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REALIST CRITIQUE OF THE STRATEGIC DEPTH DOCTRINE

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Realist Critique of the Strategic Depth Doctrine

Stratejik Derinlik Doktrinin Realist Eleştirisi

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ABSTRACT

Turkish foreign policy between 2007 and 2015 has a unique characteristic due to the influence of the new vision of Ahmet Davutoglu and significant shifts in the international relations after the Arab Spring. Early JDP governments spent great efforts to develop their relations with neighbor countries in accordance with the Davutoglu's "zero problems with neighbors" approach. As a matter of fact that, Turkey achieved successes in establishing a new kind of relations, which fundamentally depended on the economic cooperation, in its region. On the other hand, after the Arab Spring, major regional actors such as Iran and Russia tried to maximize its interests in the Middle East by supporting the regime in Syria. Iran also intensely engaged the domestic relations of Iraq. In addition to Syria and Iraq, Turkey had confrontations from the USA, Israel and Arab countries throughout her foreign policies in the region. With the help of the ineffectiveness of the international institutions such as the UN and NATO, Turkish foreign policy once promoted as a model was troubled. In this thesis, Turkish foreign policy between 2007 and 2015 will be analyzed in the light of the realist theory.

Key Words: Davutoglu, Turkish foreign policy, realism, strategic depth, The Arab Spring

ÖZET

Ahmet Davutoğlu'nun yeni vizyonun etkisi ve Arap Baharı sonrasında uluslararası sistemde meydana gelen gelişmelerden dolayı, 2007 ile 2015 yılları arasında Türk dış politikası farklı bir niteliğe sahiptir. İlk dönem AK Parti (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) hükümetleri, Davutoğlu tarafından ortaya konulan "sıfır sorun" yaklaşımı çerçevesinde çevre ülkeleri ile ilişkileri geliştirmek için büyük çaba sarf etmişlerdir. Aslında, Türkiye bu dönemde, kendi bölgesinde ekonomik işbirliğine dayalı olarak yeni ilişkiler kurmayı başarmıştır. Bununla birlikte, Arap Baharı sonrasında, İran ve Rusya, Ortadoğu'da çıkarlarını azami seviyeye çıkarmak için Suriye'deki otoriter rejimi desteklemişlerdir. İran, ilave olarak, Irak'ın içişlerinde etkinliğini arttıracak adımlar da atmıştır. Buna ilaveten, Türk dış politikası bölge çapında ABD, İsrail ve Arap ülkelerinin çoğunluğu tarafından sınamaya tabi tutulmuştur. BM ve NATO gibi uluslararası kurumların yetersizliğinin de etkisi ile, Arap Baharı sonrasında Türkiye bölgesinde arzu ettiği hedeflere ulaşamamıştır. Bir zamanlar model ülke olarak gösterilen Türkiye dış politika hedeflerinden uzaklaşmıştır. Bu tezde, 2007 ve 2015 yılları arasındaki Türk dış politikası, realist perspektif ışığında analiz edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Davutoğlu, Türk dış politikası, realizm, stratejik derinlik, Arap Baharı

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ABBREVIATIONS

AK PARTİ	(Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
BM	Birleşmiş Milletler
EU	European Union
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JDP	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
MENA	The Middle East and the North Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Trade Organisation
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Workers' Party)
PYD	Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat (Democratic UnionParty)
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi)
TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (Türk İş Birliği ve Kalkınma Ajansı)
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	The United States of America
USSR	TheUnion of Soviet Socialist Republics
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (People's Protection Units)
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWI	First World War
WWII	Second World War

INTRODUCTION

Before the JDP (Justice and Development Party- Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) came to power, Turkey widely regarded as a Pro-western country which its majority of citizens were Muslims. It was evaluated as a secular-democratic Muslim ally of the West in the troubled-region. Traditional Turkish Foreign Policy was strategically based on close collaboration with the actors as the USA (the United States of America), the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) the EU (European Union) and Israel. She mostly made her decisions in international area in accordance with the NATO allies. Turkey was a country compatible with her allies' strategies to serve mostly as a 'bridge' or a 'buffer zone' between the Europe and the infamous Middle East.

However, the close relations with the 'West' was not the case for the relationship between Turkey and her immediate neighbors. Turkish relationship with her neighbors as Greece, Armenia, Syria, Iraq and Iran were problematic for various complicated reasons. Relations with neighbors were so based on mutual mistrust that it echoed in the 'two and half war doctrine' in Turkish policy-making. While 'Two war' in the doctrine means the possibility of going to war against any two of the neighboring countries at the same time, plus 'half war' in the doctrine was PKK terrorism which struggled Turkish domestic peace since 1984. (Baudner, 2014, p. 87)

In addition to antagonisms with her neighbors, close relations with the West did not always pay well in terms of Turkish point of view. Turkey had various geopolitical and geostrategic contradictions with the 'West'. Turkish intervention of Cyprus, conflicts with Greece over Aegean Sea, the West's support for Armenian Genocide claims, internal and cross-border issues of PKK (Partiya Kerkeran Kurdistan) terrorism troubled her ties with the West. Both

internal and external challenges triggered a mechanism known as 'Sevres Syndrome' in Turkish public opinion. While Sevres Syndrome limited Turkey's choices in international politics, its domestic peace was poisoned with ethnic based- PKK terrorism.

In 2003, shortly after JDP came to power, Ahmet Davutoglu was appointed as a senior advisor to the President Abdullah Gul. Ahmet Davutoglu as an international relations professor recently wrote his *magnum opus*, the "Stratejik Derinlik (2001) (Strategic Depth). In the Strategic Depth book Davutoglu concluded what was it needed. A more secure, more self-esteemed, more influential Turkey which could become a regional power easily instead of self-limiting itself.

Davutoglu's Strategic Depth doctrine which revealed in the book in 2001 was merely an academic theory until Ahmet Davutoğlu, author of the book, became an effective actor in Turkish Foreign Policy. Davutoglu started to gain influence gradually and had a chance to implement his own work. Ahmet Davutoğlu served as chief foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül from 2003 to 2009, and afterwards, served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2009 to 2014 and as the Prime Minister from 2014 to 2016.

The foundational ground of the shift in Turkish foreign policy happened during Davutoglu's policy making is based on Ahmet Davutoglu's ideas written in his books and articles. It is possible to say that Strategic Depth Doctrine has been a basic element that has been effective in foreign policy strategies of Turkey since 2007 during the time Ahmet Davutoglu served as advisor, minister and prime minister.

According to Strategic Depth Doctrine, Turkey which have inherited the Ottoman legacy, can use its shared historical, sociological, political ties with other actors to leverage its might. Leveraging socio-economic, socio-cultural and

historic ties shared with other actors was emphasized by Turkish soft and transformative power. Since it's a soft power practice, it needed a deliver mechanism, a shuttle diplomacy and a *modus operandi*, the policy of 'Zero problems with neighbors'.

Briefly, Strategic Depth doctrine argues that, a country's "depth" within a region, based on the country's "historical depth" and "geographical depth". Historical depth is the country's historical heritage. In Turkey's case, it is the Ottoman legacy in Middle East Region. Geographical depth is the country's position in the region. Geographical position and geopolitical importance of Turkey is not a new phenomenon for people of Turkey. But, in Strategic Depth its definition has shifted from being the bridge to being the center and creating value through the central role:

> *Geographical depth and historical depth are two factors that reinforce each other, and combination of two creates the country's Strategic Depth. The interdependence of the factors push countries to carefully interpret historical and geographic paradigms. (Davutoğlu, 2015, s. 551-563)*

As Ahmet Davutoglu gaining influence in the Turkish foreign-policy making processes, he tried to shape Turkish foreign policy and sought success by implementing his doctrine which emphasized Turkish soft power. In contrast to isolationist "Peace at Home, Peace Abroad" maxim, Strategic Depth doctrine claims greater role for Turkey. As clearly underlined in his doctrine, Turkish soft power, which was derived from Turkish history, its civilization and culture would play a role in making a new and more assertive foreign policy.

The Davutoglu policy making propelled Turkey in terms of economic and diplomatic achievements between 2009 and 2012. Turkish efforts derived from the Davutoglu doctrine to reach sustainable peace with its neighbors and with the broader Middle East, easily gained attraction from the international community and domestic audiences. Negotiations started with Armenia, Turkey started to

have joint- cabinet meetings with Syria and Iraq which was the first time in Republican-era. Israel-Syria, Israel-the Palestinians, Iran-the nuclear deal, Bosnians-Serbians-Croatians issues witnessed Turkish mediation efforts. Peace-seeking efforts of a democratic-secular country with Muslim majority in a troubled region was so popular, and often viewed as the 'Turkish model'. In addition to the diplomatic gains, in return, Turkish trade volume with the Middle East rapidly increased in a very short period of time. Davutoglu was dubbed as the 'Kissinger of Turkey' by many scholars in those days.

In the popular days of Turkish soft-power and Davutoglu doctrine, the USA and its western allies also gave credit to transformative abilities of soft power of Turkey in the troubled-Middle East facing Arab uprisings. At the beginning of so called- the Arab spring, Turkey was shown as a role model to the potential new democracies. At the first glance, transitions in Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt was relatively peaceful and a social media powered passive revolutionary tide was believed to spread and reach success through the Middle East.

However, challenging series of events during the Arab spring in Libya, Syria and Yemen caused realist policies of balance of power, national interest, and military capabilities overwhelmed the role of soft power. As soft-power started to lose its influence in the wake of more-turbulent-before Middle East, its adversary, hard power praxis gained momentum. In the face of changing nature of the game in the Middle East, Turkish model was abandoned by both its western promoters and the potential Middle Eastern buyers immediately. However, Turkey herself could not keep up with the transition from soft power oriented foreign-policy-making to old-traditional hard power based policies.

Therefore, Turkish foreign policy once promoted as a role model crushed and troubled through the Middle East. The famous 'the zero problems with neighbors' policy collapsed. The Davutoglu's shuttle diplomacy is long-gone, Turkey has problematic relations with Israel, Syria, Egypt and Greece within its neighborhood.

As a spill-over of Syrian Civil War, by the year of 2019, Turkey hosts the largest refugee population in the world with near 4 million individuals. Turkey had to intervene in Syrian Civil War by using her military albeit once warm relations with Syrian administration. PKK or its Syrian form, PYD threatens Turkey from new frontier from internal war-torn Syria.

Debates over Aegean Sea and Cyprus still poisons Turkish and Greek relations. In addition, claims over the Eastern Mediterranean region potential gas reserves have a potential to escalate historical Turkish and Greek tensions further, in addition to Turkey versus other Mediterranean countries tensions over the same issue.

Interestingly, Turkey is witnessing an unnamed rivalry from countries as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait even new for traditional Turkish foreign policy, starting after the Arabian Spring turmoil.

To make things worse, Turkish relations with actors in her greater neighborhood are also troubled for various reasons. The promising relations with the European Union at the Strategic Depth doctrine's high years, are now at the brink of collapse. The USA as the strategic ally for decades, and Turkey have been at odds over Syrian Civil War, Eastern Mediterranean gas reserves and Turkish S-400 missile deal issues.

Therefore, the M.A thesis will be designated to investigate reasons of the current crisis in the Turkish foreign policy focusing the period of 2007-2015 under Davutoglu foreign policy-making. The main goal of the study is to broadly examine the doctrine, from the foundational grounds to the implementation in order to understand the origins of shortcomings in Turkish foreign policy and its possible relevance with Davutoglu's doctrine. Davutoglu, in his doctrine and during the implementation of the doctrine, tried to use Turkish soft power to leverage her might. The aim of the thesis to investigate shortcomings of his doctrine and his implications in terms of soft power-hard power transitions.

In other words, this M.A. thesis will examine the permanent marks and temporary changes and will try to find answers to the following questions: What were the elements of the Strategic Depth Doctrine in Turkish foreign policy making between 2007 and 2015? Which intellectual school of thoughts affected the foundation of the theory? What are the continuities and discontinuities between international doctrines and Strategic Depth Doctrine and its implementation? What are the continuities and discontinuities between the past foreign policy practices? What are the soft power practices rooted from the doctrine in Turkish foreign policy? What is the role of soft power-hard power transitions in explaining current crisis Turkey facing after the Arab spring? Here, the objective is to understand the main components in which we can assess Strategic Depth Doctrine as success or failure.

While trying to answer the questions above, the main focus will be on the Realist School in International Relations. The claim of the thesis is that while Strategic Depth Doctrine takes its justification from the Realist School, it also received strongest criticisms from the same school of thought. This duality should shed light on the successful and failed parts of the Strategic Depth Doctrine. This study claims that the reason behind the paradoxical situation is founded on the clash between soft power and hard power policies and their implications which shaped the tension of recent crisis in Turkish foreign policy.

The period of 2007-2015 under Davutoglu foreign policy-making will be main focus of the M.A thesis. Since, it is the period in which Turkey has exercised Strategic Depth and zero problems within the region. After that period, Strategic Depth doctrine in Turkish foreign policy-making became harder to interpret with the radical shift in balance of power in the region, and security threats coming from non-state actors. It is claimed that, 2015 is the end of zero problems with neighbor's policy and consequently Strategic Depth Doctrine.

The thesis is also provided with a newer insight to recent turmoil in Turkish foreign policy hence with a few exceptions, the already-existing literature

on the Strategic Depth doctrine written in the height of the doctrine's academic popularity might seem a bit out of date. Davutoglu's doctrine and his transformation of Turkish foreign policy received the utmost attention from many scholars in order to interpret the diplomatic route that JDP follows while implementing a change in foreign policy strategies. This study offers a brief summary of the studies on this transformation in relation to the Realist School.

While assessing the successes and failures of the Strategic Depth, literature review will be used. Especially, Ahmet Davutoglu's books and articles in the defined period, are very important. The detailed analyze of Realist School of Thought and the Strategic Depth Doctrine will be made together. In order to have better coverage Ahmet Davutoglu's Strategic Depth Doctrine, primary sources such as Davutoglu's books, articles, speeches and his doctrine's implication in Turkish foreign policy will be examined. It's because, secondary sources such as interpretations of Davutoglu's speeches, articles about his personality or work may have risk of bias. Since the literature written in the popular days of the strategic depth doctrine, and the literature written after its popularity ended may differ. It's also possible to mention, since Davutoglu was a political figure in the ruling party JDP (AK Parti- Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) political rift amongst supporters and adversaries of ruling party may cause exaggerating or undermining his work's fundamentals.

For soft power and hard power debate which consists of a basis for that thesis argument seeking to answer in terms of realist point of view, literature survey will be provided by examining already existing work of influential thinkers of realism, soft power concept. For better comprehension of continuities and breakthroughs in Turkish foreign policy, Turkish Republican era will be examined as late-Ottoman era, Turkish Republic foreign policy during Cold-War and Post-Cold War era.

Following chapters of the study are; I. Realist School in the Analysis of the International Relations and Foreign Policy, II. Historical Features of the Turkish

Foreign Policy, III. Turkish Foreign Policy at the Crossroads: Strategic Depth Doctrine in Davutoglu Era, IV. A Realist Critique of Strategic Depth Doctrine and V. Conclusion.

As mentioned before, Realist School's foreign policy explanations are crucial to evaluate Strategic Depth Doctrine as being the base as well as the criticism. The first chapter of the M.A thesis will focus on the aspects of realist school in the analysis of the international relations and foreign policy processes by focusing on the influential thinkers of the theory. This chapter will offer a brief literature survey of realist school with relevance answer those questions: 1) What are the foundational arguments of the realist theory? 2) What is power? 3) What are the different notions of power? What are the continuities and discontinuities in terms of hard power- soft power transitions? Works of Morgenthau, Waltz, Carr will be discussed to answer those questions, not to mention every detail of realist school of thought, but its relevance with the current crisis of Turkish foreign policy in scope of Davutoglu's doctrine will be provided.

The second chapter will be devoted to understand historical features of the Turkish foreign policy during the Republican era before Davutoglu's gaining influence in foreign policy making. In the chapter, there will be an attempt to outline continuities and general aspects of the traditional Turkish foreign policy making and its international relations. The foundational grounds of Strategic Depth through the foreign policy implementations during Cold War and Post-Cold War era will be conceptualized carefully. While conceptualizing the Post – Cold War area, Turkish initial foreign policy activism efforts toward her neighborhood and ex-Soviet Republics after the end of Cold War, and Davutoglu's civilization emphasized doctrine will be tried to outline to highline continuities and discontinuities.

In third chapter, Turkish Foreign Policy at the Crossroads: Strategic Depth Doctrine in Davutoglu Era, will try to seek answer to those questions: 1) What is the Strategic Depth Doctrine? What were the elements of the Strategic Depth Doctrine in Turkish foreign policy making between 2007 and 2015? Which intellectual school of thoughts affected the foundation of the theory? What are the

continuities and discontinuities between international doctrines and Strategic Depth Doctrine and its implementation? What are the continuities and discontinuities between the past foreign policy practices? What are the soft power practices rooted from the doctrine in Turkish foreign policy? The main of the chapter's focus will be on the continuities and discontinuities between Davutoglu's implications in Turkish foreign policy and past experiences.

Fourth chapter will be on the Realist Critique of Strategic Depth Doctrine mainly focusing on Turkey's capabilities and power. This chapter will focus on the clash of idealistic-soft power exercises and realism in practice of strategic depth doctrine. Then finally the MA thesis will reach its conclusion. A realist's answer to the reasons of current strain in Turkish foreign policy, if there is any, shortcomings or other possible answers to the problem will be highlighted.

In the following chapter of the M.A thesis will be devoted the aspects of realist school in the analysis of the international relations and foreign policy.

REALIST SCHOOL IN THE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1.1. Realist Theory and Its Historical Roots

Realism is one of the central and historical theories in international relations that explain the relationship between actors in the context of "conflict of interest" and competitiveness. Power is the key term in realist school to analyze the incidents in international relations. The application of power in foreign relations is called power politics or realpolitik. The modern realist approach was born as a reaction to idealism, which is a form of liberal tradition. According to idealism, international relations cannot be explained in the light of just "power users". Instead, moral values, international law, and international organizations play a critical role in determining the course of events in international relations. Contrary to the realist thinkers, idealists believe that the nature of a human being is good and collaboration is the best way to deal with the problems of foreign affairs.

Idealism gained momentum between WWI and WWII especially because of Woodrow Wilson's efforts, the US president, to establish an international order, which would rely on collaborative works of nations under the roof of League of Nations. It became clear that such multilateral efforts were ineffective to prevent German, Japan and Italy from their aggressive foreign policies. Realism strengthened in international relations after WWII and became the intellectual foundation of the Cold War period. Realist thinkers accused the idealist on the ground that they are excessively preoccupied with how the world has to be, instead of understanding the real dynamics of foreign affairs. During the Cold War, the US applied determination and containment policies to control the expansionist desires of Russia and China.

The roots of the realist school can be found in the opinions of Sun Tzu, a famous Chinese strategist. According to Sun Tzu, moral considerations are not enough to protect a state from aggressive attitudes its rivalries. Therefore, it is essential to use power appropriately for the protection of the state's interests. One

of the best explanations of the realist though is given by Thucydides, a Greek philosopher, who stated that *"the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept"* (Malchow, 2015). Niccolò Machiavelli concentrated on proper actions for staying in power including military alliances and public manipulation (Lucchese, 2015, p. 20). E.H. Car describes Machiavelli as the first significant realist. Although Machiavelli accepted the crucial role of morality in political issues, he claimed that it cannot be possible to mention the presence of morality without presence of effective authority (E.H.Carr, 2001, p. 62).

Thomas Hobbes, who is another proponent of the realist school, claimed that every actor would try to maximize its interest in the lack of a regulating force in international relations. Hobbes named this situation as a "state of war" or "state of nature", and, as a result supported the presence of a strong monarchy, which would facilitate the solution of the problems among actors (Raylor, 2019, p. 46).

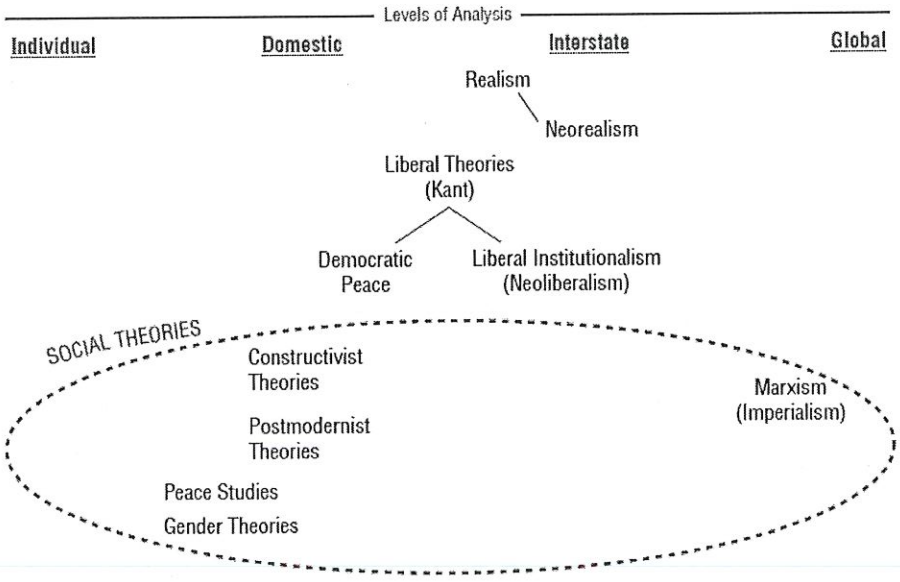

Figure-1 Realist Theory in International Relations (Pevehouse & Goldstein, 2017, p. 39)

Realists believe that the international order has an anarchic nature. It means that there is no effective mechanism or structure to solve the problems

among the international actors (W. Wohlforth, 2010, p. 159). In the internal affairs of a state, there are some law enforcement mechanisms to deter the citizens or groups from illegal actions such as violent behaviors. Realists claim that the lack of such enforcement mechanisms in international relations forces all states to find their solutions by using their powers. Although other international theories point out the roles of international organizations such as the UN, the EU, World Trade Organization (WTO), and NATO in the enforcement of international norms and values, realists are cautious with respect to the effectiveness of these organizations. For this reason, in realist thinking, the capacities of other states should be the focus area of a state, instead of their intentions. Because intentions can be quickly changed with the change in the governance of a state. It is true that the current structure is not sufficient to force a state to obey the rules and norms of international orders. On the other hand, a state will face serious consequences of its illegal actions such as pressure of international community and exclusion from the economic activities among other states in case of insisting on its illegal actions, which contradict with the international norms.

Morgenthau and Thomson claimed that there are two main schools in the history of political thought, which have conflicting opinions on the nature of society, politics, and man. According to first school, human beings have a good nature and can be victim of failure in the social order. With the help of reforms, education, and appropriate use of force, the defects of the social structure can be minimized. On the other hand, the other school believes that human beings have a conflicting nature, which is the main reason of the anarchic nature of the world order. Moral principles can only be imposed by a system of checks and balances. Morgenthau stated that *"This theoretical concern with human nature as it actually is, and with the historic processes as they actually take place, has earned for the realism"*(Morgenthau, 1993, p. 1).

The security dilemma is one of the fundamental characteristics of realist theory. Increasing capabilities of a state are usually regarded as a threat by other states. Such a threat perception causes reciprocal increase in the capabilities of

their rivalries. In this situation, states are inclined to strengthen especially their military capabilities to counter possible threats from other states. In the age of nuclear weapons, the paradox of security dilemma exacerbates the security of the states because of the arms races that are the natural consequence of the security dilemma. There is close relationship between the anarchical nature of the world order and security dilemma. In case of harsh international competition among powerful states such as the rivalry between the US and USSR during the Cold War, security dilemma creates more anarchical environment, in which every state try to sustain their security by relying their military capabilities.

In the anarchic world environment, the countering power of a state can have a preventive role in preserving the world order. Power balance is the term that refers to the distribution of power relatively equally among specific states or a group of states. In the realist theory, power balance is a braking system in IR that prevent the dominance of a state or a group of states. It is also major tenet for continuity of the existing international order. The balance of power does not refer to a peaceful period among the actors of IR. Alliances are a common international instrument for states to counter the threats of adversary states. Otherwise, each state has to strengthen its own military capacity and spend considerable amount of its resources. In this regard, deterrence capacity of a state should be preserved to prevent the emergence of a new adversary. Otherwise, it would be more costly for a state to satisfy the further demands of the challenging states (Jervis, 1976, p. 1). The containment strategy of the US in the Cold War to prevent the territorial expansion on the USSR relied on the alliance-based power balance efforts.

Due to their weaknesses, small states usually prefer to join the security umbrella of powerful states. It is called as *bandwagoning* and gives some advantages to the powerful states to increase their international legitimacy (Pevehouse & Goldstein, 2017, p. 45). Bandwagoning policy can be cheaper, but it can turn the territory of a small country into an area, in which power struggle among major powers takes place. After WWII, Turkey preferred to participate the Western block to counter the USSR's threats. Therefore, it had to deal with the

security problems that were the result of power struggle between the US and USSR. In recent years, China has accused the US of following similar containment policies against itself by strengthened economic and military relationships between the US and the countries in Asia-Pacific region such as Philippines, South Korea, and Japan.

The definitions of "great power" and "middle power" are not easy to make due to the changing nature of power among states. In the 19th century, all great powers were located on the European continent. After WWII, the US became the new leader of great powers and led the creation of multinational international organizations. The powers of both Germany and Japan significantly decreased after WWII, however, they are regarded as members of great powers in 21st century because of their economic and technological capacities. Changing of great powers does not occur rapidly. To illustrate, there was a significant decrease in the economic and military capacities of Russia after the end of Cold War, but it has undergone a rapid transformation under the leadership of Vladimir Putin and become a very international actor in determining the trajectory of the conflict in Syria.

Power distribution is also a key term for realists to explain the international structure. Neorealism, which is called structural realism, became popular at the end of the Cold War. In 1979, Kenneth Waltz reassessed the classical realist theory in his famous book named *Theory of International Politics*, which criticized the thoughts of Hans Morgenthau. Waltz claimed that classical realism ignores the economic dynamic of international relations. Moreover, he asserted that classical realism is also inadequate in explaining the current issues of international relations. According to neorealist theory, the fundamental characteristics of international order are the distribution of capabilities, anarchy, and hierarchy. Waltz also focused on the anarchic structure of the international relations instead of flaws in the nature of human beings (Waltz, 1979, p. 11).

1.2. The Definition and Nature of the "Power" in International Relations

Realist thinkers are inclined to position "power" in international relations in a superior place. According to them, ideologies, religions, and economic systems are in second place in terms of determining the influence of a state. For this reason, the autonomy of the state strictly depends on the maximization of the national interests without the control of a central authority. As an example, Western powers used severe economic sanctions on Iran to prevent its desire to acquire nuclear weapons.

Power is the central team of the Morgenthau's main assertion regarding realism. Morgenthau, who was a member of a Jewish family, managed to escape from Germany just before the outbreak of WWII. He witnessed the militarization of Germany and its brutal consequences for Europe. Morgenthau stated that "realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category, which is universally valid, but it does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all" (Morgenthau, 1993). Power can be defined as the ability to force another actor to behave in a desired way, which is impossible in case of usage of other means.

This definition relies on the "influence" capacity of power. Realist scholars assert that income level, military forces, and technological capacity of a state are the main elements of power (W. C. Wohlforth, 2010, p. 132). It is not easy to measure, a state's capacity to influence accurately because of the variety of factors such as territory, population, military forces, and others. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which includes both wealth and technological level can be one of the best assets in examining the power of a state. According to the World Bank, the top three countries in terms of their GDP are the US, China, and Japan. Turkey was the 19th biggest economy in 2018 and 17th in 2012 (WorldBank, 2019).

Country	Most Recent Year	Most Recent Value (Millions)	
United States	2018	20,494,100.00	
China	2018	13,608,151.86	
Japan	2018	4,970,915.56	
Germany	2018	3,996,759.29	
United Kingdom	2018	2,825,207.95	
France	2018	2,777,535.24	
India	2018	2,726,322.62	
Italy	2018	2,073,901.99	
Brazil	2018	1,868,626.09	
Canada	2018	1,712,510.03	

Figure-2 Countries According to Their GDP (WorldBank, 2019)

Nonmaterial factors such as domestic support for the government, diplomatic skills, and historical relationships also determine the power of a state. The effectiveness of political leadership can facilitate the deployment of military forces. In this regard, the required time for taking a decision in Russia under the strong leadership of Vladimir Putin is shorter than time required time for European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) because of the slow decision-making processes of these international organizations. The influences of ideology, religion, and nationalism can also increase or decrease the influence power of a state. If the values and norms of a state are widely accepted by other countries, that state's capacity of influence, which is called as *soft power*, will also increase (Nye, 2005, p. 19).

The term "soft power" has expanded the definition of power by including identity and dominance. Realist thinkers are also aware of the limited effects of using pure hard power in achieving national goals. The US military interventions

in both Iraq and Afghanistan and the rising influence of radical terrorist organizations such as ISIS have demonstrated that a comprehensive approach, which includes diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian efforts besides the use of force, is needed to deal with the complex security problems in 21st century.

According to realists, relative power is a significant indicator that shows the influence capacity of a state in international relations. Declining or rising nature of power is not decisive in the realist understanding. For instance, the military budget of the US has declined from 780 billion dollars in 2010 to 609 billion dollars in 2017. On the other hand, China's military spending increased by 740% between 1992 and 2017 and reached 228 billion dollars. Although the US has still superior military power against China, it is obvious that there will be a power balance between these two countries (Buchholz, 2019). Realists usually ignore this changing power trends and concentrate on the relative power of a state.

Realists have "power logic" that facilitates the making estimation about possible consequences of a war between states. In such an estimation, realists also consider the influences of the government's supports and economic condition of a state. Only countries, which have enough economic capacity, can maintain the expenses of huge military capacity. The Libya operation, which was conducted in 2011 by NATO, gives important clues about the "power logic" of realists. When Muammar Qaddafi decided to crash the opposition groups by using brute military power, NATO launched a military operation against Qaddafi to topple him. There was a striking gap between the military power of Qaddafi forces and NATO forces. Within a short period of time, rebels in Libya with the air and maritime supports of NATO forces defeated the Qaddafi. After the application of military force in line with realist theory in Libya opened Pandora's box and Libya descended into a cascade of civil wars (O'Sullivan, 2018, p. 170).

Superior military capabilities and economic power do not always guarantee the ultimate success by using military forces to solve international problems due to the unintended consequences and side effects of military intervention. During the As an example, during the NATO's military intervention

in Syria, radical so-called "Islamic" fighters[1], who fought for supporting the Qaddafi regime, smuggled the arms and weapons to Mali and controlled a vast area by using these weapons. France had to use military forces to neutralize these fighters in 2013 (Boeke & Schuurman, 2015, p. 806). This example shows the risks of using military powers in international relations.

A state's power can only be achieved in the long-term and have many ingredients such as territory, geography, natural resources, GDP, and population. The changes in these ingredients cannot be observed in the short-term. In addition to that, there are intangible elements of power, like patriotism, political culture, technological background, and education. Generally speaking, power, which is achieved in the short-term, does not create a long-term effect on the IR. To illustrate, the Japanese created a strong naval force in a very short period after WWI. However, it did not have a sufficient level of other power elements such as a strong economic capacity. In spite of Japan's successful attack on Pearl Harbor, which reduced the US naval capacity in the Pacific Ocean (Kahn, 1991, p. 150), the US was among the winner of WWII because of its relative superiority in other power elements. The US easily rebuilt its navy and countered the Japanese control in the Pacific Ocean.

Military capabilities cannot be developed in a short period of time, but they can be used to create influences on other states in the short-term. Some countries in the Middle East rely on arms imports to create strong military forces. The Ottoman Navy, which was constructed during the Abdulaziz reign, could be regarded as such kind of military forces. Ottoman Empire accepted the offer of Lord Palmerston to commission British officers in the Ottoman Navy (Dal, 2015, p. 32). It means that the Ottoman Empire could not modernize its navy by using its economic and intellectual capacity. Because of that, the impacts of this "formidable" navy was extremely limited. During the Abdulhamid reign, the

[1] This is a completely wrong definition. The Islam religion cannot be used for legitimizing the purposes of the terrorism, terrorists cannot be regarded as the members of the religion. Islam rejects the terrorism and harmful actions against innocents.

Ottoman navy was not used effectively because of some political concerns. A state should have a sufficient level of technological, intellectual, and political capacities both for constructing an effective military power and using it on the ground effectively. The current situation of the military capacities in Middle East countries such as Saudi Arabia can be given as another example to show the importance of these capacities in the construction of military power. Saudi Arabia has had achieved very limited success against Houthis in Yemen despite billion dollars of its military spending on arms imports (CRS, 2019, p. 2).

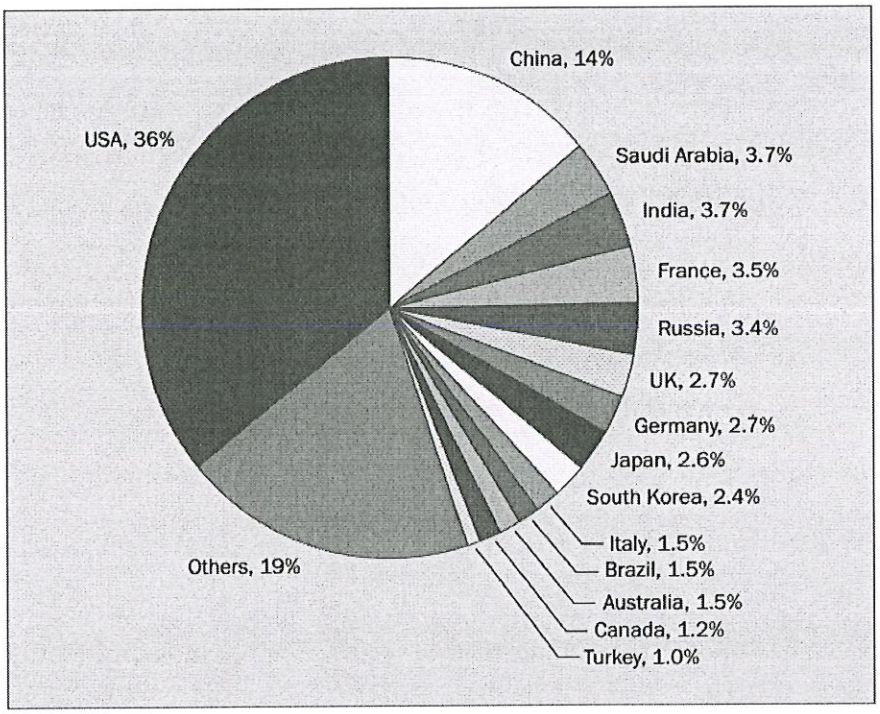

Figure-3 Military Expenditures in 2018 (Tian, Fleurant, Kuimova, Wezeman, & Wezeman, 2019, p. 5)

A state does not have unlimited resources to create elements of power. Therefore, investment in one element of power usually creates weaknesses in other elements of power. North Korea has considerable military power including long-range ballistic missiles (Caisova, 2018), but it has one of the poorest populations in the world. Moreover, investment in education in North Korea is not a sufficient level (Cho, 2019). On the other side of the coin, Germany has one of

the strongest economies and technological capacity in the EU. On the other hand, its military power, which includes cutting-edge technologies, is not well-proportionate with its economic power (GFP, 2019) because of the preferences of the German governments. Germany has not actively involved in a military campaign since WWII such as Iraq War in 2003 and Libya Operation in 2011.

Realists are inclined to use military forces as a main instrument in the IR and assess other elements of power according to their relationships with military power. In the 21st century, the possibility of state-level conflicts has severely reduced, and the security risks, which are posed by terrorist organizations and climate change, have increased. In this perspective, having powerful military capabilities for the sake of diminishing other elements of power such as diplomatic capacities and economic strength creates a serious gap between the nature of the power and its responsiveness to the global problems. Robert Gates, former US secretary of defense, pointed out that the US heavily invested in its military capabilities and ignored the values of other instruments (Shanker, 2011). In consistent with this thinking, the US started to reduce its military spending from 2010 and tried to strengthen other elements of power. However, rising military capacities of both Russia and China has caused the senior security officials in the US to check the validity of this policy in recent years (Tunsjø, 2018, p. 16).

Geopolitics can be described as using geography as an element of power. The logistic needs of military powers have a special place in the geopolitical thinking. A state can increase its power by benefiting from advantageous of its geographical location. For instance, geography can facilitate for a state to establish new military allies. Moreover, geographic location is one of the decisive factors in determining the influence of a state on controlling the key natural resources and strategic trade routes (Cohen, 2014, p. 4). Melting ices in the North Pole has opened new trade routes that shorten the length of existing trade routes. The competition on controlling these new trade routes is very dominant in shaping

the foreign policies of some countries such as the US, China, and Russia. As a result, realists attribute great importance to the geographical position of a state.

In recent years, realist theory in international relations has become popular again. However, different expert scholars have tried to illuminate the different aspects of realist thought. Feng and Ruizhuang divide these different approaches about human nature into three categories: state-centric realism, human nature realism, and systemic centric realism. These scholars have developed a framework to identify the differences in the realist thinkers in terms of unit and system levels. Such a categorization is helpful to arrange the further contributions of other scholars into the realist theory (Feng & Ruizhuang, 2006, p. 133).

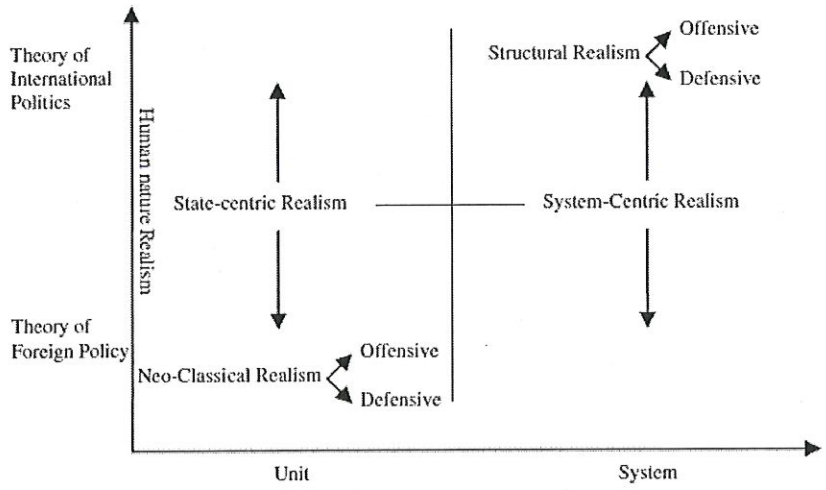

Figure-4 Typologies of Realism (Feng & Ruizhuang, 2006, p. 134)

HISTORICAL FEATURES OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

2.1. The Influence of the Ottoman Empire on the Turkish Foreign Policy

Analyzing the foreign policy of Turkey without considering the impacts of the Ottoman Empire is not reasonable. It goes without saying that, founders of the new Turkish Republic were graduated from the modernized schools in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the Westernization efforts had long been started in the Ottoman Empire to reform the outdated institutions such as military organization and bureaucratic structure.

Kemal Karpat pointed out that the main priorities of the new Turkish Republic to preserve its unity and prevent the ideological & territorial expansion of Soviet Russian. Karpat also stated that the protection of new modern, secular, and national characteristics of the Turkish Republic was also critical for the decision-makers. Karpat rejects the idea of Turkey's total break-up from its Ottoman past and emphasizes that Turkey is the successor of the Ottoman Empire in terms of political, cultural, historical, and strategical aspects (Karpat, 2012, p. 161).

The Ottoman Empire entered a new phase in its relationship with Europe. After the *Edict of Gülhane (Tanzimat Fermanı)*, Ottoman Empire accelerated the efforts to modernize its crucial institutions with the help of Western diplomats and soldiers (Tanör, 1985, p. 16). It will be a mistake to ignore the complicated relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Western culture in the 19th century to understand the main characteristics of Turkish foreign policy in 20th century. For instance, Ottoman Empire adapted French-oriented Commercial Code in 1850, Maritime Commerce Code in 1863, French-oriented Criminal Code in 1840, and even Ottoman Basic Law (Kanun-u Esasi) in 1876 (Ortaylı, 2007, p. 2). It demonstrates that the integration between Europe and the Ottoman Empire had reached a significant level before the birth of the new Turkish Republic.

Ottoman Empire was an influential player in world history. It had territories in the three continents and struggled with the major players to expand its influence era. The heritages of the Ottoman Empire can be observed from the Arabian peninsula to the Balkans. However, the administrative and economic structure of the Ottoman Empire was not sufficient to deal with the problems of the modern era nearly since the 18th century. For this reason, there was a harsh domestic power struggle between the central government and *millets* of Ottoman such as Greek, Arab, and Bulgarian in the last century of the Ottoman Empire. These negative historical memories made difficult for the new Turkish Republic to develop comprehensive relations with neighbor countries.

Turkey did not escape from its past, which contains "glorious memories" of the Ottoman's achievements. National characteristics of Turkish citizens have preserved the idea of being a big player in international affairs to some extent. This point is important to understand the foreign policy preferences of JDP in the Davutoglu era. While the Kemalist elite prefers non-interventionist and Western-centered foreign policy (Soysal& Sağlam, 1985, p. 22), the conservative parties in the political history of Turkey, which have Islamic background, have been enthusiastic to show the power of Turkey on the international stage. The abolishment of the Caliphate in 1924 was a radical turning point for the new Turkish Republic to establish more secular institutions and adopt secular policies (Hurgronje, 1924, p. 61).

There is a deep prejudice among Turkish citizens with respect to the foreign interventions of Western countries to the foreign affairs of Turkey. At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, Ottoman Empire greatly suffered from the economic and political impositions of the Western countries. These impositions took place on economic relations and minorities' rights. European powers managed to control the financial sources of the Ottoman Empire via the Public Debt Service (Duyun-u Umumiye). In addition to that, Western powers used every opportunity to intervene in the domestic affairs of the Ottoman Empire on the pretext that protecting the rights of different religious

minorities. Although the Turkish Republic strengthened its relationship with Western countries by participating both in NATO and the European Community, there have always been strong distrust against the foreign policies of Western countries in Turkey. According to a poll conducted by Mustafa Aydın, a professor at Kadir Has University, 87.9% of Turkish citizens believed that the US aims at weakening and dividing Turkey (Aydın, 2019). To illustrate, after the military interventions of the US to Iraq and Afghanistan, the Turkish negative view of America increased(PEW 2014

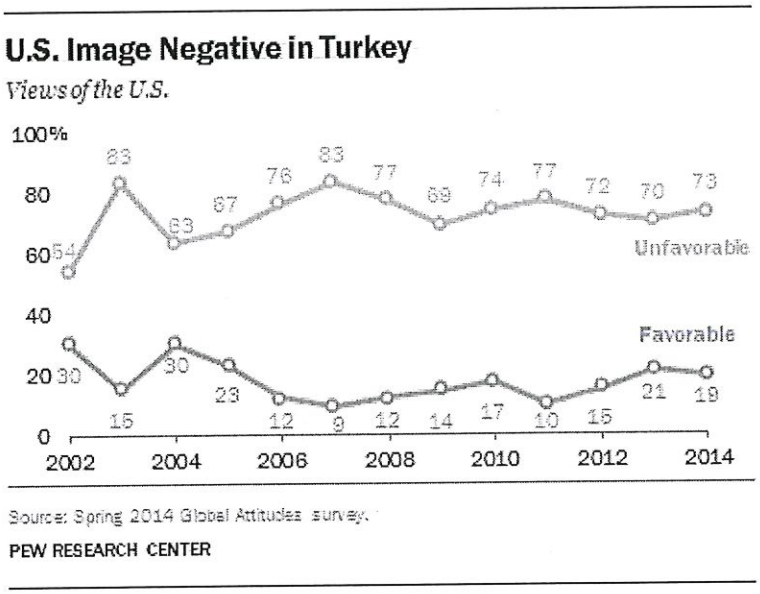

Figure-5 Turkish View of the US

2.2. Transformations in the Turkish Foreign Policy after the Establishment of the new Turkish Republic

The new cadre of the Turkish Republic deliberately chooses to participate in the legal, political, economic structure of the Western countries. The failed modernization efforts at the last stage of the Ottoman Empire such as Islamism and Ottomanism encouraged this new cadre to pursue radical policies, which aimed at minimizing the influences of the Ottoman past while transforming the society for entering the club of Western powers. Turkey has undergone a rapid and radical transformation in the second quarter of the 20th century.

The foundation of the new Turkish Republic was established by the Treaty of Lausanne, which canceled the provisions of the Treaty of Sevres. The root-causes of Armenian genocide claims and Kurdish separatist movements, which have had a restricting effect on the effectiveness of Turkish foreign policy can be found in the transformation period of the Ottoman Empire into the Turkish Republic. Treaty of Sevres encouraged the Armenian society to gain more territory from the collapsing Ottoman Empire by using genocide argument in the international arena. The birth of Kurdish separatist movement was not identical to the Armenian separatist tendency. Actually, Kurds in the Ottoman Empire took the side of the Ottoman Empire in its struggle against the invasion efforts of Western powers during the Turkish War of Independence. However, the strict nationalist practices in the early period of the new Turkish Republic had harmful impacts on the loyalty of some Kurdish groups and alienated them from enthusiastically participate in the new unitary state structure.

The political identity of Turkish foreign policy is very difficult to understand by the reason of the complex historical and cultural background. The Turkish Republic was established on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, which was influenced by various political and ideological currents such as liberalism, nationalism, and Islamism at the last stage of its presence (Kösebalaban, 2011, p. 1). Any of these political ideologies did not help to solve the deep and complicated problems of the Ottoman Empire and a military cadre led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk decided to initiate a new nation-building process that had mainly a secular and national character (Kohn, 1933, p. 141). Naturally, it caused both internal conflicts among the domestic groups in Turkey such as Kurds and some Sunni Muslims and created tensions in foreign relations with the countries in the Middle East. The abolishment of the Islamic Caliphate in 1924 was a significant point in Turkish foreign policy, which cut a historical and symbolic relationship between Turkey and the Islamic countries (Hurgronje, 1924, p. 61).

These efforts brought its fruits after WWII by Turkey's becoming a member of the European Council in 1949 and the entrance of Turkey into NATO

in 1952. Keeping that in mind, Turkey turned its back to its historical cultural heritage, which could be useful in strengthening its relationship with the countries in the Middle East. To put it another way, the Westernization efforts in the first period of the new Turkish Republic created an ideological barrier between Turkey and Middle East countries. On the other hand, the success of these policies in integrating Turkey into the world cannot be underestimated.

The special geography of Turkey is another decisive factor that has a significant influence on shaping Turkish foreign policy. The 19th century was the stage of the struggle between Russia and Western powers especially the UK and France to gain control over the Turkish straits due to their strategic importance (Bluebook, 1943). During the Cold War period, Turkey became a front of a power struggle between the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and the US. In order to protect itself from the possible attacks of the USSR, Turkey willingly preferred to join the security umbrella of Western power by joining NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). After the Arab Spring, Turkey has been a barrier in front of the refugee flow from both the Middle East and South Asia to Europe. These examples demonstrate that the geography of Turkey will preserve its special position in the formation of Turkish foreign policy.

External factors have always been very influential in the formation of Turkish foreign policy. Turkey can be categorized as a regional power, which has limited resources and power elements to be decisive in international relations. To illustrate, Turkey accelerated its integration process with the European countries during the Cold War period to balance the USSR's power in its region. As an external factor, Cold War parameters, which created a hierarchical order in international relations (Vryonis, 1997, p. 70), became the main influencer in Turkish foreign policy. It does not mean that Turkey was completely dependent on the foreign policy priorities of Western countries. As can be seen in the Cyprus Peace Operation, Turkey could also act independently in spite of the strong objection of the US. However, Turkey also suffered from the detrimental impacts of US sanctions.

The foreign affairs of a country cannot be assessed by ignoring the impacts of domestic relations among different groups. Until the election in 1950, which ended the era of the one-party regime, Kemalist ideology, which focused on the transformation of Turkish society by introducing new revolutions in a strict manner, was the main pillar of the Turkish foreign policy. It is difficult to claim that all segments of Turkish society easily embraced these revolutions due to the differentiated ideological and religious perspective. Atatürk believed the importance of preserving national unity and integrating Turkish society to the standards of Western countries. This policy was a severe departure from the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire, which had an expansionist character.

After WWII, the course of international relations changed. The victory of the Democratic Party (DP) in the first free multiparty domestic election in Republican history in May 1950 was also a significant turning point in the general philosophy of the Turkish foreign policy. The democratic elections in Turkey after the beginning of the 1950s have also had significant impacts on the foreign policy preferences of Turkey. Due to the importance of its geographical position, Western powers supported Turkey politically and economically. The rising influences of Western powers strengthened the democratic culture in Turkey to some extent. It does not mean that the influence of Western countries has always had positive impacts on the democratic culture of Turkey. However, increasing multilateralism at the global level and rising integration efforts among the hostile nations of WWII also forced the Turkish governments to enhance the democratic standards in Turkey (Laçiner, 2011a, p. 109).

The power of a country determines the influence area of it in international affairs. The new Turkish Republic did not have enough amount of qualified human resources due to the wearing effects of previous wars on Turkish society. Furthermore, it nearly consumed all its energy to counter the military intervention of foreign countries during the Turkish Independence War. For this reason, it is not reasonable to expect from the new Turkish Republic to use its limited resources to increase its influence area in international relations. Therefore, it was

very appropriate for the new ruling class in Turkey to choose protective measures and concentrate on domestic issues rather than being an active player in foreign affairs.

After the election in 1950, conservative parties have relatively been more successful in the national elections. However, the Turkish style democracy had to deal with the interrupting effects of the military coups in 1960, 1970 and 1980. The problem with the integration of Kurdish society to the national structure of the new Turkish Republic has been one of the main issues in the relationship with neighbor countries and Western countries. The upper military cadre in Turkey managed to preserve its special position in Turkey's domestic policy until the beginning of the 21st century. As the guardian of the regime, senior military officers were not hesitant to warn or punish the political actors, who were perceived as a threat to the secular nature of the regime. The perception of the top military cadre regarding the immaturity of Turkish society to embrace the democratic values was influential in their interventions to the domestic politics (Aydinli, Ozcan, & Akyaz, 2006, p. 79).

The post-Cold War period became an era for different cultural and ethnic groups in Turkish society to rediscover their cultural and historical ties. In this new area, foreign policymakers of Turkey enjoyed the flexible opportunities to establish a new relationship with the Turkic republics in Central Asia by relying on the cultural heritages. Samuel Huntington introduced his "clash of civilization theory" in this increasing popularity of religions and cultures in the post-Cold War environment and presented Turkey as a "torn country" between Western and Eastern worlds (Huntington, 1996, p. 45). Unlike the static conditions of the Cold War period, Turkey had different foreign policy options along with its relations with Western countries. On the other hand, the geopolitical importance of Turkey for the containment of the USSR relatively reduced at the end of the Cold War. The changing international conjuncture with the collapse of the USSR forced the Turkish foreign policymakers to develop new relationships with the countries that Turkey has historical and cultural ties with them.

The end of the Cold War became a new era, in which the number of regional conflicts and wars such as the US's invasion of Iraq at the beginning of the 1990s, the Bosnia War, and the Armenian invasion of Karabag has increased. It cannot be claimed that Turkey had decisive roles in all these wars and conflicts. The formation and development of alternative foreign policies depend on the material and human capacities of a country. Turkey did not have a sufficient level of regional experts, who know the languages, cultures, and internal dynamics of regional countries. Likewise, both the economic and military capacity of Turkey at the beginning of the 1990s were not enough to counter the adverse impacts of regional conflicts.

As a NATO member, Turkey has spent great efforts to meet the accession criteria of the EU since the early of the 1960s. There have been serious difficulties in the accession talks between Turkey and the EU. The rising separatist movement among the Kurdish population since the middle of the 1980s has been a major threat to Turkey. Nevertheless, major members of the EU have not shared the same threat perception with Turkey. Instead, some of them have tacitly given financial and political support to the members of PKK. What is more, the tense relationship between Turkey and Greece have been another important obstacle in front of Turkey's journey to be a member of EU member. Still, the EU supports the claims of Greece with regard to the delimitation of territorial waters.

Although there have been obstacles in terms of political relationships, Turkey and the EU have had strong trade and cultural relationship (Mustafa Kutlay, 2009, p. 117). The number of Turkish students in the EU countries is one of the driving forces in that relationship. The idea of being an EU member has had crucial impacts on every aspect of administrative and legal structure. Interestingly, the EU accession talks, which began in 2005, strengthened the position of JDP, which has conservative tendencies to some extent. The extent of Turkey's economic relations with the EU was another decisive factor that encourages early JDP governments to accelerate the EU accession process(Mehmet Kutlay, 2009, p. 119).

In the 1990s, a weak political structure was not effective to find solutions to the chronic economic and social problems of Turkish society. Islamist parties started to become influential in the middle of the 1990s due to Turkish citizens' beginning a quest for finding alternative solutions to the severe economic and social problems. The economic crisis in 1994, the post-modern military coup in 1998 and the other economic crisis in 2001 paved the way for Justice and Development Party (JDP) to reach a majority in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) in 2002. A new political perspective in domestic affairs means the changes in the trajectory of Turkish foreign affairs. In the beginning of the 2000s, Turkey witnessed the power struggle of Kemalist elites, who were influential in different fields of Turkey's bureaucratic structure, and conservative parties.

JDP accelerated to the EU accession process and put forward its liberal tendency to escape from the pressures of the Kemalist elites especially in the military structure. For this reason, the membership process of the EU became the top priority of the early JDP governments. In addition to that, JDP tried to diversify its foreign policy options by seeking trade opportunities with different countries.

The characteristics of Turkish foreign policy have continuously changed based on the ideological perception of the ruling parties. In this regard, there has been a significant gap in the identity definition of different groups in Turkey such as secularists and Islamists.

Mustafa Aydın points out the difficulty of categorizing Turkey into a clear group due to the conflicting characteristics of Turkish society. According to Aydın, Nearly 97% of Turkish territory lies in the Asian continent, but Turkish elites have close ties with Western society (Aydin, 1999). It is a well-known fact that the brightest students in Turkey prefer to continue their studies in Western countries mainly in the UK and the USA (IEFT, 2016). It is an inescapable phenomenon that those students strengthen the relationship between Turkey and the Western world.

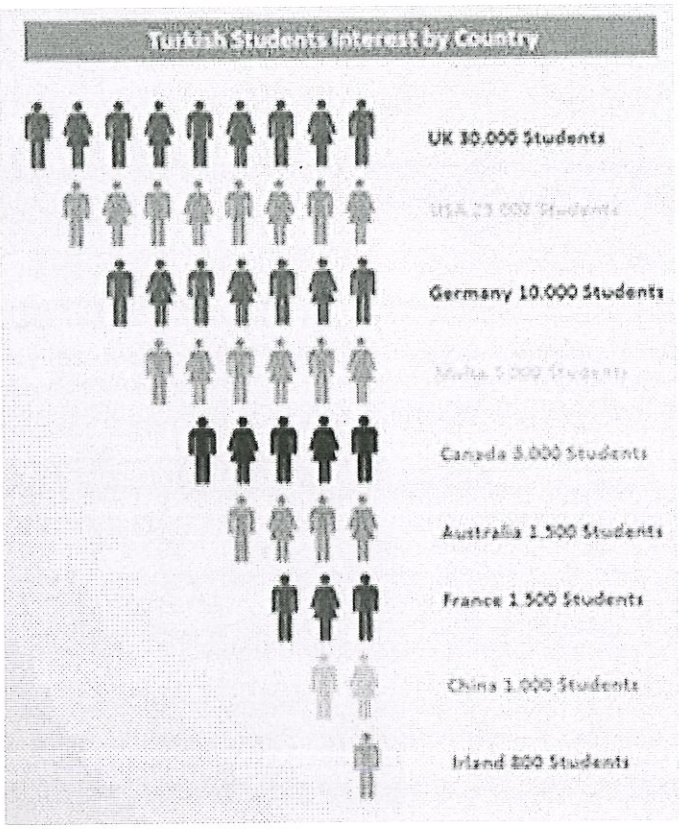

Figure-6 Turkish Student's Interest by Country

(https://ieft.net/i/ieft/turkish_students_market_report_20162 Accessed: 28.01.2020)

Aegean Sea disputes have a special place in the foreign policy of Turkey. Turkey and Greece have had a tense relationship with the reason of the historical struggles and rising nationalism in both countries. Greece gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1828 with the help of Russian and Western countries' supports (Pipineli, 1959, p. 306). At the beginning of the 20th century, Greece set her eyes on the western territory of the Ottoman Empire. The memories of the Turkish Independence War also soured the relationship between Turkey and Greece.

Mediterranean region is a natural barrier between the Middle East and Europe. Therefore, the EU gives special importance to its policy towards this region to enhance its security by minimizing the number of asymmetric threats

from both Africa and the Middle East such as terrorism and illegal migration (Nowak, 2003, p. 79).

The decision-makers of Turkish foreign policy believe that Greece pursues a containment policy against Turkey by increasing its maritime territories in both the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean. The possible extension of territorial water in the Aegean Sea from 6 nautical miles to 12 nautical miles will severely restrict the movement area of Turkey due to the substantial reduction in the international open water. Besides that, enhanced capabilities regarding the extraction of natural resources from the deep seas have increased the importance of the possible oil and natural gas reserves in both the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean. Turkey tries to deal with a very difficult dilemma by continuing the EU membership process and countering the excessive claims of Greece in the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean at the same time. Because the EU has historical and cultural reasons to back the claims of Greece in the maritime disputes.

As mentioned above, Turkey was not enthusiastic to develop a comprehensive relationship with the countries in the Middle East due to the contributions of many reasons such as the foreign policy tendencies of Kemalist elites, the desire not to involve the complex security problems of the region, and increasing relationship with Western countries. It should be also noted that Turkey has not had enough political, economic and military capabilities to enforce the parties in the Middle East to find the solutions to their complicated problems. For this reason, the foreign policymakers of Turkey until the advent of JDP deliberately prefer not to involve the problems of the Middle East regions such as Palestinian problem, Arab-Israel Wars, Iran-Iraq War between 1980 and 1986, and military involvement of the US-led coalition forces in the Middle East.

TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AT CROSSROADS: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC DEPTH DOCTRINE IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

The main characteristics of Turkey's foreign policy have significantly changed during the JDP era. Ahmet Davutoglu was one of the main influential figures, who shaped the new approaches in this transformation. Davutoglu was appointed as the chief foreign policy advisor of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, then-prime minister, in 2002. The new vision of Davutoglu, which was articulated in his famous book, Strategic Depth, started to become the main tenet of the new Turkish foreign policy. After his appointment as a foreign minister in 2009, Davutoglu found the chance to realize his foreign policy vision, which places Turkey in the central position instead of giving Turkey the role of a bridge between East and West.

It should be noted that Davutoglu was not the only influential actor in Turkish foreign policy. It is true that Davutoglu made significant contributions to the formation of a new style of Turkish foreign policy during his tenure as the chief foreign policy advisor between 2002 and 2009, the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2009-2014 and the Prime Minister between 2014-2016. On the other hand, without considering the influence of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the senior officers of JDP, it will not possible to understand the foreign policy tendency of Turkey between 2007 and 2015.

3.1 Davutoglu's New Vision for Turkey

As stated before, the nature of the international relations evolved from a static nature of the Cold War environment to the dynamic structure, in which historical and cultural relations became more conspicuous. Starting from Turgut Ozal's administration, Turkey tried to develop new relationships with countries on the ground of common cultural ties. The increasing influence of the constructivist approach in international relations opened new doors for Turkey to enhance its relations with both Europe and the Middle East. Because, Turkey, as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, has enough opportunities to communicate with these two different civilizations by using its historical and cultural background.

The new vision of Davutoglu was dynamic and proactive in nature. The constructive approach is more appropriate to understand the new Turkish foreign policy in the Davutoglu era. Instead of focusing on the meaningless internal debates, Davutoglu claimed that Turkey should seek the way to become an active regional power.

Davutoglu's vision came into sight in this changing international environment. According to Davutoglu, Turkey should develop a new identity, instead of being a passive member of the Western alliance, to become an influential regional and global actor. He regarded the systemic changes in international relations after the Cold War as an unprecedented opportunity to redefine the position of Turkish Foreign Policy. Davutoglu also believed that changing international structure increased the maneuver area of Turkish foreign policy. Davutoglu stated in "Strategic Depth" that *"Turkey enjoys multiple regional identities and thus has the capability as well as the responsibility to follow an integrated and multidimensional foreign policy. The unique combination of our history and geography brings with it a sense of responsibility. To contribute actively towards conflict resolution and international peace and security in all these areas is a call of duty arising from the depths of a multidimensional history for Turkey."*(Grigoriadis, 2010, p. 5)

Davutoglu asserted that Turkey has "strategic depth" because of its geopolitical position and history. For this reason, Turkey is among the central powers, which have enough capabilities to influence the international order. In this context, Turkey should not accept the role of regional players in the Middle East and Balkans. Instead, Turkey should seek to become influential in Balkans, Caucasian, Middle East, Central Asia, Gulf, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea at the same time. In this way, Turkey can enhance both its regional and international strategic significance (Davutoglu, 2015, p. 118). In Davutoglu's thinking, Turkey should rely on its soft power and strengthen its relationship with those regions by using its cultural and historical ties.

In his article published Foreign Policy, Davutoglu explained his proposal as the chief foreign policy advisor to the Recep Tayyip Erdogan with respect to the six principles of the new Turkish foreign policy. These principles are (Davutoglu, 2013b);

- *zero problems with neighbors,*
- *a balance between security and freedom*
- *a multidimensional foreign policy,*
- *a pro-active regional foreign policy,*
- *an altogether new diplomatic style, and rhythmic diplomacy.*

In this article, Davutoglu warned that these principles should not be interpreted in a static way. The strength of foreign policy relies on the domestic peace of a country. To put it in a different way, one of the critical assertion of Davutoglu regarding the effectiveness of Turkish foreign policy is that Turkey should establish a peaceful environment inside Turkey by expanding the areas of freedom and individual rights. As Davutoglu pointed out, during the first JDP governments, Turkey managed to establish a new kind of relationship with the Black Sea region, Balkans, Caucasus, and the Middle East. Many Turkish citizens embraced the idea that economic and political cooperation with these regions would strengthen the hands of Turkey in international affairs.

In the vision of Davutoglu, there have been three major earthquakes in international relations. The first earthquake was a geopolitical earthquake, which took place at the end of the Cold War and changed the perceptions of the countries according to their identities. The second earthquake was the "security earthquake" after the 9/11 terrorist attack, which legitimatized the foreign military interventions in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The third earthquake related to the economic and political considerations after the Arab Spring still continues (Davutoglu, 2013a). Davutoglu believed that Turkey should play a great actor role in this new international political environment to establish "a new world order" (Davutoglu, 2015, p. 93).

Davutoglu gave great importance to the solution of two deepening internal problems of Turkey to increase the effectiveness of Turkish foreign policy. The first problem is the Kurdish separatist tendency and the security-oriented approach to counter this tendency. According to Davutoglu, Turkey lost great energy and financial resources to find a solution to the Kurdish problem. Davutoglu claimed that Turkey should develop liberal policies to enhance the rights of Kurdish society to minimize both the split in the society and the use of financial resources on preventing the separatist tendencies by a security-oriented approach. The resolution of the ideological struggle between secularists and Islamists was another crucial issue for Davutoglu to enhance the effectiveness of Turkish foreign policy.

The main contribution of Davutoglu in the literature of Turkish foreign policy was the introduction of "zero problems" doctrine. Davutoglu believed that Turkey should figure out the long-lasting problems with neighbor countries on the basis of mutual benefits and common understanding. In Davutoglu's thinking, Turkey has to overcome its phobic problems and develop beneficial relationships with its neighbors to become a regional and global actor. Furthermore, the "zero problems" doctrine also includes developing a good relationship with emerging powers such as India, China, Brazil, and Russia.

3.2 Implementation of Davutoglu's Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy

From its position as the Chief Advisor of the Prime Minister in 2002 to the Prime Minister in 2014, the new approach of Davutoglu became very influential in the implementation of Turkish foreign policy. In compliance with the principles of "strategic depth", Turkey did not concentrate on the internal problems of neighbor countries. Instead, Turkey tried to strengthen its trade relations with its neighbors. These efforts resemble the new relations between Germany and France after WWII. Both countries agreed to establish the European Coal and Steel Community to promote their economic relations (European_Comission, 2019). Likewise, Turkey concentrated on the economic and social aspects of its relations

with its neighbor countries (Laçiner, 2011b, p. 156). The relationships between Turkey and the countries in the Middle East was the main area that the impacts of Davutoglu's doctrine were most visible.

Turkey was on the brink of the war with Syria in 1998 due to its supports to PKK terrorist organization. Since the establishment of a new Turkish Republic, Turkey had always tense relationships with Syria. The participation of Hatay province to Turkey and Turkey's western-oriented foreign policy approach was among the two reasons for this tense relationship. In 1998, Turkey threatened Syria with a military intervention because of the presence of Abdullah Ocalan, the former leader of the PKK terrorist organization. After the JDP's coming to power, Turkey started to develop its relationship with Syria. The growing economic and political cooperation between Turkey and Syria reached a new level in 2009, after lifting the visa requirement for the tourists. In this period, Turkey offered to become a mediator between Syria and Israel over the dispute of Golan Heights.

Turkey also actively engaged to promote its relationship with Iraq. The presence of an autonomous Kurdish region in the North of Iraq had been perceived as a national security threat before the JDP's government. Under the influence of "zero problems" doctrine, Kurdish Regional Government (KRG)'s legitimacy was accepted by Turkey. Contrary to the previous foreign policy tendencies, Turkey started to deepen its diplomatic and economic relationship with Iraq federal government. Davutoglu became the first high-level Turkish official, who visited Northern Iraq in 2009. In this visit, Davutoglu talked to Massoud Barzani and Nehcirvan Barzani and declared the opening of the Erbil consulate. In this visit, Davutoglu stated that *"The mountains will not separate us, they will unite us. Then the Middle East region will be one of the top centers of attraction in the world."* (News.Az, 2009). As seen from the statement, Davutoglu perceived developing a good relationship with KRG as a way of becoming influential in the Middle East. On the other hand, the presence of PKK in Northern Iraq and the problems related to the population composition of Kirkuk remained the main obstacle in front of developing further relationships.

Turkey's economic and political relationship with Iran was also positively affected by Davutoglu's foreign policy vision. Turkey deepened its energy cooperation with Iran and became a transit route for the transportation of Iranian natural gas. Moreover, Turkish companies also engaged the research for commercialization of Iranian hydrocarbon areas. Turkey actively supported the Iranian efforts to develop nuclear energy capacity at the cost of risking its relationship with Western countries. In February, Davutoglu visited Tehran as the Turkish Foreign Minister to mediate the tense relations of Iran with Western countries due to the Iranian uranium enrichment program (Tisdall, 2010).

Foreign policy is not an area that can be explained in the light of a single international theory. The trajectory of the relationship between Turkey and Iran is a good example of demonstrating the complicated nature of foreign policies. While Turkey was trying to enhance its cooperation in economic and political spheres, Iran strengthened its position in Iraq via supporting the Shiite community. The death sentence to Tariq al-Hashemi, the vice president, in 2012 was the indication of a power struggle among regional powers in Iraq (BBC, 2012). JDP supported the position of Tarıq al-Hashemi by inviting him to the Fourth Congress of JDP (Sattar, 2012). It is not known whether this invitation is a personal decision of Recep Tayyip Erdogan as the head of JDP or a conscious foreign policy decision to support the Sunni community in Iraq. However, it is clear that Turkey preferred to adopt an active stance against the death penalty or Tarıq al-Hashemi, which directly conflicted with the national interest of Iran.

Turkey spent great effort to heal its relations with Armenia. Due to the Armenian invasion of Nagorno Karabagh in 1993, Turkey shot its land border to deter Armenia from its aggressive attitudes. On the other hand, Armenia continuously used its citizens in Western countries as lobbyists to pass the "Genocide Act", which would recognize the incidents in 1915 against Ottoman Armenians as a genocide. Despite these problems, Turkey and Armenia managed to sign a historic agreement on October 10, 2009, in order to reinitiate diplomatic relations.

The new Turkish foreign policy had an obvious internal dilemma due to the conflicting interests of Iran and Western powers. Turkey, traditionally, followed a western-oriented foreign policy since its foundation. The Cold War deepened Turkey's interactions with Western countries under various international organizations such as NATO and the UN. Iranian nuclear power acquisition program was perceived as an existential threat for the security of Israel, which is also a sensitive issue for the Western powers. Recep Tayyip Erdogan openly criticized the double-standard of the Western powers on their objection about the Iranian nuclear weapon program, while they supported the presence of the nuclear weapons in Israel.

Intensified relations with the countries in the Middle East ignited the fuse of a debate about the new axis of Turkish foreign policy. According to the same foreign policy experts, Turkey's attitude towards the nuclear energy program of Iran and its enhanced relations with the Syrian regime during the first period of the JDP governments were the clear signs of Turkey's shifting foreign policy priorities. To put it in another way, Turkey intends to gradually weaken its relations with the Western powers and establish a new order in the Middle East as an influential regional power. Turkey's energy cooperation with Russia and JDP's relations with Hamas was shown as another indication of a significant shift in Turkish foreign policy (Kasım, 2011, p. 308).

Unlike the foreign policy priorities of the previous governments, JDP governments did not see Turkey's possible EU membership as the top strategic priority. Many times, Davutoglu expressed that EU membership is desirable for Turkey, but not the only strategic target. Joshua W. Walker pointed out the changing nature of Turkish foreign policy in the context of Turkey's responsiveness to the demands of Western countries. Walker stated that Turkey's political and bureaucratic elites had been ready to accept the proposals of Western countries even before the JDP governments, even if such proposals had harmful impacts on the national interests of Turkey. However, the political elites in the JDP era became sensitive towards the demands of Turkish citizens. Because there

would be negative political consequences of wrong foreign policy decisions. It means that both the US and EU will not easily persuade the makers of the Turkish foreign policy to use Turkey as a power projection instrument in its region(Walker, 2012, p. 12).

On the other hand, Mesut Ozcan claimed that the increasing influence of Turkey in the Middle East and Balkans did not mean that the importance of the EU membership for JDP governments was reduced in the Turkish foreign policy. On the contrary, Ozcan believed that the possibility of Turkey's EU membership would increase if Turkey became an important regional player in the Middle East. In other words, the EU would not reject Turkey's membership due to its valuable and strong relationship with Middle East countries (Ozcan& Usul, 2011, p. 161).

Turkey has also difficulty in maintaining a good relationship with Israel. Bilateral between Israel and Turkey and Turkey's offer regarding its desire to be a mediator between Israel and Syria did not change the aggressive attitudes of Israel against Philistine. Moreover, new natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean region became a source of another tension between Turkey and Israel. Due to the lack of maritime delimitation in the Eastern Mediterranean, every nation including Israel tries to maximize its benefits by ignoring the legitimate rights of both Turkey and TRNC. In this regard, especially Greece and Israel adopted a realist approach in their foreign policy with respect to the natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC) signed a maritime delimitation agreement with Egypt in 2003, Lebanon in 2007, and Israel in 2010. The report of the U.S. Geological Survey in 2010 revealed that there could be 122 trillion cubic feet natural gas and 1.7 billion barrel oil in the Tamar and Leviathan regions of Israel. As non-party of UNCLOS, Turkey objected to these agreements on the ground that they would severely harm the maritime rights of both Turkey and TRNC in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey insisted that the delimitation of the maritime border should be discussed after a credible solution for the dispute on Cyprus Island (Dogru & Reginbogin, 2017, p. 851).

Because of the historical and cultural reasons, Davutoglu gave great importance to the solution of the Palestinian problem. Davutoglu's identity perception is highly influential on the increasing focus of Turkey on this problem. It is true that Turkey has cultural and religious ties with the people in Palestine (Kasapoğlu, 2012, p. 2). In addition to that, the excessive security measures of Israel have created serious humanitarian problems for Palestinian and there is no effective international mechanism to prevent Israel from its disproportionate use of force as it was seen in the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010, which caused the death of nine Turkish citizens. Another example of Israel's disproportionate use of force was taking place in the Gaza Strip in 2008, which caused the death of 700 civilians (Ertekin, 2015).

Despite the conflicting national interests with Israel, Turkey managed to increase its trade volume with Israel, which increased nearly 10-fold between 1995 and 2015 (Yazici, 2016). Turkey tried to use strong economic cooperation as a means to solve challenging problems like Palestine's issue.

Year	Export	Import	Volume	Balance
2004	1.315.292	714.143	2.029.435	601.150
2005	1.466.913	804.691	2.271.603	662.222
2006	1.529.158	782.149	2.311.308	747.009
2007	1.658.195	1.081.743	2.739.938	576.452
2008	1.935.235	1.447.919	3.383.154	487.316
2009	1.528.459	1.074.727	2.603.186	453.732
2010	2.080.148	1.359.639	3.439.786	720.509
2011	2.391.148	2.057.314	4.448.462	333.835
2012	2.329.531	1.710.401	4.039.932	619.129
2013	2.649.663	2.417.955	5.067.618	231.708
2014	2.950.902	2.881.262	5.832.164	69.641
2015	2.698.138	1.672.500	4.370.638	1.025.638

Figure-7 Turkey's Foreign Trade with Israel (Billion USD)

(https://ticaret.gov.tr/yurtdisi-teskilati/orta-dogu-ve-korfez/israil/ulke-profili/turkiye-ile-ticaretAccessed: 28.01.2020)

Davutoglu identifies Turkey with its relations with countries in the Middle East and its historical ties with the Ottoman Empire. It does not mean that Davutoglu identifies Europe as "other". However, there is a conspicuous difference between Davutoglu's discourses regarding the Arab countries and European countries. To illustrate, Davutoglu said in Turkish-Arab Economic Forum – 2010 that *"we will soon perform the salaat in Al Masjid al-Aqsa"*(Aydıntaşbaş, 2010). Al Masjid als-Aqsa has a very special place in the history of Islam. It was the first qibla of Muslims. Calling Turkish and Arab people as "we" and aiming at performing the salaat in Al Masjid al-Aksa implies that Israel is perceived as other in Davutoglu's "world of thought" (Kasapoğlu, 2012, p. 2).

Due to the ideological barriers during the Cold War, Turkey did not pay attention to the Central Asia region. Although Turkey had strong ethnic and cultural ties, Turkey distanced itself from this region in the polarizing international relations atmosphere of the Cold War. Turkey started to develop its relations with the countries in Central Asia after the end of the Cold War. Turkey presented itself as a democratic and secular model to the countries in Central Asia to help them in order to strengthen their newly established governmental system. During the early JDP governments, Turkey's foreign aids to this region significantly increased. The efforts of TIKA such as restoring the historical places were also helpful to strengthen the image of Turkey in this region (Mutlu, 2012).

3.3 Arab Spring and Changing Direction of Turkish Foreign Policy

Arab Spring can be regarded as one of the important turning points in Turkish foreign policy. As Davutoglu stated that, Arab Spring created an earthquake impact on the internal policies of the Middle East countries. At that time, it was perceived as the awakening of the Arab citizens against the corrupt and oppressive nature of their governments. In spite of Turkey's intense efforts to develop its relationships with these countries, the Arab Spring became a barrier for Turkey to interact with both the new regimes and citizens of the Middle East

and African countries. It was very difficult for Turkey to maintain its "zero policy" approach with the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East such as Egypt, Libya, and Syria.

In the eyes of Davutoglu, Turkey became an ideal model for the countries in the Middle East because of its extensive and efficient reform programs in many areas such as judicial, economic, and political. Therefore, Arab countries should have followed the Turkish experience and transformed their authoritarian political system to meet the demand of their citizens. In other words, the inability of Arab countries to modernize their archaic governmental and economic system, as Turkey did after the JDP's coming to power, was the main reason for the protests in the Middle East.

Withdrawal of the US from Iraq strengthened the position of Iran in the Middle East. Iran became a more active player in both Iraq and Syria. Increasing the interest of Russia towards Middle East countries was another significant parameter that influenced the regional power balance. The rising influence of both Iran and Russia in the Middle East and the political turmoil that the Arab Spring created put significant pressure on the "zero problems" approach of Turkish foreign policy(Aras, 2014, p. 4). The EU accession process for Turkey started to slow down before the Arab Spring. It means that Turkey had very few incentives to accelerate the institutional reform efforts in accordance with the EU acquisition process. The Arab Spring after 2011 caused a significant change in the main characteristics of Turkish foreign policy. Instead of analyzing the real reasons for the uprising in the Arab countries, Turkey preferred to actively support the anti-governmental protests in these countries.

Davutoglu interpreted Arab Spring as the uprising of Arab citizens against their authoritarian governments for achieving a more peaceful, transparent, and democratic environment. For this reason, Davutoglu believed that Turkey should support the democracy demands of Arab citizens for at the cost of a deteriorated relationships with governments of Egypt and Syria. In his speech at the Sixth Al Jazeera Forum, Davutoglu stated that *"The past was an abnormality. The present*

change is a natural flow of history and our future is our sense of common destiny" (Garden, 2011). It means that Davutoglu sees the Arab Spring as the normalization process of the region.

When the first protests began in Tunisia on December 17, 2010, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was cautious in making its first statement. After the stepping down of Tunisian president, Zein Al-Abidine bin Ali Bouazizi, on January 14, 2011, Ministry issued a press release to express Turkey's solidarity with the people of Tunisia(MFA, 2011). On the other hand, Turkey took a more proactive stance for the protests in Egypt. Recep Tayyip Erdogan openly calls for Husni Mubarak to leave the office. Erdogan stated that *"Listen to the shouting of the people, the extremely humane demands. Without hesitation, satisfy the people's desire for change"* (Villelabeitia& Aydınlı, 2011).

Turkey believed that its active supports to the people in the Middle East would pave the way for a more constructive relationship in the future. Turkey also declared its support to the people, who were in the street of Yemen, Libya, Bahrain, and Syria in the initial phase of the Arab Spring at the risk of endangering its interests in the Gulf region. The military intervention of Golf states in the protests in Bahrain made Turkey more cautious about expressing its open support to the uprisings. Because Turkey realized the diversified perceptions of other states and it could be a harmful impact on Turkey's relations with regional countries such as Saudi Arabia.

The protests against the Kaddafi regime in Libya turned into a civil war in a short period of time. At first, Recep Tayyip Erdogan explicitly criticized a possible NATO military intervention in Libya in order to protect the civilians against the brutal response of Kaddafi forces. However, Turkey had to follow the UN resolution to allow NATO to conduct a military operation in Libya to protect civilians. Both the African Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation supported the imposition of the no-fly zone over Libya. Turkey did no veto the decision of NATO with respect to the humanitarian military intervention in Libya due to its desire to have the right to shape the future of Libya.

The uprising in Syria became the most challenging issue for Turkish foreign policy. Davutoglu's "strategic depth" concept was most observable on the relationship between Turkey and Syria. Before the eruption of the protests in Syria, two countries canceled the visa requirement and increased the trade volume from 266 million dollars in 2002 to 1.8 billion dollars in 2010. More interestingly, Turkey and Syria conducted a joint military exercise in 2009(Phillips, 2009) and Syria accepted the Turkish training support to its army.

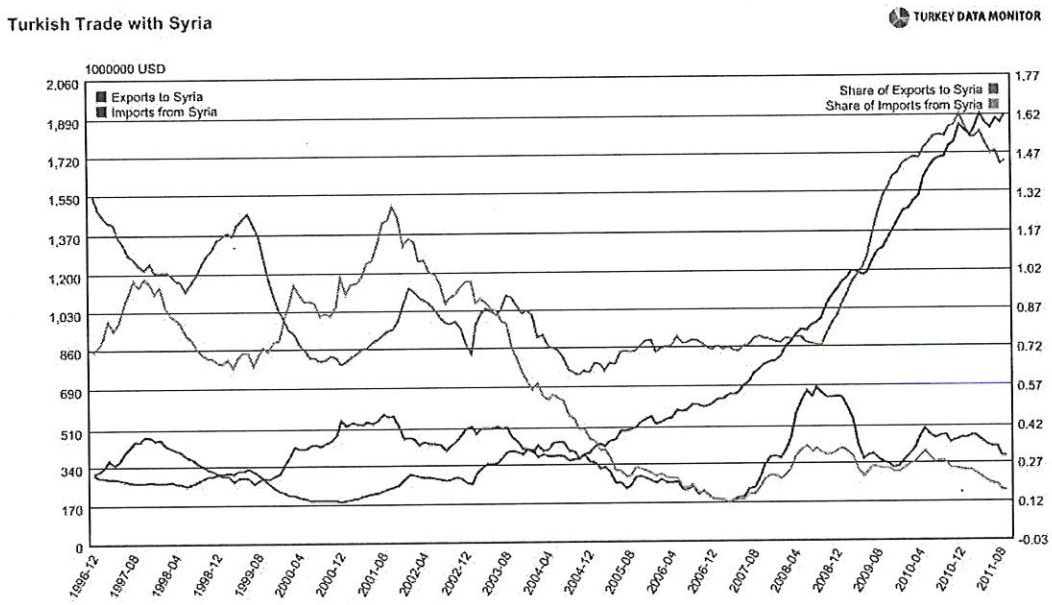

Figure-8 Turkish Trade With Syria (Turkey Data Monitor)(http://archive.economonitor.com/emredeliveli/2011/11/21/syria-from-friend-to-foe/Accessed: 28.01.2020)

The ongoing rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran especially since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 gained a different meaning after the expansion of the Iranian influence in both Iraq and Syria. Any partial policy in Syria would damage the relationship of Turkey with either Iran or Saudi Arabia. While Iran gave its explicit support to the Syrian regime, Saudi Arabia preferred to support the opposition groups in order to limit the expanding influence of Iran in the region. Increased hostilities in the region and covered support of regional powers to the different groups hindered Turkish soft power in the region.

It can be asserted that the "zero problems" approach was not followed in the context of both Syria and Iraq. Turkey adopted a more aggressive policy against the Syrian government's crackdown on the peaceful protests in the Southern part of Syria. At first, Turkey tried to use diplomatic means to persuade Bashar al-Assad to stop the brutal crackdown on the protesters and initiate a reform program, which would include all members of the opposition groups in the administration Syria. Davutoglu conveyed Turkey's position to Assad in a six-hour meeting in Damascus (Bakri, 2011). This meeting became the breaking point in the relationship between Turkey and Syria. After the meeting, Davutoglu stated that *"If these operations do not stop, there will be nothing left to say about the steps that would be taken"*(Reuters, 2011). This statement was a significant sign of Turkey's gradual detachment from the doctrine of "strategic depth". Because Turkey's subsequent actions related to Syria concentrated on the regime change in Syria.

Before the Arab Spring, Turkey attempted to establish a constructive relationship with the authoritarian governments of the Middle East and integrate them into the international community. This policy was very visible in the context of Syria. The personal relationship between Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Bashar al-Assad bears its fruits in the developing ties between the two countries. Turkey saw this policy as a way of a smooth transition from an authoritarian style to a more inclusive and democratic style in the governance of neighbor countries. In the first period of the Arab Spring, Turkey wanted to become a mediator between the authoritarian rulers in Syria, Egypt and Libya and people in these countries. Unfortunately, Turkey could not stop these authoritarian leaders to stop violent response to the protesters.

After comprehending the fruitless attempts to change the direction of Assad, Turkey started to engage with the opposition groups by using various means. For the conflicts in Syria, Turkey hosted the leaders of different opposition groups to coordinate their efforts against to Syrian regime. At one point, it is clear that Turkey saw the regime change in Syria as the only credible option for the

wellbeing of the Syrian people. Intensifying conflicts in Syria caused a new problem for Turkey due to the increasing number of Syrian refugees, who started to come to Turkey. The economic burden of the Syrian refugees and the internal discontent about the changing demographic structure of the cities in the Southern part of Turkey also force the JDP government to take more assertive measures against the Assad regime.

Actually, Turkey also tried to mobilize the international community to find solutions to the conflict in Syria. In this context, Turkey actively participated in the "Friends of Syria Initiative", which was proposed by France and the US. Russia and China did not attend the first meeting, which was conducted in Tunisia on February 24, 2012, due to the exclusion of the Syrian regimes from this initiative (Küçükkeleş, 2012). Neither of the international efforts prevented the escalation of conflicts in Syria. Turkey realized the priority of establishing a stable regime in the regions. For this reason, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) increased its concentration on Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt. The ongoing conflicts in Syria did not allow Turkey to develop a constructive relationship with the Syrian regime.

In the case of armed conflicts, the "zero policy" approach becomes redundant due to the spoiling effects of the security problems on the relationship. The ongoing conflicts in Syria forced Turkey to detach from the "zero policy" approach in the Syrian context. The harder stance of Turkey against Syria also negatively influenced the early gains of Turkey in international relations. Turkey started to increase its pressure on the Syrian regime to stop the violence against the opposition groups. In November 2011, Erdogan, for the first time, called on Assad to leave the office. In May 2012, Turkey closed its Syrian Embassy in Damascus and expelled the diplomats of Syria (Guvenc, 2012).

The tension between Syria and Turkey reached its peak level after the Syrian shooting down the Turkish fighter and killing two Turkish Air Force pilots. In this challenging environment, Turkey explicitly requested a military intervention against Syria from the international community. However, neither the

US nor the EU positively replied to this call. In an interview, Davutoglu said that *"We expect the leading powers of the international community to be more firm, more decisive and clear in their policy regarding oppression in Syria."*(Tisdall, 2012). At that time, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey was approximately 145.000, but millions of Syrian continued to come to Turkey.

Davutoglu objected to the idea that "zero policy" approach of Turkish foreign policy is failed in the wake of the Arab Spring. He pointed out that "zero problems" principle should be evaluated with other principles of Turkish foreign policy. In this regard, "the balance between security and freedom" approach has a special place in minimizing the negative impacts of "zero problems" in Turkey's relations with the oppressive regimes. In this regard, Davutoglu stated that *"Turkey balanced the "zero problems" principle with our belief in achieving a balance between security and freedom, which formed the core of our policy toward the Arab Spring. Our key principles, together with the "zero problems" policy, have not failed — nor have they been rejected. Instead, they continue to guide our foreign policy in our neighborhood."* (Davutoglu, 2013b).

The statistics demonstrate that the GDP of Turkey steadily increased during the first period of JDP with the help of the EU accession talks, global economic growth.

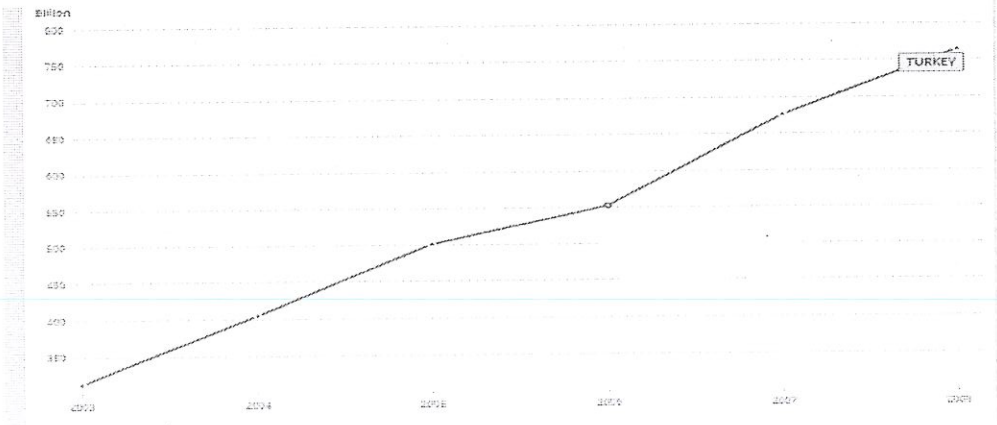

Figure-9: Turkish GDP in Current US$ (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2008&locations=TR&start=2003 Accessed: 29.01.2020)

A REALIST CRITIQUE OF STRATEGIC DEPTH DOCTRINE

During the Cold War period, the military strength and geopolitical position of Turkey were two significant characteristics of Turkish foreign policy. After the JDP's coming to power, soft power elements of Turkey such as economic relations, historical ties, and cultural affinities became more decisive in Turkey's relations with neighboring countries (Onay, 2012, p. 14). As a matter of fact that, the main characteristic of Turkish foreign policy can be divided into two broad categories base on the nature of the relations with neighbors. Prior to the Arab Spring, the constructivist approach was more appropriate to define the trajectory of Turkish foreign policy. In this period, the Turkish foreign policymakers concentrated on strengthening relationships with other countries. Instead of following its strict historical foreign policy stance towards Syria and Armenia, Turkey desired to use developed economic and developed relationships to create a peaceful environment in its region, which is a prerequisite of being a regional and global power for Turkey. Turkey's trade volume in the Middle Eastern and North Africa Region (MENA) increased from 34.3 billion dollars in 2003 to 94.3 billion dollars in 2008 (Metin & İspiroğlu, 2017).

The international and regional conditions after the Arab Spring, there were conspicuous changes in the nature of the Turkish foreign policy. Turkey gradually hardened its stance against the authoritarian regimes. In this period, Turkish foreign policy is more compatible with the realistic approach. Turkey tried every opportunity to persuade the regimes of authoritarian countries to transit transform their countries in accordance with the legitimate demands of their people. In this context, Turkey used various diplomatic channels to convey its message. However, due to numerous reasons, those regimes did not have both the willingness and capacities to conduct such a transformation. As it is seen in Syria and Libya, most of the Arab countries became an area of conflict. The rivalry between major powers such as the US and Russia on Syria and their economic and military supports to different groups exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. A

similar condition is also valid for Libya, which has descended civil wars after the fall of the Kaddafi regime.

The main problem with Turkey's policy toward Syria in the context of the Arab Spring was that Turkey could not accurately evaluate its capacities in demanding from Syria to make comprehensive reforms. Turkey did not have a sufficient amount of foreign policy experts with respect to the relationship with Syria, which has been a historically close relationship with both Russia and Iran. Ignoring the impacts of these states on the domestic policy of Syrian and trying to force the Syrian government to transit into a more democratic structure created serious tensions in the Turkish foreign policy.

In spite of the historical and cultural ties of Turkey with the countries in the Middle East, Turkey did not have credible and comprehensive knowledge about this region. Because of the institutional deficiencies and disinterest among academicians, Turkey did not aware of the real dynamics of the region before the Arab Spring. Ilter Turan pointed out an important shortcoming of Turkey in developing policies toward the Middle East. Turan stated that (Turan, 2013, p. 203);

> *"Turkey has claimed that it knows the Middle East, but I am not so sure. Until a short time ago, Turkey did not have specific research centers that focused on the region. There were few dissertations or other research about the region in general or specific countries in the region. Research staff who knew Arabic, Persian, Kurdish, and Aramaic and used it in their research were lacking."*

The constructive approach has serious limitations in the case of the armed conflict or economic rivalry in international relations. After NATO's military intervention in Libya, Russia started to strengthen its position in Syria to prevent any Western military operation against the Syrian regime. Russia managed to recover its economy due to the high oil and gas price in the international market. It helped Russia to modernize its military forces and fortify its naval forces. Russia did not hesitate to counter the US demands with respect to the regime

change in Syria. Because, there are both a Russian airbase and naval base in Syria, which are used by Russia to project its military power to the Mediterranean Sea. Turkey pushed hard to persuade international organizations and Western powers to intervene in Syria because of the humanitarian crisis that has been caused by the Syrian regime's brutal use of force against its citizens. Turkey did not accurately calculate the inactivity and reluctance of the Western powers in terms of using their financial and military forces for conducting a military operation against the Assad regime. As a matter of fact that, some European countries hastily intervened in Libya, which has oil and natural gas reserves. Western powers do not have the same kind of economic interest towards Syria. The diminishing military expenditures of the Western powers are another critical parameter that influences the passive policy of NATO.

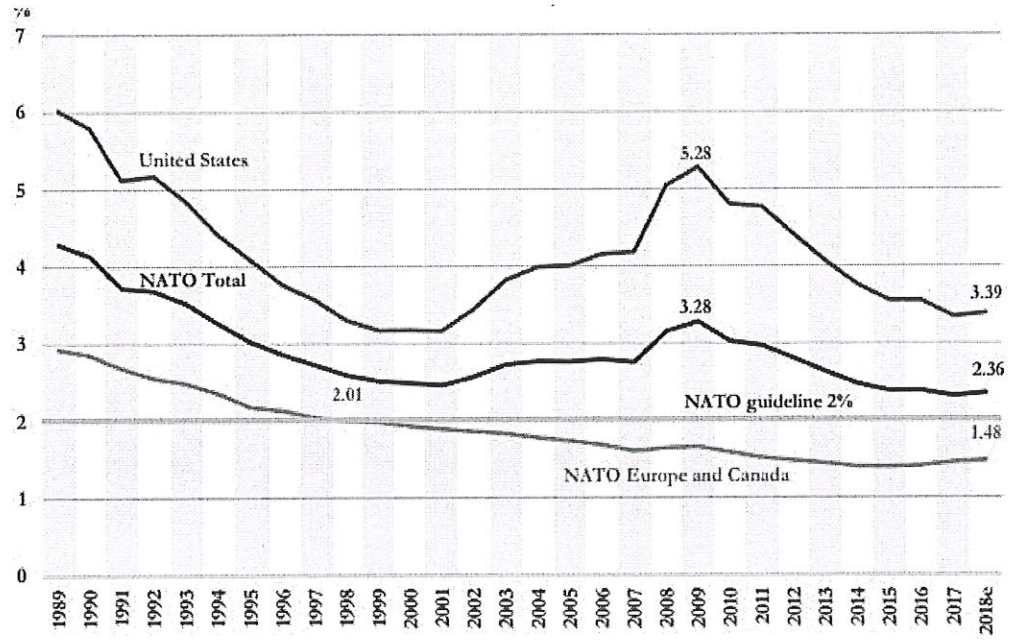

Figure-10 Diminishing Defense Budget of European Countries (NATO, 2019, p. 4)

As explained in the first chapter, the world suffered from idealism, which was the main tenet of international relations after WWI. Ignoring the realities of international relations and overestimating the function of the international organizations in preserving peace, did not prevent the outbreak of WWII, which

caused the death of millions of people. Similar idealist tendencies had been adopted by the first JDP governments until the Arab Spring began. In spite of his enormous efforts to persuade Assad to stop violence against Syrians including using personal relations and economic ties between Turkey and Syria, Turkey could not reach its aim.

Underestimating the strategic goals of Iran and Russia over Syria was one of the main reasons for Turkey's excessive self-confident in its coercive attitudes towards Syria. Many times, Turkey called the international community to conduct a military intervention in Syria. There was relative tranquility in international relations after the collapse of the USSR, which created a suitable atmosphere for states to improve their cultural, economic, and political relations with other countries. Despite the some regional conflicts such as the Bosnia War, the interventions of the US to Iraq and Afghanistan, superior economic and military power of the US could be challenged by neither Russia nor China. Turkey benefited the productive nature of this international atmosphere in terms of developing and establishing its relations with other regions.

The emergence of Russia and China as the new global powers and their proactive foreign relations have increased the chaotic condition in international relations. It can be claimed that international relations turned into an anarchic nature after the Arab Spring. Russia tries to expand its area of influence toward the MENA region and China started to challenge the military superiority of the US in the Asia-Pacific Region. In order to balance the economic and military expansion of China, the US shifted its strategic priority towards the Asia-Pacific region. It means that the US would be less enthusiastic about conducting military operations in Syria. For instance, the US military forces did not directly involve in NATO's military intervention in Syria. The US adopted a military strategy, named "lead behind the scene" and requested European countries to execute the detailed military intervention in Libya (Boyle, 2011).

In this anarchic international conjuncture, it was not realistic to expect from Iran and Russia to stop their supports to the Syrian regime. That is to say, confronting Syria without calculating the accurate influence of Russia and Iran did

not produce the intended results. Some realist thinkers were right in claiming the ineffectiveness of international organizations such as the UN, EU or NATO in preventing the regional conflicts. Both Russia and China have blocked the efforts of the UN to deter the Syrian regime from using violence against its people. There is another important point that should be taken into consideration in assessing the effectiveness of international organizations. In international organizations, the financial contributions and military capacities of states are decisive in determining their influence on the decision-making processes of those organizations. Turkey's contribution to the NATO defense expenditure was 0.916% in 2018 and the US contribution was approximately 70% (IIIS, 2018). That is to say, in the realist perspective, Turkey has limited capacity in NATO to determine its main agenda such as a possible military intervention in Syria

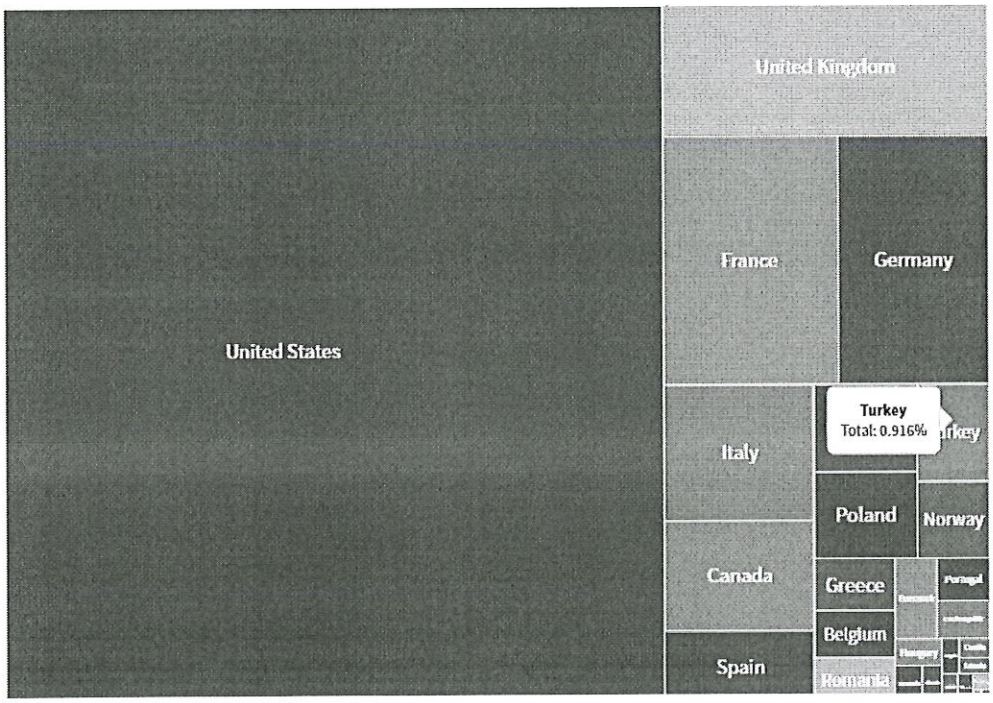

Figure-11 The Contributions of Member States to Defense Expenditure of NATO(NATO, 2019)

The security dilemma has a special place in realist thinking. In spite of Turkey's peaceful and non-interventionist foreign policy, Russia and Iran significantly increased its military expenditure before the Arab Spring. To put it in

a different way, Russia and Iran invested in their military capabilities to increase their influence in international relations. Russia deployed a maritime task force in its Tartus Naval Base in Syria. It is also known that Iran gave significant financial and military assistance to the Assad regime (Sadjadpour, 2013). Turkey also tried to unify the opposition groups in Syria and financially supported them to topple the Assad regime (Ataman & Özdemir, 2018, p. 21). It means that the realist approach was very influential in the activities of the regional powers in the Middle East after the beginning of the civil war in Syria. In this regard, Turkey had to leave its constructivist approach in its relations with Syria and adopt a more realist stance to try to change the dynamics of the region.

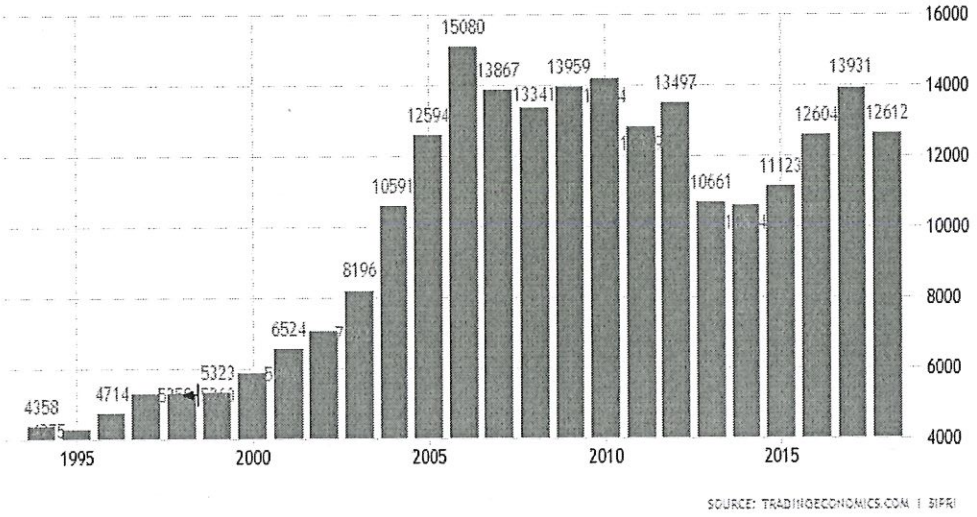

Figure-12 Defense Expenditure of Iran (Trading-Economics, 2019a)

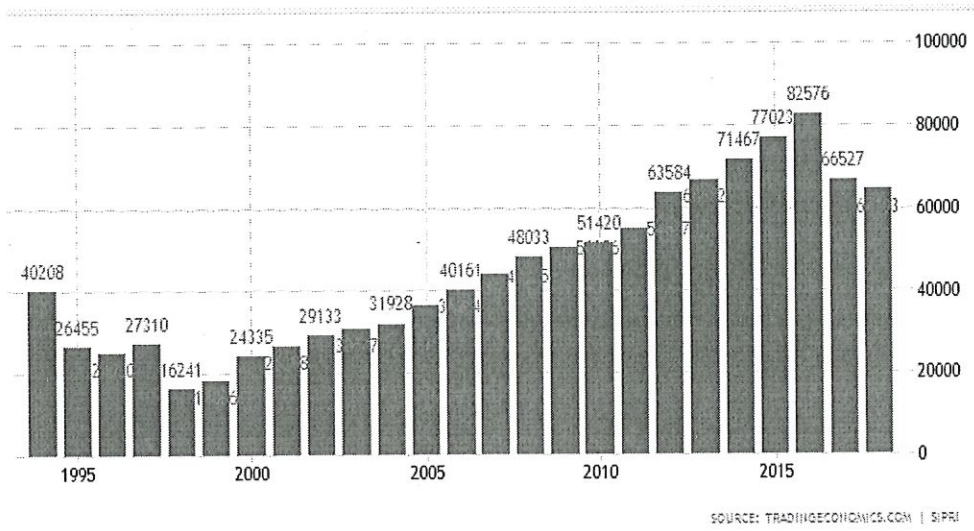

Figure-13 Defence Expenditure of Russia (Trading-Economics, 2019b)

It is interesting that Turkey tried to autonomously take a step in the Middle East, instead of taking joint action with both regional powers and Western countries. It was also a serious test for the economic, political, and security capacities of Turkey to intervene in the domestic issues of Arab countries. It seems that it was a deliberate choice of the Turkish foreign policymakers. Because, Davutoglu stated that "*When the revolutionary events in the Middle East began, we were determined that we would not be passive bystanders, but active agents that impacted this historic transformation of the region*" (Davutoglu, 2013b).

Some foreign policy experts claimed that it would be more realistic to move with the international community and try to deescalate the violence in Syria. Ozdem Sanberk stated that *"The majority of the peoples of the region view Turkey as a model or source of inspiration for their expectations and this imposes additional responsibility upon Turkey. But this situation has not pushed Turkey into carelessly taking the fore by itself. Turkey has been rather careful to act in unison with the Arab League and the international community. In other words, realism has not been forsaken."*(Sanberk, 2012, p. 2).

Turkey did not have a strong relationship with the leaders of the authoritarian regimes as major Western powers had. For instance, Bashar al-Assad participated in a postgraduate study at the Western Eye Hospital in London. Many of the authoritarian rulers of Middle East countries had such kind of relations with Western countries. Moreover, the economic and military capacities of Turkey were also not enough to change the political structure of the authoritarian regimes. As a matter of fact, the Turkish foreign policymakers were aware of the limits of Turkey's power in terms of forcing authoritarian regimes in Arab countries to transit into democratic models. Therefore, Turkey used a careful diplomatic language to convey its thoughts about the legitimate expectations of the protestors. On the other hand, Turkey could not estimate the degree of Western countries' reluctance in involving the serious problems that arose in the wake of the Arab Spring. There were numerous of that reluctance such as the US strategic policy shift toward the Asia-Pacific region, the negative impacts of the 2008 economic crisis, and the economic cost of intervening in Libya and so on.

The criticism regarding the "zero problems" approach should take into consideration its relation with other principles. Davutoglu did not assert that Turkey should not raise its voice against human rights abuses and violence in the neighbor countries for the sake of increasing the profits of Turkey from international trade with these countries. Such value-free thinking was not supported by Davutoglu. Instead, Davutoglu tried to develop a new model with neighbor countries on the ground of mutual economic and political benefits as a way of gradually transforming the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East.

The function of power in international relations can change based on the nature of the international conjuncture. In a peaceful area, it seems that hard power does not have a significant function in determining the place of a state in the international hierarchy. However, power becomes a significant instrument in preventing a conflict, which has a detrimental impact on the national interests of a state. After the JDP's coming to power, the international conjuncture was not in an anarchic state. Russia and China did not have enough capacity to challenge the international policy of the US. Therefore, Turkey enjoyed the positive atmosphere

of this relative calmness in international relations. After the Arab Spring changed the international dynamics of the region, Turkey had serious difficulty in maintaining constructive relations with its neighbors. In terms of both economic and military capacity, Turkey did not have enough power to counter the expansionist policies of both Russia and Iran in the Middle East. Moreover, Turkey has energy dependency on these countries.

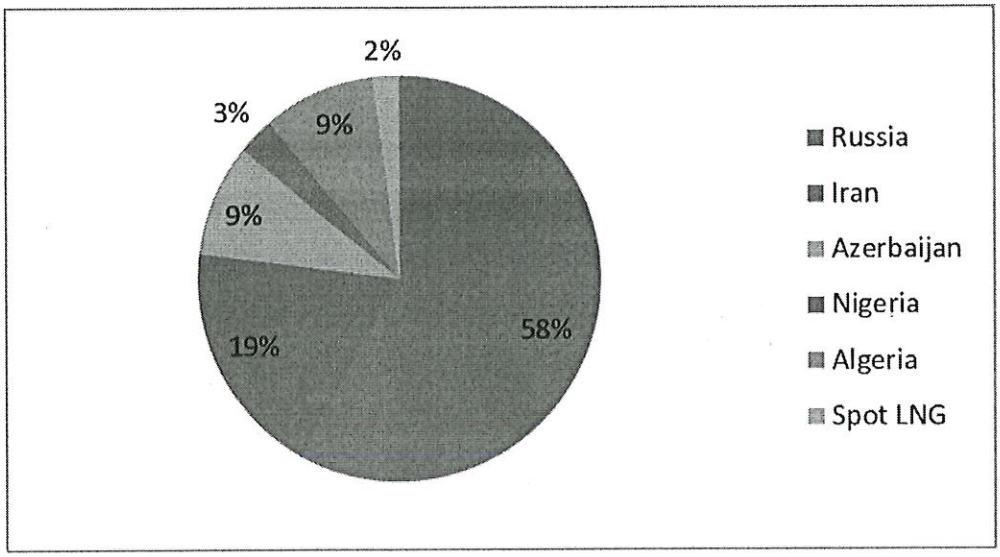

Figure-14 Turkey's Natural Gas Import (Yesevi, 2011)

Although Turkey significantly developed its soft power and built new cultural and economic relations with neighbor countries, such relationships were not enough to change the direction of the events the Middle East. Despite the deepened relationship between Syria and Turkey such a joint ministry meeting or lifting the visa requirement between two countries, Turkey failed to persuade the Assad regime to stop violence against its people. It demonstrates that soft power has a limited impact on authoritarian regimes to stop their illegitimate activities. The reason for this phenomenon is that authoritarian regimes usually do not have the capacity to modernize themselves. Transiting to democracy can destroy the power of an authoritarian regime. Both the Assad regime in Syria and Abdul-fettah-Sisi in Egypt had neither desire nor courage to allow transparent and free elections in their countries.

Turning from "zero policy" approach to the "regime change" approach can be explained as a necessity for Turkey by the reason of the humanitarian crisis in Syria. However, as it was seen in Libya and Iraq, regime change effort can create further security and economic problem. There have always been the collateral costs of using military power in a conflict area. Syria descended into a long and violent civil war, which has caused the displacement and death of millions of people. The US and Russia have supported different factions in Syria. The birth of ISIS was another significant security issue for the region. In this regard, Turkey's efforts to support the activities of the opposition groups did not produce the intended results. Furthermore, the lack of Western powers' support and the increasing presence of Russia in Syria reduced the effectiveness of Turkey's policy towards Syria, which aimed at regime change in Syria. As a result, the civil war in Syria has continued at an accelerating pace and created many problems for the security of Turkey such as the increasing influence of PYD in the northern region of Syria. After 2015, Turkey had to militarily involve in Syria to limit the spread of the PYD and ISIS in Syria.

It is not reasonable and fair to blame Turkey for its efforts to develop a relationship with Syria before the Arab Spring in spite of the undemocratic nature of the regime. Assad regime had similar authoritarian tendencies towards its citizens when JDP came to power in 2002. The main characteristic of Turkish foreign policy toward Syria in the early period of JDP can be described in terms of constructivism. Turkey was aware of the suppressive attitude of the Syrian regime but attempted to strengthen its economic and political relations to encourage Syrian to adopt democratic principles.

On the other hand, it was evident that the Syrian regime did not have any chance to bring democracy to the country. Because the majority of the Syrian population was Sunni Muslim and did not vote for the current regime. In this regard, bringing democracy to Syria means "a political suicide" for the current regime. Moreover, Syria has strategic importance for Iran due to its place in the "Shia Crescent" strategy, which connects Iran from Iraq to Lebanon (Clawson, Ghaddar, & Uskowi, 2018). The violence in Syria has caused the displacement of

millions of Sunni population and strengthened the position of the Alawite Syrian regime. It means that Iran has benefited from the violent actions of the Syrian regime to support its "Shia Crescent" strategy (Balanche, 2018). It is a challenging dilemma for Turkey to pursue a strategy for stepping down of Assad while maintaining a good relationship with Iran.

Turkey historically has had tense relations with Iran due to the ideological difference between the two countries. Despite this tense historical background, Turkey has managed to develop a balanced approach in its relations with Iran during the JDP governments. On the other hand, it is difficult for Turkey to compromise the Western powers' attitude towards Iran with the Iranian expansionist foreign policy. In 2011, Turkey allowed NATO to deploy a radar at Kurecik in order to defend the southern wing of the alliance from any ballistic missile attack. Iran perceived this deployment as a threat against itself. After Turkey guaranteed that Turkish territory will not be used for any possible attack against Iran, the tension between the two countries was put into cold storage.

Both the struggle for natural resources in the East Mediterranean and the excessive use of force by Israel against Palestinian demonstrate the difficulty of implementation of the "zero problems" approach in the practical area. In this regard, states in the Middle East do not abandon the realist approach in their foreign policies and pursue policies to maximize their national interests. It can be claimed that there is some internal dilemma with the concept of "zero problems" and its implementation. While Turkey offered to be a mediator between Israel and Syria over the problem related to Golan Heights, Israel initiated a military operation against Gaza Strip in 2008. Such a unilateral offensive action of Israel also complicated the relations between Turkey and the Arab world. In other words, this kind of operation forces Turkey to take the side of Arab countries or Israel.

Realist critique of the Strategic Depth doctrine provided in the above mentioned chapter. In the following chapter, the study will reach its conclusion.

CONCLUSION

JDP's coming to power in 2002 was the beginning of a new era in Turkish foreign policy due to the strong intellectual contribution of Ahmet Davutoglu, which became the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister subsequently. Davutoglu put a new perspective on Turkish foreign policy, which gave a central role for Turkey in its relations with both neighbor countries and other international actors. In the initial period of the JDP governments, Turkey achieved significant successes in developing new relations with neighbor countries by using its historical, cultural, and economic relations.

As Ahmet Davutoglu gaining influence in the Turkish foreign-policy making processes, he tried to shape Turkish foreign policy and sought success by implementing his doctrine which emphasized Turkish soft power. As clearly underlined in his doctrine, Turkish soft power, which was derived from Turkish history, its civilization and culture would play a role in making a new and more assertive foreign policy. The Davutoglu policy making propelled Turkey in terms of economic and diplomatic achievements between 2009 and 2012.

In the popular days of Turkish soft-power and Davutoglu doctrine, the USA and its western allies also gave credit to transformative abilities of soft and smart power of Turkey in the troubled-Middle East facing Arab uprisings. At the beginning of so called- the Arab spring, Turkey was shown as a role model to the potential new democracies.

Turkey managed to start accession negotiations with the EU in 2005. With the help of effective domestic reforms and increasing economic power, Turkey gradually became an influential regional actor in its region. The increased trade relations with neighbor countries were a significant indicator that demonstrates the willingness of Turkey to establish a new kind of relations with its neighbors. The dialogue with Armenia and joint ministry meeting with Syria was not usual practices of Turkish foreign policy. Historically, Turkey preferred to strengthen its relations with Western powers and isolate itself from the Middle East.

The Cold War parameters were very influential in Turkey's foreign policy preference to turn its face to the Western block. Due to the polarizing international atmosphere of the Cold War, Turkey did not spend great efforts to develop its relations with both Central Asia and the Middle East during the Cold War. After the Cold War, Turkey realized the power of its historical and cultural ties with the regions. The characteristics of the international relations after the Cold War was also suitable for the development of relations with neighbor countries. Davutoglu's book, *The Strategic Depth*, offered a new road for Turkish foreign policy in this relatively calm international conjuncture. The JDP's coming to power gave a valuable opportunity to Davutoglu to put into practice his new perspective.

Davutoglu's "zero problems" approach shaped the general structure of Turkey's activities in international relations. Turkey strived to establish new ties with its neighbors. Strengthening the economic ties was seen as a main instrument to deal with the historical problems with neighbors. For instance, Turkey was on the brink of war with Syria in 1998 due to the presence of the PKK in northern Syria. The autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq was the main obstacle between Turkey and Iraq relationships. Armenia's efforts to put international pressure on Turkey about the incidents in 1915 was the source of tension between Turkey and Armenia. Iran was perceived as a threat due to its "tendency to export regime to its neighbors". The marital problems in the East Mediterranean and Aegean Sea also pitted Turkey against Greece in the middle of the 1990s.

Despite all these problems with neighbor countries, Turkey managed to create a new atmosphere in its region by opening new dialogue channels with its neighbors. Before the Arab Spring, Turkey deepened its relations with both the Syrian regime and the autonomous Kurdish region in the north of Iraq. As a matter of fact that, these recovering relations also strengthening the hands of Turkey in its relations with international actors such as the EU, Russia and the US. Turkey started to be perceived as a role model for the countries in the Middle East before the Arab Spring. On the other hand, the relationship between Israel

and Turkey remained rough in the political area. While the conservative nature of the JDP governments facilitated the relationship with the Arab countries, it makes difficult to develop a relationship with Israel. The Palestinian issue remained an important source of the problem between Israel and Turkey. Mavi Marmara incident in 2011 increased the tension between the two countries at the highest points.

After the Arab Spring, there were significant changes in the characteristics of Turkish foreign policy. At the first glance, transitions in Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt was relatively peaceful and a social media powered passive revolutionary tide was believed to spread and reach success through the Middle East. However, challenging series of events during the Arab spring in Libya, Syria and Yemen caused realist policies of balance of power, national interest, and military capabilities overwhelmed the role of soft power. As soft-power started to lose its influence in the wake of more-turbulent-before Middle East, its adversary, hard power praxis gained momentum. In the face of changing nature of the game in the Middle East, Turkish model was abandoned by both its western promoters and the potential Middle Eastern buyers immediately. However, Turkey herself could not keep up with the transition from soft power oriented foreign-policy-making to old-traditional hard power based policies. Therefore, Turkish foreign policy once promoted as a role model collapsed and troubled through the Middle East.

As a matter of fact that, these changes were not the direct results of the changes in the foreign policy preferences of the Turkish foreign policymakers. The international conjuncture after Arab Spring necessitated to adopt a realistic approach in international relations. Because "soft power" became nearly obsolete as the violence in the neighbor countries increased. Iran and Russia started to be more assertive in their relations with Syria. Russia explicitly supported the Assad regime to preserve its national interests in the Mediterranean. Iran also followed an expansionist policy after the regression of the US forces in Iraq. Increased influence of Iran in Iraq and Syria had harmful impacts on Turkey's relations with Gulf states.

In addition to her difficulties in the Middle East policy, her relations with the EU did not manage to make the desired progress. The tense relations with Greece and Israel also affected Turkey's relations with the EU and the US. After NATO's military intervention in Libya, both the public opinions in the EU and the US turned against a possible military intervention in a foreign country due to its high economic costs. The economic crisis in 2008 was also influential in the anti-militarist approach in Western countries. Therefore, Turkey had to deal with the catastrophic consequences of the violence in both Syria and Iraq by itself. The expansionist policies of Iran and Russia also limited the effectiveness of the Turkish foreign policy after the Arab Spring.

In terms of the realist approach, it can be claimed that Turkey did not accurately calculate its own power before the hardening its stance against violence in Syria. Without the financial, political, and economic help of the Western countries, it was very difficult for Turkey to follow her foreign policy goals since adversaries had financial and military supports of the USA, Israel, the EU, Iran and Russia. Moreover, it is obvious that "soft power" has serious limitations, when dealing with the expansionist policies of regional powers and restricting the violent activities of the authoritarian regimes. Turkey could not manage to persuade the Assad regime to allow the opposition groups to make their voices heard or could not prevent military coup d'état in Egypt by relying her soft power.

On the contrary of the assertive and optimistic Davutoglu's strategic depth doctrine, Turkish soft-power practices which were derived from the doctrine did not work as intended. Turkey has faced troubles and challenges throughout its neighborhood and in her relations with the other actors. However, the negative situation in which Turkish foreign policy faced is not because of the Strategic Depth doctrine itself. Instead, Turkish soft-power policy rooted from the Strategic Depth doctrine might be successful to a certain extent that is the extent to enhancing its diplomacy and promoting its international trade. However,

overestimating the importance of soft power resulted as a miscalculation and a catastrophe in her foreign policy. Therefore the deadlock which confronts Turkish foreign policy is because of her lack of hard-power when confronted by hard power policies from her adversaries and her incapability to switch from soft power policies on time, not because of Davutoglu's doctrine solely.

There should be a balance between idealism and realism in the foreign policy of a country. Relying on the "soft power" instruments in international relations usually does not prevent expansionist countries to abandon their policies or does not fill the gap of lack of hard power when it is necessary. Moreover, Turkey should also accurately calculate its power before hardening its stance against the Assad regime. Realist thinkers are right in stressing the function of power in the solution of some security problems. Because international organizations such UN and NATO could not prevent the escalation of violence after the Arab Spring in the Middle East. Therefore, Turkey should have been careful in directly involving the internal policies of her neighbors with taking consideration of hard power politics and capabilities.

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