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# CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS AND MODERN DIRECTIONS OF THE FORMATION OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

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## Abstract

At the beginning of the 21st century, due to the coming to power of the "Justice and Development Party" led by Erdogan, the country's foreign policy was significantly reformed, taking into account the cultural, historical and geographical features of the Turkish state, as well as the modern geopolitical reality. During the rule of the "Justice and Development Party", significant changes took place in Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey began to pay more attention to national interests than in the second half of the 20th century. In the course of the transformation of modern international relations, the foreign policy of the Republic of Turkey is formed under the influence of both internal and external factors, and is becoming a clearly defined multi-vector feature. In this article, the directions of Turkey's foreign policy in the system of modern international relations were scientifically analyzed.

**Keywords** Türkiye, international relations, foreign policy, domestic policy, world order, neo-Ottomanism, ideology, doctrine, Ottomans, Central Asia.

## INTRODUCTION

As we all know, today there is a complex situation at the international level, and the world is going through fundamental transformations that are difficult to predict and have unpredictable consequences. In addition, the crisis of mutual trust and mutual understanding is acutely felt on the world stage. Threats to global and regional security are increasing and new dangers are emerging. In this regard, the scientific analysis of the transformation processes taking place in modern international relations is more relevant than ever.

After the "Justice and Development Party" came to power in Turkey, there have been significant changes in Ankara's foreign policy. The coming to power of this party changed the priorities of the country's foreign policy and defined the national

interests of the country more clearly. During the rule of the "Justice and Development Party", Turkey cooperates with the neighboring regions, including the countries of the Middle East and Central Asia through the "soft power" policy, and conducts an active regional foreign policy.

Of course, Ankara's foreign policy has diversified to a certain extent, which means that it is moving away from the position of a small partner of America in the region and is trying to strengthen relations with eastern countries.

## METHODS

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study of the foreign policy of the Republic of Turkey in the transformation of modern international relations is the modern political science methods, in particular, theoretical, empirical and practical methods. The author

followed general scientific methods - analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction. In addition, among the theoretical methods, such methods as systematic, institutional and comparative analysis are of priority. In this article, the method of systematic analysis helps to study the foreign policy of Turkey in the transformation of the modern system of international relations.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the transformation of modern international relations, Turkey conducts its active foreign policy in front of the world community. Of course, as in every country, foreign policy in Turkey is based on the national interests of the state. Ideology and ideas form the basis of foreign policy.

The most effective, proven and recognized mechanism for achieving the goals set in the modern foreign policy of the Republic of Turkey is the term "soft power", which has been used since the end of the 20th century. Undoubtedly, in the 21st century, the use of "soft power" policy ensures not only the country's well-being, but also its security, economic interests, foreign political image, as well as increasing its international influence.

Therefore, the political landscape of the world has recently been transformed in a unique way, in order to advance their national interests in modern international relations, countries are moving from the theory of "soft power" to "hard power" are trying to use. Currently, "soft power" [1] is of great interest among representatives of the world politics.

This policy, which reflects the views of representatives of the school of neoliberalism in America, plays a major role not only in the public diplomacy and foreign policy of the United States of America, but also in the foreign policy direction of other leading countries, especially Turkey.

The origin of the term "soft power" can be found in

the history of the ancient Chinese Lao-tzu, and in the works of Antonio Gramsci in the Middle Ages. In the modern era, this term was introduced into circulation by Joseph Nye, who tried to explain the theoretical aspects of "soft power" in several of his scientific research works. J. Nye defined "soft power" in his book as follows: "What is soft power?" "soft power" means achieving desired results without the use of coercive means, on the contrary, by attracting allies and partners voluntarily. The intended result can be achieved, first of all, by developing spiritual and material culture, increasing the effectiveness of foreign and domestic policy [2].

As we know, "hard power" tries to establish policies based on pressure and violence (using military force or economic resources). In contrast, the effective side of soft power is formed through the dissemination of various information through mass media. So, both "hard power" and "soft power" have a common strategy in a certain sense, but the tactics of implementing this strategy have their own characteristics for each of them.

It is not wrong to say that Turkey's active use of "soft power" had a clear purpose after the appointment of Ahmet Davutoğlu as the former minister of Foreign Affairs. Of course, it was Davutoğlu who was responsible for the development of broad cooperation not only in the political-economic, but also in the cultural-humanitarian spheres with the countries of the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Balkans, North Africa, Saudi Arabia, which were included in the territories of the former Ottoman Empire, and with the sister countries of Central Asia, modern He emphasized that it is important for Turkey. Consequently, his views and policies were later reflected in the concept of Turkish foreign policy.

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the basis of Turkey's foreign policy has been the doctrine of foreign policy formulated by Mustafa

Kemal Atatürk in 1923-1938. Over the years, Turkey has widely used the foreign policy defined by Atatürk in its activities in the international arena.

Later, several changes took place in Turkey's foreign policy. For example, after the Justice and Development Party came to the top of the government, the main direction of the country's foreign policy was based on the ideas of the pre-republic period. As a result, new forms of ideas such as Ottomanism, Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism appeared. However, according to many experts conducting scientific research on Turkey's foreign policy, the direction of Turkey's foreign policy has been transformed several times since the establishment of the Republic, but fundamental changes have taken place. noting that [3].

The transformation of the modern system of international relations and the change in the role of the main countries in the world require many countries to reconsider the direction of their domestic and foreign policy. Turkey's foreign policy strategy did not stop, but continued to develop, and as we can see, today the Republic of Turkey remains one of the main power centers in the Middle East region. In turn, the idea of perfection is undergoing radical changes and is gradually becoming a thing of the past, and new directions of development are entering the world political arena.

Another such idea is the doctrine of "Zero Problems with the Neighbours" proposed by Ahmet Davutoğlu, the former foreign minister and prime minister of Turkey. The doctrine was adopted in 2008 and has been a decisive factor in Turkey's foreign policy for a long time [4]. This doctrine was primarily based on the principle of peace and justice and reflected the essence of Turkish idealism. The main idea was to conduct a peaceful foreign policy, and this doctrine corresponded to Atatürk's main motto: "Peace at

home, peace in the world" According to the doctrine, Turkey focused on establishing mutually beneficial economic relations with the countries of the Middle East. At that time, the Republic of Turkey announced its readiness to take responsibility for ensuring stability in the Middle East. However, such statements of Turkey were explained by the desire to take leadership status both in the region and outside the regional space. Ahmet Davutoğlu divided the country into four types in his book "Strategic Depth", which was published before the concept of "Zero Problems with the Neighbours" was developed, and believed that Kemalism policy affected Turkey's active position in the international arena. In his opinion, this policy meant that the country was leading to the status of a "small country" in front of the world community, and this, in turn, was against the future of a Republic with great potential like Turkey [5]. After such statements, it was not difficult to guess in which direction Turkey will act in foreign policy. The official adoption of the "Zero Problems with the Neighbours" doctrine confirmed these assumptions and was a logical continuation of the transformation processes in the country's foreign policy.

Of course, the provisions of this doctrine seem effective only in theory, but its practical application is a difficult matter. The unsuccessful implementation of this idea can be explained by several reasons:

- it is very difficult to implement this doctrine in an area like the Middle East, because there have been mutual claims between countries for a long time, as well as various conflicts between states, and they are not controlled by one state. it is almost impossible to solve it by initiative;
- from the point of view of the fact that such riots as the "Arab Spring" in 2011 were not taken into account, this doctrine was not sufficiently formulated, these disagreements destabilized the

region so much that even at the present time, not only one country, but also international organizations are making specific actions to establish peace and resolve disputes in this region;

- from the beginning, there was no suitable alternative to this doctrine, and no one guaranteed that the process of rapprochement between the countries would be carried out according to plan;
- initially, Turkey used lobbying to create a zone of stability around the country's borders, before gaining its regional leadership. As a result, the country became so obsessed with self-development that even its actions began to contradict its ideals, and eventually the inconsistency of the doctrine's rules became apparent.

Currently, the direction of Turkey's foreign policy has moved far away from this concept. As a confirmation of this, we can take an example of the actions taken by the state leadership in Iraq and Syria. It seems that Ankara prefers to accept the rules that have been formed over the years as the basis of foreign policy activities, instead of spending a lot of resources to produce new concepts [6].

## **RESULTS**

In general, the modern foreign policy direction of the Republic of Turkey was shaped primarily by the influence of global geopolitical changes associated with the transition from a bipolar system to a multipolar world system, but at the same time, it preserved its civilizational identity.

In general, the country needed a strong person who would bring the direction of foreign policy to a new level, who would be able to unite different layers of the population, and who would once again represent the Turkish people as a great, united and invincible nation on the international stage. At such a time, a strong politician like Recep Tayyip Erdoğan comes to power. He is the leader of the

Justice and Development Party (ATP), which will create a system in the country that meets the above-mentioned characteristics. In addition, ATP has developed clear and effective programs for the country's development that can cover various Turkish societies and integrate all sectors. In addition, R.T.Erdoğan developed a new western development model in the country and managed to restore Islamic values, which in turn was supported by a wide range of voters in the country [7]. During his tenure as Prime Minister of Turkey, Erdoğan developed a new road map called "Vision 2023", which includes several goals and tasks for the country's development. In this program, it is noted that, based on Turkey's unique potential, it is necessary to develop a new foreign policy aimed at revising its place and role in the world. In addition, priority goals and objectives were set, such as re-establishing historical ties and adapting them to modern political events, establishing friendly relations with all border states and key participants in world politics, strengthening Turkey's role in the international arena by implementing the principle of "Strategic depth".

In addition, Turkey has set new foreign policy goals. These goals and objectives were to be fulfilled by 2023. The goals and views of Turkey's foreign policy, formulated by the former Prime Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu, were as follows:

1. Turkey will create all the conditions for joining the European Union and become an influential member state of the European Union by 2023;
2. Turkey to continue regional integration in the form of security and economic cooperation;
3. To play an important role in resolving regional conflicts;
4. Active participation of Turkey at the international level;

5. Turkey should play a decisive role in the international arena and Turkey should enter the top ten countries with the largest economy in the world. To achieve this, Turkey should advance in every way and in every field, show interest in every issue related to global stability and make a worthy contribution [8].

In our opinion, we see that Turkey is in some sense implementing the foreign policy goals. In particular, Russia's entry into the territory of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 had a significant impact on the current world order. Slogans such as "special military operation" and "fight against Nazism" turned into a wide conflict over time. On March 31, 2023, at the meeting held on Ukraine within the framework of the 52nd session of the UN Human Rights Council, it was reported that 8,400 civilians were killed as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine [9]. As a result of this war, the world's prices for food, energy, fertilizers and other essential goods have skyrocketed, which has led to increased tension and inequality in all regions. In such a situation, Turkey started its efforts to resolve the disputes between the two countries peacefully. In addition, at the initiative of Turkey, agreements on the export of Ukrainian grain were concluded on July 22, 2022 in Istanbul for a period of 120 days with the possibility of automatic extension if there are no objections from the parties. The documents were signed separately by the UN and Turkey with Russia and Ukraine. Consequently, the UN Human Rights Defender noted the importance of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. These efforts of Turkey made it possible to ensure global food security in the world, first of all, to help the neediest countries.

## CONCLUSION

Currently, the Republic of Turkey remains loyal to its ideologies of neo-Ottomanism and neo-Pan-Turkism. For this purpose, Turkey is developing comprehensive strategic cooperation with the

Central Asian countries and the Turkic-speaking regions of the Russian Federation. However, the fact that these relations do not correspond to the interests of many major countries is in a certain sense an obstacle to the relations between Turkey and the Turkic peoples. For example, in Russia, since the days of the Russian Empire, there has been a view that "the idea of Pan-Turkism poses a danger to the country and promotes nationalism", and they still adhere to this conclusion.

In fact, Turkey's foreign policy does not have the idea of uniting the Turkic peoples. In particular, such an idea can be implemented through economic, humanitarian, "soft power" policies. For example, interstate dialogues, visits, the development of political, economic, cultural relations, the emergence of Turkish cultural centers, educational programs, training centers, and the emergence and development of the organization of Turkic states are evidence of our opinion.

In addition, Turkey is currently expanding its sphere of influence to the countries of the Middle East region and the African continent, relying on the above-mentioned ideologies. This is the concept of "Eurasianism" in Turkey's foreign policy, which is actively developing political and economic cooperation with the countries and peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as with Russia and China.

So, in our opinion, it is methodologically correct to study the foreign policy of Turkey in terms of ideological and value areas both in connection with global trends and in connection with the change of the political regime in Turkey. Accordingly, the main methodological aspects of the study of the foreign policy direction of the Republic of Turkey were formed in the modern transformational system of international relations.

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