

Turkey in the Century of the Sea and Asia



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After July 16, 2016, a turning point in our recent history, Turkey was compelled to turn back to the geopolitics once adopted by Mustafa Kemal. Thus, Turkey changed its route from Atlantic to Eurasia. This is in fact not an outcome of daily politics, but rather a result of a geopolitical reflex of daily awakening and the urge to survive. Turkish-Russian cooperation should expand from the Levant Coast to the region covering Maghreb Coast as well. Turkish-Chinese rapprochement and, in particular, the development of economic, political and military cooperation between the two countries should be added to this axis of cooperation. Within the framework of the said tripartite cooperation, many creative options can be formulated with regard to the issues of Crimea, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and the future of the TRNC, within the scope of the future of relations among the three countries.

KEMALISM SHAPED THE GEOPOLITICAL axis of Turkey, during the first fifteen years, on the basis of friendship and cooperation with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Iran in the east and Greece, Bulgaria and Romania in the west, in line with the paradigm of “Peace at Home, Peace in the World”. Turkey formed a belt around itself aimed at defense, security, and stability through the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality that was undersigned in 1925, and additionally the Balkan Entente the Saadabad Pact which took effect in 1934 and 1937 respectively. Despite the multiple political pressures from all-around during the Second World War, the young Republic was able to remain out of the great destruction. This was indeed a great success. However, the Euro-Atlantic system, the winner of the War, did not let Turkey, bordering the southern part of the USSR, become independent at the post-war geopolitics. After all, Turkey was in a very strategic location controlling Dardanelles and İstanbul Straits as well as the huge geography of Afro-Eurasia. The Democratic Party (DP), founded by deputies who left Republican People’s Party (CHP) on January 7, 1946, upon the

approval of the “Second Man” İnönü, emerged with a conservative attitude and liberal economy thesis. DP’s greatest strength was its ability to convert the tenets (values) of Islam Religion into a political instrument. The DP has won the elections held in 1950. DP led Turkey to participate in the Korean War without the approval of the Turkish Parliament. After the Korean War, in 1952 Turkey pursuing the path pushed by DP became a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The burden of NATO has kept growing for Turkey ever since.

The Era After 1950 and Rupture From Eurasia

After 1950, the biggest loss for Turkey was the conversion of Turkish-Soviet friendship into hostility between the two countries. Turkey was cut off from Eurasia during the Cold War period. Fully independent Turkey founded by Mustafa Kemal had become a useful instrument of the Atlantic system. Under the name of “Combating Communism”, the Kemalist and revolutionary vein was dried out. Turkey could not even mimic Finland that was invaded by the Soviet Union

during the Great War. In the end, Finland had achieved to protect its land and independence. Contrary to Finland, Turkey could not succeed in remaining non-committal and neutral. Thus, Turkey failed to remain loyal to the legacy of our founding father, Atatürk. Over the years, being involved in the “Rimland” (Spykman, 1944) of the Atlantic System, Turkey became the pioneer and willing actor of George Kennan’s “Containment Doctrine” (National Security Archive, 1946). “Brzezinski Islamization”¹ of the “Rimland” around the Soviet Union after 1979 gave rise and life to the containment of the Soviet Union while rendering democracy in Turkey into a conservative form. The Kemalist essence of the Republic was tried to be destroyed during the era after 1979. Moreover, separatist ethnic nationalism became a problem for the state in the same period through PKK terrorism.

The Cold War ended in the early 90s. Imperialism, that is the West, had won the War. While Yugoslavia fragmented, Muslims were massacred in Bosnia. In a euphoria of triumph, enlargement of NATO carried on continuously until Ukraine and Georgia. While Russia was under siege, it was time to deal with “the Heartland” (Mackinder, 1904) in Eurasia. The events of September 11, 2001, provided a historic opportunity for this. The invasion of Iraq followed the invasion

of Afghanistan. Maps would now be changed in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. In terms of the interests of imperialism, it was of vital importance for both energy and critical raw material resources should be under control. Besides, it seemed also imperative to prevent the rise of China while ensuring the security of Israel. But, most importantly, from the point of view of imperialism, the “Rimland” needed to be consolidated. At this stage, the reshaping of Turkey under imperialist projects and intentions has taken place since 2002.

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After 2008, the Turkish army and navy became ineffective and neutralized through Fethullah Terror Organization (FETO), designed and implemented a conspiracy against the Turkish Army.² As a result, the command structure (the military chain of command) of the strongest military force of the “Rimland” collapsed, and many officers were put in the prisons in a day.

1 Famous strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski served as the National Security Consultant of US President Jimmy Carter between 1977 and 1980. With the “Green Belt Theory” developed in 1979, Brzezinski aimed to support Islamic fundamentalist religious organizations and formations against the Soviet Union. The Green Belt theory was implemented immediately after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

2 Editor’s Note: The author refers to the cases such as Ergenekon and Balyoz through which some of the higher positioned army officials, intellectuals and politicians were tried in the courts or imprisoned between 2007-2014. As a result of these cases, hundreds of officers at key positions in the Turkish Armed Forces were imprisoned and removed from the army. With these cases it was aimed at making weaken the forces embedded in the state, political sphere and the society, that opposed Turkey’s dependency on the United States and that supported independent foreign policy. Moreover, FETO members who made the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016, were brought to key positions via these lawsuits. It has been understood since 2014 that the police reports on which these cases were based and the indictments prepared by the prosecution offices were created with false evidence. The cases which were later referred to as “conspiracy cases”, were documented that all the processes about court orders were executed by the members of the Fethullah Terrorist Organization in the police and judicial departments. Judicial authorities in Turkey has still been investigating the role of the US in both the July 15 coup attempt by FETO and the above mentioned “conspiracy cases”.



Turkey's naval exercise called 'Blue Homeland 2019' launched on 27 February till 3rd of March.

After the coup attempt by FETO on July 15, 2016, the paradigm shaped by the conspiracy against the Turkish Army and thus against Turkey went bankrupt. This is because, a hitman of the Atlantic System, namely FETO supposedly adhering to the Islamic tenets had opened fire to its own people, causing hundreds of deaths and casualties. It's noteworthy that the government it attempted to overthrow also had adhered to Islamic values. Thus, the process of testing democracy with religion has ended.

The Route Change From Atlantic to Eurasia

After July 16, 2016, Turkey had to change its course from "Atlantic" to "Eurasia" and turned back to the geopolitics once adopted by Mustafa

Kemal. This is a geopolitical reflex of awakening and the urge to survive, not of daily politics. The said geopolitical reflex strongly opposes to the attempts to establish a "puppet" Kurdish state in the south of Turkey and to Turkey's detachment from the Mediterranean, and to the termination of the Turkish military presence in Northern Cyprus. The Mediterranean Shield and Gunboat Diplomacy, Blue Homeland Naval Exercise, Operations of Euphrates Shield, Operations of Olive Branch, Operations of Peace Spring, fight against FETO, and Turkey's seismic research and drilling activities related to oil and gas exploration underway in the Mediterranean are the reflections of this reflex. In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched the "Asia Anew" initiative on August 4, 2019. On 22 October 2019 Sochi agreement was signed between Turkey and

Russia. On the 5th of November, departing from China and crossing the “Middle Corridor”, the first train reached Europe through the Anatolia and Bosphorus Tunnel under the sea. In addition, Turkey signed the Maritime Boundary Delimitation Agreement with Libya on November 27, 2019. Consequently, Turkey’s relations with Iran, Russia and the Asian countries, especially China, are rising on every level. In the meanwhile, the Astana Process underway in Syria has taken precedence over the Geneva process. The states on the “Rimland” of Spykman (Spykman, 1944) are turning their faces to Eurasia.

No doubt that this inevitable change will restart the period of peace, stability, and balance that Humanity sought for in history. Everlasting peace and tranquility are the longings for peoples of the world as Humanity has suffered a great deal from the unipolar Atlantic impositions, especially over the past thirty years. A lot of blood has been shed, and still continues to spill more. While Atlantic imperialism is retreating, it uses many tactics to provoke and to confuse the entire world spanning from Bolivia to Hong Kong and from Venezuela to Iran; however, it does get any results. Our world needs breathing and a new order in every aspect.

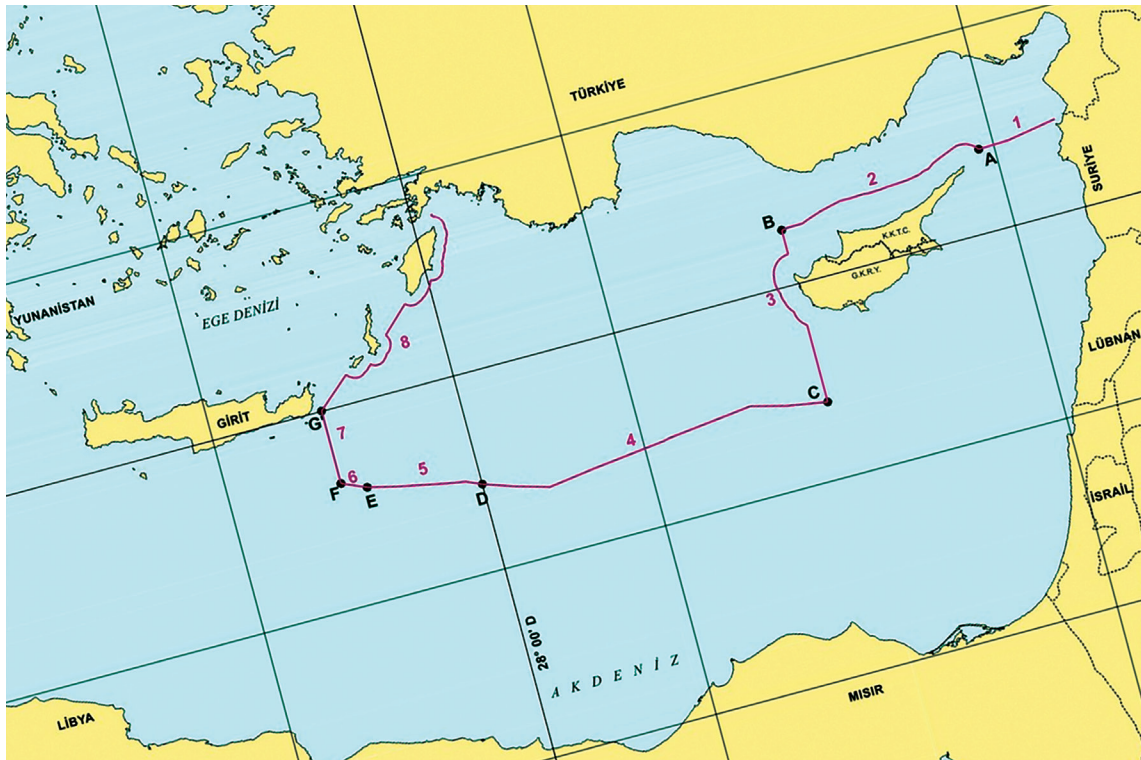
“Asia Anew” Initiative and Our Maritime Boundaries

On the other hand, in the multipolar global system, the 21st century will be both “the Century of Asia” and “the Century of the Oceans”. In this century, the Mediterranean Sea will be the door

opening to “the Century of Asia and the Sea” for Turkey. In this initiative, Turkey, “Blue Homeland”³ and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) geopolitical integrity is essential. Turkey will meet with Asia and the Sea more intensely than ever before. TRNC and Turkey’s geopolitical future in the Eastern Mediterranean is fully dependent on each other. This future is shaped on three legs. The first of these is the protection of the “Blue Homeland”. The second is to block the “puppet Kurdish state” that aims to reach the sea. Thirdly, the biggest assurance of the Anatolian peninsula along the southern axis is to maintain the independent existence of TRNC. All three legs are like “communicating vessels” (united containers) which cannot be separated or isolated from each other.

In Turkey’s new initiative policy for Asia, the existence of the TRNC has special importance. There is much that can be done both in terms of mutual recognition and economic cooperation with Asian countries especially with the Russian Federation and China. With reference to Crimea, Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region and the future of the TRNC, there is a wide range of options regarding the future relations among Turkey, China and the Russian Federation. Cooperation as such can contribute to resolving the problems of the “Blue Homeland” regarding the sovereignty in the seas surrounding Turkey, in particular, the maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean. The said cooperation can offer options that can balance a complex and dangerous picture resulting from the aggressive, unlawful attitudes and ac-

³ Editor's Note: "Blue Homeland" is a concept developed by Retired Admiral Cem Gürdeniz and embedded in Turkish military-political literature. Gürdeniz, which is also called "Blue homeland" in its column as title in the *Aydınlık* newspaper, defines the concept of the Blue Homeland as follows: "I used the concept of the Blue Homeland for the first time in the symposium on the Black Sea and Naval Security we organized at the Naval Forces Command on June 14, 2006." It is the name of the country, which briefly covers our maritime jurisdiction areas (territorial waters, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone) in the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Aegean, where we are surrounded by living and non-living resources. The surface of this homeland, the mass of water, the bottom and the land mass beneath belong to Republic of Turkey. The size of blue homeland is equal to half of land of Turkey. Every state that has got to coast to the sea has a blue homeland. The most fundamental action of geopolitical reflexes is reflecting tendency to the sea and ownership of the blue homeland." For more info: (Gürdeniz, 2013).



Turkey's maritime jurisdiction areas in the Eastern Mediterranean. E-F line shows the boundary drawn in the agreement with Libya.

tions like piracy of Greece and Southern Cyprus, which receive the support of the United States of America (USA), European Union (EU), Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. In this context, the signing of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) border memorandum with Libya on 27 November 2019 is an extremely important and major development. Similarly, the government's initiation of a new process for a boundary agreement with Syria, hopefully very soon, will make a great deal of contribution to the security of the "Blue Homeland".

On the other hand, it should be encouraged to invite friendly and allied countries to the Mediterranean Shield Operation and especially the landlocked Turkish Republics in Central Asia with shore access to the Caspian Sea by renting them warships. It is a sheer fact

that Greece tries to present ongoing conflict as a mere Crusader-Islam polarization. Being a secular republic, Turkey must not fall into this trap. Against this tout by Greece, we and all other third party countries should consider the fact that Egypt and Palestine, too, stand with the anti-Turkey bloc of Greece and Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean. Israel is also included in the same bloc.

In summary, Turkey now is in a new phase. Turkey's borders regarding its security are with-

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in the surrounding seas while the defense of the TRNC begins in Anatolia. It should not be forgotten that Turkey and TRNC that are tried to be isolated and excluded from the Eastern Mediterranean today, will not allow the repeat the history.

Turkish-Russian Cooperation Expanding From Levant To Maghreb

In this context, The Turkish-Russian cooperation should expand from the Levant Coast to the region covering Maghreb Coast as well. The USA's move against Iran and its open conflict with this country make this cooperation even more essential. This cooperation will balance the unlawfulness of US and Israeli policies in the Gulf and the Levant coast. This cooperation will balance the unlawfulness of US and Israeli policies in the Gulf and the Levant coast. It will also give a serious message to Saudi and United Arab Emirates (UAE) regimes. In the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, we can restore the stability, which the Atlantic front impaired, through the new balance of power of the 21st century. Turkish-Russian cooperation, which will provide stability in Syria and Libya, will also prevent the tension that is likely to escalate between the USA and Iran. In this process, Turkey's biggest mistake that Turkey must refrain itself would be to make harm to it he Turkish-Iranian rapprochement, which took place in the Astana Process, by taking a negative stance against Iran. Iran is the biggest obstacle to Atlantic imperialism in West Asia and Israel's policy of creating regional expansion and instability. The internal unity of Turkey and the Turkish-Russian cooperation will be the most important factor that will prevent the Third World War which everyone around the globe badly fears.

Multi-Dimensional Benefits of Turkish-Chinese Rapprochement

The Turkish-Chinese rapprochement and especially the development of economic, political and military cooperation between the two countries should be added to the above-mentioned union. To prevent the development of an alliance stated above, it is possible that pro-Atlantic bloc in Turkey may engage in any kind of provocation and blocking efforts. However, this process should be managed in a calm and cold-blooded manner, and mutual welfare and happiness of all parties involved should be targeted accordingly. Favoring and nurturing the mutual interests of Turkey and China fairly and in a balanced manner is integral to the development of the relations between two countries. Within the scope of the Belt and Road Initiative (In line with the guiding principles of BRI), implementing joint projects beneficial to both parties will positively affect the view of the public opinion in Turkey. In this way, the negative perceptions about China in the people who have been poisoned with pro-Atlantic propaganda for years will disappear. It is necessary to touch on another subject: As is known, the Greece/Piraeus port was chosen by China as the entry gate to Europe. This preference has potentially geopolitical risks. In the future, the US may put pressure on Greece on the activities of this port and its relations with China. Keeping in mind all these facts, we kindly advise our Chinese friends to look for alternate ports in Turkey and the TRNC for entry to Europe.

Turkey, on the path illuminated by the teachings of Mustafa Kemal, should fulfill its responsibility reflected in the directive "Armies, your first goal is the Mediterranean", that he gave on September 1, 1922. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

told the Egyptian Ambassador one morning in 1933, showing the sun rising from the crests of Ankara:

“Look at the sun that will rise from the east now! Today, I see the awakening of all eastern nations from afar, just as I see the day dawning. There are more sister nations to achieve independence and freedom. Their rebirth will undoubtedly come true towards progress and prosperity. Despite all the difficulties and obstacles, these nations will defeat them and reach the future that awaits them. Colonialism and imperialism will disappear from the earth and will be replaced by a new era of harmony and cooper-

ation, with no color, religion or race difference between nations.” 🌸

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