey’s opinion were less fit to join. Ankara took these recruits as a religious and cultural commentary, leading the Muslim-majority state to consider their bid, no matter how strong, to the EU, unsatisfactory. Relations began to plummet harder as the EU took a stronger stand against Turkey’s occupation of Northern Cyprus. As Erdoğan came into power, the fear and unacceptance of Turkish-EU membership grew as hesitations stemmed from the increasingly authoritarian government. Despite the suffering political relationship, the EU and Turkey maintain strong economic ties, as the EU is Turkey’s top trade partner and Turkey is the EU’s 6th. Turkey also presents Europe with geostrategic opportunity as the “bridge between worlds” for Europe.<sup>147</sup>

At the center of EU-Turkey relations are disputes over maritime boundaries and exclusive economic zones for drilling. There are several countries, other than Greece and Cyprus in the energy resources mix. France for instance has strongly backed Greece’s defense against intrusive Turkish ships. French President Emmanuel Macron has deemed Ankara’s drilling operations around Crete and Cyprus “unacceptable” and has begun sending military supplies such as Rafale fighter jets to Greece.<sup>148</sup> France is also a strong supporter of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, which Turkey was excluded from. France hopes to resituate itself as a main power throughout the Mediterranean. Macron sees Turkey as a threat to their progress, as Ankara is said to have a “self-aggrandized” and “imperial” agenda. France’s efforts to become the peacemaking medium in the region have put them front and center in the oil conflict.<sup>149</sup>

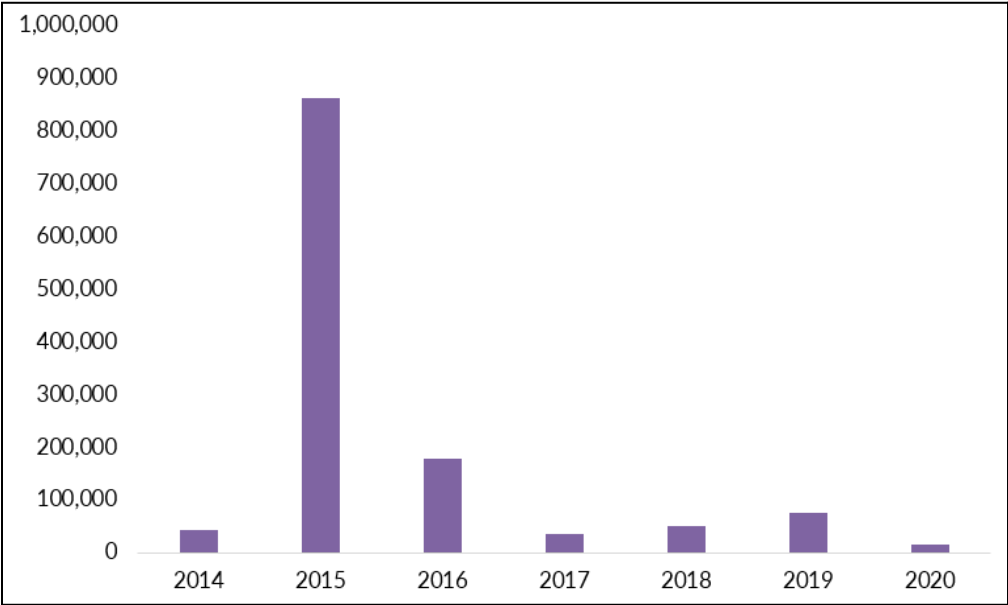


Figure 2.4 Migrant Arrivals in Greece, 2014-2020 (Migration Policy, 2021)<sup>150</sup>

<sup>147</sup> “Turkey-EU economic ties a very important cornerstone: Envoy.” Daily Sabah. January, 21, 2022.

<sup>148</sup> “Greece receives ‘game-changer’ Rafale aircraft from France.” AlJazeera. January, 20, 2022.

<sup>149</sup> “France vs. Turkey in the EastMed.” CATS NETWORK. May, 6, 2021.

<sup>150</sup> “The EU-Turkey Deal, Five Years On: A Frayed and Controversial but Enduring Blueprint.” Migration Policy. 4/8/2021.

Oil, territory, and drilling have been at the forefront of policy between the EU and Turkey, however, it is important to recognize other factors at play in these strained relationships. Most significantly, the immigration policy and situation between Turkey and the EU. Due to multiple global crises in the Middle East, including the Syrian civil war in 2011, millions were fleeing from Europe annually. In 2015, the most migrants in recorded history came from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and others to the EU. Due to the poorly developed migrant processing institutions throughout the European bloc nations, the immigrant situation has fallen on the shoulders of the East Mediterranean EU states such as Greece. In 2016, the “EU-Turkey” deal was signed to limit European migrants and supply a better structure for migration through Turkey.<sup>151</sup> As the deal goes, Greece will return unwanted migrants to Turkey, and Turkey will work with the EU to limit new migrant routes. In return, the EU gives the Turkish 6 billion Euros in aid annually, fewer travel restrictions to Europe, and a one-to-one migrant policy. Although tensions are high between Turkey and the EU, the last five years have shown plummeting numbers in migrants and continual aid. The graph below demonstrates the number of migrants coming into Turkey per year, a large drop. While Turkey’s efforts do not fully paint the picture, as the Bloc nations have rallied as well, there is serious reason to believe that this deal will renew and help the two powers work together. The immigration crisis is far from being solved as finger-pointing between Turkey and Greece has persisted. Multiple issues have arisen over the years including underfunding from Europe, migrant-release threats from Turkey, and illegal pushbacks from both parties.<sup>152</sup>

Immigration and territorial issues have created high tensions between Turkey and the EU. To deepen the rift between the two states, Erdoğan’s authoritative governance style is causing many European actors to actively condemn and freeze relations with Ankara. Turkey’s bid for the EU is completely irradicated, while they may maintain an economic and immigration partnership, diplomatic progress does not seem likely.

### **Turkey and Egypt**

Similar to Greece and Cyprus, Egypt is facing tension with its Turkish neighbors. With the Deposition of Turkey’s Muslim Brotherhood ally, Mohammed Morsi in 2013, Ankara and Cairo have experienced a nearly ten-year-long tenure of political tensions.<sup>153</sup> While there are recent talks of better diplomacy between the two governments, there are a plethora of disagreements between the powers.

In the summer of 2021, the two states engaged in “high-level” public talks regarding peace and security in the Eastern Mediterranean region. These talks have been initiated by Turkey. Erdoğan has

---

<sup>151</sup> “The EU-Turkey Deal, Five Years On: A Frayed and Controversial but Enduring Blueprint.” Migration Policy. April, 8, 2021.

<sup>152</sup> “12 Migrants Freeze to Death, Stripped by Greek Guards, Turkey Says.” NYT. February. 22, 2022.

<sup>153</sup> “Egypt, Turkey seek to reset fractured relations.” Al-Monitor. May, 10, 2021.

historically maintained a critical outlook on Egypt's leader President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi since the Muslim Brotherhood's fall from power in Egypt. As the two countries have historically gotten along, Turkey hopes to build back a partnership based on "common values."<sup>154</sup> These values are vague, lofty, and are most likely just a strategy for Turkey to spread its influence in the region. Many conflicts continue to overshadow all of Turkey's attempts to rekindle a past regional flame.

Before their most recent talks, the two states have withdrawn their ambassadors, and verbally assaulted each other's governance. To further tension, Ankara has offered refuge to hundreds of Islamist Muslim Brotherhood members, an organization that is categorized as a terrorist group in Egypt.<sup>155</sup> Likewise, the two countries support opposing forces in Libya, which has caused serious security threats across North Africa.

On the subject of territory and economics, the two states are at ends over drilling and sea rights. Egypt is a strategic partner for Cyprus and Greece. The three frequently work together in the energy resource industry. Turkey's retort to this partnership was the GNA security agreement of 2019. This maritime deal between Libya and Turkey grants Turkey economic and militaristic liberty across the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>156</sup> This deal has been met with international disdain. Although Turkey has recently reached out to Egypt, several large-scale issues regarding economics, security, and political power have made their path to diplomacy difficult.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the United States and Egypt have attempted to strengthen their relations. According to ambassador Jonathan Cohen, the two states are fostering a "strategic and strong partnership" with the U.S. donating millions of Covid vaccines. And contributing \$55 million to Covid tests, awareness, and other medical procedures to Egypt. The U.S. ambassador stated their relations spanned much farther than just Covid-19 relief as they also discussed "cultural heritage preservation, education, regional policy, defense, security, and even trade."<sup>157</sup>

However, other aspects of the two states' relations have not painted the same sunny picture. President Biden has recently left Egypt, along with Turkey, out of the world democracy meetings last December. Likewise, the U.S. government withheld their annual Egyptian security budget of \$130 million citing human rights concerns. This must be taken with a large grain of salt as the United States is still selling Egypt over two billion dollars in military equipment.<sup>158</sup> Biden's cabinet has raised many eyebrows surrounding Egypt's oppression, imprisonment, and execution of minority groups, journalists, and activists. Moving forward, the countries have put "Human Rights" at the top of their relations agenda.

---

<sup>154</sup> "Turkey, Egypt agree to further talks in bid to ease tensions." ABC News. September, 8, 2021.

<sup>155</sup> "Turkey's busy diplomatic agenda: Egypt, Ukraine, Libya." SETA. April, 15, 2021.

<sup>156</sup> "In every field, Turkey and Libya take steps for future." SETA. April, 14, 2021.

<sup>157</sup> "U.S. Ambassador in Cairo: Egypt-America relations are strong, deep; WYF was a source of inspiration for us." Egypt Today. January, 19, 2022.

<sup>158</sup> "U.S. Blocks \$130 Million in Aid for Egypt Over Rights Abuses." NYT. January, 28, 2022.

Egypt is an important partner of The United States as they are key in the Hamas/Israel stability, buy billions of dollars in military equipment, and hold significant power in their region. Moving forward, the United States should push Egypt to improve its human rights but remain in good strategic positioning as Egypt is a key player in many Eastern Mediterranean facets including energy where the two countries are aligned.

## Turkey and Libya



Figure 2.5 Map of Turkish-Libyan Maritime Deal (Anadolu Agency, 2021)<sup>159</sup>

Contrary to the countries discussed previously, Turkey and Libya are defined better by their agreements rather than their disagreements. Turkey is constantly taking the side of Libya and speaking up for its North African neighbor during times of unrest. Turkey and Libya share economic and political alignments and have a similar dynamic to Greece and Cyprus in this way. Starting with the new Libyan government sworn in last March, the Turkish/Libyan relationship has been rock solid, with Turkey being Libyan prime minister Bdeibah's first trip.<sup>160</sup>

In the conversation of natural energy and drilling, Libya and Turkey stand on one side, and Greece, Egypt, and Cyprus stand firmly on the other. Like Turkey, Libya has claimed the right to drill throughout the Mediterranean. As previously mentioned the maritime agreement of 2019 has cemented

<sup>159</sup> "Turkish-Libyan maritime pact a game changer in E. Med." Anadolu Agency. 12/12/2021.

<sup>160</sup> "In every field, Turkey and Libya take steps for future." SETA. April, 14, 2021.

their economic and political partnership even though their rulings were hastily shot down by the EU and the rest of the world.

Recently, Libya and Turkey have also increased commerce, tourism, and Turkey has donated over one hundred thousand vaccines to the Libyan government. The countries have expressed their aspirations to grow especially in security, war on terror, and cross-border crime. Ankara has a tremendous amount to gain from this partnership, including the economic advantages of trade, consumerism, and naval territory agreements. Turkey also gains a steadfast ally, which has been difficult for Erdoğan to obtain in the Mediterranean region. In 2020, Turkey also sent their military to support the current Libyan government in Tripoli to defend against Eastern Rebels.<sup>161</sup> This move was also backed by the U.N. Serraj's government, centered in Tripoli, is backed by Turkey, Qatar, and Italy while the rebel army Hifter is supported by Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and France. This is one of the most entwined issues in contemporary Mediterranean politics. As it stands, the Tripoli government is operational and Erdoğan continues to grow this regional tie. Both powers see the current dynamic as a win-win. A powerful resource for Libya and a rare ally for Turkey.

Throughout the series of interim governing arrangements since the fall of Muammar al Qadhafi in 2011, the U.S. has looked for political stability in Libya. The United States has invested nearly one billion dollars in development and security assistance over the last ten years, looking for peace in the frequently warring country.<sup>162</sup> Currently, the U.S. strongly supports the progress the Libyan government has made towards their recent political solutions. The UN security council played a great role with the countries 2021 ceasefire, signaling the potential for a healthy relationship in the coming years.<sup>163</sup> The Libya/U.S. relations have undeniably experienced major turbulence in the past. The United States and other Western powers have been blamed, for good reason, for their hands-off approach after their military intervention in 2011.<sup>164</sup> Since the government's fall, the destabilized state was left in worse condition, facing greater war and human rights violations. With this feeling of abandonment within Libya, there is a significant amount of trust that needs to be built between these two countries. The United States should keep working and supporting the Libyan government through its adolescent phase for a more sustainable governmental solution.

## Conclusion

Erdoğan and the Turkish government have looked to extend their power throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and have taken little precaution to appease their neighbors in the process. Regional

---

<sup>161</sup> "Strategic, legal aspects of Turkey-Libya deal." Anadolu Agency. December, 13, 2020.

<sup>162</sup> "The United States and Libya." US Dep of State. June, 23, 2021.

<sup>163</sup> "The United States and Libya." US Dep of State. June, 23, 2021.

<sup>164</sup> "The United States and Libya: Turbulent History and Uncertain Future." E-International News. December, 27, 2014.

tensions have defined Turkey's role in this area. Disputes over human rights, territory, and immigration, have created a laundry list of economic and political troubles for the Turkish government. As countries continue to look for energy solutions through multi-state cooperation, Ankara's less than friendly diplomatic approach is leaving them quickly in the dust. While Turkey is a valuable geological, political, and economic asset to the entire Mediterranean and the European Union, its inability to obey international law has left them in an isolated position.

The United States is in a strong position in the East Mediterranean region. The United States is building deeper economic and political ties in nearly every country (other than Turkey) and is involved with the most progressive energy policies in the Mediterranean. The recommendation for the United States is to keep up the support of the EU, and other Middle Eastern/North African countries. While Turkey is an important country to work with, their inability to play nicely will only force them into a more difficult scenario in the long run. If the United States offers protection and aid, it would be likely that it could build more energy centers, such as the one in Cyprus, and continue to employ energy giants ExxonMobil and Noble Energy in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>165</sup> If the United States hopes to harness East Mediterranean energy, its strategy should remain similar. Turkey is a force to be reckoned with, however, it cannot strong-arm an entire region seeking oil, money, and multinational solutions.

---

<sup>165</sup> "Eastern Mediterranean Turns Into Source of Gas and Conflict." CourthouseNewsService. August, 20, 2020.

### III: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Periphery

In this section, we discuss how Turkey's relationship with the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa have shifted since the end of the Cold War. Turkey's ventures in these regions demonstrate the state's recent trend away from the U.S. and NATO's sphere of influence and towards a more independent approach to foreign policy in relatively new geostrategic arenas. Ankara has steadily expanded its network of partnerships across these three regions, representing a change in its ambitions abroad by forming bilateral economic ties, exerting its influence through soft power tactics, and expanding into budding natural resource markets. By exploring these previously neglected diplomatic opportunities, Turkey is attempting to shift the status quo in each region in favor of its own long-term policy objectives.

Throughout the Caucasus and Central Asia, Turkey seeks to establish itself as a prominent power among Turkic nations, developing infrastructure and utilizing soft power tactics to unify the larger Turkic community under a common trajectory. Cut off from these regions during the Cold War era, Ankara was quick to recognize the sovereignty of each nation and gradually introduce diplomatic ties (with the notable exception of Armenia). Today, Turkish strides in these relationships are paving the way for gradual economic integration among its northeastern neighbors through infrastructure projects, aiding its goal of becoming Eurasia's energy hub. While competing Russian and Chinese foreign policy objectives in both regions undermine Turkish prospects, Ankara continues to build upon these stable ties and draw these states into its sphere of influence.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey is extending its foreign policy into the continent by creating mutually beneficial relationships. While China's relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa through the Belt and Road Initiative has been strong over the last decade, Turkey's rekindled ties with the region create new opportunities for investment and growth. Ankara's relationship with African countries is based on economic activity and significant potential for expansion that is coming out of the densely populated continent. Since 2009, Turkey has opened 31 embassies on the continent and Erdoğan has religiously aligned Ankara with some of these conservative countries, resulting in the exclusion of western, liberal views when drawing trade deals. Although U.S. and Chinese interests on the continent are at variance, Turkey has not let that deter them from their goals in Africa. Turkey has unapologetically provided Africa with significant trade deals and other forms of development assistance that are mutually beneficial to the parties involved. Currently, Turkey is mediating conversations and disputes that would traditionally be led by countries from the West and is shifting how the continent sees outside nations. The expansion of new projects has created an opportunity for Turkey to network horizontally rather than vertically and lay groundwork into largely neglected markets that have great opportunity for growth in the near future.

## **The Caucasus and Central Asia: Turkey's Foreign Policy Frontier**

*Adam Aley*

Turkey's recent rapport in the Caucasus and Central Asia reflects the state's growing desire to pursue more assertive and unilateral foreign policy while gaining leverage in increasingly critical geostrategic regions. Employing a unique set of foreign policy tools, Turkey's approach in the Caucasus and Central Asia prioritizes developing and strengthening bonds by utilizing pre-existing cultural and ethnic ties and recent political and economic commitments. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, a modern pan-Turkish ideology promoted by Ankara initially served as the underlying vision for expansion into the ethnically Turkish regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Despite these notions of Turkic unification, the majority of bilateral relationships today extend from augmented economic and infrastructural development projects driven by the institutionalization of Turkey's relationship among these nations. A large portion of instrumental dealings in either region tend to derive from energy policy, political rapprochement, and small-to-medium sized economic endeavors. However, Turkey's connections in these respective regions are largely overshadowed by the involvement of much larger global powers, primarily China and Russia. Recent waves of investment stemming from China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russian attempts to mediate domestic political affairs in former U.S.S.R. states complicate Turkish ventures in these regions. Considering these competing interests, the U.S. should support and invest in Turkish activities in either region, mainly those involving political rapprochement and infrastructure projects seeking to connect the regions together economically. Additionally, the U.S. should closely monitor Turkey's interest in the dynamic and uncertain future of Afghanistan due to the potential budding relationship between unstable and authoritarian-leaning powers. Given these complex dynamics, Turkey carefully navigates between larger powers to slowly forge its own network of geopolitical partnerships, hoping to secure its future during a period of domestic economic and political volatility.

### **The Caucasus**

As Turkey manages its delicate relationships in the Middle East after the fallout from the Arab Spring, the state's role as a regional leader in the Caucasus has reached a higher degree of political weight. Turkey's ardent support for Azerbaijan in the recent Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Armenia not only emphasizes Ankara's willingness to side against Western interests in NATO and the E.U., but also demonstrates an attempt to exert influence and gain leverage against Russia to shift the geopolitical status quo in the region. The ramifications of this conflict strengthen the energy market between Turkey and Azerbaijan by providing a direct land route between both countries and future access to Caspian oil and natural gas. Bridging the gap between two continents, Turkey can use its strategic location to transfer

energy into the European market, establishing itself as a central energy hub for Eurasia. This alternative supply of energy via Turkish pipelines may work in favor of greater U.S. interests by diverting European and Middle Eastern energy supply needs from Russia and Iran. However, Ankara's promising role in the Caucasus should concern international onlookers due to its animosity towards Armenia and insufficient domestic energy reserves.

### **Turkey's Involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict**

The end of the Cold War era and the collapse of the Soviet Union prompted a change in Turkish foreign policy in the newly independent South Caucasus region mainly dominated by energy, political and economic pragmatism, and strategic partnerships. Bilateral ties between Ankara and its main ally in the region, Azerbaijan, have served as the focal point for most of Turkey's engagement in the Caucasus. Turkey was the first state to officially recognize the Republic of Azerbaijan in November of 1991, beginning a longstanding and mutually beneficial partnership between the two countries. The two reverently refer to each other as "one nation - two states,"<sup>166</sup> capitalizing on their shared Turkish background and respect for mutual sovereignty, highlighting the deep sympathy between the two countries, particularly among premier right-wing nationalist groups such as the AKP, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), and the New Azerbaijan Party (YAP). These sentiments are echoed in the high degree of economic and political interaction between the two states, with Turkish companies and state playing a critical role in the transition of Azerbaijan to a free market economy. Oil and natural gas from Azerbaijan's offshore Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli (ACG) and Shah Deniz fields provide vital hydrocarbons for not only Turkey, but a significant portion of the Eurasian energy market, exporting 568,000 barrels of oil per day (b/d) in 2020 and 418 billion cubic feet (Bcf) of natural gas in 2019.<sup>167</sup> This bilateral relationship is the cornerstone for Azerbaijan's economic development and critical to achieving Turkey's overarching foreign policy goal of connecting Asian and European markets through its integrated energy infrastructure network. Presently, Turkey acts as the second-highest provider of FDI in Azerbaijan, and Azerbaijani investors providing more than 20 billion USD to the Turkish economy in 2020, mainly allocated to state oil companies and significant projects, such as the 2017 Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway.<sup>168</sup> In addition to this, Turkey has an extensive history of military cooperation with Azerbaijan, contributing to the founding and reorganization of military education. Utilizing its experience with NATO, Turkey has helped modernize Azerbaijani forces for over three decades, culminating in extensive military personnel

---

<sup>166</sup> "Turkey to continue supporting Baku 'with all means' - Anadolu Agency."

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-to-continue-supporting-baku-with-all-means/1992169>.

<sup>167</sup> "Azerbaijan - EIA." 13 Sep. 2021, <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/AZE>.

<sup>168</sup> "(PDF) Economic and Political Analysis of Azerbaijan-Turkey Energy ...."

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319450570\\_Economic\\_and\\_Political\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Azerbaijan-Turkey\\_Energy\\_Relations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319450570_Economic_and_Political_Analysis_of_Azerbaijan-Turkey_Energy_Relations).

visits, training, and exercises between both nations' armed forces. Consequently, Turkey has guaranteed the sovereignty of the Azerbaijan republic while also firmly demonstrating its strong presence in the region.<sup>169</sup> These strong cultural and economic linkages to Azerbaijan reflect Turkey's broader policy interests to expand its political presence in the Southern Caucasus in the face of Russian opposition. With Putin's invasion of Crimea in 2014, the three Caucasian republics show more caution in their respective relationships with the Russian republic, fearing they will be out-manuevered by strategic goals set by Moscow.<sup>170</sup> Ankara has exploited this growing paranoia to further solidify its political ties to Georgia and Azerbaijan. Turkish cooperation in the region, therefore, constrains Russian predominance and opens a potential gateway to engagement with the West for the politically isolated Caucasian republics.



Figure 3.1 Map of Turkey-Azerbaijan Route through Zangezur Corridor (TRT World, 2021)<sup>171</sup>

With the onset of the second Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the summer of 2020, Turkey quickly assumed the role of Azerbaijan's partner. During the preliminary period of tension between Azerbaijan and Armenia, Turkish arms exports to Azerbaijan surged from \$278,880 in July to \$36 million in August and \$77.1 million in September. Exports primarily consisted of Bayraktar TB2 drones and other advanced military equipment.<sup>172</sup> Utilizing these resources, Azerbaijan swiftly defeated the Armenian republic and retook the Nagorno-Karabakh territory. Baku's victory, heavily fueled by Erdoğan's adamant support,

<sup>169</sup> "Turkey's Overlooked Role in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War." <https://www.gmfus.org/news/turkeys-overlooked-role-second-nagorno-karabakh-war>.

<sup>170</sup> "Russia's Stony Path in the South Caucasus - Carnegie Endowment ...." <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/10/20/russia-s-stony-path-in-south-caucasus-pub-82993>.

<sup>171</sup> "Are Azerbaijan-Turkey drills meant to send a tough message to Iran?." <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/are-azerbaijan-turkey-drills-meant-to-send-a-tough-message-to-iran-50556>.

<sup>172</sup> "Turkish arms sales to Azerbaijan surged before Nagorno-Karabakh ...." <https://www.reuters.com/article/armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-arms-int-idUSKBN26Z230>.

signifies the limits to Russian hegemony in Southern Caucasia and opens the expansion of Turkish power. In the aftermath of the conflict, heads of both Turkic states have promoted the implementation of the “Zangezur corridor,” a transport corridor connecting the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic to the rest of Azerbaijan, passing through Armenia’s Syunik Province. The inauguration of such a corridor effectively connects Turkey and Azerbaijan via land route, and ‘unifies’ the rest of the Turkic world from the Caucasus to Central Asia, according to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev at the VIII Summit of the Turkic Council in Istanbul last year.<sup>173</sup> The Zangezur corridor could strengthen Turkish ambitions to expand into the Caspian Basin energy market through Ankara’s new Silk Road initiative named the “Middle Corridor”, which seeks to reinforce its sense of regional ownership and connect Europe and China through the Caucasus and Central Asia. While the U.S. and Ankara can both benefit from this policy objective, as described in subsequent sections, Washington should strongly support the restoration of diplomatic ties between Armenia and Turkey before supporting Turkey’s promotion of the Zangezur corridor. Ongoing discussions between Turkish and Armenian envoys in Moscow aim to normalize bilateral relations and reopen the borders between the two countries, the first time since they closed in 1993. While tensions remain high between Azerbaijan and Armenia over fallout from the conflict, mediation from Ankara could be integral in alleviating hostility. Hopefully, Turkish-Armenian rapprochement will reduce tensions and stabilize the region, opening up regional development opportunities and strengthening the region's position as a Eurasian transportation hub.

### **Turkey’s Energy Priorities in the Caucasus**

Turkey’s rapid economic growth over the past decades has increased its energy dependence, making the supply of hydrocarbons a top priority to secure the country’s future. Inadequate domestic energy reservoirs and frequent blackouts and brownouts highlight this reliance on imported energy, primarily supplied by Russian, Iranian, and Iraqi sources. Approximately 93% of the country’s petroleum and 99% of its natural gas are imported from abroad.<sup>174</sup> To alleviate this energy pressure, Turkey has heavily invested in developing energy infrastructure projects with its partners in the Caspian Basin, most notably Azerbaijan, where an estimated 48 billion barrels of oil and 292 trillion cubic feet of natural gas are.<sup>175</sup> The construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) crude oil pipeline in 2005, the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) in 2006, and the more recent Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline (TANAP) in 2018 have aided Turkey’s long-term energy needs for its growing economy.<sup>176</sup> Extensions of these projects, including the

<sup>173</sup> "Eighth Summit of the Organization of Turkic States was held in Istanbul."

[https://www.turkcon.org/en/haberler/eighth-summit-of-the-organization-of-turkic-states-was-held-in-istanbul\\_2394](https://www.turkcon.org/en/haberler/eighth-summit-of-the-organization-of-turkic-states-was-held-in-istanbul_2394).

<sup>174</sup> "ANALYSIS - COVID-19's blow to energy markets - Anadolu Agency."

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/analysis-covid-19s-blow-to-energy-markets/1817106>.

<sup>175</sup> "Overview of oil and natural gas in the Caspian Sea region - EIA."

[https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/regions-of-interest/Caspian\\_Sea](https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/regions-of-interest/Caspian_Sea).

<sup>176</sup> "Turkey - EIA." <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/TUR>.

Trans Adriatic Pipeline extending from the Caspian Sea through the European Southern Gas Corridor into Italy, opened in 2020, signifying the growing demand for the Turkish transportation of energy, reducing Russia's monopolization of energy supplies to the E.U..<sup>177</sup>

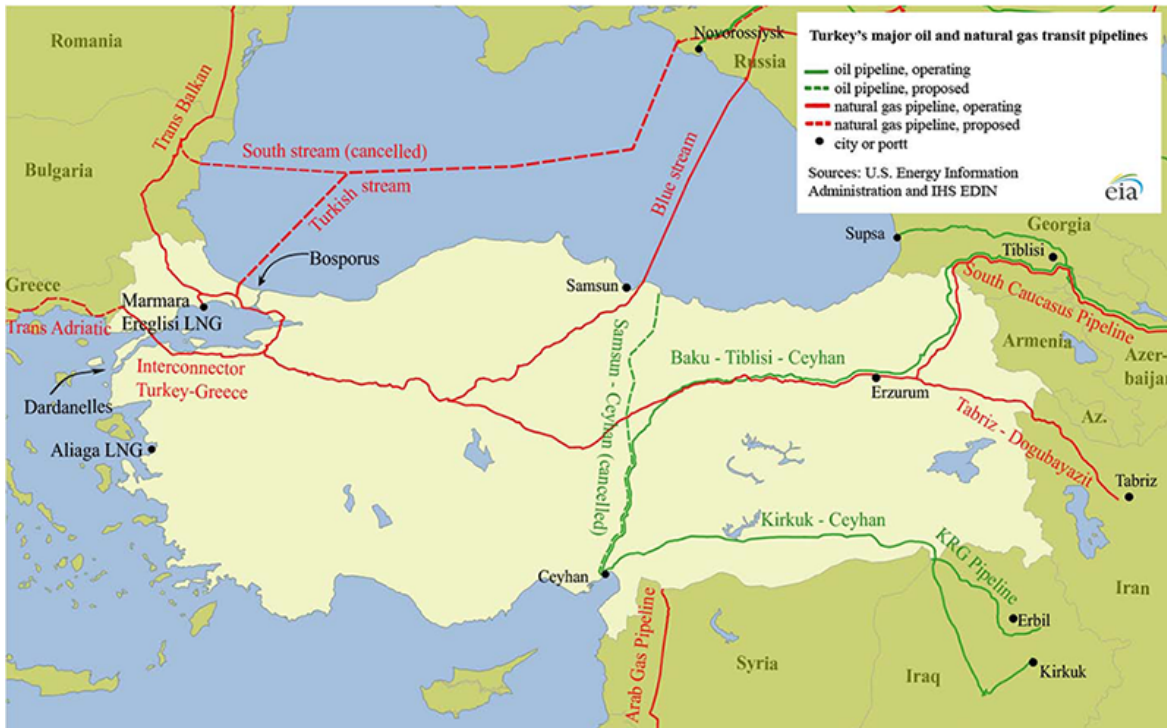


Figure 3.2 Map of Turkey's Major Oil and Natural Gas Transit Pipelines(U.S. Energy Information Administration and IHS EDIN, 2017)<sup>178</sup>

Though Turkey has expanded its energy supply chains, the country still suffers from insufficient gas reserves, illustrated by the common employment of state-mandated blackouts and tumultuous relationships with energy suppliers.<sup>179</sup> The existing infrastructure of natural gas and oil pipelines throughout Southern Caucasia aid Turkey in diversifying its energy supply and becoming a regional energy hub for Europe and the Middle East, alleviating recent dependency issues on Russian hydrocarbons. While U.S.-Turkish relations have suffered from recent retractions, long-term interests in reinforcing Ankara's energy sources and developing the infrastructure for projects extending to the world's second-largest natural gas market in Europe can help bring the two nations closer together during a time of geopolitical uncertainty. Though Caspian oil and natural gas fields are located relatively far from export markets, investment provided by the U.S. and Turkey could open this market to Europe and the

<sup>177</sup> "Turkey Forges a New Geo-Strategic Axis from Azerbaijan to Ukraine." <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/turkey-forges-new-geo-strategic-axis-azerbaijan-ukraine>.  
<sup>178</sup> Turkey - EIA." <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/TUR>.  
<sup>179</sup> "Turkey imposes industry blackouts amid gas shortage | Argus Media." <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news/2294855-turkey-imposes-industry-blackouts-amid-gas-shortage>.

Middle East. Furthermore, the Biden administration can advocate for sustainable energy technologies for Turkey, hoping to simultaneously monetize Caspian Sea energy resources for transportation while also securing Turkey's immediate domestic power needs with renewable energy.<sup>180</sup> This two-fold approach from Washington could help Ankara diversify its energy portfolio and increase energy security, provide the European market with an additional energy source, and expand the potential for beneficial Turkish-American engagements.

## Central Asia

The collapse of the Soviet Union created an opening for Turkey to reconnect with the Central Asian states, which had been conceived in the national imagination as “brothers”. Along with this notion of a pan-Turkic union between the historically separated states, Turkey's government at the time sought to introduce its model of the capitalist and democratic state as an example to be followed for the other countries in the region. Current relations between Turkey and the Central Asian states are characterized by economic pragmatism and the gradual institutionalization of diplomatic, cultural, and market networks. However, these bilateral and multilateral foundations set up by Turkey are largely eclipsed by Russian and Chinese influences. Despite their presence, Ankara continues to successfully develop these ties, advancing the possibility of greater involvement in the increasingly geostrategic domain as interests in Central Asian natural gas and oil resources grow for Eurasian energy consumers. Separately, in Afghanistan, Turkey seeks to institute formal relations with the Taliban to gain a foothold in the region and political leverage with the West. Similar to its ventures in the Caucasus, Turkey seeks to expand its influence in these regions to establish its own network of partnerships, pursuing a unilateral foreign policy to advance Turkish security.

## Turkey's Engagement in Post-Soviet Central Asia

After the independence of the five Central Asian republics in 1991 from the U.S.S.R., the Turkish government was the first state to officially recognize their sovereignty, paving the way for their transition towards a market economy and democracy. This initial period of interaction was driven by the Turkish narrative of “Turkic Unity”, otherwise known as Pan-Turkism, to restore the historical, linguistic, and cultural bonds with the newly-independent states. However, Central Asian nations weren't originally receptive to this treatment and focused on following independent foreign policy objectives rather than adhering to a common trajectory dictated by Ankara. Over time, relations gradually livened, with soft power tactics employed by Turkey involving cultural, academic, economic, and political exchanges

---

<sup>180</sup> "Can energy be the key to Turkish-US relations in the Biden era?." <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysources/can-energy-be-the-key-to-turkish-us-relations-in-the-biden-era/>.

instituted by Turkish-created organizations. Some influential Turkish-oriented institutions include the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) founded by Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey in 1985 to promote development and investment opportunities among members, and the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY) established in 1993 to consolidate Turkic solidarity, also referred to as the “UNESCO of the Turkic World.” The Turkic Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) has been especially pivotal in exerting Turkish influence in the region by instilling Turkic values in younger generations, even stating “Turkey and the countries in Central Asia consider themselves as one nation containing different countries, and our foreign politics displayed a multilateral and proactive understanding in the region.”<sup>181</sup> This appreciation of a shared cultural heritage and large population of Turkish diaspora between both regions has also spilled over into economic relations, as thousands of Turkish companies operate in Central Asia, reaching a trade volume of \$8.5 billion in 2019, heavily concentrated in the construction sector.<sup>182</sup>

Despite Turkey’s intensifying bilateral ties within the region, Chinese and Russian actors predominantly control the narrative of Central Asian development. Russia utilizes its historical ties from the U.S.S.R. era in an attempt to mediate domestic affairs and set back commitments to democracy, both of which are apparent in its latest intervention in Kazakhstan during riots over government corruption.<sup>183</sup> Other inherited traits from Central Asia’s duration under the Soviet Union, including the secularization of state politics and prevalence of the Russian language, curtail Turkish soft power tactics. However, Russia’s cultural hegemony over the region continues to decline with younger generations adopting indigenous identities as the nations continue developing independently, presenting an opportunity for Turkey to promote a common cultural identity in its place.<sup>184</sup> Meanwhile, China asserts its economic power over Central Asia via the Belt and Road Initiative, hoping to access its rich oil and natural gas markets to fuel growing energy demands. While Turkey envisions trans-continental integration through its ‘Middle Corridor’ under the Belt and Road Initiative, hoping to extend its current energy and transportation infrastructure in the Caucasus into Central Asia, China’s investments and economic engagement heavily outweigh Ankara’s prospects in the region. Beijing will continue to dictate regional development and infrastructure projects to prioritize its interests abroad, with Turkey falling behind as a secondary actor. Without intervention, China’s investments in Central Asia will consolidate its grasp over the mostly untapped market, undermining Turkey’s efforts to unify the Turkic-speaking countries through

---

<sup>181</sup> "About Us - TIKA." [https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/about\\_us-14650](https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/about_us-14650).

<sup>182</sup> "Turkey's Relations With Central Asian Republics." [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-relations-with-central-asian-republics.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-relations-with-central-asian-republics.en.mfa).

<sup>183</sup> "Central Asia will remain unstable, however many troops Russia sends." <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2022/01/15/central-asia-will-remain-unstable-however-many-troops-russia-sends>.

<sup>184</sup> "Is Russian Cultural Hegemony in Central Asia Finally Over?." 6 Jul. 2020, <https://politicstoday.org/is-russian-cultural-hegemony-in-central-asia-finally-over/>.

a common trajectory.<sup>185</sup> Despite these obstacles, Turkey continues to focus on enhanced connectivity and energy projects to connect Central Asian trade through the Zangezur corridor and the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars Railway. Considering the lack of current American engagement in Central Asia, and the competing interests presented by adversarial nations, Washington could benefit Turkish attempts to expand into the region. As Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan draw new agreements over Caspian gas cooperation, Washington should renew its interest in connecting the large natural gas and oil reserves of Central Asia to European markets through existing Turkish energy infrastructure. The U.S. and American energy companies should look into providing foreign direct investment for these ventures, and support the exploration of new hydrocarbon reserves in the Caspian Basin within territories diplomatically close with Turkey. Though the idea of a ‘Trans-Caspian’ pipeline has been dormant for some years, Europe’s recent withdrawal from Russian energy highlights the urgent need for alternative energy sources, and this initial act could be the stepping-stone to more ambitious projects in the future. The U.S. should bolster efforts to integrate the economies of Central Asia through these Turkish endeavors to advance its geopolitical presence in the region and aid Ankara’s goal of becoming Eurasia’s central energy and transportation hub.

### **Turkey’s Foothold in Afghanistan**

As the United States withdraws from its 20-year occupation of Afghanistan, Turkey looks to step in as a middle-power state keen on engaging with the radical regime. In line with its overarching foreign policy strategy, Ankara hopes to incorporate Afghanistan into its fold to extend its network of diplomatic and economic partners. President Erdoğan has already stated his willingness to cooperate with the Taliban regime, taking advantage of the vacuum left by the U.S. despite the AKP’s engagement with the former democratic Afghan government.<sup>186</sup> Ankara has formally met with Afghanistan’s acting Foreign Minister Khan Muttaqi last October and has urged the international community to engage with the Taliban and unfreeze Afghanistan’s international accounts to pay for state salaries and much-needed food and medical supplies.<sup>187</sup>

Apart from this initial surface approach to the recently radicalized state, Turkey has more vested interests in the domestic affairs of Afghanistan. Specifically, Turkey seeks to take control of the security of the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul with the approval of the new regime, though the Taliban had originally proposed Turkey take over logistical support while they maintain the airport’s security. Ongoing negotiations between the two regimes, mediated by Qatar, continue to deliberate over

---

<sup>185</sup> "China's Belt and Road Initiative and Turkey's Middle Corridor."

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-and-turkeys-middle-corridor-question-compatibility>.

<sup>186</sup> "Turkey's Erdoğan Says He's 'Open to Cooperation' With Taliban."

<https://www.businessinsider.com/turkey-erdogan-says-hes-open-to-cooperation-with-taliban-2021-8>.

<sup>187</sup> "Turkey urges engagement with Taliban after talks with group."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/14/taliban-delegation-in-ankara-for-talks-with-turkish-officials>.

Turkey's involvement in the Kabul airport, Afghanistan's main air link to the world. If Turkey gains a position as either the main security or logistics operator at the airport, they gain a central role in mediating the existing interests of the West in Afghanistan. Currently, these short-term aims concern the safe passage of NATO citizens still in the country, providing humanitarian assistance, and overseeing the safe passage of diplomatic parties into the country. Additionally, Ankara could supply Afghanistan with cheap goods and construction services (an industry closely connected to the AKP) to help repair its war-torn infrastructure.<sup>188</sup>

Turkey also believes it should play an active role in shaping the new government in Afghanistan, favoring moderate Taliban leaders over radical ones and gradually bridging the gap between Washington and Kabul. This critical role as the only Muslim-majority NATO member engaged with the Taliban could serve as a potential bargaining chip in Turkey's relationship with the Biden Administration. However, Washington should monitor Turkey's ties to the Taliban regime with caution, as any unilateral engagement outside the interests of NATO could bolster the extremist government's legitimacy and undermine perceived benefits for the U.S.. Motivation for this involvement most likely revolves around Ankara's emerging foreign policy strategy to separate itself from the West and affirm its own geostrategic interests in the region.<sup>189</sup>

## Conclusion

As Turkey continues to develop its network of economic and diplomatic partnerships outside of NATO's sphere of influence, Erdoğan's foreign policy strategy prioritizes a pragmatic approach where bilateral relations primarily serve unilateral interests. Turkey's excursions in either the Caucasus or Central Asia do not necessarily work to oppose other existing entanglements, whether they be Russian, Chinese, or American, but are predicated on Ankara's main aspiration to expand and strengthen its network of bilateral ties. Since the U.S. has limited avenues of engagement in these regions, Turkey's involvement could serve as an indirect link to promote U.S. interests, particularly in the fields of energy infrastructure and short-term objectives in Afghanistan. While Ankara's unilateral approach in these regions don't present an immediate concern for the U.S. and allows Turkey to pursue the more proactive role as a regional player Erdoğan has been seeking, the lack of U.S. leverage in these arenas could give way to Turkish-oriented objectives working outside of or even against U.S. interests. A world driven by unilateral power struggles does not help to solve multilateral problems, and though the U.S. shouldn't discourage Turkey from taking a more independent foreign policy stance, Washington should do its best to ensure the two nations' goals align to some degree by involving itself where it is mutually beneficial.

---

<sup>188</sup> "Turbulence, the Taliban, and Turkey's role in Afghanistan's future." <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/turbulence-taliban-and-turkey-s-role-afghanistan-s-future>.

<sup>189</sup> "Calculations in Kabul - Carnegie Middle East Center." <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/85323>.

Encouraging Turkish foreign policy without correcting the rift in our mutual objectives would be counterintuitive and potentially detrimental in the long-term, especially in developing regions under Russian and Chinese hegemony.

## Turkey in Africa

*Mariam Tesfaye*

Turkey is capitalizing on countries that are on a rapid development trajectory similar to that of its own. Turkey has shown growth within trade capacity over the last two decades but after several years of relying on the West for a reliable network, the nation has realized the importance of networking across, rather than networking upwards. Turkey has sought accession to the European Union since its approval for candidacy in 1999 but over the last couple of decades, the importance of bilateral relations surfaced as hopes of joining the EU began diminishing.<sup>190</sup> Turkey's relationship with African countries is based on economic activity and potential that is coming out of the densely populated continent. Turkey has opened 31 embassies on the continent since 2009, and Erdoğan is religiously aligned with some of the conservative countries, resulting in the exclusion of western, liberal views when drawing trade deals. Sub-Saharan Africa has been dependent on relationships with the West that have led to conditional grants targeting problems without individual prioritization.

Post-colonial Africa has been deliberately mistreated by its former colonizers, and, with the introduction of globalization, labor and materials have been extracted at some of the cheapest prices in the world, making the West the financial beneficiaries.<sup>191</sup> The continent sees Turkey as a breath of fresh air, both morally and economically, and has drawn up trade and investment cooperation deals that foster the growth of multidimensional relations between themselves and Africa. Turkey has recently shown patterns of diverging its interests from being in alignment with the West (specifically the US) to aligning closer to Eastern powers (China). Although the relationship is tense between China and the US, Turkey has not let that deter them from their goals in Africa. Turkey has unapologetically provided Africa with significant trade deals and other forms of development assistance that are mutually beneficial to the parties involved. Equally beneficial relationships are something the West has frequently ignored when executing their relationship with African countries but Turkey is intentionally forming these relationships by working with emerging economies. Development cooperation is a strategically essential part of Turkey's relationship with Africa and is displayed through the newfound relationships in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region.

### **Turkey's Relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa: The Past and Present**

Turkish relations with Africa date back to the Ottoman State where a majority of the recorded interactions are with North Africa. Specifically, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria were all subject to

---

<sup>190</sup> European Commission. "Turkey."

<sup>191</sup> Sıradag, Abdurrahim. "Turkey's Engagement with the African Organizations: Partner or Competitor?" 525.

total or partial Ottoman rule. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, like Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and even Niger and Chad were subject to partial Ottoman rule and had to balance a relationship with the Kanem Burnu Empire.

During the Cold War, Turkey started to attach importance to Africa and began establishing economic and political relations with North African states. Sub-Saharan Africa never achieved the same level of importance within Turkish foreign policy as North Africa until the region started to gain independence and overcome colonialism. Turkey recognized all newly independent countries and established diplomatic relations, starting with the recognition of the African Union based in Ethiopia. A Turkish diplomat who served in the 1960s explains how Turkey was far more focused on the neighboring countries with similar resources instead of Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>192</sup> While Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s was still implementing governmental institutions and recovering from the postcolonial shock, this could have been a good opportunity for Turkey to venture into new markets and other investment opportunities. The Cyprus issue of the 1970s put Turkey in a difficult situation and made the nation unable to form meaningful ties. Turkish connections with Africa began to cement in the late 1990s with the Africa Action Plan adopted in 1998. This plan was supported by the AKP government and other civil society organizations within the nation. This rediscovery and reintroduction of Africa into the viewpoint of Turkish officials was shaped by the nonpartisan treatment of North Africa and the annihilation of the negative image of Sub-Saharan Africa. Businessmen and politicians shifted their focus to developing strong connections with Africa.

To locate the Turkish opening to Africa within a broader context, it is imperative to understand the Strategic Depth of Ahmet Davutoğlu, which became the guidance for Turkish foreign policy, as articulated in his writings.<sup>193</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu is a Turkish academic, politician, and diplomat who served as the 26th Prime Minister of Turkey and Leader of the Justice and Development Party from 2014 to 2016. The strategy behind Turkey's foreign policy can be outlined through specific principles. The Cold War limited the nation's options as a part of the Western bloc and created a visionary approach, rather than a crisis-oriented approach within their foreign relations.<sup>194</sup> In turn, these new ventures were meant to strengthen Turkey's relationship with the EU while stressing the importance of soft power. Turkey announced 2005 as 'the year of Africa', and hosted the first Turkey–Africa Summit in Istanbul in 2008, leading to 15 new embassies increasing the total number of Turkish resident embassies to 27 in Africa.<sup>195</sup> The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) was established in 1992 with the intention of being the primary institution of Turkey's Africa policy. Today there are 42 TIKA offices & 42

---

<sup>192</sup> Karaca, 'Turkish foreign policy in the year 2000 and beyond: her opening up policy to Africa', 116- 118.

<sup>193</sup> Ozkan, Mehmet. "A New Actor or Passer-By? The Political Economy of Turkey's Engagement with Africa." 123.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> "Framework of Cooperation Adopted on 19 August 2008 at the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit in İstanbul / Second Africa - Turkey Partnership Summit."

embassies in the continent and has an estimated reach of access to 96% of the total population of Africa. Turkey’s total trade volume in Africa has expanded from 3 billion dollars to 26 billion dollars in the last 18 years and Turkish FDI is close to 10 billion dollars, as published by the Turkish office of Foreign Affairs.<sup>196</sup>

Turkey’s primary focuses on the continent today are humanitarian aid, providing security, and maintaining economic relations. The Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy was introduced in 2018 by Erdoğan and Çavuşoğlu during the Tenth Ambassadors’ Conference to underline hard and soft power within Turkish foreign policy<sup>197</sup>. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu is a Turkish diplomat who has served as Minister of Foreign Affairs since November 2015. Rising interest in the continent has shaped Turkey’s policy to prioritize humanitarian needs and humanitarianism, especially after the onset of the Yemen Crisis in 2011. The Yemen Crisis opened up opportunities for the establishment of military bases across the Horn of Africa. As previously mentioned, Turkey has maintained some of the strongest ties with the Horn of Africa and parts of the Sahel region. Similar to China, Russia, Brazil, and India, Turkey is buying raw materials, like oil, gold, and other minerals. Turkey’s most prominent military ties in Sub-Saharan Africa are in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel Region but both regions are riddled with domestic conflict and expansive emerging economies, alluding to a promising relationship with Turkey. The following map displays the strongest relationships Turkey has in Sub-Saharan Africa and references the key geographical points of Turkish involvement, like the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and Suakin Island.



Figure 3.3 Map of Turkey’s Primary Focuses in Africa (Tesfaye, 2022)<sup>198</sup>

<sup>196</sup> Orakçi, Serhat. “The Rise of Turkey in Africa.”

<sup>197</sup> Tol, Gönül , and Birol Baskan. “From ‘Hard Power’ to ‘Soft Power’ and Back Again: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East.”

<sup>198</sup> Tesfaye, Mariam. “Northern Africa, the Sahel Region, and the Horn of Africa.” n.d. Map.)

## The Horn of Africa: Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan

Turkey has built its largest forward base in Somalia due to the Yemen conflict and the surrounding conflicts in nations near Somalia.<sup>199</sup> This base runs counter to American goals in Somalia as the U.S. has been trying to exit the territory for decades as a result of failed military efforts against Al-Shabab. The base opened on September 30, 2017 outside of the Somali capital Mogadishu and Erdoğan quickly announced the start of oil exploration off Somalia's shore. Along with access to Somalia's resources, Turkey is also given increased access to the Red Sea, a heavily sought-after trade path. This interest in the Horn and the Red Sea is shared by China, which recently built a base in Djibouti, joining already existing bases established by France, Italy, Japan, and the United States.<sup>200</sup> Turkey solidified an alliance with Qatar during the 2017 Gulf Crisis which raised concerns from Egypt and Saudi Arabia because Turkey is returning to areas where the Ottoman empire once had influence. The UAE's rivalry with Qatar has by extension impacted their relationship with Turkey, reference Chapter 4.<sup>201</sup> This affects Sub-Saharan Africa because the intentions behind Turkey's expansion are being questioned by all the nations that border the Red Sea. A researcher on African affairs recently spoke to the hesitancy that locals in Somalia fear. Attia Issawy who works with the Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies and alluded in an interview with Al-Monitor that Somalia serves as nothing but a gateway to Turkish military presence in Africa.<sup>202</sup> This was done through a combination of efforts of taking advantage of internal conflicts, drawing closer to the government, and placing itself in between reconciliation efforts between Ethiopia and Somalia according to Issawy. On the contrary, Turkey's ability to mediate between Somalia and Somaliland has made Turkey's role in East Africa favorable to some as well.<sup>203</sup>

Ethiopia and Somalia have tensions that date back decades, but with the recently introduced Prosperity Party, run by Nobel Peace Prize-winner Abiy Ahmed, things have begun to change. He has worked on reconciliation between Ethiopia's neighbor states. Eritrea was once a part of Ethiopia, and decades of border hostilities came to an end in 2018 when Ahmed received accolades for reuniting families by opening borders and creating a dialogue between nations. Two years later, a civil war broke out in Ethiopia with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the now ruling party of the border state between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The TPLF were the ruling party of Ethiopia until Abiy Ahmed's party was introduced in 2018. Ahmed has faced heavy backlash since the start of this war in November 2020 with alleged human rights violations, especially as a Nobel Peace laureate. The United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions on Eritrea in 2009, calling for a weapons embargo, frozen assets, and a travel

---

<sup>199</sup> Mikhail, George. "Egypt Supports Somalia to Counter Turkish Influence - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East."

<sup>200</sup> Vertin, Zach. "RED SEA RIVALRIES: THE GULF, THE HORN, & THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF THE RED SEA," 9-11.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Mikhail, George. "Egypt Supports Somalia to Counter Turkish Influence - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East."

<sup>203</sup> Tok, Muzaffer Hakan. "Turkey Can Mediate in the Renaissance Dam Dispute | Opinion."

ban on civilians, military leaders, and associated business people.<sup>204</sup> As a nation with every citizen being fully trained for their national military, Eritrea had no access to weapons after the sanctions were imposed, and this created an opportunity for Ahmed and Eritrea's president to work together. The 30-year ruling party prior to Ahmed, the TPLF, is rumored to have attacked a federal military base in November of 2020 and this marked the start of the civil war. Eritrea immediately sent personnel to support the Ethiopian troops in Tigray and began fighting using Ethiopian weapons.

When this war broke out, the U.S. stopped supplying Ethiopia with weapons. At the start of the war, Turkey had already been selling drones to Ethiopia. The bilateral ties between Ethiopia and Turkey have been discussed by their respective foreign ministers and this relationship catches Turkey and the U.S. on opposing sides of the conflict. When the TPLF was the ruling party of Ethiopia, they served as a strong ally to the U.S., and the U.S., in turn, provided tremendous amounts of aid and turned a blind eye to the human rights allegations that were coming from the Ethiopian people at the time of George Bush's presidency. Now, Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party is no longer focused on its relationship with the West as their relationship from the early 2000s proved to only be serving to U.S. national interest.<sup>205</sup> Today, as stated by Erdoğan, Ankara is ready to provide all types of assistance to ensure Ethiopia's peace and stability.<sup>206</sup> Despite facing domestic backlash from Tigrayans who live in Istanbul, Erdoğan continued to boast about the quality of Turkish drones and has promoted the sales to African countries. Erdoğan realized that Africa has a large market for drones following Turkish success in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Libyan and Syrian conflicts, creating another economic opportunity for bilateral relations with the emerging economies of Africa.

Turkey has been present in Ethiopia to mediate the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt. Turkey's mediation efforts are expected to heal the longstanding tension between Ankara and Cairo. This project can shift the lives of over 100 million people in the Horn, but it would require temporary discomfort among Egyptians. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam collects water through the Nile, which is the primary source of freshwater for Egyptians. The Ethiopian government wants the returns on their investment to be quick and, therefore, requests that the project gets done in the next five to seven years. The Egyptian government is asking for the time to be doubled, requesting ten to twelve years in concern to their portion of the Nile's water supply.<sup>207</sup> Ethiopia claims that Egypt's position has a colonial-era grip over the Nile's waters and has admittedly taken the interests of Sudan and Egypt when proposing the filling process. Sudan will not face shortages in its water supply and

---

<sup>204</sup> Bereketeab, Redie. "The Morality of the U.N. Security Council Sanctions against Eritrea: Defensibility, Political Objectives, and Consequences," 153.

<sup>205</sup> Milkias, Paulos. "U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Africa with Emphasis on Ethiopia and Eritrea," 63.

<sup>206</sup> Sabah, Daily. "Turkey's Erdoğan Discusses Bilateral Ties with Ethiopian PM Abiy."

<sup>207</sup> Tok, Muzaffer Hakan. "Turkey Can Mediate in the Renaissance Dam Dispute | Opinion."

will benefit from the dam's electricity generation and allow for flood mitigation.<sup>208</sup> The United States punished Ethiopia in 2020 by cutting funding by \$130 million during a time of crisis Sudan's largest concern is the safety of its citizens due to the location of the dam, as Sudan is just on the other side of the northwest border of Ethiopia and the location of the dam.



Figure 3.4 Map of The Middle East Eye (Amin, 2018)<sup>209</sup>

These mediation efforts from Turkey have been seen in the Somalia and Somaliland dispute. Turkish enthusiasm in assisting derives from being a strategic partner of the African Union despite questionable motives. Sudan's relationship with Turkey has drastically changed since the overthrow of Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir. In 2018, Sudan leased Suakin Island, located in north-eastern Sudan right on the Red Sea, to Turkey for 99 years.<sup>210</sup> This island was once a part of the Ottoman empire and Erdoğan is working to complete a restoration project for the relics on the island like Turkish mosques and a 300-room hotel built under the Ottoman empire. Today, two mosques have been restored by TIKA and once the project is complete, Turkish pilgrims traveling to Mecca will be able to fly to Suakin Island to visit these historical sites then travel by ship to Mecca, mimicking the Ottoman ancient pilgrimage route.

<sup>208</sup> Reuters. "Factbox: Ethiopia's Giant Nile Dam."

<sup>209</sup> Amin, Mohammed. "Suakin: 'Forgotten' Sudanese Island Becomes Focus for Red Sea Rivalries."

<sup>210</sup> Tastekin, Fehim. "Turkey Views Ties with Ethiopia as Key to Influence in Africa - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East."

Erdoğan has also signed 13 agreements that agree to build a new airport for Khartoum, a free-trade zone in Port Sudan, a port and shipyards for military and civilian ships in the Red Sea, grain silos at various locations, a university, a hospital and power stations. The target volume for annual trade is expected to increase from \$500 million to \$10 billion.<sup>211</sup> The U.S. interest in Sudan aligns closely with China’s interest and when South Sudan gained independence, 80% of the country’s oil reserves went with it. Investment from both the U.S. and China decreased significantly when the countries split but it is in the United States’ best interest to harness the support of Egypt to help Sudan transition to a civilian leadership and avoid Libya’s fate.<sup>212</sup> Turkey is in the process of aiding Sudan in becoming politically stable and economically self-reliant.

### The Sahel Region: Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad

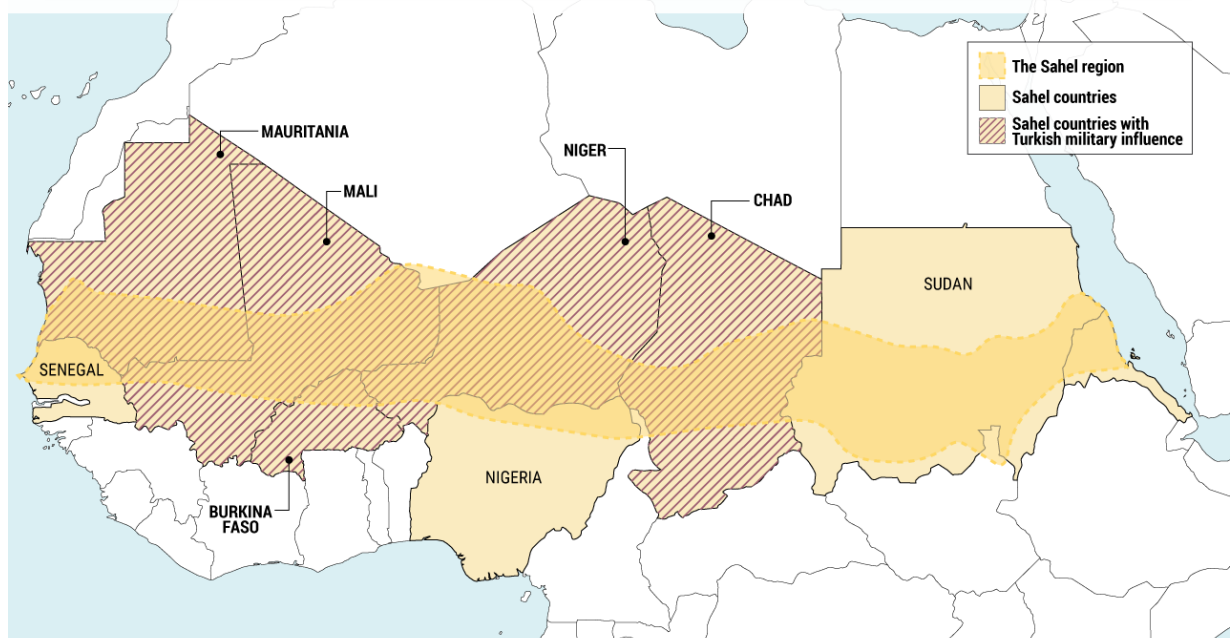


Figure 3.5 Map of Turkish Military Influence in the Sahel (Crisis Group, 2021)<sup>213</sup>

The recently formed partnership between Algeria and Turkey is a strategic relationship heavily influencing the Sahel Region. Most countries in the Sahel Region are francophone countries and provide opportunities for trade expansion and acquisition of natural resources. Turkey’s interest in the region is primarily economic, however the opportunity for security and military assistance has recently become pressing. Algeria and France recently hit a tipping point regarding illegal immigration, deportation tactics, and the use of xenophobia for French political gain. Mali has been a topic of conversation due to the

<sup>211</sup> Maguid, Mohamed Abdel . “Why Egypt Is Concerned about Sudan-Turkey Deal over Suakin Island?”

<sup>212</sup> Ben-Ami, Shlomo . “US Must Lead the Way in Keeping Sudan from Becoming the next Libya.”

<sup>213</sup> Alhassan, “Turkey’s Ambitious Plans for Africa”

ongoing diplomatic crisis. Members of the Malian military have profoundly expressed their distaste in Paris' remarks in regard to their 2020 military coup. France began by making verbal threats but a week later, completely withdrawing their forces in Mali.<sup>214</sup> French soldiers were the high-skilled armed forces on the ground and played a crucial role when gathering intelligence and logistics. The colonial sentiment that comes from French support has been called out by Turkish diplomats and representatives in Algiers who have accused France of training terrorist groups, later reported to Russian news agencies.<sup>215</sup> The withdrawal of French forces has presented an opportunity for Turkey using its highly trained military and a growing defense industry, to physically support a transitional government. French support in Mali was conditional on democratic relationships, but Turkey offered the same military support without the conditionality, establishing the base for long-term bilateral relations between Mali and Turkey.<sup>216</sup> Turkey's goal in the region is to serve as an alternative security partner, which creates political capital to enhance trade and perhaps sell more weapons. This would secure Turkey's access to the regions natural resources but the relationships between the Sahel region and the U.S., France and China make Turkish efforts constrained.<sup>217</sup>

Tukey has also shown similar support to Niger by signing a defense agreement to train and support troops fighting Boko Haram and other militant groups in the area.<sup>218</sup> The deal between Turkey and Niger has been rumored to be a power grab from Ankara, where natural resources are seized in order to spread political Islam. The emphasis of soft power is a key player in Turkey's Sub-Sahara African relations because although they are providing military support, they have also delivered a range of projects like a new international airport and a five-star hotel. A majority of Turkey's presence in the Sahel Region is tied to economic opportunities with an increase in trade deals and cooperation to increase tourism and education. Humanitarian aid has also been at the forefront of their impact in countries like Gambia, Senegal, and Burkina Faso while emphasizing how their impact is rooted in anti-colonialism.

Turkey can lean on Islamic solidarity to harness the full potential of these relationships in ways the previously mentioned nations cannot. The U.S. has provided aid to the Sahel Region but the U.S. foreign policy has not been updated to support the local military. In 2005, the U.S.'s efforts in the region were criticized for being overly militaristic and in 2020, an investigation looking into the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) was released. The investigation into TSCTP concluded that the program was \$1 billion over budget and that it is impossible to measure the fight against terrorism quantitatively.<sup>219</sup> The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) is a multi-agency effort to assist

---

<sup>214</sup> BBC News. "France Suspends Military Ties with Mali over Coup."

<sup>215</sup> Toumi, "How Algeria-Turkey Ambitious Strategic Rapprochement Will Affect France's Sahel Policy?" 44.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>217</sup> Alhassan, "Turkey's Ambitious Plans for Africa"

<sup>218</sup> Middle East Monitor, "Analysis: Turkey Forges Military Pact with Niger, Libya's Neighbour"

<sup>219</sup> Camara, "It Is Time to Rethink U.S. Strategy in the Sahel."

counterterrorism pioneered by U.S. security assistance helping Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Turkey's efforts in the Sahel is shaped by potential expansion of Turkey's trade power and volume. The U.S. should revisit their policies in the Sahel region despite Turkey's patterns of western technique and operation through military use.

### **Similarities and Differences: Turkey and U.S. Interests**

Turkey's bilateral approach has been welcomed by most African countries. Most of these countries have been directly affected by postcolonial aid from Western countries but have seen little of it work. China's approach to building relations with Africa has been through encouraging economic prosperity with urbanization projects and emerging as Africa's largest trading partner. The U.S. has made its assistance conditional on political influence, and that has heavily impacted the trajectory of these nations. Countries like Ethiopia, which were once praised for their political structure, have been torn down in U.S. media due to their recent civil war. The U.S. should continue to monitor the relationships Turkey is building as most of the nations have had relationships with the U.S. in the past. The strategic importance of the Red Sea is no secret and the U.S. base in Djibouti should protect U.S. interests in the Middle East and help ensure the flow of Gulf oil to U.S. allies in Europe.<sup>220</sup> African nations are beginning to diverge from their longstanding Western unequal partnerships and move towards Eastern relationships where their resources are being valued at a fair price. Africa's rapid growth has been shaped by FDI that is going directly towards infrastructure, creating a future for the young continent. The U.S. should continue to monitor Turkey, especially looking at who they are selling weapons to but direct intervention is unnecessary at the moment.

---

<sup>220</sup> Al-Anazi, "Strategic Importance of the Red Sea," 6.

## IV Turkey and American Adversaries

This section of the Task Force will focus on Turkey's relationships with Russia, China, and Iran and how they relate to American foreign policy. The three nations are key partners for Turkey's economic, security, and energy interests. Turkey is heavily dependent on Russian and Iranian energy and China, by way of the Belt and Road Initiative, has also sought to increase its influence in Turkey. Although these relationships could provide opportunities for Turkish economic growth and stability, they also hold the potential to jeopardize Turkish relations with the United States. Russia, China, and Iran are prominent adversaries of the United States. While the United States has little choice but to allow these transactional relations to exist, fear of relations with American adversaries advancing beyond that is real. Erdoğan and the AKP's shift from predominantly Western ideology and foreign policy to a more independent strategy and approach has made this fear real. Furthermore, the ongoing crisis in Ukraine creates more questions of Turkish loyalty to the East or West. Over the next three chapters, an analysis of Turkish relations with Russia, China, and Iran will provide insight on why Turkey has increased involvement with American adversaries and taken a more independent approach to foreign policy. Ultimately, this section will suggest that the United States should utilize Turkey as a mediator in conflicts like Ukraine and Yemen, increase investment in green energy in Turkey to lessen dependence on imported gas and oil, and create greater competition to China's Belt and Road Initiative in Turkey.

## Turkey and Russia

*Ryan Aust*

This chapter, which focuses on the relationship between Turkey and Russia and how it pertains to the United States, will focus on four main questions: After decades of a strong alliance with the United States, what forces have pushed Turkey towards greater engagement with Moscow? Why does a Turkish-Russian relationship pose a threat to American foreign policy? How does the relationship between Turkey and Russia shift American foreign policy moving forward? And lastly, What does the Russian invasion of Ukraine mean for the Turkish-American relationship? Through an examination of these questions and an analysis of the growing relationship between Erdoğan and Putin, recent energy and arms deals, and a disinterest in Western ideology, this essay argues that America must rebuild its relationship with Turkey on a platform of bilateral interests separate from Russian influence.

### Context of Modern Turkey-Russia Relations

In just a matter of years, Turkey and Russia, countries with vastly differing ideologies, backgrounds, and allegiances, have become friendly nations. Turkey and Russia do share an economic history, but an emergence of a friendlier dynamic between the two nations, and especially between Erdoğan and Putin, arose in 2016. It was the first trip President Erdoğan took following the failed coup d'etat attempt and the November 2015 downing of a Russian jet by Turkish forces. An incident which Putin called "a stab in the back by the accomplices of terrorists," he quickly placed sanctions on Turkey.<sup>221</sup> However, after Erdoğan and Putin met in St. Petersburg, Erdoğan announced, "This visit seems to me a new milestone in bilateral relations, beginning with a clean slate."<sup>222</sup> The St. Petersburg meeting also emphasized the beginning of a friendship between the two leaders. Erdoğan told his "dear friend", "Your call straight after the coup was very pleasing for me and our leadership and our people."<sup>223</sup> Erdoğan did not receive a quick response from his Western allies, and as a result, he claimed that the West was backing terrorists.<sup>224</sup> This claim showed his quick nature to point fingers; perhaps representative of his quickly changing ideology. The importance the St. Petersburg meeting was evident and the reaction, or lack there of, to the 2016 assassination of Andrei Karlov, the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, made that

---

<sup>221</sup> "Turkey's Downing of Russian Warplane - What We Know." *BBC News*, December 1, 2015.

<sup>222</sup> Walker, Shaun, et al., "Erdoğan and Putin Discuss Closer Ties in First Meeting since Jet Downing." *Guardian*, August 16, 2016.

<sup>223</sup> "Turkey's Downing of Russian Warplane - What We Know." *BBC News*, December 1, 2015.

<sup>224</sup> Graham-Harrison, Emma, "The West Is Supporting Terrorism against Turkey, Claims Erdoğan." *The Guardian*, August 2, 2016.

clear. Putin did not blame the Turkish government like he did in November of 2015, instead he said, “it was without doubt a provocation aimed at spoiling the normalization of Russo-Turkish relations.”<sup>225</sup>

### **A Relationship Built on Hard Power**

Erdoğan has made it his goal for Turkey to become an independent actor in foreign policy and a major power in its region. One way he has been able to do this: the use of hard power. Turkey’s use of hard power has emerged in three places: Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh. In Syria, Turkey and the United States entered as allies, yet American inaction made it difficult for Turkey to progress their interests. In 2013, former American President Barack Obama promised to act if Bashar al-Assad’s regime used chemical warfare. When al-Assad did, Obama was limited by congressional constraint and declining public support. America did not act, but instead proxied work to the Kurds, which threatened Turkey. As a consequence of American inaction, Turkey was isolated and Russia was able to seize power.<sup>226</sup> American inaction has created a situation where “Russia has turned from being Turkey’s opponent in Syria’s civil war into its most important partner there.”<sup>227</sup> This is not to say that Turkey and Russia are on the same side in Syria. Russia’s main interest in Syria remains the survival of al-Assad’s regime. While normalizing ties with al-Assad may occur, the same can not be said for Turkey. Rather Turkey and Russia have become important partners because Turkey understands any military action in Northern Syria they partake in requires Russian approval. Russia remains the dominant power as Turkey’s inability to unseat al-Assad was largely due to Russia’s swift and powerful intervention. A reminder that “When Turkey is left alone in a room with Russia, its hand is not as strong as once thought.”<sup>228</sup> However, this intervention marked an important turning point for the future of Turkish foreign policy. Erdoğan realized the importance of acting swiftly with the use of force. Erdoğan and Turkish leaders felt, “If the Russians can get things done with hard power, we can follow their path.”<sup>229</sup>

Involvement in Libya is an example of this. Turkey provided the Libyan government with mercenaries, weapons, vehicles, drones, and other defense systems. In return, the government provided Turkey with a foothold in the country and a supporter to their controversial claims in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greg Miller, a foreign correspondent for The Washington Post, noted how Turkey “stands to gain billions of dollars in oil, gas, and construction projects, as well as the military bases to serve as

---

<sup>225</sup> Osborn, Andrew, “Putin Says Turkey Ambassador Murder Is Ploy to Wreck Syrian Peace Process.” *Reuters*, December 19, 2016.

<sup>226</sup> Hale, William, “Turkey, America, Russia and the Syrian Civil War.” *Insight Turkey*, vol. 21, no. 4, (Fall 2019): 26.

<sup>227</sup> “Putin and Erdoğan Have Formed a Brotherhood of Hard Power.” *The Economist*, February 27, 2021.

<sup>228</sup> “The Menace of Midsized Meddlers; As America Retreats, Regional Rogues Are on the Rise.” *The Economist*, November 27, 2021.

<sup>229</sup> “The Menace of Midsized Meddlers; As America Retreats, Regional Rogues Are on the Rise.”

gateways to build influence.”<sup>230</sup> Russia, like Turkey, is set to make profits and impose greater influence in Libya. Despite supporting opposing sides, relations between Turkey and Russia have remained calm. Unlike many international relationships, especially when involving the United States due to democratic pressure, Turkey and Russia have a strong ability to compartmentalize aspects of their relationship that allows for greater communication and interaction. This has pushed Erdoğan to learn that the best way for Turkey to exert influence is through an independent role and the use of hard power.

Turkish involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia is another example of hard power. As mentioned in a previous section, Turkey was a key supplier of arms to Azerbaijan. As a result, Azerbaijan was victorious. In the aftermath, however, “one of the biggest geopolitical shake-ups since the end of the cold war” ensued.<sup>231</sup> While Russia provided itself the “peace-keeping” role, Turkey was granted greater economic control in the Southern Caucasus which is key for improving energy security and trade. Although this collaboration and reassignment of power in the Caucasus does not have a direct impact on major American interests, it could be worrisome to see the use of tactful diplomacy between Turkey and Russia. The conflict also illustrated the shift in Turkey’s foreign policy: “Until the early 2010s, Mr. Erdoğan tended to rely on diplomacy and mediation to defuse complex regional disputes. Today, he seems to think Gordian knots are best torn apart by a Turkish drone.”<sup>232</sup> Federico Borsari of the European Council of Foreign Relations added, “Thanks to their effectiveness and affordability, Turkish drones have evolved from a purely military asset into an integral component of Ankara’s foreign policy strategy.”<sup>233</sup> While a shift from diplomacy to violence or force may be belligerent, Turkey hopes it can increase their success in foreign policy. The use of drones and hard power has not only allowed them to exert influence, but greater economic benefits and strengthened energy security. In these conflicts where Turkey and Russia have seemingly been in opposition to the other, it is the similarities in ideology that have pushed their relationship beyond ground conflict.

### **Turkish Dependence on Russia**

In the past two decades, as a consequence of rapid economic and population growth in Turkey, energy demand and import dependency have risen dramatically. In fact, only China, a country much larger than Turkey, ranks higher in terms of electricity and natural gas demand in the world.<sup>234</sup> While this is normal for many nations, a country with the interests and aspirations of Turkey requires sound energy

---

<sup>230</sup> Miller, Greg, et al., “Libya Risks Losing Control of Its Destiny as Planeloads of Fighters and Arms Flood the Country.” *The Washington Post*, February 27, 2021.

<sup>231</sup> “Putin and Erdoğan Have Formed a Brotherhood of Hard Power.” *The Economist*, February 27, 2021.

<sup>232</sup> “The Menace of Midsized Meddlers; As America Retreats, Regional Rogues Are on the Rise.”

<sup>233</sup> Borsari, Federico, “Turkey’s Drone Diplomacy: Lessons for Europe.” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, January 31, 2022.

<sup>234</sup> “TURKEY’S INTERNATIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY.” *Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs*.

security, not frequent energy black-outs. As a result, the nation has turned to three major suppliers: Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran.<sup>235</sup> Russia has been closely aligned with Turkish energy interests for the past several decades and recent innovations have expanded this relationship. Although this rate has slightly decreased in recent years, Russia supplies 35% of Turkey’s natural gas imports.<sup>236</sup> Russian dominance of the European energy market has constantly been a deep fear and concern for NATO and the EU, even more so following the Russian invasion in Ukraine. Vladimir Putin told Erdoğan in 2021, “when we see quite difficult, turbulent processes on the European gas market, Turkey is feeling absolutely confident and stable.”<sup>237</sup> Putin is referring to the recently built TurkStream pipeline that stretches across the floor of the Black Sea between the two nations. He is suggesting that this pipeline will provide Turkey with greater energy security than that of continental Europe. The pipeline and a recent deal signed between Turkish energy company Botas and Russian company Gazprom have propelled the next stage of Turkish-Russian energy dependence. By September of 2021, the TurkStream pipeline allowed for gas supplies from Russia to increase by 160% from the start of the year. The pipeline has the capacity to bring 31.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas to Turkey per year, more than 60% of Turkey’s natural gas consumption in 2020.<sup>238</sup>

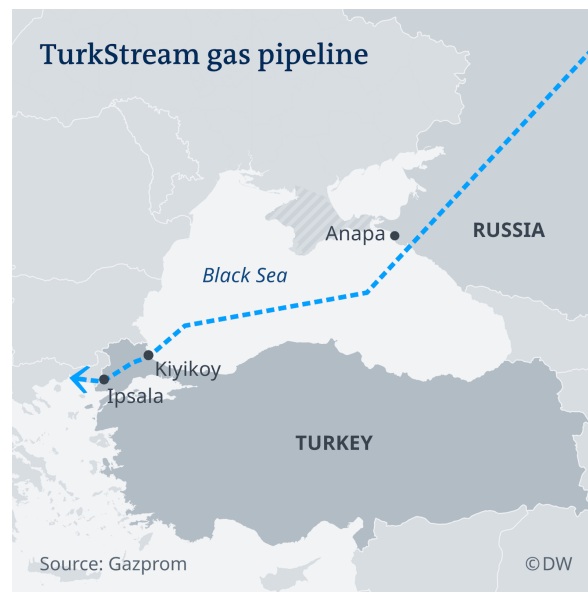


Figure 4.1 Map of TurkStream Gas Pipeline (Deutsche Welle, 2018)<sup>239</sup>

While Turkey has been energy-dependent on Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran, recent innovations have pushed energy production in Turkey to an all-time high. The recent discovery of the giant Sakarya

<sup>235</sup> Cevrioglu, Ebru Sengul, “Turkey to Lay 169 Kms of Seabed Gas Pipeline at Sakarya Gas Field”, *AA Energy*, July 28, 2021.

<sup>236</sup> Özdemir, Gloria Shkurti. “Russia-Turkey-US Energy Triangle: Success of Turkstream.” *Daily Sabah*, January 21, 2021.

<sup>237</sup> Soldatkin, Vladimir, “Putin Says Turkey Safe from Gas Crisis Thanks to Turkstream Pipeline,” *Reuters*, September 29, 2021.

<sup>238</sup> Soldatkin, Vladimir, “Putin Says Turkey Safe from Gas Crisis Thanks to Turkstream Pipeline,” *Reuters*, September 29, 2021.; “Turkey: Natural Gas Consumption 2020.” *Statista*, August 26, 2021.

<sup>239</sup> “Turkstream: Who Profits, Who Loses out?” *DW.COM*, Deutsche Welle, November 19, 2018.

field in the Black Sea has increased hope of energy independence. While it is a ways away, Turkey has looked to diversify its energy portfolio beyond fossil fuels. One way Turkey has done this was turning to Russia to build a nuclear power plant. A very important project, Putin made his excitement clear, remarking, "the successful implementation of this project will be a symbol of the dynamic, progressive development of Russian-Turkish interaction and partnership, Russian-Turkish friendship."<sup>240</sup> Putin's excitement is likely not met with the same excitement by American leadership. Although the United States is a small supplier of liquid natural gas to Turkey, it is not a key aspect of American-Turkish relations. However, with the building threat of Russia and Turkey's relationship, or "friendship" as Putin stated, perhaps America should explore expanding the relationship in terms of energy. Conceivably, the United States could follow a path similar to Russia to support green energy projects in Turkey and increase trade of liquid natural gas. The current nuclear project, Akkuyu, is set to begin functioning by 2023. The powerplant, which is expected to generate about 10% of Turkey's energy demand, was funded and is owned by Rosatom, a Russian energy company.<sup>241</sup> Providing Turkey with a renewable energy source would not only benefit an American company like General Electric, which has funded renewable energy projects in Turkey in the past, but also weaken Turkish energy dependence on Russia.<sup>242</sup>

While Turkey has been largely dependent on Russia for energy needs, in 2017, Turkey turned to Russia for security concerns. Despite its NATO membership, Turkey agreed to a \$2.5 billion purchase of the Russian S-400 surface to air missile system.<sup>243</sup> American warnings of sanctions and NATO security concerns, did not dissuade Turkey from the agreement, and two years later, the Russian system began to arrive. This marked a major turning point in the relations between the United States and Turkey. While American politicians and diplomats condemned Turkey for purchasing weapons from Russia, a more important question should be asked: Why did Turkey buy weapons from Russia and not the United States or a NATO ally? Turkey argued it needed a surface-to-air missile system to protect its southern border from offensive aircraft or missiles amidst the Syrian Civil War. Erdoğan made his desire for a defense system clear, but the process of obtaining one from Western allies was not as simple:

Although NATO temporarily repositioned Patriot missile batteries along the Turkish border with Syria, they were eventually withdrawn, and Turkish negotiations with the United States to purchase its own Patriot systems stalled over disagreements on timing of delivery, cost and Turkish demands for technology transfer and co-production agreements.<sup>244</sup>

---

<sup>240</sup> "Russia Starts Building Turkey's First Nuclear Power Plant," *World Nuclear News*, 3 April 3, 2018.

<sup>241</sup> "Russia Starts Building Turkey's First Nuclear Power Plant." *World Nuclear News*, April 3, 2018.

<sup>242</sup> "GE to Invest US\$900 Million in Turkey over the next Three Years; Focus on Infrastructure Development and Innovation." *GE News*, 2012.

<sup>243</sup> Macias, Amanda, "U.S. Sanctions Turkey over Purchase of Russian S-400 Missile System." *CNBC*, December 15, 2020.

<sup>244</sup> DeYoung, Karen, et al., "U.S. Sanctions NATO Ally Turkey over Its Purchase of Russian Missile Defense System," *The Washington Post*, December 15, 2020.

While NATO and the United States could not provide the Patriot-2 system to Turkey, Putin and the Russian government were more than happy to share their S-400 missile system. Richard Connolly, a British military expert at Birmingham University, noted that the S-400 allows greater flexibility by being able to use several types of rockets and is at least twice as cheap compared to the American Patriot-2 system.<sup>245</sup>

A similar situation to the S-400 crisis may be culminating within Turkey's Air Force. Much of the Turkish air fleet has become outdated and is in need of replacement. While the United States ruled Turkey out of the F-35 fighter program after security concerns evolving from the S-400 missile purchase, an alternative is possible.<sup>246</sup> The United States can sell F-16 fighter jets to Turkey to replace their aging F-16s and F-4s. James Jefferey, former American Ambassador to Turkey, claimed, "is a brilliant way out" of the current Turkish-American relationship.<sup>247</sup> However, the sale of F-16s to Turkey is easier said than done; congressional support is necessary. On February 4th, Frank Pallone Jr. and Gus Bilirakis, members of the House of Representatives, authored a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin. The congressmen, who were backed by more than 50 members of congress, asked the Biden Administration not to complete the sale of 70 F-16s, mechanical upgrades, and modernization kits for the Turkish fleet, arguing "The United States must not provide any further support to Turkey's military until President Erdoğan takes tangible steps to halt his destabilizing actions and violations of international law at home and abroad."<sup>248</sup> While Pallone and Bilirakis provide a fair argument concerning human rights and international law violations, it is necessary to consider the alternative solution for Turkey. Failure for the United States or a NATO ally to present Turkey with a viable option to upgrade their out-of-date fleet will evolve into a greater discussion with Russia. Russia, like they were with the S-400 sale, would be more than happy to provide Turkey jets frustrating NATO leaders and undermining their interests. The failure to present Turkey with a viable missile system is a major reason why American and Turkish relations are where they are. America must prove that it is an ally and a military supplier to Turkey. If America cannot, Turkish dependence on Russia will only rise.

### **The Threat of Russia**

There are not many people more critical of NATO than Vladimir Putin. His harsh anti-West rhetoric and an intense reluctance for Eastern European states to integrate proves this to be true. His hatred of NATO and the West has caused violence in the past and has now led us to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This invasion has been looming since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 as, for the past eight

---

<sup>245</sup> "S-400 Missile System: What Is It and Why Does Turkey Want It?" *DW.COM*, December 7, 2019.

<sup>246</sup> Lubold, Gordon, et al., "U.S. Ejects Turkey from F-35 Fighter Program." *The Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 2019.

<sup>247</sup> Malsin, Jared, et al., "F-16 Sale Could Mend U.S-Turkey Ties, but Tension with Russia Intrudes." *WSJ*, January 22, 2022.

<sup>248</sup> Pallone, Frank, and Gus Bilirakis. "Letter on Turkey F-16 Request." February 4, 2022.

years, Ukraine has been at war with Russian separatist groups in the Donbass. A region in eastern Ukraine along the Russian border, the Donbass is home to two breakaway states: the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). Ukraine recognizes these groups as terrorists, which has only urged Russia to provide them with funds and arms. This proxy war has been long and harsh, and as Russian troops began to assemble along the Ukrainian borders towards the end of 2021, Russian support for the separatist groups increased. By mid-February, 190,000 Russian troops were positioned along the Ukrainian border. Western leaders strongly condemned Putin and questioned the Kremlin's intentions, however, he reiterated that his troops were simply performing military exercises.<sup>249</sup> Ultimately, this was not the case. On February 21, Putin decreed the LPR and DPR were independent. While this decree already challenged Ukraine's sovereignty, he doubled-down by sending "peacekeepers" into the region, a title Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, called "nonsense."<sup>250</sup><sup>251</sup> When the LPR and DPR immediately requested Russia's help to fight Ukraine, it was then, at dawn on February 24, Putin declared the start of a "special military operation" into Ukraine. He claimed, "It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force."<sup>252</sup> The bombs, missiles, cyberattacks, gunfire, and dead Ukrainians however, would suggest otherwise. Entering from Belarus, Crimea, Russia, and the Black Sea, Russian troops have begun a full-scale attack on Ukraine. While initially thought the Donbass may be the targeted area, attacks have been launched from east to west. The capital city of Kyiv is under serious threat. The Russian advance from Belarus has provided a simple path to Kyiv. Flurries of missiles and bombs have lit up the night sky over Ukraine, with much of the artillery aimed at the capital city. Although much of the international community has strongly condemned Russia and its actions, placing severe sanctions on Russia, Russian banks, and high-level Russian officials, the Russian advance continues towards Kyiv.<sup>253</sup>

As a result of the Russian invasion, Turkey is in a very precarious situation. War in Ukraine is extremely problematic for Turkish interests. With a strong connection by way of the Black Sea, Erdoğan has stood by his NATO allies in solidarity with Ukraine and its Tatar population.<sup>254</sup> During Erdoğan's February 3rd visit to Kyiv, he and his Ukrainian counterpart, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, signed a trade agreement granting the production of Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones in Ukrainian factories and increasing bilateral trade from \$7 billion to \$10 billion over the next five years.<sup>255</sup> The Russian invasion

---

<sup>249</sup> "Ukraine Tensions: Russia Stages Military Drills with Belarus." *BBC News*, February 10, 2022.

<sup>250</sup> Osborn, Andrew, et al., "Putin Orders Troops to Ukraine after Recognizing Breakaway Regions." *Reuters*, February 22, 2022.

<sup>251</sup> Troianovski, Anton. "Moscow Orders Troops to Ukraine's Separatist Regions after Putin Recognizes Their Independence." *The New York Times*, February 22, 2022.

<sup>252</sup> Lawler, Dave. "Putin Launches Attacks across Ukraine." *Axios*, February 24, 2022.

<sup>253</sup> Wong, Edward, et al. "Biden Hits Russia with Broad Sanctions for Putin's War in Ukraine." *New York Times*, February 25, 2022.

<sup>254</sup> Zaman, Amberin. "As Russia Menaces Ukraine, Crimea's Tatars Turn to Turkey." *Al Monitor*, February 3, 2022.

<sup>255</sup> Gumrukcu, Tuvan, et al., "Ukraine Hails Turkey Drone Deal, Erdoğan Offer to Mediate in Russia Standoff." *Reuters*, February 3, 2022.



Figure 4.2 Map of Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine (BBC News, 2022)<sup>256</sup>

poses a serious threat to Turkey’s most important import from Ukraine, wheat. A reliance on Ukrainian wheat, connection to the Tatar population, and NATO ties suggest that Turkey and Erdoğan will remain supportive of Ukraine. Interestingly, Ukraine could garner enhanced support from Turkey due to an imprecise Russian attack. During the attack on Odessa, a city on the Black Sea, a Russian bomb struck a Turkish ship. While no one was killed, it will surely cause displeasure from Ankara.<sup>257</sup> During the invasion, Ukraine asked Turkey to shut the Dardanelles and Bosphorus Straits. Although doing so could shatter relations with Russia, it is possible the bombing may influence Turkey’s decision. The Montreux Convention of 1936 does provide Turkey the right to control the Bosphorus, however, only during a state of war; which Turkey is not, yet, in.<sup>258</sup> The ability to control the straits gives Turkey an advantage in the Black Sea, but doing so would likely result in Russian aggression towards Turkey. Potentially in the form of sanctions, as it was following the jet crisis of 2015, Russian aggression could threaten Turkey’s access to energy and elevate economic issues. As a result, Turkey must step lightly when taking a step in solidarity with Ukraine and the West.

While unlikely, there is fear in the West that Turkey will side with Russia. After the past few years of balancing the benefits of Russia and the West, this crisis has created questions of Turkey’s loyalty. The worst-case scenario for the United States and the West would be Turkey's complete break from NATO. This would allow Turkey to grant just Russia passage through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus and the two could work together to undermine NATO. While a barrage of factors would and will

<sup>256</sup> Brown, David. “Ukraine Maps: Tracking Russia's Invasion.” *BBC News*, February 25, 2022.  
<sup>257</sup> Malsin, Jared, “Turkish-Owned Ship Hit by Bomb off Coast of Odessa.” *WSJ*, February 25, 2022.  
<sup>258</sup> Wilks, Andrew. “Turkey Evaluates Ukraine's Request for Closure of Turkish Straits.” *Al-Monitor*, February 24, 2022.

influence how Turkey will address this test of loyalty, none may be more important than Turkey's dependence on Russian energy. Turkey's inability to be energy independent has weakened its ability on the world stage. A full commitment to Russia could provide Turkey with greater energy security. In order for this not to occur, the United States must back Turkey. Proving to Turkey that an American relationship is more important than a Russian relationship is necessary. One way the United States could do this is through the sale of liquid natural gas, funding of green energy projects, and trade of F-16s to Turkey. Through this process, the United States could prove to Turkey that maintaining its NATO status is the correct move. The United States should also be focused on strengthening communication with Turkey. Turkey has a unique perspective in this situation. As a key partner with Ukraine and Russia, Turkey could provide insight or forms of diplomacy better than Western nations. Furthermore, Erdoğan's close relationship with Putin cements him an important actor in this crisis.

Though Ukraine is capturing the vast majority of headlines, Georgia is also under intense Russian pressure. Georgia lies in the Caucasus, but borders the Black Sea, allowing Turkey to emerge as their largest and most important trading partner.<sup>259</sup> The former Soviet state has been the victim of Russian aggression before, but now more than ever, as Putin seeks to undermine the West, he pushes for distance between Georgia and western integration. As a result, the Kremlin deployed "peacekeepers" into Georgia and funded propaganda campaigns. The propaganda is spreading major misinformation with anti-Western rhetoric, especially across the Russian-separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia has sought to weaken the Turkish-Georgian relationship ironically "portraying Turkey as an aggressive regional actor and, therefore, as an obstacle to Georgia's Atlantic integration."<sup>260</sup> Although American involvement in Georgia may be hard to foresee as a result of the Ukraine crisis, America should keep an eye on Georgia. The use of "peacekeepers," spread of misinformation, current state of Russian affairs, and rising separatist regions in Georgia could signal parallels to the invasion of Ukraine. America should look to support Turkish interaction and trade with Georgia as it may be a pathway to Western integration and Russian disintegration. Pushing Turkey to increase involvement in the Caucasus can improve Erdoğan's international standing at the American interest of undermining Russia. Although Russian aggression has created devastating realities across Eastern Europe, America should use this as an opportunity to realign the goals of the Turkish-American relationship.

## Conclusion

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has put Turkish interests in jeopardy. Standing on a tightrope between Russia and the West, War in Ukraine is a disaster scenario for President Erdoğan. Serious threats

---

<sup>259</sup> Seskuria, Natia, "Targeting Turkish-Georgian Relations: Russian Disinformation Is Taking a Local Turn," *Royal United Services Institute*, May 20, 2021.

<sup>260</sup> Seskuria, Natia, "Targeting Turkish-Georgian Relations: Russian Disinformation Is Taking a Local Turn."

to imports from Ukraine and Russia will likely cause greater economic devastation throughout Turkey. At the same time, Turkey's loyalty to NATO remains in question. A growing war in Ukraine will only require a definite answer to Turkey's allegiance: the West or Russia? While most suggest Turkey would not leave NATO's side, their relationship with Russia remains a cause for concern. Instead of ridiculing Turkey, as America has in years past, the United States should reflect on why their relationship with Turkey stands where it does. The United States has largely disregarded the security concerns of Turkey and has left them isolated. When Turkey asked for the Patriot-2 missile system, little was done by the West. When the United States said they would work with Turkey against al-Bashad, they proxied work out to the Kurds instead. It is unsurprising to see why Turkey has become disinterested in American policy: it has not served Turkish interests. It is necessary for the United States to understand how the consequences of its actions, or inaction, caused Turkish foreign policy to change, not the other way around.

In order to rebuild relations with the United States, lessening Turkish dependence on Russia will be necessary. American investment in renewable energy projects, similar to the Akkuyu power plant, could be one way to lessen Russian dependence; the sale of liquid natural gas could be another. With the war in Ukraine, Turkey's supply of natural gas from Russia will be in question. Standing behind Turkey and providing any energy or security needs can strongly benefit this relationship moving forward. A level of trust could be reinforced. By examining Turkey and Russia's relationship, it is clear America needs to reassess their foreign policy in regards to Turkey. While Turkey has stepped out of line in a typical NATO context by involving itself with Russia, America must realize it is not a typical NATO member. Its proximity to conflict, regional geography, and historical background illustrate the differering situation compared to continental European states. Using this perspective, the United States should increase communication with Erdoğan and Turkish leadership. This would prove that the United States views Turkey as a key partner and an important factor in restoring world order. This can be a mutually agreeable platform for Turkey and the United States to regain each other's trust and reaffirm the once vital relationship between the two nations.

## Chinese-Turkish Relations: At Odds with the US

Vanessa Pei

China is one of the most powerful nations in terms of its economy, military as well as technology. It is in pursuit of establishing profound relations with the Middle Eastern, Africa, and other developing countries.<sup>261</sup> Turkey and China's relations officially began in 1971. Although the relations halted for almost 10 years because of the Uyghur issue, the relationship has recovered since the 2000s and was promoted to the "Strategic Partnership" level after 2010. With its domestic economic turmoils, Turkey is dependent on China for its economic recovery, hoping to strengthen its economic ties through the Belt and Road Initiative and its cooperation with Huawei so far that it willingly overlooks the Uyghur issue to appease China. These close economic ties between the two pose a threat to the US as it should monitor the Belt and Road Initiative, and provide Turkey support to keep it as an ally.

### Belt and Road Initiative

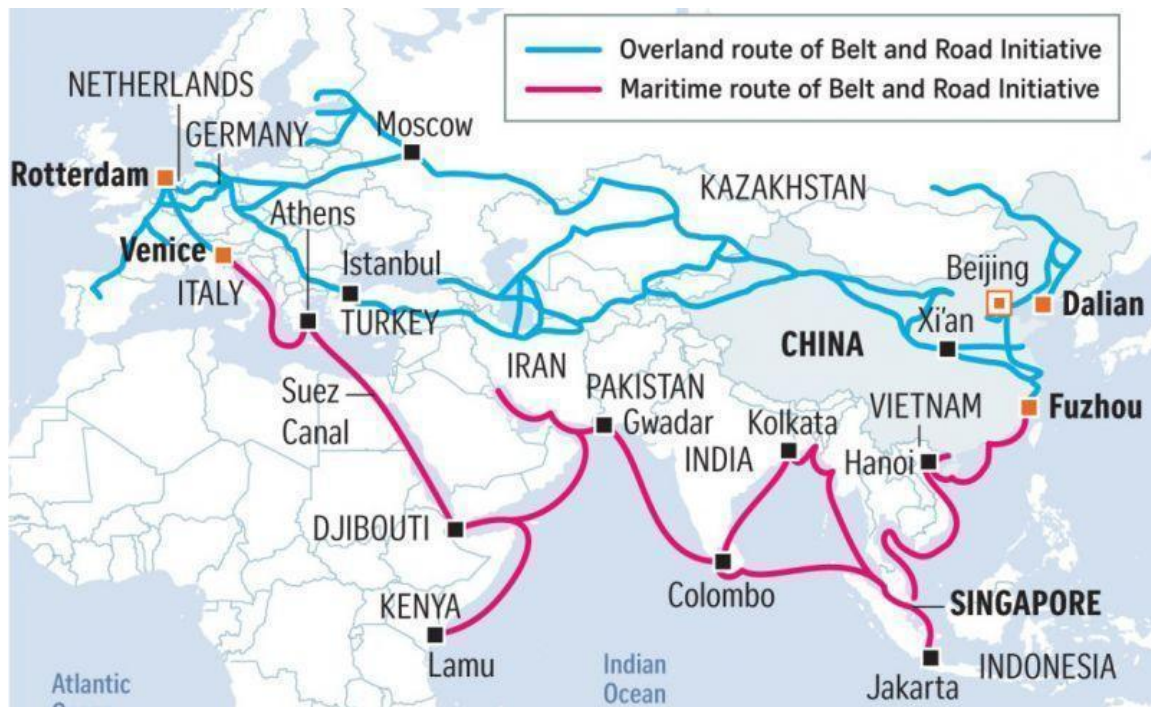


Figure 4.3 Map of Routes of Belt and Road Initiative (AsiaGreen)<sup>262</sup>

<sup>261</sup> Sila Kulaksız, "Financial Integration Via Belt and Road Initiative: China-Turkey Cooperation," *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies* 11, no. 1-2 (2019): pp. 48-64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974910119874632>, 50.

<sup>262</sup> "The Belt-and-Road Initiative and the Rising Importance of China's Western Cities," ASIAGREEN, accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.asiagreen.com/en/news-insights/the-belt-and-road-initiative-and-the-rising-importance-of-china-s-western-cities>.

In 2013, Xi Jinping, President of China, started the “New Silk Road Program” and named it “Belt and Road Initiative”(BRI). The Belt and Road Initiative is one of the most important foreign policy goals in China, and its main purpose is to promote better connectivity, enhance linkages, common understanding, and cultivate long-term stability in the region.<sup>263</sup> Turkey joined the membership of BRI in 2015; due to its key geographical position, Turkey has a central role in the BRI with regard to land, sea, and air transportation and energy pipeline.<sup>264</sup> Also, BRI is a turning point in Turkey-China relations, improving the strategic partnership in policy, economy, and security areas.

Turkey-China relation has been strengthened to an unprecedented degree, as BRI provides resources, capital, and markets for both countries' economic revivals. Turkey and China have worked together to grow both countries' economies and create a win-win situation. The annual trade between Turkey and China was \$23.632 billion in 2018.<sup>265</sup> For many years, there has been a trade deficit with Turkey. China's exports to Turkey were \$20.719 billion in 2018, while Turkey's exports to China were \$2.913 billion(Figure 4.4).<sup>266</sup> Telephone, audio, and video equipment are the top products imported to Turkey from China, while marble and travertine, rebated stone, ashlar, and limestone are among the top products exported from Turkey to China.<sup>267</sup> Under the BRI, Turkey and China could cooperate on policy coordination, financial integration, trade and investment, facilities and connectivity, and cultural exchange. Currently, Turkey and China completed the biggest joint infrastructure project in Turkey, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway line. as a part of the overall BRI project. Since 2015, Chinese companies have invested in the Maritime Silk Road project by either upgrading or establishing two ports as new maritime hubs. Furthermore, as part of the BRI, the Salt Lake Gas Storage Facility helps Turkey with energy imports by meeting the domestic consumption of natural gas.<sup>268</sup> BRI enhances Turkey and China's economic relationship, helping Turkey to relieve its economic pressure by attracting more Asian capitals. China's direct investments in 53 countries amounted to \$14.5 billion, and its share in the total overseas investments was 8.5% in 2016. According to the 2016 data, Turkey's share in the overall foreign direct investment(FDI) in China is only 2%.<sup>269</sup> Chinese FDI in Turkey showed a significant increase in 2015 due to the implementation of BRI. Since Turkey is an important country in the BRI and one of the key strategies for China is increasing investment toward countries along with the round. There are a large

---

<sup>263</sup> “The Belt-and-Road Initiative and the Rising Importance of China's Western Cities,” ASIAGREEN, accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.asiagreen.com/en/news-insights/the-belt-and-road-initiative-and-the-rising-importance-of-china-s-western-cities>.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>265</sup> Sila Kulaksız, “Financial Integration Via Belt and Road Initiative: China–Turkey Cooperation,” *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies* 11, no. 1-2 (2019): pp. 48-64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974910119874632>, 55.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Sila Kulaksız, “Financial Integration Via Belt and Road Initiative: China–Turkey Cooperation,” *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies* 11, no. 1-2 (2019): pp. 48-64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974910119874632>, 59.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid, 52.

number of Chinese foreign enterprises that invest in Turkey. Around 53,200 companies' foreign capital operate in Turkey in 2016, and according to statistics, approximately 12.3 billion USD dollars foreign investment flowed into Turkey.<sup>270</sup> As YeniAkit newspaper journalist Sinan Burhan commented, since the foundation of the Republic, Turkey has always cooperated with the West, Turkey should continue the relations with the West while also being open to exploring some new options, such as China, BRI seems to be the beginning of the options.<sup>271</sup> The U.S should be concerned about these comments, giving Turkey more corporate opportunities, letting Turkey stay in the relations with the West rather than China.

Year	Export	Import	Volume	Balance
2007	1,040	13,234	14,274	-12,195
2008	1,437	15,658	17,095	-14,221
2009	1,599	12,677	14,276	-11,077
2010	2,269	17,181	19,450	-14,912
2011	2,466	21,693	24,160	-19,227
2012	2,833	21,295	24,128	-18,462
2013	3,601	24,686	28,287	-21,085
2014	2,861	24,918	27,779	-22,057
2015	2,415	24,873	27,288	-22,459
2016	2,328	25,441	27,769	-23,113
2017	2,936	23,371	26,307	-20,435
2018	2,913	20,719	23,632	-17,806

**Source:** Republic of Turkey Ministry of Trade (2019a); [www.eb.ticaret.gov.tr](http://www.eb.ticaret.gov.tr)  
**Note:** \*General, including the BRI.

Figure 4.4 Turkey-China Trade Values(For Turkey, in US\$ million) (Kulaksiz, 2019)<sup>272</sup>

On the other hand, BRI has been considered as a “hegemony project”, accusing China of “having ulterior aims in both attempting to assert authority over other countries and becoming the new world superpower.”<sup>273</sup> Turkey is a key country in Chinese cross-continent interests, if Turkey doesn’t cooperate with China, the BRI project may be hindered. For example, as the Maritime Silk Road was established, the transportation orientation relevant impact of BRI was under China. For example, with the establishment of the Maritime Silk Road, the traffic-oriented related impacts of the Belt and Road become China's control over existing maritime routes, the establishment of alternative routes, infrastructure to

<sup>270</sup> Yiling Huang, “Research on Chinese Energy Investment in Turkey under the ...,” Research on Chinese Energy Investment in Turkey under the Silk Road Strategy." IOP Conference Series. Earth and Environmental Science 94, 2017, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321337889\\_Research\\_on\\_Chinese\\_Energy\\_Investment\\_in\\_Turkey\\_under\\_the\\_Silk\\_Road\\_Strategy](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321337889_Research_on_Chinese_Energy_Investment_in_Turkey_under_the_Silk_Road_Strategy), 2.

<sup>271</sup> Nurettin Akçay and Tang Qingye, “Turkey’s Perceptions of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (2013–2017): Media and Think-Tanks Discourse Analysis,” *China Report* 56, no. 2 (2020): pp. 221-241, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0009445520916877>, 225.

<sup>272</sup> Sila Kulaksiz, “Financial Integration Via Belt and Road Initiative: China–Turkey Cooperation,” *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies* 11, no. 1-2 (2019): pp. 48-64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974910119874632>, 55.

<sup>273</sup> Nurettin Akçay and Tang Qingye, “Turkey’s Perceptions of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (2013–2017): Media and Think-Tanks Discourse Analysis,” *China Report* 56, no. 2 (2020): pp. 221-241, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0009445520916877>, 235.

generate new trade, and possible model shifts. The Maritime silk road helps China become a superpower by reducing its dependence on foreign transport of energy. It also increases the Sea Lanes of Communications and other related maritime transport chains. This reduces its reliance on pre-existing routes while promoting both trade and development. Lastly, it ensures economies of scale of large reduced trade and transport cost.<sup>274</sup> This will facilitate China's destabilization of the global economy and increase the likelihood of a debt crisis in the coming years by largely avoiding debt sustainability analysis and funding economically problematic projects in heavily indebted countries. Providing privileged subsidies allows for state-owned and non-market-oriented Chinese companies to enter the market and enables China to lock in countries by imposing its technology and preferred technology standards on BRI recipient countries' ecosystems. It has made climate change mitigation much more difficult by exporting coal-fired power plants to ensure countries' decades-long reliance on carbon-intensive electricity. It makes it harder for the World Bank and other traditional lenders to uphold high standards and makes countries more vulnerable to Chinese political pressure by offering quick and easy infrastructure packages that disregard rigorous environmental and social impact assessments and tolerate corruption while giving China the ability to project its power more broadly.<sup>275</sup>

Under the BRI, China is establishing policies and influence in the Middle East by bypassing Iran and the Gulf countries, which brings some security concerns to Turkey.<sup>276</sup> The political and security differences between Turkey and China in the Middle East policy could cause trouble in the later stages of BRI, and the large trade gap between Turkey and China has caused discomfort and fear among Turkish people. With BRI, the trade deficit will increase continually, China has to find a way to reduce the current trade deficit. The United States should not stop being involved in the trade with Turkey and should help Turkey to be not completely under Chinese trade to prevent Turkey-China trade deficit increase. The U.S. could show Turkey that China is not the only choice to choose, and be an alternative trade partner for Turkey.

### **Huawei Technology Security Issue**

Huawei has been active in Turkey for 17 years, but its technological security issue is in many countries. Huawei is a Chinese multinational technology company headquartered in Shenzhen, China. Its product and 5G wireless network projects were banned in numerous countries because it “contains

---

<sup>274</sup> Jennifer Hillman and David Sacks, “China's Belt and Road: Implications for the United States,” How the U.S. should respond to China's belt and road (Council on Foreign Relations, March 2021), <https://www.cfr.org/report/chinas-belt-and-road-implications-for-the-united-states/>.

<sup>275</sup> Jennifer Hillman and David Sacks, “China's Belt and Road: Implications for the United States,” How the U.S. should respond to China's belt and road (Council on Foreign Relations, March 2021), <https://www.cfr.org/report/chinas-belt-and-road-implications-for-the-united-states/>.

<sup>276</sup> See chapter 4

security holes that China's government could use for spying purposes."<sup>277</sup> However, Huawei is a major contributor to Turkey's thriving Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry, supplying a pool of qualified experts to the local market on top of its innovations and product offering. Turkish Industry and Technology Minister Mustafa Varank even said "Huawei is one of the most important global companies investing in R&D (research and development) in Turkey" and his country will continue to support Huawei's R&D center.<sup>278</sup> Huawei is also partnering with a local business partner in Istanbul for smart transportation projects implemented in the city's tram line. The U.S. should be concerned about Turkey's growing investment and partnership with Huawei, especially as it might threaten the United States military presence in Turkey. As former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told the Washington Examiner, "the fact that you have a significant amount of data in Turkey now, in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party, means that we have to be ever more careful."<sup>279</sup> The United States should not only warn the Turkish government but also make sure the U.S. defense and security networks are secure. Just as Pompeo said, "It's not only military and security networks that will be impacted by increasing activity inside of Turkey or any other country from Chinese networks. We're gonna make sure and protect American data."<sup>280</sup>

### Human Rights: Uyghurs

Uyghurs have been an issue between China and Turkey since the 20th century and are a major area of instability in the Turkey-China relationship. The Chinese government has been accused of establishing a network of detention camps and holding more than 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups in the northwestern Xinjiang region in China. The Uyghurs issue in Xinjiang has been brought up as a human right issue many times, and the most recent time is during Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu's visit on January 12, 2022. There are around 50,000 Uyghurs living in Turkey, which is the largest group outside of Central Asia. Due to their shared ethnic, linguistic, and religious bonds with Uyghurs people, Turkish people have deep sympathy for the human rights violations against Uyghurs in Xinjiang. In March 2021, over one thousand Uyghur protesters gathered and shouted: "stop Uyghur genocide, close the camps" in Istanbul. Turkey and the United States believe that China is

---

<sup>277</sup> Joe Panettieri, "Huawei: Banned and Permitted in Which Countries? List and FAQ," Huawei: Banned and Permitted In Which Countries? (ChannelE2E, December 27, 2021), <https://www.channele2e.com/business/enterprise/huawei-banned-in-which-countries/#:~:text=A%3A%20Numerous%20countries%20allege%20that,property%20from%20foreign%20technology%20companies>.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> "Pompeo Warns Turkey, Says Huawei Presence There Threatening U.S.:" Pompeo warns Turkey, says Huawei presence there threatening U.S. (Ahval, September 23, 2020), <https://ahval.me/turkey-usa/pompeo-warns-turkey-says-huawei-presence-there-threatening-us>.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

carrying out genocide against the Uyghurs.<sup>281</sup> When Erdoğan was prime minister in 2019, he said “The incidents in China are, simply put, a genocide.”<sup>282</sup> The Washington Post has commended this issue as “a massive campaign of cultural extermination”, and Vox also commented on it that “the Chinese government is trying to expunge ethnonational characteristics from the people.”<sup>283</sup> China denies any religious, ethnic, right abuses, including authorities forcibly sterilizing women and imposing forced labor. China claims it is an “anti-terrorism” and “anti-secession” issue, for preventing radical Islam and terrorism in Xinjiang. However, Erdoğan remained silent due to economic ties such as BRI and other investments, and the Turkish government attaches importance to attracting Chinese investors. Turkey even arrests Abdulkadir Yapcan, a prominent Uyghur political activist living in Turkey.<sup>284</sup> Erdoğan could not afford to lose the cooperation with China or cause any problem in the Turkey-China relationship. He only commented that “Uyghurs live in peace as “equal citizens of China” and that Turkey respects China’s national sovereignty”. Interestingly, China chose two athletes, including was of Uyghur heritage to deliver the flame to the 2022 Winter Olympic cauldron. It is a symbol that shows China is seeking peace on the Uyghur issue. Overall, the two countries chose to ignore the issue and focus on economic relations. There are still racial discrimination issues that should be expressed in future cooperation, especially when Xinjiang is an important part of the Belt and Road Initiative, involving the multi-billion highway and railroad projects connecting Europe and China also go through Turkey.

## Conclusion

China and the United States are two of the most powerful countries. The US sees China as its main rival because the expansion of China is a threat. Turkey and the United States are allies, but Turkey’s current relationship with China is a threat to U.S. interests. It is important that the U.S. should monitor the Turkey-China relations. Meanwhile, Turkey should position itself in the middle to keep out of potential conflicts. An article in the Turkish newspaper Hurriyet described the BRI as “a project aimed at breaking the U.S. leadership in the world economy.”<sup>285</sup> Therefore, it is important for the U.S. response to the BRI project to address the potential economic risks by improving US competitiveness and working with its allies, partners, and multilateral organizations to better meet the needs of Turkey. The US should

---

<sup>281</sup> Al Jazeera, “Turkey Raises Uighur Issue with China as Hundreds Protest,” News | Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, March 25, 2021), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/25/turkey-says-conveyed-sensitivity-about-uighurs-to-china>.

<sup>282</sup> Alemdaroglu, Ayca, and Sultan Tepe. “Erdoğan Is Turning Turkey into a Chinese Client State.” Foreign Policy, September 16, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/16/Erdoğan-is-turning-turkey-into-a-chinese-client-state/>.

<sup>283</sup> Jennifer Hillman and David Sacks, “China’s Belt and Road: Implications for the United States,” How the U.S. should respond to China’s belt and road (Council on Foreign Relations, March 2021), <https://www.cfr.org/report/chinas-belt-and-road-implications-for-the-united-states/>.

<sup>284</sup> Alemdaroglu, Ayca, and Sultan Tepe. “Erdoğan Is Turning Turkey into a Chinese Client State.” Foreign Policy, September 16, 2020.

<sup>285</sup> Nurettin Akçay and Tang Qingye, “Turkey’s Perceptions of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (2013–2017): Media and Think-Tanks Discourse Analysis,” China Report 56, no. 2 (2020): pp. 221-241, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0009445520916877>, 225.

share cutting-edge technology, deep capital pools with Turkey. This project should create stronger economic ties between Turkey and the United States and increase U.S. foreign investment in Turkey to decrease the attachment of the Turkish government's reliance on China. We are not experts in the U.S. creating an alternative BRI project due to geographical reasons, and the project does not undermine the U.S. interest. However, the U.S. should monitor the project, and the U.S. can give Turkey more technology, to make Turkey more reliant on U.S. support rather than China. Furthermore, the United States should emphasize the human rights issue in Turkey. The U.S should build an international coalition with Turkey and other Muslim-majority nations to help Uyghur in China, form, putting diplomatic and economic pressure on China. The coalition should also provide Turkey with economic support. The new economic tie with Turkey could help it not be afraid of the Turkey-China relationship. Lastly, the U.S. should show they are supporting the Uyghur, increasing the Urghur-U.S. ties, funding the protest groups in Turkey to win support from them, to pressure the Turkish government to speak up for the attention on the Uyghur issue. Turkey and China are not one hundred percent allies, which the U.S still has a lot of opportunities to work with Turkey. When Turkey feels insecure, the U.S. should support Turkey, to keep Turkey as an ally.

## Turkey and Iran

*Noah Gruenert*

Turkey and Iran hold very similar standing in the Middle East. They are both Muslim-majority states, with longstanding historical legacies as linguistically homogenous, dynastically independent, and geographically enduring empires. Upon becoming nation-states in the modern sense, they retained many of the same features, remaining remarkably similar. As the two largest, non-Arab nations in the region, they share a position as contenders with enduring diplomatic ties to their neighbors, and to one another. Even down to metrics like population size; with 82 million for Turkey and 85 million for Iran; to similar rates of urbanization; 76.6% urban population with a 1.11% annual growth in Turkey, and 76.3% growing annually by 1.32% in Iran; Turkey and Iran are very alike.<sup>286</sup> Their standing in the region often pits them against one another, just as the Ottoman and Persian Empires were natural rivals in their time. Yet they are not the same. Turkey's Muslims are Sunnis, and its people speak Turkish, the largest of all Turkic Languages, written in a Latin script. Iran's Muslims are Shia, and Iranian Persian, or Farsi, is the largest of all Iranic Languages today, written in an Arabic script. The two languages are entirely unintelligible, though their common history as subjects of the early Islamic empires gives them some shared Arabic vocabulary. As important regional players, Turkey and Iran are at times friendly and at times combative toward one another. The two countries are staunch enemies in Syria, and their conflict there has strong implications on their overall relationship. Yet they happen to have aligned goals in Yemen, where both states support factions of the civil war to their own ends. The most important factor in Iranian Turkish relations is trade; Iran relies on Turkey to survive American economic sanctions, and Turkey remains dependent on Iranian oil and natural gas for its energy needs.

Turkey's 2010 shift to a Zero Problems with its neighbors foreign policy has put pressure on the US Turkey relationship and represents a transformation from compliant Western Ally to assertive regional power. This is especially true regarding the growing relationship between Turkey and Iran, which is primarily economic. To uphold mutual interests and prosperous bilateral relations, the US must remain allied with Turkey, while finding a way to incentivize Turkey to limit or curtail their trade with Iran.

### **The Great Satan: Iran and the US as mortal enemies**

The United States has had a tumultuous history with Iran that has led the two nations to be bitter enemies. Yet a century ago, the US and Iran had peaceful relations. Iran's monarchy, under the Qajar Dynasty until 1925, and then by the Pahlavi dynasty until 1979, was dependent on royalties from the

---

<sup>286</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook*

Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Under these contracts, which began with the D'Arcy Concession in 1901, the Iranian government was only entitled to about 16% of the oil profits from all British drilling across all of Iran, and of course Britain maintained exclusive rights to drill there.<sup>287</sup> This relationship built resentment among the Iranian population over the first half of the century, boiling over into international tension in 1951, when the Iranian Parliament, or Majles, led by Mohammed Mosaddeq nationalized Iran's oil.<sup>288</sup> The US offered to mediate the fractured relations between Iran and Britain, but the result was a CIA and MI6 coup to overthrow Mosaddeq and bolster the Shah's monarchy. There was no acceptable outcome for either Western nation involving any form of nationalization of Iranian oil. The 1953 Coup kept Iranian oil in Western hands but imprinted great animosity among the Iranian Populus toward both Britain and America.<sup>289</sup> This tension erupted violently in 1979, when student protestors stormed the American Embassy in Tehran, taking fifty-five diplomats hostage for 444 days. Iran expelled the corrupt, repressive, pro-western regime of the Shah and reformed into an Islamic Theocracy as a backlash, naming America as its primary enemy, and the relationship has remained tense. Brief hope appeared in 2015, when the Obama administration negotiated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a deal to curtail Iranian nuclear weapons ambitions, in return for relief of economic sanctions. This deal was reneged on by President Trump, and tensions between the two nations have remained high, marked by dangerous and unprecedented hostility, like the killing of Iranian General Qassim Suleimani by US forces in 2020, or the erroneous Iranian destruction of a passenger airline the following week.

### **The Great Neighbor: Turkey as Middleman between Iran and the US**

Turkey has held a strange position amid this rift turned rivalry between Iran and the US. Although the Iranian revolution reoriented Iranian foreign policy away from Western values, Turkey has continued a largely uninterrupted economic relationship with Iran since then. Beginning with Ahmet Davutoglu's Strategic Doctrine in 2001, Turkey pursued a more proactive foreign policy with the key aims: orient towards the West, become strategically dominant, and maximize security.<sup>290</sup> Turkey's economic recession in that same period brought further opportunities for Iran and Turkey to mutually benefit from increased trade. Blooming trade relations brought the nations closer together, despite American animosity towards Iran. Thus, the trend of Turkish friendship toward Iran, at least economically, has only been growing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is, however, primarily an economic partnership between geostrategic competitors, and lacks the intimacy or unity of a traditional alliance. As the US-Iranian animosity continues to intensify, the US is left questioning Turkey's allegiance, because of these strong trade ties that buoy both Middle

---

<sup>287</sup> Abrahamian, *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern US-Iranian relations*

<sup>288</sup> Curtis et al, *Iran: a country study*, 33

<sup>289</sup> Curtis et al, *Iran: a country study*, 34

<sup>290</sup> Charountaki, *Iran and Turkey, International and Regional Engagement in the Middle East*, page 151

Eastern nations in direct opposition to American foreign policy stances. It is clear then, that Turkey holds a unique position in the lineup of American allies, because of its unparalleled relationship to Iran.

### **Turkey and Iran as Enemies in Syria**

Turkey and Iran sit on opposite sides of the Syrian conflict. When the unrest in Syria in 2011 erupted into civil war, regional powers embroiled themselves in the conflict to influence its outcome and fill the power vacuum that would ensue. Iran, in opposition to the US and Turkish support of the Syrian resistance, backed the Assad regime.

Syrian rebel groups were defeated in Aleppo in 2016, giving the legitimacy of that capital over to Assad's forces, backed by Iran.<sup>291</sup> The Turkish populace was very angry with this development, blaming Iran and holding demonstrations outside Iranian missions across Turkey. Nationalist Turkish news sources claimed Iran was committing genocide against Sunnis, and that the West is trying to fragment the Islamic world by forcing Iran and Turkey to fight.<sup>292</sup> This aggression from media circles indicates that popular opinion of Iran was very low, with many pro-government newspapers calling Iran Turkey's primary enemy and encouraging demonstrations against Iran's involvement in Syria.

### **Yemeni Civil War: Unlikely Allies, or Enemy of my Enemy**

With this position as the background for Turkish Iranian foreign relations, it is surprising that they support different factions of the same side in the Yemeni Civil War.

Houthi forces, or the Ansar Allah movement, was formed in the 1990s under the auspices of the Al-Houthi tribal family to garner political reform and combat discrimination against those following Zaydism, a sect of Shiite Islam. Their violent resistance to the Yemeni government began in 2004.<sup>293</sup> In 2009, Houthi rebellion against the Republican Forces in Yemen spilled over into Saudi Arabia, and the Saudi Army sided with the Republican Forces and retaliated against the Houthis. As Saudi Arabia's rival, Iran saw this as a chance to support a thorn in their enemy's side and began providing some support to the Houthis.<sup>294</sup> By 2014, Houthi forces took Sanaa, and forced the newly elected President Hadi to relocate to Aden. Hadi had replaced former President Saleh at the behest of the Gulf Co-operation Council. Although initially connected by shared religious ideology, Iran and the Houthis became further aligned over their discontent with the regional situation. Opposition to the presiding status quo is a primary factor in Iran's support of regional forces, and such support is not strictly supplied along ideological lines or because of matching religious dogma. Groups like Hamas and the Taliban do not share Iranian religious

---

<sup>291</sup> Idiz, *Animosity toward Iran reaches fever pitch in Turkey after Aleppo* - *Al-Monitor*

<sup>292</sup> Idiz, *Animosity toward Iran reaches fever pitch in Turkey after Aleppo* - *Al-Monitor*

<sup>293</sup> Pierpaoli, *Houthis*

<sup>294</sup> Juneau, *How War in Yemen Transformed the Iran-Houthi Partnership*

views, but their obstruction of and resistance to regional powers wins them Iranian favor. Though it is difficult to gauge the level of support Iran has provided to Houthi forces, it is noticeable that in 2015, marked by the Saudi intervention in the Yemeni Civil War, Iranian support ramped up, to double down on the irritation the Houthis could be for Saudi Arabia. Since then, numerous raids and weapons cache seizures have solidified the credibility of claims that Iran supplies the Houthis with small arms, explosives, and munitions. Their relationship has become more open as well. Iran recognizes the Houthi control of Sanaa as the legitimate government, and the two have consular relations.<sup>295</sup>

Turkey supported the Saudi led coalitions involvement in Yemen, with the foreign ministry issuing a formal statement of support for the coalitions' help that backs President Hadi.<sup>296</sup> This position changed with the Khashoggi murder in Istanbul in 2018. Turkey has since then been supporting the Al-Islah party, the Yemeni Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>297</sup>

The Yemeni branch of the Sunni Salafist Muslim Brotherhood, known as Al-Islah, was part of the Yemeni opposition protests in 2011, and the negotiation process in President Sallah's abdication. Sallah's Vice President Hadi came to power and called elections, and Al-Islah became the leading political party in the opposition coalition. In this way, Al-Islah is distinct from other forms of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in other countries, because it did hold political legitimacy in a ruling coalition.

Thus, it must be noted that although they are both Islamic religious movements, Zaydism and Al-Islah sit on opposite sides of Islam's long standing schism between Sunni and Shia philosophy. Neither are their terms of engagement in Yemeni political life equal. The country is around 65% Sunni, and only about 35% Zaydi, or Shia.<sup>298</sup> However, both the Houthis and Al-Islah have a propensity to cooperate across sectarian divides, and among Muslim Brotherhood branches, Al-Islah is moderately inclusive toward non-Sunnis like Zaydis. In the face of invasion from Saudi coalition forces, Houthi forces have made alliances with Al-Islah.<sup>299</sup> This makes Turkish support for the Brotherhood more interesting, because it inadvertently puts Iran and Turkey on the same side. It seems then that these regional powers share the common goal of harassing their Arabian rival by frustrating Saudi efforts to stamp out unrest in Yemen.

The US supported Saudi involvement in Yemen as a fence-mending measure, to repair relations after Saudis felt betrayed by America unilaterally negotiating the JCPOA with Iran. As such, Saudi involvement in Yemen has been greenlit, backed by arms sales, by the White House, despite clear warning signs of the humanitarian impact this invasion would bring.<sup>300</sup> Reluctance to be involved directly

---

<sup>295</sup> Juneau, *How War in Yemen Transformed the Iran-Houthi Partnership*

<sup>296</sup> Demirtas, *Does Turkey regret supporting Saudi Arabia in the Yemen War?* Hurriyet Daily News

<sup>297</sup> Farghaly, *Brotherhoods Al-Islah and Domination of Yemen*

<sup>298</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook*

<sup>299</sup> Farghaly, *Brotherhoods Al-Islah and Domination of Yemen*

<sup>300</sup> Hazbun, *American Interventionism and the Geopolitical Roots of Yemen's Catastrophe*

and the history of the US Saudi alliance will likely keep the US out of Yemen for now. Down the line, if America chooses to be more active, the opposing sides of Turkey and Saudi Arabia may present a problem. If the US stays on the path of paring down its foreign involvement, it may prefer to bolster regional powers, especially those that promote holistic resolutions to conflict and uphold norms of restraint, a role Turkey might be able to fill. In that case, neutralizing its stance in the conflict would mean cutting arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and building coalitions of regional powers to negotiate a peaceful recovery for Yemen. Turkey’s newfound regional assertiveness could be an opportunity to leverage the US-Turkey partnership to be mediators rather than aggressors. For now, the unintended shared goal of Houthi and Al-Islah forces to repel the Saudi Coalition may keep Turkey and Iran from becoming bitter enemies through their proxy forces there.

### Lira to Rial: The Strong Economic Ties of Turkey and Iran

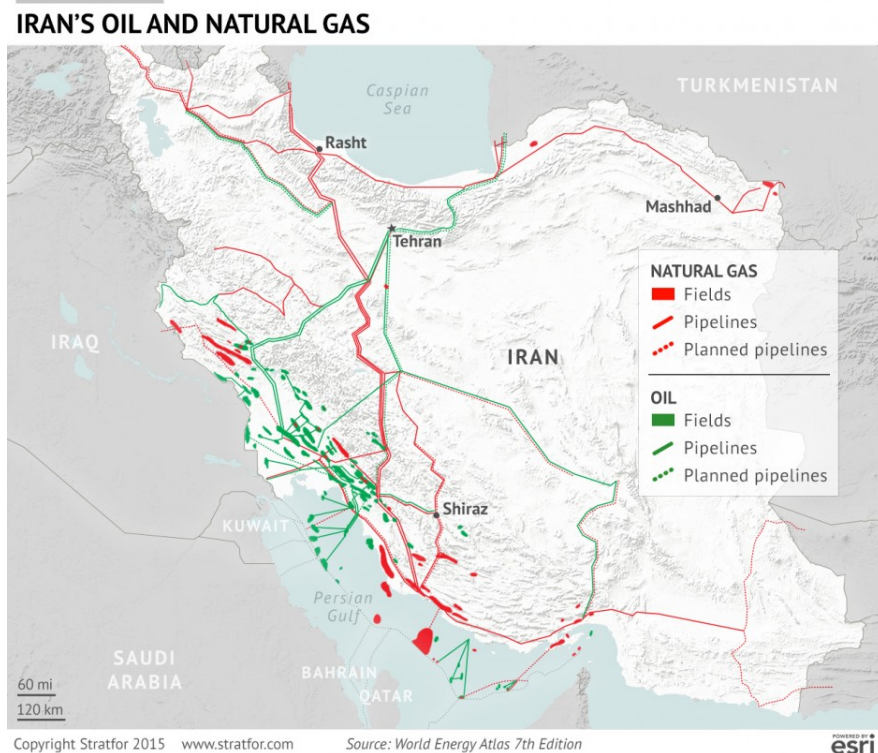


Figure 4.5 Map of Iranian Oil and Natural Gas Transportation (World Energy Atlas)<sup>301</sup>

Iran is proven to be home to at least the second largest quantity of natural gas reserves, though much of these remain undeveloped.<sup>302</sup> Yet there are several key limitations preventing Iran from maximizing its oil exports. American sanctions greatly hinder Iran from acquiring foreign investment in

<sup>301</sup> Irans Oil and Natural Gas. World Energy Atlas, 7th Edition.

<sup>302</sup> Elahee et al, *Reintegrating Iran with the West: Challenges and Opportunities*, 17

the development of its fields. Lack of technological access or foreign investment, along with political mismanagement, combine to limit Iran's access to, or export of, these reserves. In 2011, estimates concluded that Iran's production either equaled or fell short of consumption.<sup>303</sup> Despite holding around 33.6 Trillion Cubic Meters (cm) of natural gas, Iran harvested an estimated 237 Billion cm, or 0.7% of its reserves in 2019. Key technologies to improve production yield, like liquefaction, are unavailable to Iran without foreign assistance, which is blocked by American sanctions.<sup>304</sup> Thus, it is important that Iran finds foreign investment to develop its reserves for production. Iran could also expand into European energy markets, if it had greater technological access provided by Turkish investment and expanded trade with Turkey. Turkey satisfies much of its energy needs with oil product imports from Iran. A primary conduit of this trade is the Tabriz-Dogubayazit pipeline, from North-Western Iran to South-Eastern Turkey. In 2011, that pipeline carried 6.9Bcm to Turkey.<sup>305</sup> This increased to 7.5Bcm in 2012, accounting for 30% of Turkish natural gas imports.<sup>306</sup> 90% of Turkey's energy needs are met by oil and natural gas. Although per capita energy consumption is just below the world average and half the EU average, certain sectors use massive amounts of energy, particularly construction and transportation.<sup>307</sup> Iran receives Turkish investment in other sectors outside of oil as well. Seafaring projects, like high-speed catamaran boats and modern shipyards in Arvandan, Iran, have been negotiated between Turkey and Iran in a one-hundred-million-dollar deal.<sup>308</sup>

Iran depends on Turkish help to overcome American sanctions. In 2013, dual Turkish Iranian close friend of Erdoğan's, Reza Zarrab, was arrested in the US for helping facilitate transactions that circumvent American sanctions on Iran, by acquiring gold and foreign currency like dollars and euros for the Iranian government.<sup>309</sup> In 2017, Mehmet Hakan Atilla, deputy CEO of Halkbank, one of Turkey's biggest banks, which helped Zarrab undertake these transactions, was arrested on similar charges. This money laundering to stabilize the Iranian Rial has even been rumored to extend to Erdoğan's family. Atilla was convicted in 2018, and he testified that Erdoğan was aware of the scheme, though Erdoğan maintains this is all American blackmail to destabilize Turkey.<sup>310</sup> This issue caused schisms in the US Turkey relationship but may have been resolved with these high-profile arrests. If it were to continue however, US Turkey relations might sour, especially if Erdoğan were personally involved, as implicated.

---

<sup>303</sup> Elahee et al, *Reintegrating Iran with the West: Challenges and Opportunities*, 17

<sup>304</sup> Tagliapietra, *Iran's Gas Market: Reserves, Production, Consumption, Trade*

<sup>305</sup> Carter, *Iran, Natural Gas, and Asia's Energy Needs: a Spoiler for Sanctions?*

<sup>306</sup> Elahee et al, *Reintegrating Iran with the West: Challenges and Opportunities*, 22

<sup>307</sup> Bahgat, *Iran-Turkey Energy Cooperation: Strategic Implications*

<sup>308</sup> Sheikhi, *Iran Turkey sign Trade Deal worth \$100M*, Mehr News

<sup>309</sup> Recknagel, *US Arrest Awakens Ghost of Turkey's Iran-Gold Scandal*, Radio Free Europe

<sup>310</sup> Jones, *Erdoğan Defies Trump over Iran Sanctions*, Voice of America

## A Path Forward

The US is still militarily active in Syria, although American support of Kurdish forces continues to threaten the Turkish agenda, Turkey and the US seem to be guarded partners in their collaboration against remaining ISIS and Iranian proxy forces. In this regard, although Kurdish military strength is a point of contention for Ankara and Washington, their unity might hold up for now. Opening negotiations with Ankara about the role of Kurds and a potential Kurdish inheritance of captured territory in Syria is still a long way off, but Washington should look to incorporate Turkey and listen to Turkish needs in whatever Syrian solution develops in the future.

US arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and support for their invasion of Yemen may develop a crack in the US Turkey relationship, especially if the US becomes directly involved in Yemen later on. However, the US does have a unique opportunity, as an ally of both Turkey and Saudi Arabia, to me a mediator for two of the three sides in the Yemeni conflict. By opening dialogue and negotiation for this humanitarian crisis, the US could support Turkish regional ambitions, while simultaneously stabilizing a dangerous situation. If the US could get Turkey to host a summit for Yemen to find a diplomatic resolution, Iran might be willing to take part, because of Turkey and Iran's mutual understanding in Yemen, and their integral trade relations. In this way, the US could work indirectly with Iran, which could support ongoing efforts to repair the American Iranian diplomatic dialogue toward a revived JCPOA.

Iran and Turkey will clearly continue their financial partnerships, regardless of American sanctions. America must then choose to either pressure Turkey to abandon trade with Iran, which has a doubtful prognosis, given Turkish energy dependence, and growing assertiveness to resist Western hegemony. Alternatively, the US could use Turkey's new outgoing foreign policy preference to help them become a mediator: If the US could redefine or soften its policies towards Iran and relieve economic sanctions, congruent with the Biden administration's concern for human rights, then the US and Iran could try to normalize their relations, during which Turkey would be a close confidant reaping tremendous financial benefit from expanded trade with Iran. While such normalization is equally unlikely, and the US-Iranian brinkmanship seems set to continue, the Turkish position will become more ambiguous unless the US takes steps to support Turkey's ambitions or coerce Ankara away from its plans.

## Policy Recommendations

*Violet Collins and Yolanda Yang*

As discussed throughout this paper, the recent developments in the international community demand that the United States recalibrate relations with Turkey and its leadership. This Task Force recommends that American policymakers respect Turkey's increasingly independent foreign policy choices that advance Turkish interests by avoiding condemnation or sanctioning while strengthening bilateral ties with Turkey in common interest areas. Below are the specific policy choices that the research and analysis of this Task Force supports.

### Recommendation #1

First, the US should give Turkey the space as an ally to implement foreign policy independently of American interests. As Turkey continues to act more autonomously of American interests and priorities than it has in the past, policymakers need to think objectively about how these policies directly impact American interests and policies. While current Turkish policy in the international community may not directly benefit American interests, in most ways, these policies do not threaten US interests and priorities abroad. By respecting Turkey's desire to act as a sovereign state and assert strength and power in its neighborhood, the US would continue to benefit from having a strong ally in a geographically important region of the world. Furthermore, by encouraging Turkey to establish strong relationships with other countries, Turkish foreign policy may become more consistent and predictable, which will benefit the US as it navigates its own relationship with Erdoğan and the Turks. And to demonstrate its recognition of independent Turkish foreign policy, the US should increase communication with Erdoğan and Turkish leadership.

### Recommendation #2

Regarding American interests, US policymakers should take advantage of the Turkish government's increasingly independent policy choices in order to protect American interests in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia, particularly with regards to Russia and China. An empowered Turkey could be in a position to fill power vacuums left behind by the US as American policy reorients towards China, particularly in the Middle East and Afghanistan. The US should also recognize Turkish interests in being a regional power, allowing Turkey to advance its influence by mediating negotiations in conflicts like Ukraine and Yemen while enabling the US to work indirectly with its rivals such as Iran in

the Yemen conflict. This will allow the United States to continue exerting influence and power in situations where it cannot militarily commit.

### Recommendation #3

Concerning the changes in the relationship between Turkey and the United States, the United States should reassess the common interests and goals with Turkey in today's international community. The basis of the American-Turkish relationship originally revolved around security interests during the Cold War, where the US benefited hugely from having an ally bordering Russia. While security concerns are still salient today, the US should recognize that a mutually beneficial relationship built around shared interests and common goals will be more sustainable. The US should recognize Turkish domestic financial difficulties and respect its economic interests, acknowledging that the sustainable trade developments and newfound ties between Turkey and African countries are beneficial to both Turkey and the region. Besides, the US should support Turkish economic development efforts in Central Asia, investing in Turkish political rapprochement and infrastructure projects. To lessen Turkish dependence on China for its economy, the US should provide alternative ways for Turkish economic recovery by creating stronger economic ties with Turkey through its foreign investment, particularly in technology development.

### Recommendation #4

With regards to energy, the United States should work towards a long-term goal for sustainable energy in Turkey, as this would provide a means for deepening ties between the two nations while also helping Turkey become less reliant on American rivals such as Russia and Iran. Aside from sustainable energy, the United States should also support the development of Turkish pipeline infrastructure from the Caspian Sea. This would benefit Turkey by providing a stronger access point to energy while lessening Turkish dependency on Russia and countering Russian hegemony in the region. The United States should focus on the energy sector as a point of overlapping interests between itself and Turkey. Both the US and Turkey have a high level of interest in energy, and focusing on this sector could allow for the development of a stronger bilateral relationship which serves both parties.

### Recommendation #5

Lastly, instead of maintaining the standard that US allies must align their values with the States, it is more sustainable to establish bilateral ties based on shared goals and interests rather than alliances where its allies must act in full agreement with the States. Although Turkey currently has a poor human rights record, especially its treatment towards its Kurdish population, the United States should incentivize

Turkey to improve and reform its human rights practices through third-party institutions and multilateral agreements. This could be in the form of economic agreements, multilateral security negotiations, or increasing inclusion in global power politics. During Turkey's process of accession to the EU, significant improvements were made in strengthening democratic institutions. The two states could also begin with the Uyghur issue in China, where both had shown strong condemnation towards the Chinese repression of Uyghurs, albeit a friendlier stance from Erdoğan in recent years because of Turkish economic dependency on China. By working with Turkey on human rights issues on the international stage, it could urge Erdoğan to be more responsible with the Kurdish population. Policymakers should adopt the mindset that the US can have a relationship with Turkey that is not predicated on human rights and democracy. It is important for the US to be consistent in reacting to human rights violations among its allies.

## Conclusion

*Yolanda Yang*

The relationship between Turkey and the United States has been complex since its institutionalization. However, the recent Turkish quest in increasing its role globally has led to a downward trajectory of the Ankara-Washington Alliance. Its domestic economic difficulties coupled with the increasing instability of its internal politics prompted an international rebranding of Turkey as competitive global power. As articulated in the first two sections of this report, Turkey has become assertive in its immediate neighboring countries, including Gulf states, Syria, and the Mediterranean, and re-engaged in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Sub-Saharan Africa. With the COVID-19 pandemic intensifying Erdoğan's dwindling popularity and the Turkish financial crisis, Turkey pivoted further away from the US-led Western alliance, increasing its cooperation and dependency with the US rivals, namely Russia, China, and Iran. As the two countries' visions and goals bifurcate, Turkish independent foreign policy approaches, such as the acquisition of S-400 systems and the incursion into Syria, caused great concerns for Washington, indicating an urgent need for the US to reevaluate its relationship with Turkey.

Despite the plethora of tensions caused by this Turkish assertiveness, the growing divergence between the two does not necessarily undermine the US's overarching interests. In fact, a stronger Turkey in its neighborhood would serve American interests in bringing local stability and countering Russia (in Central Asia and Ukraine) and China (in Africa). Given the strategic location of Turkey, it has the potential to become a crucial ally to the US in this geographically important region, particularly when the US is no longer in a position that has control over everything. Thus, the US should forgo the perception that its allies must fully align with its interests, allowing more autonomous foreign policy choices from Turkey. With this new geopolitical reality, this task force argues that the US should recalibrate its relationship with Turkey by constructing bilateral ties based on their shared interests. Instead of the previous uni-dimensional relationship underwritten by NATO that focused mainly on security, the US should also look into areas where the two countries' interests overlap, such as sustainable energy and security, and garner Turkish interests in those areas to further US's goals. Nevertheless, in the long run, the US should be watchful with Turkish dependency with its rivals and Turkish human rights issues at home, while incentivizing Turkey to realign with the States and its underlying principles based on their shared interests.

Looking forward, Turkey shifted its attitude towards the Russian invasion into Ukraine, calling it a "war" on February 27th and agreeing to activate article 19 of the Montreux Treaty, which would close

the Straits to the Russian battleships. This strong condemnation will test the Turkish transactional relationship with Russia, signaling a potential realignment of interests among Turkey, the US, and NATO. With the situation continuing to escalate, interests in negotiations will grow, as talks on providing humanitarian corridors for civilians and securing a temporary ceasefire will be needed. The conflict positions Turkey as a meaningful mediator in those negotiations, a role that it had long desired, and also presents an opportunity for the US to recalibrate its relationship with Turkey and reignite Turkish commitment to NATO.

## Bibliography

- Abrahamian, Ervand. *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations*. New York, UNITED STATES: New Press, The, 2013.  
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=952864>.
- Akçay, Nurettin, and Qingye Tang. "Turkey's Perceptions of China's Belt and Road Initiative (2013–2017): Media and Think-Tanks Discourse Analysis." *China Report (New Delhi)* 56, no. 2 (April 29, 2020): 221–41.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0009445520916877>.
- Akyol, Mustafa. "The Problem With Turkey's 'Zero Problems' Plan." Accessed February 25, 2022.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/11/15/why-turkey-turned-away-from-syria/the-problem-with-turkeys-zero-problems-plan>.
- Al-Anazi, Turki. "Strategic Importance of the Red Sea." USAWC Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, 2001. <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=816618>.
- Alemdaroglu, Ayca, and Sultan Tepe. "Erdoğan Is Turning Turkey into a Chinese Client State." *Foreign Policy*, September 16, 2020.  
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/16/Erdoğan-is-turning-turkey-into-a-chinese-client-state/>.
- Alhassan, Abubakar. "Turkey's Ambitious Plans for Africa." *Geopolitical Futures* (blog), September 22, 2021.  
<https://geopoliticalfutures.com/turkeys-ambitious-plans-for-africa/>.
- Almuedo, Ana. "New Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Middle East: Neither so New, Nor so Turkish." Accessed February 14, 2022.  
<https://www.iemed.org/publication/new-turkish-foreign-policy-towards-the-middle-east-neither-so-new-nor-so-turkish/>.
- Alshagouri, Zed Abdullah. *Turkey-Azerbaijan Route through Zangezur Corridor*. October 7, 2021.  
<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/are-azerbaijan-turkey-drills-meant-to-send-a-tough-message-to-iran-50556>.
- Amin, Mohammed. "Suakin: 'Forgotten' Sudanese Island Becomes Focus for Red Sea Rivalries." *Middle East Eye*. March 2018. Accessed February 26, 2022.  
<https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/news/suakin-island-sudan-turkey-saudi-arabia-egypt-394055164>.
- Aras, Bülent. "State and Institutions in Turkey." *Turkey's State Crisis: Institutions, Reform, and Conflict*, 2022.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1bd4mw8.7>.
- Arat, Yeşim, and Şevket Pamuk. *Turkey between Democracy and Authoritarianism*. Cambridge New York, NY Port Melbourne, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- . *Turkey between Democracy and Authoritarianism*. Cambridge New York, NY Port Melbourne, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Ataman, Muhittin. "In Every Field, Turkey and Libya Take Steps for Future | | SETA." Accessed January 31, 2022.  
<https://www.setav.org/en/in-every-field-turkey-and-libya-take-steps-for-future/>.
- Avundukluoglu, Emin. "Turkey to Continue Supporting Baku 'with All Means.'" *Online News Media*. Anadolu Ajansı. Accessed February 25, 2022.  
<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-to-continue-supporting-baku-with-all-means/1992169>.
- Aydın, Selçuk, and Hamdullah Baycar. "Israel, the Gulf and Turkey: Why Is Everyone Making up in the Middle East?," n.d. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/middle-east-reconciliation-season-what-will-come>.
- Aydıntaşbaş, Asli, and Cinzia Bianco. "Useful Enemies: How the Turkey-UAE Rivalry Is Remaking The ...," n.d.
- Ayub. "What Is Riba in Islam?" *Qardus*. Accessed February 25, 2022.  
<https://www.qardus.com/news/what-is-riba-in-islam>.
- B. Kanat, Kilic, and Jackson Hannon. "Turkey-Israel Relations in the New Era: Opportunities and Challenges. Mediterranean," n.d.
- Baç, Meltem MÜFTÜLER. "Turkey's Grand Strategy in the Context of Global and Regional Challenges," n.d., 25.
- Bahgat, Gawdat. "Iran-Turkey Energy Cooperation: Strategic Implications." *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 4 (2014): 121–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12101>.
- Balta, Evren, and Soli Özel. "Turkey's Foreign Policy: Opportunities and Constraints in a New Era." *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (2021): 539–60. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/836667>.

- . “Turkey’s Foreign Policy: Opportunities and Constraints in a New Era.” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (2021): 539–60. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/836667>.
- Baran. “Is Kemalism Dead in Turkey?” Text. Hoover Institution. Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.hoover.org/research/kemalism-dead-turkey>.
- Bardakçı, Mehmet. “Is a Strategic Partnership Between Turkey and Russia Feasible at the Expense of Turkey’s Relations with the EU and NATO?” *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 69, no. 4 (December 1, 2021): 535–59. <https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2021-0001>.
- Barkey, Henri. “How Erdoğan Muscled Turkey to the Center of the World Stage.” Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed January 27, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/article/how-erdogan-muscled-turkey-center-world-stage>.
- Ben-Ami, Shlomo. “US Must Lead the Way in Keeping Sudan from Becoming the next Libya.” *The Strategist*, November 22, 2021. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/us-must-lead-the-way-in-keeping-sudan-from-becoming-the-next-libya/>.
- Bereketeab, Redie. “The Morality of the U.N. Security Council Sanctions against Eritrea: Defensibility, Political Objectives, and Consequences.” *African Studies Review* 56, no. 2 (2013): 145–61. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43904932>.
- Borsari, Federico. “Turkey’s Drone Diplomacy: Lessons for Europe – European Council on Foreign Relations.” *ECFR* (blog), January 31, 2022. <https://ecfr.eu/article/turkeys-drone-diplomacy-lessons-for-europe/>.
- Brown, David. “Ukraine Maps: Tracking Russia’s Invasion.” *BBC News*, February 25, 2022, sec. Europe. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>.
- . “Ukraine Maps: Tracking Russia’s Invasion.” *BBC News*, February 25, 2022, sec. Europe. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>.
- Burdeau, Cain. “Eastern Mediterranean Turns Into Source of Gas and Conflict.” Accessed February 9, 2022. <https://www.courthousenews.com/eastern-mediterranean-turns-into-source-of-gas-and-conflict/>.
- Cagaptay, Soner. *Erdoğan’s Empire*. 1st ed. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019. [http://tabyincenter.ir/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Soner\\_Cagaptay\\_Erdoğan%E2%80%99s\\_Empire\\_Turkey\\_And\\_The\\_Politics\\_Of\\_The\\_Middle.pdf](http://tabyincenter.ir/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Soner_Cagaptay_Erdoğan%E2%80%99s_Empire_Turkey_And_The_Politics_Of_The_Middle.pdf).
- . “Erdoğan’s End Game | Foreign Affairs.” Accessed February 14, 2022. [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2022-01-04/Erdoğan-s-end-game?check\\_logged\\_in=1&utm\\_medium=promo\\_email&utm\\_source=lo\\_flows&utm\\_campaign=registered\\_user\\_welcome&utm\\_term=email\\_1&utm\\_content=20220210](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2022-01-04/Erdoğan-s-end-game?check_logged_in=1&utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=lo_flows&utm_campaign=registered_user_welcome&utm_term=email_1&utm_content=20220210).
- Camara, Kamissa. “It Is Time to Rethink U.S. Strategy in the Sahel.” United States Institute of Peace. United States Institute of Peace. Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/04/it-time-rethink-us-strategy-sahel>.
- Cantelmo, Maria Chiara. “The Fall of Kemalism and the New Face of Political Islam: 20 Crucial Years in Turkey’s History (1980-2002).” *Athens Journal of History* 4, no. 1 (December 30, 2017): 37–54. <https://doi.org/10.30958/ajhis.4-1-3>.
- Carassava, Anthee. “US Warship Arrives in Crete as Greece-Turkey Standoff Escalates.” VOA. Accessed February 9, 2022. [https://www.voanews.com/a/europe\\_us-warship-arrives-crete-greece-turkey-standoff-escalates/6194647.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_us-warship-arrives-crete-greece-turkey-standoff-escalates/6194647.html).
- Carter, Stephen G. “Iran, Natural Gas and Asia’s Energy Needs: A Spoiler for Sanctions?” *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 1 (2014): 41–61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12056>.
- Casin, Mesut. “ANALYSIS - Strategic, Legal Aspects of Turkey-Libya Deal.” Accessed February 12, 2022. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/analysis-strategic-legal-aspects-of-turkey-libya-deal/1673079>.
- Cengiz, Sinem. “How to Read Turkey’s Stance on the Yemen Crisis.” n.d. <https://english.alarabiya.net/views/news/middle-east/2015/03/29/How-to-read-Turkey-s-stance-on-the-Yemen-crisis>.
- Cevrioglu, Ebru Sengul. “Turkey to Lay 169 Kms of Seabed Gas Pipeline at Sakarya Gas Field.” AA Energy, July 28, 2021. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/natural-gas/turkey-to-lay-169-kms-of-seabed-gas-pipeline-at-sakarya-gas-field/33283>.

- . “Turkey to Lay 169 Kms of Seabed Gas Pipeline at Sakarya Gas Field.” AA Energy, July 28, 2021. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/natural-gas/turkey-to-lay-169-kms-of-seabed-gas-pipeline-at-sakarya-gas-field/33283>.
- Charountaki, Marianna. *Iran and Turkey: International and Regional Engagement in the Middle East*. Library of International Relations (Series) 87. London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2018.
- Claus, Patricia. “US-Cyprus Relations at an All-Time High, Pompeo Says.” *GreekReporter.Com* (blog), January 15, 2021. <https://greekreporter.com/2021/01/15/us-cyprus-relations-at-an-all-time-high-pompeo-says/>.
- Colakoğlu, Selçuk. “China’s Belt and Road Initiative and Turkey’s Middle Corridor: A Question of Compatibility.” Middle East Institute, January 29, 2019. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-and-turkeys-middle-corridor-question-compatibility>.
- Curtis, Glenn E., Eric J. Hooglund, and Library of Congress, eds. *Iran: A Country Study*. 5th ed. Area Handbook Series. Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O, 2008.
- Dalacoura, Katerina. “Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Power Projection and Post-Ideological Politics.” *International Affairs* 97, no. 4 (July 1, 2021): 1125–42. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iab082>.
- Davutoğlu, Ahmet. “Turkic Republics Since Independence: Towards A Common Future,” 2013. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/gray-literature-detail?id=330103>.
- De La Cámara, Manuel. “CIDOB - Turkey and the European Union: A Difficult but Critical Relationship.” CIDOB. Accessed February 13, 2022. [http://www.cidob.org/publicaciones/serie\\_de\\_publicacion/notes\\_internacionals\\_cidob/256/turkey\\_and\\_the\\_european\\_union\\_a\\_difficult\\_but\\_critical\\_relationship](http://www.cidob.org/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/notes_internacionals_cidob/256/turkey_and_the_european_union_a_difficult_but_critical_relationship).
- Demirdas, Ali. “Sources of Turkey’s Current Assertive Foreign Policy in MENA.” *Inside Arabia* (blog), February 17, 2020. <https://insidearabia.com/sources-of-turkeys-current-assertive-foreign-policy-in-mena/>.
- Demirtas, Serkan. “Does Turkey Regret Supporting Saudi Arabia in Yemen War?” *Hürriyet Daily News*. Accessed February 21, 2022. <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/serkan-demirtas/does-turkey-regret-supporting-yemen-war-139378>.
- DeYoung, Karen, and Kareem Fahim. “U.S. Sanctions NATO Ally Turkey over Its Purchase of Russian Missile Defense System.” *Washington Post*, December 15, 2020. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/us-sanctions-nato-ally-turkey-over-its-purchase-of-russian-missile-defense-system/2020/12/14/f442c342-3e38-11eb-8bc0-ae155bee4aff\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/us-sanctions-nato-ally-turkey-over-its-purchase-of-russian-missile-defense-system/2020/12/14/f442c342-3e38-11eb-8bc0-ae155bee4aff_story.html).
- Duran, Burhanettin. “Turkey’s Busy Diplomatic Agenda: Egypt, Ukraine, Libya.” SETA, April 15, 2021. <https://www.setav.org/en/turkeys-busy-diplomatic-agenda-egypt-ukraine-libya/>.
- Egeresi, Zoltán. “How the Abraham Accords Affected the Turkish Foreign Policy?,” n.d. <https://dayan.org/content/how-abraham-accords-affected-turkish-foreign-policy>.
- Elahee, Mohammad, Farid Sadrich, Mike Wilman, and Pervez N. Ghauri. *Reintegrating Iran with the West: Challenges and Opportunities*. Bingley, UNITED KINGDOM: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2015. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=2074101>.
- England, Andrew, David Sheppard, and Derek Brower. “US in Talks with Qatar over Gas Supplies to Europe in Event of Ukraine Invasion.” *Financial Times*, January 22, 2022. <https://www.ft.com/content/1ac9a0b9-5e93-4d1c-8f9b-d3a16db2467a>.
- . “US in Talks with Qatar over Gas Supplies to Europe in Event of Ukraine Invasion.” *Financial Times*, January 22, 2022. <https://www.ft.com/content/1ac9a0b9-5e93-4d1c-8f9b-d3a16db2467a>.
- Erbay, Nur. “New Era Ahead as Turkey Unravels Knots in Foreign Policy,” n.d. <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/news-analysis/new-era-ahead-as-turkey-unravels-knots-in-foreign-policy>.
- Escritt, Thomas, and Sarah Marsh. “How a German State Helped Moscow Push a Pipeline, Weakening Ukraine.” *Reuters*, February 24, 2022, sec. Energy. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/how-german-state-helped-moscow-push-pipeline-weakening-ukraine-2022-02-24/>.
- . “How a German State Helped Moscow Push a Pipeline, Weakening Ukraine.” *Reuters*, February 24, 2022, sec. Energy.

- <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/how-german-state-helped-moscow-push-pipeline-weakening-ukraine-2022-02-24/>.
- Euronews. "Israel, Greece and Cyprus Sign Deal for EastMed Gas Pipeline," 2020.  
<https://www.euronews.com/2020/01/02/israel-greece-and-cyprus-sign-deal-for-eastmed-gas-pipeline>.
- Farghaly, Maher. "Brotherhood's Al-Islah and Domination of Yemen." *Center For Middle Eastern Studies* (blog). Accessed February 3, 2022.  
<http://www.theportal-center.com/2019/08/brotherhoods-al-islah-and-domination-of-yemen/>.
- Farooq, Umar. "Turkish Firms Eye Boon in Deepening Bilateral Ties with Qatar." Accessed February 7, 2022.  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/10/hlturkish-firms-eye-boon-in-deepening-bilateral-ties-with-qatar>.
- . "Turkish Firms Eye Boon in Deepening Bilateral Ties with Qatar." Accessed February 7, 2022.  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/10/hlturkish-firms-eye-boon-in-deepening-bilateral-ties-with-qatar>.
- Fuller & Bush. *World Energy Atlas, 7th Edition*. 7th ed., 2006.
- Furuncu, Yunus. "COVID-19's Blow to Energy Markets." Anadolu Ajansi, April 24, 2020.  
<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/analysis-covid-19s-blow-to-energy-markets/1817106>.
- Gafarli, Turan. "Is Russian Cultural Hegemony in Central Asia Finally Over?" *Politics Today*, July 6, 2020.  
<https://politicstoday.org/is-russian-cultural-hegemony-in-central-asia-finally-over/>.
- Gall, Carlotta. "An Exhibit Meant to Showcase Kurdish Suffering Provoked a Furor Instead." *The New York Times*, January 1, 2022, sec. World.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/01/world/europe/turkey-kurdish-art-exhibit.html>.
- Gall, Carlotta, and Safak Timur. "12 Migrants Freeze to Death, Stripped by Greek Guards, Turkey Says." *The New York Times*, February 2, 2022, sec. World.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/02/world/europe/greece-turkey-migrant-deaths.html>.
- Gencturk, Ahmet. "Italian Ambassador Hails 'excellent' Relations with Turkey." Accessed February 14, 2022.  
<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/italian-ambassador-hails-excellent-relations-with-turkey/2435425>.
- Gjevori, Elis. "Turkey's 'Blue Homeland': Striking a Balance in the Eastern Mediterranean." Turkey's 'Blue Homeland': striking a balance in the Eastern Mediterranean. Accessed January 31, 2022.  
<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/turkey-s-blue-homeland-striking-a-balance-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-37356>.
- Graham-Harrison, Emma, and Stephanie Kirchgaessner. "The West Is Supporting Terrorism against Turkey, Claims Erdoğan." *The Guardian*, August 2, 2016, sec. World news.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/02/the-west-is-supporting-terrorism-against-turkey-claims-erdogan>.
- Gumrukcu, Tuvan, and Pavel Polityuk. "Ukraine Hails Turkey Drone Deal, Erdoğan Offer to Mediate in Russia Standoff." *Reuters*, February 3, 2022, sec. Europe.  
<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/Erdoğan-visits-ukraine-hoping-play-mediator-with-russia-2022-02-03/>.
- Guzansky, Yoel. "Israel's Periphery Doctrines: Then and Now," n.d.
- HALE, WILLIAM. "Turkey, the U.S., Russia, and the Syrian Civil War." *Insight Turkey* 21, no. 4 (2019): 25–40.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26842776>.
- Haltiwanger, John. "Turkey's Autocratic Leader Praises the Taliban's 'moderate Statements' and Says He's 'Open to Cooperation.'" *Business Insider*, August 18, 2021.  
<https://www.businessinsider.com/turkey-Erdoğan-says-hes-open-to-cooperation-with-taliban-2021-8>.
- Hazbun, Waleed. "American Interventionism and the Geopolitical Roots of Yemen's Catastrophe." *MERIP*, March 27, 2019.  
<https://merip.org/2019/03/american-interventionism-and-the-geopolitical-roots-of-yemens-catastrophe/>.
- Herszenhorn, David, Rym Momtaz, and Jacopo Barigazzi. "Rough Seas for NATO as Turkey Clashes with Allies – POLITICO." Accessed February 25, 2022.  
<https://www.politico.eu/article/rough-seas-for-nato-as-turkey-clashes-with-allies/>.
- Hillman, Jennifer, and David Sacks. "China's Belt and Road: Implications for the United States." How the U.S. should respond to China's belt and road, March 2021.  
<https://www.cfr.org/report/chinas-belt-and-road-implications-for-the-united-states/>.

- Hintz, Lisel. “‘Take It Outside!’ National Identity Contestation in the Foreign Policy Arena.” *European Journal of International Relations* 22, no. 2 (2016): 335–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066115588205>.
- . “‘Take It Outside!’ National Identity Contestation in the Foreign Policy Arena.” *European Journal of International Relations* 22, no. 2 (2016): 335–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066115588205>.
- Hoffman, Max. “Flashpoints in U.S.-Turkey Relations in 2021 - Center for American Progress.” Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/flashpoints-u-s-turkey-relations-2021/>.
- Huang, Yiling. “Research on Chinese Energy Investment in Turkey under the Silk Road Strategy.” *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 94 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/94/1/012045>.
- Hubbard, Ben, and Amy Qin. “As the U.S. Pulls Back From the Mideast, China Leans In.” *The New York Times*, February 1, 2022, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/01/world/middleeast/china-middle-east.html>.
- . “As the U.S. Pulls Back From the Mideast, China Leans In.” *The New York Times*, February 1, 2022, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/01/world/middleeast/china-middle-east.html>.
- Hutt, Rosamond. “4 Things to Know about Turkey’s Economy.” World Economic Forum. Accessed February 27, 2022. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/11/4-things-to-know-turkey-economy/>.
- Idiz, Semih. “Animosity toward Iran Reaches Fever Pitch in Turkey after Aleppo - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East.” Al-Monitor, December 20, 2016. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2016/12/turkey-iran-animosity-reaches-fever-pitch.html>.
- Irish, John, Robin Emmott, and Jonathan Saul. “NATO Leaves Black Sea Exposed as Russia Invades Ukraine.” *Reuters*, February 24, 2022, sec. Europe. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/nato-leaves-black-sea-exposed-russia-invades-ukraine-2022-02-24/>.
- Jacinto, Leela. “Turkey’s Post-Coup Purge and Erdoğan’s Private Army – Foreign Policy.” Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/13/turkeys-post-coup-purge-and-Erdogans-private-army-sadat-perincek-gulen/>.
- Jakes, Lara, and Mona El-Naggar. “U.S. Blocks \$130 Million in Aid for Egypt Over Rights Abuses.” *The New York Times*, January 28, 2022, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/28/us/politics/egypt-us-human-rights.html>.
- Jones, Dorian. “Erdoğan Defies Trump Over Iran Sanctions.” VOA. Accessed January 17, 2022. [https://www.voanews.com/a/europe\\_Erdogan-defies-trump-over-iran-sanctions/6176609.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_Erdogan-defies-trump-over-iran-sanctions/6176609.html).
- Juneau, Thomas. “How War in Yemen Transformed the Iran-Houthi Partnership.” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 0, no. 0 (July 30, 2021): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1954353>.
- Karaca, Salih Z. “Turkish Foreign Policy in the Year 2000 and beyond: Her Opening up Policy to Africa.” *Dis Politika* 25(3/4) (2000): 116–18.
- Koenig, John. “‘Restraint’ in Action: America and the Eastern Mediterranean.” *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune* (blog), February 4, 2022. <https://jstribune.com/koenig-restraint-in-action-america-and-the-eastmed/>.
- Kokkinidis, Tasos. “Joe Biden’s Manifesto for Greek Americans and U.S.-Greece Relations.” *GreekReporter.Com* (blog), October 15, 2020. <https://greekreporter.com/2020/10/15/joe-bidens-manifesto-for-greek-americans-and-u-s-greece-relations/>.
- Küçük, Yusuf Kenan, Sima Aldardari, Ambassador William Roebuck, and Ambassador Douglas A. Silliman. “Eyes on U.S., Regional Concerns, UAE and Turkey Improve Ties,” n.d.
- Kucukgocmen, Ali. “Turkish Trial in Khashoggi Killing ‘Nearing Deadlock,’” n.d. <https://www.reuters.com/world/turkish-trial-khashoggi-killing-nearing-deadlock-journalism-watchdog-2021-11-23/>.
- Kulaksız, Sıla. “Financial Integration Via Belt and Road Initiative: China–Turkey Cooperation.” *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies* 11, no. 1–2 (2019): 48–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974910119874632>.
- Kutlay, Mustafa, and Ziya Öniş. “Turkish Foreign Policy in a Post-Western Order: Strategic Autonomy or New Forms of Dependence?” *International Affairs* 97, no. 4 (July 1, 2021): 1085–1104. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iab094>.
- Kuzio, Taras. “Turkey Forges a New Geo-Strategic Axis from Azerbaijan to Ukraine.” Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), November 18, 2020.

- <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/turkey-forges-new-geo-strategic-axis-azerbaijan-ukraine/>.
- Lawler, Dave. "Putin Launches Attacks across Ukraine." *Axios*, February 24, 2022. <https://www.axios.com/putin-delares-war-on-ukraine-5a28dbd5-362f-4e97-91e1-84272f7390fd.html>.
- Lewis, Paul, Caelainn Barr, Seán Clarke, Antonio Voce, Pablo Gutiérrez, and Cath Levett. "Revealed: The Rise and Rise of Populist Rhetoric." *the Guardian*. Accessed February 25, 2022. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2019/mar/06/revealed-the-rise-and-rise-of-populist-rhetoric>.
- Liz Cookman. "Turkey's Tough 2021." *Foreign Policy*, January 3, 2022. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/03/turkey-economy-Erdoğan-currency-climate/>.
- Lubold, Gordon, and Doug Cameron. "U.S. Ejects Turkey From F-35 Fighter Program." *Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 2019, sec. Politics. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-says-turkeys-purchase-of-russian-air-defense-system-undermines-nato-11563390166>.
- MacGillivray, Iain. "Turbulence, the Taliban, and Turkey's Role in Afghanistan's Future." *The Lowy Institute*, September 6, 2021. <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/turbulence-taliban-and-turkey-s-role-afghanistan-s-future>.
- Macias, Amanda. "U.S. Sanctions Turkey over Purchase of Russian S-400 Missile System." *CNBC*, December 14, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/14/us-sanctions-turkey-over-russian-s400.html>.
- Maguid, Mohamed Abdel. "Why Egypt Is Concerned about Sudan-Turkey Deal over Suakin Island?" *Horn Affairs* (blog), January 10, 2018. <https://hornaffairs.com/2018/01/10/egypt-concerned-sudan-turkey-deal-over-suakin-island/>.
- Makovsky, Alan. "Turkey's Refugee Dilemma: Tiptoeing Toward Integration." *Center for American Progress*, March 13, 2019. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2019/03/13/467183/turkeys-refugee-dilemma>.
- . "Turkey's Refugee Dilemma: Tiptoeing Toward Integration," n.d.
- Malsin, Jared. "Turkish-Owned Ship Hit by Bomb Off Coast of Odessa." *WSJ*, February 25, 2022. <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/russia-ukraine-latest-news/card/sNvkBYqiINav8S5cDGaL>.
- Malsin, Jared, and Brett Forrest. "F-16 Sale Could Mend U.S., Turkey Ties, but Tension With Russia Intrudes." *Wall Street Journal*, January 22, 2022, sec. World. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/f-16-sale-could-mend-u-s-turkey-ties-but-tension-with-russia-intrudes-11642847406>.
- Mandel, Eric. "The Middle East Is Realigning as Israel's Ties with Other Nations Warm," n.d. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-697005>.
- Markind, Daniel. "Will Natural Gas Isolate Turkey And Integrate Israel In The Eastern Mediterranean?" *Forbes*. Accessed February 9, 2022. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielmarkind/2020/10/22/will-natural-gas-isolate-turkey-and-integrate-israel-in-the-eastern-mediterranean/>.
- Martín, José. "Turkey's Judiciary Calls on Ali Erbas to Tone It down | Atalayar - Las Claves Del Mundo En Tus Manos." Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/turkeys-judiciary-calls-ali-erbas-tone-it-down>.
- Martin, Nik. "TurkStream: Who Profits, Who Loses out? | DW | 19.11.2018." *DW.COM*, November 19, 2018. <https://www.dw.com/en/turkstream-who-profits-who-loses-out/a-46364057>.
- McWilliams, Ben, George Zachmann, Giovanni Sgaravatti, and Simone Tagliapietra. "Can Europe Survive Painlessly without Russian Gas?" *Bruegel* (blog), January 27, 2022. <https://www.bruegel.org/2022/01/can-europe-survive-painlessly-without-russian-gas/>.
- . "Can Europe Survive Painlessly without Russian Gas?" *Bruegel* (blog), January 27, 2022. <https://www.bruegel.org/2022/01/can-europe-survive-painlessly-without-russian-gas/>.
- Mikhail, George. "Egypt Supports Somalia to Counter Turkish Influence - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East." Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/01/egypt-supports-somalia-counter-turkish-influence>.

- . “Egypt Supports Somalia to Counter Turkish Influence - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East.” Al-Monitor. Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/01/egypt-supports-somalia-counter-turkish-influence>.
- Milkias, Paulos. “U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Africa with Emphasis on Ethiopia and Eritrea.” *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 1, no. 2 (2004): 58–81. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27828839>.
- Miller, Greg, Missy Ryan, Sudarsan Raghavan, and Souad Mekhennet. “Libya Risks Losing Control of Its Destiny as Planeloads of Fighters and Arms Flood the Country.” Washington Post, February 27, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2021/libya-civil-war-russia-turkey-fighter-planes/>.
- Murinson, Alexander. “The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 6 (2006): 945–64. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4284512>.
- News, A. B. C. “Turkey, Egypt Agree to Further Talks in Bid to Ease Tensions.” ABC News. Accessed January 31, 2022. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/turkey-egypt-agree-talks-bid-ease-tensions-79895258>.
- Nsour, Mohammad. “Economic Cooperation between the United Arab Emirates and Turkey: Legal and Policy Considerations.” *Arab Law Quarterly* 33, 1 (2019) (n.d.).
- Nyadera, Israel Nyaburi, and Michael Otieno Kisaka. “Contemporary Conflicts, Cross border Military Operations, and the Declining Role of the UN: The Case of Turkey and Saudi Arabia.” n.d.
- Onar, Nora. “Kemalists, Islamists, and Liberals: Shifting Patterns of Confrontation and Consensus, 2002–06.” *Turkish Studies* 8, no. 2 (2007): 273–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683840701312252>.
- Orakçi, Serhat. “The Rise of Turkey in Africa.” Al Jazeera Center for Studies. Al Jazeera. Accessed February 25, 2022. <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/analyses/rise-turkey-africa>.
- Osborn, Andrew. “Putin Says Turkey Ambassador Murder Is Ploy to Wreck Syrian Peace Process.” *Reuters*, December 19, 2016, sec. Emerging Markets. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-russia-diplomat-putin-idUSKBN1482B3>.
- Osborn, Andrew, and Dmitry Antonov. “Putin Orders Troops to Ukraine after Recognizing Breakaway Regions.” *Reuters*, February 22, 2022, sec. European Markets. <https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/kremlin-says-no-concrete-plans-summit-with-biden-over-ukraine-2022-02-21/>.
- Özdemir, Gloria Shkurti. “Russia-Turkey-US Energy Triangle: Success of TurkStream | Opinion.” Daily Sabah, January 13, 2021. <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/russia-turkey-us-energy-triangle-success-of-turkstream>.
- Özdil, Eser. “Can Energy Be the Key to Turkish-US Relations in the Biden Era?” *Atlantic Council* (blog), July 1, 2021. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysource/can-energy-be-the-key-to-turkish-us-relations-in-the-biden-era/>.
- Ozkan, Mehmet. “A New Actor or Passer-By? The Political Economy of Turkey’s Engagement with Africa.” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 14, no. 1 (2012): 113–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2012.656968>.
- Pallone, Frank, and Gus Bilirakis. “Pallone Leads Bipartisan Call to Biden Administration Urging Rejection of F-16 Fighter Jet Sale to Turkey.” Congressman Frank Pallone, February 4, 2022. <https://pallone.house.gov/media/press-releases/pallone-leads-bipartisan-call-biden-administration-urging-rejection-f-16>.
- Panettieri, Joe. “Huawei: Banned and Permitted in Which Countries? List and FAQ.” ChannelE2E, December 27, 2021. <https://www.channele2e.com/business/enterprise/huawei-banned-in-which-countries/#:~:text=A%3A%20Numerous%20countries%20allege%20that,property%20from%20foreign%20technology%20companies>.
- Phillips, Christopher. “Eyes Bigger Than Stomachs: Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in Syria.” Middle East Policy,” n.d.
- Pierini, Marc. “Calculations in Kabul.” Carnegie Middle East Center, September 13, 2021. <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/85323>.
- Pierni, Marc, and Siccardi. “Understanding Turkey’s Direction: Three Scenarios - Carnegie Europe - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.” Accessed February 23, 2022. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/12/09/understanding-turkey-s-direction-three-scenarios-pub-85936>.

- Pierpaoli, Paul G., Jr. "Houthis." In *Middle East Conflicts from Ancient Egypt to the 21st Century: An Encyclopedia and Document Collection*, edited by Spencer C. Tucker, 2:533. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2019. <http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX7927000472/GVRL?sid=bookmark-GVRL&xid=05963a3c>.
- Psaropoulos, John. "Turkey Opens New Dispute over Sovereignty of East Aegean Islands." Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/8/turkey-opens-new-dispute-over-sovereignty-of-east-aegean-islands>.
- Recknagel, Charles. "U.S. Arrest Awakens Ghosts Of Turkey's Iran-Gold Scandal." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 14:13:36Z, sec. Features & Blogs. <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkey-us-arrest-awakens-ghost-iran-gold-scandal/27704593.html>.
- Remler, Philip. "Russia's Stony Path in the South Caucasus." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 20, 2020. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/10/20/russia-s-stony-path-in-south-caucasus-pub-82993>.
- SABAH, DAILY. "Turkey's Erdoğan Discusses Bilateral Ties with Ethiopian PM Abiy." Daily Sabah, August 1, 2021. <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkeys-erdogan-discusses-bilateral-ties-with-ethiopian-pm-abiy>.
- Sabry, Mohamed. "Egypt, Turkey Seek to Reset Fractured Relations - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East." Accessed January 31, 2022. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/05/egypt-turkey-seek-reset-fractured-relations>.
- Sawani, Youssef. "The United States and Libya: Turbulent History and Uncertain Future." *E-International Relations* (blog), December 27, 2014. <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/12/27/the-united-states-and-libya-turbulent-history-and-uncertain-future/>.
- Seskuria, Natia. "Targeting Turkish-Georgian Relations: Russian Disinformation Is Taking a Local Turn." RUSI, September 29, 2021. <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/targeting-turkish-georgian-relations-russian-disinformation-taking-local-turn/>.
- Shear, Michael D. "Biden Designates Qatar as a Major Non-NATO Ally." *The New York Times*, January 31, 2022, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/31/us/politics/biden-qatar-nato.html>.
- . "Biden Designates Qatar as a Major Non-NATO Ally." *The New York Times*, January 31, 2022, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/31/us/politics/biden-qatar-nato.html>.
- Sheiki, Marjon. "Iran, Turkey Sign Trade Deals Worth \$100mn." Mehr News Agency, June 1, 2017. <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/125699/Iran-Turkey-sign-trade-deals-worth-100mn>.
- Sheiko, Youssef. "The United Arab Emirates: Turkey's New Rival," n.d. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/united-arab-emirates-turkeys-new-rival>.
- Siccardi, Marc Pierini, Francesco. "Understanding Turkey's Direction: Three Scenarios." Carnegie Europe. Accessed February 23, 2022. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/12/09/understanding-turkey-s-direction-three-scenarios-pub-85936>.
- Siradag, Abdurrahim. "Turkey's Engagement with the African Organisations: Partner or Competitor?" *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 76, no. 4 (2020): 519–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928420963321>.
- Sloat, Amanda. "The West's Turkey Conundrum." *Brookings* (blog), November 30, 2001. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-wests-turkey-conundrum/>.
- Smith, Julianne. "Strains on the European Union: Implications for American Foreign Policy." *Hampton Roads International Security Quarterly*, April 1, 2016, 60.
- Soldatkin, Vladimir. "Putin Says Turkey Safe from Gas Crisis Thanks to TurkStream Pipeline." *Reuters*, September 29, 2021, sec. Energy. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/putin-says-turkey-safe-gas-crisis-thanks-turkstream-pipeline-2021-09-29/>.
- Sönnichsen, N. "Turkey: Natural Gas Consumption 2020." Statista, August 26, 2021. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/703684/natural-gas-consumption-turkey/>.
- Staff, Toi, and AP. "Israel Backs Cyprus as Turkey Moves Gas Drill into Its Waters." Accessed February 10, 2022. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-backs-cyprus-as-turkey-moves-gas-drill-into-its-waters/>.

- Suleymanov, Elchin, Farhad Rahmanov, and Cihan Bulut. "Economic and Political Analysis of Azerbaijan-Turkey Energy Relations." *Journal of Management, Economics, and Industrial Organization* 1, no. 2 (August 15, 2017): 24–44. <https://doi.org/10.31039/jomeino.2017.1.2.3>.
- Sun, Ru. "Turkey to Continue to Support Huawei's R&D Center in Istanbul: Minister." *Chinadaily.Com.Cn*, November 16, 2021. <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202111/16/WS619309daa310cdd39bc758d7.html>.
- Tagliapietra, Simone. "Iran's Gas Market: Reserves, Production, Consumption, Trade." Iran after the (Potential) Nuclear Deal: Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM), 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep01043.4>.
- Tastekin, Fehim. "Turkey Views Ties with Ethiopia as Key to Influence in Africa - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East." Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/08/turkey-views-ties-ethiopia-key-influence-africa>.
- Terry, Kyilah. "The EU-Turkey Deal, Five Years On: A Frayed and Controversial but Enduring Blueprint." [migrationpolicy.org](http://migrationpolicy.org), April 8, 2021. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/eu-turkey-deal-five-years-on>.
- Tok, Muzaffer Hakan. "Turkey Can Mediate in the Renaissance Dam Dispute | Opinion." Daily Sabah, June 24, 2021. <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/turkey-can-mediate-in-the-renaissance-dam-dispute>.
- Toksabay, Ece. "Turkish Arms Sales to Azerbaijan Surged before Nagorno-Karabakh Fighting." *Reuters*, October 14, 2020, sec. Middle East & Africa. <https://www.reuters.com/article/armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-arms-int-idUSKBN26Z230>.
- Tol, Gönül, and Birol Baskan. "From 'Hard Power' to 'Soft Power' and Back Again: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East." Middle East Institute. Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/hard-power-soft-power-and-back-again-turkish-foreign-policy-middle-east>.
- Toumi, Abdunour. "How Algeria-Turkey Ambitious Strategic Rapprochement Will Affect France's Sahel Policy?" *Insight Turkey* 23, no. Fall 2021 (December 10, 2021): 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.25253/99.2021234.3>.
- Troianovski, Anton. "Putin Orders Troops to Separatist Regions and Recognizes Their Independence." *The New York Times*, February 21, 2022, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/02/21/world/ukraine-russia-putin-biden>.
- Tutumlu, Assel. "Turkey-Central Asia Relations: A Strategic Overview." Near East University: Near East Institute, 2020. <https://yde.neu.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/170/2020/09/YDE-Orta-Asya-29.09.2020.pdf>.
- Tuysuz, Gul, and Sabrina Tavernise. "Turkey's Top Military Leaders Resign - The New York Times." Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/30/world/europe/30turkey.html>.
- Ülgen, Sinan. "Redefining the U.S.-Turkey Relationship." Carnegie Europe. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/07/26/redefining-u.s.-turkey-relationship-pub-85016>.
- Valansi, Karel. "Turkey Has Flipped the Script on Its Regional Isolation. But Will It Amount to Real Change?" *Atlantic Council* (blog), October 12, 2021. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysource/turkey-has-flipped-the-script-on-its-regional-isolation-but-will-it-amount-to-real-change/>.
- Vertin, Zach. "RED SEA RIVALRIES: THE GULF, THE HORN, & THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF THE RED SEA." Brookings Doha Center, August 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Red-Sea-Rivalries-The-Gulf-The-Horn-and-the-New-Geopolitics-of-the-Red-Sea-1.pdf>.
- Walker, Shaun, and Jennifer Rankin. "Erdoğan and Putin Discuss Closer Ties in First Meeting since Jet Downing." *The Guardian*, August 9, 2016, sec. World news. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/09/Erdoğan-meets-putin-leaders-look-mend-ties-jet-downing-russia-turkey>.
- Weise, Zia. "Turkey's Balkan Comeback." POLITICO, May 15, 2018. <https://www.politico.eu/article/turkey-western-balkans-comeback-european-union-recep-tayyip-erdogan/>.
- Wichmann, Anna. "Biden Expresses Commitment to Strong US-Cyprus Relations." *GreekReporter.Com* (blog), June 3, 2021. <https://greekreporter.com/2021/06/03/biden-sends-message-of-support-to-cyprus/>.
- Wilks, Andrew. "Turkey Evaluates Ukraine's Request for Closure of Turkish Straits." Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East, February 25, 2022. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/02/turkey-evaluates-ukraines-request-closure-turkish-straits>.
- Wilks, Andrew, and Costas Kantouris. "Turkey Opens Gates into Europe as Migrants Gather on Border." AP NEWS, April 20, 2021.

- <https://apnews.com/article/ap-top-news-syria-turkey-recep-tayyip-erdogan-greece-42a117912dd5a6a7ba407298a89563f3>.
- Wong, Edward, Michael Crowley, and Ana Swanson. "Biden Hits Russia With Broad Sanctions for Putin's War in Ukraine." *The New York Times*, February 25, 2022, sec. U.S.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/us/politics/biden-sanctions-russia-ukraine.html>.
- Yalçinkaya, Haldun. "Turkey's Overlooked Role in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War." German Marshall Fund of the United States, January 21, 2021.  
<https://www.gmfus.org/news/turkeys-overlooked-role-second-nagorno-karabakh-war>.
- Yegin, Mehmet. "Turkey's Reaction to the Coup in Egypt in Comparison with the US and Israel." *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 18 no. 4 (2016) (n.d.).
- Yilmaz, Ihsan. "Erdoğan's Political Journey: From Victimised Muslim Democrat to Authoritarian, Islamist Populist - ECPS," February 14, 2021.  
<https://www.populismstudies.org/Erdoğans-political-journey-from-victimised-muslim-democrat-to-authoritarian-islamist-populist/>.
- Yilmaz, Ugur. "Turkey's Erdoğan Says Lower Inflation Will Follow Rate Cuts - Bloomberg." Accessed February 25, 2022.  
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-29/turkey-s-erdogan-vows-to-continue-lowering-interest-rates>.
- Yüksel, Engin, and Haşim Tekine. "Turkey's Love-in with Qatar: A Marriage of Convenience," n.d.
- Zaken, Danny. "Negotiations Likely to Start over in Israel-Cyprus Gas Field Dispute - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East." Accessed February 15, 2022.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/02/negotiations-likely-start-over-israel-cyprus-gas-field-dispute>.
- Zakheim, Dov. "Thanks to the Ukraine Crisis, Turkey and Israel Have Begun to Reconcile," n.d.  
<https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/594770-thanks-to-the-ukraine-crisis-turkey-and-israel-have-begun-to?r=1>.
- Zaman, Amberin. "As Russia Menaces Ukraine, Crimea's Tatars Turn to Turkey." Al-Monitor, March 2, 2022.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/02/russia-menaces-ukraine-crimeas-tatars-turn-turkey>.
- Zontur, Erdoğan. "Turkey Slams France, Greek Cypriot Defense Deal." Accessed January 31, 2022.  
<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkey-slams-france-greek-cypriot-defense-deal/1943299>.

## Additional Sources

- Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). "About Us - TİKA." Accessed February 25, 2022.  
[https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/about\\_us-14650](https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/about_us-14650).
- TURKSOY (International Organization of Turkic Culture). "About Us - TURKSOY." Accessed February 25, 2022.  
<https://www.turksoy.org/en/turksoy/about>.
- Middle East Monitor. "Analysis: Turkey Forges Military Pact with Niger, Libya's Neighbour," July 25, 2020.  
<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200725-analysis-turkey-forges-military-pact-with-niger-libyas-neighbour/>.
- U.S. Energy Information Administration. "Azerbaijan Energy Overview." Government Agency Website, September 13, 2021. <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/AZE>.
- U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). "Caspian Sea Energy Overview." Government Agency Website, August 26, 2013. [https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/regions-of-interest/Caspian\\_Sea](https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/regions-of-interest/Caspian_Sea).
- The Economist. "Central Asia Will Remain Unstable, However Many Troops Russia Sends," January 15, 2022.  
<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2022/01/15/central-asia-will-remain-unstable-however-many-troops-russia-sends>.
- Global Conflict Tracker. "Conflict Between Turkey and Armed Kurdish Groups." Accessed February 25, 2022.  
<https://cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-between-turkey-and-armed-kurdish-groups>.
- "Eastmed Gas Pipeline 'Political Project': Expert - Energy News - Institute of Energy of South East Europe." Accessed February 12, 2022.  
<https://www.iene.eu/eastmed-gas-pipeline-political-project-expert-p5467.html>.
- "Egypt-Turkey Relations." Accessed January 31, 2022. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/topic/egypt-turkey-relations/>.

Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı (Organization of Turkic States). “Eighth Summit of the Organization of Turkic States Was Held in Istanbul | News.” Government Agency, December 11, 2021.  
[https://www.turkkon.org/en/haberler/eighth-summit-of-the-organization-of-turkic-states-was-held-in-istanbul\\_2394](https://www.turkkon.org/en/haberler/eighth-summit-of-the-organization-of-turkic-states-was-held-in-istanbul_2394).

Financial Times. “Erdoğan Attacks ‘Traitors’ and Foreign Media for Turkey Protests,” June 18, 2013.  
<https://www.ft.com/content/a3a6bb2e-d82d-11e2-9495-00144feab7de>.

Maple Institute. “EU-Turkey Relations in 2021,” January 1, 2022.  
<https://mapleinstitute.org/eu-turkey-relations-2021/>.

Reuters. “Factbox: Ethiopia’s Giant Nile Dam,” July 8, 2021, sec. Africa.  
<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/ethiopias-giant-nile-dam-2021-07-08/>.

“Framework of Cooperation Adopted on 19 August 2008 at the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit in İstanbul / Second Africa - Turkey Partnership Summit.” Accessed February 25, 2022.  
<http://afrika.mfa.gov.tr/framework-of-cooperation-adopted-on-19-august-2008-at-the-turkey-africa-cooperation-summit-in-istanbul.en.mfa>.

BBC News. “France Suspends Military Ties with Mali over Coup,” June 3, 2021, sec. Africa.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57347876>.

GE. “GE to Invest US\$900 Million in Turkey over the next Three Years; Focus on Infrastructure Development and Innovation | GE News,” October 6, 2012.  
<https://www.ge.com/news/press-releases/ge-invest-us900-million-turkey-over-next-three-years-focus-infrastucture>.

“International - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).” Accessed March 1, 2022.  
<https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/TUR>.

“Iran.” In *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, February 17, 2022.  
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iran/>.

“Issues of Greek - Turkish Relations - Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” Accessed January 31, 2022.  
<https://www.mfa.gr/en/issues-of-greek-turkish-relations/>.

“Jamal Khashoggi: All You Need to Know about Saudi Journalist’s Death,” n.d.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45812399>.

“Kurdish Repression in Turkey | Cultural Survival.” Accessed February 25, 2022.  
<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/kurdish-repression-turkey>.

“Leaders of Greece, Israel, Cyprus to Sign Gas Pipeline Deal.” Accessed February 9, 2022.  
<https://www.courthousenews.com/leaders-of-greece-israel-cyprus-to-sign-gas-pipeline-deal/>.

“Libyan-U.S. Relations- Embassy of the State of Libya Washington, D.C.” Accessed January 31, 2022.  
<https://www.embassyoflibyadc.org/us-libya-relations>.

“Mavi Marmara: Why Did Israel Stop the Gaza Flotilla?,” n.d. <https://www.bbc.com/news/10203726>.

“MGK Paid Academics to Write on ‘Kart Kurt Theory,’ Commission Report Says.” Accessed February 25, 2022.  
[http://www.todayszaman.com/national\\_mgk-paid-academics-to-write-on-kart-kurt-theory-commission-report-says\\_299296.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/national_mgk-paid-academics-to-write-on-kart-kurt-theory-commission-report-says_299296.html).

bp global. “Natural Gas | Energy Economics | Home.” Accessed February 24, 2022.  
<https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/natural-gas.html>.

bp global. “Natural Gas | Energy Economics | Home.” Accessed February 24, 2022.  
<https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/natural-gas.html>.

Ahval. “Pompeo Warns Turkey, Says Huawei Presence There Threatening U.S.,” September 23, 2020.  
<https://ahval.me/turkey-usa/pompeo-warns-turkey-says-huawei-presence-there-threatening-us>.

The Economist. “Putin and Erdoğan Have Formed a Brotherhood of Hard Power,” February 23, 2021.  
<https://www.economist.com/europe/2021/02/23/putin-and-erdogan-have-formed-a-brotherhood-of-hard-power>.

World Nuclear News. “Russia Starts Building Turkey’s First Nuclear Power Plant,” March 4, 2018.  
<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NN-Russia-starts-building-Turkeys-first-nuclear-power-plant-03041801.html>.

DW.COM. “S-400 Missile System: What Is It and Why Does Turkey Want It? | DW | 12.07.2019,” July 12, 2019. <https://www.dw.com/en/s-400-missile-system-what-is-it-and-why-does-turkey-want-it/a-49571650>.

“Shared Regional Agendas Are Stimulating the Rapid Rise of Turkey-Qatar Cooperation,” n.d. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170401-shared-regional-agendas-are-stimulating-the-rapid-rise-of-turkey-qatar-cooperation/>.

ASIAGREEN. “The Belt-and-Road Initiative and the Rising Importance of China’s Western Cities,” n.d. <https://www.asiagreen.com/en/news-insights/the-belt-and-road-initiative-and-the-rising-importance-of-china-s-western-cities>.

The Economist. “The Menace of Midsized Meddlers; As America Retreats, Regional Rogues Are on the Rise.,” November 27, 2021. <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2021/11/27/as-america-retreats-regional-rogues-are-on-the-rise?giftId=cac6dd68-becf-4664-9833-b7a2bd387f4d>.

United States Department of State. “The United States and Libya.” Accessed January 31, 2022. <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-and-libya/>.

“Turkey.” In *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, February 22, 2022. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/turkey/>.

European Commission. “Turkey.” European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. Accessed February 25, 2022. [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey_en).

“Turkey Coup Attempt: Nearly 9,000 Soldiers Joined Plot - Army - BBC News.” Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36906724>.

U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). “Turkey Energy Overview.” Government Agency Website, February 2, 2017. <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/TUR>.

“Turkey Export Data | Turkey Customs Data | Turkey Trade Data.” Accessed February 27, 2022. <https://www.turkeytradedata.com/export-data>.

Argus Media. “Turkey Imposes Industry Blackouts amid Gas Shortage,” January 24, 2022. <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news/2294855-turkey-imposes-industry-blackouts-amid-gas-shortage>.

Al Jazeera. “Turkey Raises Uighur Issue with China as Hundreds Protest,” March 25, 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/25/turkey-says-conveyed-sensitivity-about-uighurs-to-china>.

“Turkey, UAE Sign Agreements on Trade, Industry during Erdoğan Visit.,” n.d. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-erdogan-visits-uae-first-time-decade-2022-02-14/>.

“Turkey Urges Engagement with Taliban after Talks with Group,” October 14, 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/14/taliban-delegation-in-ankara-for-talks-with-turkish-officials>.

“Turkey’s Diyanet Religious Body Threatens Secularism | Europe | News and Current Affairs from around the Continent | DW | 24.09.2021.” Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.dw.com/en/turkeys-diyamet-religious-body-threatens-secularism/a-59289180>.

BBC News. “Turkey’s Downing of Russian Warplane - What We Know,” December 1, 2015, sec. Middle East. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34912581>.

Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Turkey’s International Energy Strategy.” Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkeys-energy-strategy.en.mfa>.

“Turkey’s PKK Conflict: A Visual Explainer | Crisis Group.” Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/turkeys-pkk-conflict-visual-explainer>.

Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Turkey’s Relations With Central Asian Republics.” Accessed February 25, 2022. [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-relations-with-central-asian-republics.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-relations-with-central-asian-republics.en.mfa).

“Turkish Lira Weakens Ahead of Cenbank Inflation Report | Reuters.” Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/markets/currencies/turkish-lira-weakens-ahead-cenbank-inflation-report-2022-01-27/>.

BBC News. “Ukraine Tensions: Russia Stages Military Drills with Belarus,” February 10, 2022, sec. Europe. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60327930>.

EgyptToday. “U.S. Ambassador in Cairo: Egypt-America Relations Are Strong, Deep; WYF Was a Source of Inspiration for Us,” January 19, 2022.

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/112006/U-S-Ambassador-in-Cairo-Egypt-America-relations-are-strong>.

“U.S.-Cyprus Relations: Prospects for a Settlement | Wilson Center.” Accessed February 10, 2022.  
<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/us-cyprus-relations-prospects-for-settlement>.

“Yemen.” In *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, February 15, 2022.  
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/yemen/>.

