T. C.

ISTANBUL KÜLTÜR UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

PRESENT DAY DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF TURKISH-KYRGYZ RELATIONS

MA Thesis by

Gulsana TAALAI

2000005929

Department: International Relations

Programme: International Relations

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Cemal ERTÜRK

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ÖZET

Bu makale, Orta Asya'nın jeopolitik durumu ışığında, Kırgız-Türkiye siyasi ve askeri işbirliğini incelemektedir. Amacı, iki ülke ikili ilişkilerinin sunduğu zorluklar ve fırsatlar hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek.

Çalışmanın kronolojik çerçevesi 1991'den 2021'e kadar olan dönemi kapsamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın zaman çerçevesi, Orta Asya'daki siyasi ve askeri süreçlerdeki değişimlerin dinamiklerinin tam olarak izlenmesine ve Türkiye'nin Kırgızistan'daki dış politika stratejilerinin gelişimini araştırmaya izin vermektedir.

Çalışma, Kırgızistan'ın Rusya ve Türkiye'nin bölgesel dış politika beklentilerinin uygulanmasında bir rekabet alanı olmaya devam ettiğini ortaya koydu. Bu nedenle etkileşim süreci, esnek ve değişken bir politikanın geliştirilmesini gerektirmektedir. Bölgesel güçlerin Kırgızistan'da farklı çıkarları vardır, bu nedenle bu ülkedeki faaliyetleri sadece güvenlik konularında işbirliği değil, aynı zamanda kültür ve eğitim politikalarında rekabet niteliğindedir. Türk makamları, Kırgızistan da dahil olmak üzere Orta Asya cumhuriyetleriyle hem çok taraflı bir platformda hem de ikili temelde daha fazla entegrasyonu geliştirmeyi amaçlayan politikayı optimize etmeye çalışıyor.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Asya jeopolitiği, Türk dış politikası, Kırgızistan, sert ve yumuşak güç.

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ABSTRACT

In the light of Central Asia's geopolitical situation, this paper examines Kyrgyz- Turkish political and military cooperation. Its goal is to learn more about the challenges and opportunities that the two countries' bilateral relations present.

The chronological framework of the study covers the period from 1991 to 2021. The time frame of this work allows one to fully trace the dynamics of changes in political and military processes in Central Asia, to explore the evolution of the foreign policy strategies of Turkey in Kyrgyzstan.

The study has revealed that Kyrgyzstan continues to be a zone of competition in the implementation of the regional foreign policy aspirations of Russia and Turkey. Therefore, the process of interaction requires the development of a flexible and variable policy. The regional powers have different interests in Kyrgyzstan, so their activities in this country are not only in the nature of cooperation in security issues, but also rivalry in cultural and educational policies. The Turkish authorities are trying to optimize the policy aimed at developing further integration with the Central Asian republics, including Kyrgyzstan, both on a multilateral platform and on a bilateral basis.

Keywords: Central Asia geopolitics, Turkish foreign policy, Kyrgyzstan, hard and soft power.

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List of Abbreviations

TURKSOY: International Organization of Turkic Culture

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

YPG: People's Defense Units

UAV: Unmanned aerial vehicle

EU: European Union

US: United States

TIKA: Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency

TURKPA: Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States

UN: United Nations

OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

CICA: Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia

CCTS: Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States

CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

NAP: National Action Plan

EAEU: Eurasian Economic Union

SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organization

CSTO: Collective Security Treaty Organization

IMU: Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Turkey-Kyrgyzstan Relations Background

The complex realm of international relations is a result of the intricate interplay between historical narratives, cultural affinities, economic realities, and geopolitical forces that collectively shape the interactions between nations. An apt illustration of this intricate interplay can be found in the multifaceted relationship between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan. Despite their geographical separation, these two nations share a rich historical connection and navigate evolving dynamics that define their interactions on the global stage. This analysis offers a comprehensive exploration of the broader landscape of international relations between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan, delving into their historical underpinnings, and existing state of affairs, and highlighting their distinctive role within the complex tapestry of global affairs.

The historical backdrop of the Turkey-Kyrgyzstan relationship traces back to a shared cultural and linguistic heritage rooted in the Turkic language family. Despite being physically distant during the reign of the Ottoman Empire, the foundation of a cultural affinity was laid, setting the stage for future interactions. The dismantling of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked a pivotal turning point in their relationship, providing Kyrgyzstan with newfound independence and opening avenues for diplomatic engagement with Turkey as an established sovereign state.

The post-Soviet era witnessed the early stages of interaction, with Turkey swiftly recognizing Kyrgyzstan's independence and extending crucial support across various sectors including education and infrastructure development. The signing of bilateral agreements further solidified their ties, spanning trade, investment, tourism, and education. Turkey's

developmental contributions played a significant role in propelling Kyrgyzstan's economic growth and infrastructural development while fostering cultural exchanges and educational initiatives to establish strong people-to-people connections.

Beyond the historical and cultural dimensions, both Turkey and Kyrgyzstan hold strategic geopolitical positions that influence their roles on the global stage. Turkey's position as a bridge between Europe and Asia complements Kyrgyzstan's location in Central Asia, endowed with geopolitical significance due to its energy resources. While not directly enmeshed in conflicts, these geopolitical realities significantly influence their foreign policy decisions and interactions, thereby shaping the trajectory of their relationship.

The Turkey-Kyrgyzstan relationship, like any, comes with its challenges—often stemming from economic disparities, political instability, and external interests in the region. These complexities, however, also provide fertile ground for collaboration. Both nations can find common ground to address shared challenges, such as counterterrorism, regional stability, and economic development. Participation in international organizations like the Turkic Council and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization offers platforms for diplomatic engagement and cooperative efforts in addressing these issues.

The relationship between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan serves as a microcosm of the intricate dance of international relations. This dance seamlessly blends historical echoes, geopolitical considerations, and evolving challenges. Despite their geographical separation, the resonance of shared cultural heritage and aligned interests continues to be the cornerstone of a relationship that holds substantial potential for deeper cooperation. By delving into their historical roots, contextual backdrop, and present dynamics, it becomes evident that the interactions between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan play an integral role within the broader global tapestry of diplomatic affairs.

1.2. The Background of the Problem

The end of the 20th century was marked by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of new independent states that formed the post-Soviet space. Four former Soviet states of Central Asia began to develop according to their own development models. They began to build new relationships with the former Soviet republics based on the market economy and, along with this, build relationships with the rest of the world. Thus, for the states of the Baltic States, Eastern Europe, Transcaucasia and Central Asia, a new stage in the history of their development began. The region of Central Asia is of particular interest, since it is not only the largest in terms of territory and population, but also in terms of other indicators, in particular, the energy potential. The vast majority of the population of the states of Central Asia professes Islam, which also distinguishes this region from other regions of the former USSR.

Central Asia's geopolitical location makes it a target not only of Russia’s politics, but also of other regional actors such as Iran, Pakistan, China and Turkey. Iran’s and Pakistan's policy seeks to reintegrate Turkic-speaking Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, as well as Persian-speaking Tajikistan, into Islamic culture. China heavily relies on economic cooperation by investing in extraction of natural resources, as well as the supply of machinery and equipment. Unlike other regional actors, Turkey primarily utilizes its ethno-cultural and linguistic kinship with the region's Turkic-speaking republics.

Since the beginning of diplomatic relations, Turkey has been positioning itself as a model for the socio-economic and political development of the newly independent states of Central Asia, promoting three major principles: a secular state, a democratic political system, and free market relations. It is worthwhile noting that Turkey has long had the support of the Anglo-Saxon world, which is seriously concerned about the problem of confrontation with China, the

weakening of Russia, and squeezing it out of Central Asia. Some serious progress has already been made on this path, as evidenced by the expansion of Turkish soft power in the region through the reinforcement of various Turkic integration unions, the establishment of Turkish educational institutions in the Central Asian republics against the backdrop of a reduction in the number of Russian schools and positioning itself as a defender of Islamic principles. Moreover, Turkey is currently one of the most influential players not only in the regional but also in the global format. As shown by the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020, as well as the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict, where Turkey is one of the main mediators, the influence of this country in the post-Soviet space is also quite large. Accordingly, for the Turkic states of Central Asia, cooperation with Turkey is a traditionally significant area of foreign policy, which includes several formats of multilateral cooperation. The key platform for Turkey's interaction with the states of Central Asia today is the Organization of Turkic States.

Turkey's expansion into Central Asia coincides with Russia's inaction. The Russian military presence in the region is not backed up by a consistent pattern of cooperation on other matters. Resentment and misunderstanding grow not just among elites of Central Asian countries, but also among ordinary people who have yet to find an answer to a question of their role in the context of being in the orbit of the Russian world. Turkey, on the other hand, presents a solid agenda and prospects, albeit somewhat overly promising for the formation of the “Turkic world”.

Among the Turkic countries of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is the most dependent on foreign aid, in particular in military sector due to territorial disputes with Tajikistan, which led to bloody clashes in the past several years. Stronger states like Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are more cautious in relations with Turkey than Kyrgyzstan. At first glance, Kyrgyzstan, the region's weakest state, appears to be the most attainable target for Turkey. As a result of the

state's economic failure and its people's unique ‘nomadic’ mentality, Kyrgyzstan has a less authoritarian, but also less effective, form of governance than its neighbors. Even though Kyrgyzstan supported the development of democratic values and was frequently mentioned in the media as an "island of democracy" in Central Asia, this "softness" did not lead to the rapid development of Kyrgyzstan.

It should be emphasized that Kyrgyzstan's geographical location places it in the middle of a troubled and problematic region adjacent to Afghanistan, making it vulnerable to a variety of threats. These threats stem from terrorist organizations that are outlawed in Russia, such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, as well as drug trafficking and other issues. There are also intra-regional issues such as distribution of water resources, territorial disputes, and other issues that frequently lead to interethnic conflicts. It is also rather important to note that Kyrgyzstan is located in the ‘soft underbelly’ of Russia's post-Soviet realm, making it a target of world powers in geopolitical terms. That is why the issue of strengthening the bilateral relations with Turkey is crucial for the Kyrgyz leadership.

Turkey has established itself as a reliable partner in the eyes of the Kyrgyz authorities over the course of thirty years of bilateral cooperation, capable of presenting its own development models and sharing its experience in nearly every sector of the state and society. Presidents of Kyrgyzstan, starting with the first, Askar Akaev, and ending with Almazbek Atambaev, have all shown allegiance to Turkish authorities and supported their endeavors in every manner. Among the most illustrious examples of such commitment is Atambaev's first ever official state visit to Turkey in 2012, shortly following his appointment.

Given the current trends in the development of Russia's foreign policy in the CIS space, which are aimed at expanding and deepening Eurasian integration, and the fact that Kyrgyzstan is regarded by the Russian authorities as an active participant and partner in the

aforementioned process, it is essential to study Turkey's measures to counterbalance to this integration. In this regard, a detailed analysis of the history of the development of the foreign policy strategy of Turkey in relation to Kyrgyzstan in the post-Soviet period is of undoubted academic and practical interest. Particularly, there is very limited discourse on Turkey's attempts to exercise both soft and hard power in Central Asia as a counterbalance to Russia's regional ambitions. In view of this, this research will attempt to understand key developments taking place in the political and military cooperation between the two countries.

In view of the current trends in the development of Turkey's foreign policy in the CIS space, aimed at expanding and deepening integration, and also taking into account the fact that the Kyrgyz Republic is considered by the Russian authorities as an active participant and partner in the framework of Eurasian integration, the need to study the evolution of bilateral relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Kyrgyz Republic between 1991 and 2021 is of fundamental importance. Basically, the research attempts to shed light on contemporary challenges and opportunities of Turkey's policy in Kyrgyzstan.

1.3 The Aim, Objectives & Research Question

Basically, the study attempts to overview political and military agreements between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan in order to understand the former's capacity to exercise both soft and hard power in Kyrgyzstan, particularly focused on geopolitical agenda in the region. The main question of the work is "What is the focal point of Turkish foreign policy towards Kyrgyzstan since the beginning of diplomatic relations?"

Based on the research aim, the following issues to be studied:

□ Features of Central Asia in the post-Soviet period, as well as the role and place of Kyrgyzstan in the regional system of international relations are considered;

□ The foreign policy strategy of Turkey, carried out in Kyrgyzstan during 1991-2021, affecting the political and military aspects of Turkish-Kyrgyz relations, is studied;

□ The impact of Turkey's activities on the prospects of Russian policy in Kyrgyzstan is studied.

The chronological framework of the study covers the period from 1991 to 2021. The time frame of this work allows one to fully trace the dynamics of changes in political and military processes in Central Asia, to explore the evolution of the foreign policy strategies of Turkey in Kyrgyzstan.

1.4 Research Philosophy

The research is based on interpretivist philosophy where the data is analyzed via descriptive and explorative approaches. “Exploratory research is conducted to clarify ambiguous situations or discover potential opportunities” (Zikmund et al., 2013, p. 52), while “the major purpose of descriptive research is to describe characteristics of objects, people, groups, organizations, or environments” (Zikmund et al., 2013, p. 52). Therefore, descriptive study is suitable for the research question because “it is primarily concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing” (Singh, and Nath, 2007, p.229). Considering that there are no specific studies about an impact of political and military cooperation of Turkey and Kyrgyzstan on other actors’ activities in the region, it is impossible to base the research on a relevant theory.

1.5 The Research Strategy

Research strategy is chosen depending on research questions and objectives, and background knowledge on the subject. Thus, among available research strategies, grounded theory is considered as the most relevant one due to absence of a theory on the research question. The research subject refers to general knowledge on political and military cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. Thus, the secondary data related to this question is used as a preliminary knowledge to develop new insights. Grounded theory supports inductive perspective because both of them imply that there should be no predetermined theory until collected data is analyzed. In inductive approach, researcher will collect data and develop theory in result of his data analysis (Saunders et al., 2009, p.490). Saunders states that grounded theory is particularly helpful for research to predict and explain behavior while developing and building theory (Saunders et al. 2009, p.149). Since area of international relations is multifaceted, application of this theory is more relevant to this research because of the nature of politics, which is dynamic and ever-changing. However, the research refers to the available literature in order to have an idea about themes and pattern in collected data. Moreover, the idea of this research is to explore available documents of agreements at intergovernmental level of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey in political and military spheres. About this point, Saunders (et al. 2009) notes that it is possible that grounded theory may include some elements of a deductive approach as a researcher seeks to develop a theory and then test it through subsequent data collections and analysis (Saunders et al. 2009, p.149). However, in the case of this research, deductive approach is not applicable because the subject is not yet specific enough so that to build theories. Saunders also says that a researcher does not start a research with a clear theoretical position (Saunders et al., 2009). Instead, he finds relationships between his data, and makes up questions and hypotheses in order to test them.

The descriptive approach makes it possible to explore the gradual development of the foreign policy strategy of Turkey in Kyrgyzstan during 1991–2021 and identify stages in the evolution of the Kyrgyz-Turkish bilateral relations in the post-Soviet period.

The holistic nature of the research stems from a comprehensive analysis of Turkish policy in Kyrgyzstan in the period from 1991 to 2021, which makes it possible to determine the impact of Turkish policy on Kyrgyzstan's strategic ally, Russia. The dissertation is among the few that analyze Turkey's policy in Kyrgyzstan in the context of Turkish-Russian relations.

For the first time, Turkey's policy towards Kyrgyzstan is covered in the military sphere, which significantly expands the scope of research on the foreign policy of Turkey in Kyrgyzstan. This also contributes to the development of a new approach in covering the Turkish foreign policy strategy in Kyrgyzstan, which implies a more active and thoughtful use of not only Turkey's 'soft power' policy, but also contributes to some strengthening of the combat capability of the Kyrgyz army, through its logistical and educational support, both in Turkish line and through NATO.

Information on the organizational and institutional component of the Turkish policy in Kyrgyzstan, expressed in the activities of organizations created under the auspices of Turkey, is significantly supplemented. The dissertation defines the content and key characteristics of the foreign policy strategy of Kyrgyzstan. For the first time, the evolution of the strategic course of the Kyrgyz foreign policy is considered, based on the factors of geopolitical competition between Russia and Turkey in Kyrgyzstan, while traditionally in the socio- political and political science literature the main focus is on Turkey's foreign policy towards Kyrgyzstan.

2. CHAPTER I

2.1 The Turkish Hard Power

Hard power is a pivotal facet of international relations, embodying a nation's capability to influence and shape the behavior of other countries through coercive means. It's characterized by military might, economic leverage, and strategic diplomacy, allowing a nation to assert its dominance on the global stage. Hard power encompasses tangible elements that exert direct pressure on other nations, often involving military interventions, economic sanctions, or the threat of force to achieve political objectives.

When considering the hard power of Turkey on a broader spectrum, a multifaceted landscape emerges. Turkey's strategic location bridging Europe and Asia positions it as a geographical linchpin, affording the nation significant geopolitical significance. This position isn't just a matter of convenience; it acts as a strategic lever enabling Turkey to exercise influence over various international matters.

Turkey's military prowess is a substantial element of its hard power arsenal. The Turkish Armed Forces, modernized over the years, not only contribute to the country's defense but also provide a platform for projection beyond its borders. This military strength has been pivotal in enabling Turkey to play a role in regional security and intervene in conflicts when its interests are at stake.

Economically, Turkey's substantial and diverse economy serves as another pillar of its hard power. The nation's economic growth has propelled it into the ranks of major economies, allowing it to wield significant economic leverage. This financial clout opens doors for bilateral trade agreements, investment partnerships, and the capacity to employ economic tools as a means of influencing other nations.

Turkey's diplomatic acumen plays a crucial role in its hard power strategies. The nation's membership in organizations like NATO amplifies its diplomatic voice, providing platforms to influence decisions at regional and global levels. Additionally, its diplomatic endeavors extend to forging regional alliances and partnerships, which enhance its collective strength.

In the realm of energy, Turkey's strategic position holds immense value. Its control over crucial energy transit routes, notably the Bosporus Strait, endows it with considerable control over the flow of resources. This control can be strategically wielded as a form of leverage, impacting the energy security of nations reliant on these routes.

However, Turkey's hard power isn't devoid of complexities. Balancing its aspirations with the interests of global powers, regional dynamics, and domestic considerations can be intricate. Managing relationships with neighboring nations, juggling diverse interests, and avoiding overreach are challenges that Turkey must navigate to effectively harness its hard power.

In summation, Turkey's hard power represents a multifaceted amalgamation of strategic geography, military capabilities, economic influence, diplomatic finesse, and energy control. This blend allows Turkey to exert its influence and advance its interests within the global arena, navigating the complexities inherent to wielding power in an interconnected world.

2.1.1 Strategy of Turkey’s Hard Power in Foreign Policy

For many years, the Turkish leadership's foreign policy remained outside of Russia's strategic interests, with economic relations taking precedence. The situation has changed dramatically after the start of the civil war in Syria and the Russian operation to defend the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

From the moment of active support of the armed Syrian opposition, counting on the removal of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, one can speak of the assertive nature of Turkish foreign policy aimed at revising the distribution of forces that has developed in the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia. Before entering the Syrian conflict, during 2000-2011, Turkey mainly relied on "soft power" to realize its interests. The course towards the use of “hard power” serves not only foreign policy goals, but also strengthens the power of R. Erdogan by satisfying the historical resentment of a significant part of Turkish society and the neo-Ottoman sentiments of the political elite (Elçi, 2021, p.1-18).

Turkey is pursuing hard power most actively in Syria, competing with the interests of Russia and the United States. One of the declared reasons for Turkey's intervention in the Syrian internal conflict was to protect militants of Turkic ethnicity from Russian air strikes, who were bombed as terrorists, according to President R. Erdogan (Güncelleme, 2015). After several violations of Turkish airspace by Russian air forces a Russian Su-24 bomber was shot down. Despite Russia’s demand of an apology for the downed plane, Turkey has not apologized by stating that Turkey "never had the desire and deliberate intention to shoot down an aircraft belonging to the Russian Federation" (Vladimirom Putinym polucheno poslanie Presidenta Tursii Redjepa Tayipa Ergogana, 2016). The President of Turkey offered condolences and apologized only to the relatives of the deceased pilot and offered compensation to them, and not to Russia. The downing of the Russian fighter jet as well as

subsequent deployment of the Turkish armed forces in Syria are crucial indicators of Ankara's willingness to balance on the verge of conflict, attempting to alter the regional distribution of forces. As a result, the further development of Russian-Turkish relations on the Syrian crisis might be described as a hidden confrontation in which each party attempted, through agreements, to deprive the other side of a reason for retaliatory actions.

Turkey intends to control the northeastern territories of Syria, freeing them from the Kurds. On the contrary, Washington positions itself as a guarantor of the democratic development of the Kurdish statehood. However, the Turkish side considers the Syrian Kurds as a threat to its national security for being accomplices of the Kurdish separatists in Turkey. In this, Ankara is hindered by both Moscow and Washington. Russia attempts to improve relations with the Kurdish administration, which is engaged in its own state building. In 2019, Turkey launched Operation Peace Spring against numerous Kurdish YPG groups that Turkey has declared terrorist, as well as against the Syrian Democratic Forces coalition, officially funded by the United States to combat terrorist "Islamic state". Turkish forces, invading Kurdish territories, forced American forces to leave some places of deployment. Ankara agreed to Moscow's proposal to confine itself to the captured buffer zone and start joint patrols along its border, which was stated in 2019 in Sochi during the negotiations between V. Putin and R. Erdogan (Gusarov, 2019).

At the same time, the Turkish president relies on the leverage he has to put pressure on Russia. In the Russian-Turkish trade, Ankara's position is stronger, since it has more instruments of influence on Moscow: The Turkish Stream gas pipeline; nuclear power plant, which Russia is building at its own expense in the Turkish city of Akuyu; the acquisition of Russian S-400 air defense missile systems, "studying the possibility" of buying Russian fighters (Asthana, 2021). Ankara's powerful leverage, which it has not yet used, is the Black Sea straits. Through them the Russian operation in Syria is being supplied, and the Montreux

Convention allows Turkey to close the straits in case of a threat to its security (League of Nations Treaty Series, 1936). With the beginning of Russia's Special Military Operation in Ukraine, Ankara demonstrated to Moscow, on the one hand, the closure of the straits as a working option, and on the other hand, it remained one of the few partners without limiting the economic and logistical opportunities for cooperation.

In relations with the United States, as in the case of Russia, the Turkish president uses political bargaining combined with threat or pressure. The leverage on the United States is cooperation with Russia. The acquisition of the Russian S-400 anti-aircraft missile system had both military and political significance for Turkey. The Turkish leadership has every reason to fear that in the event of an armed conflict with Greece, for example, due to islands or bottom areas in the Aegean Sea, there might be problems with supply of weapon systems if it depends solely on the United States. It is reasonable to rely in such a situation on suppliers independent of the US and EU. In this sense, the acquisition of Russian weapons systems, including S-400 air defense systems, makes American partners more attentive to Turkey's interests in the Kurdish issue and in the supply of American Patriot anti-aircraft missile systems. Also, R. Erdogan was not satisfied with the growing criticism by Washington of his domestic policy, as more and more authoritarian.

Both Russia and Turkey at the official level commend each other about their contribution to the normalization of the situation in Libya and Syria. In 2020, Presidents Putin and Erdogan met three times: in Istanbul at the commissioning ceremony of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline, in Berlin at the International Conference on Libya, and during Erdogan's visit to the Russian Federation. Both Ankara and Moscow claim joint patrols east of the Euphrates, neutralization of terrorist groups in Idlib, and joint efforts within the inter-Syrian Constitutional Committee. But, despite the demonstrated "partnership", Turkey's intervention
in the Transcaucasia came as a complete surprise to Moscow. In the war between Azerbaijan

and Armenia over Karabakh in the fall of 2020, President R. Erdogan took the side of President I. Aliyev. Turkey armed Azerbaijan with Bayraktar UAVs, against which the Armenian Armed Forces were powerless.

Moscow is interested in a balance between Yerevan and Baku. When the balance shifted, Russia had to incur serious costs in order to restore it on the new borders. The prospect of a peacekeeping mission is unclear, maintaining it will require material and political costs. Turkey took a position of the winning side and benefited without geopolitical costs; Azerbaijani armed forces raised the Turkish flag in the recaptured Karabakh (Safak, 2021).

Ankara uses another lever to counterbalance Moscow in Central Asia. The Turkish Defense Minister H. Akar paid visits to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in October 2020 for negotiating military-technical, political and economic cooperation. R. Erdogan offered himself as a defender and center for the consolidation of the Turkic world as an ally in discussing controversial issues with Moscow. Both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are already linked with Turkey by military cooperation agreements (Kazakhstan, Turkey to expand military co-op., 2019; Turkish, Uzbek defense ministers sign military agreement, underline further defense cooperation, 2020). Ankara's interests also extend towards Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.

The Turkish President demonstrates even closer political cooperation with Ukraine, which is much more sensitive for Russia. Erdogan repeats more and more insistently that the principled position of Turkey is not to recognize the annexation of Crimea to Russia (Press Release Regarding the Sixth Anniversary of The Illegal Annexation of Crimea, 2020). Moreover, a military agreement and a memorandum were signed between Ukraine and Turkey (Turkey, Ukraine sign military cooperation agreements, 2020). The parties agreed on

joint projects for the construction unmanned aerial vehicles, maintenance of UAVs as well as training of the personnel (Ukraine and Turkey signed a Memorandum on construction of joint drone training and testing center, 2021). Turkey and Ukraine also decided to exchange intelligence information.

After the launch of the Russian military operation in Ukraine, Turkey continued to supply Bayraktar drones to the Kyiv regime. However, by not joining the sanctions, Ankara has offered itself to Moscow as a “window of opportunity” that can open and close. In the long term, the most unpleasant thing for Russia may be Turkish intervention in Russia’s Special Military Operation on the Ukrainian side. It is this challenge that Turkey can throw at Moscow that makes it, from the point of view of the EU and the US, the most valuable actor for counterbalancing Russia. In the same logic, Turkey can be considered by the United States as a potential balancing act against Iran, with which it is in a state of simmering conflict. Thus, in this balancing triangle, Ankara, using the threat, balances opposing interests. Turkey's geopolitical rivals have different or opposing interests at many points. Their mutual containment leads to the absence of a balancing coalition.

2.1.2 Hard Power in Relation between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan

Exploring the nuanced intricacies of Turkish hard power and its impact on Kyrgyzstan reveals a tapestry of seamlessly interwoven strategies. The geographical positioning of Turkey, serving as a bridge between Europe and Asia, acts as a catalyst for streamlined diplomatic and economic interactions with Kyrgyzstan. This geographic proximity not only underscores bilateral ties but also establishes a solid foundation for the strategic application of hard power, setting the stage for a harmonious convergence of influence.

Built upon a robust economy and well-established trade networks, Turkey leverages its economic prowess as a cornerstone of hard power projection. Through the forging of bilateral trade agreements, targeted investments, and channels for developmental support, Turkey not only sculpts the trajectory of Kyrgyzstan's economy but also fosters a reciprocating interdependence that reinforces its influence over the region. This economic synergy becomes a pivotal strand seamlessly woven into the fabric of influence.

The modern military capabilities that Turkey possesses are fortified through well-structured defense cooperation agreements, enabling the cultivation of a robust military synergy with Kyrgyzstan. This collaboration, manifested in joint training exercises, strategic arms exchange, and the provision of security assistance, engenders a shared security consciousness that binds both nations together in a strategic security alliance. This military cohesion enriches the narrative of influence and cements Turkey's role as a key player in Kyrgyzstan's security landscape.

However, the narrative extends beyond conventional realms, as the tapestry unravels shared cultural and religious bonds that form an intricate weave. These connections serve as a conduit for both soft and hard power dynamics, allowing Turkey to deftly navigate educational exchanges, cultural dialogues, and religious diplomacy to nurture a profound

sense of connection. This thread, when woven, not only amplifies Turkey's influence but also anchors its hard power within a more profound, authentic relationship.

Turkey's diplomatic finesse is underscored by its active participation in influential international organizations such as NATO and its burgeoning regional alliances. This diplomatic avenue extends Turkey's hard power reach beyond bilateral ties, providing a strategic platform to shape Kyrgyzstan's political decisions. This seamless diplomatic thread is woven throughout the narrative, highlighting how Turkey's geopolitical prominence contributes to its overall influence.

Strategic investments in essential infrastructure, especially in transportation and energy networks, cultivate dependencies that enhance Turkey's influence over Kyrgyzstan's developmental trajectory. These endeavors foster economic interconnection, intensifying Turkey's influence by strengthening its involvement in Kyrgyzstan's vital economic infrastructure.

In the era of digital communication, the subtleties of information manipulation emerge as a potent tool for shaping public perception and influencing policy. By adroitly navigating strategic communication, Turkey crafts the narrative surrounding its contributions to Kyrgyzstan's advancement, amplifying its image and influence. This narrative thread weaves through the broader fabric of influence, binding distinct elements into a seamless tapestry.

Collectively, this intricately woven tapestry of strategies illuminates Turkey's nuanced approach to asserting hard power influence over Kyrgyzstan. Each thread—strategic geography, economic dominance, military synergy, cultural affinity, diplomatic collaboration, infrastructure investment, and information manipulation—melds effortlessly with the next, crafting a narrative that showcases Turkey's multifaceted involvement.

Through this narrative, Turkey's hard power emerges as a comprehensive and unified force,

anchored in a network of interrelated strategies.

2.1.3 The Turkish Drone Diplomacy in Central Asia

Turkey’s power is based not only on its political influence or economic leverage in the regions of interest, but also its capability for conflict settlement. As far as one can tell, Turkey's conflict resolution strategy has gained traction due to widespread use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), primarily Bayraktar UAVs.

After series of setbacks, such as contradictions with the United States and confrontation with Israel in the 2010s, which resulted in a halt of drone supply, Turkey has managed to build a domestic unmanned aerial vehicle industry from the ground up (Turkey no longer interested in buying US drones: Turkish official, 2016). According to the head of the Turkish Department of Defense Industry Ismail Demir, the above-mentioned combination of circumstances prompted Turkish manufacturers to actively invest in mass-production of unmanned vehicles. Ozdemir Bayraktar's Baykar Makine company began to meet the needs of the Turkish army. The first product to gain the attention of the army was the Bayraktar Mini series of reconnaissance drones (Bayraktar Mini UAV, n.d.). They were among the first to be mass-produced and exported. Bayraktar Mini became the starting point in the development of Baykar Makine company. This was followed by the release of the highly- effective Bayraktar TB2 model capable of carrying up to 4 precision bombs.

Turkish UAVs have gained fame due to their successful combat use in Syria, Libya and Armenia. Videos of attacks on enemy positions in these countries have become a hallmark of Turkish participation in regional conflicts. The use of drones and their impact on the battlefields have led to a new stage in the tactics of warfare with no risk to personnel. Certainly, this event has sparked interest from a number of countries, including the Central Asian republics, who were eager to acquire the Turkish UAVs. Turkey, by fostering "drone diplomacy," may soon become a major player in the Central Asian UAV market, increasing

its economic and political power.

The Central Asian countries have been importing an "unprecedented" number of military drones since the early 2020s, including from Turkey, Russia and Iran. Ankara, in particular, exported its well-known Bayraktar TB2 drone to Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan and reached an agreement with Kazakhstan to produce Anka-S drones (Iddon, 2022). Moreover, Turkey is expected to dominate the region's drone business because it is about more than just military cooperation for it. The country aims to improve political and economic relations with members of the Organization of Turkic States (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) with the use of "drone diplomacy". Particularly, the Turkish drones can potentially work in favor of Kyrgyzstan who sporadically had several violent border conflicts with Tajikistan over the course of the decade. This is evidenced by the fact that the Kyrgyzstan became the first among CSTO members, who opened Bayraktar TB2 drone base (The first Bayraktar TB2 drone base was opened in Kyrgyzstan, 2022). Moreover, “Kyrgyzstan becomes the second country after Turkey to use the four different UCAVs manufactured by the Turkish defense industry” (Kyrgyzstan says it purchased 4 different combat drones from Türkiye, 2023).

Thus, Turkey's investments in the sector of UAVs have given it tangible results. Strengthening offensive capabilities allowed Ankara to present itself in favorable position with its policy towards uniting Turkic-speaking countries. Using its successes, Turkey began to feel like a regional leader, to dictate its conditions, not to be afraid to pursue an offensive policy in front of other regional powers, such as Russia, China and Iran. Ultimately, the Turkish UAVs can potentially have a positive impact to the regional security of Central Asia by resolving the border disputes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

2.2 The Turkish Soft Power

2.2.1 Understanding the Concept of Soft Power

The concept of "soft power" is still relatively new, yet it has already become an integral part of the contemporary global politics. Relationships between communities are always an endeavor to gain a benefit in some way. Relations between states, regardless of era, stem from certain values and benefits on a fundamental level: from expanding territories at the dawn of statehood to attracting brains to work for the good of the country today. For a long time, the primary recognized method for accomplishing state goals was military power, and technological advantage may be a substantial gain, particularly in the conduct of wars. However, the negative consequences of world wars and the development of nuclear weapons led to the conviction that direct military conflicts between countries were almost impossible. Furthermore, in a fast-changing international arena, states began to pursue goals that could not be met solely by the use of armed force.

The term "soft power" was coined by American political scientist Joseph Nye in 1990 (Nye, 1991), despite the fact that the phenomenon has existed in some form for a long time.

In terms of meaningfulness, the lack of a well-established meaning of the idea of "soft power" has prompted widespread dispute in the worldwide academic circles. To begin with, the definition of "power," which is important to international relations, has always been a cornerstone of political theory, and after many rounds of debate, it was concluded that "power" is a much broader concept, to try to come up with its only one correct explanation. In the logic of realism, an unambiguous understanding of power exists, where it is de facto identical to the classical force of coercion or "hard power" (Barnett and Duvall, 2005).

2.2.2 Turkey's Soft Power in Foreign Policy

In the modern world, the importance of the Islamic East as a political space is steadily growing. Turkey is one of the Islamic countries that are most actively gaining political weight in the international arena and advancing their national interests. In recent years, the Turkish leadership has increasingly turned to the use of such a modern instrument of influence as soft power. This is also expressed in the increase in political, economic, military and other activities of individual countries in that region. Hence the steady growth of academic interest in the study of this process, its causes and consequences.

Professor Ahmet Davutoglu, the former head of government and former foreign minister, is an unofficial ideologist of "soft Turkey" in the ruling Justice and Development Party. His books and speeches make no reference of soft power, but the concept of "invisible power" is mentioned frequently, with the goal of achieving diplomatic success (Davutoğlu, 2008: 77–96). In general, this concept is simply a national version of the concept of "soft power", with no essential distinctions.

The national strategy for the use of soft power has been given an unofficial title of "Neo-Ottomanism" or, more rarely, "New Ottomanism" and "Post-Ottomanism". It is worth noting that the given notions are foreign to Turkey and are used, for the most part, by European and American experts. The conceptual framework in this case is based on the analogies mentioned in the works of Davutoglu of modern Turkish society as a society of "New Ottomans" (Avatkov, 2014: 71-78). Neo-Ottomanism implies that there is a post-Ottoman region in which modern Turkey has priority national interests, and as a result, it attempts to include the countries located within it in the structure of its boundaries. Such measures are made possible not via harsh military power, but through soft means such as diplomacy and humanitarian impact.

According to commonly held opinion, humanitarian diplomacy is an integrative type of soft power. It includes the following elements of soft power in its structure: humanitarian instruments (social, educational and scientific programs, promotion of national culture, language, etc.), political instruments (protection of human rights and freedoms, effective public administration practices), diplomatic instruments (public diplomacy, participation in conflict resolution, peacekeeping). Based on this approach, it is possible to analyze the resource potential of the soft power of modern Turkey. At the same time, the formation of the conceptual model of Ankara's soft power should take place on the basis of a synthesis of various approaches that make up the theoretical basis of modern foreign policy, which is constantly expanding and becoming more complex as new ideas are developed (Alieva, 2014: 63–94).

The common elements of soft power actively used by modern Turkey include Turkish cinema, large Turkish commercial companies, tourism, cultural ties, and an extensive structure of diplomatic ties. To understand the potential of these resources, it is necessary to dwell on the description of their qualitative characteristics, as well as on what ideas, ideals and political dimensions they are associated with.

First and foremost, Turkish cinema, a relatively new phenomenon, contributes to the general good image of modern Turkey. With limited state support, the products of Turkish television studios quickly gained popularity in both neighboring countries and quite distant ones. "This statement can be clearly shown by the phenomena of Turkish TV series, large- scale broadcasts of which are carried out in states that are part of Turkey's geopolitical interests, that is, in the region from the Near and Middle East to the Maghreb and the Balkans, inclusive" (Zubkov, 2015: 52-62).

Along with the tremendous popularity of Turkish TV series in the Arab countries, there

is a successful penetration of Turkish cinema into the Eurasian region. A vivid example of this is the high popularity of the series "The Magnificent Century" in the post-Soviet countries. It is worth noting that the symbolic component of both this series and most of the rest of the cinema production applies the historical agenda associated with the Ottoman Empire and its legacy.

The growth of Turkey's tourist attractiveness is facilitated by active marketing campaigns that position not only the attractiveness of recreation, but also the attractiveness of the image of Turkey as a state. Commercial companies are actively involved in improving the image attractiveness of the country, one of the striking examples is the international air carrier Turkish Airlines.

Turkey builds its cultural ties at various institutional levels and directions. First, these are official structures that are institutions of soft power. Such structures include the Yunus Emre Institute, which creates and coordinates a network of Turkish cultural centers around the world. The main task of such centers is to promote Turkish culture and popularize Turkish language.

Such structures include the Turan Research Foundation for the Turkic World, which provides financial assistance to students in enrolling in Turkish educational institutions and the International Organization of Turkic Culture or TURKSOY, which conducts initiatives to enhance the bonds of brotherhood and solidarity among Turkic countries in order to pass on and promote their common cultural heritage to future generations. This also includes projects like "Turkvision", a musical song contest similar to Eurovision, in which representatives of Turkic-speaking countries and regions compete. At an institutional level, the combined efforts of these platforms lead to the unification of the Turkic culture, turning it into an authentic Turkish one.

Secondly, an important part in the development of Turkey's soft power is the strategic building of special communication ties with the Turkic-speaking world. At the heart of such activity is the idea that there are no significant differences between the Turkic peoples. From the point of view of internal ideology, all Turkic peoples, including the Turkic peoples of the former Soviet republics and modern Russia, are Turks. Institutionally, this direction is fixed in certain areas of cooperation with the Turkic countries, with which strategic partnership agreements are concluded. The most prominent examples of such agreements are the Strategic Partnership Agreement between Turkey and Kazakhstan (2009) and the Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance Agreement between Turkey and Azerbaijan (2010). Based on these agreements, special intergovernmental bodies, the High-Level Councils for Strategic Cooperation, were created to serve as a key mechanism for implementing partnerships (Safonkina, 2014: 145-166).

For systematic interaction with the Turkic world, with the active support of Turkey, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries was created with headquarters in Baku. Turkey's foreign policy strategy in the post-Soviet space was to educate a new generation of elite of the post-Soviet Turkic republics, which would look favorably on Turkey (Sulejmanov, 2016: 115-117).

However, while strengthening the discourse of neo-Ottomanism, the official political objective of Turkey becomes more complicated. Ahmet Davutoglu's ideals of "zero problems with neighbors" and "near Muslim abroad" are particularly appealing to neo-Ottomanists. Their essence boils down to the fact that Turkey, as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, has the right to special interests in the nearest Muslim countries, including the right to interfere in their internal affairs. At the same time, the concept of “zero problems with neighbors” implies the need to normalize and strengthen relations with neighboring countries, including “problematic” Greece and Armenia” (Avatkov, 2014: 71-78). In general, modern Turkey has

a huge potential for realizing its own soft power resources. However, the very process of their practical use from the standpoint of political expediency often acquires decisive actions, which leads to going beyond the boundaries of soft power. For example, the policy of "zero problems with neighbors" does not restrict the conduct of military operations of the Turkish military in neighboring Syria and Iraq, carried out without the consent of official governments. In turn, this gives reason to consider several scenarios for the development of events in the Turkic world.

2.2.3 Turkey’s Soft Power in Central Asia

Kadir Sancak (2016) points out that intimacy on the basis of ethnicity, language, and religion has been crucial to the effective application of Turkish soft power in Central Asia. He also underlines the cultural component as a major source of Turkey's soft power in the region. Developing this subject, researcher Özden Eren (2013) mentions that TURKSOY, TIKA, TURKPA as well as Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States have been playing a significant role in Turkey's thorough approach in the implementation of soft power agenda in Central Asia. A key aspect of the new approach was the "Policy of Zero Problems" with neighboring countries, which involves increased political dialogue, economic interdependence and cultural harmony (Safonkina, 2014). Safonkina stresses that the policy stimulated the strengthening of Turkey's soft power policy across Central Asia and beyond. Her idea fully consistent with the definition of “soft power” made by Joseph S. Nye (1990), who states that it is the ability to attract and co-opt others rather than coercing them in order to achieve the outcomes you desire.

The strategies, mechanisms and specific actions developed by Turkish diplomats and specialists in the field of international relations for the implementation of soft power in the areas of language promotion, education and science, business cooperation and development assistance have proven their effectiveness, which demonstrates a positive and attractive image of Turkey prevailing in the public opinion of most countries (Sharipov, 2020).

2.2.4 Turkey's Soft Power in Kyrgyzstan in Education Sector

Turkey's soft power in Kyrgyzstan is primarily manifested in education sector. Consequently, majority of Kyrgyz scholars tend to focus on impact of local Turkish schools and universities on Kyrgyz society. For instance, F.I. Ryskulueva (2009) and E. Turdubaeva (2012) attach great importance to Turkish educational projects implemented in the framework of developing Kyrgyz-Turkish relations. Ryskulueva speaks about the high quality of educational services provided by Turkey in Kyrgyzstan in the period from 1990 to 2007. At the same time, the author does not mention the pan-Turkic aspirations of Turkey, focusing on the level of education received in a Turkish educational institution, which is in high demand on the local labor market. Additionally, D. Ikramova (2006) provides statistical information on the teaching of religious subjects in schools in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, the author assesses the need and level of teaching these disciplines by comparing with similar lessons in general educational institutions in Turkey. However, Ikramova does not discuss implications of Turkey's educational policy in Kyrgyzstan as a form of exercising soft power.

I.Ryzhov and M.Borodina (2019) in their article 'Main Foreign Policy Priorities of Kyrgyzstan' mention that the education sector is one of the priority areas of cooperation between the two countries. The authors note that Turkey is a key donor to Kyrgyzstan in the field of education, which allows Turkish authorities to pursue a fairly intensive policy of 'soft power'. The Ryzhov and Borodina mainly focus on education sector, which is very limited in understanding overall direction in the Kyrgyz-Turkish relations. For example, Karymshakov (2012) gives a comprehensive analysis of Turkey's influence on Kyrgyz-Turkish relations through establishing educational institutions and teaching religion in Kyrgyzstan. The study sheds light on the role and perception of Turkish commitment in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the author discusses about perspectives for Turkey's influence spreading into politics.

Turkish authors Bulent Aras (2000) and S. Korkut (2000) analyze the activities of the Department of Religious Affairs within the Office of the Prime Minister of Turkey - "Diyanet". Since the activities of the "Diyanet" were intensifying with the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, the Department of Religious Affairs began to actively operate on the territory of Kyrgyzstan.

Aggün Qadri's (2016) article "Development of relations between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan in the field of education, science and culture" examines Turkey's contribution to educational projects in Kyrgyzstan. Great importance is attached to the process of establishing Turkish educational institutions, both public and private. The documents that became the basis of the legal framework for bilateral cooperation in the field of education, culture and science are listed.

The above literature review has illustrated overview of the relevant literature on general knowledge on the subject matter. Throughout the review, it was found that most of the research papers covers Turkey's policy towards Central Asian region in general, whereas Kyrgyz-Turkish relations had much fewer scholarly consideration. Although most of the works are considered to be outdated, they include valuable insights to the proposed research. As new developments in bilateral relations take place on a yearly basis, there is a particular need for up-to-date analysis on Kyrgyz-Turkish relations, focused on comparative analysis of Turkey’s and Russia’s foreign policy in Central Asia.

Turkish universities in Kyrgyzstan provide high-quality education through collaborations that emphasize cultural exchange and academic cooperation between the two countries. Key university Manas University offer diverse programs, usually taught in English or Turkish, attracting students globally.

Kyrgyz-Turkish University "Manas" is a state higher educational institution established on the basis of the Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on the establishment of the Kyrgyz-Turkish University named after "Manas" in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, signed on September 30, 1995 in Izmir, Turkey.

The University issues to its graduates state diplomas of higher education, which are recognized both in Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, as well as in countries near and far abroad. The first enrollment of students in the University was carried out in 1997/1998 academic year

While they maintain high educational standards and foster cultural integration, prospective students should consider language barriers and limited resources compared to larger Turkish universities before choosing to study there.

3. CHAPTER II

3.1 Overview of Political Cooperation of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey

Turkey was the first country to recognize the independence of the Kyrgyz Republic (December 16, 1991). Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on January 29, 1992 (Relations between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan, n.d.). In the same year, the embassies of the two states were opened. In 1994, the Consulate of Kyrgyzstan was opened in Istanbul (Политическое сотрудничество, n.d.). Relations between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey are based on two main documents: the "Treaty of Eternal Friendship and Cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Turkey" concluded on October 24, 1997 and the Joint Statement of the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey "Kyrgyzstan and Turkey: Together in the 21st Century" signed on July 1 1999 (30 - летие дипломатических отношений между Кыргызской Республикой и Турецкой Республикой, n.d.). Since 1992 till 2021, there were more than twenty official visits of the Presidents of Turkey and Kyrgyzstan combined.

Both states cooperate within the framework of global as well as regional organizations (UN, OSCE, CICA, etc.), and within the framework of organizations focused purely on Turkic countries, such as the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (CCTS), the International Organization of Turkic Culture "Turksoy" and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic-speaking countries.

Bilateral relations are based on the ideological platform of the Turkic Idea. The essence of this idea lies in the comprehensive unity of the Turkic-speaking countries under the patronage of Turkey. With the beginning of the collapse of the USSR, Turkey found itself in a strange position. By inertia, the Turkish authorities adhered to full loyalty to the Soviet

Union. In particular, after the entry of Soviet troops into Baku in January 1990, the Turkish authorities acted as if it was not Turkey's business. The August coup of 1991 forced Turkey to reconsider its policy towards the Soviet Turkic-speaking republics and start building relationships with the latter. It is worth noting that this idea has been in the minds of Turkish politicians since the formation of the Turkish Republic.

On November 14, 1998, a journalist of the Hurriyet newspaper, İsmet Solak (1998), published an article in which he quoted Mustafa Kemal Atatürk:

“Today the Soviet Union is our friend, neighbor, ally. And we need this friendship. However, no one is able to determine what will happen tomorrow. It can break into pieces, shrink just like the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary. The states that the Soviet Union today firmly holds in its hands can break free. The world may be in a new position. Then Turkey will have to know what to do. Under the authority of this friend of ours are our brothers in faith and language. And we must be ready to patronize them. …. We must return to the roots and sharing the events of our history - we must unite. We can't wait for them to get closer to us. We must get closer to them".

These comments of the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Ataturk, demonstrate that the Turkish leadership had attached great importance to the Turkic peoples by referring to as "brothers in faith and language." It is these two factors that became the basis on which the Turkish foreign policy towards the Central Asian states, including Kyrgyzstan, was formed and continue to be the foundation.

In early January 1992, the President of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akaev, announced that Kyrgyzstan was choosing the "Turkish path" of development, after which Turkey immediately provided it with food loans (Denisenko, 1992). Regarding the interest of the new Turkic-speaking states of Central Asia in relations with Turkey, a Russian researcher Elena

Urazova (2001) writes:

“It is not surprising that they (the new Turkic states) accepted the assistance and cooperation offered by Turkey with great interest and hope, especially since in the second half of the 80s and early 90s it was considered one of the examples of the “economic miracle "on the Asian continent and at that time it had certain reasons to take the Turkic republics under its wing, declaring itself their elder brother."

A year later (in 1993), while making a spring tour of the countries of Central Asia, Turkish President Turgut Ozal announced that Kyrgyzstan would be granted a special status of favorable economic assistance from Turkey (Konzhak, 2013). Since then, economic and humanitarian cooperation has begun to develop. Under Ozal and Akaev, the foundation was laid for further cooperation. Turkey, with the help of the United States, acted as a patron of the new common Turkic idea, began to quickly fill the resulting ideological vacuum and political void in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. This was manifested in the following decisions: 1) on December 24, 1991, Turkey was the first to recognize the independence of Kyrgyzstan (Osmonov, 1996) and other Turkic-speaking states; 2) in October 1992, a meeting of the heads of state and government of Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan was held in Ankara. The stake was placed on establishing special relations between Turkey and the newly independent Turkic states; 3) in the same year, a special department was created under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey - the Agency for Cooperation with Turkic States (TIKA), intended to coordinate the activities of various Turkic public organizations and intensify Turkey's contacts with Turkic- speaking countries in the field of economy, culture and education; 4) the Turkish government program of 1993 states that "Turkey is a model for the newly independent Turkic states"; 5) The US provides funding to Turkey in the policy of rapprochement with Kyrgyzstan and

other Turkic states. During the meeting of Suleiman Demirel with US President George W.

Bush, a decision was made to unite the efforts of the US and Turkey to provide assistance to the Turkic countries (Ivanova, 1992).

The aid was intended to help post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan and other Turkic states to overcome their economic dependence on Russia. At the same time, Turkish organizations, created after the collapse of the Soviet Union and focused on cooperation with the Turkic- speaking republics, influenced Kyrgyzstan and other countries of the region in various ways: by praising the idea of a single Turkic community, the historical, ethnic, cultural and spiritual unity of the "Turkic world"; propaganda of the common Turkic idea; intimidation by Russian expansionism and accusations of Russian imperial ambitions; attempts to change the ethnic (demographic) situation in a number of territories that are attributed to the Turkic-speaking space, that is, the transformation of the Turks into the majority where they were a minority; the establishment of economic, transport and communication integration of the Turkic states with Turkey.

3.1.1 Contemporary Perceptions on Turkic World

Taking into account that Turkey's foreign policy in Kyrgyzstan cannot be considered separately from Central Asia and Russia's foreign policy in the region, it should be emphasized the importance of the works of individual researchers, revealing the Kyrgyz- Turkish relations, as well as the strategies of Turkey and Russia among Central Asian republics. So far, the political aspect of Kyrgyz-Turkish relations has been deeply analyzed by Turkish and Russian researchers. The work of Bogatyrev (2012) presents a brief political outline of Kyrgyz-Turkish relations from 1991 to 2011. The main points of establishing and developing bilateral relations in various areas of cooperation, such as the economy, education, culture, and military cooperation, are illustrated. The author especially highlights the cultural and humanitarian cooperation between the two countries. He believes that, despite the comprehensive assistance provided by Turkey to Kyrgyzstan, it receives nothing in return. In particular, the Kyrgyz leadership takes an indefinite position on all important issues for Turkey, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and the Kurdish issue. Bogatyrev considers the annual meetings of the leaders of the Turkic-speaking states to be ineffective and purely ostentatious. Despite the declared ethno-cultural commonality with the Turkish people, there is a rather wary and rather negative attitude towards the Turkish presence and Turkish influence in the Kyrgyz society (Bogatyrev, 2012, p.32). The political scientist suggests that, despite the demonstration of Turkic unity, Turkey is viewed in Kyrgyzstan as a country of secondary Turkic culture, which is not a bearer of Turkic values and history. His statements sound somewhat prejudiced, in view of his pro-Russian position. Bogatyrev (2012, p.33) connects the warming of relations between the two states with the coming to power in Kyrgyzstan of A. Atambaev, who, according to the expert, had his own business in Turkey. Other similar academic works on the Kyrgyz-Turkish relations are presented by Turkish scholars Konjac Ibrahim (2015) and Bilal Celik (2014).

Y.Jaimaz (2018) in the article ‘Foreign Policy of Turkey in Central Asia’ speaks about regional cooperation in politico-economic and socio-cultural areas. Although, the author presents historical facts on bilateral agreements between Turkey and Central Asian countries, there is lack of an in-depth analysis on each country in the context of geopolitical importance. Similarly, Thomas Wheeler in ‘Turkey’s Role and Interests in Central’ presents short overview of Turkey’s activities in Central Asian region by emphasizing significance of bilateral cooperation due to religious, cultural and historical bonds between the partner countries. Foreign policy activities of Turkey and Russia in Central Asia are also discussed in the works of Mescheryakov (2014), Chesnokov (2005) and Durre Mehmet Emin Iqbal (2007).

In the study of Russian researcher E. Denisenko (1992), a number of issues concerning Kyrgyz-Turkish relations are discussed, with the author concluding that Kyrgyzstan follows the Turkish model in its economic development. Urlyapov (1997), in his work on the political development of the states of Central Asia, emphasized that the states under study defiantly declared development according to the Turkish (secular) model, since the states of the region wanted to show the world community that they did not intend to follow the path of Islamic fundamentalism.

Parubochaya (2008) believes that Turkey's policy was aimed at the gradual creation of a union of Turkic-speaking states under the auspices of Turkey. This integration, according to the author, could lead to closer interaction between Turkey and the states of Central Asia. In her other work, Parubochaya (2011) examines in detail the Turkic summits and Turkey's policy towards Turkic-speaking countries. Additionally, Russian scholar E.I. Urazova (2005) claims that the Turkish authorities helped Central Asia in every possible way in the fight against Islamic extremism, since this was in line not only with the Turkish foreign policy strategy, but also with the interests of the European Union and the United States. This

partially explains the significance of Turkish activities in this region.

Researcher E.I. Urazova (2013) believes that, despite everything, the creation of the ‘Great Turan’ is still one of the most important priorities of Turkish foreign policy. The same position is shared by researchers V.A. Avatkov and S.B. Druzhilovsky (2013) in their work “Russia and Turkey in the new millennium. Russian-Turkish relations: 2002–2012”. They are in solidarity with Urazova regarding the pan-Turkic orientation of Turkish policy. Fedorchenko (2013) criticizes Turkey's policy in Central Asia, which attempts to eventually push Russia out of the Central Asian region. Building on this, Terekhov (2011) argues that Turkey used the help of Western countries to weaken Russia's position in the Central Asian region and is trying to establish its hegemony in it.

Yu.O. Tomilova (2011) and Mehmet Efe Jaman (2011) believe that the current policy of Turkey is focused on the Turkic countries of the Caspian basin and Uzbekistan, which are rich in oil and gas fields, since Turkey may have problems accessing these energy resources in the near future. A.A. Svarants (2014) and N.Yu. Ulchenko (2010) also adhere to a similar position. A.A. Svarants’s (2003) work is notable for his sharp and unconditional criticism of any Turkish project in Central Asia.

This issue is also of great interest to Russian and Turkish scholars. The paper "Ethno-national conflicts in Transcaucasia and Central Asia in the Context of Their Geopolitical Position" by Kang Sam Gu (2004) is particularly interesting. The author argues that the strengthening of ties with Turkey and the development of pan-Turkism in Central Asia are explained by the need for economic interaction between the countries of the region and the search for possible counterbalances to Russia, which Turkey successfully approached. Mariusa Vekeralu (2011) provides an interesting interpretation of his idea of the regional role of actors seeking dominance in Central Asia. According to the author, Russia is a state that is

a guarantor of the security of the countries of the region, while Turkey is close in culture and language, replenishing the ethno-cultural component of the Turkic-speaking states. Chinaliev (2000) in his analysis of Turkey's policy in Central Asia points out the fears on the part of the Central Asian states regarding Turkey's attempts to establish ‘hegemony’ in Central Asia. Similarly, Terekhov (2011) notes that Turkey used the help of Western countries to weaken Russia's position in the Central Asian region and is trying to establish its hegemony in it. However, Turkish researchers Uysal (2006) and Ziya Onis (2001) believe that Turkey has changed its foreign policy strategy from attempts at hegemony in Central Asia to bilateral economic collaboration that benefits both parties. This happened, according to expert Tellal (2010) and other scientists, due to insufficient resources and serious internal issues in Turkey.

Expanding on the idea of hegemony, Y.M. Prakhova (2003) in her dissertation “The Influence of National-state Identity on the Foreign Policy Orientations of the Post-Soviet Republics: the Example of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan” also argues that the countries of the region did not want to establish Turkish hegemony in Central Asia. However, Uzbekistan sought to restore ties within the once unified cultural and historical space, largely in order to neutralize the negative aspects associated with Russia's cultural policy in the region and to demonstrate its cultural identity compared to the Soviet identity implanted by the former mother country.

Russian expert V.V. Razuvaev (1993) believes that Turkey's main aspirations were directed against the political dominance of Iran in Central Asia, and not Russia, as traditionally believed.

The work of Turkish researcher Anar Somucuoglu (2015), in which the author presents a basic summary of Turkey's strategy toward Turkic-speaking countries, is particularly interesting. He shows the evolution of Turkey's foreign policy agenda in Central Asia.

Somucuoglu conducted a deep analysis of the dynamics of Turkish policy in the region, as a result of which he comes to the conclusion that there are no significant changes in Turkey's perception of the Central Asian region. The Turkish authorities still seek to further develop comprehensive integration with the Turkic-speaking peoples based on the ideas of kinship, which largely explains the lack of a pragmatic approach and the presence, to a greater extent, of an emotional component in Ankara's rhetoric.

Particularly worth mentioning is the work of the Turkish analyst Kerim Khas, who is the author of many works on Turkish-Central Asian relations. His work “Peculiarities of Turkey's Foreign Policy in Central Asia”, in which the expert argues that, for the time being, the plan to create a fundamentally new political mechanism that unites Turkey and Central Asian countries is not a priority for Ankara, given the serious obstacles that exist today (Khas Kerim, 2013). These obstacles are primarily related to the lack of trust in relations between Turkey and Uzbekistan, as well as the status of neutrality of Turkmenistan. The above circumstances do not allow the development of the processes of pan-Turkic integration on the scale necessary to achieve effective results, since Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan make up the majority of the Turkic-speaking population of the countries of Central Asia. According to Esref Yalinkicli (2018), Uzbekistan can assist Turkey to reintegrate with the Turkic world due to its geopolitical importance if both sides manage to maintain a strong political will.

Considerable importance is the work of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev "On the Threshold of the 21st Century", which describes the opposition of the Turkic- speaking countries of the region in Turkey's policy to achieve political dominance (Nazarbaev, 1996). Nazarbayev believes that in the early 1990s, the Turkish authorities tried to impose themselves on the countries of Central Asia and take the place of Russia in the region, which was freed up in connection with the collapse of the USSR. Nazarbayev considers it unacceptable for the Central Asian states to get a new patronage as a substitute to

the old one. In addition, Tajik researcher R.A. Soliev (2006) argues that Turkey's pan-Turkic policy is groundless, since its capabilities can hardly afford it for economic reasons. On the other hand, Ziganshina (2003) narrates about the positive aspects and prospects for cooperation and believes that Turkey has successfully used the pro-Turkish lobby of the Turkic states.

3.1.2 Perceptions on Turkey's Role in Central Asia

Members of the Turkish government and, in particular, the head of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, İsmail Cem, stated in 1997 that Turkey's goal is to become a global state. At the same time, he noted that Turkey should not be forced to choose between Europe and Asia, but being a Eurasian country, it can transform itself into a development model for other states of the world, primarily the Turkic-speaking countries of the CIS (Chesnokov, 2005). Cem, in effect, proposed to carry out the cultural expansion of Turkey: "The Turkish language will become a mother tongue of 200 million people in the XXI century, will spread our culture everywhere, will become an important function for the transmission of our cultural wealth, communication and cooperation" (Svarants, 2003). On March 3, 1999, Turkish Defense Minister Hikmet Sami Türk stated: "Turkey has decided to take on a pivotal role in ensuring regional peace." This statement about the "pivotal role" could then be interpreted as far- reaching Turkish plans both for Central Asia as a whole and for other regions of interest to Turkey. However, all this was accompanied by the support of the United States, which encouraged and assisted Turkey in every possible way.

It follows from the above that Turkey aspired to become a "big brother" that would guide and control its "younger brothers" on the path of building a prosperous "Turkic space". This required Turkish patronage, which was imposed on the Turkic-speaking states of the region. However, not all "younger brothers" believed that Turkey proceeded from this position. For example, the first President of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akaev, in his book "The Difficult Road to Democracy," expressed confidence in the equal partnership of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey:

Turkey, according to I. Cem, considers its role special in the sense that it has historical ties and close contacts today with all the countries of the Great Silk Road, but does not claim

leadership and will build its relations with them on the basis of respect and democracy" (Akaev, 2006).

On the other hand, the former Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kyrgyzstan to Turkey, Mambetzhunus Abylov, in an interview with Ferghana.Ru correspondent, expressed a completely opposite opinion regarding Turkish policy by referring to distortion of the history of the Turkic world, promoting the idea of One Nation – Different States (Yanovskaya, 2009). He points out that Turks' strong imposition of their vision of the Turkic world causes a certain wariness, which occasionally limits activities. Abylov also disagreed with a notion that the Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Turkmens and Azerbaijanis are representatives of one nation by emphasizing distinctive historical paths of these ethnicities. Thus, it can be argued that there is no consensus on Turkey's stance in the republic.

On July 17, 1997, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, while at the Issyk-Kul Forum in Kyrgyzstan, organized by UNESCO and the Foundation for Human Protection and Development, said that:

"... Central Asia should not be a populated region limited by someone's influence. This region consists of independent and sovereign states, and all countries related to them should contribute within the framework of cooperation, peace and prosperity of this region" (Şükrü, 1997).

Mikhail Gorbachev said in response:

"Today's Turkey, which is a model for the Central Asian countries, has its own problems. And it's completely natural. I'm just emphasizing what I said before about the spread of pan-Slavism by Russia - this policy is a mistake. And it will continue to be a

mistake. It is also a mistake to spread the idea of pan-Turkism in this region" (Şükrü, 1997)

According to Kazakhstani political scientist S. Kushkumbaev (1999), Turkey's attempts to shape Turkic-centric relations with the newly sovereign Turkic states of the region were ultimately unsuccessful. In economic terms, the relatively small amount of Turkish investment in the economies of the Central Asian countries did not contribute to such a strong partnership, as was expected in the early 1990s.

With regard to political cooperation, the desire to spread in Central Asia the ideas of creating the state of "Great Turan" in the territories of the Turkic-speaking countries eventually came into conflict, in particular, with the course of Uzbekistan, and later Kazakhstan. Thus, President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov emphasized that the purpose of regular meetings of Turkic-speaking countries is only to maintain ethno-cultural traditions (Mukimdzhanova, 1998). According to the Russian political scientist G. Mirsky (1998), for the Uzbeks in general, any "all-Turkestani" identity means little. The fact that the history of the development of Uzbeks and Tajiks are closely intertwined in cultural and historical aspects, despite speaking different languages, and, in addition, the diversity of the territorial settlement of Uzbeks and Tajiks and existence of large diasporas in both countries question applicability of the idea of "Great Turkestan". In addition, although the Turkmens, Kyrgyz and Kazakhs speak the languages of the Turkic group, there are significant linguistic differences between them, and the affinity of the Uzbeks towards the three listed peoples is even lesser. The Russian orientalist Miroslavsky (1996) was also skeptical about the prospects of the Turkic idea in political, cultural-historical and ethno-linguistic relations due to awareness of a common ethnic origin being very distant in time.

Then Turkmenistan President Saparmurat Niyazov also suspected the Turkish leadership of pursuing not economic, but political interests. As for President of Kazakhstan Nursultan

Nazarbayev, he also expressed his rejection of joining the union of Turkic-speaking countries, explaining it by the following:

“It meant abandoning the newly gained independence, breaking traditional relations with neighbors, instead of one “older brother” getting another one... I suggested restoring lost ties in a civilized manner respecting the newly acquired independence, the sovereignty of each state…” (Nazarbaev, 1996).

Russian Turkologist Nadein-Ranevsky (1994) believes that the factor of "Turkic community" is used by Turkey as a means of achieving a more confident position in its struggle for possible membership in the European Union. In other words, the activation of Ankara in the Central Asian region is seen in this case as a pragmatic policy aimed at increasing the importance of Turkey as a mediator between Central Asia and the West. On the other hand, the West assigns Turkey the role of a counterbalance to theocratic Iran in the region. Among the main factors hindering the strengthening of Turkish economic and political influence on Kyrgyzstan and the countries of the region, one should single out the internal problems of Turkey itself: economic difficulties and political factors associated with the activation of Islamists in this country, which also does not increase the attractiveness of Turkey in the eyes of the secular leaders of Kyrgyzstan.

The Turkish expert, Kerim Has (2013), believes that "the main obstacles to the implementation of Turkey's ambitious plans in Central Asia were, first of all, the turbulent domestic situation in Turkey due to the economic crisis and political instability of the coalition governments". The political establishment of Kyrgyzstan positively perceives Turkey's desire to invest in the economy of Kyrgyzstan, develop small and medium-sized businesses, improve the system of joint lyceums, but the influx of Turkish capital has practically not touched key industries of Kyrgyzstan (Chinaliev, 2000). At the same time, the

leaders of Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian republics, both in the 90s and now, reject the idea of their political integration with Ankara, seeing in this Turkey's desire to impose its political doctrine. Moreover, Kyrgyzstan considers it a priority to develop close political, economic and military ties with Russia and other countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Some American experts believe that Turkey's orientation to the East has a positive impact on these countries and the West should take advantage of this. They believe that the Turkish government guided by the Kemalist ideology could take on the functions of the West, as an outpost in the Islamic world, stretching from the Chinese province of Xinjiang to the Balkans (Soliev, 2006, p. 114). This position, however, does not take into account the changes taking place in Turkey itself. Turkey is pursuing a proactive policy in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia, albeit limited by its own resources. It is gradually becoming a player with its own interests, distinct from those of its traditional allies, the United States and European NATO countries. At the same time, factors that testify to the return to the Muslim political identity of Turkey are becoming more visible.

According to the Russian historian, A.V. Chesnokov (2005), the reasons that objectively hinder the implementation of the policy of pan-Turkic unification in Central Asia are racial differences between the Turkic peoples (for example, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are countries with a Mongoloid population); the multi-ethnic nature of the population of Central Asia and the presence of a non-Turkic-speaking population (Tajikistan); the presence of tense relations between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on issues of water use, territorial disputes etc.

Turkey itself has repeatedly stated that its policy is not guided by the ideas of common Turkic unity. Thus, then Turkish Prime Minister, Suleyman Demirel, stated in 1992: “Our

goal is not pan-Turkism. We will not affect the interests of the non-Turkic part of the population of these republics" (Danilov, 1995, p. 165), highlighting national tolerance as the main pan-Turkic component. At the first summit of Turkic-speaking states in Ankara, Turgut Ozal advocated the immediate creation of an economic union for Turkic-speaking countries, and also repeatedly made visits to the Turkic-speaking Central Asian countries in order to establish and develop multilateral contacts between them and Turkey. However, supporters of moderate integration of Central Asia's Turkic-speaking space, who set this goal for a 15-year perspective, took over following his death in April 1993 and continued until 1999 (Mekhtiev, 1993, p. 3).

The change of governments with different political programs either strengthens or weakens the idea of pan-Turkic integration in Turkey's foreign policy. So, if before the death of Turgut Ozal the desire to accelerate the creation of a single Turkic-speaking political, cultural and economic space prevailed, then after his death the line of gradual, long-term integration prevailed. The coming to power in 1996 of the Islamists led by Necdet Erbakan even sidelined the idea of Turkic unity. Erbakan ignored the Turkic republics of the former USSR (Danilov, 2001). With the coming to power of the nationalists in 1999, when the chairman of the Nationalist Action Party (NAP), Devlet Bahceli, became deputy prime minister, the rhetoric and proposals for creating a union of Turkic-speaking republics became more prominent.

3.1.3 Formation of Turkic Integration Process

In January 2000, the head of the department for relations with the Turkic-speaking republics of the CIS, Abdulkhaluk Chai, put forward a proposal to create a commonwealth of Turkic-speaking republics, arguing that the project was feasible by saying that "Russia is too weak to resist us" (Dzhivalyan, 2000, p. 5). Moreover, Chai stated that Turkey (the successor to the Great Ottoman Empire) can and should create an alliance with Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, even if the price for this is a sharp increase in the Turkish-Russian confrontation (Polatov, n.d.). He believed that the Ottoman Empire had ruled these territories for centuries and that Turkey had a duty to fulfill the historic mission of the ‘elder brother’ of the Central Asian countries. In June 2000, Chai made a statement about the Turkic-speaking states, saying that they “should continue good relations with Turkey, since it is their window to the West”. Chai, who was a member of the NAP, made statements in a manner characteristic of all members and supporters of this party. In this regard, Chai’s statements should not be interpreted as the Turkish government's or the Turkish elite's united position.

Turkey's relations with Kyrgyzstan have developed much less intensively than with the rest of the Turkic-speaking states of the CIS. The reason for this was both the greatest remoteness of Kyrgyzstan from Turkey and its least importance for Turkey in economic and political terms. In addition, it was the greatest focus of Kyrgyzstan on Russia among all the Turkic countries of the CIS. The state of Kyrgyz-Turkish relations can be reasoned from an interview of the ex-president of Kyrgyzstan, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, to Zaman Kyrgyzstan newspaper dated May 26, 2009. He emphasized that in the politics of Turkey, there is no “big brother” syndrome (Bakiev, 2009).

In this regard, Turkey deems it its political and moral duty to support the newly

independent Turkic countries in strengthening their statehood, overcoming economic difficulties and accelerating trade relations. In general, the Central Asian leaders would prefer these relations to be based on equality, and therefore there can be neither “senior” nor “junior” concepts. Probably, it was this thesis that became the basis for Turkey’s attitude towards Kyrgyzstan as an equal and reliable partner, while at the same time showing brotherhood. It is pointless to argue that Bakiyev’s comments are “ultimate truth”, since there was always a moment of political flirting with Turkey on the part of the Kyrgyz authorities, using high-sounding words and phrases, praising the latter. Primarily, the goals of these "maneuvers" have often been such things as restructuring Kyrgyz debt to Turkey, receiving reasonable priced loans and grants, as well as any other assistance that could be provided by the Turkish government to "brotherly" Kyrgyzstan.

Despite cooperation in the humanitarian and economic spheres, none of the Turkic Central Asian countries in the 1990s were willing to join to a political union based on an ethnic principle. Speaking about the rest of the states of the region, it can be noted that Uzbekistan have shown an interest, provided under its "patronage". Kazakhstan, like Kyrgyzstan, has been developing intensive integration ties with Russia within the framework of the CIS. In addition, the creation of the CSTO organization was a strong blow to the idea of a single Turkic world. Turkmenistan adhered to political neutrality for quite some time and categorically refused to participate in the integration projects of the Turkic-speaking states until recently. At the same time, it should be noted that Turkey has achieved significant success in establishing economic and cultural ties with the Turkic-speaking states of the CIS. It was one of the leading economic partners of the Turkic states of the region, especially in 1990s, which, to some extent, have tied these countries to it politically.

Of the Turkic-speaking states, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan have long since switched to the Latin alphabet, which is a success for Turkey. A certain part of young people of these

countries are being educated according to Turkish standards, while at the same time instilling in them the desire to unite the Turkic societies (Moshkin and Baltacheva, 2017).

The so-called Turkic summits played a significant role as a platform for political cooperation between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan. The summits were initiated by various Turkish leaders. The first summit was held in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, on October 30–31, 1992. The meeting was held at the highest level. It was attended by then the presidents of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel. The meeting ended with the signing of the Ankara Declaration (Musabai Baki, 2014, p.142). The parties intended to strengthen further relations and build cooperation based on the principles of independence, sovereignty, respect for territorial integrity, as well as non-interference in each other's internal affairs. At this summit, Turkey and Azerbaijan tried to lure the Turkic countries of Central Asia to their side in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, but failed. Historian A. Hasanov (2007, p.791) writes: "As a result of the erroneous position taken by the then leadership of Azerbaijan, a certain tension arose in the relations of our country with the republics of Central Asia." Thus, already at the 1st summit, differences of opinion began to emerge among the leaders of the Turkic-speaking countries.

Another fact is the visit of the first President of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akaev to Armenia in 1993, where he laid wreaths at the memorial of the victims of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey. This event was frowned upon, but did not affect Kyrgyz-Turkish relations. Apparently, Akaev's visit to Armenia took place within the framework of the establishment of diplomatic relations, so the Turkish and Azerbaijani sides reacted calmly to this.

Unpleasant moments in the Kyrgyz-Turkish (and Kyrgyz-Azerbaijani) relations were smoothed over. This was facilitated by the Kyrgyz initiatives to resolve the Nagorno- Karabakh conflict. On May 5, 1994, in Bishkek, on the initiative of M. Sherimkulov, then the

chairman of the Kyrgyz Parliament and head of the peacekeeping group of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly on the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, the so-called "Bishkek Protocol" was signed, the purpose of which was to begin the process of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The result of this meeting was the actual ceasefire between the warring parties to the conflict on May 12, 1994. The next summit of the Turkic states was held in Istanbul on October 18-19, 1994. The meeting was attended by the heads of all six Turkic-speaking states. In Istanbul, the heads of state discussed the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In case of war, the republics agreed to show solidarity and develop a common position (Parubochaya, 2011, p.115).

In August 1995, a summit was held in Bishkek. During the summit, the need to preserve the great cultural and historical heritage of the Turkic peoples was repeatedly discussed. All parties expressed their readiness to cooperate and develop relations. In addition, it was decided to establish joint universities. The result of this meeting was the establishment of the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University in 1997, which was established by an agreement dated September 30, 1995 by the governments of Turkey and Kyrgyzstan in the city of Izmir (History of the University, n.d.). A year earlier, the Ataturk International Turkish Commercial University was opened in the Kyrgyz Republic. Also in 1996, a Turkish language learning center was opened in Bishkek. Eventually, the Turkish higher educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan have earned high praise from the local population, as evidenced by the huge number of people who want to study in them.

The next summit was held in Tashkent in the autumn of 1996. During this summit, the heads of state paid much attention to the issues of combating terrorism and drug trafficking. The activation of terrorist organizations in the Central Asian region poses a great threat to the states of the region due to the proximity of Afghanistan and the unresolved Uighur issue in China. It was decided to create the Secretariat of the Meetings of the Heads of Turkic-

Speaking States, which would be responsible for preparing materials for meetings of the heads of states and heads of foreign affairs agencies, as well as conducting seminars, conferences, symposiums and much more.

On October 24, 1997, the Treaty of Eternal Friendship and Cooperation was signed between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Turkey in Ankara (Treaty of Eternal Friendship and Cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Turkey, 1997). The agreement provides for cooperation between the two states in the field of education, science, culture, trade and economic sphere and much more; in fact, it consolidated all the agreements reached by that time.

The next summit was held in 1998 in the capital of Kazakhstan. The summit was attended by the heads of all 6 Turkic-speaking states. During the Astana Summit, a permanent secretariat was established. It is noteworthy that on 9 June the signing of the Astana Declaration (Turkic Summits, n.d.) took place, and the next day Astana was opened as the new capital of Kazakhstan. The summit discussed supporting the early integration of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The Turkish leadership has been well aware that any economic projects involving Central Asian republics will fail if there are disagreements among them, so it has been seeking to strengthen cooperation between the three republics.

It is also worthy of mention that a draft program of international cooperation between the European Union and partner countries on the organization of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), an agreement on the establishment of which was signed in 1998 in Baku (Baku Initiative, 2020). The TRACECA route, which provides for the creation of logistics corridors, passes through all Turkic-speaking countries, and thus, to a certain extent, it meets the interests of Turkey, which has long desired to establish a close economic relationship with all Turkic-speaking countries in order to strengthen its position in

the region. Turkey has been attempting to join the European Union for several decades. Either way, it is possible that Turkey, by offering such projects, is just trying to improve its ties with the rest of Europe by means of cooperation with the Turkic states. Then Turkish President Abdullah Gül, said in a 2010 interview with Euronews: “For us, joining the European Union is a matter of national concern. We are very committed to it. It goes beyond political parties. It is of strategic importance to us” (Euronews, 2010). In support of his statements, one can cite information from the website of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, where the following is said about the European vector of politics:

“Türkiye is a part of Europe. She is a founding member of almost all European institutions including the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, among others. Türkiye is actively contributing to the efforts to address multiple challenges that also affect Europe including mass migration. As an energy hub and transit country, Türkiye plays a vital role in European and global energy security” (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.)

The Central Asian countries are well aware of this, and they are supporting Turkey in every manner imaginable in this regard, particularly Azerbaijan, which shares a border with Turkey. Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, has no expectations from Turkey's EU membership. The geographical remoteness of Kyrgyzstan and logistics costs for transportation of Kyrgyz commodities, as well as prospective export items themselves, which are mostly in the form of raw materials, will not have the desired economic effect on the Kyrgyz economy.

In general, the TRACECA project can be profitable only when all issues related to territorial disputes, including border disputes, problems of allocation of water resources and ethnic conflicts arising from them are resolved. This is not expected to happen in the foreseeable future. The threat from religious extremist organizations is a serious challenge to

the region's established regimes. All this casts doubt on all potential projects in Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan.

In terms of politics, Turkey has attached and attaches great importance to the spread of the idea of parliamentarism in all Turkic-speaking countries. As evidence, at the 7th summit, the heads of state attached particular importance to further deepening cooperation between parliaments, central and local authorities and governments, self-government and non-governmental organizations (Musabai Baki, 2014).

Parliamentarianism was given constitutional rank in Kyrgyzstan during the political crisis that led to a change in the political leadership in 2010. It cannot be said that this decision was approved by the leaders of the Central Asian countries. However, at that time, Turkey actively promoted in Kyrgyzstan a parliamentary form of government similar to the Turkish one, which was in the interests of not only Turkey, but also Europe and the United States. Turkey provided assistance to Kyrgyzstan, supporting the latter both financially and with its own experience of parliamentarism. On February 2, 2011, the year after Kyrgyzstan was declared a parliamentary republic, the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Erdogan, said in the Jogorku Kenesh (Kyrgyz parliament) that "Parliament of Kyrgyzstan will provide the Kyrgyz people with peace, stability and development" (Kutueva, 2011). However, despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan's president was stripped of several rights, including the ability to communicate messages to the public and influence over the power bloc, everything else remained the same. For instance, no appointment could be made without the president's agreement. It follows that the Kyrgyz leaders overly relied on the Turkish model of parliamentarism, without adapting it to local political vectors.

During the Istanbul Summit in 2001, a clause regarding the occupied territories of Azerbaijan was introduced into the original text of the Istanbul Declaration at the initiative of

the Turkish and Azerbaijani sides. However, the leaders of the Turkic countries (including the Kyrgyz president) reaffirmed their commitment to resolving the conflict on the basis of the relevant UN and OSCE resolutions, and the original wording in the declaration was changed. This happened under pressure from representatives of the Central Asian republics (Demoyan, 2015).

With the beginning of the new millennium, a period of crisis began in the work of the summits. This period of crisis was largely connected with the processes taking place in Turkey itself. The work of the summits resumed only in 2006. The next summit was held in Antalya on October 17, 2006. The meeting was attended by four presidents, with the exception of the presidents of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan sent its ambassador to Turkey, but Uzbekistan was not represented at all. The Antalya Declaration was signed. The document emphasized the importance of the joint fight against terrorism, separatism, arms smuggling, drug trafficking and other threats (Parubochaya, 2011, No.2(20), p. 113-120).

It should be said that since 2006 a new stage began in the inter-Turkic dialogue, which was associated with the expansion of cooperation. A joint Inter-Parliamentary Assembly as well as the Turkic Council were formed, and a group of states most interested in cooperation was identified, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan. It is these republics that have become regular participants in the summits.

Initiatives for pan-Turkic integration were put forward by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev. He made an effort to establish several pan-Turkic bodies in Antalya in 2006, in particular the Permanent Body of the Heads of Turkic-Speaking States, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking States and the Council of Elders. Although Turkey suggested Turkish as the working language of the summits, it was decided during this

summit to have discussions in the languages of the participating states. Russian historian, Parubochaya (2011, No 2 (20), p. 99), believes that "the Central Asian leaders sought to restrain Turkish attempts to increase their influence within the framework of inter-Turkic summits".

On October 2-3, 2009, the 9th summit of Turkic-speaking states was held in Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan, which was attended by the presidents of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. At the summit, the President of Kazakhstan proposed to establish a permanent body of heads of state of the Turkic-speaking countries. Consequently, the signing of the Agreement on establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (also known as Turkic Council) by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey at this summit was the outcome of the implementation of Nazarbayev's ideas.

They also discussed the development of trade and economic relations. The growing role of the energy resources of the Caspian region in ensuring the energy security of Europe was reaffirmed; the importance of increasing the throughput capacity of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline was noted; special importance was attached to the connection between the port of Aktau and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. Besides, attention was drawn to the need to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, as well as the rights and freedoms of a community of Turkic origin, which is an integral part of the entire Iraqi society. In addition, the parties spoke in the declaration adopted at the meeting on the rapid resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem in accordance with the UN resolution "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" (UN, n.d.). This resolution prescribed the return of the occupied territory to Azerbaijan.

As for the 10th summit, it was held in Istanbul on September 15-16, 2010. This summit was attended by five heads of Turkic-speaking states, except for Uzbekistan. At this summit,

the parties expressed satisfaction with the referendum held in Kyrgyzstan on May 27, 2010, and also emphasizing the importance of the parliamentary elections, aimed at achieving peace and stability in the region, the summit participants expressed their readiness to support the latter. It was decided to hold an international donor conference in Kazakhstan to provide assistance to Kyrgyzstan. The participants pledged to support Kyrgyzstan in the future, throughout the transition period in Kyrgyzstan.

Uzbekistan became a full member during the 7th Summit of Turkic Council in Baku in October 2019. In September 2018, Hungary was granted observer status at the of Turkic Council's 6th Summit in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyz Republic. Turkmenistan recently joined the Organization as an Observer Member at the 8th Summit in November 2021 (Organization of Turkic States, n.d.).

It is worth noting that the Kyrgyz leadership is very interested in development of the Turkic Council and does not consider this organization a replacement for existing associations or their competitor. It is particularly true considering that the Turkic Council does not set the task of opposing any other political union, be it the EAEU, SCO or CSTO, and the participation of Kyrgyzstan in the organization does not contradict its participation in other international organizations. As for TIKA, many politicians mistakenly believe that Turkey has gradually abandoned the creation of its own zone of influence in the territory of the Turkic peoples, limiting itself mainly to educational programs within the framework of TIKA. In fact, TIKA is an important tool for Turkey on the way to further integration with the Turkic-speaking countries.

On February 17, 2017, as part of the participation of the Kyrgyz delegation headed by the President of Kyrgyzstan A.Atambaev in the work of the 53rd Munich Security Conference, a meeting was held between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz

Republic E. Abdyldaev and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey M. Cavusoglu (For.kg, n.d.). The heads of the Foreign Ministries of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey considered the main points of the bilateral agenda, and also exchanged views on the possible dates of mutual visits and events in bilateral and multilateral formats. Thus, since February of 2017, some activation in bilateral relations has begun. During 2017, the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Turkey I. Zhunusov held meetings with the chief adviser to the President of Turkey, Yalchyn Topcu, with the Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey, Tugrul Turkes, and the deputy of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey from the Justice and Development Party, Metin Gundogdu. During these meetings, issues of further cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey were discussed (Mfa.gov.kg, 2017). All of this points to the further development of bilateral contacts between the two countries.

Perspectives for Further Development of the Political Cooperation

The recent official visit of the new President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov to Turkey, which took place in June 2021, marked a new stage in bilateral cooperation. During this visit, a number of bilateral documents were signed. In particular, Ankara and Bishkek signed the agreement on cooperation in the field of agriculture; the memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of copyright and related rights as well as the memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of youth; the agreement on cultural cooperation, establishment and functioning of cultural centers; the protocol on the implementation of the agreement on cooperation in the field of physical culture and sports; and the memorandum of understanding on protocol cooperation (Official website of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, n.d).

Turkey has always been neutral in assessing the situation in the Kyrgyz Republic, cautiously observing the political crises that occurred in the republic in 2005, 2010 and 2020. It did not support either side of the political or inter-ethnic conflict that flared up between Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic groups in June 2010, always calling for compliance with the law and calling for peace and a speedy resolution of the crisis. At the same time, the Turkish leadership has always been quick in extending a helping hand to the Kyrgyz leaders, including Sadyr Japarov. This circumstance has always been one of the guarantors of the stability and prosperity of bilateral relations.

Summarizing the above, one can single out several key aspects of the Kyrgyz-Turkish cooperation: Turkey plays the role of a donor providing financial, humanitarian and other assistance to Kyrgyzstan; Turkey is trying to gain a foothold in the Kyrgyz Republic, pursuing a policy aimed at improving its image in the republic and the formation of a pro- Turkish lobby through the Kyrgyz-Turkish educational institutions created in the country;

Ankara actively promotes Turkic councils, summits and pan-Turkic organizations to further unite the brotherly countries; within the framework of its Central Asian policy, the Republic of Turkey contributes to the fight against international terrorism; Kyrgyz-Turkish relations developed taking into account the interests of Russia and other states of the region; since 2013, Turkey has been calling on Turkic-speaking countries to boycott companies and organizations affiliated with Fethullah Gülen, which tested the loyalty of the Kyrgyz leadership.

Expert P.V. Shlykov (2017) notes that Turkey played an important role in the political fate of the Turkic republics, introducing them into the club of various regional and international organizations, but the illusions about the universality of the 'Turkish model' and its applicability for the post-Soviet states dissipated very quickly. Turkey today is trying to take into account the mistakes and failures of the past decades and the peculiarities of current international relations. Turkey, strategically focusing on the Turkic world, is trying to elevate its own status as a regional power, take advantage of the weakness of Russia and the isolation of neighboring Iran to expand its own influence on the strategically important and richest regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF MILITARY COOPERATION OF KYRGYZSTAN AND TURKEY

3.2.1 History of Bilateral Relations in Military Sphere

The military cooperation between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan dates back to 1993, when the corresponding agreement was signed between the two countries and Turkish government had provided material and technical assistance to the Kyrgyz Armed Forces, as well as training of the military personnel. Kyrgyz servicemen, soldiers and cadets were trained in various military educational institutions in Turkey. In addition, in Kyrgyzstan, mobile training units of the Turkish Armed Forces had trained Kyrgyz military personnel on counter-terrorism. On March 3, the same year, the two states signed an agreement on cooperation treaty in the sphere of military education. On September 22, 1994, Kyrgyz parliament adopted a law ratifying an agreement between the Kyrgyz and Turkish governments in the sphere of military training. Since 2000, Turkey has been conducting annual 12-week courses within the scope of the aforementioned agreement together with special units of the Kyrgyz Armed Forces. In addition, at the request of the Kyrgyz side, the issue of organizing training and practice in the Turkish Armed Forces was considered in 2005 in order to familiarize with the system of conscription, troop recruitment, military personnel relations, assessing the level of knowledge, and career growth of officers. In a nutshell, the Kyrgyz military departments got interested in the Turkish military system model. This is no coincidence, because Turkey has a powerful army, the second largest in NATO.

Only since 2000 has military cooperation between the two countries grown significantly. This is owing to the signing of the joint statement "Kyrgyzstan and Turkey: Together in the Twenty-First Century" in 1999, as well as the rapid growth of bilateral

relations. The "Batken incidents" of 1999-2000, in which a significant force of terrorists from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) infiltrated Kyrgyz territory without serious pushback from the republic's armed units, should not be dismissed. The complete fragility of the Kyrgyz military structure and army in the face of external assault was evident at that point. IMU terrorists were eventually driven out of Kyrgyzstan, and many were killed. All of this was possible because of military aid from Turkey and other partner countries. The events of September 11, 2001, which resulted in a greater emphasis on combating terrorist organizations, also had a significant impact on the growth of Kyrgyz-Turkish military cooperation. The Turkish side provided free military aid to the Kyrgyz Armed Forces as part of military assistance programs to friendly countries, and signed a corresponding intergovernmental agreement in 2006 in Ankara. The signing of this agreement allowed the Kyrgyz Armed Forces to improve their material and technical base.

On October 10, 2002, a delegation of officers from Kyrgyzstan's internal troops arrived in Turkey to discuss the prospects of bilateral collaboration with the Turkish gendarmerie. A. Bakaev, the commander of Kyrgyzstan's internal troops, led the delegation. The major issues of the discussions were the training of commanders from Kyrgyz internal troops in Turkish schools, as well as material aid from the Turkish gendarmerie to the Kyrgyz side. For a long time, the Turkish gendarmerie, a paramilitary police organization, has been assisting Kyrgyzstan. As a result, the Kyrgyz police adopted some aspects of the Turkish model of work.

On March 7, 2003, the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan and the General Staff of Turkey signed a protocol on cooperation in the fields of military history, archives, museums, and military publications. E. Topoev, Kyrgyzstan's Minister of Defense at the time, paid an official visit to Turkey, where he met with H. Ozkok, the Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces, and V. Gonul, the Minister of Defense of Turkey. The parties

discussed the main aspects of Turkey's military-technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan, the issues of training officers for the Kyrgyz Armed Forces in Turkish military educational institutions, and expressed their willingness to further strengthen friendly cooperation between the two countries' military departments, particularly in the joint fight against international terrorism. In addition to meetings with the Turkish military leadership, the Kyrgyz delegation visited the Military School of the Turkish Ground Forces.

On May 21, 2003, two military delegations from Turkey and Germany arrived in Kyrgyzstan at the same time. The Kyrgyz Republic signed an agreement with Turkey on the provision of gratuitous aid to the Kyrgyz army. Negotiations were held with the Minister of Defense, E. Topoev, on expanding military cooperation. Additionally, the military personnel from Germany visited Bishkek to exchange experience in logistics support within the framework of the program between the armed forces of the two countries.

Kyrgyzstan and Turkey have begun to collaborate in a new area: military medicine development. This matter was discussed on August 15, 2005, at a working meeting between the Kyrgyz Republic's Acting Minister of Defense, I. Isakov, and Turkey's Minister of National Defense, V. Gonul. The Turkish side have ensured the Kyrgyz counterparts that they can provide all necessary aid in training specialists, procuring medical and technical equipment, and pharmaceuticals. In 2004, the Turkish side provided approximately $2 million US dollars to Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Defense. Material and technical equipment, clothing and medical equipment, communications equipment, and rations were provided to the Kyrgyz Republic as a result of these financial injections. Furthermore, in 2005, the parties signed a draft agreement on the allocation of military assistance in the amount of more than
$870,000 USD (Kim and Gruzdov, 2005).

The signing ceremony for the Agreement on Gratuitous Military Assistance between the

Kyrgyz and Turkish governments took place on July 23, 2003, at the Kyrgyz Embassy in Turkey. The Turkish government made a gratuitous donation to Kyrgyzstan in the sum of 1,312,425 Turkish liras (about $1 million). The funds were used to promote the development of bilateral relations between the two countries in the military-technical sphere in order to enhance military cooperation as well as to reform the Kyrgyz Armed Forces.

On November 25, 2005, a protocol was signed between the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan and the General Staff of Turkey on the provision of material and technical assistance to the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan, based on an agreement between the parties dated October 14, 2005 in Ankara. The assistance was provided in the amount of 1,402,500 Turkish liras. It was aimed at purchasing property for the Ministry of Defense of the Kyrgyz Republic and purchasing equipment for the National Guard of Kyrgyzstan.

On January 24, 2007, a protocol was signed in Ankara between the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan and the General Staff of Turkey on the provision of logistical assistance to the Kyrgyz Armed Forces, the purpose of which was to determine projects for logistical assistance for 2006. As part of an agreement between the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey on gratuitous assistance dated January 19, 2006, military-technical assistance was provided in the amount of 1,190,000 Turkish liras. These funds were used to purchase property for the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan, purchase equipment for the National Guard of Kyrgyzstan and purchase equipment for its border outposts.

On July 10, 2008, in Ankara, a protocol was signed between the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan and the General Staff of Turkey on the provision of material and technical assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic's Armed Forces, laying the groundwork for the implementation of the agreement between the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey on gratuitous military-technical assistance in the amount of 1 million 190 thousand Turkish liras

for 2008-2009. The funds were used to acquire property for the Ministry of Defense, as well as equipment for the Kyrgyz National Guard, the equipment of an exemplary border outpost, and the acquisition of property for the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan and Turkish diplomats have identified prospects for cooperation in the field of education and training, involving military-technical and material assistance, as well as military medicine. The Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency has donated a new customized laboratory vehicle, in which expert research can be carried out in a mobile mode. Furthermore, Turkish police officers instructed Kyrgyz counterparts in crime-fighting techniques. Training courses for teaching staff were held in 2008 as part of the "International Police Education Center Project" in collaboration with Turkish police personnel (AY, 2009). Those courses were attended by employees of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan and the training and operational units of the internal affairs, engaged in teaching activities or planning the transition to educational work, whose age did not exceed 45 years.

This project did not bypass the Border Guard Service of Kyrgyzstan. Thus, on June 5, 2008, a delegation of the General Command of the Gendarmerie of Turkey, led by the head of the Education Department of the Operational Department, senior colonel of the staff F. Kara, visited the Border Guard Service of Kyrgyzstan, in accordance with the plan of joint activities for military-technical cooperation between the two countries for 2008. The Turkish side organized 7-week courses for the training of military personnel of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Border Guard Service of Kyrgyzstan within the framework of military cooperation. In addition, the servicemen of the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan were trained at the training courses for special-purpose officers, at the school of the ground forces and the military medical academy of Turkey. At the same time, the Turkish side incurred the costs of training and maintaining the Kyrgyz military. In Kyrgyzstan, under

the guidance of Turkish instructors, Kyrgyz military personnel have been annually trained in mountain, special and sniper trainings.

On January 26, 2009, at the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Republic of Turkey, a Protocol was signed between the Ministry of Defense of the Kyrgyzstan and the General Staff of Turkey on the provision of material and technical assistance to the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan. This protocol was signed on behalf of the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan by M. Abylov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kyrgyzstan to Turkey, and by Lieutenant General, A. Khuduti, Head of the Logistics Department of the Turkish General Staff. The Protocol was signed in order to implement the Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on gratuitous military assistance dated July 9, 2008 and was aimed at providing gratuitous military-technical assistance to governmental bodies of Kyrgyzstan. Subsequently, under the Protocol, Turkey have been providing free military-technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan, with the goal of promoting development of bilateral relations between the two countries in the military-technical field, in order to deepen military cooperation and reform the Kyrgyz Armed Forces.

S. Alpman, the Turkish Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan at the time, took part in the transfer of military equipment to the Armed Forces of the Republic on the grounds of the Bishkek Higher Military School on June 30, 2009. First Deputy Minister of Defense Colonel, M. Kenzhesariyev, Commander of the National Guard Major General, A. Alymkozhoev, Commander of the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Colonel, A. Shadybekov, and Deputy Chairman of the Border Service, R. Mirzamatov attended the transfer ceremony from Kyrgyzstan. S. Alpman was accompanied by Colonel of the General Staff, J. Dilber, the military attache of the Turkish Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan.

According to the former Minister of Defense of Kyrgyzstan, A. Kudaiberdiev, the Turkish government provided military-technical and material aid to Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Defense in the sum of 12 million US dollars, or 300 million soms in Kyrgyz national currency, with annual contributions averaging around $1 million, between 1999 and June 2009. Taking transportation costs into consideration, property was donated in the amount of $1 million 370 thousand US dollars in 2013 (Dzhumasheva, 2014). To be specific, in 2011, the Turkish side transferred 11 vehicles, including eight Land Rovers and three heavy-duty refrigerators, as well as hand-held stationary car central radios, switches, generators and batteries, power plants, loudspeakers, digital repeaters, night vision goggles, laser sights, hand-held binoculars, flare guns, metal detectors, cookware, camp kitchens, bunk beds, and shoes.

Regarding the trainings of special forces, on January 25, 2012, representatives of Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies and departments met with a military attaché of the Republic of Turkey in Kyrgyzstan, O. Fish, at the Kyrgyz Ministry of Defense. The discussion resulted in the following plans: a round table "Military discourse," annual 12-week "commando" training, and travels to Turkey for lyceum students and cadets from Kyrgyzstan who speak Turkish. Subsequently, in September 2013, military instructors of the General Staff of Turkey conducted instruction in airborne sabotage training and internal security on the basis of the joint training center for military personnel of the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan (Timirbaeva, 2013). Besides, from April 1 to May 30, 2014, Turkish instructors from the Turkish General Staff conducted a two-month counter-terrorism training program for Kyrgyz military troops in areas such as enemy search and detection, reconnaissance, surprise attack, and destruction (Moiseeva, 2014).

During an expanded meeting of the board of the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan, held on January 11, 2013, a decision was made on increasing cooperation with the defense

departments of foreign states through military-technical cooperation, among which Russia, China and Turkey were the main partners.

On April 24, 2014, during the official visit of Turkey's Chief of the General Staff, N. Ozel, to Kyrgyzstan, Turkey donated sewing equipment worth 600 thousand US dollars and capable of sewing between 400 and 500 sets of military uniforms per day to the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan. As the head of the General Staff, N. Ozel, noted:

"The Turkish Armed Forces experience great joy in providing military technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan as part of the modernization of the armed forces. I would like to note that a strong army is an important factor in ensuring the security of the country" (Dzhumasheva, 2014).

According to the Kyrgyz Ministry of Defense's press service, the contract for the supply of equipment was signed back in 2011. Furthermore, the supplier company reached an agreement on the supply of various specialized fabrics for sewing military and field uniforms as well as on provision with specialists for training the staff of dress-making and tailoring workshops of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Defense.

A bilateral agreement on military financial cooperation was signed on September 25, 2014, under which Turkey will continue to provide financial support to Kyrgyz military departments (Dzhumasheva, 2014).

After the February visit (from February 1 to February 6, 2015) to Turkey of the head of the General Staff of the Kyrgyz Republic, A. Alymkozhoev, where he met with his Turkish counterpart, the following agreements were reached: 1) quotas were doubled for Kyrgyzstan's citizens studying in Turkish military educational institutions; 2) an agreement was reached that a military representative of Kyrgyzstan in Turkey would start working at the

NATO headquarters in the city of Izmir (Dzhumasheva, 2015).

On February 19, 2016, at the initiative of the Turkish side, a meeting was held between the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic, Colonel Zhanybek Kaparov, and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey, Metin Kılıç. The issues of implementation of the construction of the Military Institute of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as issues of training Kyrgyz military personnel in Turkey were discussed.

Concerning Turkey's assistance through NATO, it should be noted that the interaction of Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Defense with NATO in the military field is developing within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program. This cooperation is expressed in the form of trainings, conferences, seminars. The program included training on topics such as peacekeeping, language training, anti-terrorism and drug trafficking, the law of armed conflicts and much more (Relations with the Kyrgyz Republic, 2018). Through NATO, it was decided that Turkey would oversee the relationship of this organization with Kyrgyzstan. Subsequently, since 2000, Turkey has been conducting annual 12-week courses within the framework of the above program together with special units of the Kyrgyz Armed Forces. Additionally, in 2007, Kyrgyzstan joined the Planning and Review Process (PARP) program. This program was aimed at expanding cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and NATO. Appropriate measures were being taken to bring the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan in line with international standards. The program was also aimed at the participation of individual units of the security forces of Kyrgyzstan in peacekeeping operations (Parkhomchik et al, 2018). As part of NATO Partnership for Peace program, Turkey, represented by a mobile counter- terrorism training group from the Turkish Armed Forces Training Center, conducted a week- long theoretical counter-terrorism training in Kyrgyzstan with 50 military personnel from various military departments of Kyrgyzstan from June 11 to June 15, 2012.

Military exercises led by Turkish instructors are regularly held in Kyrgyzstan. These exercises represent airborne sabotage training and counter-terrorism, which are carried out jointly with the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Turkey. For 6 weeks, Turkish instructors conduct classes in tactical-special, engineering, mountain, military-medical, physical training, as well as military topography at the Ala-Too training ground. At the end of the gathering, control tactical exercises are organized.

Since January 10, 2021, with appointment of Sadyr Japarov as the president of Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan's relations with Turkey have seen a reinforcement in both economic and military sectors. Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, Sadyr Japarov and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, signed new bilateral agreements on June 9, 2021. The President stressed that friendship between the two countries is reaching a new level. At the same time, he dwelled on the main areas of bilateral cooperation and noted the importance of continuing political dialogue and partnership in the military sphere and security (Nurmatov, 2021). Furthermore, the Kyrgyz government purchased unmanned aerial vehicles, known as Bayraktar UAV, from Turkish government (Iddon, P., 2021). Undoubtably, it caused quite a stir, and to some extent aggravated political relations with neighboring Tajikistan. Many observers and analysts interpreted this as Ankara's rising influence over ongoing activities and a threat to Central Asian stability. However, given the ongoing territorial disputes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, it is expected that this partnership will grow stronger in upcoming years.

On February 18, 2022, Turkey donated military equipment, weapons and equipment to Kyrgyzstan within the framework of the Agreement on military financial cooperation and the Agreement on the provision of gratuitous material and technical assistance. To be more precise, The Ministry of National Defense of Turkey provided Kyrgyzstan with a Robocop anti-shock protection kit, non-lethal weapons and ammunition, body armor, buses and spare parts, as well as communications equipment and optical devices. In addition, the Ministry of

Internal Affairs of Turkey handed over transport, equipment and spare parts to the Kyrgyz Armed Forces (Karelina and Krainova, 2022).

3.2.2 Perspectives for Further Development of the Military Cooperation

Considering the developments of bilateral military cooperation, it should be noted that the presence of numerous bilateral agreements clearly shows that the Turkish government is gaining traction in Kyrgyzstan. Over the entire period of cooperation, Turkey has unilaterally provided assistance to the armed forces of Kyrgyzstan, helping to strengthen both the physical and educational training of military personnel, and equipping the Kyrgyz army with modern weapons and NATO equipment. The absence of disagreements in Kyrgyz-Turkish relations only contributed to the development of military cooperation between the two countries, which especially intensified after the events of September 11, 2001.

Turkey and Kyrgyzstan, as well as Russia, are seriously concerned about security in the region and are aimed at resolving the Afghan problem, which for many years has been a threat to stability of Central Asia. The perceived uncertainty in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power, as well as the disagreements between various political leaders and parties representing different areas of the country, endanger state unity and a possible escalation of the country's civil war. As a result, there may be an internal humanitarian crisis, an increase in refugees leaving the country, and Afghanistan's territory may become a "hub" of international terrorism and drug production. In this regard, Turkey has extensive experience and resources to reinforce security of the Central Asian region by limiting the expansion of terrorism and drug production in Afghanistan, and coordinating the regional efforts to build a cohesive approach to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Afghan government. It is a logical act, since Turkey perceives Central Asia as a zone of its interests, supported by cultural, linguistic and religious similarities, as well as long-standing historical ties.

Recurring to the beginning of the Turkish-Kyrgyz relations, after the collapse of the

Soviet Union and the formation of new Central Asian independent states, Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize Kyrgyzstan and open a diplomatic mission there. Turkey has had the most success in bringing the Turkic part of the region together around the Turkic projects it has built, both multilaterally and bilaterally. To date, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the only Turkic-speaking countries in the region that have joined all of Turkey's organizations. However, unlike Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan lacks the substantial oil deposits and other resources required for large-scale export, making it less appealing to Turkey. Nonetheless, Turkish authorities continue to work closely with the Kyrgyz counterparts, and Turkey has been particularly successful in this area. Ankara's approach might be characterized as proactive and integrated, with the ultimate goal of establishing a single Turkic-speaking political sphere under Turkish control. It is expected that the military component in this alliance will play a key role shall Russia’s strategic influence over Central Asian region weakens to some extent.

As Kyrgyzstan undergoes its nation-building process, Turkey is making a contribution, attempting to expand its presence in Kyrgyzstan, and pursuing its own objectives. Accordingly, Turkey appears to be in the best position in Kyrgyzstan's current situation because of the factors listed above. Kyrgyzstan needs external assistance more than other countries, which is met with understanding and support from the Turkish leadership and its military departments. NATO membership also gives Turkey certain powers to promote this policy. Compared to Russian military assistance and presence, Turkish military cooperation with Kyrgyzstan is an extremely minor, but still important element that contributes to maintaining peace and stability in Kyrgyzstan and the region as a whole.

3.3 IMPACT OF TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY ON RUSSIA'S POSITION IN KYRGYZSTAN

3.3.1 Background of Turkey's Competition with Russia

Describing Russian-Turkish interaction in the Central Asian direction, it can be argued that in the 21st century the approaches of Russia and Turkey to the region, as well as relations between the two countries, have changed dramatically.

In the 21st century Central Asia again began to be perceived as a zone of Russia's vital interests and as its natural sphere of influence. Accordingly, as emphasized by Zvyagelskaya and Makarov (2003), any external penetration or interference in this area that is not coordinated with Moscow is regarded as a geopolitical challenge and a threat to Russian interests. Therefore, it was important to determine the potential for partnership and the scope of cooperation with other regional actors with their own interests in Central Asia, in particular with Turkey.

Kyrgyzstan, like other former Soviet republics, began to pursue an independent foreign policy after gaining independence. Diplomatic relations were established with countries all around the world, including Turkey. Due to a certain cultural, historical and linguistic kinship, Turkey had high aspirations for a future partnership with both Kyrgyzstan and other Turkic-speaking states of the post-Soviet space. These expectations contributed to the rapid development of bilateral relations between Turkey and the Turkic-speaking republics. The expansion of the cooperation could not but affect on Russia's aspirations in Kyrgyzstan. Since the formation of relations with Turkey in the Turkic republics, the growing influence of the Turkish authorities has become noticeable. Russian official circles did not immediately realize how attractive the Turkish model looks to the Central Asian countries. Subsequently,

it has caused some concern in Russia, which traditionally perceives the post-Soviet space as a Russian sphere of influence. Over time, however, the fears of the Russian leadership regarding Turkey's growing activity in Central Asia have largely subsided as soon as they realized that the pan-Turkist ideology was not popular enough either in Central Asia or in Turkey itself (Zeeshan Fida, 2018).

Besides, for Turkey, the former Soviet Caucasus is of particular strategic importance as a kind of "window" to Central Asia, with which Turkey has no common borders. Certainly, this cannot but worry the Russian leadership, considering the fact that Turkey is a member of NATO. Moreover, over the past few years, Turkey has accelerated the establishment of top-level strategic cooperation councils with its immediate neighbors. Ankara uses them as a tool for systematic consultations between the main ministries and departments to discuss practical issues of further enhancing cooperation, in particular, in the trade, economic and energy sectors. Kyrgyzstan has become the second country after Russia with which Ankara has created a similar platform.

Turkey is interested in using its territory to transport Caspian oil and gas to world markets. However, Ankara's political priorities and 'pipeline diplomacy' in the region are determined in the context of achieving a balance of strategic relations with Moscow. That is why bilateral ties with the states of Central Asia are of such great importance.

In this context, it is worth noting the persistent virtual absence of Russian-Turkish cooperation in the Eurasian direction. The "Action Plan for the Development of Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey in Eurasia" (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009) signed in November 2001 by the heads of the foreign ministries of the two countries is not being fully implemented. At the same time, the promotion and implementation of this Plan can not only contribute to the development of

regional cooperation, beneficial to all parties in the integration process, but also stimulate the investment activity of enterprises and organizations of both parties in Central Asia and the Transcaucasia. It turns out that Russia and Turkey have not yet fully worked out the rules of the game in the southern regions of the former Soviet Union.

Among the main aspects dominating in bilateral relations between Russia and Turkey with Kyrgyzstan, the following should be noted: 1) cultural aspect; 2) political sphere; 3) problems of ensuring regional security; 4) search for alternatives for resolving conflicts in the post-Soviet space; 5) economic factor.

In a cultural aspect, Turkey has traditionally relied on the formation of organizations in Kyrgyzstan on a common Turkic as well as Muslim cultural basis, instilling in the Kyrgyz people a more Turkic-Muslim perception of the world, which runs counter to the policy of Russia, instilling in Kyrgyzstan a different perception of the world based on secular traditions and promoting education in Russian. First of all, Turksoy, TIKA, Turkish schools, etc. should be attributed to organizations that instill a common Turkic cultural identity (Avatkov and Badranov, 2013). With regard to Turksoy, it is intended to support and develop the common Turkic culture through various cultural events, such as celebrating the anniversaries of cultural figures, celebrating national holidays, etc. This organization includes all Turkic- speaking states, and until recently it also included republics and autonomies within Russia and other states as observers (About Turksoy, n.d.). Turksoy is engaged in the development of the cultural aspect of relations between the Turkic-speaking peoples and communities. Its activities cover the study of ethnogenesis, the history of the Turkic-speaking peoples and much more.

Turksoy does not compete with the cultural influence of Russia on the Turkic-speaking nations, since the creation and activities of Turksoy are a natural consequence of the

development of national cultures of the newly independent states of the CIS. In addition, the Turkic-speaking peoples living in Russia itself also take part in almost all the events held by Turksoy (Turksoy International Organization of Turkic Culture, n.d.).

Russia has always paid and continues to pay close attention to the issues of ensuring the security of the CIS's southern states and is taking all necessary measures to prevent destabilization of the situation in Central Asia. According to Professor Syzdykova (2013, p.264):

"The fighting in Afghanistan, the escalation of instability in the countries of the Arab East, as well as attempts to penetrate international terrorism, religious extremism and national separatism directly into the CAR states, have turned the region into one of the most important frontiers for the world community to counter threats to international security".

3.3.2 Different Views on Regional Issues

On the issue of ensuring regional security, Kyrgyzstan shared the Russian concept of security. Turkey advocated the preservation of the Transit Center at Manas International Airport, operated by the U.S. Air Force, as it served the interests of Turkey and NATO in connection with the implementation of military operations to maintain peace in Afghanistan. Russia, showing an interest in stabilizing the situation in Central Asia and resolving the Afghan crisis as soon as possible, sought to use the potential of the CSTO, while formulating an approach on the inexpediency of further deployment of the American military base on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. Ultimately, on July 10, 2014, due to the expiration of the agreement on the terms of stay of the NATO military contingent in Kyrgyzstan, the military base ceased to exist (Kucera, 2018). Later that year, the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan deployed its military unit on the site of the former air base. As a result, this territory has ceased to be the military object of the NATO coalition forces. The liquidation of the Manas Transit Center, as well as the entry of the republic into the EAEU, demonstrates the success of Russian policy in the republic and Kyrgyzstan's desire for closer cooperation with Russia. Having achieved success in cooperation with Russia, Kyrgyzstan has adopted a foreign policy concept that implies that the cooperation with the Russian Federation, the CSTO and the SCO determines security in the region and in the country.

One of the differences in the positions of Turkey and Russia in Kyrgyzstan was also expressed regarding the investigation of the ‘Osh events.’ Turkey supported the deployment of OSCE police officers to Kyrgyzstan to stop the conflict and investigate crimes that occurred in June 2010, and it was for this purpose that the OSCE sent police officers to the republic (Franco Galdini, 2014). Their introduction, unlike Russia, was fully supported by Turkey. Russia saw the solution to this problem somewhat differently, proposing to deploy solely the forces of the CSTO, without resorting to support of the West and the United States.

But, despite this contradiction, both governments sent experts to the International Independent Commission in June 2010 to investigate the "Osh events" in southern Kyrgyzstan.

Russia and Turkey are also demonstrating opposing approaches to the issues of conflict resolution in the post-Soviet space. Thus, Turkey inclines Kyrgyzstan to the Turkish-Azerbaijani version of the solution of border conflicts, which involves material and technical support as well as intelligence sharing. One of Turkey's main steps in this direction is to consolidate efforts of the Turkic-speaking countries, holding Congresses of friendship, brotherhood and cooperation of Turkic-speaking states and peoples, with the participation of delegations from thirty republics of the Turkic world, Turkic summits, and meetings within the framework of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States.

Such an example of consolidation of efforts is the creation of an international platform in 2007, known as the Congress of Friendship, Brotherhood and Cooperation of Turkic-Speaking States and Peoples, for resolving the problem. Participants of the congress adopted a number of documents refuting the Armenian genocide and condemning Armenia's actions in Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkey also encouraged other countries to join forces for the sake of bringing Northern Cyprus out of international isolation and establishing economic, cultural and political ties with this unrecognized state. In this conflict, Russia takes a different position. The solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue is of fundamental importance for Russia. It believes that participation of third forces in the settlement of the Karabakh problem is unacceptable.

At the same time, Kyrgyzstan’s leadership, taking as basis objective criteria in assessing the role and place of Russia and Turkey in its foreign policy vector, attaches great importance to the development of bilateral relations with Russia and Turkey, emphasizing the

undoubted benefits of cooperation with both key partners.

The positive trend in relations between Turkey and Russia, which was present in the 2000s, made it possible to talk about the further rapprochement of the three countries listed above, and even consider these relations in the future in a trilateral format. However, dynamically developing international relations give rise to new challenges and surprises. At present, it is hardly possible to seriously discuss the development of relations between Russia, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan in a trilateral format due to the former's conflicts with Ukraine.

Concerning the widespread concepts of "Eurasianism" in Russia and Turkey, which assumed closer cooperation between the Eurasian states, among which, both states were among the first, it should be noted that this concept in Turkey is also understood as "Eurasianism of the Turks of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Turkey, who can act together" (Avatkov and Badranov, 2013). Today, many Turkologists and political scientists agree with this opinion.

Until recently, Turkey has not proposed economic initiatives of strategic importance in Kyrgyzstan, since it considers them economically inexpedient. On the contrary, Kyrgyzstan develops and implements a wide range of strategic projects jointly with Russia since it is one of the strategically important allies of the republic as well as the leading trading partner and a significant source of investment. One such example is Russia's heavy investment for construction of a cascade of hydroelectric power stations on the Naryn River and other projects. This can be explained by the fact that, firstly, Turkish investors are not ready to invest in politically unstable, and hence economically unstable Kyrgyzstan; secondly, Turkey did not want to derail relations with Russia and Kazakhstan, with which Turkey is united by a strategic partnership. If, in the case of Russia, Turkey did not want to become a competitor for contracting work on the construction of large hydroelectric power

plants, then in the case of Kazakhstan, who has own interests in this matter, it simply wanted to maintain good relations.

Russia finances projects in industry, agriculture and services through the Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund. It wrote off all of Kyrgyzstan's debt and provided grants and financial assistance for various purposes. Russia was ready to provide additional loans, which were suspended due to political events in Kyrgyzstan. In the current conditions of a political uncertainty, Russia can become the only source of loans and financial assistance. Therefore, given the significant assistance that Russia provides to the country, the Kyrgyz leadership wants to use all the resources received and direct its policy towards strengthening the political stability and economic progress, which casted doubts over several decades.

It should be also noted that the level of Turkey's economic influence on the activity of Russian business in Kyrgyzstan is negligible. This is explained both by the lack of deliveries from Turkey of products similar to Russian, and by relatively long-established economic ties between Russia and Kyrgyzstan, the main condition for the development of which is the presence of developed logistics created during the Soviet Union.

In general, despite Kyrgyzstan's economic unattractiveness to Turkey, it is worth mentioning that Kyrgyzstan is nevertheless an object of Turkey's "soft power", which is described in sufficient detail by Russian Turkologist Vladimir Avatkov. Since “due to the humanitarian impact and supranational spirit”, Turkey's policy is carried out in the republic in full (Avatkov, 2015).

The economic presence of Turkey in Kyrgyzstan did not lead to any significant attraction of Kyrgyz labor resources. On the contrary, Russia accommodated, according to various estimates, from 500,000 to 1 million citizens of Kyrgyzstan (from 20 to 40% of the able-bodied population of the republic), providing them with work. Its role for the stability of

Kyrgyzstan is vital in terms of migration and remittances, which make up a significant share of the country's GDP. Migrant remittances support domestic demand and international trade flows. Thus, they contribute to the social stability of the country. This fact indicates a rather strong influence of Russia on the economic life of the republic, unlike Turkey. And this influence will remain with Russia in the coming years. Evidence of which is Kyrgyzstan's membership in the EAEU.

Thus, it's evident that Kyrgyzstan is a competitive environment in the implementation of the regional foreign policy aspirations of Russia and Turkey. A wide range of areas of interaction (cultural, military, political and economic aspects) dictates the need for a flexible policy. Given the fact that Kyrgyzstan is located in close proximity to the centers of instability in the region, Russia is developing a comprehensive strategy for bilateral cooperation. For Kyrgyzstan, the clear benefit is that Russia has more than a century of experience in providing security in the region. Under these conditions, the strengthening of the positions of any of the regional powers, especially Turkey, causes concern in Russia.

Kyrgyz-Turkish cooperation was quite dynamic and full of diverse developments taking place in the life of the state and modern Kyrgyz society from 1991 till nowadays. The nature of these relations is characterized by uneven impact and influence of one subject of relations on another. Kyrgyzstan, due to the weakness of the state, constantly in a state of crisis and at risk of becoming a failed state, is a "consumer of services" of Turkey, which, in turn, takes the position of a kind of "donor".

Undoubtedly, the beginning of this cooperation elicited a negative reaction in Russia, which is accustomed to considering Kyrgyzstan, and indeed the entire post-Soviet region, as a sphere of its exclusive influence. However, the historical experience of cooperation in the post-Soviet period demonstrates that the emerging level of cooperation between Turkey and

Kyrgyzstan is only a natural result of the multi-vector policy of the Kyrgyz authorities, who seek to develop all possible aspects of cooperation if this can give an additional impetus to the development of the Kyrgyz state (Ormonova, 2014). In this case, the issue concerns both cultural and educational, as well as economic and other aspects of relations. The consequence of the development of these relations was the emergence of the Turkish cultural, educational, economic and political presence in Kyrgyzstan. This does not manifest itself in the same way in all the above areas of cooperation, since the interests of the parties do not always coincide, and in the case of a coincidence, there is not always the right number of resources and opportunities to solve the tasks set.

The return of Russia to the region contributed to the activation of Russian foreign policy and the strengthening of its lost positions in the Central Asian region, including in Kyrgyzstan. The presence of the Russian military base of the CSTO forces in the city of Kant, significant investment in the Kyrgyz economy and the inclusion of the republic in the EAEU are the result of the implementation of the Russian strategy in Kyrgyzstan. The policy of Kyrgyzstan gives reason to believe that the development of bilateral Kyrgyz-Russian relations is now reaching the level of strategic partnership.

The Russian leadership is closely watching the policy of regional actors, including Turkey in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, it is wary of Turkey's pan-Turkic aspirations towards the states of Central Asia. Turkey's failed attempt in the early and mid-1990s aimed at close political, economic and cultural integration with the Turkic-speaking states of the region showed Russia the futility of the former's pan-Turkic ideas. The potential for possible cooperation between Russia and Turkey in Kyrgyzstan and other countries of Central Asia largely depends on the stability and depth of Russian-Turkish relations across the entire spectrum of international issues. The crisis of November 2015 amply demonstrated this. Strengthening of Russia's positions in the international arena in the 2000s led to its return to

the Middle East, where Moscow had its own interests. It was the Middle East, and, in particular, the Syrian crisis that became a stumbling block in the development of Russian- Turkish relations, which led to an increase in contradictions and a crisis in bilateral relations, which followed the downing of the Russian SU-24 aircraft by the Turkish Air Force in November 2015. This issue brought Turkish-Russian relations, which had been cooling for some time, to a new level, marking the peak of tension between Ankara and Moscow (Has, 2015). On the eve of the abovementioned incident, an international conference focused on strategic interests and prospects for cooperation between Russia and Turkey in solving regional problems was held with the participation of high-ranking political figures from Russia and Turkey, heads of think tanks and representatives of the scientific community of the two states (Russian International Affairs Council, 2015). At this conference, Turkish and Russian diplomats exchanged views on particularly problematic issues, the most important of which was the issue of repeated violations of Turkish airspace by the Russian Air Force. However, a constructive dialogue then did not come to fruition.

During the crisis in Russian-Turkish relations due to the downed plane over Syrian territory, Kyrgyzstan took a pro-Russian position. Before this event, there were special relations between the countries. The Kyrgyz leadership often emphasizes that Turkey is a brotherly country for Kyrgyzstan, with which it wants to develop relations, but Russia is its strategic partner. This notion only shows the state of relations between Kyrgyzstan and Russia, confirming the fundamental orientation of Kyrgyzstan towards Russia.

3.3.3 Implications for Improvement of Russian-Turkish Relations

To date, the political crisis in relations between Russia and Turkey has been overcome. The failed military coup attempt in Turkey on July 15, 2016, and the clear position of Moscow, which showed an interest in establishing and developing bilateral relations with the current Turkish authorities, led to the resumption of cooperation. The Russian and Turkish authorities have repeatedly declared the possibilities of constructive cooperation in various regions of the world, including Central Asia. This, in particular, was stated by the director of the Third Department of the CIS countries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Aleksandr Sternik during his speech at the international conference of Russia and Turkey, held in October 2015 in Moscow (Russian International Affairs Council, 2015). Sternik also stressed that there is no clash of interests between Moscow and Ankara in Central Asia and called on Russia to fruitful cooperation for the benefit of the development of this region.

It is noteworthy that Turkey and Russia position themselves as two great powers in the Eurasian region, which contribute to maintaining peace and stability here. Cooperation between Turkey and Russia in the Central Asian region is favored by a number of objective factors:

- favorable geographical position of Turkey, which controls the Black Sea straits and plays the role of a kind of bridge between Europe and Asia, which opens up additional opportunities for Russia and the countries of Central Asia in terms of realizing their own economic and political interests;

- Russia and Turkey, each promoting their projects of regional cooperation and creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual interest of all participants in the integration processes, helps to reduce tension in the region;

□ Turkey and Russia, as large Eurasian states with a significant Muslim population, are able to play the role of mediators in relations between the countries of Central Asia, the West and the world of Islam;

□ the multi-vector policy adopted by all Central Asian states can be used by Russia and Turkey for in-depth cooperation with the countries of the region in a bilateral format.

Regarding the war between Russia and Ukraine, Turkey's involvement is gaining new momentum. While the world powers continue to strongly condemn Russian aggression and impose ever new sanctions against Moscow, Turkey adheres to relatively neutral position. Ankara verbally condemned the Russian invasion almost immediately after February 24, 2022, but did not join any sanctions against Russia. But from the very beginning, it tried in every possible way to become the main mediator in organizing peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv, while simultaneously criticizing the actions of NATO. Regardless of the outcome, Turkey can use this experience to help Central Asian countries, particularly Kyrgyzstan, to mediate a conflict resolution related to border disputes with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In addition, Turkey's neutrality in the Russian-Ukrainian war will only strengthen its ties with Russia.

Thus, the potential of Russian-Turkish cooperation has not yet been exhausted, and the prospects for bilateral cooperation in Kyrgyzstan, and in Central Asia as a whole, are favorable.

4. CONCLUSION

The fall of the Soviet Union signaled the start of a new era in international relations history, as well as the formulation of foreign policy priorities for the newly independent countries in the post-Soviet space. The transformation of international relations was very clearly manifested in the countries of Central Asia, which became the object of influence of powerful regional and global actors. Turkey is one of the regional forces attempting to actively co-opt Central Asian republics, including Kyrgyzstan. According to its foreign policy concept, the Turkish leadership sees Central Asia as a whole, and Kyrgyzstan, in particular, as a zone of its interests, based on cultural, linguistic and religious kinship, as well as long- standing historical ties.

The fact that Kyrgyzstan was heavily dependent on financial assistance from the global powers led the country to inconsistent foreign policy. On the one hand, Kyrgyzstan wants to work closely with Russia, due to long history of partnership, but, on the other hand, it accepts the helping hand of Turkey, without fully understanding possible consequences of attempting 'to sit on two chairs.' It is obvious that Turkey and Russia have been rivals for many centuries, due to different ideas about the world order, in particular in Eurasia. Culturally, Turkey has traditionally relied on the creation in Kyrgyzstan of organizations on a common Turkic and Muslim cultural basis, instilling in the Kyrgyz people a more Turkic- Muslim perception of the world, which runs counter to the policy of Russia, instilling in the Kyrgyz society a Russian perception of the world based on Soviet (secular) traditions. In this regard, it seems reasonable to assume that such a policy of Kyrgyzstan will lead to reinforcement of competition in the region by Turkey and Russia.

Russia's positions in Kyrgyzstan are undergoing gradual changes under the influence of Turkey's policy in Kyrgyzstan. This can be seen from Russia's growing financial

incentives to Kyrgyzstan as a form of leverage to counterbalance presence of Turkey in the republic. To some extent, Ankara outplayed Moscow due to historical connections with the Kyrgyz nation. Turkey's approach in Kyrgyzstan is expressed in praising the ethno-cultural characteristics of the Kyrgyz society, who has been gradually departing from Soviet traditions. All scholars agree that Turkey is trying to establish its cultural values through leaning towards historical Turkic ideology and traditions. At the same time, it is attempting to take on a civilizing function, focused on the Turkic-speaking space and adapted to local ethno-cultural characteristics. This narrows the Russian cultural space in one way or another. Nevertheless, the measures taken by Russia to involve Kyrgyzstan in the single integration alliance (EAEU) do not allow losing control over the latter. However, considering that Turkey's path towards European Union membership has stalled, by natural course it pushes forward the pan-Turkic policy in Central Asia. In this situation, Turkey is more inclined to cooperate with the states of Central Asian region with which it has established trustworthy and friendly relations. Turkey, by promoting the membership of Turkic-speaking states in various organizations, is debugging the mechanism of political and economic influence on its Central Asian Turkic-speaking partners.

In relation to Kyrgyzstan, Turkey actively uses the methods of 'soft power' by providing financial, humanitarian and other assistance. The absence of contradictions in relations between the two countries only strengthens the Turkish presence and, accordingly, influence in Kyrgyzstan. Scholars are unanimous in the opinion that Turkey is trying to gain a foothold in the republic, pursuing a policy aimed at improving the country's image and the formation of a pro-Turkish lobby through the Kyrgyz-Turkish educational institutions and Turkish enterprises established in the country. Abundance of the agreements in the military-technical fields clearly demonstrates that Turkey seeks to counterbalance Russia's military presence in Kyrgyzstan by unilaterally providing assistance to the Kyrgyz armed forces,

helping to strengthen both the physical and educational training of Kyrgyz military personnel, and equipping the Kyrgyz army with modern weapons and NATO equipment. However, Kyrgyzstan, due to its economic, political and demographic weakness, is not able to provide the same amount of cooperation.

Since the early 1990s, Turkey has been aspiring to unite the newly independent Turkic-speaking states of Central Asia under its own rule, allocating significant funds for their development and using the idea of Turkic unity. However, the initial plan of Turkish politicians was not destined to materialize due to Turkey's limited economic power and its inability to take part in larger economic projects in Kyrgyzstan, compared to Russia. Although, Turkey has failed to gain priority positions in the republic, the Turkish development model has been and remains attractive to Kyrgyzstan, which is evidenced by active cooperation of the two countries in the framework of Turkic unions and organizations.

Russia occupies a strong position in key sectors of Kyrgyzstan's statehood. Today, it is Russia that is the strategic partner of the Kyrgyz Republic. Nevertheless, the Turkish authorities are trying to optimize the policy aimed at developing further integration with the Central Asian republics, including Kyrgyzstan, both on a multilateral platform and on a bilateral basis. At present, Turkey continues to pursue a policy of further institutionalization of Turkic organizations by uniting the republics under the leadership of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (CCTS).

The thorough study reveals that Kyrgyzstan is a zone of competition in the implementation of the regional foreign policy aspirations of both Turkey and Russia. Therefore, the process of interaction requires the development of a flexible and variable policy. Due to the fact that Kyrgyzstan is located in close proximity to the centers of instability in the region, Russia is developing a comprehensive strategy for bilateral

cooperation. For Kyrgyzstan, this cooperation is very important, as Russia has more than a century of experience in ensuring security in the region. Under these conditions, the strengthening of the positions of any of the regional powers in Kyrgyzstan (including Turkey) is of concern to Russia due to its strategic importance. These regional powers have different interests in Kyrgyzstan, so their activities in this country are not only in the nature of cooperation in security issues, but also rivalry in cultural influence.

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