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KASHMIR IN TÜRKİYE'S ASIA POLICY AND TÜRKİYE'S POTENTIAL ROLE IN KASHMIR'S CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Güney Asya'nın en bilinen insani trajedilerinden biri olan Keşmir Krizi, uluslararası gündemi yıllardır meşgul etmektedir. Hindistan, Pakistan ve Çin ortak yönetiminde bulunan Keşmir bölgesinin Hindistan kontrolündeki Jammu kısmı, statü sorununun anavatanı olması nedeniyle bugüne kadar birçok savaşa ve can kaybına şahit olmuştur. Türkiye, netlik kazanan Keşmir politikası olmamasına rağmen krizi yakından takip ederek taraflara ateşkes çağrısında bulunmuş ve hatta arabuluculuk teklifi götürmüştür. Türkiye'nin krize dair söylemleri ve tutumu, insani dış politikasındaki başarıları ve geçmiş arabuluculuk deneyimleri, bu çatışmada daha da aktif olma potansiyeline sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu potansiyelin arabuluculuk olgusu ile güçlendirilmesi ve netlik kazanan bir Keşmir politikasının inşa edilmesi, Türkiye'nin Yeniden Asya Girişimi kapsamında hedeflendiği gibi kıtaya daha bütüncül bir yaklaşım sergilemesini sağlayabilecektir. Türkiye'nin Keşmir politikasının tümdengelim yöntemiyle Türkiye'nin önce Asya, ardından Güney Asya ve son olarak krize taraf olan üç devletle olan son dönem politikası incelenerek, genelden özele doğru bir çıkarım ile kurgulanabileceği öne sürülmektedir. Elde edilen veriler ışığında, Türkiye'nin Hindistan ile ikili ilişkilerinin Keşmir krizinde kardeşlik temasının etkisiyle Türkiye'nin Pakistan yanlısı duruşundan dolayı gerildiği sonucuna varılmıştır. Türkiye'nin bölgeye bütüncül yaklaşabilmesi için küreselleşen dünyada önemli bir aktör ve Hint kıtasının jeostratejik devi olan Hindistan ile ikili ilişkilerin geliştirilmesinin karşılıklı faydayı beraberinde getireceği aşikardır. Hindistan'ın dönem temsilcisi Modi'nin aşırı sağ yaklaşımı, Müslüman nüfusun yoğunlukta olduğu ülkelerde kaygıyla karşılansa da her iki ülke de açık diyalog ve ticaret alanında iş birliğini artırma niyetindedirler. Bu bağlamda Türkiye'nin Keşmir politikası, Keşmir Krizi'nde arabuluculuk olgusu üzerine inşa edilebilir, böylece hem Pakistan hem Hindistan'a Türkiye'nin iyi niyet göstergesi sunularak dengeli bir politika izlenebilirse Pakistan'ı göz ardı etmeden Hindistan ile ilişkileri iyileştirmenin mümkün olacağı düşünülmektedir. ABD'nin bu arabuluculuk girişiminde Türkiye'ye eşlik etmesinin, dış müdahaleye sıcak bakmayan Hindistan'ı müzakereye ikna etmede etkili olabileceği düşünülmektedir. Nihai olarak Türkiye'nin, Keşmir Krizi'ndeki potansiyel rolünün katkısıyla Keşmir politikasını arabuluculuk olgusu üzerinden inşa edebileceği, böylece Asya'ya daha bütüncül yaklaşma ve Yeniden Asya Girişimi kapsamındaki hedeflerinden birine ulaşma fırsatı yakalayabileceği sonucuna ulaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Asya, Çatışma Çözümü, Keşmir, Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

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The Kashmir Crisis, one of the most well-known humanitarian tragedies in South Asia, has occupied the international agenda for years. The Indian-controlled part of Jammu in the Kashmir region, which is under the joint administration of India, Pakistan and China, has witnessed many wars and loss of life to date, as it is the homeland of the status problem. Although Türkiye does not have a clear Kashmir policy, it has followed the crisis closely, called for a ceasefire and even offered mediation to parties. Türkiye's rhetoric and attitude towards the crisis, its achievements in humanitarian foreign policy, and past mediation experiences indicate that it has the potential to be even more active in this conflict. Ensuring that this potential is strengthened with the mediation phenomenon and the construction of a Kashmir policy that has become clear would enable Türkiye to display a more holistic approach to the continent, as it was aimed within the context of the Asia Again Initiative. It is suggested that Türkiye's Kashmir policy can be constructed with the deductive method by examining Türkiye's policy with Asia first, then South Asia and finally the three states party to the crisis, by making an inference from the general to the specific. In light of the data obtained, it was concluded that Türkiye's bilateral relations with India were strained because of its pro-Pakistani stance in the Kashmir crisis due to its brotherhood theme. In order to have a holistic approach to the region, it is obvious that improving Türkiye's bilateral relations with India, which is an important state in the globalizing world and the geostrategic giant of the Indian continent, can be mutually beneficial. Although the extreme right approach of Modi, the term representative of India, is met with concern in countries where the religion of Islam is dominant, both countries intend to increase cooperation in open dialogue and trade. In this context, if Türkiye's Kashmir policy can be built on the mediation phenomenon of the Kashmir Crisis, and a balanced policy is carried out by presenting goodwill to Pakistan and India, then it is possible to improve relations with India without ignoring Pakistan. It is thought that the US's accompanying Türkiye in this mediation attempt can effectively to make convince India, which is not in favour of foreign intervention, to negotiate. Finally, concluded that Türkiye can build its Kashmir policy through mediation with the contribution of its potential role in the Kashmir Crisis, thus she has the opportunity to approach Asia more holistically and achieve one of its goals under the Asia Again Initiative.

Keywords: Asia, Conflict Resolution, Kashmir, Türkiye

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA: Anadolu Agency

AAI: Asia Again Initiative

ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

BJP: Bhartiya Janata Party

BRI: Belt and Road Initiative

BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

BSEC: Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

CA: Central Asia

CEND: Creation of Favorable Conditions for Nuclear Disarmament

CENTO: Central Treaty Organization

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

CPEC: China Pakistan Economic Corridor

CTBT: Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

CW: Cold War

EA: East Asia

ECO: Organization for Economic Cooperation

EIT: European Institute of Innovation & Technology

EU: European Union

HLSCC: High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council

J&K: Jammu and Kashmir

JDP: Justice and Development Party

KC: Kashmir Crisis

LOC: Line of Control

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NPT: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons

NSC: National Security Council

OBOR: One Belt One Road

OHCHR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OIC: Organizing Islamic Cooperation

PM: Prime Minister

PRC: People Republic of China

RF: Russia Federation

SA: South Asia

SAARC: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organization

SDP: Sectoral Dialogue Partnership

SU: Soviet Union

TAC: THE ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia

TIKA: Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency

TUDEV: Turkish States and Communities Friendship, Brotherhood and Cooperation Foundation

TURKPA: Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries

TURKSOY: The International Organization of Turkic Culture

UN: United Nations

US: United States of America

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WTO: World Trade Organization

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First of all, regarding my thesis which I have meticulously handled and finally completed, I would like to convey my appreciation to my dear family members; my mother, father, sister, brother and finally as she the source of motivation; my niece for all their support and encouragement.

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I wanted to keep this issue on the agenda by presenting an unconventional solution proposal for the Kashmir Crisis, which becomes a vicious circle, both by the bringing a different voice to Türkiye's Kashmir policy studies, which are missing in the domestic literature and by making a unique contribution to the conflict resolution studies of Kashmir in the standardized international literature. Moreover, I wanted to provide benefits for those interested in this field who want to study Kashmir in special

I wish this thesis to be a reference for all academics on the subject.

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SCIENTIFIC ETHIC PAGE

I declare that in the preparation of this thesis, scientific ethics and academic rules were meticulously complied with, all the information in the thesis was obtained and presented within the framework of ethical behaviors and academic rules.

Bu tezin hazırlanmasında bilimsel etiğe ve akademik kurallara özenle riayet edildiğini, tez içindeki bütün bilgilerin etik davranış ve akademik kurallar çerçevesinde elde edilerek sunulduğunu, ayrıca tez yazım kurallarına uygun olarak hazırlanan bu çalışmada başkalarının eserlerinden yararlanılması durumunda bilimsel kurallara uygun olarak atıf yapıldığını bildiririm.

Meltem Zeynep YILMAZ

INTRODUCTION

While two neighboring countries in Asia were the colonies of The Britain until 1947, India of which population exceeds one billion people and forms the national force and leading to be great country with its other properties and Pakistan of which Muslim population is majority and known to be Islamist are at forefront with the Kashmir problem between them and mentions other important problems of peninsula with details during historical process.

The country itself still looks like a “heaven” today. Though has been more than half a century after the withdrawal of The Britain, the Kashmir issue, which has become a highly emotional issue intertwined with terrorism, foreign intervention, and mercenaries, still causes concern, as the great military secret powers of India and Pakistan are at a level that encourages some circles to attempt another war.

The Prussian Clausewitz interpreted it as “the pursuing of policy via other instruments” (Clausewitz, 1989). For Kashmir, the two neighbors India and Pakistan have continued their rivalry over this land in the diplomatic field and on the battlefield in 1947-48, 1965, 1971, and finally 1999 (Bhan at al., 2018). According to India, Kashmir means that struggling for having military force along an unsound front line where the superiority of numbers and armored vehicles are very difficult to achieve. Most successive leaders of India shared the belief that Kashmir should be given “special status”, while for Pakistani politicians, Kashmir has remained a valuable element in domestic political competition and its situation should be determined with self-determination (Bose & Jalal, 2004).

The uprising in Kashmir and some degree of foreign interference behind it constitutes a conventional low-intensity conflict. The possible danger that the next armed conflict escalates into a major war, and increasingly into an unforeseen nuclear war, raises international concern. Today, South Asia (SA) is at a crossroads. One is the hope of peace, the other is another great danger of war. The Kashmir issue is determinant of these two options among others. The Cold War (CW) period ended with the disintegration of the Eastern Bloc and the necessity for the US to follow regional security strategies in this new period has emerged. In this new period,

although there is no power to oppose the US supremacy, stronger actual threats have emerged. It is seen that the policy of dominating the SA region is valid in the US foreign policy considering the new process entered with the end of the CW (Ejaz, 2016).

India had an increasingly active role in the international arena due to its growing economy and its de facto nuclear power in the same period. As the world's most populous democracy and its ever-growing economy, India's importance in its region has increased even more (Burki, 2011). India has taken important steps towards becoming a global power by improving its relations with the US, especially after 9/11. The US security concern in the SA is over China's containment and it intends to achieve this with the help of India. The strategic stability in the SA is adversely affected by the rise of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. Indeed, the major powers of the region, India, Pakistan, and China also possess nuclear weapons. The emergence of China, as a potential power in the region, also poses a threat to strategic stability. Here India is really a power to balance China. The balancing of China has an important place in the US strategy regarding regional security in order to prevent the emergence of China as a potential hegemonic power in the region (Kocakenar, 2015). Therefore, India's role can also be effective in distracting China from its target becoming a regional power.

The Soviet Union (SU) started a new the CW, so to speak, with Afghanistan, which is occupied by taking advantage of the power vacuum in American foreign policy after the Vietnam War. After losing Iran, the US could not take the risk to lose Afghanistan and Pakistan and wanted to protect Rimland against Soviet attempts to land in the traditional warm seas, expel the Soviets from Afghanistan, and if this failed then could prolong the occupation as long as possible to make the invasion expensive for the SU (Davutoğlu, 2001). Finally, the Kashmir Crises (KC) between Pakistan and India, which has been going on since the day they were established, is another factor threatens the region.

The KC between India and Pakistan has grown in scale by being influenced by the pressures on the region created by the geopolitical steps in the global power struggle. Following a non-alignment policy, India has been forced to cooperate with

global actors because of territorial losses in the war between China in 1962. After the India-China war, Pakistan's alliance with the People Republic of China (PRC) and leaving a part of Kashmir under its control the PRC also caused the PRC to penetrate the problem. The addition of fear of the disintegration created by the separatist movements in the north-east of the country, and the potential of the PRC to support these separatist movements to geopolitical pressures due to being stuck by two wings of Pakistan led India to prioritize geological values (Hewitt, 2001). Eventually, India manipulated the separation of the East Pakistan from the West Pakistan and managed to breathe easily by tearing off one of the arms that were choking her (Burki, 2011).

The jihadist structures organized in Pakistan to undertake the resistance in Afghanistan be formed in the north of Pakistan and the socioeconomic problems of the immigrants flowing from Afghanistan to the country after the SU's invasion of Afghanistan, caused the strengthening of radical structures in the country while negatively affecting Pakistan. The strengthening radical structures supported the separatist movements in Kashmir, thinking that Kashmir could be saved with a similar unconventional war strategy with the self-confidence gained from the success of the jihadist resistance in Afghanistan. After these developments, while the KC which increased its capacity to produce crisis by feeding on the source of holiness, produced a rebellion against Indian domination, the fire of the region could not be extinguished for a long time.

The KC, fed by the pressures formed by global developments, as well as the political cunning of Pakistan and India to cover up the internal political failures and the legitimacy of the administrations, has turned into a taboo that cannot be compromised for both sides, and eventually it has been imprisoned in the dungeon of deadlock. After the CW, the parties preferred to continue the arms race rather than taking steps to evaluate the solution ground arising from the alleviation of global pressures, and the arms race resulted in the parties gaining nuclear capacity. After this security dilemma, the problem has become a source of nuclear threat that has the capacity to affect the whole world. Although the peace talks between the two countries, within the scope of resolving the KC, are repeated from time to time with vicious dialogues that become routine with the put parties together via global and regional

cooperation organizations, as well as external coercion, they either hit the pass fewer taboo walls of domestic politics or result in a Kashmir-based provocation (Burki, 2011). Although the Kashmiris rely on cricket matches, the possibility of unity due to natural disasters, and the contribution of global or regional cooperation mechanisms for a solution, a solution-oriented development is not expected in the near future under normal conditions. This chaotic environment in the SA also hinders the integration of the region. Although many countries, especially the US and China, call for a ceasefire, the tension created by the KC does not decrease (Yıldız, 2019).

Türkiye, the unique the bridge between Asia and Europe, is another state willing to reduce the tension in the region (TOBB, 2018). On the other hand, Türkiye tends to shift its attention to Asia without giving up its westernization, which is one of the main principles of its foreign policy parameters in the recent period in parallel with the increasing dynamism of Asia. In fact, this trend is followed all over the world. For instance, in the statement made by Obama in 2011, the desire of the US to shift its axis to Asia confirms it (Tülün, 2017). Both the turmoil in the European Union (EU) and the ontological erosion of the union have also questioned the trust of other countries in the Union.

Besides, with its rapid economic growth recently, China has become a competitor that worries the US economically and politically. Thus, the libra was balanced in a way was left Europe behind, and the claims that the center of the world would shift to Asia gain currency. On the other hand, Türkiye has prosperous relations with both Pakistan and India, which are the parties to the KC. It has historical and cultural ties with India while it has fraternal ties with Pakistan. In addition, Türkiye has declared that it aims to make maximum efforts for regional stability and security with the “Asia Again Initiative” (AAI). The PM Minister Çavuşoğlu announced that within the scope of this new initiative Türkiye continues to make constructive contributions to overcoming conflicts and problems in Asia by making use of its experience and sensitivity in the field of mediation and humanitarian issues (MFA, 2019). Türkiye, defined as one of the moderate forces in the Asian Continent, is also the NATO member with a strategic the location. Thus, it is valuable that Türkiye called for a ceasefire for the KC, one of the deadlocks of SA, and brought the mediation

initiative to the agenda. So much so that Türkiye has the quality of playing a strong role in the KC, which includes religious elements, due to its moderate political Islamic identity and its predominantly Muslim population.

As for the US, it is known that SA region getting more significant within its own policy day by day. *E.g*, the fact that it has connections with the Asia Pacific, one of its priority regions, that establishes a dialogue with China's neighbors in the SA for its follow policy over balance China, and that it has a close dialogue with Pakistan due to terrorist activities in Afghanistan shows the importance of the SA for the US Moreover, the US is following the region closely due to the concern that Pakistan come under the protection of China and its strategic partnership relations with India (Demirci, 2019). In other words, the US wants to play a more active role in the region. As a result, the US tends to increase its mobility in this geography that it cares about. That's why it is not be surprising that the US stands by Türkiye, which is ready to act as a mediator, in the solution of the KC, which is one of the dead-ends of the SA region. It is concluded that the US and Türkiye acting together to end the crisis can be considered as a rational attempt to resolve the KC, which has endangered the stability of the region and has become a security dilemma. This common attempt is a first as it has not yet been encountered in the peace process regarding the KC

It is clear that Türkiye can get more promising results by acting in partnership with the US instead of acting alone in this difficult persuasion process. Because the US is India's strategic partner, and India is beware of its power. Moreover, former president Trump underlines the sensitivity of the US on India by calling India "the Main Defense Partner of the US (National Security Council, 2017). Provided that the US achieves peace with this mediation attempt, it is not only contributed to security and stability in the Asia Pacific, one of the regions declared as a priority but is also be able to achieve its objectives of encircling and balancing China with the help of India.

If looking at the content of the negotiations to date, could be seen that India's reluctance to comply with the UN terms and blockades in the mutual dialogue phase has emerged. Hence, it is not surprising that the ceasefire calls and mediation activities of the states that were not party to the crisis came to the fore. India has declared that the KC can only be mitigated through negotiations with Pakistan and the crisis is a

matter of domestic policy and will not approach the internationalization of the crisis moderately (Khaliq, 2020). Thus, examining the dynamics that keep India away from the ceasefire and the negative perspective on the UN terms can explain why it stays away from the negotiations compared to Pakistan, and a new impetus can be gained by using these facts in diplomatic persuasion period.

The deterioration of the balance of both the region and the continent due to the inability of the two states to negotiate and the escalation of the crisis the brings the mediation initiative to the agenda. Türkiye has the potential to persuade it to bilateral talks due to its brotherly bond with Pakistan. Naturally, Pakistan has already made an offer to Türkiye to attempt mediation (Anadolu Agency, 2017). Türkiye also has the ability to persuade India for bilateral dialogue with Pakistan, thanks to its smooth and cultural relationship with India. On the other hand, India could be persuaded to negotiate with Pakistan, considering her sensitivity of her not to interfere in its internal affairs. For this reason, Türkiye and the US need to carry out a sensitive and balanced mediation process. If Türkiye takes an emotional, pro-Pakistani stance in the mediation process and criticizes India by feeding off the bond of brotherhood, it may undermine the confidence of India, which is already distant from the negotiation process. That's why the neutral and solution-oriented attitude of Türkiye and the US will be important in this regard. Whether the crisis is resolved or not, India would be able to redraw the theme of trust with Türkiye thanks to Türkiye's peaceful attitude.

This dissertation primarily aims to draw an updated chart by taking to the road from Türkiye's Asia perspective to relations with the SA. After that, the goals of the dissertation are shown from the general to the specific. Such as, analyzing the relations from the SA to the parties of the KC, and reading Kashmir by internal dynamics, and the potential of Türkiye for conflict resolution in the region and researching the data. On the other hand, with this dissertation, if Türkiye succeeds in peacemaking what kind of positive progress would occur question is illuminated. Therefore, the research aims to include the US in the peacemaking and dialogue calls. And if those aims succeed Türkiye-India mutual relations and cooperation would go on the positive side. Türkiye's past rhetoric and attitudes in the KC favored Pakistan, so its relationship with India was harmed. As another objective in the dissertation, the old attitude is

criticized, and its cause of India's antipathy is clarified, and policy-building through a more moderate and impartial approach is presented in detail as a suggestion. Additionally, the AAI one of Türkiye's new foreign politics would succeed, therefore, the prestige of Türkiye and its sphere of influence will be increased. This situation would make cooperation wider and further cooperation will be easier.

The main focus of the research is demonstrated to the fact that Türkiye has increased its interaction with the region due to the SA's rise in the world with the recent increase in the economic importance of the region and the tension created by the KC, but the scope of its activity is limited because of the lack of a Kashmir policy. Türkiye has the potential to be active in the Kashmir Crisis, which it has already shown to be relevant in its discourse and approaches, with the contribution of its past mediation experience and successful entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy.

In this context, Türkiye's Kashmir policy can be provided through the phenomenon of mediation statement is the hypothesis of the study. In other words, since there is no Kashmir policy that gains legitimacy, Türkiye has not carried out a policy based on the status quo. *E.g*, although Türkiye took a very sensitive and caring attitude followed by politicians during the conflict and crisis that took place here, she did not take any serious steps for conflict resolution or mediation. President Erdoğan's statement "Kashmir means our Çanakkale" has explained the value attributed to Kashmir (Erdoğan, 2020). Conclusively, it is clear that Türkiye has the anatomy to act as a mediator for the crisis in accordance with the principle of "Peace at Home, Peace in the World", which is one of the main foreign policy codes.

This dissertation deals with that Türkiye's bilateral relations with the two states that are party to the crisis, India, and Pakistan, and the impact of Türkiye's pro-Pakistani discourse and attitudes regarding the KC on its relationship with India is discussed. In order to Türkiye's Kashmir policy-making, it is aimed to analyze Türkiye's Asian policy first, then Türkiye's South Asian policy, and finally Türkiye's relations with the parties of the KC. In other words, the deductive method is used as a methodology.

As for the roadmap in this methodology, steps are respectively followed as understanding the SA starting from Asian policy, then understanding Kashmir starting from the SA and understanding the crisis from Türkiye's internal perspective is illuminated. Later, Kashmir's place within the scope of Türkiye's recent Asian policy and the AAI is studied. Eventually, within the framework of these dynamics, it is aimed to present Türkiye's policy-making proposal for Kashmir to the literature. After all, via plausible arguments is proved that Türkiye has the potential to become a mediator for the crisis, and it is proposed that effective and final peacebuilding can be achieved provided that this mediation attempt is carried out accompaniment of the US.

As for the limitations of this study, it is aimed to take the last period of Türkiye, namely the Justice and Development Party (JDP) period, as a basis. In other words, Türkiye's Asian policy and its relations and interactions with the Asian states in question is taken as reference. In the regional policy review, no evaluation is made other than the states and organizations in question.

Apart from the introduction part, the study is planned to consist of three parts. The first part is under the title of Türkiye's Asian Policy, the second part is under the title of Türkiye's South Asian policy, and the last part is under the title of Türkiye and Kashmir. In the introduction part, the hypothesis in the research, the aims, limitations, and method of the research is explained and the literature review is the briefly mentioned. At the same time, the skeleton of the thesis is drawn in this section.

In the first part, Türkiye's recent Asian policy is studied. In this context, after the foreign policy parameters are explained, the Central Asia (CA) policy is examined in general terms. Afterwards, the Asian Policy of the last period, namely the JDP period, is examined and the AAI, which is an important leverage, is explained. This new initiative and the KC are tried to be linked.

As for the second part, it is aimed to make a reduction from the general to the specific, that is, from Asia to the SA. First of all, South Asia policy is studied in general terms within the scope of Türkiye's recent and the AAI. Then, bilateral relations with India, Pakistan and China, which are the key actors of the region is examined. Thus, a preliminary route can be in the way to Türkiye's mediation adventure.

Finally, in the last chapter, it is aimed to examine the KC, which is the main theme of the thesis, in all its details. First of all, information is given about the history, course, danger potential and current situation of the crisis. Afterwards, the economic elements, which is one of the main dynamics of the crisis, is examined. Thus, it is clarified that if the crisis is resolved, all parties would gain economically. Afterwards, all discourses and approaches of Türkiye on Kashmir is evaluated, and it is aimed to re-study this crisis with a pragmatic new perspective and with Türkiye's internal dynamics. At the end of all these evaluations, a new and mediation-based Kashmir policy construction is presented as a proposal. Finally, the interpretation that the US should partner with Türkiye in order to strengthen this mediation phenomenon and the diplomatic persuasion process is tried to be defended with arguments.

CHAPTER ONE
ASIA POLICY OF TÜRKİYE

Türkiye's Asian policy is included in this part of this study. However, it would be complementary to explain Türkiye's foreign policy concept before mentioning Türkiye's Asian policy. In this section, the Asian policy of the last (JDP) period is concentrated rather than the general Asian policy of Türkiye. In other words, it is limited by the recent time policy. Mentioning the briefly the concept of foreign policy, foreign policy is a mechanism used by governments to guide diplomatic ties and relations with other states. Moreover, foreign policy, just like a mirror, reflects the aims and values of the state. In the global area, political and economic goals are achieved with the help of foreign policy (Britannica, 2022). In this way, it can be deduced that there could be basic peculiar codes of foreign policies in states. Just like other states, there are certain topics that have shaped the foreign policy of the Republic of Türkiye since its establishment.

It can be stated that Turkish Foreign Policy is shaped by two basic parameters. These are: Status Quo and Westernism. Status quo literally means established order. Status quoism, on the other hand, can be expressed as the policy of not disturbing the current situation, close to the meaning of the word. Türkiye, on the other hand, considered it a rational approach to prefer the status quo policy due to the geography and political elements it inherited from the Ottoman Empire. However, status quoism in Turkish Foreign Policy is based on a dual understanding that can be conceptualized as "maintaining the existing borders" and "maintaining the current balances". In this context, Türkiye; it preferred not to demand any border changes and accordingly not to carry out an irredentist policy over its cognates living in close and adjacent areas to the country's territory due to the principle of maintaining the existing borders. Namely, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's expression "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" can be put forward as the most obvious political proof of the status quo policy (Oran, 2006).

Maintaining the existing balances can be expressed in the direction of observing the balances in the established order and not changing these balances. In this context, Türkiye, has always observed the balance between the West and the non-Western and has acted to ensure that this balance is not disturbed due to its geostrategic

position. At the same time, the balances within the West find a response in the status quo understanding of Turkish Foreign Policy. In order to deal with the principle of westernism, first of all, it is necessary to determine what the West means for Türkiye. The West is not only a geographical definition for Türkiye or it does not have a geographical meaning.

The counterpart of the West in Turkish politics is a form of civilization. The civilization in question is a phenomenon shaped by an economic infrastructure and a scientific superstructure. At this point, its infrastructure is capitalism and its superstructure is rationalism. However, this structure of the West has not remained stable and has undergone changes and transformations over time. Türkiye, on the other hand, has shaped its foreign policy in accordance with which Western image is dominant in which period. As a result, the concept of the West has evolved into an understanding of social state in terms of infrastructure, and an understanding that emphasizes the concepts of democracy and human rights in terms of superstructure (Isyar, 2013).

1.1. Central Asia Policy of Türkiye

If one defines the Central Asia (CA) geographically; in the broadest sense, it is the region also referred to as "Inner Asia" consisting of today's Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, East Turkestan, Mongolia, Northern India, Northern Pakistan and Northern Iran (Findley, 2005). However, the term the CA refers to the region in which Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan are the located in the political dimension the CA region is of great importance in world geography, especially for geopolitical theorists (Roy, 2000)

According to the 'Land Domination Theory' put forward by the famous theoretician Mackinder, the region is the located in the center of Eurasia and the power holds the dominance of the region becomes the dominant object of the system (Mackinder, 1904). Another factor makes the region important is its oil and natural gas reserves. Caspian energy basin has 16% of the world's oil reserves and besides, there are 237 billion cubic meters of natural gas reserves in the region. The region is at an important point for Türkiye as well as for international politics (Efegil & Özsavaş,

2013). This importance derives from both political interests, cultural ties, and public closeness. Türkiye's interest in the region makes it possible to use Türkiye as a corridor in the opening of the oil and natural gas in the region to the world market, and to develop both economic and political relations with the states of the region by emphasizing ethnic and cultural closeness (Arı, 2010).

Having the opportunity to establish bilateral relations with Central Asian countries with the collapse of the USSR, Türkiye naturally became the first state to recognize Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (Yılmaz, 2010). Türkiye's perception of the CA cannot be considered independently of its official history thesis and identity politics. Although it is the successor of a multi-ethnic and multicultural state like the Ottoman Empire, it should not be forgotten that the Republic of Türkiye was established as a national state and the naming the ethnic element of this state was the Turks. Linguistic, historical, geographical, cultural, and religious elements come to the fore while defining the Turkish national identity. When Turkish identity began to be discussed since the end of the 19th century, the ideology of Turkism or Pan-Turkism, along with the ideologies of Ottomanism and Islamism, has been one of the currents of thought occupied by the intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire the most. The CA, which is generally accepted as the ancestral home of the Turkish communities, has also entered the field of interest of the Turkism movement.

The origin of Turkish history, taught in history books in today's Türkiye, is based on the CA. Both archaeological findings and written sources indicate that there are cultural the bridges between the Turks of today's Türkiye and the CA. The fact that the Turks are a nomadic tribe and the Oghuz tribes who migrated from the CA to Anatolia founded the Great Seljuk State, the Anatolian Seljuk State, and finally, the Ottoman Empire, are still the mainstays of official history theses in Türkiye today. Thus, the origin and "ancestral homeland" of the Turks are included in the primary and secondary school curricula as the CA (Çaman, 2013). Once the JDP come to power in 2002, Türkiye made important reforms on the way to the EU membership and an important point was reached in democratization. The initiation of membership negotiations with the EU and the achievement of the best economic indicators in the

history of the Republic had a positive impact on the perception of Türkiye abroad and, more importantly, on the self-perceptions of the political elites.

In order to better understanding the JDP's approach to Türkiye's the CA policy, Professor of International Relations, who has had a decisive influence on Turkish foreign policy since 2002. Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu's analysis of the region may shed light on it. There are some basic principles and approaches in the Turkish foreign policy of the Davutoğlu period. These principles and approaches, of course, shape the approach in the Central Asian regional policy in general. According to Davutoğlu's foreign policy understanding, the primary determination is about how Türkiye is positioned by the political elites. Türkiye has a unique geopolitical position and Türkiye has many regional affiliations (Davutoğlu, 2008). He argues that Türkiye should be positioned as a center, not a periphery.

Another fundamental difference in understanding concerns the general view of decision-makers and political elites towards the concept of foreign policy. For instance, a vision-oriented approach, not a crisis-oriented view, which was the dominant approach in foreign policy in the previous periods, should be dominant, a systematic and permanent framework centered on Türkiye should be established, Türkiye's civil and economic power should be activated and soft power characteristics should be given the opportunity. As other complementary features, the following issues can be emphasized in general terms: operationally, a balance should be established between security and democracy in foreign policy, regional policy should be followed by targeting zero problems with neighbors, active and proactive peace diplomacy, multidimensional foreign policy and rhythmic diplomacy should be implemented (Davutoğlu, 2010).

Despite the acceleration and successes in the EU orientation in Turkish foreign policy during the JDP period, Asia and Africa come to the fore at a rhetorical level and in official visits. In the following years, some circles interpreted this tendency as "axis shift" or "neo-Ottomanism" (Çağatay at al., 2011). Türkiye has started to implement an active foreign policy towards not only the Turkish Republics to which it feels connected ethnically and culturally but also all the basins around it in this period. New embassies were opened in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Black Sea

basin, and even in Latin America and Africa, Turkish Airlines started regular flights, and high figures were achieved in bilateral trade relations. For the first time, cooperation instead of conflict was dominant in foreign policy rhetoric. In addition, instead of Türkiye "being surrounded by enemies", a self-confident foreign policy with the themes of mediation, reconciliation, and foreign trade has been tried to be created. Compared to the post-Cold War policy, this versatile foreign policy pointed to a more active and initiative-taking understanding.

As mentioned above, this unusual versatility of Turkish foreign policy was behind the interpretations of "axis shift" and "neo-Ottomanism". Although the Middle East seems to have come to the fore in the new foreign policy, this is not due to the preference of the Middle East, but to the neglect of a form in which ideological motives are also determinant in the Turkish foreign policy of this region for years. Just as it is irrational to interpret a region only from an ideological perspective and to be motivated in this way, staying away from a region for ideological reasons and not taking interest also indicates an irrationality in foreign policy. The Middle East was perceived in this form during the Republican era, and the JDP did not have codes that would require it to exclude this region ideologically.

On the contrary, in the tradition of 'National Vision' which is one of the important reference sources of the JDP ideology, there were many ideological bases that encouraged active politics towards the Middle East (Çaman, 2013). Although this situation led to be the perception of the Middle East as a priority compared to other regions during the JDP era, according to Davutoğlu, Türkiye's Middle East vision does not contradict its foreign policy towards the CA or the Balkans. Actually, it points to a foreign policy in a holistic sense. In other words, this holistic approach prioritizes urgent issues like the Middle East while emphasizing not pushing others into the background (Aras & Akpınar, 2011).

Türkiye plays a leading role in Asia via the Organization for Economic Cooperation (ECO), the Turkish States and Communities Friendship, Brotherhood and Cooperation Foundation (TUDEV), and the Turkic Speaking Countries Summit, of which it is a co-founder. Moreover, Türkiye, as a founding member of organizations such as the D-8, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries

(TURKPA), Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), follows a quite active policy in International Organizations. It is considered that during the JDP government, Türkiye made great efforts to become a member of other organizations in Asia. As a matter of fact, Erdoğan, prime minister of that time, has met with Russian President Putin about membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), one of the most important organizations in Asia, during his 2005 visit to Moscow, and Putin was pleased with this matter. Apart from this, the JDP government applied to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2008 to sign a friendship and cooperation agreement (TURKSAM, 2005). Later, it became a party to the ASEAN Friendship and Cooperation Agreement -THE ASEAN/THE TAC- in 2010 (MFA, 2011).

Davutoğlu interpreted it as a mistake that Türkiye's early period strategies towards the CA had not sufficiently analyzed the global and regional balances and had acted without a complete calculation of its own opportunities and foreign policy instruments. Türkiye perceived the US as a strategic partner in Eurasian balances and followed a balancing policy with this strategic relationship during the period of Türkiye-Russia Federation (RF) competition. However, according to Davutoglu, international politics and Eurasian relations are much more complex and multidimensional. If Ankara wants to become an influential actor in the CA in the long run, it has to observe the "rhythmic" course of both global and regional actors in their relations in the region and include them in their analysis. According to Davutoğlu, Ankara, trying to institutionalize and develop its relations with the CA countries via international organizations such as the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) and the BSEC, is not achieving the desired success because of some strategic mistakes in its regional policy followed.

The above-mentioned tensions with the Russia Federation (RF) have hampered Türkiye's maneuverability in the northern line within the scope of the BSEC, while the tensions with Iran have damaged the maneuvering options within the scope of the ECO in the southern line. In fact, since Türkiye does not have a direct land and sea connection with the CA, needs both of these actors. Türkiye's constant tension with

either of these two countries is a situation that should not happen in terms of Ankara's strategic interests in the CA (Davutoğlu,2012).

1.2. The Asia Policy of Türkiye in the Recent Time

It is necessary to emphasize the importance of Asia first in order to be able to read Türkiye's recent Asian policy. This importance deeply affects the interest and approach of the great states and Türkiye to the region. Now that the SA region, which is an important pillar of Asia, has started to become a new economic power center in the world political economy with its rising economy since the 1990s, contributing to the economic dynamism of the Asian continent. As a matter of fact, while East and Southeast Asia, one of the other important regions, had 17% of world production in the 1980s, this rate jumped to 25% in the mid-1990s and to 30% by the early 2000s (Asian Development Bank, 2016). The importance of Asia can be understood more clearly when one looks at its datas.

Accordingly, Asia takes the lead with approximately 39% GDP (2021), followed by the North America with 28% and the EU with %24. As a result, Asia appears to be the world's largest continental economy in terms of both Nominal GDP and PPP. (IMF, 2021). These data prove that Asia in general and China in particular are the fastest growing economies in the world. Countries in the region, which are also known as Asian Tigers such as China, India, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand, have become the center of attraction of the world with their booming economies. In other words, the center of gravity of the world economy is now shifting towards Asia.

Especially, China, the world's production giant, surpassed Germany with an export of 1.2 trillion dollars in 2009 and became the world leader in exports (Economist, 2010). In this way, China is rapidly moving towards becoming the potential superpower of the future. China, whose share in world exports was measured approximately 15% in 2020, still maintains its giant position today and is the leading actor that raises the statistics of Asia (Chaudhury, 2021). Apart from this, India, like China, is one of the vital countries that continues to grow, and its star is shining day by day. Moreover, it is seen that India's rank third only after China and Japan in the Asian economy (IMF, 2021). Japan, another giant of Asia, is the world's third and the

continent's second-largest economy. With GDP data, THE US$ 4,937 Billion, it increases the Asian continent's economy percentage (IMF, 2022).

Another economic pillar of Asia is the CA energy resources. Having 3.6% of the world's oil reserves and 6.9% of natural gas reserves Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan are the four appeared leading countries for the sake of economic dynamism in Asia (BP, 2011). In this sense, it can be concluded that with the help of the CA, Asia has a high potential to shape the future world as a geo-economic power. Thus, it is not surprising that Türkiye, the neighbor of this precious region, has strategic importance in ensuring energy security.

In the case of looking at Türkiye's opening to Asia in general and the EA in particular, it is seen that foreign economic relations take priority. Especially after 2003, Türkiye's relations with the CA countries as well as the EA were approached on an economic-commercial basis. In other words, economic diplomacy within the framework of economic pragmatism forms the basis of Türkiye's Asian policy and bilateral relations with the countries of the region during the JDP government. However, it can be said that Türkiye not only develops its relations with Asian countries within the framework of purely economic interests, but also observes the principles of mutual economic interest and dependence. In other words, Türkiye's opening to Asia is an economic choice and is affected by global conditions. Conclusively, as stated in the introduction part, the shift of the center of gravity of the world economy to Asia played a leading role in Türkiye's event of opening to Asia (MFA, 2022).

Eventually, in Türkiye's Asian expansion, factors such as the emergence of the CA a new energy center, the emergence of the EA as a new economic center, the search for new market areas, the desire to revitalize the country's economy by developing foreign trade relations, increase the welfare of the country, and ultimately, consolidate its multidimensionality and global actor role are influential. Türkiye, seeing Asia, which it had neglected until so far, as a close continental basin in this period, approached with a new dynamism and started to carry out its foreign economic relations effectively. The fact that the term President and the PM take crowded business circles with them during their visits to the countries of the region clearly

shows the value given to foreign economic relations. In the end, during the JDP term, foreign economic relations became a priority in foreign policy and even became one of the indispensable elements of foreign policy. Moreover, trying to mobilize soft power with economic leverage the JDP government has acted on a geocultural and geostrategic basis in foreign policy (Kardas, 2011).

Conclusively, even though Türkiye, which started to show more interest in the CA after the collapse of the SU, has an active policy there, it could not escape from being blocked by Russia. That is, although Türkiye did not achieve the total influence she wanted, made many socio-economic collaborations. She approached the CA with the themes of Ottoman multiculturalism and common Turk terminology. The awareness that the region was neglected was experienced during the Davutoğlu period. The general codes of Türkiye's recent policy were also created during the Davutoğlu period. In this sense, the motto that Türkiye should be the center country, not the periphery, and follow a vision-oriented active policy has brought the CA to the fore in Turkish foreign policy.

Subsequently, memberships in Asian organizations accelerated and economic cooperation initiatives increased. In other words, the economic leap of Asia and Türkiye's increasing interest in this region has progressed in parallel. After all, in Türkiye's recent Asian policy, after Davutoğlu, the understanding of a more holistic approach to Asia and being active in Asia was continued in the JDP period, intensifying. This comprehensive approach has gained a new form with the AAI.

1.3. The Asia Again Initiative

In the globalization process, where the meaning of the distant phenomenon has changed, Türkiye's has moved its field of action in foreign policy to various parts of the world, where it will make expansions with new targets. In this context, Latin America, Asia, Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the most recently announced Asian expansion are Türkiye's steps to position itself in the new world order. It is known that such regional expansions actually date back to the period of Ismail Cem, one of the former foreign ministers. During his reign, Latin America, Africa, and Asia-Pacific expansions were projected and later implemented by the governments that followed. However, the required success could not be achieved during the implementation of the

projects. The expansions in this period are inclusive as they contain the metaphor of being both Asian and European are still maintained by governments today. Türkiye's participation in the SCO as a dialogue partner in 2013 can be considered as the beginning of the strong breakthrough made due to the increasing importance of Asia (Deveci & Güllü, 2021).

It is likely that the big states in the organization will advance Türkiye faster in the continent, both economically and politically. On the other hand, one of the factors underlying this organizational breakthrough is the disappointment with the UN. In the speech of Erdoğan on the issue of Syrian refugees and the Civil War at the 74 th the UN General Assembly meeting in 2018, he commented that it is unacceptable that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council have rendered the UN ineffective for a while, and stated again that "The world is bigger than five" (Erdoğan, 2014). Afterwards, Türkiye, which thought that it was left alone in its humanitarian policy, started to focus on Asia in both its academic, political and social agenda. In fact, it would be more rational to evaluate this naturally developing process not as an axis shift, but as getting tired of waiting at the EU gate. Just after all this, in 2019, the declaration of the AAI by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Çavuşoğlu, turned the theory into practice.

The AAI was announced by Türkiye, with the intention of taking better advantage of the cooperation potential and the opportunities offered by the developments in Asia. This initiative focuses on strengthening the relations of Türkiye with the countries of the region in a systematic and stable manner and on regional, sub-regional and country-specific orientations within the framework of a comprehensive and holistic strategy of relations. As for the areas targeted by the initiative, it is known that the economy comes first, followed by education, culture, tourism, and sports. In this direction, it is expected that Türkiye's trade with Asia will be balanced, and economic cooperation and mutual investments will be increased. Industries with advanced technology and high added value, tourism, finance and defense industry sectors, infrastructure, transportation, logistics, green energy, and sustainable development projects are the areas of cooperation that are envisaged to be implemented within the framework of this initiative. Finally, institutional mechanisms

have been established, including representatives from all relevant institutions and organizations, in order to determine and implement Türkiye's Asian policies with a holistic approach and in more effective coordination (Asia Anew Initiative, 2019).

It would be useful to consider the AAI as a new and holistic view of Asia without the perception of turning away from the EU. Because Türkiye, due to its special position, has the phenomenon of being a bridge between Europe and Asia, that is, being as European as a European, and as Asian as an Asian. It is quite possible that this initiative, which envisages a stronger focus on Asia, will make Türkiye a balancing factor between Asia and Europe by gaining strength from its strategic position. In other words, this orientation reveals a foreign policy vision that further strengthens the core country role.

Mevlut Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave enlightening information on the AAI at the Press Conference held at the 11th Ambassadors Conference on 8 August 2019. He said that Türkiye's Asian policy is not lacking, but that the continent needs to be approached more holistically, the AAI has emerged for this purpose. He added that Asia is now becoming the economic center of the world and that Türkiye cannot ignore this while achieving its economic goals. Since this expansion offers a holistic approach, it covers not only economy-oriented but also other factors such as education, defense industry, civil society relationship and digital trade and digital diplomacy (MFA, 2019). In addition, Çavuşoğlu stated that Asia is one third of the world's land area and emphasized that this continent has the most populous population, largest cities, longest life expectancy and greatest diversity. With this dynamic region, it is aspireble to revitalize bilateral relations, try to strengthen regional connection lines, and make maximum efforts for regional stability and security thanks to the AAI.

As a result, he expressed that Türkiye will approach Asia holistically and will not evaluate it with distinctions such as East, West and South, and continues to make constructive contributions to overcoming conflicts and problems in Asia, benefiting from Türkiye's experience and sensitivity in the field of mediation and humanitarian issues (Asia Anew Initiative, 2019). Accordingly, it is still early to interpret the course of this new initiative, which includes many aims and actions. Since political data for the future is not yet available, it would be illuminating to evaluate the success of the

initiative with the steps taken in this context and the visits made. In this context, China, Russia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan is taken as reference while evaluating the expansion in this study.

China, one of the region's giants, has attracted attention not only on the basis of the Asian continent but also all over the world, by flying into an economic passion recently. Meanwhile, China's commercial traffic has also increased. It is not surprising that it is becoming more and more attractive to be a trading partner and interact more with China. After all, Türkiye has taken many steps with the awareness of more interaction with China at the economic level. The One Belt One Road Project (OBOR) is the most popular one of these. Türkiye, which has been one of the countries most mentioned in the China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) since 2013, has made great efforts to implement the Trans-Caspian East-West Central Corridor in this context. Moreover, one of the most important achievements of this great project was the first export train, departing from Istanbul, passing through two continents, two seas and five countries, including Georgia, Azerbaijan, and the Caspian Sea and Kazakhstan, to the Chinese city of Xi'an (Tamer,2021).

As of 2010, China-Türkiye relations have made progress in political and commercial matters and their relations have reached the level of strategic cooperation (Dal, 2017). Considered the world's organized industrial zone, China, is also one of the five permanent members of the the UN. In this respect, the intense contact to be established with China is vital in Türkiye's Asian breakthrough. Another common denominator that unites China and Türkiye is the SCO. It is in a position that can be considered a key point in Türkiye's manoeuvring area in Asia because it incorporates Asian giants such as China, Russia, Pakistan, India and Iran.

Established in 1996 under the name Shanghai Five, which includes China, Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, it expanded and became the SCO by including Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and India and Iran. Fighting against illegal organizations, terrorism, fundamentalism and separatism, building mutual trust among neighbours, maintaining regional peace and stability, and establishing good relations and cooperation in the context of politics, culture, science, technology, education, energy and trade are among the objectives of the organization. Türkiye was

unanimously accepted to the Dialogue Partnership at the SCO Heads of State Summit held in Beijing on 6-7 June 2012. This position is below the “observer country” status and above the “guest participants” status (MFA, 2022). It is foreseen that Türkiye can find the opportunity to get closer to the SCO thanks to the AAI.

Increasing the cooperation with Russia, another giant of Asia, can be counted among Türkiye’s expectations within the scope of the AAI. Luckily, Russia is the country with which Türkiye has the most commercial exchange among the members of the SCO. For instance, energy and defence industries are the main topics. The two countries, which can establish a strategic partnership when necessary, came together within the scope of the state summits (on Syria), the Joint Strategic Planning Group meetings, and the signed energy corridor agreements (Blue Stream, Turkish Stream). In addition, the nuclear power plant construction partnership established in Türkiye was realized and dialogue mechanisms such as security-military technology partnerships were developed (Deveci & Güllü, 2021). Moreover, Türkiye’s mediator approach in the Russia-Ukraine War and the grain agreement with Russia are indications that it is in a delicate balance in the region. As a result, bilateral relations are essential both for the establishment of regional and global peace and for Türkiye’s influence on the continent.

There are several visits that are presumed to be accelerated by the AAI. For instance, another country that Türkiye willing to strengthen its cooperation in Asia is Indonesia, and recently a consensus has been reached with this state on important issues such as industry and economy. Minister Çavuşoğlu, during his visit to Indonesia on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Türkiye-Indonesia relations, expressed the value given to this country by using the phrase “our key partner in the SA, friendly and brotherly Indonesia” (Çavuşoğlu, 2020). Paralelly, during the visit of Indonesian Foreign Minister Marsudi to Türkiye in April 2022, she said that Türkiye is one of the most important destinations for Indonesia and stated that they are considering starting a high-level strategic council between the two countries. Commenting on the AAI announced by Türkiye in 2019, Marsudi said that they welcomed this initiative very positively. She also remarked “We understand that Türkiye has two DNAs: Asian DNA and European DNA. With this initiative, I am very confident that Türkiye will

be able to strengthen its Asian DNA and be a part of the rise of Asia." After all in addition to defense and cooperation, the two countries are expected to come to the fore with breakthroughs such as joint development, joint industry, joint work and capacity building (Tarhan, 2022).

Bangladesh is another country expected to be one of the important partners of the AAI. During his visit to Bangladesh on 22-23 December 2020, Çavuşoğlu talked about the goal of increasing the bilateral trade volume to two billion dollars and included Bangladesh among the stars of the SA with its sustainable development (Tamer, 2021). Abdul Momen, Bangladesh Foreign Minister, visited Türkiye for the opening of the new embassy building in 2020. During this visit, Çavuşoğlu underlined the necessity of increasing the trade volume by emphasizing that large companies in Türkiye started to invest in Bangladesh. Expressing his gratitude to Bangladesh for the adoption of Rohingya refugees, Çavuşoğlu stated that Türkiye will also support them via Kızılay, Afad and TİGA (MFA, 2020).

Two competitor powers, India and Pakistan, can be added to the list of states that are expected to increase Türkiye's cooperation and dialogue within the scope of the AAI. Türkiye has historical and cultural ties with both states. However, because of Kashmir, which is a gloomy problem between the two states, Türkiye should pay attention to both maintaining a balanced policy and increasing its cooperation on this delicate balance. Being one of the strategic powers of the region, India is a South Asian country that takes advantage of its geography with its developing economy and large population and determines its axis based on its border neighbours China-Pakistan. Reaching high growth figures in recent years with its success in software and technology, India has the potential to overtake China in terms of economic growth and population growth (Deveci & Güllü, 2021). As for mutual economic relations, India is one of the 17 countries declared by Türkiye within the framework of its 'export master plan'. For this reason, it would not be surprising that Türkiye is the second largest importer among Asian countries, with India (MFA, 2020). According to India's general wisdom, border problems with Pakistan create blockadges for the security and stability of the region. Therefore, Türkiye's regional and bilateral relations with India

are negatively affected at times because of brotherhood relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye.

As for Pakistan, it beyond being a rival of India, it is a powerful state and has strategic importance in the region. Although its growth rate is not as high as India, it is a developing country whose economy is based on agriculture. With its nuclear weapons capability, Pakistan occupies a strategic position in the area. Pakistan, which is governed as an Islamic Republic, unites with Türkiye in the phenomenon of religious brotherhood. In addition to the religious phenomenon, cultural and historical ties are also very strong. This closeness also showed itself in diplomacy, and bilateral relations were elevated to the level of the "High Level Cooperation Council" in 2009 and assumed an institutional identity (MFA, 2022).

When it comes to international platforms, it is known that both countries generally show supportive approaches to each other. The most recent of these support elements has been seen within the scope of the KC. This region, which is the located on the border of India and Pakistan and cannot be shared, has been in the middle of conflict and war for years, and ultimately, the administration is provided in the triangle of India, China and Pakistan. About 97 percent of Kashmiri people are Muslims (Mir, 2021). The main element of the conflict is not only the land fight, but also includes the Hindu and Muslim oppositions. Although Türkiye did not remain indifferent to this crisis due to the defeat suffered by Muslims and its long-standing ties with Pakistan and called for a ceasefire, it takes an attitude that blames India. However, this attitude negatively affects Türkiye's relations with India.

Türkiye, which has ancient ties with India and Pakistan, also needs both states when cooperation and diplomacy in the field of manoeuvre in Asia. Now that the KC is a blockade for the balance to be maintained with both states, then the fact of Türkiye's mediation possibility for this crisis within the scope of the AAI can be considered pragmatically. Türkiye has already had many statements about the crisis to date. These statements were that the crisis was persecution of Muslims and a violation of human rights. Regarding mediation, Türkiye has already declared its readiness by President Erdoğan. In this context, he mentioned that bilateral dialogue can be transformed into multi-dialogue and wished that more lives would not be lost (Fai,

2020). Moreover, Erdoğan said “We are also in favour of solving this issue through dialogue, within the framework of the UN resolutions and especially in line with the expectations of the Kashmiri people” (Erdoğan, 2019). Later, India’s Permanent the UN Representative TS Tirumurti reacted by criticizing Türkiye for meddling in India’s internal affairs (Tirumurti A. T., 2020).

Fortunately, India and Pakistan agreed to “absolute observance” of all agreements and accordance, including the ceasefire on the disputed Kashmir border in 2021. Despite this promising last attempt at peace, violations unfortunately still continue (Mahaseth & Shukla, 2021). Strengthening this swaying the bridge of peace with diplomatic persuasion and providing a lasting solution would benefit the entire geography. That’s why it is not surprising that Türkiye’s role as an activist and mediator comes to the fore. As mentioned previously in this study, the AAI already included an element of permanent contribution to regional peace and even mediating steps in its objectives (MFA, 2022).

It has been announced within the scope of the AAI that Türkiye will take action and follow an active policy in order to solve the problems that prevent the maximum benefit in interaction with the region (MFA, 2019). Since a more holistic approach to Asia is envisaged, the necessity of paying attention to differences in this regard has emerged. In other words, it has become important to consider different perspectives for solving a problem or for a new initiative. If one consider this within the scope of the KC, see that there are criticisms that although Türkiye voices the mediation phenomenon, it paints a pro-Pakistani picture in its discourse. Only if Türkiye gives the confidence that this activity must be carried out by taking a more holistic approach and considering the differences of both states, the probability of the mediation activity to take place will increase. In other saying, keeping the morale factors behind the maximum benefit factor can speed up the diplomatic persuasion process. Conclusively, whether the KC is resolved or not, Türkiye’s impartial and holistic diplomatic persuasion process may soften India, revive bilateral relations and a more productive process can be experienced in Türkiye’s interaction with the region.

CHAPTER TWO

SOUTH ASIA POLICY OF TÜRKİYE

In this part of the study, Türkiye's the SA policy is discussed. First of all, the geopolitics of the SA and the countries within there is the briefly mentioned. Afterwards, general topics in Türkiye's dialogue with the region and bilateral relations with countries is mentioned. The limitation of this section is Türkiye's the JDP policy. In particular, starting from the scope of Türkiye's bilateral relations with India, Pakistan and China the Türkiye's potential mediation phenomenon for KC is detailed in the next section.

The SA region is unique when its area, cultural depth, position at the centre of the world's agenda, economic potential, human resources that contains about a quarter of the world's population, and its importance in terms of the evolution of the international system are evaluated together, thus it is gaining weight in the global strategic equation day by day. Geographically, the SA region includes India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. China, which is essentially an active member of the global system and should be considered a peripheral country for the SA regional subsystem, can also be included in this system. This situation arises from the fact that China is affected by the bilateral relations between Pakistan and India and the border problem between China and India. Moreover, the SA is also one of China's manoeuvring areas in its struggle for regional leadership. It can be accepted that the countries of the region do not have a high level of development, that's why the struggle for power has emerged and the great powers have appeared in the regional policies because they lacked hierarchy. In other words, the power vacuum in the region was tried to be filled and balanced by the powerful states.

As well as historical hostilities existence of ethnic, religious and cultural differences between the countries of the region makes it difficult to build and develop positive relations with each other. Likewise, it may be difficult for states to achieve a holistic approach in their relations with the region. With the withdrawal of England from the region in 1947, independence movements started. In the same year, India and Pakistan separated from each other, and then with the support of India, Bangladesh

entered the struggle for independence and left Pakistan. After all these events, it can be concluded that the SA is a geography that should not be considered homogeneous in terms of structure (Arı, 2000).

Türkiye, one of the states related to the region, maintains relations within the framework of both organizations and states in its interaction with the SA. Due to the region's irregular structure, Türkiye has adopted some regional-specific approaches rather than holistic ones in its interaction with the SA. Türkiye has always had strong cultural and historical relations with South Asian countries. At the same time, Türkiye has a strong political will to further develop its cooperation and relations in every field with these countries with which it has friendly relations. The development of relations and cooperation with these countries with which Türkiye has deep-rooted friendship ties with its peoples also contributes significantly to regional peace, cooperation, and stability (MFA, 2022). Conclusively, the SA region can be interpreted as one of the important levers in Türkiye's Asia policy.

To the briefly touch upon Türkiye's bilateral relations with the countries of the region, she primarily pursues an active policy. In this context, it would be reasonable to start with Afghanistan, one of the countries where Türkiye is most active in the region. Türkiye, which started its diplomatic relations with Afghanistan in 1921, opened a representative office in Kabul as one of the first decisions taken by the Turkish Grand National Assembly Government. Until Afghanistan became a protectorate of the SU, Türkiye supported Afghanistan's modernization steps and contributed to the development of basic state institutions such as the military, culture, health, education and administration in the country. After the end of the Soviet occupation in 1989, Türkiye continued to closely monitor the developments in Afghanistan and tried to contribute to the bringing stability and peace to Afghanistan by contacting both foreign actors and all groups in the country. Today, Türkiye actively supports Afghanistan's efforts in the fields of development, security and capacity building.

Türkiye carries out its Afghanistan policy within the scope of four main headings. These are ensuring security and stability, protecting the unity and integrity of Afghanistan, strengthening the broad-based political structure in order to prioritize

public support and participation in the country, and the bringing peace to the people by clearing Afghanistan from terrorism and excessive currents. In line with these goals, Türkiye making great contributions to Afghanistan by supporting the efforts of the UN and the NATO as well as making efforts on a dual level. The trilateral summit of Türkiye-Afghanistan-Pakistan launched in 2007 and the conference named 'Istanbul, the Heart of Asia' in 2011 serve this purpose. Moreover, the development program carried out in Afghanistan since 2004 is worth approximately 1.1 billion dollars and is one of the largest foreign aid provided by Türkiye (MFA, 2022).

Bangladesh, a continuation of the Bengali society, is another important South Asian state in which Türkiye conducts an active policy. The bilateral relations between the Turkish and Bengali nations, which started years ago, continued with the support of the Bengali people in the Türkish War of Independence, and today, as two states with deep historical and cultural ties, they stand close to each other. Bangladesh was recognized by Türkiye at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Summit in 1974 and Türkiye's Embassy in Dhaka was opened in 1976. Moreover, due to Rohingya Muslims taking refuge in Bangladesh in 2017, Türkiye tried to alleviate this humanitarian crisis by providing material and moral assistance to Bangladesh. Bilateral relations maintained around the phenomena of Islam, common culture and solidarity also include high-level visits. Eventually, it can be said that bilateral relations are conducted positively and peacefully (MFA, 2022).

Bhutan, a relatively small one, is another South Asian country included in the international system under the name of the Kingdom of Bhutan. It consists of multiple ethnicities such as Bhote, Nepali and immigrants. In the relations between Türkiye and Bhutan, which can be considered an underdeveloped country with a GDP of approximately 2.5 billion dollars, economic aid to the said country comes to the fore. For instance, due to the flood disaster occurred across the country in 2009, Türkiye became one of the countries that provided substantial financial aid. Indeed, it is possible to mention a generally positive and active policy between the two countries, where high-level visits also take place (MFA, 2022).

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is another multi-ethnic South Asian country. Diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Nepal were established in

1962 and embassies were accredited through Islamabad and India. Bilateral relations usually come to the fore with the title of Türkiye's aid to Nepal. In fact, Türkiye's aid after natural disasters and its support for infrastructure work in the field of education through the TIKA confirm this. Although high-level visits between the two countries are not realized, the dialogues continue actively. E.g., after the earthquake took place in Nepal in 2015, Türkiye participated in rescue efforts and provided humanitarian aid again. At the "World Humanitarian Summit" held in Istanbul in 2016, a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of a political consultation mechanism was signed between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and then the first political consultation of the two countries was held in Kathmandu at the level of General Managers on 18 April 2019. Eventually, Türkiye's position as one of Nepal's main trading partners and the positive progress of bilateral relations indicate that a successful and interactive policy is being carried out with the country in question (MFA, 2022).

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is another South Asian state with an area of approximately 65,610 km². Although Türkiye-Sri Lanka bilateral relations started in 1948 when Sri Lanka gained its independence, it is known that the embassies became operational in 2012. It would be accurate to mark that bilateral relations are generally positive. It is possible to talk about the partnership between the two countries commercially. For example, Türkiye realized a housing project in Sri Lanka through the TIKA and made a capital investment of approximately three billion dollars. Just like it did to other countries, Türkiye mobilized the Turkish Red Crescent in Sri Lanka due to the flood disaster it was exposed to. In final, Türkiye carries out an active and sensitive policy in a peaceful environment with Sri Lanka (MFA, 2022).

Next, two key states in Türkiye's the SA policy is mentioned. These are India and Pakistan, which are in constant struggle with each other. Since detailed bilateral relations between these states and Türkiye is mentioned in the next part of the study, it would be reasonable to the briefly mention them now. To start with India, the dialogue between Türkiye and India has been going on since 1947 when India gained its independence, and even Türkiye recognized India immediately. India is in the friendly country category from Türkiye's perspective in essential. There have been

many visits between the two countries at both the ministerial level and the high level. Furthermore, President Erdoğan and Indian Prime Minister Modi met regularly on the margins of the BRICS and the G20 summits between 2015 and 2019.

India is a vital state with global power potential with its growing economy, breakthroughs in information and space technology, large market, the potential for military power and rich human resources. For this reason, Türkiye's focus on India is great due to both the common historical heritage and the power of India. As for the commercial partnership, while the fact that Turkish companies are active in the construction sector in India, joint committee meetings are also held in the fields of agriculture and tourism. Ultimately, although the commercial partnership established with an important economic power like India is not at the desired level, bilateral relations are positive and active except for the Kashmir issue (MFA, 2022).

Pakistan is another key state, even the most important one, in the SA for Türkiye. Pakistan is one of the only states that replace Türkiye's brotherhood phenomenon indeed. Bilateral relations between Pakistan and Türkiye have been going on since 1947 when Pakistan gained its independence. While high-level visits take place between states in a political sense, it is known that people remember each other with the phenomenon of brotherhood in social terms. The support given by the Muslims of the subcontinent in the Turkish War of Independence strengthened this phenomenon in minds. At the same time, Türkiye's success in establishing a modern state and its struggle for independence has been a source of inspiration for the people of Pakistan.

It is known that the relations between the two countries finally became institutionalized with the mechanism established as the High-Level Cooperation Council in 2009 and later raised to the level of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC). The Strategic Economic Framework and twelve more documents were signed on 13-14 February 2020 as the scope of bilateral economic relations at the HLSCC meeting. As for trade, the two countries are mutually importing and exporting. Eventually, it can be deduced that the two countries are close to each other in diplomacy, social and economic sense and carry out a successful and stable policy.

Therefore, it would not be surprising to claim that Pakistan is the state Türkiye approaches with the most sensitive and caring attitude in the SA policy (MFA, 2022).

All South Asian countries that are deemed sufficient to be explained and their bilateral relations with Türkiye are outlined in general terms above. In this part of the study, there was no historical limitation in bilateral relations, general lines are emphasized. This limitation is discussed in the next section as the last period relations. Conclusively, as marked in detail, there has not been a period of crisis or a pause in Türkiye's bilateral relations with the countries in the region in question, and an active policy is being pursued in general. Regional themes; economic aid, support and investments in some structural activities with institutions such as the TIKA, aid made with neighbourhood awareness in natural disasters and commercial partnerships come to the fore. When looking at the general policy of the region, organizations and relations with Pakistan and India, which can be considered as regional giants, are in a key position. So much so that the KC between these two states has the potential to disrupt Türkiye's holistic approach to the region.

2.1 Türkiye's Recent South Asia Policy

In this part of the study, Türkiye's policy and activities in the SA in the last term, namely the JDP period, is discussed. The study of the JDP policy constitutes the limitation of this department. Since the relations with the countries of the SA were evaluated in general terms in the introduction part, this evaluation is not be repeated in this section. Instead, some institutions that are effective in Türkiye's approach to the region and the SA policy that is influential in the SA activities is clarified. Then, the key positions of the three state parties to the KC in the Türkiye's recent regional policy is evaluated.

The SA is a region that is gaining more and more importance on a global scale. Considering its area, cultural value, economic potential, human resources that correspond to almost a quarter of the world's population, and its potential in terms of the evolution of the world system, it is accepted that the increasing importance in the global strategic equation is an undeniable fact. The SA is becoming one of the centers of gravity of the world, both geostrategically and geo-economically. In addition to its

position among global centers, dynamic developments make the region an effective mechanism for the future of the global system.

As for Türkiye's dialogue with the region, sayable that Türkiye has always been stuck in minds having strong historical and cultural ties with the SA. Türkiye establishes a dialogue with the countries of the region on the theme of friendship. It has a strong will to support this dialogue through cooperation. Having deep-rooted friendship ties with the peoples of these states, Türkiye's cooperation and relations with these countries have the potential to contribute significantly to regional stability, peace and cooperation (MFA, 2022). The expectation that Türkiye will become a more active and, in other words, the order-making state in Asia or in the SA, just as it was hoped in the AAI, confirms this. Therefore, it should not be surprising that Türkiye takes action to contribute to peace in any situation that threatens regional peace within the scope of the SA. From this point of view, defending Türkiye's mediation potential in the KC, which is the key point of this thesis, can be accepted as a strong argument. The next chapter makes this topic detailed.

Since the region is not suitable for a holistic approach due to its structure, Türkiye, like other states, generally carries out a policy here within the framework of organizations or some cooperation organizations. A holistic approach was adopted as a principle within the scope of the AAI. In this context, the importance of organizations has increased even more. In particular, as well as the Türkiye approach that separates Pakistan from other states and supports it on many platforms, it is known that she supports developing countries in technical issues such as finances and infrastructure within the scope of its own institutions.

As for Türkiye's first official activities with the countries of the region, it is seen that this corresponds to a recent date. With the withdrawal of England from the SA in 1947, the countries that gained their independence one by one have started to establish a mutual dialogue with other countries. Afterwards, she became one of the first states to recognize all states. Türkiye has not had a crisis or a period of stagnation in its bilateral relations with the countries in the region in question, and an active policy is being pursued in general. On regional themes; economic aid, support and investments in some structural activities with institutions such as the TIKA, aid made

with neighborhood awareness in natural disasters and commercial partnerships come to the fore.

When looking at the general policy of the region, it is understood that the organizations and relations with Pakistan and India, considered as regional giants, are in a key position. So much so that the crisis between these two states has the potential to disrupt the Türkiye's holistic approach to the region. The general themes of Türkiye's approach to the region have been mentioned above. Organizations that are leveraged in this approach is discussed. These organizations will also be considered for the close region, the SA. The organizations or institutions to be mentioned can be listed as follows; D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D8), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The first one of these, the D8, was constituted with the declaration in the Istanbul Declaration of the Heads of State/Government Summit on 15 June 1997. The D-8, also known as Developing-8, is an organization for development cooperation among the following countries: Türkiye, Egypt, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Iran, Nigeria, Malaysia, and Pakistan. Based in Istanbul, the prime minister of the time, with the initiative of Prof. Dr Necmettin Erbakan, it was established with the aim of improving the position of developing countries in the world economy, diversifying their commercial relations, creating new opportunities for member countries in the field of trade, and ensuring their strong participation in decision-making mechanisms at the international level. The D-8 is not a regional formation but a global organization as the composition of its members reflects (D-8 Organization For Economic Cooperation, 2022).

In the first Summit Declaration (Istanbul, 1997), the main objective of the D-8 is declared to be socio-economic development in harmony with the following principles: Peace instead of conflict, dialogue instead of confrontation, cooperation instead of exploitation, justice instead of the double standard, equality instead of discrimination, democracy instead of oppression. In other words, the general objectives of the D-8 are stated as providing new opportunities to the member states by developing trade relations, improving the positions of developing countries in the

world economy, ensuring active participation of member states in international decision-making processes and offering them a good standard of living. In addition, the D-8 does not limit the participation of member states in other international organizations in terms of commitment (D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, 2022).

Türkiye attaches importance to the D-8 Organization, of which it is the founder, and actively participates in the activities of the Organization. The D-8 Presidency, which was carried out by Türkiye between 2017-2021, was handed over to Bangladesh with the D-8 10 th Summit held on April 8, 2021. The total population of the D-8 countries is 1.1 billion (1/7 of the world's population) and their total economic size exceeds 4 trillion Dollars, and their total exports (700 billion Dollars) constitute 14% of global trade.

Moreover, the D8 is of great importance as it includes the leading economies in every corner of the Islamic geography. In fact, the D8 has a global potential rather than a regional one, because all of the members are also a part of the OIC. Those countries are mentioned as powerful actors in terms of economic development, technology, trade potential and population density. As a result, Türkiye is able to engage in strong and inclusive activities both politically and economically within the scope of the organization (MFA, 2022). Türkiye established its first official relations with the states in the Southeast Asian region under the umbrella of the D8 until 1999, with the initiatives of the PM Necmettin Erbakan. In the following process, the decision to develop political and economic relations with the ASEAN was taken in 1999 (Temiz & Aydoğdu, 2019).

Another formation that shapes Türkiye's mobility in the region is the ASEAN. The ASEAN was officially established on August 8, 1967, with the document signed by the five founding leaders - the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand - gathered in the main hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building in Bangkok. In this signed document, the targeted aims are also stated. These objectives concerned the promotion of regional peace and stability through cooperation in the economic, social, cultural, technical, educational and other fields, and respect for justice and the rule of law, and adherence to the UN

principles. In addition, a statement was added that the association would be open to the participation of all states in the SA region, depending on its aims and principles. Over the years, many countries have been involved in the association. Among these, the member countries are Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Singapore (founding members), Brunei (1984), Vietnam (1995), Laos (1997), Myanmar (1997) and Cambodia (1999), while the dialogue partners are the EU, the US, Canada, Russia, the PRC, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand. The association also has sectoral dialogue partners; these are Switzerland, Norway, Pakistan and Türkiye.

As for its historical transformation is examined, it has become a global organization with a very wide network today. Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia Treaty signed in 1976 and Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone-SEANWFZ Treaty signed in 1995 transformed the ASEAN into a legally binding organization. At the 11th the ASEAN summit in 2005, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Drafting of the ASEAN Charter, which provides a legal and institutional framework, was signed and "THE ASEAN Community" was founded on three pillars: "ASEAN Security Community", "ASEAN Economic Community" and "ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community". Then, at the 27th ASEAN Leaders Summit on November 21-22, 2015, a statement to implement the ASEAN Economic Community was published. In the statement, free movement of goods and services is aimed at this huge geography. Although there are some obstacles, implementation has been started. As can be marked, the ASEAN is a giant organization with the principle of cooperation and peace-building in many fields (ASEAN, 2020).

Eventually, as for Türkiye's relationship with the organization, the interaction dates back to 1999. Since the geography it covers is far from Türkiye, economic gains and cooperation are more important than political advantages. Türkiye became a party to the Friendship and Cooperation Agreement (ASEAN/TAC) during the 43rd the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in 2010, after expressing its intention to become a dialogue or sectoral dialogue partner. After this date, that is, since 2013, Türkiye has been invited to the Foreign Ministers' Meetings and the ASEAN Summit by the country's chairman of the period. In addition, Türkiye has an embassy on the borders of ten member states. It is considered that the Sectoral Dialogue Partnership (SDP)

established with the ASEAN, is beneficial by conducting a policy of opening up to the Southeast Asia region of Türkiye, providing a basis for political and economic relations, increasing the visibility of the country in the area just as desired in the AAI and obtaining the expected trade figures between Türkiye and region states within the framework of the country's 2023 goals.

As mentioned, the ASEAN is at a crucial point in terms of Türkiye's holistic approach to the SA - Southeast Asia and the cooperation opportunities it offers (MFA, 2022). As the latest news is known that Çavuşoğlu visited Cambodia to attend the Fourth ASEAN-Türkiye the SDP Trilateral Meeting on 3 August 2022. Within the scope of the meeting, the Minister held bilateral meetings and discussed global and regional issues, then discussed the developments in Ukraine and Southeast Asia, held talks with the authorities responsible for the Muslims of Cambodia, and finally declared that the support given to Sri Lanka would be continued by Türkiye. As a result, the main themes in Türkiye's approach to the region, such as economic cooperation, humanitarian foreign policy, sensitive and Muslim-friendly approach, and active attitude in recent developments, are being implemented faster and more robustly through the organization (MFA, 2022).

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is another important formation operating in the SA region. This association was established after the signing of the SAARC Charter on 8 December 1985 in Dhaka province. The SAARC consists of eight member states, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Later, The Association Secretariat was established on 17 January 1987 in Kathmandu. The objectives of the association written in the SAARC Charter can be listed as follows: To improve the quality of life and well-being of the peoples of the SA and; to accelerate the economic, social and cultural development of the region and to provide all individuals with the opportunity to live in dignity and realize their full potential; promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the SA countries; building mutual trust, helping to understand and appreciate each other's problems; to pave the way for active cooperation and mutual assistance in economic, technical, scientific, social and cultural fields; increase cooperation with other developing countries; to increase cooperation among

themselves in international forums on issues of common interest. In addition, decisions at all levels will be taken on a unanimous basis; and bilateral and controversial issues will be excluded from the association's negotiations (SAARC, 2020).

There are also observer members as well as the member states; these are listed as the US, the EU, China, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Iran, Myanmar, Mauritius. As for Türkiye's relationship with the organization, it turns out that the current situation is not at the desired level. Türkiye's interest in the SA region is undeniable. For example, Türkiye's efforts to the bring peace and stability to Afghanistan, the themes of close contact and cooperation that have come to the fore with increasing high-level visits with India, and lastly, the close relations and brotherhood theme with Pakistan for years confirm this. Türkiye, which has a special interest in the region as well as the countries, applied for observer membership in 2011, but the application is still under evaluation (MFA, 2022). Finally, it is mention that Türkiye can conduct a policy with this organization through a holistic approach by increasing interaction and cooperation with this organization rather than its membership status.

The latest and most comprehensive structure that can be evaluated within the scope of the SA region is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In fact, the SCO was originally established in 1996 by the RF, the PRC, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan to increase trust among member states, to demilitarize border regions and to promote regional cooperation, under the name of "Shanghai Five". At the Heads of State Summit meeting held in Shanghai on 14-15 June 2001, with the effect of events taking place both internationally and in the band of member states, a consensus was reached to transform the Shanghai Five into a regional organization in order to effectively combat and strengthen cooperation against threats originating from separatism, fundamentalism and terrorism. With the participation of Uzbekistan in this group, the Joint Declaration was accepted at this summit and the organization was officially implemented with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Establishment Declaration signed by six countries.

Then, at the first the SCO Prime Ministers' meeting held in Almaty on September 14, 2001, the "Memorandum of Understanding on the Main Objectives and the Directions of Regional Economic Cooperation and the Initiation of the Process of

Creating More Favorable Conditions in the Fields of Trade and Investment" was signed and the organization started to create an economic infrastructure. The SCO's founding purpose, principles, activities, cooperation areas, structure and external relations were announced with the SCO charts signed at the SCO Heads of State Summit held in St. on 7 Jun 2022. Respectively, first India and Pakistan in 2015 and then Iran in 2021 were accepted as full members of the organization. On the same date, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Qatar were given the status of dialogue partners.

As for Türkiye's relationship with the organization, it can be interpreted that it is more active here compared to other organizations. In 2018, the SCO developed a mechanism called Dialogue Partnership Status for third-country and international organizations that do not have observer membership status and want to contact the organization. This status allows states to have limited cooperation with the organization in certain fields. It is also below the "Observing Member" status but above the "Guest Participants" status. Eventually, Türkiye was unanimously accepted into the Dialogue Partnership at the SCO Heads of State Summit held in Beijing on 6-7 June 2012. Then, the "Memorandum on Recognition of the Dialogue Partner Status of the SCO to the Republic of Türkiye" signed on 26.04.2013 was approved by the Council of Ministers Decision no. 2017/10196 dated 01.05.2017 and published in the Official Gazette dated 24.05.2017 and numbered 30075. This document envisages the development of cooperation between the Dialogue Partner Türkiye and the SCO on various issues, in particular regional security, the fight against drug trafficking, countering terrorism and organized crime, also in cultural and economic fields (MFA, 2022).

Looking at the current developments in Türkiye regarding the SCO to evaluate the latest situation may useful. The latest recent development occurred within the 22nd Heads of State Summit of the SCO. For this summit, Erdoğan went to Samarkand to attend the SCO summit on September 15, 2022, upon the invitation of the President of Uzbekistan, Sevket Mirziyoyev (Presidency Of The Republic Of Türkiye, 2022). During this visit, Erdoğan stated that as they Türkiye aim to become a member of the SCO. This statement had wide repercussions in world politics. Most of these repercussions came from the West, and they were negative views that it was not

possible for Türkiye to become a member of both the NATO and the SCO, and that this could cause an axis shift. According to some views, on the one hand, this membership seems understandable for Türkiye, which is unlikely to focus on the West as much as before with the AAI, moreover, the possibility that the upcoming elections in the country would gain momentum with the support of Russia may question the future functionality of this membership discourse (Euronews, 2022).

President Erdoğan, as the guest of the American PBS channel in New York for the 77th General Assembly of the UN, made evaluations on domestic and foreign policy and the world agenda. In this meeting, Erdoğan also answered questions about the SCO. The reporter said, "You intend to join the SCO. There are Russia, China and Iran in this organization. This is an organization with very different values and goals than the NATO. Do you want your country to be part of the east or a part of the west?" In response to the question, Erdoğan made the following statement:

"I have to say this very clearly, we are part of the world, neither East nor West… For the US, a large part of our country geographically belongs to the east. The part that belongs to the west is separate. But the EU has kept the US busy for fifty-two years. Unfortunately, it still hasn't made it a member. There is no other country in the EU that is in our situation. They still keep stalling. However, we are a NATO country. Even though we are the NATO country, even the NATO countries keep the US busy in the EU process. We are among the top five with the support we provide within the NATO. We are a country located in. We have such a position in NATO. It is undoubtedly very significant for the US that Türkiye, which has such a strong position, is kept aside with such distraction tactics. Inevitably, we may be in a situation of entering into different pursuits. The EU will hold the US for 52 years, will not let the US get close to it, and after that, 'Why did it meet here, why did it meet here?' he will say. I can do that. While we are having these negotiations, we will not be accountable to the EU at this point. We meet with all countries of the world. I will also meet with Mr. Xi, I will meet with Mr. Putin, and I will also meet with Mr. Modi. I negotiate with all countries. Because we are all part of this world. When we have meetings with the member states of the EU, they don't ask 'Why did you meet with them?' There

was no question. Just as we are advancing the process with the SCO countries at the moment, we will be in the same stance as the rest of the countries " (Euronews, 2022).

In other words, it can be said that Erdoğan criticizes the Western world, which interprets the concentration of Türkiye's agenda on the SCO as seeking an alternative to the West, in line with its vision of rising Asia. At the same summit, Erdoğan had one-to-one meetings with some critical leaders such as Putin and Xi Jinping. Other leaders Erdoğan met with included President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif, President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and President of Uzbekistan Sevket Mirziyoyev. The closed-door meeting between Erdoğan and Putin lasted about 40 minutes. While thanking Erdoğan for his contributions to the grain agreement, Putin said that they hoped that a significant portion of the grain shipped from Ukraine would go to the poorest countries, but that their expectations in this regard have not been realized so far. On the other hand, Putin announced that they have agreed to pay 25 percent of their natural gas shipments to Türkiye in rubles. Putin stated that they expect the agreement, which envisages payment of 25 percent of natural gas shipments in rubles, to be implemented soon.

In response, Erdoğan made the following speech: "Thanks to our status as a Dialogue Partner that we have had for the last 10 years, this has become one of our windows to Asia. We are striving for the conclusion of the conflict in Ukraine through diplomacy. We are carrying out fruitful cooperation with the UN and the parties at the point of shipment of Ukrainian grain via the Black Sea. We are making sincere efforts to deliver the grain to our brothers and sisters in Africa, especially to those who need it the most" (NTV, 2022).

Another carefully followed meeting was Erdoğan held with Xi Jinping. The two leaders, made a speech for about half an hour, discussed the relations between the two countries and regional issues. Xi's meeting with Putin was also closely followed. While the two giant leaders focused on current clashes with Ukraine, they did not neglect to talk about energy. Putin expressed his concerns about the Ukraine war and expressed his gratitude to Jinping for the balanced policy pursued by China. The two leaders held their first face-to-face meeting after the war at this summit. In this context,

it would not be surprising to conclude that the SCO is an important and functional mechanism in world politics. Xi stated that China has historically instilled stability and positive energy into the world, and said they are willing to work with Moscow. In this field, Putin stated that they openly support Beijing on Taiwan and condemn the US provocations in the Taiwan Strait. Xi Jinping and Putin had met face to face a few weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24 and then announced that they had declared an unlimited partnership. The two leaders also promised greater cooperation against the West.

Eventually, at the end of the 22nd Meeting of Heads of State in 2022, the SCO leaders announced the Samarkand Declaration. The leaders of the SCO member Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, India and Uzbekistan signed this declaration regarding the results of the summit. In this declaration, it was declared that the SCO is not a mechanism established against other states and international organizations, but a structure that values mutual interests and approaches cooperation moderately. The leaders also added a call for increasing the effectiveness of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and reforming its organization by bringing economic realities to the fore. Finally, in this declaration, topics such as increasing cooperation in the field of defense and security and conducting joint military exercises of the organization's "Peace Mission" aimed at "Fighting Terrorism" were highlighted (Medyascope, 2022).

In the final analysis, the economy is one of the important levers within the SCO, and that's why one of the biggest areas of development within this structure is the economy as well. By ensuring the free movement of capital and goods, the SCO aims to facilitate economic investments, develop commercial activities and ultimately provide a favorable environment for interconnection projects. It would be appropriate to mention that the new economic preferences of global powers and China's the BRI project were effective in this development of the organization. Although the member countries differ from each other in structure, the organization makes the economic common denominator suitable. E.g., the SCO Business Council, which is active within the organization, is a functional structure and is aimed at creating an interregional business network by supporting various start-up and humanitarian projects. These

projects cover fields such as the construction of highways and railways, transportation infrastructure, the construction of oil and gas pipelines throughout the CA, while also promoting cooperation and prosperity in the region. With all these projects, it is aimed to create a common market and a region that facilitates free trade.

The SCO has made many breakthroughs in the field of economics since its establishment. To take a brief look at it, in 2003, China started a multilateral program of commercial and economic cooperation. In 2004, for the implementation of this program, activities were carried out in the fields of trade and investment, implementation of regulations, conformity assessment of standards and procedures, customs, financial and tax areas, transportation, energy sector, science and high technologies, agriculture, information and telecommunication technologies and environmental protection. Subsequently, in 2010, the Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation Program was launched. As part of this program, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Energy Club was also created in the same year, making it possible for both member states and observer states to participate. In 2014, the International Road Transport Facilitation Agreement was signed. Eventually, it was not surprising that about 11% of global foreign investment took place in the Shanghai Eight in 2016 (Akram, 2020).

As a result of the data obtained, mentioned that the SCO is a very effective mechanism and not only a regional but also a global organization. In this context, the fact that Türkiye operates even in the status of a dialogue partnership with the organization has the potential to take it further in regional policies. Because through the organization, it has the opportunity to contact and cooperate with many important regional states. Ultimately, the organization may be one of the levers in Türkiye's the SA policy, because it is not easy to approach the region holistically and the organization incorporates the three the SA regional giants, Pakistan, India and China. At the same time, the organization is also important for the Asian Re-opening as it includes the two critical Asian powers, China and Russia.

In this last part of the section, which is thought to be a discussion instead of a conclusion; as can be stated, Türkiye has not had a crisis or a stagnation period in its bilateral relations with the South Asian countries in the region in question, and it is

understood that an active policy is being pursued in general. Fields such as economic aids, support and investments in some structural activities with institutions such as the TIKA, aid made with neighborhood awareness in natural disasters, and commercial partnership come to the fore in themes related to the region. As for looking at the general policy of the region, organizations and relations with Pakistan and India, which can be considered as regional giants, are in a key position. So much so that the KC between these two states has the potential to disrupt the Türkiye's holistic approach to the region.

After examining the SA with a holistic approach in the deductive method, which goes step by step towards the analysis of the KC, Türkiye's bilateral relations with the parties of the crisis, India, Pakistan and China, is analyzed and then the crisis is interpreted in Türkiye's perspective.

2.2 Türkiye-Pakistan Bilateral Relations

Pakistan is one of the rare countries that Türkiye approaches with the concept of brotherhood and attaches great importance to it. The Turkish and Pashtun communities, whose peoples' relations with each other date back to the Ottoman period, continue in close relations today by changing forms as state level, since Pakistan's establishment. The undeniable support of the Muslims of the subcontinent to the Turkish War of Independence has put bilateral relations on an emotionally durable base, and Türkiye's struggle has been a source of inspiration for Pakistan. Hence, emotional themes also come to the fore in bilateral relations. Indeed, they are referred to as two brotherly countries in distant geographies. Bilateral relations were maintained with high-level visits, and the themes of brotherhood and sympathy between the societies were established by helping each other in difficult times such as natural disasters.

Bilateral relations are tried to be built as supportive and high-level both economically and diplomatically. Accordingly, bilateral relations were elevated to the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) level in 2019, and an institutional mechanism was achieved. Then, during President Erdoğan's visit to Pakistan on 13-14 February 2020, the 6th meeting of the HLSCC was held and the Strategic Economic

Framework was signed here, and it is seen that the relations are tried to be improved by gaining momentum in the economic theme (MFA, 2022).

After all, it would not be surprising to state that the economic relations of the two countries are also good level. There are many Turkish companies in Pakistan. As for Turkish investments, it is known to they concentrate on energy, infrastructure projects, finance and contracting sectors. In Türkiye, there are more than two hundred companies with Pakistani capital. It has been determined that the amount of direct investment made by these companies in Türkiye in the 2000-2020 period is approximately 691 million dollars. These companies mainly operate in the electronics, telecommunications, automotive, machinery, banking and trade sectors. Moreover, the total trade between the two states' volume is at an increasing level (MFA, 2022).

As for detail research relations between Türkiye and Pakistan; if examined in the social field is seen many similar themes are encountered between societies. This similarity stems from the fact that Pakistan sees Türkiye as a role model in some aspects. In this context, it is not coincidence Turkish motifs were found in the patterns on the flags of Pakistan as soon as it gained its independence in 1947. The main reasons for this influence that Türkiye has created in Pakistan are the formation of a foreign policy mechanism that Türkiye has turned to the west, determined in foreign policy parameters as westernism, and at the same time, the fact that it has not completely distanced itself from the Islamic phenomenon. For example, in 2004, Pakistan formed a structurally similar the National Security Council, as Türkiye has, in order to maintain the balance between the government and the army.

In addition, the balancing adjustments in army made by General Eyup Khan in 1958, General Yahya Khan in 1969, General Ziya-ul-Hak in 1977 and finally General Pervez Musharraf in 1999 and 2007 are other indications that Türkiye is a real role model for Pakistan. Finally, the role of the Turkish Constitutional Court in the presidential elections, namely the transfer of General Musharraf's candidacy to the constitutional court, and the Pakistani Constitutional Court carried out monitoring activities in the presidential elections of Pakistan with the 6 October elections. As a result, it is understood more clearly after these examples that Türkiye is a model for Pakistan with its many institutions. Despite all these similarities, there are also

fundamental differences. For example, since Türkiye is surrounded by democratic values, it has the potential to resolve political crises with democracy, but since Pakistan has not yet internalized democratic values, political crises are inevitable (Sahin, 2016).

The recent course of bilateral relations can be easily understood from the interview of Shahbaz Sharif, who was elected as the last term (2022) president. Speaking to the Anadolu Agency (AA) correspondent, Sharif started his speech by expressing that the historical relations between Türkiye and Pakistan are based on common religious, cultural and linguistic ties and that he believes this will not be affected by the political changes on both sides. Then, he added that both countries have approached Islamic geography sensitively and supportively until today, this theme is one of the facts that unite them. For example, Pakistan is one of the founding members of the OIC with its heritage based on the Islamic belief faith, Pakistan has a character structure that constantly supports the causes of Muslims. It tends to play an active and dynamic role in reviving the OIC and establishing closer relations with all Muslim countries.

Emphasizing that Pakistan has always been a staunch supporter of unity and peace among Muslim countries, Sharif in his speech emphasized the urgent need to protect the national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of each of the member states as the Chairman of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. To this end, it underlined that its national policies should adhere to the principles of peace and justice, as stated in the UN and OIC Charter. He also said that they should promote unity and peace, with justice and dignity, in all disputes and conflicts, inside and outside the Islamic world. Sharif finally highlighted that Pakistan and Türkiye support each other in all matters concerning national interests, whether it is Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) or Northern Cyprus, and thanked Türkiye, especially its leadership, for its principled support of the J&K conflict (Khaliq & Bicer, 2022).

As can be understood from Sharif's statements, Türkiye is in a very important position for Pakistan. Likewise, Pakistan has a very special meaning for Türkiye. That's why emotional themes come to the fore in relationships. Both countries tend to take a sensitive and protective approach to the injustices suffered by Muslims. Therefore, it would not be surprising to see that both states are members of the OIC

and act actively. Pakistan and Türkiye, which can be considered as strong representatives of Islam, show similar approaches to the Palestinian issue in this context. Another issue which the two countries meet on a common ground emotionally is the KC.

The KC is an issue that has still been going on since 1947, when India and Pakistan gained independence and caused wars due to the inability to determine the status of Kashmir and today has turned into a crisis because of become chronic. Approximately 90% of Kashmiri people are Muslims, so this density is also seen in the Jammu region, which is administered by India, and there is a general belief that India exhibits authoritarian approaches and human rights violations due to the phenomenon of religion. Likewise, the people of Azad Kashmir under Pakistani administration suffer from mutual conflict as well. After all, it can be accepted that two main themes for the KC, namely Human Rights Violations and the Muslim-Hindu dispute, have come to the fore in the international arena. Therefore, it might have not been surprising that Türkiye remained silent about the KC due to its sensitivity to human rights abuse, its meticulous approach to Islamic geography and its fraternal bond with Pakistan.

Türkiye has always displayed a sensitive and supportive approach to the Islamic geography. Provide that thinking about this in the context of the KC, it is accepted that Türkiye has shown an approach that supports Pakistan and criticizes India on almost all platforms. Despite the fact that she has repeatedly called for a ceasefire in both countries, Türkiye seems to consider this crisis as a violation committed against the Muslim people. President Erdoğan's statement that "Kashmir Becomes Our Çanakkale" confirms this (TRT, 2020). As explained, Türkiye is showing a very sensitive approach to this crisis, but it is known that this approach has caused some blockades when evaluated by Indian part. Even, between the two countries, India and Türkiye occasionally there has been a period of unpleasantness in relations due to Kashmir. In this field, India found Erdoğan's rhetoric about Kashmir unacceptable and criticized it as a gross interference in its internal affairs (The Economic Times, 2020).

After all the evaluations, it would not be ambitious to mention that Pakistan is the key element in Türkiye's the SA policy. In addition, it is clear Türkiye is conducting maneuvers in the SA region based on Pakistan. In other words, another pillar of Türkiye's regional policy includes developments related to Pakistan. In essence, Pakistan has not been able to internalize democracy as much as Türkiye, that's why there is a high probability that its political crises will deepen.

Since Türkiye is considered an exemplary representative of both democratic and Islamic geography, provided that it makes constructive contributions to Pakistan in terms of democracy, the likelihood of achieving more lasting success in the regional policy conducted through Pakistan will increase. If the KC is evaluated from this perspective so the foundations of Türkiye's mediation phenomenon in the crisis will be more comprehendible. In this study, the argument that Türkiye can mediate this crisis is defended. From this point of view, by assuming this mediation role, Türkiye can achieve success within the scope of the AAI, which would give impetus to Asia policy, support Pakistan in the SA policy and ease the obstacle to Pakistan's progress in terms of democracy, and get a chance to get rid of the nervous atmosphere caused by this crisis with India by proving its goodwill gesture. In addition, in the next part of the study, it is underlined that Türkiye's pro-Pakistan stance in the crisis negatively affected bilateral relations with India.

The last point to be clarified or criticized in Türkiye-Pakistan bilateral relations is economic cooperation. In this sense, it is known that the common theme in relations is brotherhood, Islam and social closeness, but it can be stated that these strong themes do not provide the desired cooperation in terms of economy. The level of perfection in relations has not yet been achieved in the field of economy. In this sense, the last president, Sharif, also had some comments. During his last visit to Türkiye, Sharif said that Pakistan promises a strong and large market with its growing middle class; emphasized that he will meet with leading Turkish companies to encourage them to use the good opportunities available in Pakistan in various fields including energy, infrastructure, e-commerce, agro-industry and IT sectors (Khaliq & Bicer, 2022). Finally, it is the common desire of Türkiye and Pakistan, whose annual bilateral trade

volume exceeds one billion dollars, to experience the golden age of mutual trade in the coming years.

2.3 Türkiye-India Bilateral Relations

India, with a population of over 1 billion, is an important state not only for the SA but also for the whole world. The establishment of relations between Türkiye and India has begun after India gained its independence in 1947. India, which is governed by a multi-party parliamentary democracy, has approximately 79% Hindu, 15% Muslim, %2 Christian, 2% others communities (Pew Research Center, 2021). Although there are more believers in Hinduism than believers in Islam, this diversity of religious beliefs also brings about social disintegration. The KC can be considered in this context and is one of the country's political issues. Looking at the bilateral relations again, could mentioned about close contact at the existence of embassy and consulate in both two countries.

In fact, it would not be misleading to state that the construction of bilateral relations began in the period before independence. It is possible to trace the first interaction of Turkish and Indian society back to the period of Saka's, Kushans and White Huns. Subsequently, the Ghaznavids, Babburians and the Delhi Turkish Sultanate also have represented this common history. In other words, concluded that the two communities have been in a relationship for centuries despite the geographical distance. Thus, the interaction between the two societies, which started in the early periods and continued in the process, is a common history with strong ties that remark itself in many fields such as political, military, social and cultural (Pustu et al., 2015).

The support given by Indian Muslims in the Turkish Independence Struggle has an important case in bilateral relations. However, in this new period India gained its independence, it was observed that Türkiye-India relations were more distant compared to the past and progressed in accordance with the conditions of those day. Subsequently examining chronologically, the execution of bilateral relations in an official and comprehensive framework with an agreement was occured with the friendship agreement signed on 14 December 1951 (T.C Resmi Gazete, 13.07.1952). The first disagreement, which partially led to strained bilateral relations, occurred at

the Bandung Conference in 1955. It was a disagreement as to the non-alignment movement. While Türkiye did not participate in this movement and chose its side, India preferred to remain neutral.

At the end of the 1950s, with the transformation of the Baghdad Pact into Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), the two states reached a common denominator against communism fortunately. However, Türkiye's close alliance with Pakistan was beginning to worry India. In the following processes, the desired closeness between the bilateral relations could not be achieved. India used the West card against Chinese communism and started to stand closer to the West. For this reason, comments were made that she was willing to fix its relations with Türkiye at that time. Unfortunately, While Türkiye supported Pakistan in Kashmir because of its close stance with Pakistan, India's stance supporting the opposing party Makarios in the Cyprus issue created a bthe LOCkade in bilateral relations (Malkoç, 2022).

According to the views of Ismail Cem, the foreign minister of that time, the importance given to Türkiye by the Indian parliament in the 1970s was reflected in the delegation's visit to Türkiye. Later, Cem stated that the Indian authorities wanted to establish stronger relations with Türkiye, and see that Türkiye's Asia policy and continental balance were seen as an important center of gravity. In addition, Cem interpreted it as promising that the Indian authorities showed that they were impressed by Mahmut Dikerdem's approach, Türkiye's Ambassador to New Delhi, that being friendly with Pakistan would not be a disadvantage for India (Cem, 1971). Then, to continue briefly, the visits of Bülent Ecevit to India after Turgut Özal and Kenan Evren in the 1980s, and the return visits of the Indian authorities in response to these visits, gave the impression that the relations between the two countries would develop further and be easily advanced in the future.

Since the 1980s, the efforts to improve the contact between the two countries showed themselves in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye and, as before, it was decided to establish an Inter-Parliamentary Turkish-India Friendship Group in early 1986. After the death of former Indian President Indira Gandhi as a result of an armed attack, Türkiye immediately conveyed its condolences to India and the Presidential Memorandum inviting the parliamentary general assembly to take a moment of silence

on this issue was presented to the parliament on 31 October 1984, and then the politicians went to India to attend the funeral. This event has been instrumental in re-remembering the old friendship theme of the two communities.

The visit of the term chairman Özal on these dates (1986) had wide repercussions in the eyes of the people. This was also the first official visit of a Turkish prime minister to India. After the visit, which was thought to be productive, India made a statement about the Cyprus Issue that it would support a federal solution both Türkiye and Greece would accept, and the theme of softening in bilateral relations came to the fore again. Subsequently, Rajiv Gandhi's return visit to Türkiye took place in 1988. Newspaper headlines started to appear in the headlines where the theme of coldness was left behind. In general, it would be right to say positive contacts were made between the two countries in the 1980s.

As mentioned before, although some of the blockades affected the economic relations badly, mutual economic contacts progressed well during the Özal period. In the 90s, mutual relations are tried to be strengthened even more. In the early 1990s, President of India Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma made a four-day official visit to Türkiye to return Kenan Evren's visit. In other words, on 17 July 1993, an Indian president came to Türkiye for the first time to pay an official visit finally. Demirel, the President of Türkiye at the time, declared that he accepted this visit as the beginning of a new era in bilateral relations. However, in the same year, Pakistani President Bhutto expressed his request for help regarding the Kashmir conflict from Türkiye, which he believed to have established strong relations with both Pakistan and India, and this statement is an indication Türkiye has made good progress in its relations with India.

Finally, clear to say that positive atmosphere was still maintained during Ecevit trip to India, who was known for his sympathy for Indian culture and the prime minister of the time. Prior to this visit, Ecevit's opinion that Türkiye could adopt the Indian model came to the fore. Comments were made that Türkiye, which distanced itself from India while leaning towards Pakistan in its previous political attitudes, is on the path of balance. After all, Türkiye's relations with India can hardly be considered apart from the Pakistan perspective (Malkoc, 2022). In other words, bilateral relations between Türkiye and India have remained in the shadow of Pakistan.

As could be marked, the Pakistani factor manifests itself in Türkiye's relations with India. It would not be surprising to mention that Türkiye, in its relations with one of these countries, then puts another one on its agenda too. Finally, bilateral relations in the recent period, namely the JDP term, is mentioned. During the JDP period in Türkiye, cultural and historical ties with India continue to be among the prominent topics. Although the course of bilateral relations changes according to seasonal conditions, both sides have complained economic relations are below expectations. Developing relations with India is always on Türkiye's agenda. To take a look at one of the last foreign policy yearbooks (2021), it is stated that in addition to the objectives of realizing the existing commercial potential and increasing mutual investments, it is aimed to carry out bilateral relations with a non-unidimensional positive agenda within the framework of mutual interests (MFA, 2021).

With its huge market, military and nuclear power, growing economy, high-level position in information and space technology, rich human resources, ancient culture and history, India is always important for Türkiye with its potential to become a global power in its own region and in the world. In this context, the official visit of President Erdoğan, which took place in recent 2017, is remarkable. Since it is clear that a requirement for a rebirth or revival due to actless relationships. India is also important because of its connection with Asia Pacific, which is one of the new routes in Türkiye's economic manoeuvring area. Within the scope of the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) and the G20 summits, the leaders of the two countries, Erdoğan and Modi, met regularly between 2015-2019. In addition, on 23 September 2019, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye held a bilateral meeting with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in the margins of the 74th United Nations General Assembly (MFA, 2022).

If continue with 2019, is seen this date can also be evaluated as a period of tension in bilateral relations. It would be appropriate to turn back to the recent past to explain the process leading to this tension. India was also affected by the increasing religious-based extremism in its nearby geography as in Filipinos and in 2014, Modi, the leader of the BJP, the representative of the nationalist regime, was elected Prime Minister. This also meant the establishment of the first non-judgmental government in

India without a congress party. This event not only brought conflicts possibility of varying sizes between the Muslim community and Hindus in India, but also brought forward a danger that feeds the phenomenon produced in the West that stems from ‘anti-Islamism’. The possibility as to domestic policy orientation could harm India’s foreign policy, represents another concern (Aksoz, 2022).

After the ultra-Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power, the time period in which tolerance from ancient Indian culture was questioned began. In fact, after this date, the danger of internal conflict has come to the fore in the country. For example, discriminatory practices alleged to have been applied against Muslims and the change in the semi-autonomous status of Kashmir in the Indian Constitution did not escape the attention of the whole world. Türkiye, which has never been insensitive to the negative conditions that Muslims are exposed to, has not been late to show its reaction after following the agenda closely. At the United Nations General Assembly held in September 2019, Erdoğan touched upon the Kashmir issue on behalf of Türkiye after a long break and declared that he favors the resolution of this issue through dialogue in accordance with THE UN resolutions. Türkiye’s bringing this issue to the UN can also be considered a global warning to India (Presidency Of The Republic Of Türkiye, 2019).

Here where the political tension between the two states initiated. Just after this date, Erdoğan clearly criticized India by comparing what happened in Kashmir to what happened in Palestine. Then, speaking at the joint forum of the National Assembly and the Senate held in the Pakistani Parliament in February 2020, Erdoğan made assertive statements here. He stated that as Türkiye they will continue to support Pakistan in the KC by taking strength from the Türkiye-Pakistan brotherhood phenomenon and mentioned that Kashmir’s freedom struggle and the Çanakkale struggle resemble each other (TRT Haber, 2020). After all these Türkiye’s criticisms, India eventually showed its counterreaction. New Delhi described President Erdoğan’s remarks on Kashmir in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly as “absolutely unacceptable” and recommended that Ankara “learn to respect the sovereignty of other nations”. India, also criticized Pakistan, Türkiye and the OIC for their comments on India’s domestic issues at the 46th session of the Human Rights Council (The Economic Times, 2020).

Moreover, TS Tirumurti, Permanent Representative of India to the UN, said in a statement that Türkiye should learn to respect the sovereignty of other nations and think more deeply about its own policies (Tirumurti A. T., 2020). As can be seen, very tense energy has begun to dominate in political relations between India and Türkiye. Türkiye's extreme reactions to India's nationalist rhetoric and its new regime affected bilateral relations very badly. As a result, it is not difficult embrace that the Kashmir issue, specific to Pakistan, reflects a negative atmosphere in the bilateral relations between Türkiye and India. However, even if Türkiye had expressed its readiness to mediate with a gesture of goodwill, it was not welcomed by the Indian front because of its pro-Pakistani and morale-oriented rhetoric.

If continue with the latest developments, the Erdoğan-Modi meeting held this year (2022) comes forward. The two held talks within the scope of the SCO Summit held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. After the recent tensions, this meeting between the two countries has been carefully followed. In this meeting, which was closed to the press, the areas discussed in this meeting is revealed in time. Immediately after the meeting, Modi tweeted in Turkish from his own account; "We met with President @RTErdoğan and reviewed all bilateral relations between India and Türkiye, including ways to deepen economic relations for the benefit of our peoples"[1] (Narandra Modi, 2022). This promising meeting and the aforementioned statements show that economic relations are still not at the expected level. In this age of accelerating globalization, it would not be surprising to mention that both states need each other in their economic maneuvers.

Accordingly, Türkiye following its reoriented policy to Asia recently had better use the economy as leverage in its bilateral relations with India which is not at the desired level. In the era of globalization, India is a state that cannot be denied with its superiority in information technology, the importance of its manpower geostrategic position and its military power. At the same time, it is seen that she makes rational maneuvers in order to maintain her current strong position in his policies. In this context, it adopts multiple orientations rather than single orientations in its political

[1] "Cumhurbaşkanı @RTErdoğan ile görüştük ve halklarımızın menfaati için ekonomik ilişkileri derinleştirecek yollar dahil Hindistan ve Türkiye arasındaki tüm ikili ilişkileri gözden geçirdik"

maneuvers. For example, in order not to disturb the balance despite the competition with China in the region, it is a member of the BRICS and at the same time, it has adopted the principle of operating comprehensively within the ASEAN by giving importance to being active in its nearby geography. In other words, it favors diversity in power elements. Therefore, in the context of India's multiple political orientations, it is likely that India may welcome positive steps taken by Türkiye to her in every field.

Another issue that needs to be evaluated in order to revive bilateral relations is the common culture phenomenon. The "Türkiye-India Cultural Agreement" signed in 1951 between the two countries reflects the ancient tie better. In addition, Türkiye's first agreement for this purpose was with India. "Türkiye-Indian Cultural Society", which operates in an old period, can also be considered a bridge representing a strong bond between the two countries. Today, such structures can be re-established in order to create bring people closer by forming positive impressions in the public and societies of the two states. In other words, Türkiye can reveal the perceptions of India with a new and different interpretation without creating them through Pakistan (Aksoz, 2022).

Provided that a policy drawing strength from historical and cultural ties in bilateral relations, adopts economic cooperation as a principle and keeps the Pakistan factor in the background, is ensured, the two important powers of Asia be able to sign more successful businesses and initiatives and then a win-win policy is implemented. As a result, after all the evaluations, it was underlined that the bilateral relations were negatively affected by the Pakistani factor, and it was revealed that there is no obstacle in the bringing the Türkiye-India bilateral relations to the desired level with the help of overtaking and balancing the Pakistani factor. It is thought that the economy may act as a prize in this sense. At the same time, it is believed that by redeclaring the mediation phenomenon for the KC of Türkiye with all its good intentions and putting it into practice by avoiding the past critical discourses, a moderate and new era can be started in relations. In the final analysis, it is thought that Türkiye, which seems to intend a more inclusive and holistic approach in its relations with India, may pragmatically expands its range of diplomacy providing achieve this.

2.4 Türkiye-China Bilateral Relations

The People's Republic of China (PRC), which holds the title of the most populous country in the world with a population of over 1 billion, is an important power that is advancing towards becoming a playmaker in the rapidly changing world order. Türkiye's diplomatic relations with China started in 1971. Later, in the 1980s, relations gained momentum in parallel with the implementation of outward-oriented growth in both countries. As for 2010, the relations were elevated to the level of "Strategic Partnership" finally. After this date, high-level visits gained momentum. In this context, while The PRC Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Türkiye on 7-9 October 2010, and the PRC President Xi Jinping visited Türkiye on 20-22 February 2012 during his vice presidency, President Erdoğan visited the PRC on 8-11 April 2012 when he was Prime Minister, and lastly visited in July 2019 as President.

In addition, since 2015, the two presidents, Erdoğan and Xi Jinping have met by getting together via many international meetings such as G-20 Hanco, G-20 Antalya, the BRICS Johannesburg and G-20 Buenos Aires in 2018, and The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Dushanbe and G-20 Osaka Summit meetings in 2019. When it comes to more recent dates, it is seen that Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Türkiye on 25 March 2021 due to the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Subsequently, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye visited the PRC on January 12, 2022 (MFA, 2022).

Thanks to its economy, culture, technology and population power, China is an important country among rising Asian countries in global politics and economy. In this respect, China is one of the countries where Türkiye pays the most attention in the area of maneuver in Asia. Besides the bilateral relations are generally established on the economic theme and progressed at a peaceful level, the Uyghur Problem in China is the only disputatious topic in bilateral relations. The main subject of the issue in question is the Uyghur Turks. It is known that the minority of eleven million people living in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in the northwest of China, the majority of this group is Muslim. Allegedly, Uyghur Turks are subject to bullying against their identity and culture, and are excluded from their consent in what are called "vocational training centers". This event has been heavily criticized by the international

community. According to the UN data, although it is claimed that at least one million Uyghur Turks are being held in these camps, detailed information on this issue cannot be obtained from the Beijing administration (Anadolu Agency, 2021).

Türkiye, which is not indifferent to human rights violence not only within the scope of Muslims but also all over the world, has taken an active approach in this case. At the beginning of 2022, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu met with his counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing. In this meeting, Çavuşoğlu very stated that Ankara recognizes China's right to fight terrorism, but calls on Beijing to draw a fine line between terrorists and innocent people. Türkiye also expressed that it expects the Chinese authorities to respect the universal human rights of Uyghur Turks and other Muslim groups, including freedom of religion (Aglarcı, 2022). Prior to this date, Erdoğan's criticism of 'genocide' after China's re-violation of rights against the Uyghurs in 2009 and then raising the issue at the G-20 summit was a reflection of his strong support for the Uyghurs. Although Türkiye is desperate to find the support it is ready to give in the international arena from other states, it has been successful in publicizing the issue. Afterwards, China did not accept these criticisms and the theme of tension in Türkiye-China bilateral relations was seen (Sayın & Koçak, 2017).

In the booklet of the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which includes the entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy expectations of 2023, the following is stated on the subject; after underlining the aim of maintaining relations in a way that will serve global peace in the national interests, Türkiye's expectations and sensitivities for Uyghur Turks and other Muslims to lead their lives in peace, tranquility and prosperity, to observe their fundamental rights, to protect their religious freedoms and to transfer their cultural identities to future generations, have been expressed in every meeting between Türkiye and China and even in bilateral contacts at the highest level, and also expressed it decisively on international platforms, especially in the UN and THE OIC (MFA, 2022). As explained above, the issue of Uyghur Turks is one of the issues that Türkiye meticulously handles and maintains its relations with, even though there is not yet a level of tension in bilateral relations with China.

Looking at the mutual economic relations again, it can be started by underlining that China is Türkiye's largest trading partner in Asia Pacific. At the same time, as of 2021, China is Türkiye's second largest trading partner worldwide. It has been determined that the bilateral trade volume between the two countries, mutual imports and exports are intense, exceeded one billion dollars in 2000. Although Türkiye has a trade deficit with China, the total amount of China's investment in Türkiye has been recorded as over 4 billion dollars. Investments, which have been increasing more recently, cover the fields of energy, infrastructure, logistics, finance, mining and telecommunication. In addition, with the updating of the bilateral currency swap agreement signed between the central banks of the two countries in 2019 on June 15, 2021, the transaction volume was increased by 35.1 billion TL and 23 billion Chinese Yuan, thus reaching a total transaction volume of 46 billion TL and 35 billion Chinese Yuan. (MFA, 2022).

An important sub-title in economic relations is transportation projects, which have been on the rise recently. In this context, THE OBOR, the giant transportation project announced by China to the whole world in 2013, and Türkiye's Middle Corridor come to the fore. This step taken by the China to bringing the historical Silk Road back to life points to a transportation network covering the whole world (Lifang, 2016). Indeed, Türkiye is also a part of this initiative and represents strategic geopolitics. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two countries in 2015 in order to harmonize Türkiye's already existing Middle Corridor project with China's Belt and Road project. In this context, it is planned to realize the Trans-Caspian-Central Corridor Project, which opens an additional corridor between China and Europe and complements China's Northern line. Studies to develop cooperation within this scope are ongoing. Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line, one of the most important levers of the Middle Corridor project, was put into operation in 2017 and its activity is increasing day by day. Eventually, the first direct freight train service in the Türkiye-China direction over the "Middle Corridor" route departed in December 2020 (MFA, 2022).

The sub-corridor, which can be considered the OBOR flagship and also provides a seagoing transport, is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This

project, which was created with the mission of having a positive impact on Afghanistan, Iran, the Central Asian Republic and the region, is a regional linking mechanism. The corridor is expected to support the development of the people of Pakistan and China, as well as being an economic corridor that promotes interpersonal communication for construction, bilateral connectivity and investment, economy and trade, logistics and regional connectivity. It was built on a route starting from Kashgar to the port of Gwadar. The fact that the route passes through Kashmir, the disputed region between India and Pakistan, also makes it remarkable (CPEC, 2022). Although there are views as to this Kashmir connection point worries India, the possibility of calming the high tension in the region with the common interests of the two states India and Pakistan within the scope of the project should not be overlooked.

Similarly, the elements of trust have already been included in the announced basic principles of the initiative. In this context, while declaring the charts that the initiative should adopt as a principle, it is underlined that it is primarily compatible with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Subsequently, it was emphasized that it supported the following Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence; mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, mutual non-aggression, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. At the same time, it was emphasized that the initiative considers differences in order for all the countries it covers to live together in peace and supports dialogue between different civilizations on the principles of meeting on common ground by taking advantage of each other's strengths (Belt And Road Portal, 2017).

Here, the fact of establishing common ground by considering the differences emphasized in this principle can be realized for the KC. As a result, China would not desire any tension around the transportation route for the sustainability of the project, and it is expected to take a conciliatory approach to prevent this, as stated in the principles. As the main argument that the study focuses on, Türkiye's mediation for the KC is possible in this sense being supported by China. In this sense, without being an active mediator, China can provide an assurance to improve the process or not jeopardize the delicate nature of the process at least.

It is an undeniable fact that bilateral relations continue to develop day by day in political and economic terms, with the effect of the rise of relations between Türkiye and China to the level of Strategic Partnership in 2010. In 2018, the "Türkiye Tourism Year" was celebrated in China, and it is promising that the cultural, artistic and promotional activities carried out in this context contributed significantly to the relations between the two countries. Subsequently, Yunus Emre Institute, which is one of the key factors in Türkiye's soft power building, was put into operation in also Beijing in 2021 (MFA, 2022). As for the organizations, there are opportunities for the two states to come together within the scope of foundations such as the G20, the ASEAN, the UN, the SCO in the name of both regional and bilateral cooperation. In addition, the case of China's permanent member of the UN Security Council is important in Türkiye's holistic policy.

In light of the data, it is concluded that both countries care about each other and carry out an active and cooperative policy together. It has been clarified that economy, trade, tourism and the BRI constitute the current theme of bilateral relations. There is a high perception as to interaction may increase further with Türkiye's the AAI. Finally, China, which is a party to the crisis, has the potential to warmly welcome Türkiye's mediation case for the sake of inner circle peace, due to both the OBOR and care for regional security.

CHAPTER THREE

TÜRKİYE AND KASHMIR

Kashmir, defined as the Switzerland of the East due to its magnificent geography, is unfortunately a structure that is notorious for the crisis. A crisis term is defined in the dictionary as an extremely difficult or dangerous point in a situation and the Kashmir region in this sense reflects the definition of crisis as it includes violence and conflict (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). The conflict in the region, which is administered by India, Pakistan and China, is mainly between India and Pakistan. Kashmir has lived under political chaos and pecuniary and non-pecuniary loses have being given for years. This is actually a border dispute, that has been ongoing since 1947, and both states claim rights in this region thus the line could not be drawn.

Kashmir has lived in a political chaos and the KC definition is more suitable as material and moral losses have been suffered for years.

In geographically, Kashmir is a part of Indian subcontinent and it is bounded by Pakistan to the west, Afghanistan to the northwest and by Punjab to the south (Britannica, 2022). Thanks to this geostrategic location, Kashmir has importance both for its close geography the SA and for the general continent in terms of connection points. It is known that due to Kashmir, the two states that are party to the crisis, India and Pakistan, have gone three separate wars and approximately forty-seven thousand people lost their lives in total (Reuters, 2008). It is a crisis that is followed with sensitivity around the world due to the intense loss of life and the nuclear power of the parties, India and Pakistan.

Türkiye is also a state that closely follows the crisis, calls for a ceasefire and even offers mediation. Here, Türkiye's mediation initiative, which is the main focus this dissertation, is examined in detail in this section. However, the point that needs to be clarified is Türkiye's recent activity in Kashmir represents limitation of this study. Hence, the last period, namely the JDP policies, is examined mainly. As for the methodology, the deductive method has been used since the beginning of the study and a road map has been followed from Türkiye's Asia policy to the SA policy and from there to Kashmir finally. In this context, Türkiye's Kashmir policy, which has not yet been clarified, is tried to be built on the mediation phenomenon based on Türkiye's Asia and the SA maneuvers. In this mediation activity, the US partnership, which is believed to make the process more effective and successful in the long run, is included with Türkiye's accompaniment.

In this last part of the study, the following is discussed respectively; first, the chronological course of the KC and all its triggering factors is discussed and its political reflection is evaluated, and then the ecopolitics of the crisis, a triggering factor of the KC, is evaluated within the scope of the economy element. In the continuation, the general Kashmir approach of Türkiye without mentioned details and the recent period, the JDP, Kashmir approach with its details is evaluated. From this point of view, it is tried to enlightened by supporting various arguments that Türkiye has the potential for mediation, and it is suggested that Türkiye's Kashmir policy be built on the mediation phenomenon. Finally, after evaluating the US's discourse and approach

to the crisis, an assessment is made regarding its partnership in Türkiye's mediation process.

3.1 Kashmir Crisis and Its Political Evaluation

The Kashmir zone is not possessed the same chance in its politic destiny even if it is blessed with unique geography, nature, and fertile soil. The region referred to within the scope of the KC and where the conflict took place is actually the Jammu area. But there are other regions throughout Kashmir. When examined within the province, J&K, Azad Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Ladakh and Aksai regions come to the fore. The J&K is disputed and essentially an Indian-administered province, Ladakh is part of the J&K and Indian-controlled, Azad Kashmir is Pakistani-controlled, Gilgit Baltistan is part of Azad Kashmir, and finally, Aksai is Chinese-controlled. The center of Azad Kashmir is Muzaffarabad, and the center of Jammu-Kashmir is Srinagar (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2022).

The Kashmir region, which covers an area of approximately 222 thousand square meters, is also very famous for its natural beauties. It is blessed with unique and strategic geography, fertile soil and nature. It is not surprising that Kashmir is called the Switzerland of the East because of its unique geography (Lee, 2020). Having prosperity of forest areas, water resources and favorable territory Kashmir lands are also a remarkable region in terms of tourism. For instance, Indus River, an important source of income and water for the entire region, flows here.

As for the strategic importance of the region, there are important points to highlight. Located in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent, Kashmir has borders with Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and China. Kashmir has a place in very important coordinates that are surrounded by the Himalayas, and this decent feature makes Kashmir a gate of the SA. Blessed with the highest mountains in the world including the Mount Everest, the Himalayas has more than 110 peaks with 7300 meters above sea level. It has been one of the SA's greatest treasures for years. It lies in a 2500 km area between Azad Kashmir and Namcha Barwa the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. Moreover, thanks to the Karakoram Mountain on the northwest coast, which connects the Himalayas to India, China, India and Pakistan are connected to each other. (Chatterjee & Piskopos, 2019). As a result, this uninterrupted line makes Kashmir suitable for checking the whole area. Thus, it highly increases Kashmir's importance

and means the whole of the SA's concern. After the geostrategic general definitions, it can finally be skipped to the politics of the crisis.

Illuminating the developments on the way to the crisis with historical description gives a holistic perspective to the KC. To mention about the beginning of the KC, when going back to 1947, it is accepted as general wisdom that Britain's withdrawal from the subcontinent on this date started the events. The SA region, which was under the umbrella of the Britain for a long time, opened the doors of a new era after the British and the struggle for independence began in there. Powered by the absence of a higher authority, Pakistan and India were separated from each other and today's Pakistan state was established. With the withdrawal of Britain from the region, some pieces of land were left without status. Kashmir is one of them, and today, this British legacy problem still unresolved. Throughout history, there have been three separate wars because of this the KC.

In the aftermath of the partition, hundreds of so-called independent principality states were brought under authority by two new nations. However, Kashmir's term general governor, Sikh Maharaja Hari Singh, apparently refused to join either nation for the sake of the community's independence. The origins of the conflict in Kashmir stem from religious phenomenon. In other words, the fact that about 80% of the people are Muslim, but the head of state is Sikh, and the concern that he will be close to India has started the struggle for independence here. Although Kashmiri Muslims expressed that they wanted to unite with Pakistan at this stage where the partition was discussed, Maharaja showed that he was in favor of independence by not accepting the union with Pakistan (Arı, 2000).

In September 1947, an occupation took place in Kashmir by Kashmiri Muslims and Pakistani tribes in the west of the state, and Maharaja, the term president, asked for help from the Indian President Nehru to repel it. On the other hand, Nehru stated that this aid would only occur if Kashmir region was completely connected to India in order to preserve its territorial integrity. Subsequently, on October 27, 1947, the Maharaja agreed to join India on the condition that Kashmir's constitutional autonomy would not be violated, and Indian troops repulsed the Pakistani forces immediately afterwards (Human Rights Watch, 1993).

When it came to 1948, once India and Pakistan sent their own troops to the region, the conflict officially started, and then today's borders were formed. While one third of Kashmir, including Srinagar, passed into the controlled of India, the remaining area of about 84 thousand km, namely Azad Kashmir, passed under Pakistani control. An intense struggle was waged as the Kashmiri people rose up and joined the Pakistani troops. India took the issue to the UN during this collision. Here India accuses Pakistan of being an invader, while Pakistan accuses India of persecuting the Muslim people. After making evaluations, the UN endorsed holding a plebiscite with the first decision taken on April 21, 1948.

In this resolution no 38. adopted by the Security Council; first of all, the UN called on the governments of both India and Pakistan to take all measures to improve the situation and to refrain from making any statements or causing them to be made. Then the plebiscite recommendation was declared as follows: Recommends to the Governments of India and Pakistan the following measures as those which in the opinion of the Council and appropriate to bring about a cessation of the lighting and to create proper conditions for a free and impartial plebiscite to decide whether the State of Jammu and Kashmir is to accede to India or Pakistan (United Nations, 1948). The UN declared that it would be appropriate for both states to accept the results of the voting that will take place under the plebiscite committee. After all this intense process, a ceasefire was finally reached on January 1, 1949 (Arı, 2000).

After the ceasefire, the UN adopted another resolution on 5 January 1949. In this context; it was envisaged that the ceasefire line should be maintained between the parties, that both sides would withdraw their troops from the region, and that the plebiscite to be held by the UN would reach the final result (United Nations, 1949). Unfortunately, as India plebiscite did not approach implementation, this decision was suspended and triggered subsequent conflicts. Although India did not declare that it did not want the plebiscite, stalling the society caused the conflict between Nehru and the then Kashmir term president Sheikh Abdullah. In the following years, opposition to Sheikh Abdullah increased and the opinion in favour of the unification of Jammu with India was strengthened and propaganda was made on this issue. As a result of increasing pressure to unite with India, Sheikh Abdullah opposed this and was arrested

in 1953. Abdullah, who was sentenced to 10 years in prison, triggered the nationalistic feelings of the Kashmiri people.

In 1956, not surprisingly, the Constituent Assembly approved the merger with India. Subsequently, Nehru made an explanation as to why he did not comply with the plebiscite decision, which was expected of him. Nehru's justifications are generally shaped around three main themes. First of all, he stated that the Pakistani soldiers should withdraw from Kashmir for the plebiscite. As for the second issue, he underlined the idea of the constituent assembly in Kashmir, and by declaring that this assembly approved the union with India and accepted the Indian constitution, he approached as if the idea of a plebiscite had never come to the fore. Finally, Nehru declared that the plebiscite was not welcomed by criticizing that Pakistan damaged confidence by making alliances such as the SEATO and the Baghdad Pact and that it eliminated the objective conditions suitable for the plebiscite (Arı, 2000).

The first Kashmir-based war between the two states and its reflections are as mentioned above. Finally, it can be concluded that the Kashmir issue is an element of competition and tension between the two states and has the potential to affect the peace stability of the SA region. The crisis is also effective in the power balances of India and Pakistan. For example, it is clearly noticed that both states made alliances and counter-alliances with the great powers in order to gain supporters in the crisis. The reason could why the Soviets objected to the plebiscite and declared that it supported India stemmed from the US and the United Kingdom supported the plebiscite in special and Pakistan in general. Accordingly, it is not be misleading to state that the KC and the states that are its subjects are on the chessboard of the great powers.

The second war, not far from the first war, fought in 1965. When looking at the conditions of the period just before the war, it would be fitting to start with the constitutional amendment. In 1957, the J&K was given a special status in the constitution and it was attached to India. Conflicts between Hindus and Muslims have also gained momentum during same period. This conflict environment led the UN Security Council to reconsider the Kashmir issue in 1964. In fact, with the influence of the US and England, Nehru took a step in the solution process and ensured that Sheikh Abdullah was released from prison and made arrangements for him to meet

with Eyup Khan. However, after Sheikh Abdullah made talks with other states, doubts about his intentions began and he was convicted again.

Eventually, Pakistan attempted to enter Kashmir with its guerrilla forces and was subsequently unsuccessful, and India, in turn, began military action. These conflicts, which started in Kashmir in June 1965, turned into a Pakistan-India war on the common border in August. Then, with the ceasefire declared in December, the conflict finally came to an end. It has been observed that after the war, the great powers carried out balance policies over conflict. For instance, the US, which imposed an arms embargo on both states during the war, has adopted a silent stance towards a solution after the war. On the other hand, the USSR, taking advantage of the absence of authority, offered a solution to both sides and then came together in Tashkent and offered to conclude a peace agreement.

Unable to see the supportive attitude received from the UN, India accepted this offer from the USSR and came to the table. Shortly after the offer, India and Pakistan by coming together in Tashkent were able to sign a peace agreement in February 1966. On behalf of the USSR, Kosygin has achieved success by acting as an impartial mediator in the Pakistan-India conflict, thus increasing THE USSR's influence and weight in the region. This move during the cold war showed that Kashmir can stay in the grip of the balance games (Arı, 2000). Likewise, China's declaration of support for the plebiscite in 1963 reveals its pro-Pakistan stance due to its regional challenge with India (Malhotra, 2017).

This deep disagreement between India and Pakistan, the KC, is also used as a tool in the domestic policies of these states. In other words, as Ziya ul Hak and Butto did, by creating a perception of hostility or insecurity, the members of the government have tried to ensure their legitimacy or political stability. Therefore, the crisis did not end and continued to evolve by changing its form. Another war, not stemming from Kashmir, between Pakistan and India took place in 1971. Indian army entered the territory of Pakistan in this war, which broke out due to the border dispute and resulted in the independence of Bangladesh. In the war, which ended in favor of India, severe casualties were experienced. In addition, according to official figures, around 90,000 Pakistani soldiers and civilians surrendered to Indian forces (Bag, 2019). Then the war ended with the Simla Agreement signed on July 2, 1972.

After the 1971 war, the Muslim population which was bored by war in the J&K made a proposal to the Indian government that it might abandon its demand for an independence referendum if they were given extensive autonomy. The Line of Control (LOC) was formed which is the fruit of the Simla Agreement. It is essentially converting the old ceasefire line (1947) into a control line with a few changes. The LOC, the outcome of the peace of 17 December 1971, did not constitute a legally recognized international boundary, but de facto served as a border. It divided Kashmir into two parts the Azad northern side directed by Pakistan and the J&K. According to Simla Agreement, parties would respect to the LOC and not violate it. It was agreed with this agreement that both sides would refrain from border violations (Security Council Report, 1972). However, this line also separated local people from each other and caused a social depression.

Finally, it should be stated that some elements of the competition were active in the process leading up to the third war. Nuclear tests come to the fore here. The years of nuclear studies and missile tests re-escalated the tensions between the two countries with India's capture of the Siachen Glacier in 1984. As a result of the intervention of the great powers, brink of war was turned away. India and Pakistan are also two states with nuclear power and this nuclear structure is shaped by the effect of the security dilemma. That is to say, in the case of a nuclear weapon exchange or test of one state, another perceives it as a threat.

In February 1999, a meeting of the two countries took place in Lahore. A tennis match was held as a good example of sports diplomacy in this meeting, which the international public also looked at with hope. Within the scope of these meetings, it was decided to organize mutual bus services and to establish a mechanism can provide direct communication in order to avoid misunderstandings of nuclear activities. In addition, it was agreed that nuclear tests should be notified to the other party in advance (Arı, 2000). Despite all these positive developments, some violations were experienced in May 1999. Accordingly, the armies of the two countries faced each other again in 1999.

The third clash, called the Kargil War, broke out in May 1999 and heavy fighting took place in the Kargil region of Kashmir until July. The conflict started when the parties accused each other of breaking the terms of the Simla Agreement.

This time Afghan guerrillas also joined the war to take sides with Pakistan in Kargil, one of the most sensitive places on the border, and this changed the terminology of the war. While India claims that guerrillas crossed the border and attacked Indian soldiers in a contravention by getting help from Pakistan, Pakistan stated that it did not provide this support and the guerrillas were volunteers fighting for the independence of Kashmir.

Kargil War, including airplanes and helicopters, started to intensify with India's border violation. Later, while the Pakistan offered to bring matters to the table, India focused on the withdrawal of the mujahideen in Kashmir. Meanwhile, Pakistan invited international observers to the battlefield to prove its claim then India was in favor of not letting them into the field. Afterwards, tired society remained, not a winner of the war. While India presented itself as an all-out victor with the confidence brought by the heavy use of weapons, Pakistan was pleased that the war and the KC were presented to the international public more than ever because of the success of the mujahideen. Eventually, creating this awareness in the international community and keeping the issue alive is an issue of Pakistan attaches importance (Arı, 2000).

As mentioned in Huntington's well-known article The Clash of Civilizations, the threat element in the world system after the cold war is shaped no longer possible from blocks but rather unpredictable differences (Huntington, 1993). The fact that differences between the two states have led them to conflict and separation over the years can indeed associate with this theory. Examined in terms of national identity, while India's construction of a more inclusive national identity with no religious or ethnic origin comes to the fore, Pakistan's national definition construction is based on religious factors. This difference also manifests itself in the social lives of Hindu and Pakistani communities that once lived together within the borders of the same state. For example, while the Indian caste system categorizes the social structure, it is not such a structure in Pakistan. In food cultures, untouchable cow meat, which is sacred to Hinduism, is included in Pakistan's meals. The fact that even inter-society marriages do not occur frequently reflects that living together is not very preferable.

It is thought that India's move away from its traditional policies was also effective in changing the course of the conflict. For example, the issue of being against nuclear weapons and caring about being a secular state adopted by the term presidents

Gandhi and Nehru reflects the traditional policy of India. However, the far-right the BJP has tried to build security in this way by carrying out nuclear tests and changing the constitutional status of Kashmir, with the importance it attaches to being a nuclear power, and then it moves away from the traditional (Arı, 2000). The 2019 constitutional amendment, which is highlighted next, confirms this.

Continuing from the traditional policy of India, it can be said that the Indira Doctrine is effective here. The Indira Doctrine, inspired by the Monroe Doctrine, advocate India should become the regional leader and that India's internal affairs should not be interfered with by other states. It also adopted the principle of using military power as a deterrent (Öğden, 2019). On the other hand, Pakistan objects to this and supposed that India's leadership challenge threatens its own security. In this sense, Pakistan did not neglect to receive the support of foreign powers when needed. Accordingly, Pakistan's frequent visits to China and its close cooperation with the US in the 1980s invasion of Afghanistan were reasonable steps to counterbalance India.

In addition to the close combat, the arms race and nuclear tests of the two states also create increasing tension in the region. Although both states represent structures in the nuclear activity and production mechanism, it was not easy for them to be accepted as such in the political system. Naturally, these two states, which are in close competition with each other, started nuclear activities in parallel with each other within the framework of the security dilemma. India, which carried out the first nuclear explosion in 1974, prompted Pakistan to take action in this regard, causing Pakistan to carry out nuclear program studies with the help of China in the early 1980s (Nazir, 2014). Competitive armaments and nuclear tests also point to a subcontinental leadership race. For instance, after Pakistan announced on April 6, 1998, that it had developed the first medium-range missile capable of attaching a nuclear warhead, India carried out five underground nuclear tests in May (Burns, 1998).

The ongoing border conflicts over Kashmir make attractive nuclear activities in the framework of deterrence. In other words, Pakistan and India, which build the security phenomenon over each other, can use Kashmir, an alarming title, to cover up the nuclear structure in the same way. Considering that these mutually intensive nuclear activities threaten the peace in the SA region, other states are worried about this. For example, after India's the BJP government increased its nuclear activities in

the late 90s and launched it as an element of courage in domestic politics, the US tried to balance it by applying an embargo. Subsequently, India went into economic decline and its credibility was damaged. On the other hand, the US tried to discourage Pakistan from conducting nuclear tests in the same period (The Nuclear Weapon Archive, 2001). However, the approach of the US to nuclear activities varies according to the conditions of the period, for example, it is a controversial issue whether it provides technical assistance in this sense or whether it detects the tests beforehand.

There are two main agreements that provide controlling nuclear activities. these are the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) and The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is a known fact that the US and the international community do not favor the formation of nuclear power by both states, India and Pakistan, and they want them to be a party to the NPT and the CTBT agreement. According to general wisdom, provide that India and Pakistan become parties to these agreements, they will not be able to carry out arbitrary nuclear tests and the tension between them will be prevented from turning into a conflict involving nuclear weapons (UN Digital Library, 1998). Conclusively, although India and Pakistan were not parties to this agreement due to the concern that their room for maneuver would be limited, they became members of the Creation of Favorable Conditions for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) Initiative established by the US in 2019 (MFA, 2022).

If continued the historical adventure of the crisis, then seen that as well as occurred minor conflicts in the early 2000s, the most radical event took place in 2019 with India's constitutional amendment. Kashmir, which is the most important security concern of India and Pakistan, gained a different dimension with this crisis experienced 5 th of August 2019. Previously, Kashmir had a special status with Article 370 of the Indian constitution. In accordance with this status, Kashmir had the right to make its own laws, and in addition, it has a separate flag as an example of a wide range of autonomy that also has the right to produce independent policy. Consequently, within the scope of this article, except for foreign affairs, defense, communications, and finance, parliament depends on the state government's consensus for applying all other laws. This article also prohibits foreigners from permanently settling in the area, purchasing land, finding employment in local governments, or earning educational

scholarships. Under the so-called Permanent Residence Act, women residing in the J&K are deprived of their property rights if they marry someone from outside the state.

Moreover, Paragraph 35A, which was later added to this article, gives the state administration the right to grant an indefinite residence permit to those determined by them, but they also provide rights such as working or acquiring property in public offices. In this context, buying property from Kashmir has been made specific to the people of Kashmir. Kashmir's residents have different-privileged laws compared to other Indians in terms of ownership of property, citizenship, and fundamental rights. Within the framework of this laws Indian citizens from other states cannot purchase land or property in J&K (The Economic Times/Politics, 2019). However, with the last amendment of the BJP, India has terminated Article 370 in its constitution.

Looking at the official statements, India's interior minister Amit Shah said the special status of the region was cancelled by the central government, "considering the existing internal security caused by cross-border terrorism". Additionally, he stated that this is not permanent and that the Kashmir state will come to the stage again after certain regulations and security are provided (Chaturvedi, 2019). This is an indication that citizens in India can now purchase property from Kashmir and that Kashmiri may become committed to India in important decisions. In other words, it is completely connected to India. This has the potential danger to change the demographic structure of the Kashmir people, mostly Muslims.

As a concern, The Hindus who purchase land from Kashmir and settle in there may have the opportunity to increase their influence there, and India may have the opportunity to boost its influence more easily by taking power from it. In other words, by purchasing property to dominate the region, it may benefit from the impact factor of the economy. The attempt to capture the fertile, valuable and unique lands by Hindus has the potential to affect the political economy status of Kashmir. In addition, the state would be filled by Hindus and the position of Muslims may be dragged into obscurity. Since the possibility of demographic structure changes, these concerns have increased (BBC, 2019).

The status of Kashmir has been discussed and changed before. In fact, it was given its special status in 1957 and was attached to India, but later in 1965, its special status was terminated and it became a province of India. With a similar but more

radical recent constitutional amendment, the BJP has taken a step that is likely to unsettle not only Kashmir but all Muslims on its borders. After the constitutional amendment, it is seen that the Indian administration has implemented a series of decisions such as sending more than thirty-five thousand soldiers to the region, imposing a curfew, cutting off phone and internet connections, and banning gatherings of more than four people. This increasing pressure and constitutional amendment rained many criticisms on India for its human rights violations. It is thought that these radical policies of the extreme right-wing the BJP may increase social segregation, push the Kashmiri people to struggle and make the problem more chronic (BBC, 2019).

On the other hand, considering the situation from the Indian side, the KC is actually a terrorist activity. In order to protect its national integrity, it approaches this crisis very sensitively and interprets it as an internal matter. However, the allegations of human rights violations that have been going on for years in the Jammu region make people think that India is offensively fighting this struggle on the field, not on the table. The crisis also has a partially undermining effect on the Indian economy. It is worrying that the autonomy given to the Muslim community here may have a knock-on effect on the Muslims living within its borders (Özkaya at al., 2014).

In addition to its political reflection, Kashmir can be evaluated as an element of violence including a humanitarian crisis. Namely, calling the Kashmir conflict a Crisis in literature is based on the chronic occurrence of very serious human rights violations and deaths rate here. The recent report of the UN, published in 2018, really points to human rights violations and India's inaction in the J&K and calls on both sides, India and Pakistan, to ensure peace and to end the conflict. Then, the report, published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on 8 July 2019, mentioned the seriousness of abuses by state security forces and armed groups in both Indian and Pakistani-controlled areas of Kashmir. The OHCHR also found excessive use of force by Indian security forces to stop the violent protests that began in July 2016, and requests India to order that its security forces comply with the UN Core Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials as they have caused the death and injury of large numbers of

civilians. It also condemned India for the lack of criminal sanctions for alleged sexual violence by security forces in Kashmir.

As for Pakistani side, the OHCHR found that restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and association in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir created human rights violations and that anti-terrorism laws were misused against minority groups to target political dissidents and activists. Finally, the OHCHR expressed his concerns about the forced abduction of people in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir, claiming that the Pakistani intelligence agency was responsible for the disappearance of groups of victims (OHCHR, 2018).

As a result, although both states are in war and conflict, since the Indian-administered Jammu region is the main key point, violence and human rights violations by India are usually mentioned rather than Pakistan in general reports, especially in the UN's. Unfortunately, more than 50,000 people have lost their lives from 1989 to present due to the attacks in the J&K (OHCHR, 2018).

Continuing with the KC's examination in terms of chronological, the near date 2021 comes to the fore with a promising development. India and Pakistan's Director-General of Military Operations, in a joint statement, stated that on February 25, 2021, talks were conducted to prevent conflicts on the LOC, which separates the areas under the control of the two countries. Pointing out that the parties evaluated the situation in the LOC and other regions and agreed to address each other's problems and concerns, the statement said, "Both sides agreed to a ceasefire and all agreements and agreements in the Line of Control and other regions, starting from midnight on February 24 to February 25 agreed to comply with absolute observance." statement was included. It was also stated that both sides will use existing mechanisms, including a hotline, to resolve tensions and misunderstandings (Choudhury, 2021).

Kashmir is in a critical position that can affect the balance not only in its own geography but also in its near and far geography due to the crisis phenomenon. Iran, one of the sovereign states of the nearby geography, has an active and effective position in Kashmir. After the revolution, Iran, which reflects the codes of transnational Ummatism in its foreign policy, has started to believe that it has a responsibility towards the Shiite population in Kashmir. Iran, which emphasized that it was on the side of Kashmiri Muslims during the Khomeini period, especially after

the revolution, due to the consciousness of the ummah, approached India with a criticized approach on this issue. After this date, although Iran's approach to Kashmir has changed according to its periodic interests, it has not been explicitly involved in the crisis and has not made radical statements. When the recent policy is examined, the inclusion of Iran in the CPEC corridor, which is China's flagship, has brought it closer to Pakistan. Similarly, Iran, which was trying to improve its relations with India at this time, started to take India to its opposite side after changing the autonomy principle of Kashmir in India's constitution and increasing its pressure. Because of its belief in the Ummah and its stance that cares about regional peace, Iran attaches great importance to the resolution of this crisis. For this reason, just like Turkey, Iran offered mediation to the parties, but India did not approach it moderately. Eventually, the Kashmir Crisis has already assumed an international form, although India claims it is a domestic issue. Indeed, the human rights violations that Kashmiri Muslims are subjected to have increased reactivity towards India (Balaban & Sayın, 2022).

Conclusively, as a vicious circle of war and conflict since 1947 the Kashmir region, which caused the death of thousands of soldiers and civilians, can still be called a crisis because it has not been able to overcome the status problem. Apart from the UN's plebiscite proposal for the resolution of the crisis, states such as the US, Türkiye and Russia called parties for negotiations, but this remained unanswered due to India's reluctance. It is an undeniable fact that the crisis did not cover the expected agenda in the international public and media. Therefore, Pakistan's desire to keep the crisis on the agenda in international public opinion reflects its view that the crisis can be solved by foreign intervention.

On the other hand, although India has declared that this crisis should be resolved through bilateral negotiations, it has not taken a stable and reliable step in this regard. It is a handicap that has not been clarified for years whether the crisis is resolved by plebiscite or by negotiation or mediation attempts. Here the hypothesis of this study is that the crisis can be resolved with the cooperation of Türkiye and the US joint initiative within the scope of mediation indicated. As explained in detail above, the mediation phenomenon has been advocated since no solution has been achieved and action has not been taken in a plebiscite and bilateral permanent talks until today. This issue is discussed in the following sections of this study. However, before that, it is

claimed the crisis has an economic impact as well as its political evaluation in this dissertation. In this context, besides the political evaluation, the next section is planned to make an ecopolitical evaluation of the crisis.

3.2 Ecopolitics of Kashmir Crisis

The lush valley of Kashmir is a precious region with a wide variety of natural resources and fertile lands. In other words, although it is called a crisis zone, it is actually a paradise valley. It is not surprising that the Kashmir region has become the subject of competition led by possessing economic advantages and potential. However, the crisis situation it is in makes it necessary to evaluate the economy from this perspective. Accordingly, the economic dynamics cannot be free from the crisis agenda.

Kashmir is a popular phenomenon not only because it is a crisis region, but also because it is an economically valuable valley. In other words, it is acceptable that the parties do not want to share this place due to its economic value, which is one of the issues that exacerbated the crisis. In parallel, the ongoing crisis here has also deeply affected the economies of the federal structures in Kashmir. In other words, although it is a valuable region, its economic advantages cannot be fully realized. For example, when the recent data are examined (2019), the per capita income in the Jammu and Kashmir region was recorded as 1498 USD (Reserv Bank of India, 2021). On the other hand, Azad Kashmir is recorded as 1500 USD in the 2018-2019 period (AJ&K At A Glance, 2022). Unsurprisingly, all these tensions led to a slowdown in economic development in these nearly identical states, as the figures show.

As is tried to be shown in this study, first of all, economic resources are examined in order to clarify the question of what are the economic inputs that make Kashmir so indispensable. Forests are one of these resources. The forests, which are very popular and give Kashmir the title of green valley, are one of the main economic pillars of the pre-and post-colonial era. Thanks to forests, the importance of lumbering, marketing of wood and wood products, and use in livestock and feed production draw attention. Moreover, furniture and items made from various woods and walnut wood carvings are popular. Again, plywood and chipboard factories, whose raw materials are taken from forests, are also important levers of the economy.

Electricity, tourism, horticulture and agriculture are given as examples of other forest-fed sectors in the Kashmir region. In other words, Kashmir forests, in other words, green gold, have a key position in the functioning of the economy and ultimately increase the attractiveness of the economy from an outside perspective. unfortunately, forests are also affected by the political crisis (Wani & Kumar, 2018). Timber smugglers emerge as security guards cannot easily protect forests due to the ongoing chaos. According to the data, since 1989, the Kashmir Valley has lost more than 59 square miles of its 7,810 square miles of forest cover due to terrorism and terrorist activities (EFSAS, 2017).

Apart from the forest, there are other elements that make the nature of Kashmir valuable. For example, productive water resources that give life to nature are also one of the main levers of the Kashmir economy. The region is endowed with famous rivers such as Indus, Cenab, Jhelum, Tawi, Nubra, Shyok, Poonch, Tsarap, Senge, Suru, Zangbu, and Tawi. All these water resources increase the value of Kashmir because the surrounding areas are also fed by the rivers here. The most vital of these is the river Indus, and it is one of the titles of rivalry between Pakistan and India. The Indus is actually a large river basin that is the confluence of six rivers, three of which flow from the east and three from the west. This river is also a key river in the SA as it connects four important countries by passing through India in the east, China in the northeast, and Pakistan and Afghanistan in the west (Kirk & Rais, 2022).

It is not surprising, therefore, that India and Pakistan disagree over the control of the Indus and the use of its water. The reason for this tension is actually due to the Indus passing through Kashmir. In fact, India has more of a say in its control, as the Indus River passes through the Indian-controlled region of Jammu. Even though the river is divided into two by the LOC, it is considered an element of competition as it would acquire the entire river that captures Kashmir. Since the most important water source of the surrounding basins is the Indus, it is also of vital importance in terms of agricultural activities (Bayram, 2019).

Water is of vital importance for Pakistan, whose economy is heavily dependent on agricultural activities and is currently dealing with the problem of water resources. In this context, about 20% of its economic activities are carried out through the Indus River (Ali, 2017). On the other hand, water is of vital importance for India, which

carries out intensive hydroelectric activities. For this reason, competition for Indus can be considered obligatory for both states. As a matter confirming this competition, an example can be given as India's threat to cut off the water coming from Indus to Pakistan at a time when the tension in Kashmir is rising. Ultimately, Kashmir's water resources make Kashmir indispensable and enable it to be considered the ECO-politically (Ahmad, 2012).

Continuing from natural resources, Kashmir's underground richness and fuel resources can be given as an example. Kashmir is very fortunate in terms of wind power, water flow, sunlight and biomass, although its use is not intensive due to authoritative regulations. Water, an important income for the state treasury, is the cornerstone of hydroelectricity in Kashmir. At the same time, solar energy is widely used because the region can easily receive sunlight. In this sense, Ladakh region is the region that produces the most sunlight. In addition, other cities with high energy potential can be listed as Udhampur, Leh, Baramulla, Kupwara, Anantnag (Ali, 2017).

One of the elements that make Kashmir valuable is that it has uranium reserves. As it is known, uranium is the main source of nuclear activities and in today's world where nuclear competition is intense, uranium reserves are of vital importance. The element uranium found in soils and rocks is widely used in the production of nuclear weapons. However, it is not considered legal to provide supplies to any state other than the states that are party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) agreement. In addition, the states that are party to this agreement must prove, under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, that they will use it to serve peaceful purposes while supplying uranium (Kumar, 2009).

Apart from this agreement, there is an exceptional example, although India is not a party to the NPT, it is known to supply products for nuclear technology from the US, Canada and Australia. The value of uranium is increasing day by day, as nuclear reactors can produce low-cost and a wide variety of radioactive materials using less uranium (Awan & Khan, 2015). Nuclear competition is also felt in the SA region due to the become nuclear capability states of India and Pakistan. Naturally, there is competition between these two states over the element uranium. Especially the discovery of this uranium in Kashmir further increases the intensity of competition and makes Kashmir valuable (Kilisoglu, 2019).

As for the discovery of uranium in Kashmir, scientists first discovered high concentrations of uranium in the Ladakh region, near the Himalayas. According to Rajeev Upadhyay, the geologist at Kumaon University, “The presently recorded uranium-rich zircons from young magmatic intrusions of the Shyok suture zone and associated sequences is the first record from these remote regions and in geological terms, these uranium-bearing magmatic rocks exposed in Ladakh are very young (between 100 million and 25 million years old). Uranium-bearing magmatic rocks are located all along Kohistan, Ladakh, and southern Tibet (from east to west). However, the contents of uranium may differ from place to place” (Jayaraman, 2007). It is thought that this latest discovery, in addition to the final studies, may increase the economic importance and competitiveness of the Kashmir region.

Another aspect that makes Kashmir valuable is the geostrategically important Himalayas Mountain. Connected to Nepal and Bhutan, this mountain represents a wide network thanks to the lower mountain Karakoram, which connects India, China and Pakistan on its northwest line. Hence, it would be appropriate to use the analogy of the gate of the SA for the Himalayas. Covering an area of approximately 595 000 km2, this mountain stretches from Southeast Asia to North Africa. While the connections of the mountain are largely controlled by India, Nepal and Bhutan, parts of it have also been occupied by China and Pakistan in the past (Chatterjee & Piskopos, 2019). As a result, The Himalayas mentions the point of rivalry among great states in the SA region.

The elements that make the Himalayas competitive are shaped by the headings of economy and geostrategy. In this context, the fact that the Himalayas have suitable lands for agriculture and animal husbandry makes the region dynamic. On the other hand, the Himalayas, where tourism activities are intense, are a very popular place for winter sports. The Himalayas are also important for the development of the region with its mineral deposits’ forests, and wide grasslands (Chatterjee & Piskopos, 2019). Like other elements, the Himalayas have unfortunately been affected by the political chaos in Kashmir. For instance, one couldn't see any settled tourism policy because of the crisis in Kashmir. That's why tourists can feel insecure while choosing this place and tourism is badly affected (Malik & Baht, 2015).

Another important and new topic in Kashmir's the ECO-politics is the 2019 amendment to the Indian constitution. Kashmir has a special status in the Indian constitution and this is guaranteed by Article 370. Under this status, Jammu Kashmir held control over its own laws and independent policy-making, and it also had a separate flag (IAS Parliament, 2019).

Paragraph 35a, which was added later to Article 370, gives Kashmiris the right to be appointed and grant permanent residence permits to the state administration, as well as the right to work in public offices and acquire property. Indeed, buying property from Kashmir was made specific to Kashmiris. In other words, Kashmiris had the privilege of citizenship, fundamental rights and property purchase (BBC News, 2019). However, on August 5, 2019, under the leadership of the Modi government, the clause containing this Kashmir autonomy status was abolished (The Economic Times, 2019).

Although the interior minister of India, Shah, said in his statement on the subject that this arrangement was made for the purpose of providing security due to cross-border terrorism and that it will be rearranged later, it does not change the fact that it is now possible to buy property in Kashmir for the citizens apart from Kashmir. In addition, considering the fact that most of the people are Muslims, it is likely that the demographic structure of the region may change in the future (Hindustan Times, 2019).

When the possible consequences of the decision are evaluated in more detail, the concern is that the Hindus who bought land in Kashmir my increase their influence in the following years and the nationalist approach represented by the Modi government may increase the possibility of excluding Muslims. The seizure of Kashmir's fertile lands by the Hindus is likely to affect the political economy of the region. Ultimately, the realization of political ambitions through the economic factor, that is, the ECO-politics gains importance here.

In light of the data obtained concluded that Kashmir’s importance stems from not only the endless political struggle between the two states, which has turned into a prestige issue, or from the Muslim-Hindu conflict, but also from its economic value. In other words, economic preciousness makes Kashmir an element of competition, and it can be considered one of the triggering factors of the crisis.

Later, the study is continued with the OBOR project, which is one of the most important and current topics of Kashmir's ecopolitics. Kashmir is making a name for itself in this new project, with its strategic connections, the region's proximity to important states and its prosperous lands. This project is expected to increase Kashmir's the ECO-political importance because it has connections throughout Kashmir. Therefore, in this study, the project in question is detailed and expressed as one of the sub-categories of the crisis.

3.2.1 Renaissance of Old Silk Road: One Belt One Road and Kashmir

The OBOR or the BRI, created by China in 2013 as an attempt to reinvigorate the ancient Silk Road, is a very costly initiative that aims to connect China and many countries. This giant project aims to ensure the easy circulation of Chinese products all over the world by building trade routes and connecting China to Asia, Europe and Africa by a fast route (Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 2022).

Recently in 2022, the OBOR Project covers 147 countries, including sea and road transport (Green Finance and Development Center, 2022). Within its scope, the project is shaped by four pioneer categories: port, transportation, aviation and energy. The project will bring along an interactive interaction with the countries it covers and construction activities. In other words, there will be a profitable situation for the countries involved in the project. It is expected to provide development and employment in the field of development, especially for South Asian countries that are still developing in terms of infrastructure. South Asian countries, which are in the middle of the struggle for regional leadership between China and India, are likely to get closer to China with this project, in other words, they possibly take shelter under the Chinese umbrella. For this reason, it is expected that India may perceive this project as a threat to its own manoeuvring room and influence (Yılmaz & Sayın, 2022).

The project formed with two main pillars: the construction of a terrestrial belt connecting China to Europe and the construction of sea belt connecting China to the Indian Ocean and from there to Europe. These basic pillars were supported by four different sub-projects and all of them were implemented. These are stated as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (THE CPEC), Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM), Trans-Himalayan Economic Corridor and Maritime Silk Road Project (Baruah, 2018).

Starting with CPEC, the most spoken-through project and the one related to this study is beneficial. Powered by its strategic closeness with Pakistan, China hopes to easily realize its geopolitical and geoeconomic goals by implementing this project comprehensively. On the other hand, this project, which can provide serious development support for Pakistan, has the potential to take the partnership between the two states to a higher level within the scope of the win-win approach. Thanks to a trade route to be built within the scope of the project, it is aimed to meet the energy needs of China without any problems, as well as to accelerate the flow of goods and services. In addition, Pakistan will gain an advantage as infrastructure and superstructure will be renewed on this route (Gokten, 2019).

As mentioned before in this study, the China-Pakistan strategic partnership is one of the strongest structures in the SA. This partnership is a wide-ranging structure, covering economic strategic and political areas. Economic partnerships are generally provided by China's support for Pakistan's infrastructure and development, as well as the leadership of China's products to the Pakistan market and the increased mobility of its products. While Pakistan has the opportunity to strengthen its national economy, it focuses on Chinese capital and products in its domestic market. If the partnership is examined, China provides more advantages than Pakistan is remarked. While bilateral trade focused on Pakistan's imports from China, Pakistan's share in China's imports is less than one in ten thousand (Hussain, 2017).

After the conclusion that Pakistan gains a high economic advantage thanks to its partnership with China, it is also useful to briefly touch on the real inner face of the event. Although it is very known that Pakistan has been economically supported by China in many areas, it is the Chinese side that benefits more from this partnership in the end. Despite the support it receives from China, Pakistan keeps Chinese products ahead of its own products in its own market, that is, Chinese capital and products dominate its domestic market. In addition, Pakistan's imports from China in mutual trade are many times more than China's imports from Pakistan. In other words, the China-Pakistan strategic partnership, which is one of the strongest structures in the SA, actually works more for the benefit of China (Gökten, 2019).

As for the route of the corridor is examined, it is pointed out that it starts from the Gwadar Port and continues along the Karakoram highway and covered an area of 2700

km, passing through the Gilgit Baltistan, Kashmir connection, and ending towards the city of Kashgar (Kirk & Rais, 2022). It is believed that the mutual agreements signed on 5 July 2013 will increase the interaction on political, industrial and social issues as well as the economy. China is building many infrastructure and superstructure initiatives in Pakistan in order for the products to have a stable and safe journey while passing through Pakistani territory. The CPEC, which aims to connect China primarily to the ocean and from there to other countries, costs a huge budget of approximately 56 billion dollars and brings with it the renewal of Pakistan from hydroelectric to railway (Muneer et al., 2018).

Finally, when it comes to the relevance of the corridor with Kashmir, detected that the main route of the CPEC is surrounded by the Kashmir connection. Therefore, it is deduced that China sees Kashmir as a gate in this new breakthrough. Thanks to this connection, although the Gilgit region is likely to develop in terms of infrastructure, China is not very keen on investing here due to legal blockages. Because the region is in a risky atmosphere due to the Kashmir Crisis. Unfortunately, as it can be understood from events, the Crisis is the biggest obstacle to Kashmir's development (Yılmaz & Sayın, 2022). Gilgit Baltistan is located in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir and any investment in it is subject to Pakistani approval because its status is not autonomous and is dependent on Pakistan. If China invests in this complex region, it hesitates to create turmoil in the Jammu part of India.

If the Kashmir region had not remained in a legal vacuum, China could have increased its investments in Kashmir. In terms of both Kashmir and the entire the SA through which the route passes, China has begun to attach great importance to the themes of security and cooperation for the sustainability of its project. So much so that since the start of the project, it has been making more neutral statements for Kashmir and giving the message that the building of lasting peace will benefit everyone (Muneer et al., 2018).

Although China, has taken a pro-Pakistan stance on the KC in the past, some authorities claimed that China can bring the two states together on a common ground for peace within the scope of the ECO-politics, perhaps through the OBOR, however, no concrete steps have been taken. Or, as another approach, it is thought that China

can be a supporter of any mediation or conflict resolution activity, even if it is not itself a pioneer for the resolution of the crisis.

With all the infrastructure and superstructure support to be provided to Pakistan within the scope of the CPEC, the bond between the two states China and Pakistan will be strengthened, along with cultural, military and economic cooperation will increase and China's influence in the region will be strengthened. This situation has the potential to affect the balance of power in the region. It is likely that not only China's regional-led rival, India, but also its strategic partner, the US, may concerned about this. For this reason, it is clear that the project is impressive with the world agenda, as it concerns the great powers. India's declaration that it can land troops in Baltistan due to its increasing concern in Kashmir due to the CPEC, and the US's concern that its hand in the containment policy of China may weaken, affect the dynamics of the region (Baruah, 2018).

If continuing with the other sub-projects of the OBOR, the Maritime Silk Road Project (MSR) will emerge as the second. This project aims at the construction of a sea corridor, that opens to the Indian Ocean. As the ocean is one of India’s priority security areas, India has received this project with concern. As a result, China aims to facilitate maritime trade with its concourses in the ASEAN thanks to this project.

The third next project is the Trans Himalayan Economic Corridor. Although this corridor mainly concentrates on the connection between Nepal and China, it is a network that concerns the whole of the SA. Aiming to connect Beijing and Kathmandu through the Himalayan mountains, this project has the potential to increase Nepal's strategic importance. In essence, Nepal is a state economically supported by India, so it would not be misleading to say that it is under the auspices of India. However, with this corridor, the influence of India on Nepal may be endangered, as Chinese capital and influence will enter. This corridor is also a step towards connecting the Himalayas with China. Since the importance of the Himalayas in the SA and Kashmir is known, China's step-by-step approach is again met with concern by India (Baruah, 2018).

One reason for India's concern is the possibility of a reoccurrence of the threat of war, which it has carried out in the past over the border quarrel with China. Since this war took place due to competition in the Himalayas, China's increased presence here is likely to create a security dilemma (Tellis, 2020) . In addition, China's deployment

of troops in the Himalayas under the pretext of the security of the project, thus affecting Kashmir and Pakistan, would endanger and pacify India's northern border. China, which was found to have sent approximately 30,000 soldiers to Pakistani-controlled Kashmir in the past, is therefore a threat to India in the Himalayas (The Economic Times, 2018).

Finally, when it comes to the last project called BCIM, it can be emphasized that this is actually a breakthrough that was mentioned before the OBOR. Named after the initials of the states it covers Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar, this project aims to connect Southwest China, East India, Myanmar and Bangladesh. What makes this project different from others is that India has an important place here. This project, which aims at a transparent economic cooperation mechanism, cannot progress rapidly due to India’s concerns, even though India is involved. (Gokten, 2019).

In light of all these sub-projects of the OBOR, it is highly probable that China's prestige and economic power may increase both in the SA and all over the world. Subsequently, with the volume of the pioneering project the CPEC, Pakistan-China strategic partnership will grow in the socio-economic field and India may continue to be concerned about this. India's concern stems from the concern that Kashmir and Pakistan are being pacified by Chinese influence. As a result, this project also affects Kashmir, putting its political economy and strategic importance on the agenda.

As a result, as it was argued at the beginning of the chapter, it was clarified as a result of the collected data that the economy was a triggering factor for the KC. In more detail, the economic value of Kashmir makes it a competitive subject and the parties do not want to give up these fertile lands. On the other hand, the possibility of the political economy building lasting peace in the crisis was also brought to the agenda. When this was examined, although China invited both states to negotiate within the scope of the OBOR project, no result could be obtained. Due to India's approach to the project with concern and the possibility of further strengthening of China-Pakistan ties, India is not generally approached the negotiations or the project moderately. Ultimately, although it is a very successful and comprehensive project in its essence, it can be accepted that the OBOR has not had the expected effect in providing the desired permanent peace environment (Yılmaz & Sayın, 2022).

Provide that political chaos is over in Kashmir, the economy of Kashmir may experience its golden age, but if the political chaos continues, the economy continues to be undermined and no parties of the KC can benefit from prosperity. As a result, Kashmir's economy cannot be considered independent from the political agenda.

3.3 Türkiye's Kashmir Approach

The Republic of Türkiye, which adopts acting in line with the principle of Peace at Home and Peace in the World by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, in its humanitarian and entrepreneurial foreign policy, does not remain indifferent to crises preventing sustainable peace.

Türkiye, of course, has shown not become indifferent to the KC, which has caused the death of approximately 50 thousand people with the potential to threaten regional and even global peace, thanks to Erdoğan's speech "Kashmir means our Canakkale". Although Türkiye's attitude towards the crisis varies slightly compared to the governments of the period, generally she indicates a pro-Pakistan stance because of perceiving the crisis as a persecution of Muslims. Moreover, calling on the parties to a ceasefire Türkiye, stated that if need ready to become a mediator in this crisis. In this respect, Türkiye's approaches and discourses on this issue since the beginning of the crisis is briefly mentioned in turn.

It can be accepted that Türkiye's interest in the Kashmir issue began in the 1960s. Following without a very active foreign policy due to the grip of the cold war before the 1960s, Türkiye started to expand its maneuvering area with the decrease of the Soviet threat in this time period when the cold war softened. The same Soviet threat pushed Türkiye to become active in this region, as the Shah of Iran, received the support of the West, hoped Türkiye to be with him in order to protect South Asia from this threat. As a result, Türkiye's basic approaches over the KC in this time have been shaped as supporting Pakistan, to which it is bound by historical friendship bonds, under all circumstances, and as a member of the NATO Türkiye, engages in activity close to the view of the United States (Duman, 2019).

It is known that the meanings attributed to Kashmir are gathered around a few cases. First of all, the Cyprus problem, which started in the 1960s, was economically reconciled with Kashmir. Accordingly, the relationship between Pakistan and the Azad

Government is similar to the relationship between Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In addition to having the size of a certain piece of land like Cyprus, Azad Kashmir also has its own unique head of state, prime minister and parliament.

The two structures are really similar, as there are Indian security forces near the Parliament and the crisis environment continues (Arı, 2000). In this period, while India supports the Greek Cypriot administration on Cyprus, on the other hand, Türkiye supports Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, based on Pakistan's "eternal friend" approach. However, in the report it prepared during this period, Türkiye showed that contrary to expectations, it did not take sides and handled the issue independently. Türkiye's objective tone in the report, which supports Pakistan in its rhetoric, shows that its friendly relations with Pakistan do not prevent it from acting independently in its own policy. In other words, Türkiye preferred to act on a conjunctural basis.

Finally, in 1962, Türkiye's first mediation attempt on Kashmir, which attaches great importance to regional peace, occurred. It was surprising that this mediation initiative was considered a blessing by the Indian ambassador and that he personally exchanged ideas with the term President Inonu. Although negotiations took place in 62-63, unfortunately, no results were obtained. Subsequently, Türkiye's partiality to Pakistan in the war that would take place in 1965 between the two states and the possibility that it would give arms to Pakistan came to the fore and had an obstructive effect on Türkiye-India relations again. As a result, although Türkiye produced an objective discourse and reports in the period just before the war, the support it gave to Pakistan in practice, during the war, can be interpreted as sticking to Pakistani orientation in the period approach (Aslan, 2020).

Even though Türkiye, the US and the UK stepped in to establish a ceasefire during the conflict, this did not come to an immediate conclusion. In 1695, the most essential concern of the US in the Indian subcontinent was the danger of 'Communist China' rather than the USSR. Therefore, it has always carried out an active policy in the Kashmir issue and throughout the region. Again, in this period the US see India as a balancing factor balance of China prevented Pakistan from getting the support it expected from the US against India. On the other hand, it is noticeable that Türkiye

stands closer to Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. In the background of this close stance, there is also Pakistan's demand for this support from Türkiye (Duman, 2019).

One year before the war, that is, in 1964, the President of Pakistan, Eyup Han, who came to Türkiye and talked about this issue, wrote a letter to his colleague Cemal Gursel describing the situation they were in during the war. In this letter, he expressed his confidence that the understanding and sympathy of the Turkish Nation in these difficult times will further strengthen the ties that bring their nation and their countries closer together (BCA). Then, Türkiye met this expectation and subsequently issued a memorandum together with Iran. According to the memo, Türkiye and Iran declared that they were ready to send troops to the UN peacekeeping force and support Pakistan while they found India guilty. Even though Türkiye could not send all of these weapons because of the NATO barrier, it sent at least 5 million worth of military materials and weapons to Pakistan (Armaoglu). Despite Türkiye's objective rhetoric, the inconsistency in conducting balance on the Kashmir issue has affected its relations with India. In response, drawing similarities between the issues of Cyprus and Kashmir, India has supported the Greek Cypriots against Türkiye's theses due to the Kashmir issue (Duman, 2019).

Finally, looking at the 1980s, one sees a Türkiye aims to gravitate towards Asia more than before, with its term president Turgut Özal. In this context, Özal also realized that India was neglected in the SA and this situation should be compensated. However, during the high-level occurred during this period, again Turkish officials visited Pakistan before India and showed that this habit could not be given up by not keeping India apart from the Pakistani mortgage.

In the 90s, with the acceleration of the opening to Asia again, Türkiye made some different approaches led by Ecevit's policies in this period. For example, unusually, Ecevit looked at India from an independent perspective from Pakistan. Unlike politicians who visited Pakistan before visiting India in the past, Ecevit made his visit to India first. At the same time, despite the warnings of foreign affairs, he made statements outside of Türkiye's standard approach to Kashmir. In other words, Türkiye was advocating for the Kashmir issue to be resolved with a plebiscite at the UN, but Ecevit declared that India agreed with the idea of a solution through bilateral talks. However, these discourses remained in practice and did not produce a different result

in the Kashmir issue. During this period, Türkiye requested to use both its eastern and western identities. However, the expected level of interaction was not achieved in Asia that's why this remained at the slogan level.

Finally, the last and current period of the JDP in Türkiye's Kashmir policy could be mentioned. It is possible to come across a Türkiye that pursued more pragmatic policies in the early stages of the JDP. Looking at the SA in general, not specifically Kashmir, it can be stated that Türkiye, taking strength from Western support, looks at the SA more closely. In this context, the trade volume with India has increased and high-level visits have been realized a lot. Similarly, it hosted the official meeting between Israel and Pakistan, which has tense relations, and after the US invasion, due to the current situation in Afghanistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan have been brought together in Istanbul.

As the architect of the Istanbul Summit, which started in 2010 in Istanbul jointly between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Türkiye, Türkiye displayed an active and enterprising stance in the region. Moreover, Türkiye supported the bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and India for the construction of the solution process until 2006. In other words, promising developments in bilateral dialogue and cooperation with India in that period, not at the desired level before, indicate Türkiye's holistic approach to the region (Aslan, 2020).

When looking at the second period of the JDP, that is, after 2010, there are differences from the policy of the first period. Received relatively less support from the West during this period, Türkiye, pursued an independent policy affected by some emotional themes. When this period is evaluated in terms of Kashmir, this emotional approach comes to the fore. However, an initiative advocating the holistic approach of the period and looking at Asia again with a different style than before marks this period. In this field, the initiative called 'Asia Again' is on the scene remarkably. In conclusion, it would not be misleading that Türkiye's Kashmir approach in this term is shaped by this emotional theme and Asia Again Initiative. Additionally, it has been noticed that the crisis has been expressed more by Türkiye on international platforms.

Erdoğan, victorious in Türkiye's referendum in 2017, was taking a step towards a new administration. In this context, it is noteworthy that he made his first official visit to India. During this visit, the Indian media predicted that Erdoğan would speak within

the framework of Türkiye's support for Pakistan in particular Kashmir. Erdoğan started this interview by pointing out that Türkiye attaches great importance to India and the embassies opened in 2010 and 2013. Underlining the need to increase mutual investment Erdoğan, also state that improved bilateral relations between India and Türkiye would also contribute to world peace. When asked about his comments on Kashmir, Erdoğan said that Türkiye is also friendly with the crisis parties, India and Pakistan, and argues that they should increase bilateral dialogues or allow multiple dialogues, including Türkiye, in order to not bring about more mortality there. As noticed, Türkiye's mediation agenda in the KC remains valid in the last period as well.

In the interview that followed, after the OIC made statements criticizing India on Kashmir and the organization's "biased" stance was pointed out, President Erdoğan was asked for his comments on this issue. Emphasizing that Türkiye is the term chairperson of the OIC, Erdoğan stated that providing that occurred any terrorist actions in anywhere the OIC has the right to criticize and take steps on this issue (Erdogan, Turkish President Erdogan speaks to WION, 2017). It would not be surprising to mention that Türkiye's active position within the OIC had an impact on the inclusion of emotional approaches in its policy.

As for the following years, Türkiye did not remain indifferent to the issue in 2018 as well. In this field, after the attacks in Kashmir in 2018, Türkiye immediately issued a statement, stating that it is deeply concerned and saddened by the loss of life and injuries in Jammu Kashmir, mentioned in order to protect harmed civilians it is important to take measures to reduce tension in the region (MFA, 2018).

Then, with the Constitutional arrangement in India in 2019, Kashmir has been given a different dimension and Türkiye has therefore started to include more concerns in its discourses. As mentioned in detail in the previous sections, India abolished Article 370 of its constitution, which granted autonomy to Kashmir. Subsequently, Türkiye immediately issued a statement and approached the issue quite sensitively. Türkiye expressed concern that the abolished of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which grants special status to the State of Jammu-Kashmir, on August 5, 2019 increased the current conflict and stated that it wishes to resolve the current issue through dialogue, taking into account the common interests of the people of J&K with India and Pakistan, parties to the crisis, within the framework of the UN resolutions.

Finally, it was declared that Türkiye is ready to contribute to reducing tensions in the region if the parties agree. After this date, Türkiye's mediation phenomenon has started to come to the agenda more (MFA, 2019).

After this change in the constitution, tensions increased and conflicts took place in Kashmir. Thereupon, the UN Security Council held consultations on J&K with the title of India-Pakistan. Türkiye has issued a statement on this issue on 17 August 2019 and declared that it welcomes these consultations as the tension in the region are reduced and diplomacy plays a leading role. Moreover, mentioning the need for the UN's leading role in the KC with the help of the previous the UN Charter over the KC, Türkiye emphasizes its wish about resolving the crisis thanks to international law and dialogue. Claiming the need to the UN's become more active in the KC, Türkiye also called for parties should refrain from the ways that led to tensions (MFA, 2019).

Later, Türkiye shared its concern about the elimination of the identity of the Muslim-dominated Kashmiri people and started to the bring the issue to international platforms. In this context, on 29 May 2019, Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu attended the OIC Jammu-Kashmir Contact Group Meeting held in Jeddah. At this meeting, the Minister expressed Türkiye's concerns about the difficult situation and security of the people of J&K and emphasized that they support the resolution of this issue within the framework of the UN resolutions, taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people (MFA, 2019). Türkiye has continued to maintain its activeness and common sense on the issue. Just one month after the OIC meeting, Minister Çavuşoğlu attended the Emergency Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Jammu Kashmir Contact Group to be held at the Foreign Ministers Level upon the request of Pakistan, via video conference. At this meeting, it was envisaged to find solutions to the violations of freedom and human rights in Kashmir within the OIC (MFA, 2020).

As for international platforms, it was seen that Erdoğan also referred to Jammu Kashmir, at the 74th General Assembly Meeting in 2019. In his speech at the 74th United Nations General Assembly, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan brought the Kashmir issue, which has not been resolved for 72 years, to the agenda. Reminding the decisions taken by the UN Security Council and giving messages that the Kashmir issue should be resolved peacefully, in accordance with international law and through

dialogue, he emphasized that the stability of South Asia cannot be separated from the Kashmir issue (T.C Cumhurbaskanligi, 2019). Erdoğan's speech on this issue at a meeting of global powers reveals the seriousness of Türkiye on this issue. In fact, it tries to reflect on international platforms and then internationalize the problem based on Pakistan's request

Another speech over Kashmir issue is occurred at the UN 75th General Assembly Meeting in 2020 by Erdoğan. He underlined the Kashmir problem, which is still waiting for a solution, is one of the most fundamental problems for the peace and stability of the SA. Finally, Erdoğan emphasized that the issue became more complicated after the abolition of its special status. In line with Türkiye's previous discourses, he argued that it would be right to resolve this crisis in line with the UN resolutions and take into account the expectation of the Kashmiri people (T.C Cumhurbaskanligi, 2020).

It can be argued that Türkiye's Kashmir approach has reached a different status with Erdoğan. Erdoğan started his speech by mentioning that the bond of brotherhood between Türkiye and Pakistan is very rare. He stated that this bond is a true brotherhood strengthened by history and reinforced by historical events. Subsequently, he reiterated that Pakistan's aid to the Turkish people in the Çanakkale War was a rare act of loyalty for Türkiye, and expressed his strong belief that the eternal brotherhood between Pakistan and Türkiye would be preserved. After all, using the phrase Kashmir is what Çanakkale is, Erdoğan has very clearly expressed the importance attributed to the Kashmir issue by reconciling Çanakkale, which is a key factor in Türkiye's National Struggle, with Kashmir.

Thanks to this strong bond, Erdoğan declared that Türkiye will continue to stand by Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. This analogy has been resonated all over the world. In this context, Trimurti, the Permanent Representative of India to the UN, stated that the statements of the President of Türkiye regarding J&K are unacceptable and this constitutes a major intervention in India's internal affairs. As can be seen, Türkiye's assertive rhetoric was met with criticism on the Indian front and brought the theme of tension in bilateral relations to the fore (Tirumurti A. T., 2020).

The phenomenon of Ummatism, which can be considered to be more tangible with the JDP, is also one of the prominent topics for Kashmir. At the forum, Erdoğan

addressed this issue through the Palestinian, Cyprus and Kashmir issues. It is a known fact from the support given to Syrian refugees, Libya and Yemen that Türkiye is very sensitive towards the Muslim Ummah. Expressing that Türkiye saved 3.5 million oppressed, Syrian people, from the barrel bombs of the regime, Erdoğan stated that with the same understanding, Türkiye took care of Palestine, Cyprus and Kashmir in order to resolve the disagreements and differences between the Ummah. It is a general wisdom that Türkiye is in an active effort in this regard within the scope of the OIC.

At the end of his speech, explaining his ideas on the solution to the KC, Erdoğan emphasized that this issue can be resolved with justice and equity. Emphasizing that the long-standing problems of the Kashmiri people have increased with unilateral steps, Erdoğan said that the current situation has worsened and that seizing the freedom of the Kashmiri people does not benefit anyone. He stated that he believed that the crisis could only be resolved on the basis of justice and equity, not through conflict or oppression, as it has been for years, and stated that such a solution would be in favour of all parties. Finally, he added that Türkiye will continue to be an advocate of peace, justice and a solution through dialogue in the KC (TRT Haber, 2020).

In light of all the data reached, can be stated that Türkiye, together with the JDP, has begun to attach more importance to the Kashmir issue, which had cared about before, and to take an active stance on this issue. The attitude of Türkiye under the leadership of the JDP government, which sees the crisis as a matter of struggle in which Muslims' right to freedom is taken away, is also shaped around the phenomenon of Ummatism. Emphasizing the idea that it supports a solution in line with the UN resolutions and the will of the Kashmiri people for years, Türkiye is thought that clearly pro-Pakistani attitude in the KC.

Finally, Türkiye's sensitivity to Kashmir can be found in the entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy vision reports published at the end of the year. In the example of 2020, it was stated that Türkiye considers Kashmir as an important element of peace and stability in the SA and is in solidarity with the people of Kashmir while maintaining its principled stance for Kashmir (MFA, 2020). It can be accepted as an undeniable fact that this attitude of Türkiye, which favors Pakistan, has caused tensions in bilateral relations with India and not progressing at the desired level. However, both Türkiye and India have declared their willingness to bring bilateral relations to the

desired level. For this reason, when Türkiye's mediation phenomenon is interpreted from a holistic perspective, it would show Türkiye's goodwill and increase the likelihood of Türkiye gaining sympathy on the Indian front as it includes the element of serving regional peace.

3.4 Türkiye's Potential Role in Kashmir Conflict Resolution

Once a rational and permanent solution to the Kashmir problem cannot be found, the consequences of other wars, including nuclear, would not even be predicted. In the previous section, findings were obtained within the scope of Türkiye's active stance on Kashmir and its ready and enthusiastic approach to mediation. In light of these data, the hypothesis that Türkiye has a mediation potential for the KC and that it can build its policy on the mediation phenomenon since there is no Kashmir policy at the moment has been defended**.** The current section is planned to evaluate why Türkiye has the potential to mediate the crisis within the scope of internal and external dynamics. Primarily, the mediation motif is tried to be explained based on Türkiye's entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy.

The Republic of Türkiye recently called the state the most westerner in the east and the most easterner in the west has an active and versatile foreign policy mechanism. In this sense, Türkiye has a leading role in mediation, which is one of the most basic methods for permanent peace and stability by creating global peacebuilding and awareness for this, both in its region and distant geographies. Türkiye carries out its mediation activities through the mediation certificate programs as well as by conducting the co-chairman position in initiatives initiated by organizations such as the UN, the OSCE and the OIC, as well as the serial international mediation conferences it hosts. Türkiye is a wise state that has pioneered many initiatives on preventive diplomacy and mediation in order to resolve existing conflicts through peaceful means.

In this sense, when examples of cooperation in the field under the leadership of Türkiye are given, two separate cooperation processes with the participation of Serbia-Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, the Heart of Asia Istanbul Process implemented for the peace of Pakistan and Afghanistan, its role in the negotiations between Somalia and Somaliland, and its indirect role in the negotiations between Israel and Syria, supporting for the Southern Philippines peace process, Türkiye's efforts to resolve the

issue of Iran's nuclear activity through dialogue, and finally, Türkiye's efforts to increase the contacts between the two states in the current Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Following these extensive experiences, Türkiye has shaped the mediation phenomenon within the scope of certain principles it has determined. In its own mediating principles, Türkiye emphasizes that since each problem has its own unique motives, solutions should be provided with flexible and unique methods and all the dynamics of the situation should be familiarized, also touched upon the importance of gaining the parties' trust. Moreover, has been stated the mediator should present a commitment that will not be short-term from the very beginning. Finally, embracing the principle of the mediator adopting a values-based strategy by presenting an equal vision to the parties, Türkiye is committed to acting within the mechanism of mutual trust with all the states and structures that are party to the problem (MFA, 2022).

Within the scope of peaceful resolution of conflicts and mediation, Türkiye has carried out and continues to conduct considerable activities led by international organizations. For instance, the UN is one of these structures where Türkiye is most active in mediation cases. In this regard, Türkiye, which came together with Finland on September 24, 2010 in New York, started the 'Mediation Initiative for Peace' within the UN. Subsequently, the resolution A/65/283, which was adopted by the vote of the UN General Assembly on 22 June 2011, strengthens Türkiye in this position as it is the first resolution adopted by the UN on mediation (UN General Assembly, 2011).

As for the OSCE, it is marked Türkiye has a similar lead position here as in the UN. 'The Group of Friends of Mediation' (GoF) was established in 2014 under the leadership of Finland, Türkiye and then-term president Switzerland. This group aims at wider representation and experience sharing of dispute resolution and mediation within the OSCE.

An undeniable fact that Türkiye, a strong representative of Islamic geography, carries out an active policy within the scope of OIC. Indeed, Türkiye has been making maximum efforts to support the mediation efforts in the OIC since was Term Presidency and Executive Committee Chairmanship. The resolutions titled "Strengthening the Mediation Capacity of the OIC" submitted by Türkiye were adopted by the IT Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM). Following this decision, the

OIC Mediation Contact Group was established and Türkiye was included in the group's co-chairmanship (MFA, 2022). Türkiye has adopted a leading role in increasing solidarity in the issues of Muslim communities under pressure such as Palestine, Jerusalem and the Rohingya, especially between the years 2016-2019, when it was the term the OIC presidency (Kalabalık, 2019).

Finally, some conferences hosted by Türkiye in many fields and envisaging international participation is mentioned. The most comprehensive of these is the Istanbul Mediation Conferences. These conferences, which aim to make new breakthroughs in the field of mediation and to enable the sharing of knowledge and experience by the bringing together experts in their fields, also include some sub-panels drawing attention to the inclusion of women and youth in the mediation process. The meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Russia and Ukraine, with the devotion of Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu, within the scope of the last conference, 8th, held on March 10, 2022, shows that the mechanism is also functional in practice (TCDisisleri, 2022).

Another conference series hosted by Türkiye is the Mediation Conferences held with the OIC member countries. "Mediation for Peace Certificate Program" was organized in Ankara in 2018 with the participation of young diplomats of member countries in order to develop and keep the mediation mechanism between member states up to date.

On the other hand, Türkiye's international activity stands out regarding the pandemic, one of the current issues on the global agenda. In 2020, a seminar titled How the Coronavirus Pandemic Affects Conflict Dynamics and Mediation: New Challenges to Peace and Security, which was held under the leadership of Minister Çavuşoğlu in collaboration with the ADF and the International Peace Institute (IPI), was held in a digital environment. In this event, the effects of mediation processes from the epidemic were emphasized. In addition, since this is the first online event organized by ADF, it reflects Türkiye's sensitive and active foreign policy understanding. At the same time, a webinar titled "Leveraging New Technologies for Peace in an Increasingly Digital World" was held on May 27, 2021, in collaboration with the "Innovation Cell" established in January 2020 under the leadership of ADF, Istanbul Mediation Conferences and the United Nations Department of Political Issues and Peacebuilding (MFA, 2022).

In light of the data obtained, has been concluded that Türkiye is in an effort to contribute to world peace with the effect of both its domestic policy based on the traditional principle of 'Peace at Home Peace in the World' and its foreign policy based on vital activity in international organizations. In other words, Türkiye's experience in mediation, enthusiasm and sensitive approach can bring Türkiye to the agenda as a mediator in the KC.

After examining the arguments that Türkiye can mediate in the crisis, the answer to the question of why Türkiye should mediate in this crisis is tried to be clarified. There is a general consensus that this crisis, which has been going on since 1948, should be resolved as soon as possible so that it does not further threaten regional and global peace, so that it does not turn into further loss of life or even a nuclear showdown. However, as detailed in the previous sections, the crisis could not be resolved despite bilateral dialogues, negotiation and peace calls by other states, and even the UN's intervention. Although the two countries India and Pakistan have recently declared that they have declared a ceasefire, the LOC region is still potentially controversial because the status of J&K could not be determined. in other words, the failure of bilateral dialogue naturally brings mediation to the agenda.

For many years, Türkiye has started to include discourses it can mediator the KC. In these discourses, the mediation offer that Pakistan frequently conveys to Türkiye also has an impact. Pakistan not only offered mediation but also asked Türkiye to support itself in negotiations and persuasion regarding the crisis. On the other hand, clearly the peoples of Türkiye and Pakistan, with the awareness of a brotherly state, also have a consciousness of solidarity because of the Kashmir dispute. For this reason, Türkiye's call for a ceasefire in order to resolve the crisis has been expressed by both its politicians and relevant international organizations by Türkiye. In fact, President Erdoğan's association of Kashmir with Çanakkale in one of his last statements shows the importance Türkiye attaches to the issue. Hence, it can be accepted that Türkiye has announced to the world it has the synergy to act after all these discourses. In other words, Türkiye has enough motivation to turn these discourses into practice.

On the other hand, the lack of a settled Kashmir policy despite all Türkiye's interest was highlighted in the previous sections. In this way, Kashmir policy can be accepted to be built on the mediation phenomenon. This mediation is also compatible with

Türkiye's past discourse and approaches on Kashmir. When the more recent history is examined, the AAI comes to the fore. It is aimed to develop regional and state-specific approaches within the scope of the AAI, which envisages Türkiye's approach to the Asian continent again and more holistically. When interpreted in terms of Kashmir, the tension in relations with India necessitates specific approaches, both due to the absence of Kashmir policy and Türkiye's closer attitude to Pakistan.

In other words, the mediation case that can be made in the crisis may both realize an approach specific to Kashmir and would have a positive effect on bilateral relations if this phenomenon is perceived as a goodwill indicator of Türkiye from the point of view of India. Thus, just like aimed in the AAI a holistic approach is achieved starting from Kashmir in special to the SA and throughout Asia in general. This approach has the potential to serve the target of increasing Türkiye's trade volume with Asia, which was also highlighted in the initiative. Especially due to strained relations with India, the trade volume has decreased. Ambassador Sanjay Panda's statement to the Turkish think tank the GASAM in 2020 also reveals this commercial concern in bilateral relations. The ambassador's statements, which touched on many issues in bilateral relations, summarize the current bilateral relations in this sense.

First of all, the Ambassador called for a 'course correction' in bilateral relations between Türkiye and India and underlined the need to optimize the current potential in defense, high technology and trade. Subsequently, he stated that Indian investors are waiting to "come and invest in Türkiye" when the "right environment" is provided. He also declared that India sees Türkiye as a democratic, secular and friendly state adheres to the principles of the rule of law within the scope of the teaching of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. From this point of view, it implies that India will not welcome the Kashmir issue from the perspective of religion, and that the conflicts in Kashmir are cross-border terrorism.

Stating that Türkiye also suffers from cross-border terrorism, Sanjay said they expect a sensitive approach to terrorism, which is their common concern with Türkiye. He also highlighted Türkiye's geostrategic importance and conveyed that India sees Türkiye as an important commercial partner and an important center for the EU. Finally, he stated that India is ready to work for this, believing that the ancient ties can be put back on track in time, however far (Khaliq, 2020).

Conclusively, it is clearly noticed that Türkiye and India are also aware that the bilateral relations are not at the level they deserve and are eager to bring it to a high level. Regrettably, the only blockage in bilateral relations is the Pakistani factor. Although India openly declares that Kashmir is an internal matter and does not welcome intervention, the underlying reason for this lies in its discomfort with Kashmir's association with religion. So, provide that Türkiye changes its old biased rhetoric on Kashmir and interprets it as more neutral, more moderate and more inclusive, that is, an event that undermines the security of both states, it may soften India's perspective.

In summary, barriers to progress can be removed even if there is no consensus between the two states on Kashmir, and the influence of a third party, meanwhile Pakistan, should not be allowed on bilateral relations. The sensitivity of the balance to be established between Pakistan and India in the mediation mechanism that will be formed with moderate and neutral rhetoric by Türkiye, which can assume the role of mediator in the name of serving the common peace, is of vital importance.

After examining in detail, the arguments making Türkiye's mediation activity possible and necessary, in final, suggestions and details on how this activity can be realized is clarified. Within the scope of mediation, first of all, steps should be taken by the parties to ensure that confidence-building measures are taken in cooperation with both sides in order to prevent possible conflicts and end violence. In other words, a safe environment should be established by minimizing the risk of conflict very before Kashmir's status or plebiscite discussions.

The conflicts experienced throughout Kashmir and the unrest created by the military regime have triggered large-scale terrorist activities. This complex structure is actually a situation of widespread conflict and violence rather than being interpreted simply as violence that the Muslim people of Jammu are subjected to. This situation creates a security crisis across India, Pakistan and Kashmir. In this context, Türkiye should turn its Muslim-oriented perspective on the crisis to a broader perspective, namely see it as a humanitarian crisis. For this reason, it should take care to soften its biased rhetoric and adopt a neutral and holistic approach to the construction of mediation. As mentioned before, since the bilateral relations between India and Türkiye have been strained by the Kashmir effect, it is important for Türkiye to

appropriately show its goodwill towards India and to convince India for this mediation. Thus, provide that Türkiye mediates, it would be walking on a common path with both India and Pakistan for a common purpose.

What is lacking in the crisis is essentially diplomatic persuasion by a strong actor or actors that can the bring the parties closer to negotiation. Türkiye, which has the potential to play an effective role in bringing the parties together, also has positive and ancient relations with both countries. The point that needs to be highlighted here is that all the dynamics of the crisis have been well-read by the UN and some of its members since the first international intervention in the crisis came from the UN. In other words, the first step towards a solution and the necessary infrastructure is available within the scope of the UN. On the other hand, since Türkiye is an active member of the UN and has mediation experience, cooperation with the UN in the resolution phase is likely to strengthen the mediation architecture. However, since there are some possible blockages that Türkiye may experience in convincing India, it is thought that mediation can be made more effective with the accompaniment of a strong structure close to India and capable with convince it under the umbrella of the UN.

This is where the US comes to the fore in special. In addition to being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the US is also a strong structure that can accompany Türkiye in mediation by making the process effective in terms of re-advancing the process blocked in the UN infrastructure. Additionally, the US has friendly relations with Pakistan and India, parties to the crisis. Eventually, it is argued that the KC can be resolved on the basis of mediation, with the joint initiative of Türkiye and the US, within the scope of UN principles. This joint venture, which is believed to make the process more effective, has been interpreted from Türkiye's point of view in this section, and now it is planned to be interpreted together with its dynamics for the US in the next section.

3.5 Appraisement of Kashmir in Terms of Regional Powers India-Pakistan- China and Kashmiris

In this last part of the study, the views of all states party to the crisis, India-Pakistan and China, which are planned to be a summary, is briefly included in terms of solution or status regarding the KC. To start with China, it is mentioned that China generally requires the crisis to be resolved peacefully and she claims that the conflict

threatens the sustainable peace of the region. However, it is a fact that she sometimes criticizes India in her actions and discourses because of the regional leadership struggle with India. On the other hand, there is the general wisdom that China, which has a strategic partnership with Pakistan, did not openly support Pakistan in the KC, but that it provided arms to Pakistan. It does not seem possible to expect China, which occupied Kashmir due to the border problem with India and has a say in its administration, to show a pro-India attitude in the crisis.

China has clearly not associated itself with the crisis phenomenon and avoided being involved in the debate even if it has a bond with Kashmir. When China's recent statements are examined, Chinese foreign affairs representative Mao Ning made a statement that the Kashmir problem, which has been going on for many years, should be resolved peacefully and appropriately in accordance with the UN Charter, Security Council resolutions and related bilateral agreements. It was also declared that the parties, India and Pakistan should avoid unaccountably steps that would drag the crisis to a dead end, which was actually a criticism of India's movement to change the autonomous status of Kashmir in the constitution. Beijing immediately criticized India's move to change the state status of Kashmir and separate J&K and Ladakh in 2019, expressing that it is always against India's attempt to take the Chinese lands in the western part of the China-India border under its administration. She subsequently warned India not to endanger China's territorial integrity.

China made another resounding comment at the OIC meeting in Islamabad in March 2022. Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that heard many Islamic state friends calls for help in Kashmir, then expressed that China shared the same pain with them and hoped that the crisis would be resolved as soon as possible. Subsequently, India made harsh criticism, stating that China did not have the right to have a say on this issue. In addition, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India, Arindam Bagchi, underlined that it should not be forgotten that India keeps its internal issues away from foreign public considerations (Krishnan, 2022).

In light of the mentioned data, it was concluded that although China is a party to the crisis and also a strategic partner of Pakistan, it was not involved in the crisis and only called for the resolution of the crisis. As highlighted before, one leg of the OBOR project, which is its own mega initiative, passes through Kashmir. There are

many statements that this initiative, called the CPEC, causes China to attach more importance to peace in Kashmir due to its Kashmir connection. After this project, China, which started to call for peace and ceasefire to the parties more frequently, seems to care more about its own interests than the peace in its immediate basin. In addition, China, which can use the Pakistani factor from time to time to balance India in its regional struggle, interprets the crisis in the context of its own dynamics. Due to China's inactive stance, it is not uncommon to see China's own statements that it can mediate in the crisis or that such an offer has been received from the international arena.

Eventually, in summary, China has declared its neutrality on Kashmir since the 1980s and publicly declared that it sees the issue as a problem that needs to be resolved between India and Pakistan, but in 2010 it seems to have moved away from this traditional policy. Trying to maintain a balancing policy between the two countries until 2010, China seems to be more active with its discourses, not keeping itself out of the crisis as before, after this date. Although China is not the primary party in this dispute, she is an actor in the conflict because of Chinese territory Aksai. Since the flagship the CPEC line of the OBOR project is connected to Kashmir, it is a general opinion that China is more sympathetic and sensitive to the Kashmir Crisis than before.

Even after the CPEC launch, China highlighted its own mediation potential for Kashmir. So much so that China's readiness to play a constructive role in improving relations between Pakistan and India has been expressed by Chinese politicians. This desire of China to act actively was not met with moderation by India. As a matter of fact, after the radical change regarding the autonomy status of Kashmir in the Indian constitution in 2019, China, like the whole world, started to have security concerns on behalf of Kashmir. After these dates, she began to believe that it would be logical to internationalize the problem and solve it before the UN and started to openly support Pakistan on this issue and made statements expressing this (Kurita,2021).

The fact that China is a permanent member of the Security Council makes this support even more important. China, which draws more attention to the UN Kashmir resolutions at the UN summits, is experiencing tension with India for this reason. Finally, looking at the recent past, although it is seen that after the ceasefire declaration in 2021, China avoided the remarkable statements about Kashmir at the UN summits

to not shake the balance, it is not possible to return to its old balancing policy in the short term. As a result, although China has a variable attitude towards the Kashmir conflict according to the conditions of the period and its own interests, it has started to show an approach that supports the UN resolutions due to India's recent extreme approaches. In this sense, it can be said that China is in a position to welcome the plebiscite.

Next, the general approach of Pakistan, another actor party to the crisis, is discussed. As detailed in the previous sections, there have been themes of rivalry and tension between Pakistan and India since 1948 when they separated from each other. these two states also build their security perceptions on each other, in other words, their primary security threats are each other. From this point of view, what Kashmir means for Pakistan is a victory and religious factor that must be won as a continuation of the independence struggle. Both Kashmir in general and the disputed region of Jammu are formed predominantly by Muslim populations. For this reason, Pakistan, which is considered an Islamic state, is trying to save the Muslims in Jammu from Hindu oppression and to protect this region so that they can freely perform their religious activities, with a consciousness acting on the phenomenon of religion.

The Kashmir issue, which has been placed in the category of a struggle for the sake of religion in Pakistan’s domestic policy, has unfortunately caused the formation of some struggling aggressive groups within the country and their attacks on Jammu Kashmir or India are expressed as terrorist activities from the perspective of India today. In order to turn the attacks of these groups in its favour, India is trying to gain support by asking the US to evaluate these groups as terrorists, by taking strength from the sensitivity of the US on terrorism. In order to turn the attacks of these groups in its favour, India is trying to gain support by asking the US to evaluate these groups as terrorists, by taking strength from the sensitivity of the US on terrorism.

Pakistan is struggling for Kashmir within the scope of the plebiscite element, which is the key factor in determining the status of the region. Since the plebiscite decision was made under the leadership of the UN, Pakistan is trying to get the support of the international arena and the UN because India did not approach this decision. For this reason, it tries to keep the issue lively in the UN meetings and in some organizations such as the OIC. The people of Kashmir had mostly chosen to join

Pakistan in the previous vote, but India did not accept this decision. For this reason, Pakistan insists on the approach that the solution to the crisis can be possible with the implementation of the plebiscite. Another solution Pakistan focuses here on is mediation act. Islamabad called on some states and organizations, especially Türkiye, for help in this regard and asked them to mediate the solving crisis.

Finally, since Pakistan sees Kashmir as a region of chaos where human rights violations are committed by India and the Muslim population is persecuted, she requests the UN resolutions to be implemented, especially plebiscites, for the resolution of this crisis, and the persecution of the Kashmiri people to end then the perpetrators to be prosecuted.

As for the last actor in the crisis finally, India, can be deduced that her general views are dependent on her domestic policy. First of all, looking at what Kashmir means for India, it can be stated that this is different from Pakistan's approach. In essence, India interprets the KC as a threat to its own territorial integrity, not religion based. Due to its multi-religious and multi-ethnic structure, India does not entirely focus on the phenomenon of religion in its basic internal parameters. For this reason, it embraces Kashmir in order not to trigger another territorial loss due to religion factor after separation act between Pakistan and itself. As India interprets this region as a security deadlock, exhibits her military units and authoritarian regime here. For instance, India interprets the KC as a domestic policy issue and does not favour the internationalization of the problem. Therefore, India does not lean towards to see external intervention in the crisis.

However, due to the fact that the main problem occurs in the Jammu region and because of the opinions that the security members of India have committed many human rights violations there, it is exposed to international pressure to stop this and to run the judicial mechanism. Despite all the pressures, India criticizes and does not accept the comments made about this crisis by publishing a statement. Following these pressures, India abolished the law that previously granted autonomy status to J&K in its constitution, and once again proved that it wants to ensure that the issue remains in its domestic policy by completely subordinating the Jammu region to itself. After this constitutional change, the Modi administration, which increased the pressure in the region, imposed a broadcast ban for a while and blocked access to social media.

Although these radical practices have been subjected to intense criticism in the international arena, India has declared that this practice was done for the sake of better-ensuring security.

When India's general approach to ending this crisis is analyzed, first of all, Pakistan's dissatisfaction with its so-called terrorist activities comes to the fore. India argues that her positive attitude over the plebiscite insistence from the international arena and Pakistan can conceivable only if the withdrawal of Pakistani fighters and security forces in and around Jammu first. Then, it claims that the issue can only be resolved talk tete-a-tete with Pakistan. Although the two states have declared that they have declared peace in Kashmir more than once on the stage of history, this crisis turn into a vicious circle as the status issue cannot be resolved. Unfortunately, since conflicts and disagreements continue and India has not taken any steps on a plebiscite or any other solution alternative, foreign intervention is thought mandatory for resolving the crisis.

In conclusion, it would be appropriate to say that India, which tried to take the region under its own dominance and close it to foreign intervention with its constitutional arrangement, exhibited an impulsive approach to Kashmir, especially during the Modi period. Since India is relatively far from mutual negotiation and does not recognize the plebiscite, convincing it to take a permanent step for peace is more complicated than convincing Pakistan. That's why, in this study, the argument of can persuading India by the US, which is a strategic partner of India and a state it fears its power, is defended. In light of the illuminated data, mention that the KC poses a fundamental security concern for all states and also threatens the sustainable peace of SA and the Indian geography. The need for mediation emerges because the crisis has not been resolved between the two parties, India and Pakistan, and even when statements are made that a ceasefire has been reached, a permanent agreement has not been made.

While India and Pakistan are still fighting for sovereignty in Kashmir, what the people of Kashmir want is an issue that is not discussed much on the agenda, that is, neglected. The main issue here is whether the public did not favour the plebiscite that came to the fore in the past anymore. Within the scope of this plebiscite, in addition to the decision of whether the people would like to be connected to Pakistan or India, the

idea of a Kashmiri society that wants full independence without being attached to these two states is also on the agenda. The idea of full independence for the Kashmiri people, who are likely to be tired of years of chaos and tension, is understandable. However, it is a fact that it is not talked about much on the agenda of both sides, Pakistan and India, and it is not welcomed. Especially after India abolished the autonomy clause in the constitution, the possibility of transferring its sovereignty here seems unlikely in the near future. Although there is no general opinion about what the people want, it is also a general opinion that they are tired of India's oppressive rule, thus the probability of the people wanting to be tied to India can be considered low.

While some of the struggling groups in Kashmir want to join Pakistan and use force for this purpose, the other part is fighting for independence. For Kashmir, which ultimately hosts an environment of chaos and conflict, it is essential to first ensure peace in the region, that is, to control and demilitarize all combatant groups and military violence. The necessity of conducting field research at the UN for the formalization and representation of the people's decisions on the status of Kashmir is evident here. In this way, the people will be represented in the peace process by including them in the process (BBC,2019).

Conclusion and Suggestions

The Kashmir region, which has been known for years for its status problem, still cannot get out of the vicious circle formed by the crisis. The inability of the whole world to raise its voice against this crisis has caused the crisis to remain unsolved for years between the state parties, India, Pakistan and China, and many wars and casualties have been lost for the sake of Kashmir. This thesis, the main idea of which was formed by the realization of Türkiye’s lack of policy regarding the KC in the literature, essentially points to a policy-making process from general to specific.

While the EU is ontologically fragile after the Brexit process and some crises, the economic boosting of Asian states, especially China, has caused the world libra to outweigh the Asian continent. Although she tries to keep the balance mechanism in the foreground in its foreign policy, using the Western card has always been Türkiye’s priority. However, in recent time it is possible to see a Türkiye tired of waiting at the

door of the EU and is intent on focusing on the Asian region, which has been neglected until now. It is in such an environment that the AAI, which is a natural consequence of the intention to look at all geographies more comprehensively, took root.

The AAI, declared in 2019, aims to achieve a balanced structure in Türkiye's trade with Asia and accelerate economic cooperation and mutual investments. Moreover, it hopes to the bring Asian peoples and Turkish people closer together and displays the idea of a Türkiye that approaches Asia more holistically than before. Within the scope of the question of how Kashmir can be positioned in the new Türkiye model, which attaches great importance to Asia, this thesis study has taken form. In other words, one of the arguments advocated in the thesis was that Türkiye did not have a settle Kashmir policy and therefore its room for maneuver could not be built. A more holistic and active approach can be achieved if a Kashmir policy that becomes clear and reflects Turkey's goodwill ready to serve peace is adopted.

Türkiye is a state adopts a very sensitive and helpful approach to world-wide humanitarian crises, wars and natural disasters, both due to its successful humanitarian foreign policy and the influence of Ottoman culture. In this direction, the KC has been meticulously followed since the beginning of the process and it has been expressed by the politicians that Türkiye is ready to mediate at every opportunity. Türkiye's intense interest in the crisis stems from its religious-based interpretation of this conflict, meanwhile, the persecution of Muslims in the Jammu region and its support for Pakistan, which has a bond of brotherhood. Furthermore, the interest in Kashmir has intensified during the JDP era, for example, President Erdoğan's statement about the KC at the UN board meeting and the statement during his trip to Pakistan that 'Kashmir is what Çanakkale is' confirms this.

Indeed, India did not remain unresponsive to these statements and accused Türkiye of meddling in its internal affairs, and the theme of tension in bilateral relations began to gain momentum. Ultimately, due to Türkiye's close interest in the issue and its approach envisaging a more holistic perspective of Asia, the need for the construction of a Kashmir policy arises. Türkiye has already shown its willingness to be active in the crisis by making many discourses and proposals, and it is argued in this study that this should be supported by a policy. Namely, Türkiye's interest in the crisis is very clear, but this should not remain as a discourse, in other words, Türkiye,

which has the potential to be more active in Kashmir, can take advantage of this by executing a policy through mediation.

In this thesis, which includes the interpretation of Kashmir in Türkiye's Asian policy in general and Türkiye's South Asia policy in particular, the deduction method was used as a methodology. To elaborate more, in order to construct Türkiye's Kashmir policy, first Türkiye's recent Asia policy was examined, then Türkiye's recent South Asia policy was examined within the scope of this policy. Bilateral relations with parties to the crisis were also examined in detail and a policy proposal was presented to the literature. In addition, within the scope of this thesis, Türkiye's relationship with India was negatively affected because of its fraternal bond with Pakistan and then the desired momentum could not be achieved in both socio-cultural and economic terms in bilateral relations is another argument advocated. Türkiye's assertive and biased discourses on Kashmir today also play a large part in this situation.

Again, back to policy making, after the aforementioned researches, an inference was made that Türkiye's Kashmir policy should be built with the phenomenon of mediation in the crisis. This inference also argues that since Türkiye adopts a holistic approach to Asia as a principle has a deficiency in both its approach to the KC and its bilateral relations with India due to the Pakistan factor, this deficiency can be improved within the scope of mediation activity and then a more holistic approach can be obtained as desired. In other words, if Türkiye can prove its goodwill to India by putting into action its desire to resolve the crisis and build lasting peace, there can be a high probability of revival and improvement in Türkiye-India bilateral relations. Türkiye needs partnerships to be established with India both in terms of economy and politics. In the recent bilateral meetings, both states reflect their common desire that it is time to accelerate their relations without external factors and that it is time to increase their economic partnerships.

In this study, it is also argued that Türkiye's mediation attempt is one of the rare ways it can reconcile with India without offending Pakistan. The important thing here is the sensitivity of the balance that Türkiye will establish between the two states. Türkiye, whose bilateral relations with India have been overshadowed by Pakistan, can this time move bilateral relations to a more independent arena, provided that it sharpens and neutralizes its rhetoric and attitudes regarding the crisis. It is another

argument defended in this study that the US, which is both a strategic partner of India and India is hesitating of its power, can take the mediation process to success quickly provide that the US accompany Türkiye in the mediation act with the aim of increasing the functionality of the mediation phenomenon and make India warm to this issue. Since the US is also a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the step it takes in this regard can also be considered a responsibility.

It is important why these two countries were specifically found suitable for mediation. In this sense, both Türkiye and the US have smooth bilateral relations with the two states party to the crisis, Pakistan and India. While Türkiye is closer to Pakistan, the US is closer to India. It is more important to convince India here because India argues that the KC is an internal issue and does not favor foreign intervention. However, the systematic violence of the Indian security forces on the indigenous people in the Jammu region and the inability to determine the status of the region necessitates the resolution of this crisis. In other words, the issue of mediation naturally came to the fore because the two states did not come to an agreement until today, namely, it did not come out of the blue. This proposal reveals the distinctness of the thesis, as a joint mediation initiative as advocated in this study has not been implemented in Kashmir’s conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes so far.

Another proposal in this thesis can the bring the two states closer to each other and speed up the solution phase is based on the ECO-politics way. Pakistan and India do not have much in commercial partnership due to the chaos in between. Especially the frozen atmosphere around the LOC deeply affects the economy. Opening the LOC area to trade, benefiting jointly from Kashmir’s economic riches, and the establishment of commercial-based joint structures including Türkiye and the US can be considered promising in relations. As a result, the economy can be used as a tool to improve policy.

As emphasized in the title, Turkey's potential role has been confirmed by its active attitude towards the crisis so far. The stabilization of this active role by turning it into a policy and at the same time serving the purposes within the scope of Asia Again will provide an advantage in Turkey's foreign policy manoeuvre. Ultimately, Turkey's shaping of Kashmir policy through mediation is a suggested way in this study in terms of covering both states that are party to the crisis. In the solution to the crisis,

Turkey advocates primarily stopping the conflict and violence, ending the military oppressive regime that Muslims in the Jammu region are exposed to, and then determining the status of Kashmir with the consensus of the parties. Ending violence can be achieved under UN principles and responsibility, thus the US presence has the potential to pressure India to put an end to the oppressive regime.

There are also opposing views in the international community that advocate the plebiscite or the attachment of the Muslim Jammu people to Pakistan, however, contrary to these views, Turkey, which is aware of the delicate balance of the crisis, argues that the status of Kashmir should be determined by the joint decision of the parties. Therefore, the mediation process can be shaped with a simple approach such as calling the parties to negotiations with diplomatic persuasion due to India's concerns. Eventually, what is meant by mediation in the study is to persuade the parties to negotiate and, if necessary, to contribute to lasting peace-building by carrying out multiple dialogues.

In all light of the data obtained, thanks to this thesis the aim of contribute to the domestic literature with the help of examining the KC through Türkiye’s internal dynamics and contribute to international literature with the help of evaluation of this worldwide crisis for permanent peace-building within the scope of mediation has achieved. Finally, it can be underlined that whether the mediation activity is successful or not, what is emphasized here is that Türkiye can be able to approach Asia more holistically and inclusively by displaying an active state image in the SA and throughout Asia with this initiative. If Türkiye, with the support of the basic principle of Peace at Home and Peace in the World, can build a delicate balance policy between India and Pakistan, it can be able to increase the room for maneuvering in Asia both economically and politically. In final, Türkiye can position itself strongly and visibly in the gigantic Asian continent through the KC.

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