

The Formula of Success and Peace in the Eastern Mediterranean and Southern Caucasus^{*}



MEHMET PERİNÇEK

Dr.
Institute of Asian and African Countries,
Moscow State University

Dr. Mehmet Perinçek was born on September 19, 1978 in Istanbul. He graduated from Istanbul University's Faculty of Law. He started to work as a research assistant at the Institute of Ataturk's Principles and History of The Turkish Revolution, Istanbul University. He served as a visiting researcher at the Moscow State Institute/University (MGİMO (U)) in the period 2005-2006 and at Moscow State University's Institute of Asian and African Countries in the period 2010-2011. He was a visiting scholar at the Institute of Asian and African Countries at Moscow State University between 2011 and 2017. For more than twenty years he has been conducting research on "Turkish-Soviet Relations" and the "Armenian Question" in the Russian-Soviet state archives and on current Turkish foreign policy. He has published several books and articles on these issues. His books and articles have appeared in Russian, English, German, Persian and Azerbaijani Turkish. Dr. Perinçek has presented several papers at international conferences and symposia in Turkey and abroad.

E-mail: mperincek@hotmail.com

The United States has one grand strategy; all its plans, its build-ups, and allies are shaped according to this strategy. This is also true when it comes to Libya. Of course, those targeted by this strategy also need their own holistic counter strategy of defenses and alliance-building. And this is also true of Libya. It should also be remembered that the Eastern Mediterranean security is the guarantee for a decisive solution in the Syrian crisis. The United States would have the opportunity to reach the Black Sea much easier if it manages to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean.

At this point, Russian national security correlates with Turkish national security. Turkey's Blue Homeland strategy and the Turkish-Libyan maritime agreement as part of this strategy served to block the Atlantic front in the Eastern Mediterranean and strengthen the hands of regional powers. Therefore, this move has not only strengthened the hands of Russia and Turkey, but also created an opportunity for defensive fortification in the entire Eurasian front. All countries that are targeted by imperialist forces must act according to their shared interests, and not according to any historic rivalry or conflicts. Turkey and Russia must take the first steps in this direction at once. It is also important for China to pursue a more effective policy in Western Asia, to take measures to support the anti-US front and to cooperate with the countries that face the Atlantic threat to reinforce their sovereignty.

TODAY, THE CONFLICTS AND PROBLEMS in our region, especially the ones that Turkey is involved in, are not independent of the overall polarization in world affairs. This polarization has not changed since the time Mustafa Kemal Atatürk portrayed Western imperialism as a group of “tyrant and tyrannized nations” and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin differentiated between “oppressing and oppressed nations”. We can also define this polarization in terms of a clash between the East and West, the North and the South, or between the Atlantic and Eurasia.

There are a handful of nations that exploit the world's resources, and on the other hand there are nations that are exposed to this imperialist exploitation. Nonetheless, there are also countries that have chosen an independent way of development, as part of the oppressed world.

The Holistic Approach of Current US Strategy

Looking at the current situation, one could observe that the goal of the United States is actually to seize

the energy resources and supply lines in Central Asia, and maintain the dominance of the US dollar. It is especially important for the United States to maintain its supremacy in these regions: the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, the Black Sea and the Caucasus.

In short, all of these regions are critical to the overall US strategy. The fate of this strategy is particularly contingent on prevailing over Russia and China, and imposing the partition of Turkey. These countries have well-established traditions of statehood and strong military-economic potentials, and stand as the most serious obstacle to US plans.

Washington has come up with different plans to clear these obstacles, and the “Greater Kurdistan” project is the one that it is currently putting forward to counter Turkey.

However, let us add a side note here: the “Greater Kurdistan” project is not only directed against Turkey; it is also designed to partition Iran, Syria, and Iraq. Furthermore, since the Kurdish puppet state would act as an important base for the United States to reach Central Asia, this project poses a threat to all of Eurasia, especially to Russia and China.

For this reason, “Greater Kurdistan” is not only part of US plans for the region, but also a strategy for its world domination. In short, it is a plan for a second Israel.

The same situation goes for US threats that Russia and China confront. As part of its intention to contain Russia and China, the USA would also encircle Turkey and the entire Eurasian geography.

Now we can close the parenthesis and move on from where we left off to the main topic.

The Eastern Mediterranean-Black Sea: The Only Security Zone

What is happening in Libya today is not independent from the polarization of the world into oppressed and oppressing nations, as well as from the grand strategy of the United States and from the “Greater Kurdistan” project.

The United States has one grand strategy; all its plans, its build-ups, and allies are shaped according to this strategy. This is also true when it comes to Libya. Of course, those targeted by this strategy also need their own holistic counter strategy of defenses and alliance-building. And this is also true of Libya.

Was it not the US strategy that has led to civil war and crisis in Libya in the first place? Gaddafi’s government in Libya was a huge obstacle for the United States, having considerable importance both in terms of its high-quality oil reserves and geopolitical position in the world. This obstacle was removed by the USA as part of the Arab Spring process.

This was what brought the country into a state of pure mayhem. Therefore, it is the United States and its allies such as France who are responsible for the chaos we are witnessing today. Naturally, one could not expect the responsible parties to solve this problem.

Who could solve the problem?

If the United States were the source of the problem and Washington’s actions in Libya were eventually connected to the “Greater Kurdistan” project, who could really help to fix the situation?

The answer lies in regional powers being targeted by US plans, as were mentioned earlier in explaining the polarization of the world into oppressed and oppressing nations. It is more or less clear that Turkey and Russia share the same fate in the region. Is this also the case in the Eastern Mediterranean? Turkey is confronting the US-Israel-Greece-Greek Cyprus bloc in the Eastern Mediterranean. In fact, this bloc is openly targeting Turkey through military drills and provoking a diplomatic crisis around the issue of natural gas exploration. However, this bloc threatens not only Turkey, but also Russia. The United States is encircling Russia, while containing Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Washington is provoking the Greek Cypriot government against Moscow as well by lifting the arms embargo against Greek Cyprus. This is driving Greek Cyprus to stand against Russia. It is also clear that the British air bases in the Greek territory are also threatening the Russian presence in the region.

In addition, the recently increasing racist attacks on Russian citizens in the Greek Cyprus have also been a painful topic for Moscow. Thus, Russian state-media is not afraid to publish some news related to this issue.¹

The situation is no different when it comes to energy. The aforementioned EastMed pipeline project is a project against the Turkish-Russian TurkStream and the Turkish-Azerbaijani TANAP project, and to an extent, it is directed against the supply of Central Asian gas to Europe. The Russian media frequently emphasizes Turkish-Russian cooperation and Turkey being a “fellow-sufferer” on this issue.²

¹ As an example, see RIA Novosti, 2019.

² For some examples, see Danilov, 2020; Anpilogov, 2020; Репортёр, 2020.

Of particular relevance to this very context is the Russian Energy Minister Aleksandr Novak's offers to Turkey for cooperation on the Eastern Mediterranean energy deposits (Abay, 2019).

The United States would have the opportunity to reach the Black Sea much easier if it manages to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean. At this point, Russian national security correlates with Turkish national security.

It should also be remembered that the Eastern Mediterranean security is the guarantee for a decisive solution in the Syrian crisis. The anti-Turkey bloc is also a problem for Russia in Syria. Furthermore, the United States would have the opportunity to reach the Black Sea much easier if it manages to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean. At this point, Russian national security correlates with Turkish national security.

The same situation applies to the Black Sea as well. US efforts to reach the Black Sea do not only play a role in the strategy of encircling Russia, but also come into play in the plan to contain Turkey. The polarization of world politics is intensifying in this region. The agreement signed between the United States and Ukraine against the Turk-Stream further complicates the picture.

Could the Libyan crisis be perceived outside this picture depicted above? For the time being, Turkey and Russia are supporting opposing sides in Libya. Understanding previously mentioned processes could be important in planning future policies more adequately.

The History of Russia's Libyan Policy

Russia had mainly adopted a passive attitude towards the Arab Spring in the Medvedev era, and

the fault line that started from Libya has stretched all the way to Syria. Moscow, which by then had learned from these mistakes, has now taken action to prevent the threat before it started. Russia has started to take a more active stance in Libya, while sending troops to Syria, with the requisition of Damascus.

Russia had initially remained neutral at the beginning of the Libyan conflict and supported the dialogue process. Moscow's favorite, a third party, the son of Gaddafi, did not stand a chance of success. Haftar's expansion over the 94% of the country's land area and perceived strength to win this civil war have played an important role in garnering Russian support. After all, Moscow preferred to stand by the winner in order to be able to increase its influence in the new Libya.

But of course, Russia was not the only force behind Haftar's side. In fact, it was on the same side as the forces it clashed with in the US grand strategic plan. Moscow's point of view sparked from a similar mentality: to compensate for the influence of its strategic opponents, and not leave the winning side to its rivals.

The Turkey-Libya Agreement and the Blue Homeland

Turkey's involvement in the Libyan crisis has changed the balance of power. Even more importantly, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdictions signed between Ankara and the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) on November 27, 2019 have put an end to important uncertainties in the conflict. This was incredibly important in terms of crystallizing the two currently existing fronts in Libya.

Turkey's Blue Homeland³ strategy and the Turkish-Libyan maritime agreement as part of this strategy served to block the Atlantic front in

³ Blue Homeland is coined by Cem Gürdeniz, retired Turkish admiral. It is a roadmap aimed to protect rights and interests of Turkey in the seas surrounding Anatolia as well as seas and oceans beyond its periphery.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan meets with Libya's UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj. (Mustafa Kayal Xinhua, 2020)

the Eastern Mediterranean and strengthen the hands of regional powers. Therefore, this move has not only strengthened the hands of Russia and Turkey, but also created an opportunity for defensive fortification in the entire Eurasian front.

Now, everything has started to settle in its place in Libya. The turmoil in this North African country was not unrelated to the overall polarization of world politics. For some time, the global powers had been analyzing the formation of fronts in Libya and trying to coopt them in order to increase their influence.

The same plan for a Turkish-Russian conflict in Syria, which had earlier fallen apart with the Sochi Agreement, was being extended to Libya. However, the plans have failed once again. The disadvantageous situation of supporting two opposing sides was turned into an advantage.

The situation has begun to become clearer, even though the Atlantic forces have devoted special efforts at adding more uncertainties since late

2019. The same plan for a Turkish-Russian conflict in Syria, which had earlier fallen apart with the Sochi Agreement, was being extended to Libya.

However, the plans have failed once again. The disadvantageous situation of supporting two opposing sides was turned into an advantage. On January 8, 2020, Erdoğan and Putin met in Istanbul and reconciled. A ceasefire was to be ensured by Ankara using its influence on the GNA and by Moscow on Haftar's side.

However, the process did not proceed quite as Moscow expected. During the ceasefire negotiations mediated by Turkey and Russia in Moscow this January, Sarraj's government immediately signed the agreement, while Haftar had left the country without signing the agreement. This shows that Haftar is not only under Russia's influence. As a matter of fact, this was a large disappointment for Moscow.

Following this incident, intelligence provided in mid-February revealed that the Russian private security company Wagner has withdrawn its mercenary forces from Libya before their contracts expired.

US and French Support for Haftar

The Atlantic front was not to tolerate the agreement signed between the Sarraj government and Turkey.

It later turned out that Haftar forces were preparing for an attack on Tripoli with troops trained by the US military, with the US military and intelligence officials working closely with Haftar and with the US having the total control of the region's airspace; France was not far behind in terms of its support⁴

While the United States gave Haftar its full support, Haftar in turn positioned himself with the Atlantic forces. The United States and Haftar shared the same goal in the Eastern Mediterranean. The systematic cooperation even on the most sensitive and confidential areas revealed its true

⁴ For the details of the USA-Haftar and France-Haftar cooperation, please see the following articles: Aydınlik, 2020a; Perinçek, 2020a; Perinçek, 2020b; Perinçek, 2020c.

scale, but this action from the Atlantic front in Libya also paved the way for new opportunities for cooperation and other initiatives.

Turkey's intervention could be seen as a game changer, in result of which Russia has started to pursue a new course, both pragmatically and geo-strategically.

Faced with this situation, Russia has now to revise its position on the Libyan crisis. Haftar's stance against the Turkey-Libya agreement played an important role in the determination of his allies, consolidating his positioning within the Atlantic camp. Surely this showed that Moscow's influence has been undermined, while the United States has strengthened its hand.

Turkey's intervention has been successful in pushing back the Haftar forces. This could be seen as a game changer, in result of which Russia has started to pursue a new course, both pragmatically and geo-strategically.

Haftar's side is no longer hiding the problems with Wagner. Their dissatisfaction with each other has also begun to be reflected in the press.⁵ As a result, on May 20, 2020, Wagner has decided to evacuate their remaining troops.

FETO Message from Wagner to Turkey

An interesting development took place during this period. Yevgeniy Prigojin, known as the owner of the Russian private security company Wagner, also referred to FETO in his open letter to the US Senate and reacted to Washington hiding Fethullah Gülen in the country. The US Congress House of Representatives on June 11 (2020) and the US Senate on June 16 (2020) took two decisions regarding Prigojin, who is also known as Putin's cook.

In both these resolutions, Yevgeniy Prigojin was accused of attacking the national interests and

democratic values of the United States, in particular influencing the internal policies of the United States and its allies, and interfering in the democratic processes of the United States.

The Russian businessman penned an open letter dated June 21, 2020 addressed to the US Congress against this decision and the accusations. The letter mentioned Fethullah Gulen as follows:

"In order to destroy the national values of other countries, including their customs and culture, the United States regularly interferes in political processes and elections around the world. (...) The USA is a haven for the money of thousands of criminals, thieves and scammers from many countries. The United States creates terrorist groups, harbors their leaders and ensures safety for their families. The USA grows and gives shelter to traitors and dissidents from all over the world, such as Fethullah Gulen, Chen Guangcheng, Reza Pahlavi and many others"

The fact that Prigojin, known for his close ties to Putin and not appearing in the media, published a public letter and made such a reference to Fethullah Gulen. Aalbeit not directly related to the contents of the letter at a time of crisis in Libya, this raised the question of whether Moscow has a message for Ankara (Aydinlik, 2020b).

It was also reported in the press that Wagner's leadership has undergone a change in August 2020. Experts attributed the management change in Wagner to the new regulation to be made concerning the business format of the organization, whose existence is not legally accepted. It was stated that Dmitriy Utkin, who previously managed the company and was responsible for its activities in Ukraine and Syria, will leave due to the change in the company's working methods. This change is defined as follows: Now, instead of directly participating in military operations, the company will develop military-political preparedness and cooperation strategies. It is reported that Wagner will

⁵ See Assad, 2020.

only provide consultancy and training support in African countries, including Libya (Oda tv, 2020).

Two Arrested Russian Citizens

There are two Russian citizens detained in Tripoli that have been at the center of a great deal of controversy between the parties involved. On May 16, 2019, two employees of the Russian Foundation for the Protection of National Values (RFPN), sociologist Maxim Shugaley and translator Samer Hasan Ali Sueyfan (Russian and Jordanian citizen), were charged with intervening in the presidential elections. They were arrested and jailed at the Mitiga Prison.

The Russian side suggested that this situation could initiate a cooperation process with the GNA, if its citizens were released.

Russia has attempted to secure their release at the highest level. Turkey was also asked to help resolve the situation, but no results have been obtained yet.

The Russian side suggested that this situation could initiate a cooperation process with the GNA, if its citizens were released. The first steps of this change in Russia's strategic plan were based on this issue.

The developments within the last week have been significant and indicate a serious turning point for the region.

On June 3, the Deputy Prime Minister of Libya's Government of National Accord Ahmed Maiteeq and GNA Foreign Minister Mohammed Taher Siala visited Moscow. During the visit, a series of talks took place with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Ministry of Defense and officials of security units. The GNA delegation was accepted for the first time in Moscow at such a high level.

In the official statement declared after the meeting, the Russian Foreign Ministry pointed

out that the main obstacle to the development of cooperation based on mutual interest was the two Russian citizens detained in Tripoli (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2020). It meant that a new era would begin in the relations between the two governments if the two Russian citizens were released.

Signals of cooperation between the two governments also came from Libya. Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Maiteeq stated that his government believes Russia to be a very important partner in the establishment of stability in Libya, as was reported by RIA news agency. In Libyan official's view, Russian diplomacy played an important role in sharply reducing the military tensions (RIA Novosti, 2020).

Maiteeq continued to express such sentiments after he returned to his country. Maiteeq identified Turkey as a 'strategic ally' and stated that 'Russia can be an effective ally' during an interview in February (Yıldız, 2020).

Later, the Libyan side also gave a written guarantee to the Russian Foreign Ministry that the detained Russians would be released.

The Ankara-Moscow Diplomacy Lines

Diplomacy between the two countries also began to pick up. Telephone conversations took place between Çavuşoğlu and Lavrov on June 8, and between Erdoğan and Putin on June 10. Indeed, Libya was the focal point.

Turkish Minister of Defense Hulusi Akar explained that Russia has rejected some information and allegations about its military presence in the region and that Turkey's problems in Libya need to be solved by negotiating with Russia in a way similar to the way they were discussed in Syria. This is a potential answer to allegations of Russian mercenaries and warplanes being sent to Libya, which he was asked about during a television program on June 10, 2020.



Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar meets with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu. (The Republic of Turkey Directorate of Communications, 2019)

Akar's attitude towards Russian mercenaries and aircraft was especially important. Based on the statement of the Russian side, he pointed to a process similar to Astana.

On top of that, it was announced that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu would fly to Istanbul. However, this visit was postponed at the last minute. Statements from both sides after the visit clearly showed that there have been no disruption in relations. According to statements from both sides, a joint negotiation process has commenced.

Naturally, the GNA and Turkey did not want to stop after their military successes in the field. Taking advantage of these successes while sitting at the negotiation table was the most logical course of action, after all. It was not possible for Ankara and Tripoli to comply with the Cairo Declaration, and Russia knew that as well.

As a result, a joint declaration was signed between the Turkish and Russian delegations after the talks in Ankara. The decision was made to continue talks in Moscow.

⁶ For the details, see Perinçek, 2020d.

⁶ See Rudaw, 2020.

The US Pushes the “Puppet State” Button

The Atlantic front took on a new action in parallel with its own holistic strategy, while the Turkish-Russian relations on Libya continued with its own ups and downs, despite shared objective interests.

The United States, while suffering great losses in Syria with the Sochi Agreement and its “Greater Kurdistan” project, has responded by pushing the button to form a new puppet state, pushing for the project with increased eagerness over the last few months. Deployments to Northeastern Syria have increased and a number of secret talks with the PKK/PYD were held. The United States has launched a new set of processes –militarily, administratively and economically– in an effort to carve up this “corridor”. The military phase of the plan will provide security for the PKK/PYD, whereas the administrative phase will establishing the governmental and institutional power of this puppet state. The economic phase will include oil revenues, which serve as the lifeblood of this American corridor.⁶

In June, a union among Syria's separatist forces was concluded, in the aftermath of the process, with the “sponsorship of the United States” in their own words.⁷ On top of that, an oil deal was signed between the US-PKK/PYD forces.

The Atlantic Front's Fear of Astana in Libya

The United States has taken action on Libya in line with its plans in Syria. In order for its plan in Syria to work, the US also has to dominate Libya as well. US Africa Command (AFRICOM) has started to show signs of returning to Libya, after it

had withdrawn in 2019. Currently, the American petroleum companies do not seem to hold almost anything in Libya. Exxon Mobil had withdrawn from the country in 2014: they had not wanted to remain in the Libyan market.

As a result, in their recent statements, Washington and Paris have shown that they are deeply disturbed by the involvement of Turkey and Russia in the Libyan conflict.

Former US Ambassador to Ankara Eric Edelman and the former Deputy Commander for the US European Command Charles Walt made it clear that the United States should act against Turkey and Russia in Libya. According to them, Ankara and Moscow's influence in Libya must come to an end (Edelman & Wald 2020a; 2020b).

Josep Borrell, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, rephrased the same ideas in the beginning of this year by saying that "Turkey and Russia have changed the balances in the Eastern Mediterranean by imposing a military solution in Syria. We cannot accept the same situation happening in Libya." According to Borrell, no one would be happy with the Russian and Turkish military bases along the Libyan coastline. A new Astana process must not be allowed in Libya (Sputnik, 2020).

The possibility of another Astana process for Libya has led to serious concerns within the Atlantic camp. In fact, this attitude of the West should also be a lesson for Ankara and Moscow. Both countries have become targets along a line that stretches from Syria to Libya.

Bernard-Henri Lévy, one of the ideologues of Atlanticism in France, is also known to be con-

cerned about also the so-called partitioning of Libya between Turkey and Russia, and has vigorously insisted Turkey and Russia be stopped (La Règle du jeu, 2020).

The possibility of another Astana process for Libya has led to serious concerns within the Atlantic camp. In fact, this attitude of the West should also be a lesson for Ankara and Moscow. Both countries have become targets along a line that stretches from Syria to Libya. There is nothing more natural than these two countries sharing common interests.

These common interests are also noticed by Christopher Nixon Cox, the grandson of former US President Nixon and the director of the Richard Nixon Foundation. According to Nixon's grandson, Erdogan and Putin's interests overlap in Libya. They both want to drive the French out of Libya and weaken the UAE's influence there (Zalfaoui, 2020).

Atlantic Council experts also worry that Turkey and Russia may find a common ground in Libya, both politically and militarily. They even predict that Syria could be involved in this hypothetical agreement (Lorient Le Jour, 2020).

Under these circumstances, it is obligatory for the United States to return to Libya and implement its plans in Syria in order to prevent any possibility of cooperation between Ankara and Moscow and for France to return to the old days of colonialism in North Africa by pitting these two countries against each other. When their strategy fails, they simply begin afresh.

The recent reciprocal provocations are part of this general situation. First, a rumor is spread that the Al-Watiya base was hit by the Russians, then the GNA and Turkey are reported to have hit the Russians back. However, all signs suggest that

the UAE was responsible for the strike on al-Watiya, while the GNA officially denied that the Russians had been hit in retaliation.

Winning Over Russia

Turkish and Russian authorities need to learn from all these incidents. The rivalries and clashes must be put aside, and common ground must be established as part of a holistic strategy aimed at advancing both countries' mutual interests, as has been the case in Syria.

For Turkey and the GNA, it is obligatory to eliminate and even drag the opposing forces onto their sides, for a final victory. Most importantly, Ankara and Tripoli have the opportunity to turn this process in their favor with the right strategies. Russia can act as a neutral power at first, and can later even be dragged to support the Sarraj government with the right policies. This would change the balance in Libya completely in favor of Tripoli; it would reduce the burdens of the war in each and every sense.

The basis for this cooperation is not just that Haftar is now supported by the United States and losing the war: Moscow has also begun to grasp the anti-Atlantic ideals of the Blue Homeland strategy. This played an important role in Putin finding common ground with Erdogan in Libya on January 8, 2020.

However, radical elements fighting beside Sarraj are another concern for Russia. The Sarraj government is known for not having a unified structure. It is also necessary to pay attention to possible provocations from various autonomous forces and radical elements. This will be important to eliminate the non-cooperative propaganda within the Russian media.

On the other hand, Sarraj can also be targeted by the Atlanticist forces within his own front for signing the Turkish-Libyan maritime agreement. There are some signs suggesting this. Michel Scarbonchi is a Middle East expert and

one of the leading figures in French foreign policy. He is also among the architects of the French policy of support for Haftar and does not recommend Fathi Bashagha instead of Sarraj without reason (Opinion Internationale, 2020).



Fighters of the GNA in Tripoli. (Hamza Turkial Xinhua, 2020)

It should be noted that the Atlantic front has not completely ended its support for the GNA. The fact that it is the officially UN-recognized government and that Haftar has been on the losing side, along with its old ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, prevents Washington and its allies from entirely abandoning the GNA. Thus, from the Atlantic point of view, it is necessary to weaken Tripoli's relations with Turkey and take control over the region. Sarraj, who is perceived as a guarantor for relations with Turkey, serves as an obstacle in this plan, and Bashagha, who is known for his pro-American statements is sometimes considered as an alternative.

It would be important for Turkey to adopt a holistic strategy that pays attention to this side of the issue as well. The United States will bet on both sides in Libya. The GNA should not be allowed to be part of US plans to ultimately establish a "Greater Kurdistan".

This would also tear Turkey apart from its natural allies and lead to its isolation in other zones of conflicts due to tensions with the United States.

Believing that Turkey can act together with the United States in Libya while fighting against them in Syria is a misleading concept that could disrupt the Turkish fight against the puppet state.

The First Step of the 'Astana Model' in Libya

In the meantime, the steps to be taken regarding the Russian citizens detained in the GNA region – as was mentioned previously – can also accelerate the cooperation process between Turkey and Russia. This is not just about the release of two Russian citizens: it will be of strategic importance for the establishment of the Astana model in the Eastern Mediterranean and Libya.

In return, Turkey and the GNA will also be in a position to make a demand from Moscow regarding Libya. This kind of mutual gesture can help to alleviate conflicts.

Washington's strategy in Syria is not independent of its strategies in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea, Caucasus, Central Asia, etc. Therefore, Ankara should formulate a grand strategy to put an end to Atlantic plans in Syria, Libya, and the Black Sea, and it should establish new alliances accordingly.

Creating a holistic strategy and a chain of alliances against Atlantic plans to prevent the US, France and their allies from attempting to kick Turkey out from the Eastern Mediterranean will

be instrumental in preventing the exploitation of energy reserves and the opening up of a new "corridor" in Syria. Washington's strategy in Syria is not independent of its strategies in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea, Caucasus, Central Asia, etc. Therefore, Ankara should formulate a grand strategy to put an end to Atlantic plans in Syria, Libya, and the Black Sea, and it should establish new alliances accordingly.

Cooperation not only with Russia, but also with Syria and Egypt should be among Turkey's priorities in this context. The American threat can only be eliminated by such a holistic strategy. Damascus and Cairo also need to grasp this holistic strategy. While fighting the United States and France in their home country, standing by Turkey's side in Libya is also an important for Damascus.

All countries that are targeted by imperialist forces must act according to their shared interests, and not according to any historic rivalry or conflicts. Turkey and Russia must take the first steps in this direction at once.

The United States and France have already placed Ankara and Moscow on the same front, whether they like it or not.

Therefore, to keep pushing the Blue Homeland strategy and to improve alliances in the region, starting with Russia, is key to a victory in the Eastern Mediterranean and Libya.

The Azerbaijan-Armenia Border Conflicts and Karabakh Conflict

The just solution of the Karabakh problem in the South Caucasus and the establishment of stability and peace in the region pass through a holistic strategy as in the Eastern Mediterranean. The recent aggressive attitude of Armenia towards Azerbaijan and the border conflicts that followed show this clearly once again. The occupation of

Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 regions gives Yerevan the courage to resort to all sorts of arrangements.

Is there any chance for the Minsk Group, which holds the responsibility to solve this problem, to accomplish this seemingly impossible task? Previous years have made it clear that the Minsk process will not yield any results. There was no doubt about this among those who have observed the process closely. Therefore, ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and sustaining peace and stability in the South Caucasus can no longer be left to the Minsk Group.

This of course means that some other mechanism will be required to facilitate this process. The success of Syria in the Astana process is an example especially of a solution for the conflicts in the region, and the Karabakh Problem. Turkey, Russia, and Iran are much more concerned with the Karabakh Problem than Western countries in terms of geography, geopolitics, and history. Regional problems can be solved much more comfortably and justly when western states are held back and the countries of the region take the leadership.



Iran, Russia and Turkey praise contribution of Astana talks to Syrian settlement. (CGTN, 2018)

It would be more useful to talk about the answer to the question of whether or not there is a

solid basis for the Astana process to take action in the Nagorno-Karabakh Problem and other issues in the South Caucasus.

The largest US embassy in Eastern Europe is located in Armenia. As a result of this, a serious network of American agents and their influences have taken over the country. They have also gained serious ground within the state and various NGOs (Aydinlik, 2018). The activities of Soros Foundations are also substantial. In his statement recently, Ilham Aliyev stated that the Sorosists took over the legislative-executive-judiciary arms of the Armenian state, and stated that the Pashinyan government has followed Soros' instructions (Aydinlik, 2020c).

This network has played an important role in bringing Nikol Pashinyan to power. Pashinyan showed his loyalty to the forces that brought him to power. His political alliance advocated Armenia's resignation from the customs union and military alliance with Russia (United World, 2020). Everyone has now begun to accept that Armenia's "axis" has shifted.

In parallel with this, there has been a recent process in which supporters of greater cooperation with Russia (such as Robert Kocharyan) were arrested and deposed. This "purge" was also reflected in the business world. Russia has clearly expressed its discomfort in this regard.

Yerevan adopted actions that glorify and honor Nazi collaborators in World War II in a way similar to certain former Soviet republics such as Ukraine and the Baltic states. A statue of the Dashnak leader Garegin Nzhdeh, who openly worked for fascist Germany, was erected in the center of the capital, and many high-ranking state officials attended the opening.

Such actions are among the most typical signs of standing against Russia and entering the Atlantic

front. For this reason, this may be seen not just as a simple historical attribution, but also as a strategic choice, since such activities symbolize “liberation from Russian hegemony” and consolidates anti-Russian position in the public opinion.

It is possible to see similar actions when evaluating the incidents that took place between 1915-23. Soviet Russia has also been alleged to be among the co-partners and cooperators of the so-called “Armenian Genocide” in many pro-West groups in Armenia, many of which are led by figures such as Pashinyan. According to these groups, the pro-Turkey Bolshevik Moscow partitioned the territory of Armenia with Ankara, and played a large role in the “genocide” by cooperating.

Yerevan’s Tovuz Plans

Armenia naturally became more isolated in the region while standing by the Atlantic front and shifting away from Russia. It would be impossible for Yerevan to be not disturbed in this isolation, alongside the economic and political crises throughout the country.

The setup of Yerevan in the Tovuz region, which is located on the border with Azerbaijan, could also have a meaning in this respect. The attack did not come from the occupied territory, but from a natural border with Azerbaijan.

Let us just quickly remind our readers here that Armenia is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which consists of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Any conflict in the occupation zone will not be counted as the joint defense of the CSTO, but an external attack on its core territory will garner the Organization’s full support.

This is one of the plans of the now isolated Yerevan. While strengthening its place in the

Western camp on one hand, it will have the support of Russia and the CSTO countries against Azerbaijan, on the other.

The economic problems and the political tensions inside the country will also be covered up this way. The government’s complete failure with the fight against the Coronavirus has remained as an important topic of the country’s public agenda, but this has been overshadowed by the conflict.

This conflict, which was provoked by Armenia, will also encourage the Turkish Army, which had implicitly gone against the Atlantic bloc in Syria, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Libya, to open up a new front and thin out the Turkish military power.

This conflict, which was provoked by Armenia, will also encourage the Turkish Army, which had implicitly gone against the Atlantic bloc in Syria, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Libya, to open up a new front and thin out the Turkish military power. It is clear that Azerbaijan is not the only target, and that Armenia is not the only perpetrator.

Moreover, this maneuver is not just an action to provoke Moscow against Azerbaijan. This will also pave the way for the Turkish-Russian conflict, which has been the most crucial mission of the West in the region throughout history.

These conflicts can cause Baku to look weak, and get embroiled in turmoil, and the orange movements in Azerbaijan, which the West has failed to strengthen previously, could put the Aliyev government in a tough spot.

Moscow’s Harsh Reactions to Yerevan

In fact, Armenia’s provocative plans were doomed to failure from the outset. First of all, Armenia

was not the defensive force in this conflict, but the aggressor. The current Turkish-Russian and Azerbaijani-Russian relations in place have made it impossible for Moscow to target Baku and Ankara. And other members of the CSTO would not take an aggressive action against Turkey and Azerbaijan, either.

Armenia has also come up with the lies that some Ukrainian mercenaries and jihadists from Syria are fighting on the Azerbaijani side just to provoke Russia, but these unsubstantiated allegations could not find any support.

In addition to all of this, Yerevan has faced some unexpected reactions. Even Margarita Simonian, an Armenian-Russian who is in charge of Russia Today and Sputnik media groups and does not favor Turkey, has responded harshly to Yerevan asking for help. According to Simonian, the Armenian government has acted aggressively against Russia repeatedly and has basically slapped Russia in the face (MK, 2020).

Russian public opinion has been increasingly subjected to arguments favoring the view that it is Armenia who needs a military base in Gyumri, and not Russia (Khrumchikhin, 2018). The US military biological laboratories in Armenia have resulted in a serious sense of threat in Russia (Belozero, 2020).

The beginning of the border clashes, being three days after the discharge of Pashinyan's son from military service, were also criticized in the Russian media (Lenta.Ru, 2020).

A plan "B" is also ready for Yerevan. This time, Yerevan will be able to provoke its own people against Russia by saying, "we have been left alone" as a pretext of playing a clear role in Western plans in the region. The aim is to discredit Russia in the presence of the Armenian people.

Within that period, Russian television broadcasts would be stopped on grounds of being harmful to the national interests of the country.

Disturbances That Can Be Created Within China

Another point to note is that the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway pass near the Tovuz region. Armenia's aggressive stances not only pose a danger for Turkey and Azerbaijan, but also to the security of energy and transportation in the region, especially with the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway being a part of the "Belt and Road" proposed by China. The initiative and the agreement of cooperation on this railway between Ankara-Moscow-Baku began in 2019, strengthening the potential for an alliance.

Meanwhile, let us just note that Armenia has recently joined the International Religious Freedom Alliance, which was founded in 2020 under the provision of the United States and has drawn attention for its anti-Chinese activities.

These facts show that the developments in Western Asia are not far from China. For this reason, it is also important for China to pursue a more effective policy in Western Asia, to take measures to support the anti-US front and to cooperate with the countries that face the Atlantic threat to reinforce their sovereignty.

The Period of Keeping the Status Quo is Now Over

Therefore, Russia is deeply concerned by the pro-Western policies of the Pashinyan government. This situation offers great opportunities in favor of Turkey and Azerbaijan in redistributing the balances of power, and reshaping the alliances in the South Caucasus. It is possible to see the signs for it from the Kremlin.

Moscow has favored the protection of the status quo as it did before in the Karabakh Conflict. The concern that a conflict reaching beyond its relations with Yerevan could lead to a Western intervention in the region has played an important role in this attitude. The possibility of Western powers deploying in the region, with the excuse of the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, has been the decisive point in Russia's policy of maintaining the status quo.

However, a new process started in which these policies have begun to change. As we mentioned above, Armenia's Westward axis shift was among the leading reasons behind the strengthening of Moscow-Baku relations in political and economic areas. On such solid ground, relations with Baku have been getting more important for Moscow than relations with Yerevan. This being said, Russia still has certain commitments towards Yerevan within the framework of the CSTO.

The Lavrov Plan is in Effect

In addition, the Azerbaijani Army has accumulated considerable power over the last 10 years, and has moved to a more advantageous position compared to the Armenian Army (this advantage has proven itself the April War in 2016). Five years ago, relying on this advantageous situation, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev told the Russian President Vladimir Putin that the Karabakh Conflict must be resolved, even by force if necessary. Then, Putin promised his Azerbaijani counterpart that the issue would be resolved peacefully.

Russia began to work on a new plan, following Putin's promise. According to this plan, which would later be referred to as the Lavrov Plan, it was provisioned that the immediate evacuation of five occupied 'rayon's would take place first, and then be returned to Azerbaijan. This plan was put

in front of the former Armenian Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan. In the end, both parties agreed upon the Plan.

However, after the overthrow of Sargsyan with the orange revolution movements, Pashinyan came and declared that he rejects the Lavrov Plan. As a result, this step toward a resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict after many years was blocked.

Subsequently, Moscow-Yerevan relations have faced another major crisis. While Putin's promises to Aliyev remain valid, Azerbaijan's strict response to the provocations in Tovuz could also be evaluated as a reminder of the Russian promises in some ways.

All these cases indicate that a new mechanism with greater possibilities must be initiated.

Indeed, the strengthening of military relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, such as conducting military exercises and developing the recent cooperation in the field of defense industries, is important. It is worthwhile to mention here that Turkish UAVs were put on the screen and that measures for retaliation were discussed at a recent meeting of the Armenian Ministry of Defense.

The efforts of the Ankara-Moscow-Tehran triangle (also known as the Astana process) acting on the Karabakh issue are vital to bear positive results.



An image from the meeting of the Armenian Ministry of Defense. The Turkish UAV Bayraktar TB2, is seen on the screen. (Ruchron, 2020)

In history, this mechanism has put an end to the “Armenian Issue”. The Dashnak government, a pro-British collaborative government whom Mustafa Kemal called the “Caucasus Barrier” during the War of Independence, was destroyed by the Turkish-Soviet military cooperation, and peace and stability were provided in the South Caucasus. The imperialist-backed occupied territories were also liberated.

The Holistic strategy of the Ankara government has not only paved the way for the liberation of the South Caucasus, but also saved Izmir. The same thing is needed today. The Astana mechanism, which would be in effect for the South Caucasus, will also be key to overcoming important problems such as Syria, the Eastern Mediterranean and Libya.

Competition in Natural Gas Projects is not Essential

It is necessary to say that although there seems to be a competition between TurkStream and TANAP –which delivers Azerbaijani gas to Europe and Russian gas projects with the same goals– such projects do not essentially affect the gas providing parties. Europe’s gas demands are large enough to meet the supply of both projects. In addition, TurkStream was designed later on, and has taken TANAP into account as well.

TANAP is not considered as a competitor among the Russian public.

In fact, the TANAP, TurkStream and Nord-Stream projects share common interests against the EastMed project of the Atlantic front in the Eastern Mediterranean.

On the other hand, it is important to maintain the advantageous position supported by UN

resolutions and the full justification of the international law. It is important to avoid actions such as claiming territory on Iran even before the liberation of Karabakh or attempts such as recognizing the “Yerevan government in exile”. The liberation of the occupied lands should be the primary focus. All of Turkey’s attention, energy and power should be directed at this.

Any speeches that might lead to the loss of Turkey’s potential allies, and any attempts that could discredit Turkey in the international community will also disrupt the Nagorno-Karabakh cause and should therefore be avoided.

The Key to Peace in the South Caucasus and West Asia

From the point of view of Russia, Turkey and Azerbaijan have started to take their place within Eurasia thanks to their military, economic and strategic power on one hand, while Armenia, which has significantly weakened, has fallen under the influence of the West on the other. It is clear who Russia’s ideal partners are to be.

Certainly, a Turkish-Azerbaijani union and Turkish-Russian-Iranian cooperation will disrupt US plans and bring peace in the region, just as they did historically, as we mentioned above, in the South Caucasus. Indeed, the effect of such cooperation will be felt, not just in the South Caucasus, but also all over West Asia.

Patriotic Party (Turkey) Black Sea-Mediterranean Friendship and Peace Plan, accepted on June 21, 2020, complements the ideas above-mentioned and it assessing these ideas together with the Plan will be beneficial. 🌱

PATRIOTIC PARTY'S PLAN FOR BLACK SEA – MEDITERRANEAN FRIENDSHIP AND PEACE

21 JUNE 2020

1. US and NATO bases that threaten peace and development in the Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Aegean Sea, Mediterranean and Arabian Sea regions should be closed, and the fight against US-supported separatists and fanatical terrorists should be supported.

2. The Turkish and Greek peoples of Cyprus are members of separate nations. It is no longer possible for them to live together because of their painful past. These two peoples have had to determine their future separately. A real Turkish-Greek friendship can only be built on this very basis. Similarly, the State of Abkhazia is the state of the Abkhazian nation and is a factor for peace, stability, and security in the Black Sea. Recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and the Republic of Abkhazia by regional states and the international community will disrupt US hegemonic plans and serve peace, stability, and prosperity.

3. Turkey's protection of its legitimate rights in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean is compatible with the interests of Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean countries: Russia, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Italy. Therefore, Turkey should be supported in its rightful defence of its blue homeland in the Eastern Mediterranean against military threats by the US-Israel-Greece-Southern Cyprus alliance.

4. The US-led intervention in Libya should be ended, and Libya's legitimate government should be supported. Protecting Libyan territorial integrity is essential. The struggle of Libya's UN-recognized legitimate government to unite its homeland by any means is both rightful and the only solution for peace in the Mediterranean. Libyan oil belongs to the Libyan state and nation.

5. Crimea should be recognized as territory of the Russian Federation.

6. In order to put an end to the occupation of Armenia in Karabakh, which is part of Azerbaijani territory, regional states should put pressure on Armenia. The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan should be respected.

7. Syria's territorial and state integrity must be respected, and peace should be established in Syria. Syria must be cleansed of separatist and fanatical terrorist organisations. The US should stop occupying Syrian territory and should withdraw from Syria. The Astana Process conducted by Iran, Russia and Turkey and the Sochi Agreement between Turkey and Russia are the only way forward for a peaceful solution.

8. Israel's occupation of Arab lands and their oppression of the Palestinian people should end. The independent Palestinian State, with its capital as Jerusalem, should be recognised.

9. Turkey, Russia, Iran, Syria, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Abkhazia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba should wage a joint fight against sanctions and for the lifting of the embargos. Free trade and economic cooperation between countries should be established. Trade in national currencies must be developed to end the supremacy of the US dollar for the welfare of the peoples of the world.

10. Barriers to free transportation, communication, tourism, economic and cultural development between the Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Aegean Sea, Mediterranean and Arabian Sea countries should be removed.

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