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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAM  
MASTER’S THESIS**

**TURKISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONS IN THE POST-COLD  
WAR ERA: A NEOREALIST ANALYSIS**

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I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled as "Turkish-Russian Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: A Neorealist Analysis" has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Master's Thesis**

#### **Turkish-Russian Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: A Neorealist Analysis**

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**Graduate School of Social Sciences**

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**This thesis aims to study the relations between Turkey and Russia in the post-Cold War era. The thesis focuses on the dynamics of relations between them through a neorealist analysis and argues that the existence or disappearance of mutual threat perception is the main point that defines Turkish-Russian relations. In this sense, the thesis explains the factors that lead to their cooperation or conflictual relations. Contrary to the general view in the 2000s, which puts forward that economic relations between the two countries lead to sustainable cooperation, the thesis claims that political tension still exist and this has become more apparent, particularly with Russia's offensive policies since 2008.**

**There are three chapters in this thesis, apart from the introduction and conclusion parts. The first chapter begins with the theoretical background and then examines Turkish-Russian relations in the 1990s. The second chapter analyzes the relations in the 2000s while exploring the factors that led to their rapprochement, and ends with the problems in the relations. The third chapter focuses on the South Caucasus region where Turkey and Russia have clashing interests and also diverging positions in the regional conflicts. The evaluation of Russia's offensive policies since 2008 and its impact on Turkish-Russian relations is also done in the chapter.**

**Keywords: Turkey, Russia, Cooperation, Conflict, Neorealism, South Caucasus.**

## **ÖZET**

**Yüksek Lisans Tezi**

**Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Türk-Rus İlişkileri: Neorealist Bir Analiz**

**Orkun SÜRÜCÜOĞLU**

**Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi**

**Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü**

**Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı**

**İngilizce Uluslararası İlişkiler Programı**

Bu tez, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Türkiye ve Rusya arasındaki ilişkileri araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Tez, ilişkilerin dinamiklerine neorealist bir analizle odaklanmakta ve karşılıklı tehdit algısının mevcudiyetinin ya da ortadan kalkmasının Türk-Rus ilişkilerini tanımlayan ana nokta olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Bu anlamda, tez iki ülkenin işbirliğine ya da çatışmacı ilişkilerine yol açan faktörleri açıklamaktadır. 2000’li yıllardaki iki ülke arasındaki ekonomik ilişkilerin sürdürülebilir bir işbirliğine yol açtığını ileri süren genel görüşün aksine, tez politik gerginliğin hala mevcut olduğunu ve bunun özellikle Rusya’nın 2008 yılından beri saldırgan politikalarıyla daha belirgin hale geldiğini iddia etmektedir.

Tez, giriş ve sonuç kısımlarının dışında üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm teorik arka planla başlamakta ve devamında 1990’lardaki Türk-Rus ilişkilerini incelemektedir. İkinci bölüm işbirliğine yol açan faktörleri araştırırken 2000’lerdeki ilişkileri analiz etmekte ve ilişkilerdeki sorunlar ile sona ermektedir. Üçüncü bölüm Türkiye ve Rusya’nın çıkarlarının çatıştığı ve bölgesel çatışmalarda farklı pozisyonlara sahip oldukları Güney Kafkasya bölgesine odaklanmaktadır. Bölümde Rusya’nın 2008’den itibaren saldırgan politikaları ve bunun Türk-Rus ilişkilerine etkisi de değerlendirilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkiye, Rusya, İşbirliği, Çatışma, Neorealizm, Güney Kafkasya.

**TURKISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONS IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA: A  
NEOREALIST ANALYSIS**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AKP</b>	Justice and Development Party
<b>BSEC</b>	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
<b>BLACKSEAFOR</b>	Black Sea Naval Force
<b>BSS</b>	Black Sea Synergy
<b>BTC</b>	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline
<b>BTE</b>	Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline
<b>CFE</b>	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>CSTO</b>	Collective Security Treaty Organization
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>EaP</b>	Eastern Partnership
<b>ENP</b>	European Neighborhood Policy
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FSU</b>	Former Soviet Union
<b>IAEA</b>	International Atomic Energy Agency
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INOATE</b>	Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation to Europe
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>NPT</b>	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OIC</b>	Organization of the Islamic Conference
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>PJAK</b>	The Party of Free Life of Kurdistan
<b>PKK</b>	Kurdistan Workers' Party
<b>SCO</b>	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
<b>SSR</b>	Soviet Socialist Republic
<b>TACIS</b>	Technical Assistance to CIS
<b>TANAP</b>	Trans-Anatolian Pipeline
<b>TAP</b>	Trans-Adriatic Pipeline

<b>TICA</b>	Turkish International Cooperation Agency
<b>TRACECA</b>	Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia
<b>TRNC</b>	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
<b>UNOMIG</b>	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Considering the period of the Ottoman Empire and Tsarist Russia, it can easily be said that Turkey and Russia have shared mutual threat perception for each other throughout the centuries. Thus, the two countries have fought many wars with each other. The 1920s, when both Turkey and the Soviet Union had problems with the West, could be mentioned as an exceptional period. During the Cold War also, the two countries took position in the opposite blocs.

On the other hand, the end of the Cold War with the disintegration of the Soviet Union changed the international structure. The bipolar world replaced with a unipolar one and this led to the emergence of new opportunities for states. Due to the disappearance of the communist threat and decreasing importance of the country for Western countries' security, Turkey began to search for new alternatives. Before the 1990s, Turkish foreign policy had been mainly Western oriented. With the end of the Cold War, the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia have been emerged as new regions where Turkey can also develop good relations with. Meanwhile, Russia, the successor of the Soviet Union, was dealing with internal problems and did not choose to pursue aggressive policies.

### **a. Scope and Objective**

This thesis focuses on the relations between Turkey and Russia in the post-Cold War period and tries to explain the dynamics of relations between them in a theoretical context, namely neorealism. Accordingly, the factors that determine the status of bilateral relations will be examined in terms of security concerns and economic interests. In addition, the comparison of military and economic powers of the two countries will be made. Furthermore, the impact of power imbalance and offensive policies of one side on the bilateral relations, which points out the essence of Turkish-Russian relations, will be examined.

The issues which caused their problematic relations in the 1990s, the factors that led to their rapprochement in the 2000s, recent ongoing crises which put the two countries in diverging positions and the South Caucasus region which includes

elements that could bring about the emergence of threat perception between the two states are the topics to be analyzed throughout the thesis.

The thesis argues that the existence or disappearance of mutual threat perception is the main factor that defines Turkish-Russian relations. The existence of such a perception causes security concerns and diverging policies. On the other hand, the disappearance of it paves the way for cooperation between the two countries. In order to analyze Turkish-Russian relations in the post-Cold War period, the thesis tries to answer the question of which factors determine the status of relations between two countries both positively and negatively.

The negative historical legacy in bilateral relations and Turkey's active foreign policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia in the early 1990s were the main factors that maintained the mutual threat perception. On the other hand, the two countries began to resolve their problems at the end of the 1990s and then formed a balancing coalition against the US policies in their neighboring regions in the 2000s. Their problems with the West and improvement of bilateral trade and energy relations also contributed to the rapprochement. On the other hand, Russia's offensive policies since 2008 started to deteriorate the bilateral relations. In this regard, the regional conflicts in the South Caucasus region where Turkish and Russian interests have been diverging could be the main point which could lead to the emergence of threat perception and security dilemma once again.

## **b. Literature Review**

In literature, Turkish-Russian relations have not been analyzed enough as it deserves to be. Although both countries have significant power in their regions and have had intensive relations both positively and negatively for centuries, the relations between the two countries have not been examined as much as the relations with the US, the EU or the Middle East region. Particularly, the literature is not comprehensive regarding Turkish-Russian relations in the 1990s. On the other hand, the number of books, articles, theses and news has been increased in the 2000s, while the relations have been intensified and mutual cooperation has been emerged.

However, theories of international relations have mostly not been applied for analyzing the bilateral relations.

The articles that were written at the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s, which were evaluating the Turkish-Russian relations in the 1990s, pointed out that although there were problems between the two countries in that decade, there had been emerging cooperation areas as well.

After mentioning the problems like Turkey's active policies in Central Asia, disagreements with Russia about the interventions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, competition for the energy routes, debates about the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the S-300 missile problem and support for secessionist groups, Erel Tellal also underlines that there had been increasing political contacts and more importantly developing economic relations between the two countries. Therefore, he points out the possibility for further cooperation.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, İdil Tuncer mentioned the same problems but also adds that the two countries should not perceive these problematic issues as unresolvable.<sup>2</sup>

The increasing cooperation is also mentioned by Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer. She describes this situation by using the phrase "virtual rapprochement". Accordingly, both countries had an understanding of mutual gains from cooperation and the political leaders and officials in both sides began to avoid making hostile remarks regarding the other side. On the other hand, the mutual trust has not completely disappeared.<sup>3</sup>

Lerna Yanık claims that Turkey's policies towards the Turkic republics, disagreement with Russia concerning the energy routes and support for secessionist groups in the other's country contributed to the mutual threat perception. Only after the progress has been made in the resolution of these problems, the elimination of mutual threat perception occurred and then cooperation became much more possible.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Erel Tellal, "Rusya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, 14. Edition, (Ed. Baskın Oran), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, pp.543-550.

<sup>2</sup> İdil Tuncer, "Rusya Federasyonu'nun Yeni Güvenlik Doktrini: 'YAKIN ÇEVRE' ve TÜRKİYE", **En Uzun Onyı**, (Ed. Gencer Özcan and Şule Kut), Buke Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000, p.456.

<sup>3</sup> Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "Turkish-Russian relations: The challenges of reconciling geopolitical competition with economic partnership", **Turkish Studies**, Volume:1, Issue:1, 2000, p.62.

<sup>4</sup> Lerna K. Yanık, "Allies or Partners? An Appraisal of Turkey's Ties to Russia", **East European Quarterly**, Volume:41, Issue:3, Fall 2007, p.351.

In the 2000s, the rapprochement between Turkey and Russia has become more concrete through their converging policies in their neighboring regions. In their article, Suat Kınıklioğlu and Valeriy Morkva put forward that apart from high level of economic relations, the two countries have taken similar positions in the Black Sea region and regarding the US policies on Iraq, Syria and Iran. Besides, Turkey's problematic accession process to the European Union (EU) and domestic factors like the encouragement of the Turkish business councils and positive attitude of Turkish media towards Russia also contributed to this process.<sup>5</sup> In addition to their problems with the West, good relations between Turkey and Russia even led to the arguments, like "the axis of the excluded".<sup>6</sup>

The positive atmosphere began to change with the Russo-Georgian War in 2008. Gareth Winrow stresses that Turkey's dependence on Russia in terms of energy forced Turkey to remain passive in this conflict. However, Russia listed Turkey as one of the countries providing Georgia with military equipment. Moreover, some problems in trade arose. Winrow puts forward that Turkey initiated the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform and the normalization process with Armenia to establish stability in the region which works as a buffer zone between Turkey and Russia.<sup>7</sup>

Tracey German, who have articles regarding the Caucasus region, points out that Russia has made several gains after the war. Accordingly, it has established two permanent military bases in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and increased its degree of military cooperation with Armenia.<sup>8</sup> Kavus Abushov, referring how Moscow uses regional conflicts on behalf of its interests, claims that Russia benefits from 'controlled instability' in the region.<sup>9</sup>

Differing from the others, Şener Aktürk makes realist assessment of the Turkish-Russian relations. He explores the dynamics of the bilateral relations by

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<sup>5</sup> Suat Kınıklioğlu and Valeriy Morkva, "An anatomy of Turkish-Russian Relations", **Southeast European and Black Sea Studies**, Volume:7, Issue:4, pp.534-545.

<sup>6</sup> Fiona Hill and Ömer Taşpınar, "Turkey and Russia: Axis of the Excluded?", **Survival: Global Politics and Strategy**, Volume:48, Issue:1, 2006, pp.87-88.

<sup>7</sup> Gareth Winrow, "Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests", **Chatham House briefing paper**, 2009, pp.6-8.

<sup>8</sup> Tracey German, "Securing the South Caucasus: Military Aspects of Russian Policy towards the Region since 2008", **Europe-Asia Studies**, Volume:64, Issue:9, 2012, p.1660.

<sup>9</sup> Kavus Abushov, "Policing the near abroad: Russian foreign policy in the South Caucasus", **Australian Journal of International Affairs**, Volume:63, Issue:2, 2009, p.209.



comparing the two countries' Gross Domestic Product (GDP), GDP/capita, population, and active manpower in their armies in order to assess their military-economic powers.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, he also makes references to the perception of threat like Lerna Yanık. Aktürk claims that there is an increasing gap between Turkey and Russia in terms of their overall military-economic powers and moreover, Russia's offensive actions, such as the war in 2008, are leading to the emergence of mutual threat perception.<sup>11</sup>

Although Emmanuel Karagiannis does not examine the Turkish-Russian relations through realism, he studies Russian policies in terms of offensive realism. In one of his articles, he strives to evaluate the US and Russia's policies in terms of offensive realism and reveals Putin's reactions against unilateral US actions in the world and how Russia pursues policies in its near abroad for protecting its own security and maintaining influence in the Caucasus.<sup>12</sup>

### **c. Research Method**

This thesis involves a detailed literature review over Turkish-Russian relations. It has been done through secondary as well as primary resources. Since the thesis focuses on the period after the end of the Cold War, the literature related to this time period has been used throughout the research process.

In this study, books, academic and newspaper articles, the speeches of political leaders and other authorities, reports of the research centers, embassies, state departments, business and international organizations, statistics, analysis of think-tanks have been utilized. Moreover, websites of the newspapers and news channels have been used to include the current events and developments into the thesis.

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<sup>10</sup> Şener Aktürk, "A Realist Reassessment of Turkish-Russian Relations, 2002-2012: From the Peak to the Dip?", **Caspian Strategy Institute Report**, 2013, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Aktürk, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Emmanuel Karagiannis, "The 2008 Russian-Georgian war via the lens of Offensive Realism", **European Security**, Volume:22, Issue:1,2013, pp.74-93.

#### **d. Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter begins with the theoretical background. In this part, basic assumptions and main concepts of realism are given. Then, neorealism and offensive-defensive debate within neorealism are briefly explained. In the second part of the first chapter, the political, security and economic history of Turkish-Russian relations in the 1990s are summarized.

The second chapter analyzes the bilateral relations in the 2000s and begins with the factors that led to the Turkish-Russian rapprochement. Turkey and Russia's problems with the West, cooperation against terrorism, disagreement with the US over its Middle East policies and improvement of bilateral economic and energy relations are mentioned in this regard. The chapter ends with the problems in the relations and emphasizes the possibility of the emergence of mutual threat perception.

The third chapter examines the South Caucasus region where Turkey and Russia have clashing interests and also diverging positions in the regional conflicts. The chapter analyzes Turkey, Russia, the US and EU's policies in the region since the 1990s. Finally, it explores the increasing gap between Turkey and Russia's military-economic power and Russia's offensive policies since 2008, which could lead to the revival of mutual threat perception.

The thesis concludes that the mutual threat perception which causes security dilemma and diverging policies makes a deteriorating impact on Turkish-Russian relations. Clashing interests, power imbalance between the two countries and offensive policies of the stronger state causes such a perception and security dilemma. This was the case by the end of the 1990s. On the other hand, the resolution of problematic issues, high level of economic relations and converging policies regarding several issues paved the way for cooperation in the 2000s. However, the increasing gap between the two countries and Russia's offensive policies in recent years, while emerging as a great power could lead to the emergence of this perception again. The South Caucasus seems to be the region where Turkish and Russian policies have been diverging mostly and have the capacity to bring the two sides on the opposite positions.

## FIRST CHAPTER

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RELATIONS

#### 1.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

First of all, it should be noted that the structures and developments in international politics cannot be explained by only one theory. All theories have their own advantages and disadvantages in theorizing. None of the major theories was able to predict the disintegration of the Soviet Union or the developments happened in the Balkans in the 1990s.<sup>13</sup>

Major events and significant changes in international politics usually cause re-evaluation of the basic assumptions that were taken as granted by many people. Nonetheless, realism managed to protect its importance throughout history by evolving, while maintaining its basic features.<sup>14</sup> For many years, realism had been the dominant theory in international relations and it was hard to come across with anti-realists.<sup>15</sup>

##### 1.1.1. The Evolution and Basic Arguments of Realism

The discipline of international relations has emerged after the First World War in order to impede the recurrence of such a destructive war. In these days, scholars were striving for finding out the reasons for the eruption of such a big war in order to hinder its recurrence. So, the researchers had also a moral purpose.<sup>16</sup> However, the chaos in the 1930s, the rise of dictators even in some European

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<sup>13</sup> Scott Burchill, "Introduction", **Theories of International Relations**, (Ed. Scott Burchill and the others), Macmillan, London, 1996, pp.22-23.

<sup>14</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Uluslararası İlişkilerin "Gerçekçi" Teorisi: Kökeni, Kapsamı, Kritiği", **Uluslararası İlişkiler**, Volume:1, Issue:1, Spring 2004, p.34.

<sup>15</sup> William T. Fox and Anetta Baker Fox, "The Teaching of International Relations in the United States", **World Politics**, Volume:13, Issue:3, April 1961, p.343.

<sup>16</sup> Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater, "Introduction", **Theories of International Relations**, 3. Edition, (Ed. Scott Burchill and the others), Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p.6.

countries and the inability of the League of Nations in dealing with the problems caused serious concerns and pessimistic thoughts.<sup>17</sup>

Realist scholars like Edward H. Carr and Reinhold Niebuhr, emphasized that the developments in the 1930s revealed the importance of power competition among states. They also underlined the exaggerated role of international organizations by utopians. They told that attention should be paid to power competition and national interests which determine the characteristics of inter-state relations. Realists were claiming that war is an inevitable thing and states should be ready for it and furthermore, the efforts which aim to prevent wars and establish peace would be meaningless. The Second World War and its destructive effects led the thought to become widespread that realists seemed to be right in their views.<sup>18</sup> Among the Cold War generation the best knowns are Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, Ramond Aron, Kenneth Waltz, Stephen Karsner and Robert Gilpin.

Realism takes its roots from thinkers, like Thucydides and Machiavelli. In time, it has been divided into sub-schools, such as classical realism, political realism, neorealism and neo-classical realism. Nevertheless, all the scholars in this view have been thinking about two basic questions: How the states' attitudes in international relations can be explained, and how the dynamics of international system can be explained?<sup>19</sup>

Realist scholars distance themselves from moral values and think that state leaders should give priority to the survival of their states. Since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), the sovereign states have been considered as the main actors in international politics for them. As states are legitimate actors, they have the capacity to exercise authority and enforce laws in their territories. Yet, there is not such a central authority in the international realm and therefore, realists depict the structure of international realm as an anarchical one. In domestic politics, the power-seeking

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<sup>17</sup> Aydın, p.35.

<sup>18</sup> Aydın, p.36.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas R. Cusack and Richard J. Stoll, **Exploring Realpolitik: Probing International Relations Theory with Computer Simulation**, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1990, p.53, cited in James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, **Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey**, 5. Edition, Addison Wesley-Longman, New York, 2001, p.64.

feature of the human beings could be directed in a less violent way, but this is not that certain in international politics.<sup>20</sup>

As stated above, there are variations within the realist tradition. Yet, all these approaches emphasize some common concepts such as state, power, security dilemma, balance of power and anarchy, while explaining the international relations and the dynamics of international system. So, examining what realists think about these concepts would help us to understand realism in a better way.

States are considered as the main actors within the realist tradition after the Treaty of Westphalia. Realists often make references to the sovereign feature of states. Other actors, like international organizations, transnational corporations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have not any significant impact on international politics. Throughout the history, other actors have risen and fallen, but this is not the case for states in modern politics. Besides, non-state actors operate in compliance with the rules and laws made by states.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, realists put forward that states are unitary actors. By using the word “unitary”, it is pointed out that state acts as one and a unified actor in the international realm. The differences and problems among groups within a state would be solved in a way that would help the government to act on behalf of the state. In addition, it is assumed that states have the authority to do this. Although realists accept that bureaucratic entities or NGOs can sometimes act against the decision of states, it would happen only when this is not against the important national interests defined by states.<sup>22</sup>

The foreign policy making process of states develops in a rational context. Accordingly, the aims would be determined; the alternatives would be presented to achieve these aims; the evaluation of the state’s capacity and implementation of the aim would be discussed; the order of the aims would be made in terms of feasibility; the cost and advantages would be determined and in the end, the alternative would be chosen, which would provide utility maximization in order to achieve the aim.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, “Realism”, **The Globalization of World Politics**, 2. Edition, (Ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith), Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, pp.142-143.

<sup>21</sup> Dunne and Schmidt, pp.150-151.

<sup>22</sup> Aydın, pp.40-41.

<sup>23</sup> Aydın, p.41.

One of the main points that realists put emphasis on is the importance of power. The main assumption here is that human beings are selfish and they struggle to maximize their own interests. Other than this pessimistic view of human nature, realists underline that there is no central authority in the international realm. This anarchy causes insecurity among states, which in the end forces states to promote their interests and struggle for power. The struggle for power is necessary in order for states to maintain their sovereignties.<sup>24</sup>

Classical realists, in particular, point out the competitive nature of human beings and the desire to establish superiority over others.<sup>25</sup> For instance; Hans J. Morgenthau, who is one of the important scholars in classical realism, states that politics is a struggle for power.<sup>26</sup> Although neo-realists believe that power is a device for states to maintain their security, the concept of power has protected its importance in realist school in general.

As stated before, there is no higher authority in international realm, which gives it an anarchical feature. Since states cannot trust a central authority to defend themselves against others, they should strive for increasing their own security. Therefore, realists mostly depict the international system as a self-help system. On the other hand, the measures taken for protection lead to the insecurity of other states. In the end, this situation causes the emergence of security dilemma, which exists

*“when the military preparations of one state create an unresolvable uncertainty in the mind of another as to whether those preparations are for “defensive” purposes or (to enhance its security in an uncertain world) whether they are for offensive purposes (to change the status quo to its advantage).”*<sup>27</sup>

Since states cannot know others’ intentions in this uncertain atmosphere, they perceive the efforts for increasing security as a threat and then, they take counter measures. In the end, all this would lead to the emergence of a more insecure world.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Aydın, p.39.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, **Introduction to International Relations**, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p.6, cited in Aydın, p.39.

<sup>26</sup> Hans Joachim Morgenthau, **Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace**, 1. Edition, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1948, p.21.

<sup>27</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler and Ken Booth, “The Security Dilemma”, **Dilemmas of World Politics: International Issues in a Changing World**, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, p.30, cited in Dunne and Schmidt, “Realism”, p.153.

<sup>28</sup> Dunne and Schmidt, p.153.

In the international system, if a state increases its power to the extent that could damage the balance of power, others began to react against this change. Accordingly, “states will check dangerous concentrations of power by building up their own capabilities (‘internal balancing’) or aggregating their capabilities with other states in alliances (‘external balancing’).”<sup>29</sup>

The assumption is that the balance of power leads to the equilibrium of power and thus, the deterrent effect is emerged for the states that pursue expansionist policies. In the Cold War, the alliance systems between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on the one hand, and the Warsaw Pact on the other could be a useful example in this regard.<sup>30</sup>

### **1.1.2. Classical Realism and Neorealism**

Although classical realism is not the theory to be used in this thesis, the examination of its main points helps to analyze neorealism in a better way. Classical realists point out that the international system has an anarchic order. Contrary to domestic politics, there is no higher authority above states in the international arena and this could lead to conflicts among states. In addition, classical realists assume that states are the main actors and other actors do not possess any significant capability. Moreover, states are unitary and rational actors. They strive to maximize their interests. The main concern of states is to increase their powers, and the military power is the main aspect of this aim. On the other hand, this could create security dilemma among states in international politics.<sup>31</sup>

Morgenthau, who is one of the most important figures in classical realism, mentions six principles of realism. These principles also reveal some other important assumptions of classical realism. First, he claims that like society, politics is operating in compliance with objective laws. The human nature is the essence of these laws and what should be done is to understand these laws in order to improve society. People should consider themselves in the position of policymakers, evaluate

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<sup>29</sup> William C. Wohlforth, “Realism and foreign policy”, **Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases**, (Ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Tim Dunne), Oxford University Press, New York, 2008, p.36.

<sup>30</sup> Dunne and Schmidt, p.144.

<sup>31</sup> Ali Balcı and Tuncay Kardaş, “Realizm”, **Uluslararası İlişkilere Giriş**, (Ed. Şaban Kardaş and Ali Balcı), Küre Yayınları, İstanbul, 2014, p.89.

the options and predict the most rational choice likely to be made for better analysis. Second, he emphasizes the concept of interest defined in terms of power. Accordingly, this concept distinguishes politics from economic needs or moral values. Statesmen have to act in accordance with this concept. Third, he further points out that this concept is universally valid. The interests of states have much significance and constitute the basis of politics. In addition, this fact does not change by time and place. Yet, he admits that the kind of interest in a period depends on the political and cultural context of a particular period. Fourth, states' decisions and actions cannot be evaluated by moral values. Individuals can make sacrifices on behalf of morality. However, statesmen have not such a right. The survival of state should be the priority for them. Fifth, there is a difference between the moral aspirations of a particular nation and the universal moral laws. States usually try to base their actions on legal or religious motives. But, the judgment of them in terms of the concept of "interest defined in terms of power" would be more true and fair. Sixth, he stresses the autonomy of politics. Politics should be thought in terms of interest defined as power, like economy should be the interest defined as wealth or lawyer's actions in terms of legal rules.<sup>32</sup>

Although realism had been very influential between 1940s and 1960s, it began to be criticized heavily in the 1960s and 1970s for several reasons. The people criticizing realism put forward that nongovernmental actors increased their influences on international politics. In addition, the distinction between domestic and foreign policy was diminishing and states started to differentiate from traditional nation-state concept in time. Moreover, economy has become as important as military-strategic issues.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, some people like Morton Kaplan and David Singer stress that the methods used by realists are not scientific and rather based on prudence. According to them, the analysis based on the reason of political elite could not provide scientific results. Graham T. Allison's bureaucratic politics approach, which claims that organizational structures were more influential than state leaders in foreign policy decisions, also was incompatible with one of the main assumptions of

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<sup>32</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "A Realist Theory of International Politics", **Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace**, 6. Edition (Ed. Hans J. Morgenthau), Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1985, pp.4-13.

<sup>33</sup> Aydın, p.47.



realism, which is that states are unitary actors.<sup>34</sup> These criticisms led to some variations in realist school.

Kenneth Waltz's famous book "Theory of International Politics" presented the basic points of this change. In his book, Waltz firstly makes a distinction between reductionist and systemic theories and then examines systemic analysis. Accordingly, reductionist theories work with the elements at national or sub-national levels in explaining international issues. So, internal elements cause external outcomes. International politics is analyzed by examining the behaviors of states, political elites, bureaucracies and other subnational and transnational actors.<sup>35</sup>

Waltz criticizes these views by stating that world politics could not be understood simply by examining inside of states. Otherwise, people remain at the descriptive level and cannot make valid generalizations. The people defend reductionist theories can only be right, if no any significant factors would be influential between the aims and actions of states and the outcome. Yet, mostly there is no correlation between the intentions of actors and the outcome in international politics. The decisions and actions of other states and the interactions between them have also impact on results.<sup>36</sup>

He puts forward that since there is not any correlation between the variety of actors and their actions and the outcomes, systemic causes are also part of the process. Therefore, he has tried to develop a systemic theory. With his words, "the structure of a system acts as a constraining and disposing force, and because it does so systems theories explain and predict continuity within a system." So, people can know what to expect and understand the reasons for recurrences.<sup>37</sup> He also describes the structural change as a revolutionary one since "... it gives rise to new expectations about the outcomes that will be produced by the acts and interactions of units whose placement in the system varies with changes in structure."<sup>38</sup>

Waltz uses the word "structure" in a sense that it designates a set of constraining conditions. Then, he tries to find an answer to the question of how structural forces can be understood. He claims that the effects of structure occur

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<sup>34</sup> Balcı and T. Kardaş, p.90.

<sup>35</sup> Kenneth Waltz, **Theory of International Politics**, Random House, New York, 1979, pp.60-61.

<sup>36</sup> Waltz, p.65.

<sup>37</sup> Waltz, p.69.

<sup>38</sup> Waltz, p.70.

indirectly in two ways: through socialization of the actors and through competition among them. Socialization reduces differences and encourages similar attitudes and actions. Competition similarly does the same effect because actors tend to emulate more successful ones for success. So, both socialization and competition are the factors that reduce the variety of behaviors and outcomes.<sup>39</sup>

Waltz later mentions the differences between domestic and international politics in terms of ordering principles, the character of the units and the distribution of capabilities. Considering the institutions and agencies, he states that domestic systems are centralized and hierarchic, while international systems are decentralized and anarchic.<sup>40</sup> Like classical realism, neorealism assumes that the international system is an anarchical one since there is no higher authority above states, but neorealism differs from classical realism by claiming that states do not act by itself through rational decision making process. Instead, the decisions are the results of interactions among states in the context of their positions in the international system.<sup>41</sup> The anarchic structure of the system makes survival the main priority for states. Waltz puts forwards that human nature cannot be tested experimentally and instead, people should focus on observable elements. Unlike classical realism, neorealism leaves human nature out of the picture and focuses on the impact of anarchic structure.<sup>42</sup>

Secondly, he examines the character of the units. What he finds out is that although there are differences among states in their wealth, power, cultures and ideologies, they are similar in terms of basic functions and differ only by their capabilities.<sup>43</sup> As Waltz says, “Each state has its agencies for making, executing, and interpreting laws and regulations, for raising revenues, and for defending itself.” Moreover, all states, even though at different levels, have similar tasks in the issues of education, health and economic regulation. Therefore, neorealism claims that

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<sup>39</sup> Waltz, pp.73-77.

<sup>40</sup> Waltz, p.88.

<sup>41</sup> Balcı and T. Kardaş, p.91.

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth Waltz, **Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis**, Columbia University Press, New York, 1959, p.166.

<sup>43</sup> Aydın, p.49.

states are like units.<sup>44</sup> The anarchic structure of the international system which creates self-help context makes states similar in terms of their functions.

Thirdly, Waltz focuses on the distribution of capabilities. Because states are like units functionally, they are distinguished from each other by their level of capabilities for implementing their tasks.<sup>45</sup> Neorealism claims that the capabilities of states and the distribution of it determine the structure of international system. Accordingly, great powers are the main actors in this anarchic structure and they have the capacity and opportunity to use this over others for their own interests. The number of great powers determines whether the international system is unipolar, bipolar or multipolar. Neorealists point out the disadvantages of multipolar world system, since there could be more imbalance of power and complications than bipolar system which could lead to misunderstandings and war eventually.<sup>46</sup>

Then, Waltz examines how states act if one or several states increase their powers to the extent that would change the balance of power. He concludes that in a hierarchic realm, actors tend to support the stronger ones (bandwagoning), because losing would not put their security at risk. However, this is not the case in an anarchic realm. States tend to have a balancing approach rather than bandwagoning. Because a bandwagoning behavior could make strong states even much stronger, and these strong states could pose a threat to the weaker ones in the future as well.<sup>47</sup> It should be remembered that power is not an end itself, but rather as a tool for maintaining security in neorealist view. Therefore, the expected behavior for great powers is to allocate its resources to the security issues and also make agreements and alliances with other states.<sup>48</sup> In terms of cooperation, neorealists point out two obstacles: cheating and relative gains of other states. So, if other states get more power and influence in a cooperation initiative, states tend not to cooperate but instead, behave in a unilateral way. Thus, they have a pessimistic view regarding a cooperation endeavor since it is hard to start and also maintain.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Waltz, **Theory of International Politics**, p.97.

<sup>45</sup> Waltz, **Theory of International Politics**, p.97.

<sup>46</sup> Balcı and T. Kardaş, pp.91-93.

<sup>47</sup> Waltz, **Theory of International Politics**, p.126.

<sup>48</sup> Jack Donnelly, "Realizm", **Theories of International Relations**, p.36.

<sup>49</sup> Steven L. Lamy, "Contemporary mainstream approaches: neo-realism and neo-liberalism", **The Globalization of World Politics**, (Ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith), 2. Edition, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p.186.

Although power is also important in neorealism, it is not an end itself like classical realism. While examining the reasons for competition for power, John J. Mearsheimer, who is one of the most important realists, puts forward five assumptions. He has underlined that when all these assumptions become reality, the security competition begins. First, there is an anarchic system in the international arena and great powers are the main actors in international politics. Second, all states have military capabilities and third, states can never be sure about other's intentions. Fourth, the most important aim of states is survival and only by maintaining this, states can pursue their other desires, like economic development. Fifth, states are rational actors and make their policies in accordance with it. Mearsheimer claims that if all these assumptions come true, then the competition for power at the expense of others begins in international politics.<sup>50</sup>

### 1.1.3. Offensive and Defensive Realism

On the other hand, this brings us to the question of how much power is enough. Examining answers to this question, we can talk about two different approaches in neorealism: offensive realism and defensive realism. Offensive realists state that since survival is the main goal of states, maximization of power and becoming a hegemonic power is the best way to ensure it. Therefore, states should always try to increase their power whenever it is possible. On the other hand, defensive realists contradict with the idea of working for being hegemon. They base their argument on three reasons.<sup>51</sup>

First, if a state gains so much power that could damage the balance of power and make that state a hegemon, other states will form a balancing coalition against it. This argument can be supported by examples of the balancing alliances that were formed against Napoleonic France (1792-1815), Imperial Germany (1900-18), and Nazi Germany (1933-45). Second, the defending coalition is usually more powerful than offensive ones which would end up with the defeat of offensive states. Third,

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<sup>50</sup> John H. Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism", **International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity**, (Ed. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, Steve Smith), 3. Edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, pp.78-79.

<sup>51</sup> Mearsheimer, pp.80-81.

even if the offensive state wins the war and conquers new lands, it is really difficult to maintain control over them. Nationalism would play its role and the people in those conquered territories would revolt against the conqueror. This would mean new wars and expenditures. So, the losses would be much more than the gains for the offensive state. Due to these reasons, defensive realists suggest states having an appropriate amount of power for their survival, not more than that. Otherwise, this could pose a risk to their survival.<sup>52</sup>

According to defensive realists, striving to become a hegemonic power would force other states to form a balancing coalition in order for establishing the balance of power again.<sup>53</sup> So, defensive realists claim that "...great powers could guarantee their security by forming balancing alliances and choosing defensive military postures (such as retaliatory nuclear forces)."<sup>54</sup> They further put forward that the wars among great powers have been usually erupted by the people in domestic politics who overrate the degree of external threats and also their military capabilities.<sup>55</sup> In the end, defensive realists suggest that states should follow more moderate policies in order to avoid creating a security dilemma.<sup>56</sup>

However, offensive realists do not agree with the defensive realists. They claim that the struggle for forming a balancing coalition has not always been succeeded in. The states under threat usually place a burden on each other and this situation damages the efforts for creating a balance or its effectiveness. Moreover, offensive realists contradict with the defensive realists' claim that balancing power usually wins the war. Instead, they put forward that the side that makes the first attack mostly has won the war throughout the history. Furthermore, they disagree with the defensive realists' view that the cost of invasion would be higher than the gains for the conquerors. They stress that nationalism does not always hinder the occupation as was the case in France during the Second World War. Besides, there are other ways for maintaining the advantages, such as dividing the occupied country

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<sup>52</sup> Mearsheimer, p.81.

<sup>53</sup> Göktürk Tüysüzoğlu, "Savunmacı Realizm ve Saldırgan Realizm Bağlamında Karadeniz Havzası'ndaki Çatışma Gerçekliğinin Değerlendirilmesi", **Avrasya Etüdleri**, Issue:44, 2013/2, pp.69-70.

<sup>54</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories", **Foreign Policy**, Number:110, Special Edition: Frontiers of Knowledge, Spring 1998, p.31.

<sup>55</sup> Walt, p.37.

<sup>56</sup> Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited", **International Security**, Volume:25, Issue:3, (Winter 2000-2001), p.129.

into smaller parts for easing the governance of it or simply disarming it.<sup>57</sup> Thus, states should follow expansionist policies if gains are more than the costs.<sup>58</sup>

Security concerns of states constitute the most significant part of the analysis in realist school and neorealism attaches priority to the survival of states. Accordingly, states want to have as much as power to guarantee their security. By power, neorealists mean military and economic power. Economic power is important because states could direct their economic wealth to military sector, which would contribute to their military power in the end.

Throughout the thesis, the motives behind Turkish and Russian policies will be explained in terms of their security concerns and economic interests. The main concepts of realism will also be referred to. Furthermore, the comparison between their military and economic power will be made. Besides, Russian policies aiming to become a regional power in accordance with the offensive realist arguments will be examined with examples and moreover, how this affects the bilateral relations will be evaluated.

## **1.2. BRIEF HISTORY OF TURKISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONS IN THE 1990s**

### **1.2.1. Political and Security Dimensions**

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, 14 new states emerged other than Russia. Yet, Russia's territorial space, population level and energy resources made it the most important state among these 15 newly independent states.<sup>59</sup> The establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Russia began in January 1992 with the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Çetin to Russia. In the following months, the "Treaty on the Principles of Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation" was signed during the visit of Turkish President Süleyman Demirel. The treaty laid down the bases of relations

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<sup>57</sup> Mearsheimer, pp.81-82.

<sup>58</sup> Taliaferro, p.128.

<sup>59</sup> Tellal, p.542.

between the two countries by referring to usual concepts, such as the respect for political independence.<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, the bilateral relations had not made any significant progress by the end of the 1990s, and therefore this decade has usually been remembered by the rivalry between the two states, particularly in political and security fields. The problems between Turkey and Russia can be summarized as; Turkey's ambitions in Central Asia and Caucasus, disagreement about energy routes that would transport energy in the Caspian Basin to Europe, Russia's decision to sell S-300 long range surface-to-air missile systems to the Greek Cypriots and the support for secessionist groups in each other's countries.

#### **1.2.1.1. Turkey's Ambitions in Central Asia and Caucasus**

Turkish political leaders, learning lessons from mistakes in the last days of the Ottoman Empire, had avoided following pan-Turkist policies since the republic was founded. The fact that such adventurous policies could cause harsh reactions from the Soviet Union was also another important reason for Turkey's inactive policies towards Central Asia until the 1990s. Even when Gorbachev declared "glasnost" and "perestroika" policies, which called for openness and transparency in government institutions and restructuring of the Soviet political and economic system, Turkey acted cautiously in order not to provoke the Soviet Union. This stance has been taken until mid-1991.<sup>61</sup>

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Turkey wanted to have an influence in Central Asia, which was perceived by Turkish politicians as an opportunity to develop relations with new alternatives, while Turkey's importance was decreasing in the eyes of the West due to the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, such an opening could help Turkish business sector in the search for new markets. Iran had also similar aims and presented an Islamic model to the newly independent countries. This made the United States of America (US) support Turkey's policies

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<sup>60</sup> MFA, "Turkey's Political Relations with Russian Federation", [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-russian-federation.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-russian-federation.en.mfa), (01.03.2014).

<sup>61</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and Caucasus", **Turkish Studies**, Volume:5, Issue:2, 2004, p.2.

towards the region, and the “Turkish Model”, which is “Muslim, yet secular and democratic”, began to be argued in this context.<sup>62</sup>

Turkey, by using ethnic ties with the people of newly independent states in the region, constructed cultural centers, granted scholarship to the students to educate them in Turkey and established broadcast networks to reach the people in the region culturally.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA) was established in 1992 to coordinate these activities.<sup>64</sup> Politically, Turkey was the first country that recognized the independence of all new Central Asia and Caucasian states and signed agreements with every visiting leader based on cooperation.<sup>65</sup>

On the other hand, Russia perceived this effort as a policy of the US to increase its influence in Russia’s neighboring regions and thus, reacted against this. The “Near Abroad Policy” of Russia, declared in 1993, was a cornerstone in Russian foreign policy towards its neighboring regions. The concept was used to refer to the territories of Former Soviet Union (FSU) countries and propose the active Russian involvement in economic and security issues in its near abroad.<sup>66</sup> In addition to the US involvement, the Turkish model could take attraction from the inside of Russia and pose a threat to Russia’s territorial integrity.<sup>67</sup> This rivalry also caused a debate about the implementation of the CFE. The treaty brought some military restrictions and Turkey put forward that Russia was not complying with the conditions of the treaty, particularly in North Caucasus. Therefore, this situation led to security concerns in the Caucasus.<sup>68</sup> In sum, Russia wanted to maintain the status quo and its influence in the region, whereas Turkey was striving to establish a new order with the support of Western countries in the region. This is the main reason for competition and tension.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Gareth Winrow, “Turkish Policy in Central Asia”, **Post-Soviet Central Asia**, (Ed. Touraj Atabaki and John O’Kane), I. B. Tauris, London and New York, 1998, p.91, cited in Yanık, p.351.

<sup>63</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, “Turkey’s Eurasian Agenda”, **The Washington Quarterly**, Volume:34, Issue:1, 2011, p.104.

<sup>64</sup> Aydın, “Foucault’s Pendulum”, p.5.

<sup>65</sup> Aydın, “Foucault’s Pendulum”, pp.3-4.

<sup>66</sup> Tuncer, p.440.

<sup>67</sup> Andrei V. Zagorski, “Traditional Russian Security Interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia: Perceptions and Realities”, **Russia, The Caucasus and Central Asia: The 21st Century Security Environment**, (Ed. Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov and Ghia Nodia, M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York and London, 1999, p.63, cited in Yanık, pp.351-352.

<sup>68</sup> Tuncer, pp.450-451.

<sup>69</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, “1990’lardan Günümüze Türk-Rus İlişkileri”, **Avrasya Dosyası**, Volume:13, Issue:1, 2007, p.273.



However, Turkey met great challenges in accomplishing its goals, as Mustafa Aydın summarized. First, there are other countries, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and China, that seeking influence in the region like Turkey. Second, there were some problems with the “Turkish Model”. Accordingly, the model was vague and as Turkey had problems with the Western countries in the 1990s, it met with difficulties in taking attraction from the regional countries. Third, although these states were newly founded, the old communist elites were protecting their positions in political scene. This made the use of Turkic ties as a device to deepen cultural and political ties very difficult.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, there had been significant numbers of Russian minorities and they were taking important positions. The individuality rather than broader cultural and political unities was also supported by the public.<sup>71</sup> Fourth, these people had already got rid of the hundred years of Russian domination, and Turkey’s “big brother” approach and arrogant attitude brought about negative reaction among the people. Fifth, Turkey’s intensive efforts caused emergence of the view among regional powers, like Iran and Russia, that Turkey wanted a regional hegemony. In the initial phase, Russia actually did not take position against Turkey’s policies and perceived it as a tool against Islamic movements. Moreover, Russia was dealing with its own problems. Yet, as Turkey was penetrating more and more into the region, Russia took an action in order to re-assert its influence. Sixth, the newly independent states did not want to identify themselves only by religion or ethnicity, but to they wanted to have many options and make economic cooperation.<sup>72</sup> In addition to the points mentioned by Mustafa Aydın, Turkey also did not have enough economic capacity to become an economic and political power in the region.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, Turkey got less and less focused on the region and followed more cautious policies after mid-1990s.

On the other hand, Turkey’s ambitions in Central Asia and Caucasus conflicted with Russia’s near abroad policy and their competition for influence in this region led to the emergence of the perception of threat in both states against the

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<sup>70</sup> Mustafa Aydın, “Foucault’s Pendulum”, p.6

<sup>71</sup> Şükrü S. Gürel and Yoshihura T. Kimura, **Turkey in a Changing World**, Institute of Developing Economies, Tokyo, 1993, p.194, cited in Aydın “Foucault’s Pendulum”, p.7.

<sup>72</sup> Mustafa Aydın, “Foucault’s Pendulum”, pp.7-9.

<sup>73</sup> Larrabee, p.104.

other. At this point, it should also be remembered that the two countries had fought many wars for centuries and they were on the opposite blocs in the Cold War.

#### **1.2.1.2. Disagreement about Energy Routes**

One of the important issues in the 1990s was the question of how the energy resources in the Caspian Basin would reach to Europe. There were mainly three routes in this regard. The first one was the use of pipelines and railway system which goes through Russia. This alternative had already been constructed during the Soviet period.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, there were problems with this. First, these pipelines had not been constructed in terms of post-Soviet energy needs. So, there were questions about the carrying capacity of these old pipelines, which came also with the security concerns. Second, the transition fees that would be determined by Russia would increase the costs. Third, the Caspian oil would be mixed with the ones that come from other oil fields in the pipeline and such a situation would reduce the quality and increase costs. Fourth, the Baku-Grozny-Tikhoretsk-Novorossiysk line that was planned to construct in the same direction with the old system would go through Chechnya where important security problems existed. Fifth, European countries wanted to diversify the suppliers in order for energy security and thus, other alternatives were trying to be evaluated.<sup>75</sup>

The second possible route was going through Iran. Although it has advantages of being shorter and more economic, the political dynamics prevented this route from being used. The problems between the US and Iran played an important role at this point.<sup>76</sup> In addition, the increasing degrees of oil and natural gas that would be extracted could only be transported to Europe through the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz. In the long run, this would increase the costs and security risks.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Mehdi Parvizi Amineh, **Towards the Control of Oil Resources in the Caspian Region**, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1999, p.187, cited in Hayriye Kahveci, "Enerji Politikaları ve Uluslararası Rekabet", **Kafkaslar Değişim Dönüşüm (Avrasya Üçlemesi III)**, (Ed. Mustafa Aydın), Nobel Yayınları, Ankara, 2012, p.262.

<sup>75</sup> Kahveci, pp.262-263.

<sup>76</sup> Jan Kalicki, "Caspian Energy at the Crossroads", **Foreign Affairs**, Volume:80, Issue:5, 2001, pp.120-134, cited in Kahveci, p.263.

<sup>77</sup> Kahveci, pp.263-264.

The third option was the route that would go through the Caucasus and Turkey. Accordingly, a pipeline would be established in three countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. The construction of the pipeline would increase Azerbaijan and Georgia's resistance to Russian influence.<sup>78</sup> Since Turkey was also striving to maintain its geostrategic importance in the eyes of Western countries in the post-Cold War era, the energy issue was considered as a useful mean in this regard among the political elites.<sup>79</sup>

In the end, a temporary solution (Early Oil) was founded until bigger investments would be made in the region. Accordingly, the oil that was being extracted on these days would reach to Europe as a test. If this turned out to be feasible and economic, then bigger investments would follow and more important pipelines would be constructed.<sup>80</sup> There were two alternatives in this regard: Baku-Novorossiysk (Russia) and Baku-Supsa (Georgia). Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline had the advantage of the capability of increasing its capacity. Yet, it was a Russian pipeline, going through Chechnya, and mixing high-quality Azerbaijani oil with the lower quality Siberian one and causing losses in terms of cost.<sup>81</sup> The other alternative, Baku-Supsa pipeline, had the advantage of excluding Russia and not mixing with other oils. However, it was requiring the establishment of a new pipeline. It was also more expensive and the route was involving Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which had security problems. Turkey and the US were also supporting this alternative since it could form the basis of a new main pipeline that would be established. In the end, the decision was to use both of the pipelines in accordance with the "Early Petrol".<sup>82</sup>

So, Russia did not want to lose its hegemony on energy pipelines and was also trying to use it as a tool for its political goals. On the other hand, Turkey wanted to be part of the energy routes for several reasons. First, the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline was not operating after the Gulf War due to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 661. This resolution made a negative impact on the Turkish economy.

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<sup>78</sup> Zeyno Baran, "EU Energy Security: Time to End Russian Leverage", *The Washington Quarterly*, Volume:30, Issue:4, 2007, p.136.

<sup>79</sup> Kahveci, p.264.

<sup>80</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", *Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001*, p.420.

<sup>81</sup> Amineh, pp.198-201, cited in Kahveci, pp.269-270.

<sup>82</sup> Emmanuel Karagiannis, *Energy and Security in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, London, 2002, p.25, cited in Kahveci, p.270.

Hence, a new pipeline could lead to the re-operation of the Ceyhan facility. Second, Turkey could increase its influence in the region and penetrate the markets in regional countries more easily. Third, as stated before, Turkey could maintain its geostrategic importance in the eyes of Western countries in the post-Cold War era.<sup>83</sup>

In this regard, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline was planned. The US also wanted the establishment of a new pipeline which is excluding Russia and Iran. Thus, it became one of the supporters of the project.<sup>84</sup> Although the route would be longer than Baku-Novorossiysk and Baku-Supsa, Turkey put forward several advantages of the BTC alternative. Accordingly, this would lead to the diversification of energy transportation and by this way, hinder dependency on single country and help the integration of region with global economy. Moreover, Ceyhan terminal has good exportation facilities in comparison with others in the world. Besides it has also better weather conditions than the Black Sea and does not have natural constraints like the Straits. Furthermore, the transportation of oil from the Black Sea and the Turkish Straits would increase the traffic jam in the Straits and cause security risks, financial costs and environmental problems.<sup>85</sup> The Ankara Declaration on 29 October 1998, with the participation of politicians from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Uzbekistan and - then the US Energy Secretary Bill Richardson with the observer status – was a cornerstone in the establishment of the BTC oil pipeline and revealed the political support for the project.<sup>86</sup>

So, the competition for energy routes was one of the diverging issues between Turkey and Russia.<sup>87</sup> As Gawdat Baghat puts forward that the pipeline would help the states that benefit from it “...for domestic needs, foreign investment and jobs; substantial transit fees; and political leverage over the flow of oil and gas.”<sup>88</sup> Russia,

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<sup>83</sup> Zeyno Baran, “The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Implications for Turkey”, **The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West**, (Ed. S. Frederick Starr and Svante E. Cornell), Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, Washington, 2005, p.104.

<sup>84</sup> Kahveci, p.266.

<sup>85</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, pp.435-436.

<sup>86</sup> Baran, “The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Implications for Turkey”, p.106.

<sup>87</sup> It even caused a dispute about the Straits. Turkey, by point out the increasing traffic and its dangers, tried to impose restraints on the merchant ships carrying dangerous loads. Although this was a genuine concern, its was also related with the promotion of the BTC Project. The crisis between Turkey and Russia was resolved in 1998. (Çelikpala, p.276.)

<sup>88</sup> Gawdat Bahgat, “Europe’s energy security: challenges and opportunities”, **International Affairs**, Volume:82, Issue:5, 2006, p.972.

on the other hand, was striving to maintain its monopoly in energy market in Eurasia and Europe. For this reason, it tried to hinder the establishment of non-Russian controlled pipelines. For instance; "... when plans were being made to construct a natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan across the Caspian Sea through Turkey and eventually into Europe, Moscow moved fast to construct Blue Stream gas pipeline under the Black Sea into Turkey..."<sup>89</sup> At this point, it can be said that the competition for being a transit country in the transportation of Caspian energy resources to Europe involves both economic and political reasons.

#### **1.2.1.3. Russian and Turkish Relations with the Secessionist Groups**

In the 1990s, the most important problem between Turkey and Russia was their attitudes towards the secessionist movements in each other's country. During these years, Russia blamed Turkey for supporting secessionist groups in Chechnya and Turkey blamed Russia for the support given to the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party). This had been one of the issues that increased the tension between them.

In the 1990s, two wars occurred in Chechnya between Russia and the secessionist Chechens. Although Chechens gained their de facto independence from Russia following the First Chechen War (1994-1996), Russia managed to regain the control of Chechnya after the Second Chechen War (1999-2000). Erel Tellal puts forward seven reasons for Russian policy on Chechnya. The first one is related with the pipelines under the territory that carry Central Asian oil and natural gas. Second, the secession of Chechnya could lead to the loss of Russian influence over the Caucasus region. Third, such kind of secession would encourage other ethnic groups in Russian territory to follow the same path. Fourth, this conflict began to cause the rise of terrorist activities in Russia and therefore, raise concerns about Russia's security. Fifth, the conflict started to affect the domestic politics and different politicians were supporting different leaders in this conflict. Sixth, there were concerns regarding the rise of fundamentalist movements within the Russian territory and such developments could lead to the disintegration of the Russian Federation. Finally, the enduring conflict had caused many people to suffer both physically and

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<sup>89</sup> Baran, "EU Energy Security: Time to End Russian Leverage", p.138.

psychologically so that the public opinion was strongly revealing the will to end the war.<sup>90</sup>

Russians were claiming that Turkey was permitting the Chechens to use Turkish territories and did not prevent the financial aid from reaching to secessionist groups in Chechnya. Especially during the First Chechen War, the North Caucasian diaspora groups in Turkey organized demonstrations, provided financial aid and even hijacked a Turkish ferry in the Black Sea in order to endorse the Chechens. However, Turkey did not exert enough efforts to stop such activities. Dudayev's name, who is a prominent Chechen leader, was also given in some places in Turkey. The poor trial of the people who hijacked the ferry also raised suspicions and reactions in Russia. When the Russian officials came to Turkey in February 1995, they asked Turkey to withdraw its support for the Chechens, prevent the transition of military equipment and voluntaries, and the closure of related associations. When these demands were not met by Turkey, Russia started to be more active in supporting Kurdish organizations in Russia.<sup>91</sup> Although Russian allegations were denied by Turkish officials who also stated that Turkey saw it as Russia's internal problem, these statements did not satisfy the Russian authorities.<sup>92</sup>

On the other hand, Russia supported the PKK in most of the 1990s and the Duma constituted the significant part of this. A conference about "The History of Kurdistan" was organized on 22 February 1994 and a Kurdish House was opened on 25 January 1995 with the help of the Duma. In addition, the "Kurdish Parliament in exile" made their third meeting in Moscow in 1995 with the permission of the Duma. In 1997, two Kurdish conferences were organized in Moscow with the encouragement of Russian Duma and moreover in 1997, the Duma accused Turkey of committing genocide against Kurds. Furthermore, when the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan wanted the right of asylum in 1998, the Duma wanted Yeltsin to accept this application.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Tellal, p.545.

<sup>91</sup> Fiona Hill, "Seismic Shifts in Eurasia: The Changing Relationship Between Turkey and Russia and its Implications for the South Caucasus", **Southeast European and Black Sea Studies**, Volume:3, Issue:3, 2003, p. 62.

<sup>92</sup> Muzaffer Ercan Yılmaz, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Türk-Rus İlişkileri", **Akademik Fener**, Issue:13, 2010, p. 35.

<sup>93</sup> Tellal, pp.545-546.

Actually Russia's connection with the Kurdish secessionist movements goes back to the Tsarist Russia. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Kurdish tribal leaders were trained in Tsarist Russia and thus, they had pro-Russian views. During the Cold War, the pro-Soviet Kurdish organizations carried out activities as well.<sup>94</sup> It is important to note that the Russian governments had not openly supported Kurdish movements but the Duma, whose decisions are not binding, had been very active in this regard in the 1990s. Likewise, Turkish governments also did not clearly endorse the secessionist Chechens, but overlooked or did not take a firm stance against pro-Chechen activities.

Although not important as the problematic issues mentioned above, Russia's decision to sell S-300 missiles to Greek Cypriot was one other point that tensed the bilateral relations. This problem occurred due to the military cooperation between Russia and Greek Cypriots. Russia wanted to have a share in military sector of the Western countries and an agreement was signed in December 1996 between the two sides on the sale of Russian S-300 long range surface-to-air missile systems to Greek Cypriots.<sup>95</sup> Apart from economic motives, Russia was also striving to increase its influence in Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.<sup>96</sup> Besides, the sale decision of Russia was perceived as part of the competition in the Caucasus and Central Asia and accordingly, Russia wanted to have a new card other than Turkey's Kurdish problem against Turkey.<sup>97</sup> Although there had been trade relations in military field between the two sides, such a decision had the capacity to break the balance of power in Eastern Mediterranean. Consequently, Turkey protested the agreement and with the support of the US, the Greek Cypriots accepted the deployment of the missiles not on Cyprus but on Crete.<sup>98</sup>

As stated before, both countries were having the perception of threat for the other and this was also reflected in their relations with the third countries or groups.

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<sup>94</sup> Aktürk, p. 12.

<sup>95</sup> Tellal, p.544.

<sup>96</sup> Sema Sezer, "Rusya Federasyonu ve Kıbrıs", 19.07.2005, <http://www.avsam.org/tr/analizler.asp?ID=55>, cited in Anıl Gürtuna, **Turkish-Russian Relations in the Post-Soviet Era: From Conflict to Cooperation?**, (Unpublished Master's Thesis), The Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 2006, p.62.

<sup>97</sup> Cenk Başlamış, "Türkiye'ye gözdağı", **Milliyet**, 08.01.1997, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/1997/01/08/dunya/turkiye.html>, (26.06.2014).

<sup>98</sup> Çelikpala, p.277.

On the other hand, such moves exacerbated the negative relations and led to security dilemma.

### 1.2.2. Economic Dimension

Contrary to the political dimension, there had been important progress in bilateral economic relations in the 1990s. It should be noted that the Natural Gas Agreement that was signed on 18 September 1984 turned out to be a cornerstone in this regard. Accordingly, Turkey would get 120 billion cubic meters of natural gas from the Soviet Union for 25 years, starting from 1987, in exchange for free currency. Furthermore, the Soviet Union would use 70% of the revenue by buying goods from Turkey, and the 35% of this 70% would be allocated to the construction services.<sup>99</sup>

These conditions helped the diversification of trade and led the Turkish companies to involve in the construction sector in the Soviet Union, which made up significant part of Turkey's exports to Russia. In addition, other countries increased their investments in Turkey, since the goods that the Soviet Union would buy from Turkey enabled such a situation.<sup>100</sup> The growth in volume of trade increased sharply and the Turkish-Soviet Business Council (later Turkish-Russian Business Council) was established.<sup>101</sup>

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia faced with a serious economic crisis and the Russian GDP fell around 50% from 1990 to the end of 1995.<sup>102</sup> The Russians could not even obtain basic consumer goods and thus, it was not surprising to see that the volume of shuttle trade with Turkey increased significantly in the 1990s. The politicians also paved the way through their decisions in the parliament and by this way, the Russian people managed to get consumer

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<sup>99</sup> Erel Tellal, "SSCB'yle İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, 14. Edition, (Ed. Baskın Oran), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, pp.163-164.

<sup>100</sup> Tellal, "SSCB'yle İlişkiler", pp.163-164.

<sup>101</sup> Gül Günver Turan, "Türkiye ve Rusya Arasındaki İktisadi İlişkilerde Gönüllü Bir Kuruluş: Türk-Rus İş Konseyi", **Dünden Bugüne Türkiye ve Rusya: Politik, Ekonomik ve Kültürel İlişkiler**, (Ed. Gülten Kazgan and Natalya Ulcenko), İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003, p.281, cited in Yanık, p.359.

<sup>102</sup> David E. Hoffman, **The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia**, Public Affairs, New York, 2003, pp.178-208, cited in Kara, p.129.



goods with cheap prices, and the trade was rekindled at a slow rate though.<sup>103</sup> However, shuttle trade between the two countries lost its pace towards the end of the 1990s. There are several reasons for this.

First, other countries, like China, began to involve in Russian market and emerged as competitors of Turkey in this regard. Second, after the emergence of economic crisis in Russia in August 1998, the purchasing power of the Russians fell again. Third, Russia had to enact laws that were limiting shuttle trade due to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) pressures.<sup>104</sup> The volume of shuttle trade between the two countries, which was around 8.8 billion dollars in 1996, declined to 3-4 billion dollars in the early 2000s.<sup>105</sup>

Likewise, Turkey was also facing with a serious economic crisis in the 1990s and early 2000s because of its inability to make structural reforms and also internal political and economic weakness. Therefore, these developments affected the bilateral trade between the two countries negatively and the volume of trade was only 4.5 billion dollars in 2000.<sup>106</sup> The change in bilateral trade between Turkey and Russia throughout the 1990s can be seen on the table below.

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<sup>103</sup> Michael Ellman, "The Russian Economy under El'tsin", **Europe-Asia Studies**, Volume:52, Number:8, 2000, p.1418.

<sup>104</sup> Hasan Selçuk, **Türkiye-Rusya Ekonomik İlişkileri**, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005, pp.60-64, cited in Göktuğ Kara, "Will energy fuel the future of the Turco-Russian relationship?", **Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies**, Volume:11, Issue:2, 2009, p.129.

<sup>105</sup> Erhan Büyükkakıncı, "Türk-Rus İlişkilerinin Değerlendirilmesi: Güvenlik Sorunsalından Çok Boyutlu Derinliğe Geçiş", **Sovyetler Birliği'nin Dağılmasından Yirmi Yıl Sonra Rusya Federasyonu: Türk dilli Halklar ve Türkiye ile İlişkiler**, (Ed. Erhan Büyükkakıncı ve Eyüp Bacanlı), Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, Ankara, 2012, pp.812-813.

<sup>106</sup> Habibe Özdal and the others, "Turkey-Russia Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: Current Dynamics, Future Prospects", **USAK Center for Eurasian Studies**, Report Number:13-06, July 2013, p.36.

**Table 1:** The Foreign Trade between Turkey and Russia (.000 US dollar)

		Change		Change			Change
Years	Export	%	Import	%	Balance	Volume	%
1992	438.407		1.040.402		-601.995	1.487.809	
1993	499.032	14	1.542.363	48	-1.043.331	2.041.395	38
1994	820.113	64	1.045.387	-32	-225.274	1.865.500	-9
1995	1.238.226	51	2.082.352	99	-844.126	3.320.578	78
1996	1.493.682	21	1.900.235	-9	-406.553	3.393.917	2
1997	2.056.542	38	2.174.258	14	-117.716	4.230.800	25
1998	1.347.533	-34	2.154.994	-1	-807.461	3.502.527	-17
1999	586.589	-56	2.371.856	10	-1.785.367	2.958.445	-15

Source: Web Page of Turkish Embassy in Moscow,

[http://www.turkishline.ru/embassy/rus\\_tek.html](http://www.turkishline.ru/embassy/rus_tek.html), pp.1-4, cited in Ertan Efegil, “Türk-Rus İlişkileri: Bölgesel İşbirliği veya Stratejik Kazanç?”, **21. Yüzyılda Türk Dış Politikası**, (Ed. İdris Bal), Lalezar Kitabevi, 2006, p.349.

### 1.3. EVALUATION OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONS IN THE 1990s

The end of the Cold War marked the collapse of the bipolar world system in international politics. In accordance with the views of neorealists, this change has brought about uncertainties and instability. In Turkey, serious concerns were raised regarding the losing geostrategic importance of the country. On the other hand, in this period there were also debates about the capabilities of Turkey, which is close to many regions geographically, for increasing relations with the newly independent states.<sup>107</sup>

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Turkey began to pursue a more multidimensional and active foreign policy in the Balkans, Black Sea, Caucasus and Central Asia by striving to take initiatives, affect the developments and direct them in a certain way. Turkey recognized newly independent states, established them with diplomatic relations, provided financial and humanitarian aid, and also cooperated with the international organizations in regional issues.<sup>108</sup> Another important topic that was argued in Turkey is the status of regional power.

<sup>107</sup> Şule Kut, “Türkiye’nin Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dış Politikasının Anahatları”, **En Uzun Onyıl**, p.44.

<sup>108</sup> Kut, pp.45-47.

Şule Kut points out that becoming a regional power does not mean that other regional states would go under the hegemony of that state, but the messages of the regional power regarding regional issues would be taken seriously by others.<sup>109</sup>

Although the Balkans was also important for Turkish foreign policy makers, the Caucasus and Central Asia are the regions where Turkey was mainly trying to develop good relations and establishing influence. Considering the Turkic ties, Turkey was striving to become a regional power and increase its status in the international arena, regain its importance in the eyes of the Western countries and find new markets for the economic development. So, although Turkey had taken into consideration of the Soviet Union's reaction and followed a Moscow-centric policy while communicating with these regional countries at first, it began to move more actively by the end of 1991. Both political and economic motives played role in Turkish foreign policy towards the Caucasus and Central Asia.

In Russia, on the other hand, there had been a competition among different groups for having the highest voice in policy making process in the following two years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. At first, the group which supports pro-Western policies and cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO became prominent. Yet, this path led to criticisms from other groups. The "Eurasianists" were the most prominent one among those. They claimed that Russia should focus on its near abroad rather than the West and this is the best way for the protection of national interests.<sup>110</sup> In addition, the political and economic reforms made by Yeltsin also did not become successful but rather caused high inflation and unemployment. This situation increased the criticisms and number of opponents to Yeltsin's policies.<sup>111</sup>

Consequently, Yeltsin began to pay more attention to the voices of conservatives and nationalists, receded from pro-Western policies and mentioned Russian leadership about security issues in the FSU countries.<sup>112</sup> As stated before, the near abroad policy prevailed in Russian foreign policy. Then, Moscow tried to

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<sup>109</sup> Kut, p.53.

<sup>110</sup> Tuncer, pp.437-438.

<sup>111</sup> Gün Kut, "Yeni Türk Cumhuriyetleri ve Uluslararası Ortam", **Bağımsızlığın İlk Yılları: Azerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan, Türkmenistan, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları**, (Ed. Büşra Ersanlı Behar and the others), Ankara, 1994, p.19, cited in Tuncer, p.438.

<sup>112</sup> S. Neil MacFarlane, "Russia, The West and European Security", **Survival**, Volume:35, Issue:3, 1993, p.13, cited in Tuncer, p.439.

establish itself as a hegemon and exclude Turkey from the Caucasus and Central Asia. Russia perceived Turkey's policies, which were aiming to have an influence in these regions, as a threat. The Russian political elite considered that it could limit Russian influence in the FSU countries.<sup>113</sup>

Other than Turkey's ambitions in the Turkic republics, Lerna Yanık points out that disagreement regarding energy routes, Russia's military power, and support of the two countries for secessionist groups in each other's country led to the emergence of mutual threat perception in both countries against the other.<sup>114</sup> In addition to the problems mentioned above, several remarks and actions also contributed to this perception. For instance, while Turkish officials were talking about intervening into the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh, Russian Marshal Yevgenii Shaposhnikov, in return, stated that such a move could lead to the Third World War.<sup>115</sup> The discord regarding the CFE and Russian bases in the Caucasus were also causing tension between the two countries.<sup>116</sup>

It should be noted that other than political reasons for tension, there were also economic ones. Both countries wanted to get significant shares in the markets of FSU countries and become a transit country in the transportation of energy resources. The rivalry between the BTC and Baku-Novossiysk pipelines revealed this competition. The competition for regional influence - and also the bad historical legacy - made the two states perceive each other as a threat. The S-300 missile problem and support for secessionist groups could be considered as the consequences of this perception. All these events contributed to the creation of security dilemma in the bilateral relations.

At this point, it should be mentioned that the US, which could be considered as a regional hegemon in its own region and does not want the emergence of a regional power in other regions due to the security concerns, pursued a policy, which Mearsheimer calls as the 'buck-passing' strategy. Accordingly, a great power would

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<sup>113</sup> Tuncer, p.436, 438.

<sup>114</sup> Yanık, p.351.

<sup>115</sup> Dimitri Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", **Contested Borders in the Caucasus**, (Ed. Bruno Coppieters), VUB University Press, Brussels, 1996, p.91, cited in Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, p.65.

<sup>116</sup> Yanık, pp.355-356.

support its regional allies to deter or fight against the aggressor state.<sup>117</sup> In this regard, the US supported the “Turkish Model” by hoping it would counterbalance Russia. Moreover, the US endorsed heavily the establishment of the BTC<sup>118</sup> and Turkey’s efforts to integrate Georgia and Azerbaijan to the Trans-Atlantic system and its support for armed forces of these two countries.<sup>119</sup> Apart from this, the US also encouraged pro-US regional organizations, such as GUAM, named through the initial letters of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova.<sup>120</sup>

However, Turkey could not succeed in having an influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia and retreated from its ambitions in these regions due to the reasons mentioned above, while Russia was re-establishing its influence in its near abroad again. This change made a positive impact on bilateral relations by reducing the perception of threat. As Stephen Walt points out states do not establish a balance against the biggest power, but against the power they believe that is threatening for them.<sup>121</sup> In addition to that, both countries were facing with serious economic crisis and wanted to increase the volume of bilateral trade. So, economic concerns also began to play role in bilateral relations by the end of 1990s. In addition to these changes, Turkey’s retreat from its ambitions in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the resolution of the S-300 missile problem and Ecevit’s visit to Russia, during which an agreement was signed on the cessation of support for secessionist groups, led to positive predictions about the Turkish-Russian relations by the end of 1990s.

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<sup>117</sup> John Mearsheimer, **The tragedy of great power politics**, Norton, New York, 2001, pp.158-159, cited in Karagiannis, p.76.

<sup>118</sup> Karagiannis, p.81.

<sup>119</sup> Winrow, “Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests”, p.6.

<sup>120</sup> “The four countries have cooperated in the fields of trade, energy, transportation and low security (e.g. antiterrorism, pipeline security).” (Karagiannis, p.82.)

<sup>121</sup> Stephen M. Walt, **The Origins of Alliances**, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1987, pp.17-50, cited in Şener Aktürk, “Turkish-Russian Relations after the Cold War (1992-2002)”, **Turkish Studies**, Volume:7, Issue:3, 2006, p.346.

## SECOND CHAPTER

### TURKISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONS SINCE 2000

#### 2.1. FACTORS LEADING TO RAPPROCHEMENT

In this chapter, the factors that led to a rapprochement between Turkey and Russia are examined in the first part. These factors are considered as both countries' problems with the West; cooperation against terrorism; cooperation over main regional issues, like the protection of the Black Sea by littoral states, cautious approach towards the color revolutions and disagreement with the US over the Middle East policies; and finally the improvement of bilateral economic and energy relations. The chapter is concluded with main problems in the Turkish-Russian relations and particularly their diverging positions in the Syrian issue and the recent developments in Ukraine which could lead to the emergence mutual threat perception once again.

##### 2.1.1. Problematic Relations with the Western Countries

Both Turkey and Russia had problems with the Western countries and organizations at the end of the 1990s and this is one of the most important factors that led to their cooperation. Russia's problems were mainly with the NATO and Turkey's were with the EU.

Russia was anxious about the enlargement of the NATO in Eastern Europe and thus, reacted against the debates about the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland's membership to the NATO.<sup>122</sup> However, these three states became NATO members in 1999. In addition, Russia wanted to be more than just "a station that pumps oil" contrary to the views of Western countries.<sup>123</sup> Russia's opposition to the interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo was another conflictual issue in the relations

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<sup>122</sup> Bülent Aras, "Turkey and the Russian Federation: An Emerging Multidimensional Partnership", **SETA Policy Brief**, Number:10, 2009, pp.4-5.

<sup>123</sup> İlyas Kamalov, "Komşuluktan Stratejik İşbirliğine: Türk-Rus İlişkileri", **ORSAM Report Number:18, The Black Sea International Report Number:3**, 2010, p.7.

between Russia and the West. These problems led Russia to search for new alternatives for developing relations. Russia's new foreign policy under Vladimir Putin's leadership, who became the Prime Minister in 1999 and the President in 2000, has included cooperating with other states and international organizations if it is coinciding with the Russian interests.<sup>124</sup> Particularly, the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)<sup>125</sup> and neighboring countries were the focus points of Russia's new multidimensional foreign policy.<sup>126</sup>

Likewise, Turkey had problems with the West, particularly with the EU at the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s. As it is well known, Turkey's membership process to the EU goes back to the end of the 1950s. After the end of the Cold War, the debates about the enlargement of the EU revived, because the newly independent states were making transition to democracy and free market economy.<sup>127</sup> Turkey also had hopes for becoming a member of the EU during the new enlargement process. Yet, Turkey's low performance in the protection of human rights, internal political and economic instability, disagreements with Greece and finally the Cyprus issue made up obstacles in the membership process.<sup>128</sup>

At the Luxembourg summit, the EU worked on a two-stage enlargement process. Accordingly, the membership process would be started earlier with the more developed and readier countries, like the Greek Cypriots, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia in the first stage. In the second stage, the process would include Slovakia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania. So, Turkey was excluded from the enlargement process. Because of such decisions and policies, Turkey suspended its relations with the EU in 1997 after the Luxembourg summit.<sup>129</sup>

On the other hand, Turkey was declared as "candidate country" in 1999 at the Helsinki Summit. Sanem Baykal and Tuğrul Arat put forward six reasons for the change in the EU's attitude. The first one is the increasing geostrategic importance of Turkey due to the intervention in Kosovo and concerns about energy security in the Caucasus. Second, the EU wanted to establish the European Security and Defense

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<sup>124</sup> Izvestia, 22 April 2000, cited in Aras, p.5.

<sup>125</sup> A regional organization founded by the former Soviet Union Republics.

<sup>126</sup> Kamalov, p.7

<sup>127</sup> Sanem Baykal and Tuğrul Arat, "AB'yle İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, p.326.

<sup>128</sup> Baykal and Arat, p.327.

<sup>129</sup> Kamuran Reçber, **Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri**, Aktüel Yayınları, Bursa, 2004, pp.96-97.

Identity in cooperation with the NATO and Turkey's approval was needed for this process because of its veto power. Third, the US also wanted Turkey's membership to the EU. Fourth, social democratic parties came into power in Europe and these new governments, emphasizing the importance of pluralism, had more moderate attitude towards Turkey's membership. Fifth, Greece also adopted a more reconciliatory attitude towards Turkey, because it wanted to join the European Monetary Union and in this regard, limiting the public and military expenditures was vital. This new positive attitude would also help Greece to gain popularity in the EU. Moreover, Turkey's decision of suspending its relations with the EU prevented Greece from using the EU as a pressuring force in the Cyprus issue. Finally, Turkey's commitment to the IMF program and military success in the fight against the PKK by capturing Öcalan raised the hopes for democratic openings in political field. It should also be noted that the candidacy decision would not bind the EU to make a definite decision about Turkey's membership to the EU.<sup>130</sup> However, it can be said that even though Turkey got the candidate status in 1999, the belief that Turkey will become an EU member state one day lost its popularity among the Turkish politicians and public. So, this unstable accession process caused Turkey to look for other alternatives than the West at the end of the 1990s.

The accession negotiations started in 2005. Yet, because of the disagreements with the EU regarding the Cyprus issue, uncertainty about the end of the negotiations, negative attitudes of the right-wing government leaders and the financial crisis in Europe, and Turkey's focus on the developments in the Middle East damaged the negotiation process.<sup>131</sup> Therefore, it would not be wrong to state that Turkish-EU relations have been unstable and mutual trust between the two sides has disappeared.

Russia also did not want Turkey's membership to the EU. During his visit to Turkey, Putin warned Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan about his drawbacks that Turkey's EU membership would damage Turkish-Russian relations.<sup>132</sup> Russian diplomats and commentators expressed their doubts about Turkey's membership

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<sup>130</sup> Baykal and Arat, p.352-353.

<sup>131</sup> Şevket Ovalı, "From Europeanization to Re-Nationalization: Contextual Parameters of Change in Turkish Foreign Policy", **Studia Ubb. Europaea**, Volume:57, Issue:3, 2012, pp.28-32.

<sup>132</sup> Turan Yılmaz, "Putin'in sitemine 600 kişiyle cevap", **Hürriyet**, 11.01.2005, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=287897>, (31.12.2013).



process and indicated their ideas that the EU countries would not permit Turkey to join the organization even if Turkey fulfills the criteria. These ideas were in parallel with Alexander Dugin's views, which points out Eurasianism based on the cooperation of Turkey and Russia as the major actors.<sup>133</sup>

Moreover, Turkey also did not want only to be perceived as a "bridge" between the West and the Middle East by the US and EU.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, it can be said that both Turkey and Russia was uncomfortable about the perception that the Western countries have about them. The problems that Turkey and Russia had with the West became one of the factors that led to their cooperation and some commentators made an analogy by pointing out the similarity of the situation in the 2000s with the one in the 1920s.<sup>135</sup> Referring to the difficulties in the membership process, Erdoğan has recently opened debates about Turkey's possible membership to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)<sup>136 137</sup>.

In general, Turkey had problems with the EU and Russia's problems were mainly with the NATO. But, it cannot be said that Turkey-NATO relations or the EU-Russian relations were going well. The increasing cooperation between the NATO and EU, marked by the Berlin Plus Agreement in 2002, which permits the EU to use NATO assets, caused reactions in Turkey since it was not an EU member country.<sup>138</sup> In addition to that, the problems about the intelligence sharing regarding the PKK in Northern Iraq after the Iraq War among Turkey, the US and the NATO caused trust issues.<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, Turkey's good neighborhood policies in its

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<sup>133</sup> Kınıklioğlu and Morkva, p.538.

<sup>134</sup> Kamalov, p.7.

<sup>135</sup> Kemal Girgin, "Turkey and its Great Northern neighbour", *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 27.03.2006, cited in Kınıklioğlu and Morkva, p.538.

<sup>136</sup> In 1996, the Shanghai Five groups was formed by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. With the joining of Uzbekistan to the group, the organizaed was renamed as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001 in Shanghai. Although the cooperation fields are mentioned as economic, political and military, actually security cooperation is the main field of the organization. Turkey is now one of the dialogue partners of the SCO.

<sup>137</sup> Hürriyet Daily News, "Turkish PM Erdoğan to Putin: Take us to Shanghai", 22.11.2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-erdogan-to-putin-take-us-to-shanghai.aspx?pageID=238&nID=58348&NewsCatID=359>, (08.06.2014).

<sup>138</sup> Pinar Bilgin, "The 'Peculiarity' of Turkey's Position on EU-NATO Military/Security Cooperation: A Rejoinder to Missirolì", *Security Dialogue*, Number:34, 2003, p.345, cited in Özgehan Şenyuva and Çiğdem Üstün, *NATO-Türkiye İlişkileri: Türkiye Kamuoyu ve Elit Algıları*, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, p.29.

<sup>139</sup> Gülnur Aybet, "The Evolution of NATO's Three Phases and Turkey's Transatlantic Relationship", *Perceptions*, Volume:17, Issue:1, 2012, p.30.

region based on diplomatic efforts has not always corresponded with the policies of NATO, such as the policies on Iran.<sup>140</sup>

Like Turkey, Russia also had problems with the EU. Eastern Enlargements of the EU caused new member countries to change or repeal some of the cooperation agreements with Russia. Moreover, the EU standards would limit the number of Russian goods to be exported in the long run. Besides, the EU's policy of the diversification of energy suppliers, and the visa requirements that would enter into force after these countries' membership to the EU would further damage Russian economic interests.<sup>141</sup> Yet, as important as economic interests if not more, political reasons are behind somewhat suspicious view of the two sides towards each other. While the EU wanted to enlarge to the East and support Central and Eastern European countries in the process of democratization and transition to free market economy, Russia perceived these attempts as a strategy against itself. Russia, as stated before, do not want any other actor to become an influential power in its near abroad.

### **2.1.2. Cooperation against Terrorism**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the most important problems between Turkey and Russia in the 1990s was their support for secessionist groups in each other's country. Russians were putting forward that Turkey had been permitting the Chechen secessionists to use Turkish territory for their purposes and did not make enough effort to stop financial aid going to Chechnya. On the other hand, Russia was supporting the PKK and also permitted the Kurds to organize conferences. Furthermore, the Duma accused Turkey of committing genocide against Kurds.

However, Turkey adopted a more passive stance in the Second Chechen War started in 1999. As it is stated before, by the end of the 1990s, Turkey and Russia began to understand that their cooperation rather than competition would lead to

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<sup>140</sup> Şenyuva and Üstün, p.30.

<sup>141</sup> Sergey Tumanov, Alexander Gasparishvili and Ekaterina Romanova, "Russia-EU Relations, or How the Russians Really View the EU", **Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics**, Volume:27, Issue:1, 2011, p.123.

mutual gains. In the Second Chechen War, radical Islamist groups in Turkey have played a more important role than any other groups in Turkey in supporting the Chechens and Turkey did not want such radical groups to increase their influence on Turkish territory and the region.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, Turkey realized the fact that if it involves in Chechnya problem, Russia would use the PKK card as leverage.<sup>143</sup> Their problems with the Western states also contributed to that understanding.

The visit of Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit to Russia in November 1999 could be marked as a milestone in Turkish-Russian relations regarding this issue. During the visit the two Prime Ministers, Putin and Ecevit, negotiated on a number of issues such as the cooperation in the media and cooperation against terrorism, and visa exemption in diplomatic passports. As a result of the negotiations, they made various agreements involving these issues. Even though it is not clearly stated, the proclamation about the cooperation against terrorism showed the willingness of both sides to evaluate the fight against secessionist movements as internal affairs. The constructive attitude of Russia during the capture of Öcalan and the passive stance of Turkey during the Second Chechen War led to a positive atmosphere. It should also be noted that Ecevit's description of the Chechnya problem as Russia's internal affair during the visit also revealed the signs of new approach.<sup>144</sup> This new and positive attitude of both sides became one of the most significant factors that led to Turkish-Russian rapprochement in the 2000s.

In addition to the agreements, both states gave the list of suspects to each other that could involve in illegal activities of secessionist organizations in their respective countries.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, Ecevit stated that Turkey would extradite a Chechen terrorist to Russia and Russia also closed down several PKK-related offices within its territory.<sup>146</sup> In the 2000s, several Chechens who wanted the independence of Chechnya were assassinated in Istanbul and their assassins could not be found.<sup>147</sup> However, as there is a sympathy towards the PKK among many Kurdish

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<sup>142</sup> Hill, "Seismic Shifts in Eurasia", p.62.

<sup>143</sup> Büyükkakıncı, p.803.

<sup>144</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, (Ed. Baskın Oran), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, p.534.

<sup>145</sup> Yanık, p.355.

<sup>146</sup> Aktürk, "Turkish-Russian Relations after the Cold War (1992-2002)", p.345.

<sup>147</sup> Şener Aktürk, "Russian-Turkish Relations in the 21st Century, 2000-2012", **Russian Analytical Digest**, Number:125, 2013, p.3.

organizations in Russia and the increasing power and influence of Kurds in the Middle East politics, Russia has not named the PKK as a terrorist organization despite of Turkey's insistence.<sup>148</sup> On the other hand, Russia has sometimes complained about the fact that some terrorists that were killed in Chechnya had Turkish passports.<sup>149</sup> Yet, it can be claimed that these mutual complaints have not damaged the bilateral relations.

### **2.1.3. Cooperation over Main Regional Issues**

Both Turkey and Russia did not want the intervention of the non-regional states in regional affairs and this shared policy was an important factor that contributed to the rapprochement between the two states. Especially their policies in the Black Sea region and attitudes towards the US policies on Iraq, Syria and Iran in the 2000s were the main converging points between Turkey and Russia.

#### **2.1.3.1. Cooperation in the Protection of the Black Sea by Littoral States and Cautious Approach towards the Color Revolutions**

Although the Soviet Union was the major actor in the Black Sea region during the Cold War, Turkey's NATO membership was ensuring Turkey's security. Yet, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the regional countries, mainly Bulgaria and Romania, began to follow anti-Russian policies. Moreover, Russia's borders to the Black Sea became narrower and it lost the Sevastopol port to Ukraine, which is very important logistically. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Western countries did not attach importance to the Black Sea region, because they were mainly preoccupied with the integration of Central and Eastern European countries to the world system. Besides, if they had been aggressive towards Russia in its neighboring regions, it would have led to an increasing reaction against Yeltsin among anti-Western Russians.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Kınıklıoğlu and Morkva, p.536.

<sup>149</sup> Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu ile İlişkiler", p.538.

<sup>150</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.523.

Yet, starting from the mid-1990s, the integration of the Black Sea region to the Trans-Atlantic system has become an important issue in international politics. Some experts in the US put forward three-phased plan. First, the integration of Central and Eastern European countries would be completed. Second, the influence would be established on the “Wider Black Sea” region and therefore Russian dominance would be reduced. Third, the presence of the West would be widened to Russia’s borders.<sup>151</sup> Yet, it should be stressed that the US had displayed a low profile in regional issues until the September 11 attacks, which caused significant changes in the US foreign policy.<sup>152</sup>

After the Cold War, Turkey started to search for regional cooperation to maintain its geopolitical importance in the eyes of the West. Therefore, it wanted to be active in the Black Sea region and made efforts for the development of cooperation in the region in the early 1990s. As a result of Turkey’s endeavors, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) initiative was established in 1992 and turned into an international organization in 1997 with the name of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. However, the BSEC did not meet the expectations and thus, Turkey lost its early enthusiasm towards the region in the following years. Although Turkey joined other regional organizations in the 2000s, it did not take an active role. Instead, Turkey chose to conduct its relations with the regional states bilaterally. The regional organizations have only worked as a forum for economic issues.<sup>153</sup>

In the 2000s, the region has been widened in definition - described as the area from Eastern Europe to the Caspian Sea. In parallel, the strategic importance of the region has also increased due to its capacity for growth, extension of market and taking place in energy transition area.<sup>154</sup> These developments led various powers to make policies regarding the Black Sea region.

Russia’s near abroad policy was already including the region as it refers to the ex-Soviet territories. The EU became much more involved in the region after the

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<sup>151</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.523.

<sup>152</sup> Özgür Özdamar, “Security and military balance in the Black Sea region”, **Southeast European and Black Sea Studies**, Volume:10, Issue:3, 2010, p.344.

<sup>153</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, pp.523-524.

<sup>154</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.522,

candidacies of Bulgaria and Romania, which are the littoral states in the Black Sea. The EU seems to have two main interests in the region: to guarantee the security of energy supplies from the region to the European markets and to contribute the stability and democratization process in the FSU countries, which would be on behalf of the EU member countries' security.<sup>155</sup> Turkey has traditionally wanted to maintain the status quo in the region while increasing the level of economic and security cooperation. Therefore, it developed policies in accordance with this aim.

The US was one another power that focused on the region in the 2000s.<sup>156</sup> Especially the region's strategic importance for the US has been heavily increased after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. The region's geographical proximity to the Middle East shaped the US policy towards the Black Sea. The US experts thought that the Black Sea region was the transition corridor for the arms smuggling related with the Middle East, and controlling the region would damage terrorist groups. There are other reasons for this change as well. The region is close to the energy-rich regions, like the Middle East and Caspian Basin and moreover, it provides the opportunity to contain Iran in the north. Furthermore, one of the main US foreign policy goals has been the containment of Russian influence and the diversification of the energy resources reaching to Europe. Moreover, after the refusal of the March 2003 motion by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the US wanted to be much more active in such critic parts of the world. Besides, the US would contribute to democracy promotion efforts in Russia's neighboring regions in this way.<sup>157</sup> In terms of security, the US wanted to have military bases in the region. In this regard, it made agreements with Bulgaria and Romania and obtained the right to deploy military troops within certain limits in these countries' territories.<sup>158</sup>

On the other hand, Russia's dominance over the energy resources and pipeline routes has been the basis of its policies. This situation has also caused lack of harmony among the EU countries in making a unified policy on Russia, since they need Russia for energy needs.<sup>159</sup> Apart from using energy issue as a policy tool,

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<sup>155</sup> Özdamar, p.344.

<sup>156</sup> Özdamar, p.342.

<sup>157</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.525.

<sup>158</sup> Kamer Kasım, "Türkiye'nin Karadeniz Politikası: Temel Parametreler ve Stratejiler", **Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları Dergisi Discussion Platform**, Volume:8, Issue:5, 2008, p.177.

<sup>159</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.525

Russia started to involve in domestic politics of Ukraine and Georgia, and Putin emphasized his concerns regarding the NATO and EU enlargements.<sup>160</sup>

Russia found an unexpected friend in the Black Sea region: Turkey. As it is stated before, Turkey believed that cooperation in the region could occur only in economic field and it also did not want non-regional states to involve in regional matters. The US, the EU and the countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Georgia, which increasingly had anti-Russian attitudes, have contradicting policies with Turkey in the Black Sea region. This situation led to the Turkish-Russian rapprochement in regional politics which was seen in several developments. The similar attitudes of both states towards the “Community of Democratic Choice” and “Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership” can be mentioned as examples.<sup>161</sup>

Romania had a geostrategic importance and wanted a greater role in regional politics by cooperating with the US, the EU and NATO. The Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership was mainly a Romanian initiative and it aimed to reduce Russian and increase the US influence over the region. Therefore, the initiative took support of the US. However, Turkey opposed the initiative since the political elites wanted to protect the delicate balance that was established in the post-Cold War period. Hence, Turkey participated at the level of state minister at the foundation summit in 2006 despite the Western countries’ insistency. Russia also chose to be represented at the level of general director at the summit. In the end, the initiative did not take enough attention and lost its importance by 2010.<sup>162</sup>

The Community of Democratic Choice<sup>163</sup> was established in order to spread democracy throughout the region, strengthen economic ties and establish a stable order. But, the democratization efforts were widely used only in rhetoric. Particularly Romania and Bulgaria, but also Georgia and Ukraine indirectly claimed that the Turkish-Russian rapprochement was the main obstacle to the aim of spreading

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<sup>160</sup> Özdamar, p.343.

<sup>161</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.525

<sup>162</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, pp.525-526.

<sup>163</sup> The Community Of Democratic Choice was established in 2005 in Ukraine with the participation of nine states which are Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia and Ukraine. In addition, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the US, the EU and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe were the observers. The community’s aims were declared as the promotion of democratic values, regional stability and economic prosperity. (Jean-Christophe Peuch, “Ukraine: Regional Leaders Set Up Community of Democratic Choice”, **RFE/RL**, 02.12.2005, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1063461.html>, (30.05.2014)).

democracy in the Black Sea region and thus, the Western countries should strive to stop this.<sup>164</sup> Unsurprisingly, some Russian analysts perceived the initiative as a device to weaken Russian influence in the Black Sea region.<sup>165</sup>

The color revolutions should also be mentioned at this point. The term “color revolutions” is used to refer to the US-supported regime change and democratization process that occurred in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. The young people in these states, who believed that the polls were rigged, were the initiator of the protest movements. The leadership changes in these countries occurred nonviolently and the democratization process gained speed. It was later revealed that the US supported the NGOs which work for the development of civil society and democracy in these countries and even educated the local people for civil disobedience and democratic change.<sup>166</sup> The main reason for the US support is the policy that aimed to reduce Russian influence in these countries. Thus, Russia was against the color revolutions and it perceived the new leaders in these countries, like Mikheil Saakashvili in Georgia and Victor Yushchenko in Ukraine, as pro-US politicians.

In the early 2000s, Turkey was concerning about the disintegration of Iraq and emergence of an independent Kurdistan from such a situation. Accordingly, this could trigger the demand for independence among Kurds in Turkey’s own territory as well. The US intervention in Iraq and the following developments raised the possibility of such a situation. Moreover, the intervention even led to a more instability in Iraq and the Middle East. While implementing their policies, the US officials mostly pointed the democratization of Iraq as their main motive. Given these facts, Turkey began to think of suspiciously regarding the US-supported democratization movements. Besides, there was a possibility that the EU could use Ukraine and Georgia’s EU membership process as an excuse to stall Turkey. Turkey also wanted a slower NATO membership process for these countries; otherwise this could damage the balance in the regional politics and cause Russia to develop more aggressive policies. Likewise, Russia did not want Ukraine and Georgia’s membership to the EU or NATO and thus, Turkey’s and Russia’s policies converged

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<sup>164</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.526.

<sup>165</sup> Peuch, “Ukraine: Regional Leaders Set Up Community of Democratic Choice”.

<sup>166</sup> Mustafa Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.466.



once again.<sup>167</sup> Consequently, Turkey approached cautiously towards color revolutions unlike its Western allies.

The preservation of the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits (1936) has been one of the most important concerns for Turkey in the Black Sea region. The treaty ensures Turkey's sovereignty over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles while allowing the free passage of commercial ships and limiting the presence of the military ships of non-littoral states in the Black Sea by 21 days. Bulgaria and Romania wanted some changes in the convention, which if occurs it could lead to a significant US presence in the Black Sea. Unsurprisingly, the US supported the idea. Yet, Turkey objected it due to the concern that such a change could damage the delicate balance in the region and any change should be made by the consensus of all littoral states.<sup>168</sup>

However, the US began to change its strategies towards the region after 2007. The new strategy is based on cooperation with the current regional mechanisms. The problems that occurred after color revolutions, the disagreements between the US and some EU countries, and Turkey's insistency on the implementation of the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits are the reasons for this strategic change. Turkey's initiatives, like The Black Sea Naval Force (BLACKSEAFOR)<sup>169</sup> and Operation Black Sea Harmony<sup>170</sup>, aimed to protect the Montreux regime and impede US involvement in regional matters.<sup>171</sup> Turkey and Russia used BLACKSEAFOR and Operation Black Sea Harmony as excuses for the prevention of the NATO power from spreading in the region by stating that these two initiatives were enough to provide security.<sup>172</sup> Moreover, they have been working in

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<sup>167</sup> Hill and Taşpınar, pp.87-88.

<sup>168</sup> Özdamar, p.345.

<sup>169</sup> It is a naval force which is established in 2001 with the agreement in order to strengthen cooperation and mutual trust among the littoral states in the Black Sea. The idea was first come from Turkey in 1998. At first, humanitarian aid, search and rescue and environmental protection was on the top of the agenda. (BLACKSEAFOR, "Kuruluş", <http://www.dzkk.tsk.tr/denizweb/blackseafor/turkce/hakkinda/kurulus.php>, (31.05.2014).) In time, terrorism and illicit trafficking in weapons of mass destruction have also become the main issues on the agenda. (MFA, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/blackseafor.en.mfa>, (31.05.2014).)

<sup>170</sup> It was initiated by Turkey in 2004 and Turkey later wanted to make it have a multilateral structure. It operates closely with the NATO and is assumed as a major security provider in the Black Sea. Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria also joined Black Sea Harmony. (<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/blackseafor.en.mfa>, (31.05.2014).)

<sup>171</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.526.

<sup>172</sup> Yanık, p.357.

concert with the NATO initiatives. We have seen the similar approach while Russia were opposing and Turkey were hesitant to the US attempt to gain observer status in the BSEC.<sup>173</sup> In the end, the strategy change of the US led to the reduction in Turkey's focus on the Black Sea region.<sup>174</sup>

So, it can be said that Turkey and Russia have strived for cooperating in regional issues as much as possible in the Black Sea region and preferred not to compete with each other. Their policies were different from the zero-sum geopolitical rivalry in the region.<sup>175</sup> As summarized by Özgür Özdamar;

*"... with the changing security environment after 9/11, Turkey's uneasy relations with the USA regarding Iraq and growing tensions between Russia and the EU-NATO couple led Turkey to follow a policy of caution on matters concerning the Black Sea. In order to prevent existing regional initiatives (e.g. BSEC, Black Sea naval task force [BLACK-SEAFOR] and Black Sea Harmony) from being harmed by the new rivalry between the west and Russia, Turkey has chosen to defend the status quo in the region."*<sup>176</sup>

### **2.1.3.2. Cooperation against the Middle Eastern Policies of the US**

Turkey and Russia have had similar attitudes towards the Iraq intervention, relations with Syria (until 2011), Iranian nuclear program and Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their attitudes have been contrasting with the US policies in the Middle East. For instance; both countries strived for pursuing a balanced policy, they acknowledged the rights of Palestinians to establish an independent state and entered into a dialogue with Hamas contrary to the Western countries.<sup>177</sup> On the other hand, Turkey's policy began to change with the deterioration of its relations with Israel and it has taken a firm stance on the side of Palestine.<sup>178</sup> Moreover, Turkey and particularly Russia are geographically not so close to Israel and Palestine and therefore, Russia does not perceive the conflict as a threat to its security. Thus, the Iraq intervention, relations with Syria and Iranian nuclear program are given as the

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<sup>173</sup> Kara, p.126.

<sup>174</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.526.

<sup>175</sup> Oksana Antonenko, "Towards a comprehensive regional security framework in the Black Sea region after the Russia-Georgia war", **Southeast European and Black Sea Studies**, Volume:9, Issue:3, 2009, p.261.

<sup>176</sup> Özdamar, pp.344-345.

<sup>177</sup> Fatma Aslı Kelkitli, **Post-Cold War Turkish-Russian Relations: The Limits of Competition and Cooperation in Eurasia**, (Unpublished PhD Thesis), The Graduate School of Social Sciences of Boğaziçi University, İstanbul, 2012, p.324.

<sup>178</sup> Kelkitli, p.384.

cases of converging Turkish and Russian policies against the Middle Eastern policies of the US.

#### 2.1.3.2.1. Case 1: The Iraq Intervention

Another example that can be given to the Turkish-Russian cooperation against the non-intervention of outside actors in their neighboring regions is their attitude towards the Iraq War. The relations between the US and Iraq had generally been tensed during the Saddam regime and the US had already carried out several military operations in Iraq. When George W. Bush became the new President of the US in 2001, the neo-conservatives began to obtain high positions in the US government and bureaucracy. The September 11 attacks led to a more hawkish and unilateral US foreign policy. Public opinion in the country also made that easier. Actually, the US followed a multilateral foreign policy during the intervention in Afghanistan and took the support of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). However, the people who thought that the US would stop after the war in Afghanistan were mistaken. His speech in the State of the Union Address of January 29, 2002 revealed that Bush had more than that in his mind. He stressed that the US has to:

*“prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction. Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since September 11. But we know their true nature. North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens.*

*Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people’s hope for freedom.*

*Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility towards America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens.”<sup>179</sup>*

After these remarks, he depicted these three states as the ‘axis of evil’ and proclaimed that the US would not take a defensive position. On the other hand, the US tried to use diplomacy and take a multilateralist approach while dealing with North Korea and Iran. Yet, this was not the case in Iraq.

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<sup>179</sup> Richard A. Melanson, **American Foreign Policy since the Vietnam War**, M. E. Sharpe, New York, 2005, pp.308-309.

The people who supported the military intervention in Iraq (mainly the Bush administration and neoconservatives) had optimistic opinions regarding the consequences of such an action. Their main motive was that if Saddam regime was toppled and a democratic regime was established in the country, it could emerge as an example for other Arab states. In their opinions, the policies and decisions of the authoritarian governments in the Middle East have caused the region to become a breeding ground for terrorists. Thus, if Iraq became successful, the people in the other Arab states would force their governments to transform the regime to a more democratic one, which could stop the spread of terrorism. Besides, such a chain of events would lead to a rise in the US influence over the region.<sup>180</sup>

As both Turkey and Russia wanted stability in their neighborhood, they did not want the US intervention in Iraq. Although negotiations had been taking place between Turkey and the US regarding Turkey's role in the intervention, Turkish authorities also tried to convince the Saddam administration to step back. The meeting with the Vice President of Iraq Taha Yassin Ramadan in order to explain how serious the current situation is can be evaluated in this regard.<sup>181</sup> But, such initiatives did not bear fruit. After the long negotiations between Turkey and the US, a motion came in front of the Turkish Parliament, which would allow the US army to use Turkish territory to enter into Iraq by opening northern front.<sup>182</sup> The motion got 264 affirmative, 250 dissentive and 19 abstaining votes in the parliament on 1 March 2003. Since 267 affirmative votes are required in conformity with the Turkish Grand National Assembly standing orders, the motion got rejection. As expected, the decision was met very well in Russia and Putin mentioned it as the event of the week.<sup>183</sup>

This decision brought about a change in the US war plans and made a negative impact on the US-Turkey relations. The US authorities criticized Turkey both directly and indirectly due to rejection of the motion.<sup>184</sup> Both Turkey and Russia

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<sup>180</sup> Melanson, p.313.

<sup>181</sup> İlhan Uzgöl, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.271.

<sup>182</sup> Hill and Taşpınar, p.82.

<sup>183</sup> Radikal, "Putin: Meclis kararı haftanın olayı", (05.03.2003), <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=68041>, (03.02.2014).

<sup>184</sup> For example; after the war, Rumsfeld stated that one of the reasons of the Sunni militant insurrection is the absence of a northern front in the war, which made it easier for Saddam's

had their own reasons for not joining the war. It is important to note that both countries had mutual energy and commercial ties with Iraq. It is estimated that Turkey had lost 30 billion dollars since the Gulf War due to the cut in Iraqi oil and US sanctions. The Russian oil company, LUKoil, also had significant investments in Iraq. Furthermore, public opinion in both countries was against the war. Turkey also concerned that Iraq could be disintegrated after the war, which would lead to the emergence of an independent Kurdish state. Moreover, the chaos could cause security problems in Turkey and damaged Turkey's economic interests. Likewise, Russia was concerning that the unilateral US intervention would damage Russia's trade links with Iraq.<sup>185</sup> In addition, Russia did not want the US to be active in its sphere of influence.<sup>186</sup> For example; Sergey Mironov, the speaker of the Federation Council, indicated how Russia is against the unilateral world system during his visit to Turkey in 2007.<sup>187</sup>

In the end, both Turkey and Russia found themselves on the same page in the Iraq War. While Turkish Parliament rejected the motion, Russia voted against the US proposal regarding the war in the UNSC. The territorial integrity of Iraq was important for both countries and the secessionist movements in their own countries was one of the reasons.<sup>188</sup>

#### 2.1.3.2.2. Case 2: Syria

Unlike the US foreign policy, Turkish and Russian policies on Syria in the 2000s had also been similar at least until the beginning of the Arab Spring. Actually in most of the 1990s, Turkey and Syria had several problems, like the Hatay issue, water problem and the PKK issue. Syria had been using the PKK by supplying aid to it in order to force Turkey to make concessions in bilateral problems.<sup>189</sup>

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Republican Guard to reach north. (CNN, "Rumsfeld: Insurgency slows progress", 21.03.2005, <http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/03/20/iraq.anniversary/>, (03.02.2014).)

<sup>185</sup> Hill, "Seismic Shifts in Eurasia", pp.60-61.

<sup>186</sup> Hill and Taşpınar, p.81.

<sup>187</sup> Kınıklıoğlu and Morkva, p.538.

<sup>188</sup> Aktürk, "Russian-Turkish Relations in the 21st Century, 2000-2012", p.3.

<sup>189</sup> Müge Aknur, "The Impact of Civil-Military Relations on Democratic Consolidation in Turkey", **Democratic Consolidation in Turkey**, (Ed. Müge Aknur), Universal Publishers, Boca Raton, Florida, 2012, p.240.

Yet, Turkey's ultimatum in 1998, which indicated that Turkey could make military operation if Syria continued its support for the PKK, led Syria to deport the PKK leader Öcalan on 17 October 1998. Then, the two sides met in Adana and made an accord that include Syria's commitments in which it recognized the PKK as a terrorist organization, ceased its support for it and would cooperate with Turkey in this regard. These developments were followed by economic agreements and meetings in the following year.<sup>190</sup> The Hatay issue and water problem fell off the agenda and the two countries cooperated against terrorism, increased their trade relations and political consultations in the 2000s.

Apart from the cooperation against the PKK and Turkey's efforts to play the mediator role and reduce the international pressure on Syria, the dramatic increase in volume of bilateral trade had been the engine of the progress in bilateral relations. In December 2004, a free trade agreement was signed and entered into force in January 2007. This agreement contributed to the achievement of 2,5 billion dollars of trade volume in 2010. One other important development occurred in tourism sector. The number of touristic visits has increased significantly in the 2000s and with the abolishment of tourist visa in September 2009, the number of tourists reached approximately to one million in 2010.<sup>191</sup>

Although the good relations have been reversed after the Arab Spring, which would be explained in more detail later, Turkey's good relations with and positive attitude towards Syria contrasted with the US policies until then. The US wanted to isolate Syria from international politics. On the other hand, Turkey's close ties with Syria and its mediation efforts between Syria and Israel were against the US policy.<sup>192</sup> The US attitude towards Syria had already been negative even before the September 11 attacks. As it is well known, after the attacks, the US began to pursue more hawkish policies and isolating Syria from the international community became much more important, particularly after the Iraq War. While developing relations with Syria, Turkey also had to deal with the increasing US pressure and speculations referring to Syria as the next US target after Iraq.

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<sup>190</sup> Melek Fırat and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, pp.566-567.

<sup>191</sup> Nuri Yeşilyurt, "Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, pp.421-422.

<sup>192</sup> Aknur, p.240.

Russia has had also good contacts with the Assad administration. While Russia was trying to increase its influence in its neighboring regions, it strived to develop even better relations with Syria. Moreover, Russia has inherited good relations with Syria from the Soviet period. Russia has a naval base in the city of Tartus in Syria and although it is not a developed facility, it has a symbolic importance. In addition, Russia and Syria have made several military agreements on the sale of Russian military equipment to Syria and the sum of the military contracts "... had allegedly increased to nearly 20 billion dollars." The bilateral economic relations between Russia and Syria have also developed in the 2000s. The volume of trade has reached nearly 2 billion dollars by 2012. In addition, Russia has made investments in Syria, particularly in energy and infrastructure projects.<sup>193</sup>

In addition to the security and economic dimensions of the relations between Russia and Syria, there is also a political one. As it is stated before, Syria and the US have had problematic relations and Russia does not want more US presence and influence in its neighboring regions. Apart from Iran, Syria is the most feasible option for Moscow to cooperate with against the US policies.

In short, both Turkey and Russia perceived US involvement in regional politics as a destabilizing factor in their southern region. Instead, they tried to convince Assad to make political reforms gradually.<sup>194</sup> However, this situation changed with the Arab Spring in 2011. Moscow and Ankara have taken two different positions regarding the events in Syria, which would be examined at the end of the chapter.

#### **2.1.3.2.3. Case 3: Iran's Nuclear Program**

Turkish and Russian foreign policies converged also on their policies on Iran in the 2000s. In the 1980s and 1990s, Turkish-Iranian relations had been tensed actually. There are several reasons for this. First, Iran supported the PKK in that period. Moreover, after the Iranian revolution in 1979, Iran tried to export its new

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<sup>193</sup> Nikolay Kozhanov, "Russian Support for Assad's Regime: Is There a Red Line?", **The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs**, Volume:48, Issue:2, 2013, pp.25-26.

<sup>194</sup> Hill and Taşpınar, p.87.

Islamist regime to other countries in its neighboring regions. Furthermore, there were allegations which claim that Iran was the power behind the political assassinations in Turkey. Finally, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, both countries competed to have an influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia in the early 1990s. So, although economic relations between the two countries made progress in the 1980s and 1990s, the political tension continued to exist.<sup>195</sup>

However, this negative atmosphere changed in the 2000s and the bilateral relations have improved significantly. There are several reasons for it. First, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has focused not only on relations with Western countries, but also with Eastern ones while criticizing the previous governments. One of the main aims of the government has been to increase Turkey's influence in its neighboring regions. Besides, the degree of the economic and energy relations between Turkey and Iran has increased dramatically. Furthermore, the two countries began to cooperate against terrorism by fighting against the PKK and the PJAK (The Party of Free Life of Kurdistan), which is considered as the Iranian branch of the PKK. Iran also supported improvement of relations due to both security and economic concerns.<sup>196</sup> In addition, like Syria, Iran concerned that it could be the next target of the US, thus it wanted to use Turkey to gain time and involve in the international system.<sup>197</sup>

On the other hand, the US wanted to isolate Iran from the international system and Turkey's rapprochement with Iran is contrary to its policies. The relations between the US and Iran has been tensed since the Iranian revolution in 1979. Particularly, the nuclear crisis is the main point of their conflictual relations. Hence, this issue should be explained in more detail in order to understand the main conflictual point better.

During the Cold War, the US was supporting its allies technologically and in that context helped Iran to establish a small scale research reactor. In 1957, the cooperation for the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with the USA President Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace program gained importance and in

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<sup>195</sup> Nilüfer Karacasulu and İrem Aşkar Karakır, "Iran-Turkey Relations in the 2000s: Pragmatic Rapprochement", **Ege Academic Review**, Volume:11, Issue:1, 2011, p.112.

<sup>196</sup> Karacasulu and Karakır, pp.113, 117.

<sup>197</sup> Gencer Özcan, "Turkey: a New Power in the Mediterranean Policy of Zero Problems with the Neighbours", **MED**, 2012, p.61.



1967 the Tehran Nuclear Research Center was established. Then, Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 and ratified it in the assembly in 1970.<sup>198</sup>

As a result of this, Iran had the right to run its nuclear activities, make researches and obtain the required tools for peaceful purposes in accordance with the NPT Article IV.<sup>199</sup> In 1974, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran was established and Iran began to make various treaties regarding this issue with several other countries. After the Islamist Revolution, Iran stopped its nuclear program. Yet, the Iranian leaders perceived the importance of the technology during the Iran-Iraq War and the program was started in 1985. Iran initially approached to China but when China stepped back due to the US pressure, contacts with Russia were initiated.<sup>200</sup>

Although Russia ceased to sell military equipment to Iran in 1995 due to the US pressure<sup>201</sup> on itself<sup>202</sup>, this attitude has changed in the 2000s and arms sales to Iran began in 2001.<sup>203</sup> However, more than the trade in military field, Russia has attached great importance to the cooperation particularly in nuclear energy projects. Many Russian companies have taken active role in investments in Iranian nuclear energy sector and obtained significant economic gains.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, many Russians have taken the opportunity to work in the projects and had an income. Furthermore, Russia's cooperation with Iran prevented Iran from supporting Islamist groups in

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<sup>198</sup> Mustafa Yetim and Rıdvan Kalaycı, "Türkiye İran İlişkileri: "Sıfır Sorun mu", Nükleer Sorun mu?", **Orta Doğu**, Volume:5, Issue:2, 2011, pp.97-98.

<sup>199</sup> The UN, "Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", <http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NPTtext.shtml> (06.02.2014).

<sup>200</sup> Yetim and Kalaycı, pp.98-99.

<sup>201</sup> Ali A. Jalali, "The Strategic Partnership of Russia and Iran – International Relations", **Parameters**, Volume:31, Issue:4, 2001, pp.98-111, cited in Zehra Nilüfer Karacasulu and İrem Aşkar Karakır, "Attitudes of the International Community toward Iran's Nuclear Puzzle", **Journal of International and Area Studies**, Volume:15, Issue:2, 2008, p.7.

<sup>202</sup> "... in the late 1990s several Russian companies and institutions, suspected of exporting missile components to Iran, were subject to sanctions. The US administration, while trying to discourage Moscow from cooperating with Iran, linked the issue with the prospect of expanding Russian-American contacts in high-tech industries and also with Russia's accession to international organizations ..." (Elena Dunaeva, "Russo-Iranian Political Relations in the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century", **Iranian Studies**, Volume:46, Issue:3, 2013, p.461.

<sup>203</sup> Karacasulu and Karakır, "Attitudes of the International Community toward Iran's Nuclear Puzzle", p.7.

<sup>204</sup> Ray Takeyh, "Iran's Nuclear Calculations", **World Policy Journal**, Volume:20, Issue:2, p.26, cited in Karacasulu and Karakır, "Attitudes of the International Community toward Iran's Nuclear Puzzle", p.8.

Russia. Finally, Iran was moderating the attitude of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) towards Russia.<sup>205</sup>

The Iranian nuclear crisis began in August 2002 when it was revealed that Iran had made some nuclear activities without the knowledge of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).<sup>206</sup> These two nuclear sites were the uranium enrichment facility in Natanz and the heavy water facility in Arak.<sup>207</sup>

Then, the IAEA examined these nuclear facilities. In September 2003, the agency wanted Iran to stop its uranium enrichment activities and sign the Additional Protocol of the NPT. Although Iran signed the protocol, it was not presented to the Iranian assembly. In November 2004, Iran made the Paris Treaty with the EU-3 countries, which are the UK, France and Germany, and stopped its uranium enrichment activities temporarily in exchange for various economic commitments.<sup>208</sup> It should be noted that even though Russia disappointed with Iran's nuclear activities revealed in 2002, it continued to support Iran's right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and exerted great effort in the negotiations.<sup>209</sup>

During this period, Turkey mainly had a passive stance and although the government stated that Turkey did not want the militarization of Iranian nuclear program, it also pointed out Iran's right to use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. There are several factors for this approach.<sup>210</sup>

First, Turkey's consumption of the natural gas has been increasing and it gets 20% of its energy needs from Iran. So, Turkey did not want to involve in any action that could harm the stability in Iran which would lead to a reduction in energy supply. In addition, such a situation would increase Turkey's dependence on Russia. Second, Turkey and Iran began to cooperate against the PKK and PJAK in the 2000s. Moreover, a prospective American intervention in Iran could bring about a political movement among the Kurds in Iran that could later affect the Kurds in Turkey. Third, the relations between Iran and Turkey have been developing in the 2000s as

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<sup>205</sup> Vladimir A. Orlov and Alexander Vinikov, "The great guessing game: Russia and the Iranian nuclear issue", **The Washington Quarterly**, Volume: 28, Issue:2, 2005, p.57.

<sup>206</sup> Yeşilyurt, p.457.

<sup>207</sup> Yetim and Kalaycı, p.100.

<sup>208</sup> Yeşilyurt, p.457.

<sup>209</sup> Dunaeva, p.461.

<sup>210</sup> Aylin G. Gürzel and Eyüp Ersoy, "Turkey and Iran's Nuclear Program", **Middle East Policy**, Volume:19, Issue:1, 2012, p.39.

stated before.<sup>211</sup> In addition to that, the US intervention in Iraq caused a concern in Iran that they could be the next target. Thus, Iran was trying to improve relations with Turkey to reduce the pressure on itself.<sup>212</sup> Consequently, the good relations had positive impacts on economic relations. On the other hand, the economic embargo and sanctions would harm Turkey's role in the Iranian market and a possible war would cause reduction in the number of tourists coming to Turkey because of the geographical proximity.<sup>213</sup> Fourth, the influence of religion among Turkish people has been increasing and it can be said that the religious aspect of the AKP government also contributed to this positive relations, and aiming to become the 'big brother' of the Muslim world seems to be one of the factors.<sup>214</sup>

Yet, this does not mean that Turkey did nothing but remained passive. After the detection of the facilities in Natanz and Arak, the US started to focus on this issue more closely and wanted Turkey's cooperation. As Turkey was trying to fix its relations with the US that had been deteriorated due to the Iraq War, it made some steps. Some officials from the government and military expressed their worries regarding the Iranian nuclear program and this concern took place in the National Security Policy Document of 2005. Yet, Turkey avoided choosing a particular side.<sup>215</sup>

After the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as the new president, Iran restarted its uranium enrichment activities. Hence, the IAEA addressed the issue to the UNSC in February 2006 and since then the negotiations have conducted by the P5 + 1, the five permanent members of the UNSC and Germany. The P5 + 1 have used the carrot and stick method. Accordingly, if Iran stops its nuclear activities, encouraging measures will take place and if it does not do that, then series of sanctions will be imposed on the country. Since Iran did not implement the demands of the IAEA, some increasingly weighted economic sanctions began to be imposed on Iran in accordance with the UNSC resolutions.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Yeşilyurt, p.455.

<sup>212</sup> Özcan, p.61.

<sup>213</sup> Yeşilyurt, p.456.

<sup>214</sup> Gürzel and Ersoy, p.39.

<sup>215</sup> Gürzel and Ersoy, p.39.

<sup>216</sup> Yeşilyurt, p.457.

As there have been speculations that the US and Israel could attack on Iran, Russia increased its efforts for a diplomatic solution between 2003 and 2006. While striving to convince the Western countries that the issue can be resolved by peaceful measures and military force would not be required, it also put forward new solutions to Iran, like enriching the uranium in Russian territory. When Iran did not show any positive sign for accepting such ideas, then Russia began to vote at least for the imposition of economic sanctions on Iran in the UNSC.<sup>217</sup> As mentioned before, Iran was also trying to develop good relations with Turkey in order to decrease the pressure on it. Thus, Turkey started to be more active by hosting the negotiations. This attitude was welcomed by all parties and the European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and Iranian National Security Adviser Ali Larijani met in Ankara in April 2007.<sup>218</sup>

After his visit to the US in 2008, the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan stated that Turkey could serve as a mediator between the US and Iran. The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the director general of the IAEA Mohamed ElBaradei expressed their support for Turkey's offer.<sup>219</sup> Meanwhile, the Obama administration started the "engagement policy" that based on the diplomatic solution of this issue.<sup>220</sup> After these developments, the Turkish officials made contacts with their Iranian counterparts to convince Iran to return to the negotiation table.<sup>221</sup>

So, the negotiations gained pace in September 2009. However, a new nuclear facility which is close to the city of Kum was revealed in the same month and the tension increased. Nonetheless in October 2009, P5 + 1 and Iran made an agreement on the supervision of nuclear facility in the city of Kum by the IAEA and return of the low-enriched uranium which was processed in Iran and later reprocessed in France and Russia. In February 2010, Iran stressed that it achieved in enriching uranium about 20%, so it did not need uranium-enrichment from abroad.

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<sup>217</sup> Dunaeva, p.462.

<sup>218</sup> Yeşilyurt, p.457.

<sup>219</sup> Gürzel and Ersoy, p.40.

<sup>220</sup> Nihat Ali Özcan and Özgür Özdamar, "Uneasy Neighbors: Turkish-Iranian Relations since the 1979 Islamic Revolution", **Middle East Policy**, Volume:17, Issue:3, 2010, p.114.

<sup>221</sup> Gürzel and Ersoy, p.40.

Consequently, the tension in international arena increased once again. Therefore, the UNSC began to work on a new sanction on Iran.<sup>222</sup>

At this point, Turkey, Brazil and Iran made an agreement in which "... Iran agreed to store 1200 kg of LEU in Turkey in exchange for 120 kg of fuel for its Tehran Research Reactor, supplied by the so-called "Vienna Group" (France, Russia and the US)".<sup>223</sup> After that, Iran informed the IAEA about its "commitment to fuel exchange". Yet, the UNSC stated that the agreement did not resolve the key concerns regarding Iran's activities. If we look at the countries' views separately, we see that China actually evaluated the agreement in an optimistic way at first. Russia pointed out that the agreement was irrelevant with the sanctions. France also emphasized that the agreement was not resolving basic problems and the US perceived this action as a tactical move and believed that Iran was only trying to gain more time.<sup>224</sup>

In the end, this offer was rejected in the UNSC and the imposition of the new sanctions was determined as a result of the voting on 9 June 2010 although Turkey and Brazil voted against the sanctions.<sup>225</sup> The resolution (Resolution 1929) involves an arms embargo, prohibition of Iran to make any activity related to ballistic missiles, legalizing the inspection process in examination of the violations and the extension of asset freeze to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines. Turkey stated that if they did not vote against the imposition of sanctions, the country would lose its credibility. The Turkish government also complained about the double standard of the West. According to them, these major powers did not make enough efforts to hinder Israel's possession of the nuclear weapons. Many Turks believed that the Western countries were trying to maintain their monopoly on the nuclear power.<sup>226</sup> Turkey's vote in the UNSC meeting (and also its bad relations with Israel) caused a debate in the West about the 'shift of axis'. However, Turkey's policies regarding this issue were not based on identity, but on more realistic concerns like Turkey's energy dependency, the cooperation in the fight against the PKK and PJAK and the good economic relations.

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<sup>222</sup> Yeşilyurt, p.457.

<sup>223</sup> Thomas Lorenz and Joanna Kidd, "Turkey and Multilateral Nuclear Approaches in the Middle East", **The Nonproliferation Review**, Volume:17, Issue:3, 2010, p.525.

<sup>224</sup> Diego Santos Vieira de Jesus, "Building Trust and Flexibility: A Brazilian View of the Fuel Swap with Iran", **The Washington Quarterly**, Volume:34, Issue:2, 2011, p.62.

<sup>225</sup> Yeşilyurt, p.457.

<sup>226</sup> Gürzel and Ersoy, p.41.

In April 2011, Turkey again tried to start a new multilateral negotiation process. The EU High Representative of Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton declared the new plan of the P5 + 1 which aims to increase the transparency of the Iranian nuclear program and include a new version of the uranium fuel-exchange agreement. Yet, the Iranian officials put forward two conditions as an answer. Accordingly, the UNSC would remove the sanctions and recognize the right of Iran to produce the LEU in its own country in accordance with the NPT Article IV. However, the UNSC was not trusting Iranian officials' words anymore. The meeting was ended without any conclusion.<sup>227</sup> The IAEA published a report on 8 November 2011 which claims that Iran was trying to develop a nuclear weapon. Thus, the USA, the EU and Canada increased the degree of the sanctions.<sup>228</sup> Russia, on the other hand, was following a middle way. While Russia "... was bargaining hard with the United States and the EU, seeking to exclude the "crippling sanctions" in order to lessen the effect on ordinary Iranians and complete the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant", it also pointed out that it would not support Iranian cause if it is against Russian interests in other issues.<sup>229</sup>

In short, Turkey has not been on the same side with the US in the Iranian nuclear issue. Contrary to the US pressure, Turkey mostly avoided choosing a side in this issue and exerted great effort to find a diplomatic solution. Turkey's energy needs, economic relations with Iran, cooperation with Iran against terrorism and the concern that a prospective US intervention in Iran would destabilize the Middle East region and cause security problems for Turkey are the motives of Turkey's diplomatic efforts.

The economy is not the main factor in Russian-Iranian relations. Although the bilateral trade has tripled in the last decade, the volume would not seem to grow dramatically since the two economies are not complementary. The main motive of their cooperation seems to be their negative attitudes towards the US. In addition to this, both countries perceive Sunni extremism in the Caucasus as a threat and have an interest in higher energy prices. Due to these reasons, although there have been

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<sup>227</sup> Gürzel and Ersoy, p.42.

<sup>228</sup> Yeşilyurt, p.457.

<sup>229</sup> Dunaeva, p.466.

exceptions, Russia has usually used its veto power in the UNSC in favor of Iran.<sup>230</sup> Besides, a US intervention in Iran would mean containing Russia in the south.

In June 2013, Hassan Rouhani was elected as the new president of Iran. He espoused a moderate approach in his presidential campaign and after coming into office, optimistic views for further negotiations between Iran and P5 + 1 emerged once again. The international community also wanted to take this opportunity and the negotiations began. In September 2014, a six-month interim deal was made between the two sides. Accordingly, the sides would work for permanent agreement in this period. To sum up the main points of the agreement, it can be stated that Iran would not enrich more than 5% of uranium and neutralize the quantity that exceed this level. In addition, Iran would also grant better access to the inspectors in its facilities. On the other hand, there will be no further sanctions as long as Iran complies with the agreement and Iran will get sanctions relief around 7 billion dollars.<sup>231</sup> Turkey's different position from Iran in the Syrian issue and its tensed relations with Iraqi central government, which have positive relations with Iran, caused Turkey's exclusion from the negotiation process. Moreover, Turkey's vote against the sanctions in the UNSC in 2010 damaged Turkey's credibility in the eyes of the West regarding this issue.<sup>232</sup> On the other hand, the agreement is also on behalf of Turkey, because it will prevent the US or Israel from making a military intervention in Iran which would cause a chaos in Turkey's neighboring regions. Similarly, Russia was content with the agreement and Lavrov mentioned how all sides win with this agreement.<sup>233</sup> As of May 2014, the negotiations for permanent deals continue, but "... progress was slow and difficult, with serious gaps between the two sides on basic issues like the size of any nuclear enrichment capability Iran would be permitted to retain."<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Bülent Alirıza, Jon B. Alterman and Andrew C. Kuchins, "The Turkey, Russia, Iran Nexus", **Center for Strategic&International Studies**, 2013, pp. 19, 24.

<sup>231</sup> BBC News, "Iran agrees to curb nuclear activity at Geneva talks", 24.11.2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25074729>, (05.06.2014).

<sup>232</sup> Emre Çalışkan, "Türkiye, İran anlaşmasının neredesinde?", **BBC Türkçe**, 26.11.2013, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2013/11/131126\\_iran\\_turkiye.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2013/11/131126_iran_turkiye.shtml), (05.06.2014).

<sup>233</sup> Tolga Tanış and Uğur Ergun, "Türkiye de karlı çıkacak", **Hürriyet**, 25.11.2013, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/avrupa/25201651.asp>, (05.06.2014).

<sup>234</sup> Steven Erlanger, "Nuclear Talks With Iran Fail to Yield Pact, Officials Say", **The New York Times**, 16.05.2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/17/world/middleeast/iran-nuclear-talks.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/17/world/middleeast/iran-nuclear-talks.html?_r=0), (05.06.2014).

#### 2.1.4. Improvement of Economic and Energy Relations

The booming trade volume between Turkey and Russia in the 2000s is also one of the most important factors that led to cooperation between the two countries. It can be said that the bilateral economic relations has been the main motive for Turkey and Russia to develop close relations even they have taken different positions in some issues.

Yet, it would be wrong to stress that the economic relations were established after the end of the Cold War. Turkey received financial aid and technical assistance from the Soviet Union even during the Cold War.<sup>235</sup> The two countries increased the volume of trade in the 1990s after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and this is one of the reasons for political rapprochement between two sides. In the 1990s, both countries faced with serious economic crisis and therefore, they needed each other, considering commercial links. The parliaments also enacted law on behalf of the progress in bilateral trade.

However, both countries' economies have developed significantly in the 2000s. In Russia, the Putin administration made realistic macro-economic plans and tightened fiscal policies. Furthermore, the rise in oil and natural gas prices has also helped Russian economy. In Turkey, the AKP governments have followed the economy policies made by the previous government and IMF, and supported liberal economic policies. In addition, political stability also contributed economic growth in Turkey.<sup>236</sup> The economic crisis that the two countries were facing with at the end of the 1990s also softened their approaches towards each other and led them to realize the benefits of closer economic cooperation.<sup>237</sup> Its reflections on the change in the volume of trade between the two countries can be seen in the graphic below.

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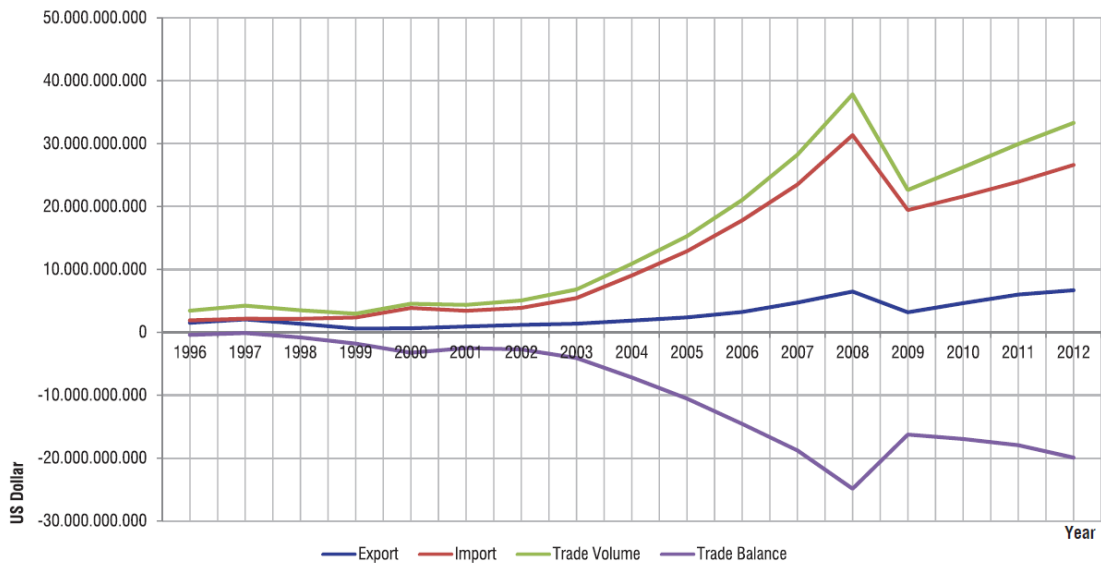
<sup>235</sup> Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "Peaceful Coexistence: Turkey and the near East in Soviet Foreign Policy", **Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science**, Volume:481, 1985, p.121.

<sup>236</sup> Kara, p.127.

<sup>237</sup> Richard Weitz, "Russian-Turkish Relations: Steadfast and Changing", **Mediterranean Quarterly**, Volume:21, Issue:3, 2010, p.62.



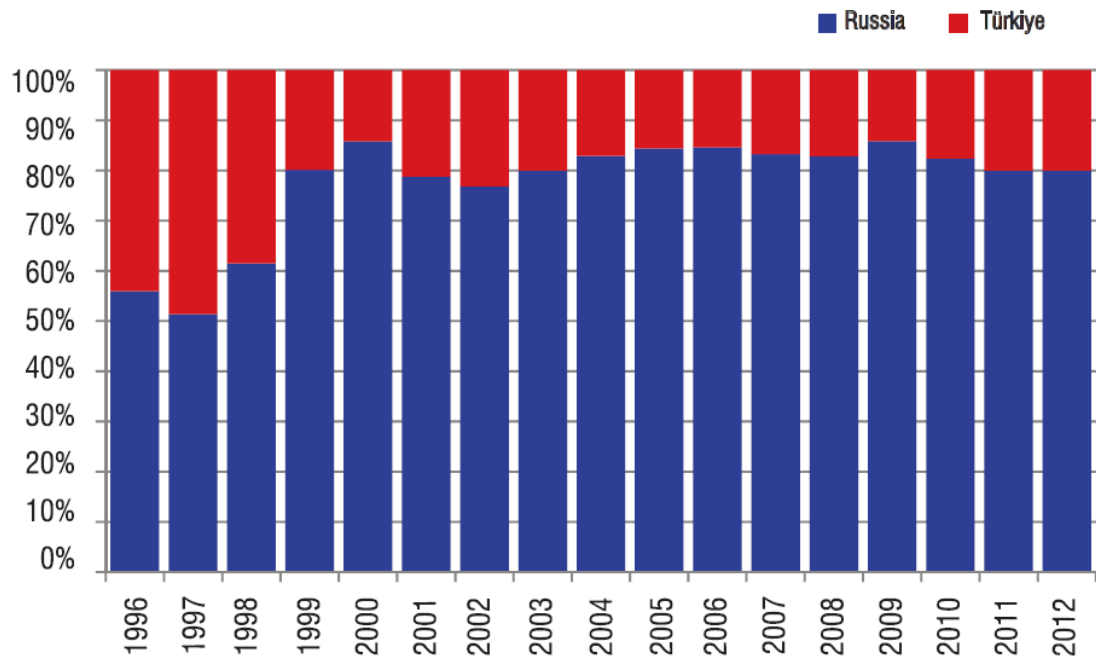
**Figure 1: Turkey-Russia Trade Volume (1996-2012)**



Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, cited in Özdal and the others, p.37.

Yet, another fact is also seen in the graphic, which is the growing trade deficit against Turkey. An additional graphic can elaborate it better by revealing the share of the two countries in the total trade.

**Figure 2: Share in Trade Volume between Russia and Turkey (1996-2012)**



Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, cited in Özdal and the others, p.38.

There are several reasons. First, the Blue Stream Pipeline began to operate in 2005 and consequently Turkey's natural gas imports have increased. Second, the

prices of the natural gas and oil have risen since 2002 and this caused Turkey to pay more to meet its energy needs apart from the quantity. Third, since Russian economy has transformed into a free market system, the number of Turkey's competitors increased and this led to reduction in Turkey's share in Russian market.<sup>238</sup> Furthermore, Russia did not approach positively towards Turkey's proposition for offset and re-exportation of unused natural gas to other countries in order to close the deficit.<sup>239</sup> The good news is Turkey's share in bilateral trade has increased since 2009. The bilateral trade should spread into other sectors both for the sustainability of economic relations and balance. In addition to sectorial diversity, the geographical proximity can help the achievement of 100 billion dollars of trade volume target<sup>240</sup> which was stated by the political leaders.<sup>241</sup> Another important development has been the legal amendment in March 2009 which paved the way for making bilateral trade through ruble and lira. This contributed positively to the volume of trade. At the end of 2011, the volume of trade made by local currencies exceeded 1 billion dollars.<sup>242</sup>

Tourism has become one of the most important sectors in the relations. The people from both countries who have diplomatic passports have already been exempted from visa requirement for their 90 days visits since 1999. A new agreement was signed on 12 May 2010, which granted the Turkish and Russian people, who have service, private and ordinary passports, the visa exemption in conformity with the certain criteria.<sup>243</sup> The agreement came into force in 2011. The number of tourists coming to Turkey from Russia has been increasing and 3.6 million Russian tourists visited Turkey in 2012 and contributed to the Turkish economy around 3 billion dollars.<sup>244</sup> Turkey became the most visited country by Russians for touristic purposes.<sup>245</sup> In the years between 2003 and 2012, the share of Russian tourists visiting Turkey had increased from 9.13% to 11.33%.<sup>246</sup> In 2012, Russians are the second after Germans in the number of people visiting Turkey. This

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<sup>238</sup> Özdal and the others, p.37

<sup>239</sup> Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", p.544.

<sup>240</sup> Özdal and the others, p.41.

<sup>241</sup> Ümit Çetin, "Rusya ile ticaret hacmi hedefi 100 milyar \$", **Hürriyet**, (25.11.2013), <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/25186068.asp>, (17.02.2014).

<sup>242</sup> Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", p.543.

<sup>243</sup> Özdal and the others, p.73.

<sup>244</sup> TÜİK, "Turizm İstatistikleri Revize Sonuçları, 2001-2012", **Haber Bülteni**, 14.02.2013, <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=15845>, (17.02.2014).

<sup>245</sup> Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", p.544.

<sup>246</sup> Özdal and the others, p.56.

also helps Turkey to finance its trade deficit in bilateral trade. In 2013, the number of Russian tourists coming to Turkey increased to 4,269,306.<sup>247</sup>

**Table 2:** The Numbers of Incoming Visitors to Turkey from Russia by Year

Year	Total Number of Incoming Visitors to Turkey	Incoming Visitors from Russia	Percentage of Russians
2003	14.029.558	1.281.407	9.13
2004	17.516.908	1.605.006	9.16
2005	21.124.886	1.864.682	8.83
2006	19.819.833	1.853.442	9.35
2007	23.340.911	2.465.336	10.6
2008	26.336.677	2.879.278	10.9
2009	27.077.114	2.694.733	9.95
2010	28.632.204	3.107.043	10.85
2011	31.456.076	3.468.214	11.03
2012	31.782.832	3.599.925	11.33

Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, cited in Özdal and others, p.56.

On the other hand, the reason for Turkish people's visit is mostly related with business rather than touristic. In 2012, the number of Turkish people visiting Russia for touristic purpose was 100.918 out of 305.429. The abolishment of visa requirement is estimated to increase the number of touristic visits. Yet, although the number of Turkish people visiting Russia has increased, it has not been at a significant degree. At this point, it is important to note that Russia is not perceived as a touristic destination not only for Turks but also for others in the world.<sup>248</sup>

<sup>247</sup> CNN Türk, "Geçen yıl en çok turist Almanya ve Rusya'dan", 03.02.2014, <http://www.cnntrk.com/haber/ekonomi/genel/gecen-yil-en-cok-turist-almanya-ve-rusyadan>, (05.06.2014).

<sup>248</sup> Özdal and the others, p.58.

**Table 3:** The Numbers of Incoming Visitors to Russia from Turkey by Year

Year	Total Number of Incoming Visitors to Russia	Incoming Visitors from Turkey	Percentage of Turks
2003	22.514.000	139.745	0.6
2004	22.051.000	178.343	0.8
2005	22.176.000	198.151	0.9
2006	22.452.000	213.306	0.95
2007	22.908.625	237.116	1.0
2008	23.676.140	239.095	1.0
2009	21.338.650	177.332	0.8
2010	22.281.217	196.704	0.9
2011	24.932.061	249.109	1.0
2012	28.176.502	305.429	1.1

Source: Federal Agency for Tourism of Ministry for Culture of the Russian Federation, cited in Özdal and others, p.58.

Turkish construction companies have been very active abroad and Russia is one of the best markets for them. Moreover, Putin stated that the volume of Turkish construction companies' investments in Russia has exceeded 50 billion dollars since 1990s and he also praised their quality of work.<sup>249</sup>

Apart from the construction sector, the investments of Turkish companies in Russia have reached 7-8 billion dollars.<sup>250</sup> The durable household goods have an important share in this and BEKO and Vestel have totally 10% market share in Russia. Chemistry, textile, beverage and banking sectors are some others that Turkish companies have investments. Especially in banking sector, there are seven operational Turkish banks in Russia: Denizbank, Credit Europe Bank, Ziraat Bankası, ProCommerce Bank and Türkiye İş Bankası (CJSC Sofia Bank).<sup>251</sup> On the other hand, Russian companies began to invest in Turkey's telecommunication, energy and banking sectors.

<sup>249</sup> Ntvmsnbc, "Putin: Öncelikli partnerimiz Türkiye", 07.02.2014, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25497355/>, (05.06.2014).

<sup>250</sup> Faruk Akkan and Yaşar Niyazbayev, "Rus ve Türk şirketlerin yatırımları iki ülke siyasi ilişkilerinin sigortası", **Haberrus**, 14.05.2012, <http://haberrus.com/economics/2012/05/14/rus-ve-turk-sirketlerinin-karsilikli-yatirimlari-iki-ulke-siyasi-iliskilerin-sigortasi-ozel.html>, (17.02.2014).

<sup>251</sup> Özdal and the others, p.42.

However, energy constitutes the most important part of the bilateral trade between the two countries. Turkey does not have enough oil and natural gas reserves for its needs and Russia has the biggest natural gas reserves and ninth oil reserves, though it came after Saudi Arabia in oil production. These factors and the geographical proximity between Turkey and Russia have led them to cooperate in energy field.<sup>252</sup> Turkey came after Germany for Russia in exporting natural gas and the quantity corresponds to 59.8% of the natural gas that Turkey used in 2012. Iran, Azerbaijan, Algeria and Nigeria are Turkey's other partners respectively.<sup>253</sup>

As stated in the first chapter, there had been a rivalry between Turkey and Russia for transporting the Caspian oil to Europe. While Turkey was supporting the BTC pipeline, Russia insisted on the Baku-Novorossiysk line. This rivalry was one of the issues that deteriorated the bilateral relations. Thus, the Blue Stream Pipeline has carried much significance in developing energy relations between the two countries. The pipeline was constructed to convey natural gas from Russia to Turkey under the Black Sea without any transit countries. Its construction started with the agreement signed in 1997 and officially became operated in 2005. In accordance with the agreement, Turkey will buy 16 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Russia for 25 years.<sup>254</sup>

For several decades, Turkey has wanted to become an energy corridor which conveys oil and natural gas reserves in the Middle East and Caspian Basin to Europe. In the 2000s, Turkish authorities indicated their desire to make Turkey a regional energy hub and therefore, have been trying to get as much as energy to the country. The main motive is to re-export the natural gas and oil to Europe by making profit. However, some scholars like Mustafa Aydın, points out the problems of this ambition by putting forward several reasons. First the re-exportation of energy is not possible in the tradition of world energy agreements. Second, Turkey does not have enough oil and natural gas storage facilities. Third, the authorities are overlooking political problems hindering such aims.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Özdal and the others, p.47.

<sup>253</sup> Özdal and the others, p.48.

<sup>254</sup> Çelikkpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", p.535.

<sup>255</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, pp.466-467.

Another important development was Turkey's permission to Russia for making seismic researches in Turkey's exclusive economic zone in order to construct South Stream Pipeline, which is considered as the rival of Nabucco. The South Stream Pipeline would enable Russia to convey its natural gas to Europe through the Black Sea by bypassing Ukraine. The cost of the pipeline would be considered around 20-25 billion euro. In return for permission, Turkey got discount for the natural gas bought from Russia. Besides, Turkey could take the residuary natural gas from Russia in the West line, which was not used in the previous years.<sup>256</sup> The financial problems in the Nabucco Project and Turkey's stagnated EU membership process were other factors led Turkey's permission to the South Stream Project.<sup>257</sup> Turkey also wants to reduce the natural gas imports from Russia at the level of 50% by 2015.<sup>258</sup>

Since the beginning of energy relationship, Turkey has become a reliable receiver for Russia while Russia becoming a reliable supplier for Turkey. When Iran and Azerbaijan had problems to provide Turkey with natural gas in the past, Russia increased its supplies to close the shortage.<sup>259</sup> In addition, the recent rumors suggest that Turkey would make Russia an offer for the construction of the South Stream pipelines under the Turkish territory rather than under the Black Sea. By this way, the cost of the project would be decreased by 7 billion dollars. Besides, Russia could sell additional natural gas to Turkey and the risks and costs of maritime management would be avoided.<sup>260</sup>

Oil is one other energy resource that takes place in the relations. Russia is Turkey's fourth biggest oil supplier (11%) in 2012 by coming after Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.<sup>261</sup> Since Turkey wants a bigger role for Ceyhan terminal by making it the last station for carrying Central Asian, Iraqi, Russian and Caspian oil to the international markets, it made Russia an offer for the construction of a Samsun-Ceyhan Line in order to carry Russian oil to the Mediterranean Sea. Yet, the project

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<sup>256</sup> Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", pp.547-549.

<sup>257</sup> Kahveci, p.276.

<sup>258</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, "Enerji ve Tabii Kaynaklar Bakanı Taner Yıldız'ın 2013 Yılı Bütçe Sunumu", 15.12.2012, [http://www.enerji.gov.tr/yayinlar\\_raporlar/2013\\_Genel\\_Kurul\\_Konusmasi.pdf](http://www.enerji.gov.tr/yayinlar_raporlar/2013_Genel_Kurul_Konusmasi.pdf), (19.02.2014), p.41.

<sup>259</sup> Özdal and the others, p.50.

<sup>260</sup> Olcay Aydılek, "7 milyar dolarlık Türk formülü", **Hürriyet**, 15.04.2014, <http://ekonomi.haberturk.com/enerji/haber/939074-7-milyar-dolarlik-turk-formulu>, (05.06.2014).

<sup>261</sup> Özdal and the others, p.50.

did not call enough attention from Russia for economic reasons.<sup>262</sup> The Russian Minister of Energy Alexander Novak pointed out the disagreement in passage fee. Novak also stressed that carrying oil from the Straits (56 dollars per ton) would be much cheaper than carrying it from the Samsun-Ceyhan Pipeline (estimated as 76 dollars per ton).<sup>263</sup>

The third energy resource that Turkey and Russia cooperate with is nuclear energy. It should be noted that one of the Russian foreign policy aims is to commercialize its nuclear technology. On the other hand, Turkey wanted to have a nuclear power plant for its energy needs. The tender for the construction of a nuclear power plant in Turkey was initiated in September 2008 and Russia was the only country that made an offer in this regard. However, the tender was gotten into court due to some of its articles related to “space assignment” and “procedures and principles to determine active electric energy unit sales price”. Then, the institution responsible for, Türkiye Elektrik Ticaret ve Taahhüt A.Ş., cancelled the tender in order not to prolong the process. Therefore, the two states made a governmental agreement to avoid from the judicial process in 2010.<sup>264</sup>

A nuclear power plant will be constructed in Mersin-Akkuyu in accordance with the agreement. The plant would be composed of four reactors which have 4800 MW capacity in total<sup>265</sup> and the project would be coordinated by Turkish Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources and Russian state company Rosatom. Russia would be responsible for the management of nuclear waste, dismantle of nuclear power plant and education of the Turkish personnel that will be working in the plant. In return, Turkey would buy electricity from the plant for 15 years by \$ 12.35 cent/KWh.<sup>266</sup> If everything goes in accordance with the plan, the project will be completely finished in 2023.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Çelikpala, “Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler”, p.549.

<sup>263</sup> Nerdun Hacıoğlu, “Samsun-Ceyhan 22 dolara takılmış”, **Hürriyet**, 2.12.2012, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/22057646.asp>, (19.02.2014).

<sup>264</sup> Çelikpala, “Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler”, p.550.

<sup>265</sup> Resmi Gazete, Sayı: 27648, 21.07.2010, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2010/07/2010210706.htm>, (19.02.2014).

<sup>266</sup> Resmi Gazete, Sayı: 27721, 6.10.2010, (<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2010/10/20101006-6.htm>), (19.02.2014).

<sup>267</sup> Habertürk, “Akkuyu Nükleer Santrali’nde son durum”, 10.02.2014, <http://ekonomi.haberturk.com/enerji/haber/920227-akkuyu-nukleer-santralinde-son-durum>, (05.06.2014).

On the other hand, there are many criticisms regarding the plant. They are summarized in five points by Mitat Çelikpala. The first one is related with law. The critics state that the agreement is against both domestic and international law. The second one is dependency on foreign countries. The third one is the doubts about the technology that is going to be used and security concerns. The fourth one related with economic burdens. Finally, the concerns about the protection of environment have been causing lots of criticisms.<sup>268</sup>

## **2.2. EVALUATION OF TURKISH-RUSSIAN RAPPROCHEMENT**

As mentioned in the first chapter, the bilateral relations were initiated and mutual visits occurred between the two sides in the 1990s. However, there was not any significant progress by the end of 1990s due to the problematic issues in that decade.

The factors that were explained previously and Ecevit's visit in 1999 changed the atmosphere positively. In 2001, the "Joint Action Plan for Cooperation in Eurasia: From Bilateral Cooperation Towards Multidimensional Partnership" was signed at the level of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The plan paved the way for cooperation in Eurasia. Accordingly, a committee would be founded, which would search for cooperation areas for the two countries in Eurasia for establishing peace in the region. By this way, bilateral economic relations would also be strengthened. In addition, the Action Plan comprised cooperation against terrorism. This was implying the mutual trust between Turkey and Russia.<sup>269</sup> The plan constituted the basis of cooperation in the following years in the fields of energy, trade, tourism and defense.<sup>270</sup>

In 2004, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül visited Russia and this was the first visit at the level of Minister of Foreign Affairs after eight years. Meanwhile, "2004-2005 Consultation Programs between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation", which made the bilateral relations more institutionalized, was signed. In

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<sup>268</sup> Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", pp.551-555.

<sup>269</sup> Çelikpala, "1990'lardan Günümüze Türk-Rus İlişkileri", pp.281-282.

<sup>270</sup> Kınıklıoğlu and Morkva, p.535.



December 2004, the Russian president Vladimir Putin visited Turkey. Such a Russian visit to Turkey at the presidential level was made in 1972 lastly. The visit also led to the emergence of “Joint Declaration on the Intensification of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership”.<sup>271</sup> In addition to that, six other agreements were made in economic and military fields.<sup>272</sup>

In the years between 2006 and 2009, various agreements which contributed to the institutionalization of the relations had been made. Moreover, the inauguration of the Blue Stream Pipeline in 2005 increased energy cooperation.<sup>273</sup> Besides, cooperation in the fields of culture, science and education also developed progressively. For example, in 2007, Russian Cultural Year was celebrated in Turkey and Turkish Cultural Year was celebrated in Russia in 2008.<sup>274</sup> In 2009, the Turkish President Gül visited Russia and a joint declaration was signed, which points out the new target of both sides as the development of relations to a higher level and the free flow of good, service and capital between the two countries. The legal amendment that would enable the use of ruble in bilateral trade was made in March 2009. Besides, both sides negotiated on the establishment of Turkish Cultural Center in Moscow and Russian Cultural Center in Turkey.

During Erdoğan’s visit to Russia in January 2010, it was declared that the two countries wanted to reach 100 billion dollars volume of bilateral trade in five years. Furthermore, the legal obstacles that hindered the use of national currencies in bilateral trade were abolished. In May 2010, then the Russian President Dimitri Medvedev made a visit and the “High Level Cooperation Council”, co-chaired by Erdoğan and Medvedev, was established in order to resolve the problematic issues more quickly. Under the council, various commissions were founded in different fields. As a result of this visit, the abolishment of touristic visas was decided and several agreements were made on transportation.<sup>275</sup> Consequently, it is important to note that the number of mutual visits in the 2000s have increased significantly and

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<sup>271</sup> MFA, “Turkey’s Political Relations with Russian Federation”, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-russian-federation.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-russian-federation.en.mfa), (01.03.2014).

<sup>272</sup> Çelikpala, “Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler”, p.538.

<sup>273</sup> Çelikpala, “Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler”, p.538.

<sup>274</sup> MFA, “Turkey’s Political Relations with Russian Federation”, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-russian-federation.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-russian-federation.en.mfa), (01.03.2014).

<sup>275</sup> Çelikpala, “Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler”, p.541.

contributed to the rapprochement between Turkey and Russia. The table at the below reveals this fact.

**Table 4:** High-Level Official Visits between Turkey and Russia (2000-2012)

	City	Date
Prime Minister Mikhail Khazyanov & Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit	Ankara	October 2000
Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov & President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit ve Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem	Ankara	June 2001
President Vladimir Putin & President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	Ankara	December 2004
Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan & President Vladimir Putin	Moscow	January 2005
Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan & President Vladimir Putin	Sochi	July 2005
President Ahmet Necdet Sezer & President Vladimir Putin	Moscow	June 2006
President Abdullah Gül & President Dmitri Medvedev	Moscow	February 2009
Prime Minister Vladimir Putin & Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	Ankara	August 2009
Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan & President Dmitri Medvedev	Moscow	January 2010
President Dmitri Medvedev & Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	Ankara	May 2010
Prime Minister Vladimir Putin & Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	İstanbul	June 2010
Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan & President Vladimir Putin	Moscow	March 2011
Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan & President Vladimir Putin	Moscow	June 2012
President Vladimir Putin & Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	Ankara	December 2012

Source: Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ankara, cited in Özdal and others, p.23.

There have been two new visits at this level. The first one was in November 2013, when Erdoğan visited Russia due to the fourth session of the High-Level Russian-Turkish Cooperation Council. In the visit, the leaders talked about the progress in bilateral trade and their diverging positions in the Syrian issue.<sup>276</sup> The second visit occurred in February 2014, when Erdoğan met Putin in Sochi for the opening ceremony of Sochi Winter Games. After the talks, Putin praised the constructions of the Turkish companies.<sup>277</sup>

The two countries also supported each other in international platforms. Turkey supported Russia's joining to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and having observer status at the OIC. In addition, the two played key role in instituting a Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group in 2006. Yet, Russia has not assisted Turkey at the same degree. Russian veto in the Cyprus issue could be given as an example.<sup>278</sup>

One another cooperation areas between Turkey and Russia is in the military field. Turkey is the first NATO country that made a defense cooperation agreement with Russia in 1994. The main reason for this action is the fact that Turkey was not getting enough military equipment from its Western allies in its fight against terrorism.<sup>279</sup> The cooperation in military field has continued to develop later. Yet, Turkey's NATO membership has been limited the degree of it.<sup>280</sup> The main cooperation in the military field occurred in the Black Sea, as stated before.

As mentioned at the end of the first chapter, Turkey and Russia started to have a mutual understanding of the advantages of cooperation. The disappearance of the perception of threat, need for increasing trade relations for economic gains and the resolution of several problems like Turkey's retreat from its ambitions in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the S-300 missile problem and Russia's acceptance of the establishment of BTC pipeline paved the way for the rapprochement at the end of the 1990s.

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<sup>276</sup> Hürriyet Daily News, "Turkish PM Erdoğan to Putin: Take us to Shanghai", 22.11.2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-erdogan-to-putin-take-us-to-shanghai.aspx?pageID=238&nID=58348&NewsCatID=359>, (06.06.2014).

<sup>277</sup> Hürriyet Daily News, "Turkey is our primary partner: Russia's Putin", 08.02.2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-is-our-primary-partner-russias-putin.aspx?pageID=238&nID=62196&NewsCatID=359>, (06.06.2014).

<sup>278</sup> Kınıklıoğlu and Morkva, p.537.

<sup>279</sup> Kınıklıoğlu and Morkva, p.537.

<sup>280</sup> Aras, p.7.

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, Turkey had problems with the West. The EU was not meeting Turkey's demands for membership and the US did not need Turkey as much as during the Cold War. Moreover, Turkey accepted the Russian hegemony in the Caucasus and Central Asia and Russia's increasing influence in its near abroad despite the US support for Turkey in these regions particularly in the first half of the 1990s. Therefore, the US began to accept that its buck-passing strategy did not work. This situation further led to a reduction in Turkey's importance in the eyes of the US. Finally, Turkey's problems with the US regarding the intelligence sharing against the PKK were also one other problematic issue.

Similarly, Russia did not want the NATO enlargement to the extent of its borders. The interventions in the Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo deteriorated the relations between the West and Russia. Moreover, the Eastern enlargement of the EU led to the repeal of several agreements between new EU members and Russia, which damaged Russia's economic interests. Finally, it should be noted that Russia does not want any other power to become influential in its near abroad. Overall, both Turkey's and Russia's problems with the West were one of the factors led to the rapprochement. In this regard, the situation has shown similarities with the one in the 1920s.

By the end of the 1990s, both countries had a mutual understanding that their cooperation rather than competition would lead to mutual gains. This understanding paved the way for the cessation of support for secessionist groups. Turkey did not want the radical Islamist groups helping Chechens to increase their influence in Turkish territories and realized the fact that Russia would use the PKK as a leverage regarding this issue. Ecevit's visit to Russia in 1999 was a milestone in this regard. After the visit, Turkey took a passive stance in the Second Chechen War and Russia has shown a more constructive attitude in the process of capturing Öcalan. Besides, both states gave the other the list of suspects that could have involved in illegal activities in secessionist organizations in their respective countries. In sum, it can be said that the security concerns of both countries paved the way for their cooperation.

The Black Sea region is one of the areas where Turkey and Russia had converging policies in the 2000s. The EU, particularly after Bulgaria and Romania's

membership, began to pay more attention to the region. The security of energy supplies and the stability and democratization process in the FSU countries have been main motives of the EU. The US, similarly, has increased its presence in the region after the September 11 attacks. The region's geographical proximity to the Middle East, arms smuggling related with the Middle East, containment of Russian influence, diversification of energy resources and having military bases in the region have appeared to be the focus points of the US.

Russia, on the other hand, wanted to preserve its influence in the region and therefore, involved in the domestic politics of Ukraine and Georgia. Russia has also been against these countries' membership to the EU and NATO. Turkey, which is another important actor in the region, does not want the balance of power in the region to be damaged, because such a situation would lead Russia to develop more aggressive policies, which would pose a threat against Turkey eventually. Therefore, although Turkey is a NATO member country, it did not want the NATO to increase its presence in the Black Sea contrary to the US policies, and supported regional initiatives like BLACKSEAFOR and Operation Black Sea Harmony. Russia's negative attitude and Turkey's cautious approach towards the color revolutions can also be mentioned in this regard. As stated, Russia did not want any other power to become influential in its near abroad and perceived the color revolutions as an attempt by the West for containment. It should be noted that Russia has evaluated these developments as a threat to its own security.

Turkey, on the other hand, considering the chaos in Iraq, has adopted a cautious attitude towards such movements aiming democratization. In addition, Turkey realized Russia's negative reaction and thus, was beware of endorsing the movements. In the end, it can be stated that Turkey and Russia did not perceive the situation in the Black Sea region as a zero-sum geopolitical rivalry and instead, focused on cooperation and dialogue.

In the Iraq War, Russia opposed the US intervention and Turkey did not support the US, except the permission for the use of Incirlik base. Both countries had mutual energy and commercial ties with Iraq. Turkey had serious concerns that the war could lead to the disintegration of Iraq and the emergence of a Kurdish state. On

the other hand, Russia has been against a unipolar world order and thus, used its veto power in the UNSC regarding the war.

After the intervention in Iraq, the US wanted the isolation of Syria from the international community. However, Turkey had developed good relations with Syria after the Adana Accords and the two countries began to cooperate against the PKK. Moreover, the level of bilateral trade and the number of touristic visits had been increased significantly. Russia had already good relations with Syria since the Soviet period and had a naval base in Tartus. Furthermore, there have been important military agreements between the two countries and Syria has been one of the few countries in the Middle East which is against the US. So, the economic and political gains played an important role for Turkey and Russia and they took opposite stance against the US policies on Syria. However, this situation was changed in 2011, but it will be explained in more detail at the end of the chapter.

The policies towards the Iranian nuclear issue were another converging point between Turkey and Russia. As stated before, the US had tensed relations with Iran since 1979 and it has serious concerns regarding the Iranian nuclear program. The concern was that Iran would strive to develop a nuclear weapon. A prospective military intervention in Iran has also seriously discussed in the 2000s. In this period, the US wanted Turkey to take a more aggressive and decisive stance against Iran's nuclear program. However, Turkey strived for using diplomatic methods for the resolution. It should be noted that Turkey had significant economic and energy relations with Iran and they fought against the PKK and PJAK in this period. Iran did not want to become the next US target and therefore, tried to develop good relations with Turkey. Turkey was also concerning about one more US intervention in its neighboring regions, considering the chaos in Iraq. Russia, on the other hand, had significant investments in Iranian nuclear energy sector. In addition, Russia and Iran have cooperated against Sunni extremists in the Caucasus. Moreover, Iran has been an important ally against the US. Hence, Russia also supported diplomatic methods and mostly, though not always, vetoed the sanctions against Iran in the UNSC.

However, it is important to note that bilateral economic and energy relations have been the main engine of the Turkish-Russian rapprochement. Vladimir Putin had a policy of cooperating with other countries and international organizations, as

long as it is in compliance with the Russian interests. Turkey is a good market for Russia in the field of energy, and increasing levels of bilateral trade would help Putin to consolidate its power within Russia. In addition to that, Russia wanted to export military equipment and vehicles to other countries, including Turkey, for economic gains.<sup>281</sup> Overall, the foreign policies of the two countries, which enabled increasing levels of cooperation, contributed to the rapprochement in the 2000s. As neo-realists point out that both countries cooperated with each other as it is compatible with their national interests.

Russia, with its historical legacy, wanted to maintain and consolidate its regional power status and thus, tried to act against the US policies as much as possible in its neighboring regions. Russia's increasing political and economic power also has directed Russia in this way. Turkey, on the other hand, thought that the US involvement in regional issues causes instability in the region, considering the consequences of the Iraqi intervention, which leads to security concerns and economic losses in Turkey. Moreover, another concern of the Turkish political elite was that the US involvement in regional issues at the expense of Russian interests could make Russians follow aggressive policies due to their security concerns. Eventually, more aggressive Russia would pose a threat for Turkey, which would cause security concerns for Turkey and lead to the emergence of security dilemma.

### **2.3. THE MAIN PROBLEMS IN TURKISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONS**

Despite the progressive improvement in the relations starting from the end of the 1990s, there are still some problematic issues. One of them is related with Cyprus. Russia has significant assets in offshore banks in Southern Cyprus.<sup>282</sup> This factor and Russia's good relations with Greece and the Greek Cypriots have led it to take an opposite stance against Turkey. Russia used its veto in the UNSC against the decision that would appease the security concerns of Greek Cypriots before the Annan referendum. Moreover, it voted against Annan's report after the referendum, which criticizes Greek Cypriots. This also prevented the UNSC from making a

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<sup>281</sup> Ertan Efeçil, "Türk-Rus İlişkileri: Bölgesel İşbirliği veya Stratejik Kazanç?", **21. Yüzyılda Türk Dış Politikası**, (Ed. İdris Bal), Lalezar Kitabevi, 2006, p.347.

<sup>282</sup> Winrow, "Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests", p.5.

decision which would call for the removal of embargo on Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Although Russia later softened its attitude towards Turkey in Cyprus issue, the recognition of Kosovo's independence by the Western countries made Russia to compare Kosovo's situation with the TRNC. The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov warned the Greek Cypriots about pursuing policies compatible with Russian position in Kosovo issue. When the search for natural gas in Eastern Mediterranean by the Greek Cypriots began, Russia supported it and called on Turkey to respect international law.<sup>283</sup>

Another problematic issue is Duma's decision in 2005 which claims that the Ottomans committed genocide against Armenians in 1915.<sup>284</sup> Although Turkey criticized Russia for the decision, it did not change anything. Moreover, even though there has been made important progress in fight against terrorism, it did not completely fell off the agenda. Russia put forward that some Chechen terrorists that have been killed were carrying Turkish passports. Turkey, on the other hand, has criticized Russia for not naming the PKK as a terrorist organization. Furthermore, several Chechen opposition leaders have been killed in Turkish territories and the Caucasus diaspora criticized Turkey for not reacting against the Russian government.<sup>285</sup>

The problems at customs also affected the bilateral relations negatively in the 2000s. In 2005, Russia prohibited the import of some goods from Turkey, like chicken meat productions, fruits, vegetables and flowers. In addition, a legal amendment was made in 2008, which requires physical controls apart from documentary control of the Turkish origin products. Naturally, this situation damaged Turkey's competitiveness in Russian market. Russia pointed out the standardization efforts and loss of tax income due to double billing as excuses. Turkey, on the other hand, stressed that Russia was not making the same sanction on Germany and China, which follow the same procedures.<sup>286</sup> The problem is expected

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<sup>283</sup> Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", pp.556-557.

<sup>284</sup> Winrow, "Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests", p.5.

<sup>285</sup> Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", pp.557-558.

<sup>286</sup> Çelikpala, "Rusya Federasyonu İlişkiler", p.558.



to be resolved after the agreement in September 2008 that would lead to more simplified procedures at customs.<sup>287</sup>

### **2.3.1. Main Ongoing Crises between Turkey and Russia**

It should be noted that the problems mentioned above such as Russia's position in the Cyprus issue, the Duma's decision regarding the 1915 incidents, problems in the cooperation against terrorism and at customs have not caused any significant damage to bilateral relations. Although these problematic issues have not been completely resolved, both states have strived for using dialogue mechanisms. However, it should be noted that these problems do not have enough capacity to cause risks for the security of both Turkey and Russia, which would lead to the emergence of threat perception. On the other hand, the ongoing crises in Syria and Ukraine, in which Turkey and Russia take diverging positions, have this capacity.

#### **2.3.1.1. Case 1: Syria**

Both Turkey and Russia had developed good relations with Assad regime in Syria in the 2000s even at the expense of the US opposition. Yet, the Arab Spring and its impacts on Syria, which brought about mass demonstrations at first and a civil war later has caused Turkey to change its policies on Syria, whereas Russia has been still supporting the Assad regime. This situation also opened the Turkish-Russian rapprochement up for discussion.

The Turkish-Syrian relations had developed significantly in the 2000s until the Arab Spring. Turkey, contrary to the US policies, "... presented itself as an equal partner interested in contributing to Syria's integration to the global order through a series of economic and cultural exchanges..." As Ziya Öniş puts forward that economic and cultural relations rather than democracy promotion efforts is the engine of the improvement.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> CNN Türk, "Türkiye ile Rusya arasında gümrük protokolü", 19.09.2008, <http://www.cnnturk.com/2008/ekonomi/genel/09/19/turkiye.ile.rusya.arasinda.gumruk.protokolu/493999.0/index.html>, (02.03.2014).

<sup>288</sup> Ziya Öniş, "Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest", **Insight Turkey**, Volume:14, Issue:3, 2012, p.53.

When the demonstrations spread to Syria, Turkey tried to encourage Assad to make political reforms at first. At this point, it should be pointed out that the US and EU had firmer stances than Turkey towards the Assad regime and they were criticizing Turkey's reluctance to join economic sanctions. By the end of 2011, Turkey, realizing the Assad administration will not make political opening and Turkey will continue to be faced with criticisms in the international arena, began to change its position.<sup>289</sup> Turkey hosted the coalition of Syrian opposition groups, the Syrian National Council, joined economic sanctions on Syria and also granted sanctuary to the armed forces of the opposition, the Free Syrian Army. At this point, it should be noted that Turkey did not want the Kurdish people in Syria to avail themselves of the conflict to establish a political entity in Northern Syria. Moreover, the political elite in Turkey thought that Assad would not be able to preserve its power and therefore, Turkey should take place on the opposition side. Yet, this calculation revealed to be mistaken. Besides, Turkey overestimated the power of the opposition group and did not pay enough attention to the divisions among them.<sup>290</sup>

Russia, on the other hand, has continued to support the Assad regime even after the Arab Spring. Given the fact that there have been close political, military and economic ties between the two countries, Russia does not want to put its gains on risk. Moreover, Russia has a naval base in Tartus, the Syrian city on the Mediterranean coast of Syria. The base had been used to support the Soviet Union's Fifth Mediterranean fleet, which was dismissed in 1991. So, in the post-Cold War period, the base has only a symbolic meaning for Russia.<sup>291</sup> The base mostly "... serves as a refueling station rather than as a base for Russian vessels and currently has limited utility to a navy that is suffering the effects of three decades of under-investment."<sup>292</sup> Although Russia has also negotiated with the opposition groups,<sup>293</sup> it maintains its support for the regime at the expense of harsh criticism from most of the international community.

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<sup>289</sup> Öniş, pp.53-54.

<sup>290</sup> Christopher Phillips, "Turkey's Syria Problem", **Public Policy Research**, Volume:19, Issue:2, 2012, pp.138-139.

<sup>291</sup> Kozhanov, p.26.

<sup>292</sup> "Russia's Syrian stance: principled self-interest", **Strategic Comments**, Volume:18, Issue:7, 2012, p.2.

<sup>293</sup> Kozhanov, p.28.

The main concern of the Russian political elite is the increasing influence of radical groups in the opposition forces. Syria is geographically closer to Russia than any other states affected by the Arab Spring and if radical groups take the control of Syria, then there is a possibility that they can later become more active and influential among Muslims within Russian territory. In addition, Russia does not want to lose its political and economic gains in Syria. At this point, it should be stressed that Russia has lost its influence and economic gains in Iraq and Libya after the wars in these countries.<sup>294</sup> Furthermore, Russia does not want the erosion of principles like respect for state sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. Russia wants to protect itself and its allies from external interventions. Moreover, Syria is also close ally to Iran, which Russia has good relations with.<sup>295</sup>

So, when Turkey decided to deploy NATO Patriot missiles along its border with Syria in November 2012, Russia criticized the decision.<sup>296</sup> In August 2013, hundreds of Syrian citizens were killed by chemical attack, known as the Ghouta incident, and while Turkey was blaming the Assad regime for the attack and called for ‘strong response’,<sup>297</sup> Russia questioned this claim and opposed the intervention.<sup>298</sup> This crisis was ended with the agreement between the US and Russia. Accordingly, the Assad regime would give its chemical weapons to international controls.<sup>299</sup>

One other crisis between Turkey and Russia occurred in October 2012, when a Syrian passenger plane travelling from Moscow to Damascus was forced to land in Ankara by Turkish fighter jets. Turkey’s claim was that the plane was carrying equipment related with the defense industry from Russia to Syrian Ministry of

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<sup>294</sup> Kozhanov, pp.29-30.

<sup>295</sup> “Russia’s Syrian stance: principled self-interest”, pp.1-2.

<sup>296</sup> Kommersant, “Turtsiya zadela Rossiya raketami”, 24.11.2012, cited in Emre Erşen, “Emerging Problems in the Ankara-Moscow Axis: The Syrian Crisis and NATO Missile Defence”, **Middle Eastern Analysis**, Volume:5, Issue:60, 2013, p.49.

<sup>297</sup> Hürriyet Daily News, “Eleven nations, including Turkey and US, urge ‘strong response’ in Syria: White House”, 06.09.2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/eleven-nations-including-turkey-and-us-urge-strong-response-in-syria-white-house.aspx?pageID=238&nID=54005&NewsCatID=352>, (19.05.2014).

<sup>298</sup> Voice of Russia, “No evidence Syria used chemical weapons against rebels – Putin to Cameron”, 26.08.2013, [http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2013\\_08\\_26/No-evidence-Syria-used-chemical-weapons-against-rebels-Putin-to-Cameron-4915/](http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2013_08_26/No-evidence-Syria-used-chemical-weapons-against-rebels-Putin-to-Cameron-4915/), (19.05.2014).

<sup>299</sup> Erşen, p.49.

Defense.<sup>300</sup> On the other hand, the crisis did not grow due to the constructive attitude of both sides and fell off the agenda.<sup>301</sup> The Syrian issue has not resolved yet, and Turkey and Russia have maintained their diverging positions.

### 2.3.1.2. Case 2: Ukraine

Another problematic issue between Turkey and Russia lately is the recent developments in Ukraine. The crisis began when Ukraine suspended the preparations for a trade agreement with the EU, which would lead to closer trade ties, on 21 November 2013.<sup>302</sup> Russia, concerning for the increasing EU influence in its neighboring regions, had been pressuring on Ukraine to do this. Russia wanted Ukraine to join Russian-led customs union along with Kazakhstan and Belarus.<sup>303</sup> The decision led to large-scaled protests in the country. In order to support the government, Russia agreed to buy 15 billion dollars of Ukrainian debt by investing in its national welfare fund and decreased the price of natural gas by about a third. At this point, it should be noted that Ukraine is traditionally divided into two between more pro-European regions in the west and more pro-Russian in the east.<sup>304</sup>

The Ukrainian Parliament enacted anti-protest laws, but the protest movements did not stop and people began to die.<sup>305</sup> On 22 February 2014, the President Yanukovych left the country for Russia and the protestors took control of the presidential building. Olexander Turchynov was appointed as the interim

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<sup>300</sup> Milliyet, “Erdoğan’dan indirilen Suriye uçağı ile ilgili açıklama”, 11.10.2012, <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/erdogan-dan-indirilen-suriye-ucagi-ile-ilgili-aciklama/siyaset/siyasetdetay/11.10.2012/1610321/default.htm>, (19.05.2014).

<sup>301</sup> Nerdun Hacıoğlu, “Uçak krizi kapandı Patriotlar hala sorun”, **Hürriyet**, 11.02.2013, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/planet/22569043.asp>, (19.05.2014).

<sup>302</sup> In an interview, Şener Aktürk puts forward three reasons for this decision. First, Russia supplied billions of dollars aid and reduced the price of natural gas. Second, Russia’s aid does not include conditions like the EU or IMF. Third, the areas where Yanukovych has got most of the votes are in eastern and southern parts of Ukraine and these regions are mostly pro-Russians. (Emre Can Dağlıoğlu, “Kırım işgaliyle, Rusya Türkiye’nin en büyük tehdidi olur”, **Agos**, 06.03.2014, <http://www.agos.com.tr/haber.php?seo=kirim-igaliyle-rusya-turkiyenin-en-buyuk-tehdidi-olur&haberid=6719>, (10.06.2014).).

<sup>303</sup> BBC News, “Ukraine suspends preparations for EU trade agreement”, 21.10.2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25032275>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>304</sup> Laura Smith-Spark, Marie-Louise Gumuchian and Diana Magnay, “Ukraine, Russia sign economic deal despite protests”, **CNN**, 23.01.2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/12/17/world/europe/ukraine-protests/>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>305</sup> BBC News, “Ukraine protests: Two protestors killed in Kiev clashes”, 22.01.2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25838962>, (09.06.2014).

president and the warrant of arrest was declared for Yanukovych.<sup>306</sup> However, the chaos has continued to exist.

At the end of February, pro-Russian gunmen occupied important buildings in Simferopol, the capital of Crimea<sup>307</sup>. In early March, Russian troops began to prepare for entering into Crimea. On 16 March 2014, a referendum was organized in Crimea<sup>308</sup> and the result was on behalf of joining Russia. Although the EU and US imposed travel bans and asset freezes on several Russian and Ukrainian officials, Putin signed the bill for joining Crimea to the Russian Federation. This situation spread to pro-Russian eastern part of Ukraine, and people in Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv organized protests and called for referendum on independence.<sup>309</sup> On 17 April 2014, Russia, Ukraine, the EU and the US agreed in Geneva to reduce the tension in eastern part of Ukraine.<sup>310</sup>

Yet, the conflict in the country did not stop. On 11 May 2014, pro-Russian separatists declared independence in Donetsk and Luhansk after a disputed referendum. However, it was not recognized by Kiev and the West. On 25 May 2014, Petro Poroshenko was elected as the new President of Ukraine. Pro-Russian separatists strived to prevent citizens in the east from casting their ballots.<sup>311</sup> The US President Obama was content with the result and pledged 5 million dollars of

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<sup>306</sup> BBC News, "Ukraine crisis timeline", 07.06.2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>307</sup> Crimea is an autonomous republic within Ukraine. It was given to Ukraine in 1954, which was part of the Soviet Union then. The Muslim Crimean Tatars are indicating that they were once the majority in the peninsula, yet deported by Stalin in 1944 by claiming that they were cooperating with the Nazi invaders in the Second World War. After the end of the Cold War, Tartars began to return to Crimea. Majority of the peninsula identifies themselves as ethnic Russians and speak Russian. (BBC News, "Why Crimea is so dangerous", 11.03.2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26367786>, (10.06.2014).

<sup>308</sup> There were two questions: Are you in favour of re-uniting Crimea with Russia as a constituent part of the Russian Federation? Are you in favour of restoring the Constitution of the (autonomous) Republic of Crimea of 1992 and retaining the status of Crimea as part of Ukraine? However, it should be noted that in the constitution of Ukraine "issues of altering the territory of Ukraine are resolved exclusively by an All-Ukrainian referendum". (BBC News, "Why Crimea is so dangerous", 11.03.2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26367786>, (10.06.2014).

<sup>309</sup> BBC News, "Ukraine crisis timeline", 07.06.2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>310</sup> BBC News, "Ukraine crisis: Deal to 'de-escalate' agreed in Geneva", 17.04.2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27072351>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>311</sup> Laura Smith-Spark, Nick Paton Walsh and Radina Gigova, "Billionaire Poroshenko declares victory in Ukraine", CNN, 25.05.2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/05/25/world/europe/ukraine-crisis/index.html?iref=allsearch>, (09.06.2014).

military aid to Ukraine.<sup>312</sup> On 6 June 2014, Poroshenko and Putin met in France for the first time and called for a quick end to the violence in south-eastern Ukraine.<sup>313</sup>

Turkey and Russia have taken different stances in the Crimean issue. While Russia accepted the referendum results in Crimea, Turkey, along with the West, has not recognized it. So, it can be said that Turkey has been taking side on Ukraine in the dispute and therefore, the new Ukrainian President Poroshenko declared Turkey as an ally.<sup>314</sup> After Crimea's inclusion to the Russian Federation, Putin, in his speech, pointed out the events in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya and criticized the Western countries in this regard. Putin's remarks reflect its mistrust towards the West.<sup>315</sup>

There are arguments that the inclusion of Crimea to the Russian Federation could lead to the emergence of threat perception in Turkey for Russia due to Crimea's geostrategic importance. Taking Crimea into control means having greater access to the Black Sea and breaking the balance of power in the region. It could be expected that Russia would increase its military presence in the Black Sea. In accordance with the realist arguments, being neighbor with great powers which are striving for increasing the numbers of military bases would damage the pragmatic cooperation with these states.<sup>316</sup> As stated previously in this chapter, Russia and Turkey have collaborated in the 2000s against the Western policies in the Black Sea and this is one of the motives for the rapprochement.

In conclusion, it should be stated that the Syrian and Ukrainian crises have not resolved yet and it is almost impossible to know at this point how they will end up. However, these two issues have the potential to bring about the emergence of mutual threat perception between Turkey and Russia once more. The Syrian crisis has already caused important security problems in Syria and began to spread to neighboring countries. So, Turkey's security concerns have become more prominent. In Ukraine also, the Ukrainian government is fighting against the pro-Russian in

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<sup>312</sup> BBC News, "Obama condemns Russian 'dark tactics' in Ukraine", 04.06.2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27691607>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>313</sup> BBC News, "Ukraine crisis: Moscow and Kiev seek 'end to bloodshed'", 06.06.2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27735180>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>314</sup> Nerdun Hacıoğlu, "Poroshenko zafer konuşmasında Türkiye'yi müttefik ilan etti", 26.05.2014, **Hürriyet**, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/26487470.asp>, (10.06.2014).

<sup>315</sup> Cenk Başlamış, "Kırım'la yetinecek mi?", **Deutsche Welle Türkçe**, 19.03.2014, <http://www.dw.de/k%C4%B1r%C4%B1mla-yetinecek-mi/a-17506296>, (10.06.2014).

<sup>316</sup> Kerim Has, "Kırım'ın Rusya'ya İlhakı Türk-Rus İlişkilerini Nasıl Etkiler?", **USAK Uzman Analizleri**, 14.03.2014, [http://www.usak.org.tr/kose\\_yazilari\\_det.php?id=2263&cat=326#.U5bpY\\_1\\_sz7](http://www.usak.org.tr/kose_yazilari_det.php?id=2263&cat=326#.U5bpY_1_sz7), (10.06.2014).

eastern part of the country. Considering what has been happening in Crimea, nobody could really know when Putin will stop. Yet, it can be said that the annexation of Crimea by Russia would change the balance of power in the Black Sea and this could lead to converging policies of Turkey and the West in time.

Russia has actually shown the signals of offensive realism since 2007. In this regard, the war between Russia and Georgia in 2008 should be particularly examined. This war also revealed how Russia could use regional problems for its own advantage. The existence of three regional conflicts in the Caucasus region should direct the attention towards this region. Although Turkey withdrew from its political ambitions in the region in the mid-1990s, it has significant degree of economic interests in the region. Besides, the energy resources in the region have an increasing importance in meeting Turkey's energy needs in this regard. In addition, the region works as a buffer zone between Turkey and Russia. That is why; the region deserves a more detailed examination since it could bring about a serious clash between Turkish and Russian interests in the future.

## THIRD CHAPTER

### IMPACT OF THE REGIONAL CONFLICTS IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

#### 3.1. THE GENERAL OVERVIEW AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS REGION

In Encyclopedia Britannica, the Caucasus is referred as:

*“... mountain system and region lying between the Black Sea (west) and the Caspian Sea (east) and occupied by Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.... The name Caucasus a Latinized form of Kaukasos, which the ancient Greek geographers and historians used; the Russian Kavkaz is of the same origin. The ultimate derivation is thought to be from Kaz-kaz, the Hittite name for a people living on the southern shore of the Black Sea.”<sup>317</sup>*

The Caucasus region has many different ethnic and religious entities and this has caused various conflicts between them throughout the history. Non-regional countries have also provoked the conflicts for their own interests. Considering the rich energy resources and the potential to become transition corridor in transportation of oil and natural gas from Central Asia and Caspian Basin to Europe, many theories have been put forward, like Mackinder’s Heartland Theory, Spykman’s Rimland Theory and Brzezinski’s The Grand Chessboard Theory. They basically claim that the hegemonic power in the Caucasus region would rule Asia and the power ruling Asia would rule the world.<sup>318</sup>

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia succeeded in maintaining its control in the North Caucasus. Yet, three new states emerged in the South Caucasus: Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Given the fact that the South Caucasus is located on the other side of the Caucasus Mountains in Russian point of view, they describe the region as “Trans-Caucasus (Za Kavkaz)”.<sup>319</sup> However, the regional

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<sup>317</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, “Caucasus”,

<http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/100270/Caucasus>, (17.05.2014).

<sup>318</sup> Hakan Kantarcı, **Kısaçtaki Bölge Kafkasya**, IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2006, p.2, cited in Uğur Güneş, **Türkiye Dış Politikasında Güney Kafkasya Bölgesindeki Güç Mücadeleleri ve Büyük Kafkasya Kalkınma Girişimi**, (Unpublished Master’s Thesis), The Graduate School of Social Sciences of Ufuk University, Ankara, 2009, p.10.

<sup>319</sup> Fırat Purtaş, **Rusya Federasyonu Ekseninde Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu**, Platin Yayınları, Ankara, 2005, p.225, cited in Fatih Yoldaş, **Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Rusya’nın Kafkasya Politikası**, (Unpublished Master’s Thesis), The Graduate School of Social Sciences of Gebze Institute of Technology, Gebze, 2010, p.12.



countries want to be mentioned as the South Caucasus countries rather than Trans-Caucasus because the latter one is related with the Russian point of view and recalled Russian hegemony.<sup>320</sup>

One of the reasons that make the South Caucasus important for Russia is related with security concerns. Russian political elite think that Russia should maintain its dominant position in the South Caucasus in order to establish stability and order in Russia's territories in the North Caucasus. In addition, the historical ties and Russian population lead Russian politicians to think of South Caucasus as a region where Russia should actively engage in.<sup>321</sup> Moreover, the region has energy resources and be close to energy-rich areas, which make it play an energy corridor role between Central Asia and Europe through the pipelines. Hence, Russia should be influential on the decisions regarding energy issues in order to maintain its importance as energy supplier. Furthermore, becoming a dominant power would help Russia to increase its influence in the Black Sea and give greater access to the Mediterranean Sea and new markets.

Turkey, on the other hand, is not an influential actor as much as Russia is in Caucasus politics. The energy issue has been the main point of Turkish policies towards the region since the end of the 1990s. Turkey wants to be a regional energy hub and the rich energy resources in the Caspian Basin call Turkey's attention. Besides, Turkey strives for accessing to new markets for its economic growth and the region is also the gate to Central Asian countries. Moreover, Turkey wants to have a stable buffer zone between itself and a major power like Russia, the country which Turkey had been in the opposite camps during the Cold War. On the other hand, the regional conflicts prevent Turkey from neglecting the region due to the geographical proximity. It should be noted that five of the fifteen armed conflicts started between 1991 and 1999 are in the Caucasus region.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Yoldaş, p.12.

<sup>321</sup> German, p.1651.

<sup>322</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Sunuş: Kafkasya'nın Değişen Dinamikleri, 1989-2012", **Kafkaslar Değişim Dönüşüm (Avrasya Üçlemesi III)**, p.1.

### 3.2. TURKEY’S SOUTH CAUCASUS POLICY IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

Before the 1990s, Turkey had not involved in politics of the Caucasus and Central Asia. In 1921, Turkey and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Moscow through which Turkey guaranteed that it would not support Turanist movements in the Soviet Union, and in turn Moscow declared that it would not strive to spread communism in Turkey.

This policy had been maintained by the newly founded Republic of Turkey between the two world wars. During this period, Turkey had exerted effort to maintain its good relations with the Soviet Union, while also developing relations with the West. At this point, it is important to note that Turkey was trying to use its relations with the Soviet Union as leverage against the Western countries.<sup>323</sup> Besides, Turkish politicians, by taking into account the period of late Ottoman Empire, were aware of the fact that how utopian Turanist policies could cause terrible effects. Turkey preserved this position also during the Cold War. Likewise, the Soviet Union took precautions in order to impede Turkey’s possible contacts with the Turkish-Muslim people in its territory and even hindered the connection of communist parties in Turkey with these people.<sup>324</sup>

During the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy was based on its geostrategic importance for the Western Bloc against the Soviet Union. However, things have changed for Turkey with the end of the Cold War. As stated in the previous chapters, since security concerns for the US and European countries diminished, even the NATO’s existence began to be debated. Turkey’s decreasing importance for the West and the unrest in the FSU countries emerged after 1991 raised serious concerns in Turkey and led to the re-evaluation of Turkish foreign policy. Consequently, Turkey strived for developing relations with the alternatives other than West, and the Caucasus and Central Asian countries were good options considering ethnic and cultural ties with them.

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<sup>323</sup> Erel Tellal, “Türk Dış Politikası’nda Avrasya Seçeneği”, **Türkiye’nin Avrasya Macerası 1989-2006 (Avrasya Üçlemesi II)**, (Ed. Mustafa Aydın), Nobel Yayınları, Ankara, 2007, p.13.

<sup>324</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, p.366.

Turkish foreign policy towards the region did not change immediately even when Gorbachev declared the policies of “glasnost” and “perestroika” at the end of the 1980s. Turkey avoided making contacts with the Soviet republics and chose to conduct relations with the central government. This policy was mostly apparent during the Baku incidents.<sup>325</sup> The Turkish President Turgut Özal stated that it was an internal affair of the Soviet Union. When these republics in the Soviet Union declared their sovereignties, delegations from them started to visit Turkey in the search for cooperation in several fields, like culture, science and health. High-level visits, on the other hand, began with Özal’s visit to the Soviet Union in March 1991, even though Turkey avoided signing agreements in sensitive issues that could cause a negative reaction from the Soviet Union.<sup>326</sup>

Azerbaijan declared independence on 18 October 1991 and the parliament called for the international recognition. The public pressure, the desire to make a step before Iran does and criticism regarding Turkey’s passive attitudes towards Baku incidents led Turkey to recognize Azerbaijan’s independence on 9 November 1991. Then, Armenia and Georgia were recognized by Turkey on 16 December. By the end of the year, Turkey had recognized all the other new countries. However, it should be stressed that Turkey did not open a consulate in Armenia due to its invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>327</sup> This brought about comments like Turkey formed a bloc close to the Western countries in the South Caucasus against Armenia and Russia.<sup>328</sup> It can be said that Turkish foreign policy towards both the Caucasus and Central Asia gained much more self-confidence and Turkey tried to involve in regional issues actively and establish cooperation mechanisms in the fields of politics, economy and

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<sup>325</sup> On 6 May 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union took the control of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijani SSR and gave it to the central administration. In addition, Armenia placed a de facto embargo on Nakhchivan. Consequently, the people in Azerbaijan revolted and raise their flag in a stadium in Baku. Then, Abulfaz Elchibey elected as the president of Azerbaijani Popular Front. Due to increasing pressure, the Azerbaijani SSR declared that it repealed the autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh on 15 September. In paralell with the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, the tension increased and attacks had been made in Baku on the Armenians between 13-16 January. The Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union declared a state of emergency in Baku and then, the Soviet army entered into Baku. (Nazim Jafarov, **Azerbaycan Halk Cephesi (AHC) İktidarı Döneminde Azerbaycan Dış Politikası (Haziran 1992-Haziran 1993)**, (Unpublished Master’s Thesis), The Graduate School of Social Sciences of Ankara University, Ankara, 2000, pp.14-36, cited in Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, p.373)

<sup>326</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, pp.372-374.

<sup>327</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, pp.377-379.

<sup>328</sup> Winrow, “Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests”, p.2.

culture in order for having an influence in the region, creating policy alternatives and accessing to new markets.

Furthermore, the leaders of the newly independent Turkic countries also approached positively towards the “Turkey Model”, at least at the beginning. These new states wanted to establish good relations with the international organizations, and Turkey can be a good tool in achieving this.<sup>329</sup> It was later revealed they were not wrong in their assumptions. Turkey helped them to be heard in various platforms such as the Council of Europe, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), IMF, EU and NATO. Other than Kazakhstan, the Turkic Republics became members of Economic Cooperation Organization with the help of Turkey.<sup>330</sup>

Nonetheless, Turkey failed in accomplishing its goals in Central Asia due to several reasons as mentioned before such as other regional actors’ existence that had the same goals, the vagueness of the “Turkish Model”, the distinctiveness that came into existence among Turkic people, the reaction against Turkey’s “big brother” attitude and Turkey’s inability to fulfill its aims both politically and economically. The political leaders in Turkey realized this failure by the end of 1995, and turned their attention towards the Caucasus region. Better opportunities, geographical proximity, the energy resources in the Caspian Basin and the regional conflicts that could make negative impact on Turkey’s own security and stability were the reasons for this shift.<sup>331</sup>

Just like in Central Asia, Turkey wanted to support the independence of the newly founded states in the South Caucasus against Russian hegemony, increase Turkey’s influence and integrate these states to the global system. Since the pipelines from the Caspian Basin to Europe could flow through the South Caucasus countries and Turkey, which could enhance Turkey’s importance in the eyes of the Western world.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> M. Efe Çaman and M. Ali Akyurt, “Caucasus and Central Asia in Turkish Foreign Policy: The Time Has Come for a New Regional Policy”, **Alternatives**, Volume:10, Issue:2-3, Summer-Fall 2011, p.69.

<sup>330</sup> Kiaras Gharabaghi, “Development Strategies for Central Asian in the 1990s: In Search of Alternatives”, **The World Quarterly**, Volume:15, Issue:1, 1994, pp.115-116.

<sup>331</sup> Aydın, “Foucault’s Pendulum”, p.11.

<sup>332</sup> Nigar Göksel, “The Dynamics of the Ankara-Moscow partnership in relation to the South Caucasus”, **SAM and Russian Diplomatic Academy**, 2012, p.4.

What we see in Turkey's Caucasus policy from the beginning is its support for the independence and territorial integrity of the newly independent countries in the region. In addition, Turkey has also been on the same page with the Western countries and international organizations regarding the regional issues.<sup>333</sup> This approach was considered as a way that could not damage Turkish interests in regional politics and also in accord with the traditional Turkish foreign policy based on cooperation with the West.<sup>334</sup>

It should be remembered that the Ottoman Empire and Tsarist Russia had fought against each other for centuries. In addition, Turkey and the Soviet Union also had been in opposite blocs in the Cold War. So therefore, it is normal for Turkey to want a buffer zone between itself and Russia in the region. Thus, Turkey supported the independence, territorial integrity and stability of the newly independent three Caucasus states after the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, any instability in these states could spread to Turkey due to Turkey's historical and cultural ties with the Caucasian origin people in Turkey which could make pressure on the government to involve in the problems. Moreover, Turkey's economic relations with the Central Asian countries could be damaged. Besides, Turkey's support for these states' territorial integrity against secessionist movements in the conflicts like Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia should be considered in this regard. Turkish political elites concerned that if the breakaway regions gained their independence, this could make spillover effect and cause chaos in the whole region.<sup>335</sup>

By the early 2000s, Russia established an overwhelming influence in the region. Moreover, the US which had supported Turkey in the Caucasus in the 1990s began to involve in regional issues more actively by itself. The military advisors sent to Georgia by the US should be evaluated in this regard. So, these factors caused Turkey to shift its attention towards other regions.<sup>336</sup> When the AKP came into power in 2002, some analysts stressed that Turkey would reduce its degree of

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<sup>333</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, "Turkey as a Regional Power and the Caucasus", **Insight Turkey**, Volume:9, Issue:2, 2007, p.26.

<sup>334</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, "Türkiye ve Kafkasya: Reaksiyoner Dış Politikadan Proaktif Ritmik Diplomasiye Geçiş", **Uluslararası İlişkiler**, Volume:7, Issue:25, 2010, p.96.

<sup>335</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikalarının Değişen Dinamikleri", **Kafkaslar Değişim Dönüşüm (Avrasya Üçlemesi III)**, pp.204-206.

<sup>336</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, pp.463-464.

attention even much more, by pointing AKP's religious background. When we examine the developments by 2008, we could say this analysis is true except the policies regarding energy issue.<sup>337</sup>

Yet, some scholars like Mustafa Aydın claim that there were other issues which occupied Turkey's political elites. Mustafa Aydın puts forward the US military intervention in Iraq, instable Turkey-EU relations, the debates regarding the Cyprus issue, the PKK terror, the Kurdish problem and the closure case of the AKP as examples of various developments and processes that took Turkey's attention.<sup>338</sup> Thus, the division of Turkey's policy towards the Caucasus into two; as the period until the war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 in the one hand, which led Turkey to shift its focus on the Caucasus, and the post-war period on the other hand could be helpful for better analysis.

### 3.2.1. Relations with Azerbaijan

The relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan have been developed quickly since 1991. Azerbaijan has been perceived as an important ally by Turkish political elites and it had a significant share in Turkey's openings towards the Caucasus and Central Asia, particularly in the first half of the 1990s. Abulfaz Elchibey, who is the second president of Azerbaijan and had been in office between June 1992 and September 1993, had very positive approach towards Turkey and took Atatürk's ideas as a model which should be followed by Azerbaijani government. The ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan have also been emphasized by the concept; "one nation, two states".<sup>339</sup> Moreover, Elchibey made his first visit to Turkey and mentioned Turkey as the model country.<sup>340</sup> This attitude also contributed to the development of good relations between the two countries.

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<sup>337</sup> Turkey's aim to become a regional energy hub is important for several reasons. First, this is vital due to Turkey's increasing oil and natural gas needs. Second, if Turkey become an important actor in energy politics, this will increase its importance in the eyes of the Western countries. (Emre İşeri and Oğuz Dilek, "The Limitations of Turkey's New Foreign Policy Activism in the Caucasian Regional Security Complexity", **Turkish Studies**, Volume:12, Issue:1, 2011, p.45.)

<sup>338</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikalarının Değişen Dinamikleri", p.210.

<sup>339</sup> Ayça Ergun, "Türkiye-Azerbaycan İlişkileri", **Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası 1989-2006 (Avrasya Üçlemesi II)**, p.247.

<sup>340</sup> Nazım Cafersoy, **Elçibey Dönemi Azerbaycan Dış Politikası**, Asam Yayınları, Ankara, 2001, p.124, cited in Ergun, p.256.

However, Heydar Aliyev came into power in June 1993 and this led to significant changes in Azerbaijani foreign policy. Contrary to Elchibey period, H. Aliyev tried to conduct a more balanced foreign policy and develop good relations also with Russia and Iran. In this way, Azerbaijan joined the CIS and described the Azerbaijani people in Iran as “Iran’s internal issue”. Yet, the relations with Turkey have also been emphasized by making references to ethnic ties and the discourse of “one nation, two states”.<sup>341</sup> However, the bilateral relations were more distant and less sentimental than Elchibey period. The conviction among the political elite regarding Turkey’s involvement in the coup attempt against H. Aliyev also caused negative effects.<sup>342</sup> Nonetheless, the good friendship between the two presidents Süleyman Demirel and Heydar Aliyev and the fact that Demirel had warned Aliyev about the coup attempt before the event, contributed to the improvement of relations again.<sup>343</sup> During H. Aliyev’s visit to Turkey in 1997, various agreements were signed in the field of sports, social security, electricity, energy, industry and regarding Air and Naval Forces. In addition, the “Strategic Partnership Agreement” was signed.<sup>344</sup>

Brenda Shaffer is also one of the scholars who compare Azerbaijan’s foreign policy in the Elchibey period with the Heydar and İlham Aliyev’s period. She states that:

*“During the Elchibey period, ideological considerations superseded considerations of material factors, and thus long-term constraints were primarily ignored in the formation of the young state’s foreign policy strategy and its designation of alliances. In contrast, the foreign policy conducted by President Heydar Aliyev and continued under President İlham Aliyev downgraded the role of ideology and thus, permanent material factors were taken into consideration and had a significant influence on the state’s foreign policy decisions and alliance choices.”*<sup>345</sup>

Since 2000, H. Aliyev’s health problems raised concerns about who will be in office after his death and how will the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan will be affected. In August 2003, a legal amendment was made in order to ensure that Hayder Aliyev’s son İlham Aliyev will be the next president. Thus, I. Aliyev became

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<sup>341</sup> Ergun, p.251.

<sup>342</sup> Ali Faik Demir, “Türkiye’nin Güney Kafkasya’ya Yönelik Dış Politikasını Oluşturmasında Rol Oynayan Unsurlar”, **Beş Deniz Havzasında Türkiye**, (Ed. Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan), Siyasal Kitabevi, Ankara, 2006, p.121.

<sup>343</sup> Ali Faik Demir, **Türk Dış Politikası Perspektifinden Güney Kafkasya**, Bağlam Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003, p.101, cited in Ergun, p.258.

<sup>344</sup> Demir, **Türk Dış Politikası Perspektifinden Güney Kafkasya**, p.101, cited in Ergun, p.258.

<sup>345</sup> Brenda Shaffer, “Foreign Policies of the States of the Caucasus: Evolution in the Post-Soviet Period”, **Uluslararası İlişkiler**, Volume:7, Issue:26, 2010, p.56.

the Prime Minister and made his first visit to Turkey in September 2003. As the US and Turkey were supporting I. Aliyev by emphasizing the stability of Azerbaijan, it was not hard for him to become the new president in October 2003. By eruption of the Russo-Georgian war, although there had been several mutual visits between the two countries' politicians, the expected progress in the relations could not be achieved.<sup>346</sup>

Nonetheless, a natural gas pipeline established between Turkey and Greece, in which the required source would be supplied from Azerbaijan. The inauguration occurred in November 2007 with the attendance of the Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, then the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Hilmi Güler, Greek Minister of Development Christos Falias and Georgian Minister of Energy Aleksandre Khetaguri. The expectation was that the line would be extended to Italy in the following years.<sup>347</sup> Yet, the establishment of BTC oil pipeline and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) natural gas pipeline has been the most important developments in bilateral relations in the 2000s. These two projects and also the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway project will be examined in detail later.

### 3.2.2. Relations with Georgia

First, it should be noted that the history between Turkey and Georgia had been problematic before the 1990s. During the Ottoman era, Georgia sought the support of Tsarist Russia against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>348</sup> Moreover, before the 1990 general elections, Georgian leaders wanted Turkey to declare that it would not resort to force against Georgia.<sup>349</sup>

After Georgia's independence, diplomatic relations between the two countries began with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Çetin's visit to Tbilisi. During the

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<sup>346</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, pp.480-481.

<sup>347</sup> CNN Türk, "Türk-Yunan doğal gaz boru hattı açıldı", 18.11.2007, <http://www.cnntrk.com/2007/ekonomi/genel/11/18/turk.yunan.dogalgaz.boru.hatti.acildi/405410.0/index.html>, (16.03.2014).

<sup>348</sup> Yelda Demirağ, "Türkiye-Gürcistan İlişkileri", **Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası 1989-2006 (Avrasya Üçlemesi II)**, p.269.

<sup>349</sup> Fahrettin Çiloğlu, "Gürcistan tedirgin mi?", **Milliyet**, 17.03.1998, <http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/Fahrettin%20%C3%87ilo%C4%9Flu/>, (16.03.2014).



visit, several agreements were signed. On 30 July 1992, Süleyman Demirel's visit made him the first president who visited Georgia. In addition, the "Friendship and Good Neighborhood Agreement" was signed between Demirel and the Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze consequently.<sup>350</sup>

However, in the first years of independence, Georgia was dealing with the South Ossetia and Abkhazia problems and Turkey focused on the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and improving relations with Azerbaijan. In addition, Russia declared its near abroad policy in 1993. Thus, the relations between Turkey and Georgia had not made any significant progress as expected. Yet in the following years, Turkey almost cut its relations with Armenia and meanwhile, Georgia appeared to be the only way to reach Azerbaijan and Central Asia. Furthermore, Georgia could play an important role in transporting energy resources in the Caspian Basin to the West. In addition to that, Shevardnadze wanted the support of the West against Russia and this increased Turkey's importance in the eyes of Georgia.<sup>351</sup> In the second half of the 1990s, mutual visits among politicians occurred and various agreements on cooperation in different fields were made between the two countries.

In the early years of the 2000s, dramatic political changes occurred in Georgia. The democracy deficit, the failure in fight against corruption, energy problems, and poverty among the people led to the increasing pressure of the opposition. The pressure and discontent caused the resignation of Shevardnadze in 2003 and Mikheil Saakashvili came in office by taking 96% of the votes in the elections in January 2004.<sup>352</sup> Saakashvili sought the support of the West against Russia and saw Turkey as a tool that could help Georgia to integrate the global system. The BTC, BTE, the abolishment of visa requirement in the visits until 90 days and the use of Batumi Airport by Turkey for domestic flights (in return for modernization of the airport)<sup>353</sup> were the examples of good relations between the two countries. However, this does not mean that the relations have been smooth. By 2008, the Saakashvili administration had problems with the two autonomous regions:

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<sup>350</sup> Demirağ, p.271.

<sup>351</sup> Demirağ, pp.272-274.

<sup>352</sup> Demirağ, p.284.

<sup>353</sup> Bülent Aras and Pinar Akpınar, "The Relations between Turkey and the Caucasus", **Perceptions**, Volume:16, Issue:3, 2011, p.62.

Adjara and Abkhazia. The attitudes of Saakashvili while dealing with the problems raised concerns about him in Turkey.

Aslan Abashidze, who was the leader of the Ajarian Autonomous Republic in Georgia, tried to take advantage of the leadership change in Georgia and declared that he did not recognize the new administration that came to power with the 2004 elections. This triggered series of events and got Georgia on the brink of internal conflict. Turkey had good relations with both Adjara and Georgia, but tried to remain out of this issue. In the end, Abashidze left Adjara and Saakashvili constrained the limits of the region's autonomy. Although Turkey did not officially criticize this situation, Saakashvili's reliability in the eyes of Turkish political elites deteriorated. While making decisions, Saakashvili did not care or even inform Turkey. Moreover, he used Christian themes in order to ensure the integrity.<sup>354</sup> On the other hand, the Treaty of Kars, which was signed in 1921 and Turkey is one of its guarantors, entailed the protection of Adjara's autonomous status in its Article 6.<sup>355</sup>

Abkhazia was one another autonomous region that Saakashvili had problems. During his administration, he conducted a tough policy toward the region and did not answer Turkey's mediation offers. However, this policy even brought about a closer rapprochement between Russia and Abkhazia. Consequently, Russian pressure increased and since the relations among the NATO countries were not as good as before the Iraq War, Georgia and Ukraine's membership appliances to the NATO were not accepted at the Sofia Summit in 2006. Turkey remained in a more abstained position by taking into consideration Russia's opposition and Saakashvili's over-confident policies which could cause even more problems.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, pp.487-488.

<sup>355</sup> İsmail Soysal, **Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları I. Cilt (1920-1945)**, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1983, pp.41-47, cited in Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.487.

<sup>356</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, pp.488-490.

### 3.2.3. Evaluation of Turkey's Relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia until 2008

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Turkey has strived for developing good relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia. In politics, it has avoided intervening in internal issues of these states. As Turkey perceived the fact that it could not establish a regional hegemony on the region, developing economic relations and increasing the volume of trade has become the main aim of Turkish foreign policy in the Caucasus. This policy has continued also under the AKP governments. The economy and energy issue have become the basis of relations among these three states.

Economic relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan were based on "The Commercial and Economic Cooperation Agreement" signed on 1 November 1993. Both sides granted the status of most favored nation to each other.<sup>357</sup> Turkish entrepreneurs were the first ones that came to Azerbaijan for business. Cultural ties between the two countries also facilitated the process.<sup>358</sup> Especially after 2003, the volume of trade increased by 40% averagely every year, which made Turkey the biggest trade partner of Azerbaijan in 2007 when the volume exceeded 1,2 billion dollars. Turkey was also the biggest investor that in the sectors other than energy and Turkey's total investments in Azerbaijan reached nearly 5 billion dollars.<sup>359</sup>

Similarly, the good political relations between Turkey and Georgia affected the bilateral economic relations positively. Between 2003 and 2007, the volume of trade quadrupled<sup>360</sup> and led to the signing of the Free Trade Agreement in 2007.<sup>361</sup> Saakashvili's privatization policies and liberal economic reforms also accelerated the process.<sup>362</sup> Turkish companies have built roads, airport terminals and invested in a

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<sup>357</sup> Sinan Oğan, "Azerbaycan'ın Tamamlanamayan Ekonomisi ve Türkiye ile Ekonomik İlişkiler", **Avrasya Dosyası**, Volume:7, Issue:1, 2001, p.75.

<sup>358</sup> Fariz İsmailzade, "Turkey-Azerbaijan: The Honeymoon is Over", **Turkish Policy Quarterly**, Volume:4, Issue:4, 2005, p.3.

<sup>359</sup> MFA, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-azerbaycan-ekonomik-iliskileri.tr.mfa>, cited in Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları", p.224.

<sup>360</sup> MFA, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commerical-and-political-relations-with-georgia.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commerical-and-political-relations-with-georgia.en.mfa), cited in Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları", p.216.

<sup>361</sup> <http://www.state.gov.tr/e/eeb/efd/2008/100871.htm>, cited in Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları", p.216.

<sup>362</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları", p.216.

glass factory, communication sector and plenty of small and medium sized enterprises.<sup>363</sup>

### 3.2.4. The BTC, BTE and Railway Projects

Turkey's Caucasus policy which is based mostly on economic and energy issues have showed itself especially in the projects like the BTC, BTE and the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway project.

The BTC oil pipeline was constructed as one of the lines using the oil resources in the Caspian Basin. It is "...able to transport up to a million barrels of crude oil a day, 50 million tons a year, traversing 1,760km..." from Azerbaijan to Turkey.<sup>364</sup> During the construction process, 21.000 people had been employed. The ports of Mersin and İskenderun have been revived and Turkey's geopolitical importance has increased. The pipeline also contributed to the stability in Azerbaijan and Georgia.<sup>365</sup> Although the shortest route for such a pipeline would go through Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh issue impeded the involvement of Armenia in the project. Since the US did not want Iran as the transit country, Georgia became the only choice. It should also be noted that the pipeline contributed to the emergence of strategic partnership among Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia.<sup>366</sup> Besides, it has reduced the traffic in the Straits and therefore minimized the risks.<sup>367</sup>

The BTE natural gas pipeline entered into service in March 2007. The pipeline has become an additional alternative for Turkey and reduced Georgia's natural gas dependency on Russia.<sup>368</sup> The agreement is valid for 15 years and Turkey will get 6,6 billion cubic meters of natural gas.<sup>369</sup> "At full capacity, and after

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<sup>363</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Turkey's Caucasus Policies", **UNISCI Discussion Papers**, May 2010, p.178.

<sup>364</sup> Ayhan Güney and Selim Özdemir, "Is The Regional Economic Cooperation in South Caucasus Myth or Reality?", **Süleyman Demirel University The Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences**, Volume:16, Issue:1, 2011, p.138.

<sup>365</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.518.

<sup>366</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları", p.208.

<sup>367</sup> Cenk Pala, "Türkiye'nin Avrasya Boru Hatları Macerası", **Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası 1989-2006 (Avrasya Üçlemesi II)**, p.162.

<sup>368</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları", p.214.

<sup>369</sup> Aras and Akpınar, p.57.

additional stages of development, the pipeline will be able to export up to 16 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year.”<sup>370</sup>

Another project is the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway project. Since Turkey’s border with Armenia has been closed, the railway that goes through Iran became the only route to link Turkey and Asia. However, the route is longer than the one that goes through Armenia, and when there was a crisis between Turkey and Iran, the transportation was interrupted. This led to a suggestion regarding the construction of a railway line between Kars and Tbilisi in 1993.<sup>371</sup> After Azerbaijan’s involvement in the project in 2004, the progress has been made. As this project would make Armenia more isolated and increase the level of relations among Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the objections were raised from Armenia, Armenian Diaspora and Russia, which do not want Turkey to increase its role in the region.<sup>372</sup> When financial obstacles emerged in the construction, the Armenian Diaspora started lobbying in international agencies and in the US to hinder the official investment of the US in the project.<sup>373</sup> The project is expected to be completed in mid-2015.<sup>374</sup>

### 3.2.5. Relations with Armenia

In the first years of Armenia’s independence, Turkey was conducting active policies in the Caucasus to establish a regional influence. Turkish politicians thought that the two countries could develop good bilateral relations, despite their bad history.<sup>375</sup> The Turkish ambassador working in Moscow Volkan Vural’s visit to Armenia in April 1991 seemed to be a good starting point. During the visit,

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<sup>370</sup> Güney and Özdemir, p.139.

<sup>371</sup> Hasan Kanbolat, “Türkiye Kafkasya’ya Demir Ağlarla Bağlanacak mı?”, **Stratejik Analiz**, Issue:65, 2005, p.57, cited in Aydın, “Kafkasya’da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları”, p.213.

<sup>372</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya’da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları”, p.213.

<sup>373</sup> Hasan Kanbolat, “Kafkasya’da Demir İpek Yolu”, **Stratejik Analiz**, Issue:83, 2007, p.63, cited in Aydın, “Kafkasya’da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları”, p.213.

<sup>374</sup> Hürriyet Daily News, “Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia talk ‘stability’”, 06.05.2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-azerbaijan-and-georgia-talk-stability.aspx?pageID=238&nID=66078&NewsCatID=510>, (07.06.2014).

<sup>375</sup> Demir, “Türkiye’nin Güney Kafkasya’ya Yönelik Dış Politikasını Oluşturmasında Rol Oynayan Unsurlar”, p.119.

agreement drafts were prepared regarding good neighborhood, border trade and establishment of road connection between the two countries.<sup>376</sup>

However, the Armenian Parliament's declaration, which stated that the border between the two countries had determined by an agreement between Turkey and the Moscow government, and thus would not be accepted by Armenia, caused tension. Although Turkey recognized the independence of Armenia, it did not establish diplomatic relations with Armenia.<sup>377</sup> The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which will be examined in more detail later, also damaged the relations and Turkey did not open a consulate in Armenia. The opening of a genocide museum in Yerevan in 1995 further exacerbated the situation.<sup>378</sup> In the elections in 1998, Robert Kocharyan, who has a radical approach, came into office and Armenia strived more actively for the recognition of so-called "Armenian Genocide" in other countries.<sup>379</sup> The increasing numbers of these recognitions further tensed the relations between the two countries. The Kocharyan administration also tried to use the EU as a device to make pressure on Turkey in order to lift the embargo.<sup>380</sup> Kocharyan's attitude was more aggressive than his predecessor Levon Ter-Petrosyan and his policy differences have showed themselves in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, relations with the Armenian Diaspora, border problem and debates about the so-called "Armenian Genocide".<sup>381</sup>

In April 2005, Turkish parliament proposed the examination of the incidents in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by an international history commission to Armenia. On the other hand, Armenia's response was to establish alternative commission to discuss various issues when the diplomatic relations were normalized.<sup>382</sup> Then, the murder of Hrant Dink, who was a citizen of Turkey and has an Armenian origin, on 19 January

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<sup>376</sup> Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, **Turkey's New Geopolitics: From Balkans to Western China**, Westview Press, Santa Monica, 1993, pp.76-77, cited in Ali Faik Demir, "SSCB Sonrası Dönemde Türkiye-Ermenistan İlişkileri", **Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası 1989-2006 (Avrasya Üçlemesi II)**, p.308.

<sup>377</sup> Fuller and Lesser, pp.78-79, cited in Demir, "SSCB Sonrası Dönemde Türkiye-Ermenistan İlişkileri", pp.308-309.

<sup>378</sup> Raymond H. Kevorkian, "La politique étrangere de la Republique d'Armenie", **Les Cahiers de l'Orient**, Issue:57, Premier trimestre 2000, pp.79-81, cited in Demir, "Türkiye'nin Güney Kafkasya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikasını Oluşturmasında Rol Oynayan Unsurlar", p.121.

<sup>379</sup> Demir, "Türkiye'nin Güney Kafkasya'ya Yönelik Dış Politikasını Oluşturmasında Rol Oynayan Unsurlar", p.124.

<sup>380</sup> Demir, "SSCB Sonrası Dönemde Türkiye-Ermenistan İlişkileri", pp.304-305.

<sup>381</sup> Demir, "SSCB Sonrası Dönemde Türkiye-Ermenistan İlişkileri", p.307.

<sup>382</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları", p.220.

2007 surprisingly caused an ice-breaking effect in bilateral relations.<sup>383</sup> The rapprochement between civilian organizations of the two countries led to closer contact and dialogue. The restoration of the Church of the Holy Cross on Akdamar Island and opening of it as a museum in 2007 by Turkey was one another opportunity to improve the bilateral relations. However, the high level attendance of Armenia to the inauguration was not occurred.<sup>384</sup>

Although there is not any official trade between Turkey and Armenia, the two countries made trade through other countries, like Georgia and Iran. The Armenian Chamber of Commerce claimed that the volume of trade is 300 million dollar in 2009. The numbers show that if the border opened, Turkey would become the biggest trade partner of Armenia.<sup>385</sup>

### **3.2.6. The Change in Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Region after the Russo-Georgian War**

The instable condition of the region was revealed once again with the Russo-Georgian War in August 2008. Georgia by claiming to re-establish “constitutional order”, and Russia, by emphasizing “preventing genocide” entered into South Ossetia almost simultaneously. The tension between the two states continued for several months. While Russia was winning the war, the conflict was ended with the ceasefire offered by France which was then holding the EU rotating presidency. On 26 August, Russia recognized the independences of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>386</sup>

Turkey was aware of the fact that the US was not an important actor in the region and the balance was damaged in favor of Russia. Moreover, the decision makers realized the fact that the frozen conflicts were not so frozen as thought and they could damage Turkey’s interests in the region. Georgia’s infrastructure and Azerbaijan’s trade links were damaged in the war. Besides, the natural gas flow from the BTE stopped temporarily due to security concerns. Turkey’s link with Central

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<sup>383</sup> Yıldız Deveci Bozkuş, “Hrant Dink Suikastı Sonrası Türk-Ermeni İlişkilerinde Olası Gelişmeler”, **Stratejik Analiz**, Issue:83, 2007, p.10, cited in Aydın, “Kafkasya’da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları”, p.219.

<sup>384</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya’da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları”, p.220.

<sup>385</sup> World Bulletin, “Turkey-Armenia trade volume reaches \$300 mln”, 02.02.2010, <http://www.worldbulletin.net/index.php?aType=haber&ArticleID=53530>, (19.03.2014).

<sup>386</sup> Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler”, **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.476.

Asia was also constrained. Furthermore, such developments could become an example for the Kurds in Turkey. On the other hand, Turkey also did not want the US military presence in the region. There were different and mostly opposite demands from Russia and the West which were making pressure on Turkey. Therefore, Turkey had to take an initiative.<sup>387</sup>

These developments made Turkey focus on the region and it put forward a proposal, which is the establishment of the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform, which will include Turkey, Russia and the three Caucasus states. The plan is actually similar to the Caucasian Stability Pact which was proposed by Süleyman Demirel. The Platform would work for the cooperation in economic and energy fields and emphasize the importance of regional peace and stability.<sup>388</sup> Ali Babacan, who is then the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, said that "...it is an additional platform to facilitate the communication between the countries of the region, a framework to develop stability, confidence and cooperation, a forum for dialogue."<sup>389</sup> The difference from Demirel's proposal is that Turkey consulted Russia before putting forward the suggestion and foresaw only observer status to the US and the EU in the Platform.<sup>390</sup>

Given the fact that the platform would not grant important roles to the US, NATO and EU, Russia supported the proposal.<sup>391</sup> Armenia and Azerbaijan perceived the platform as a tool that can be used to accomplish their goals. However, Georgia did not want to involve in an organization with Russia, considering the recent war. Furthermore, Saakashvili wanted a more important role for the EU.<sup>392</sup> The US and EU also were not satisfied with Turkey's such unilateral actions. In response to these complaints, Turkey emphasized that this initiative was complementary to the efforts of the EU and the OSCE's Minsk Group.<sup>393</sup> Mutual trust issues and conflictual

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<sup>387</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, pp.477-480.

<sup>388</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya'da Türk Dış ve Güvenlik Politikaları", p.211.

<sup>389</sup> Ali Babacan, "Calming the Caucasus", **The New York Times**, 23.08.2008, [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/opinion/23iht-edbabacan.1.16407371.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/opinion/23iht-edbabacan.1.16407371.html?_r=0), (19.03.2014).

<sup>390</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.477.

<sup>391</sup> Winrow, "Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests", p.8.

<sup>392</sup> Hürriyet Daily News, "Caucasus Platform not feasible yet", <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11272905.asp>, (19.03.2014).

<sup>393</sup> Alexander Jackson, "The Limits of Good Intentions: The Caucasus as A Test Case for Turkish Foreign Policy", **Turkish Policy Quarterly**, Volume:9, Issue:4, 2011, p.87.



relations impeded the institutionalization. On the other hand, the negotiations between Turkey and Armenia were conducted via this platform.<sup>394</sup>

Alexander Jackson mentions two reasons for the failure of the CSCP. First, the exclusion of outside powers, such as the US and EU, gave de facto leadership of the region to Russia through this platform. This could also erode UN's, EU's and Minsk Group's efforts to achieve peace in the Caucasus. Turkey's activeness would be limited to Russia's permission. Second, Turkey did not take into account the problems among the Caucasus states which hindered the establishment of a dialogue atmosphere.<sup>395</sup>

After the Russo-Georgian War in August 2008, another opening of the Turkish foreign policy towards the region is the efforts that were exerted in order for normalization of the relations between Turkey and Armenia. Turkish authorities were thinking that normalizing relations with Armenia would contribute to the stability in the South Caucasus. Moreover, it would reduce the pressure on the U.S. Congress to pass a resolution regarding the so-called Armenian Genocide. Finally, it would make a positive impact on Turkey's image in the eyes of the EU countries and lead to a progress in the membership negotiations.<sup>396</sup>

Armenia also wanted the normalization of relations. During the war in August 2008, Armenia's transit through Georgia was blocked.<sup>397</sup> In addition, the closure of borders with Turkey and the bad relations with Azerbaijan due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have put the Armenian economy in a bad situation. Sargsyan also wanted to reduce Armenia's dependency on Russia and developing good relations with Turkey could be a step to contact with the West.<sup>398</sup> Finally, the isolated position of Armenia has prevented the country from benefitting from energy resources since the pipelines bypass the country.<sup>399</sup> The US also supported these attempts. If the relations between Turkey and Armenia had become normalized, the Caucasus region

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<sup>394</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.477.

<sup>395</sup> Jackson, pp.87-88.

<sup>396</sup> Larrabee, p.107.

<sup>397</sup> Shaffer, p.63.

<sup>398</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, p.497.

<sup>399</sup> Igor Torbakov, "Russia and Turkish-Armenian Normalization: Competing Interests in the South Caucasus", **Insight Turkey**, Volume:12, Issue:2, 2010, p.33.

would have become more stabilized and Armenia's dependency on Russia would have been reduced.<sup>400</sup>

Before the opening, Turkey's official position was that borders between the two countries "...would only be reopened and diplomatic relations established with Yerevan after Armenia openly acknowledged Turkey's borders, abandoned its international campaign for recognition of the events of 1915 as genocide, and resolved the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh to the satisfaction of Azerbaijan."<sup>401</sup> The Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, who was elected in 2008, was actually striving to normalize the bilateral relations by encouraging diplomats to make meetings. The Russo-Georgian war only increased the importance of resolution efforts. Sargsyan invited the Turkish President Abdullah Gül to the World Cup qualifying football match played between Turkey and Armenia in Yerevan on 6 September. After series of developments, two protocols, which are "Protocol on Establishment of Diplomatic Relations" and "Protocol on Development of Relations", signed by the foreign ministers of both countries in Switzerland on 10 October for the normalization of bilateral relations with the support of the EU and US.<sup>402</sup>

Yet, these developments caused negative reactions in Azerbaijan due to its problems with Armenia. The main concern was that this rapprochement could reduce the pressure on Armenia to make concessions in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. The opposition parties in Turkey also criticized the AKP government for working against the interests of Azerbaijan, which is considered as a brother country among Turkish people.<sup>403</sup> One of the concrete examples of Azerbaijan's reaction to Turkey was seen during I. Aliyev's visit to Moscow in April 2009 when he explained his desire to have a strategic partnership with Moscow.<sup>404</sup>

In response to these criticisms, Erdoğan pointed out that the normalization of the relations between Turkey and Armenia depends on the resolution of the Nagorno-

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<sup>400</sup> Torbakov, p.36.

<sup>401</sup> Winrow, "Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests", pp.8-9.

<sup>402</sup> Winrow, "Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests", p.9.

<sup>403</sup> Larrabee, p.108.

<sup>404</sup> Cenk Başlamış, "İlham Aliyev, Rusya'yı stratejik ortak ilan etti", **Milliyet**, 18.04.2009, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/ilham-aliyev--rusya-yi-stratejik-ortak-ilan-etti/dunya/dunyadetay/18.04.2009/1084622/default.htm>, (19.03.2014).

Karabakh conflict.<sup>405</sup> However, Armenia objected to this attitude and emphasized that the content of protocols do not refer to the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. The ratification of the protocols in Turkish Parliament is a legal obligation for their entry into force and since this was not the case, Armenia receded from the negotiations in 2010.<sup>406</sup> In addition to that, the statement of Armenian Constitutional Court which points out that the protocols should be in compliance with the Armenian constitution, in which there are references to the international recognition of so-called Armenian Genocide further damaged the normalization process.<sup>407</sup>

Larrabee stresses that Turkey has made several mistakes in the process. First, the AKP government underestimated the influence of Azerbaijan and opposition parties in Turkey which forced the government to link the process to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. Second, Armenian economy was in a bad situation. The political and economic power of the Armenian Diaspora made the state dependent on the diaspora. Third, the AKP government, by trusting the good economic relations with Russia, thought that Russia would contribute to the normalization process positively. However, Russia did not choose to involve in this issue and moreover, tried to use Azerbaijan's discontent against Turkey and the US.<sup>408</sup>

After this failure, the bilateral relations are not expected to develop soon. On the other hand, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan declared a message of condolences on 23 April 2014 regarding the 1915 incidents and called for the revival of the opening process once again.<sup>409</sup> In the following day, while the Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan was insisting on the recognition of the 1915 incidents as "genocide", he also stated that they did not see Turks as enemies.<sup>410</sup> Despite these developments,

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<sup>405</sup> Emrullah Uslu, "Ankara-Yerevan Rapprochement Strains Turkey's Relations With Azerbaijan", **Eurasia Daily Monitor**, Volume:6, Issue:68, 09.04.2009, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34835&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=485&no\\_cache=1#.Uymh4vl\\_sz4](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34835&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=485&no_cache=1#.Uymh4vl_sz4), (19.03.2014).

<sup>406</sup> Larrabee, p.108.

<sup>407</sup> Şaban Kardaş, "Turkey Reacts to Armenian Constitutional Court's Decision on Protocols", **Eurasia Daily Monitor**, Volume:7, Issue:17, 26.01.2010, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=35954&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=484&no\\_cache=1#.Uymnbfl\\_sz4](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35954&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=484&no_cache=1#.Uymnbfl_sz4), (19.03.2014).

<sup>408</sup> Larrabee, pp.108-109.

<sup>409</sup> Zeynep Gürçanlı, "Başbakan 'Ermeni' açıklaması yaptı", **Hürriyet**, 23.04.2014, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/26277820.asp>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>410</sup> **Hürriyet**, "Sarkisyan: Türkler düşmanımız değil", 24.04.2014, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/26282115.asp>, (09.06.2014).

the bilateral relations are not seemed to improve as long as political difficulties mentioned above exist.

On the other hand, the problems in the process led to a positive momentum in the relations with Azerbaijan. The high-level mutual visits have continued and the problems in the price of natural gas and oil were resolved in June 2010. In addition, “The Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Support” was signed between the two countries in August 2010. After elected as president once again in October 2013, I. Aliyev made his first visit to Turkey, and Erdoğan did the same in April after Turkey’s local elections in March 2014.<sup>411</sup>

The energy cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan has also accelerated. The Southern Corridor project of the EU, which is about the transportation of the natural gas in the Caspian Basin and Middle East to Europe, has already been one of the priorities of the EU. The Nabucco project was very important in this regard. Yet, the financial difficulties and lack of coherent political will for the progress in the project raised doubts about its implementation. Besides, Russia had announced the South Stream project, which is considered as the rival of Nabucco.

In 2011, Turkey and Azerbaijan announced the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline Project (TANAP). This new natural gas pipeline would not be the extension of the BTC and moreover, have the capacity to provide the flow of natural gas from other suppliers as well in the future. Through TANAP, Turkey would get natural gas by a cheaper price and strengthen its hands in the price negotiations with Russia and Iran due to the diversification of suppliers. The Shah Deniz<sup>412</sup> consortium chose the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) instead of Nabucco to carry Azerbaijani gas to Europe in December 2013.<sup>413</sup> The TAP would be follow-on route of TANAP.<sup>414</sup> The

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<sup>411</sup> Milliyet, “Her seçimden sonra ilk ziyaret ettiğimiz yer Azerbaycan”, 04.04.2014, <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/-her-secimden-sonra-ilk-ziyaret/siyaset/detay/1862152/default.htm>, (07.06.2014).

<sup>412</sup> “The Shah Deniz gas field was discovered 70 kilometers offshore in the Caspian Sea as recently as 1999. With estimated reserves totalling 1.2 trillion cubic meters (tcm), Shah Deniz is Azerbaijan’s largest natural gas field. An international consortium started to produce gas and condensate from the field in 2006.” (Gareth Winrow, “Final Investment Decision for Shah Deniz II Boosts Prospects for Southern Gas Corridor”, **Caspian Strategy Institute Caspian Report**, Issue:6, Winter 2014, p.19.)

<sup>413</sup> Shorter distance, lower transit tariffs and the higher price that customers in Greece and Italy were willing to pay were given as the reasons for this choice by Gareth Winrow. (Winrow, “Final Investment Decision for Shah Deniz II Boosts Prospects for Southern Gas Corridor”, p.24.)

<sup>414</sup> At the first phase, 16 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas will be produced and 6 bcm of this will be used by Turkey and the remaining part will be carried to Europe. Turkey has the right to re-export this 6 bcm of gas and such a right does not exist for Turkey’s agreements with Russia and Iran, while

selection of TAP will also make a positive impact on the Turkish-Russian relations in energy field. Russia's South Stream project has a similar route with Nabucco in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, TANAP+TAP would carry the gas to Southern Europe. However, it should be noted that if the Turkmen gas joins the project in the future, this could cause Russia's negative reaction.<sup>415</sup> In the end, it can be said that the EU was satisfied with TAP, because it is in accord with the EU policy of diversification of energy supplies.<sup>416</sup>

### 3.3. RUSSIA'S SOUTH CAUCASUS POLICY IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

First of all, it should be noted that Russian foreign policy towards the South Caucasus cannot be evaluated without considering the developments in the North Caucasus, especially in Chechnya. Throughout the Cold War, the nations in the South Caucasus had been under the control of the Soviet Union. After the disintegration, three new states, which are Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, emerged. Russia's political, economic and administrative problems in the 1990s prevented the country from pursuing a decisive policy towards the region. When Vladimir Putin became president in 2000, most of the internal problems were resolved and the country began to be more active in foreign policy. Therefore, it would be more accurate to divide Russian foreign policy towards the Caucasus after the end of the Cold War into two periods.

Oktaý Tanrısever similarly states that Russian foreign policy by the end of 1999 had been based on "recession in post-Soviet era". Then, the period under Putin's presidency is described as "imperialist interventionist" by Tanrısever. He claims that in the early 1990s, Russia had two choices: establishing good relations with these countries on the basis of equality or striving to take them under hegemony

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importing their gases. (Emre İşeri and Alper Yılmaz, "Turkey's Energy Strategy and the Southern Gas Corridor", **Caspian Report**, Fall 2013, p.88.) TANAP is expected to be completed by 2019 and cost around 12 billion dollars. (Selen Tonkus, "Turkish PM visits energy partner Azerbaijan", **Anadolu Agency**, 04.04.2014, <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/news/309739--turkish-pm-visits-energy-partner-azerbaijan>, (08.06.2014).)

<sup>415</sup> Şaban Kardaş, "The Turkey-Azerbaijan Energy Partnership in the Context of the Southern Corridor", **Istituto Affari Internazionali Working Paper 14**, March 2014, pp.7-9.

<sup>416</sup> Winrow, "Final Investment Decision for Shah Deniz II Boosts Prospects for Southern Gas Corridor", p.17.

even though formally recognizing their sovereignty.<sup>417</sup> The liberals and social democrats were claiming that Russia had not enough power to dominate these countries like in the Soviet era, and thus it should respect their sovereignty. Besides, it could have some influence on them by this way.

On the other hand, the security bureaucracy, communists and extreme nationalists wanted Russia to preserve its imperial bonds with the South Caucasus states by pointing its relevancy with the security of the North Caucasus. Rather than making a choice, Moscow stated that although Russia would recede from the region, it would be done in a transition process for the protection of national interests. Yet, this policy was perceived as an excuse to maintain Russian hegemony on the FSU countries by the international community and the South Caucasus countries. Russia's military presence in the South Caucasus, its use of conflicts in Georgia and Azerbaijan, and pressure on these states regarding transportation routes of the energy resources in the Caspian Basin were also regarded as the concrete examples of Russian hegemonic policies by the international community.<sup>418</sup>

In the 2000s, Russia has pursued more penetrating policies towards the region. In addition to Putin's style, Russia's problematic relations with the West, which was mentioned before, also accelerated this process. Putin was claiming that the policies in the 1990s were the main reason for internal political instability and economic crisis. Thus, state-centric approach has been adopted in the new period.<sup>419</sup> Naturally, the Chechen problem was creating instability in Russian territory, which prevented Russia from being more influential in the South Caucasus.<sup>420</sup> The change in Russian foreign policy can be seen in the new national security and foreign policy concepts and military doctrine. The revision of these documents aimed to establish a multi-polar world system.<sup>421</sup> For instance; the Foreign Policy Concept (2008) indicated that the NATO enlargement "... violates the principle of equal security, leads to new dividing lines in Europe and runs counter to the tasks of increasing the

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<sup>417</sup> Oktay F. Tanrısever, "Rusya'nın Kafkasya Politikası: Sovyet-Sonrası Geri Çekilme Söyleminden Emperyal Müdahaleciliğe", **Kafkaslar Değişim Dönüşüm (Avrasya Üçlemesi III)**, pp.174, 177.

<sup>418</sup> Tanrısever, pp.178-181.

<sup>419</sup> Hans Overloot, "Reordering the State without Changing the Constitution: Russia under Putin's Rule, 2000-2008", **Review of Central and East European Law**, Number:32, 2007, pp.41-67, cited in Tanrısever, p.184.

<sup>420</sup> Tanrısever, p.184.

<sup>421</sup> Fatma Aslı Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", **Perceptions**, 2008, p.74.

effectiveness of joint work in search for responses to real challenges of our time”.<sup>422</sup> In an article, the question of “why is the US decision to open bases in Romania and Bulgaria fully legitimate, while it is not possible for Russia to do something similar?”<sup>423</sup> reveals Russia’s concerns about the US dominance in international politics.<sup>424</sup>

The First Chechen War, which started at the end of 1994 and has ended with the ceasefire in August 1996, had led to an increase in secessionist Chechens’ status. When Putin became the Prime Minister in August 1999, he firstly quashed a rebellion in Dagestan and then invaded Chechnya which brought about the Second Chechen War. The second war was ended with Russian victory and Putin made Akhmad Kadyrov, who was on the side of Chechens in the first war but on the side of Russians in the second war, the President of the Chechen Republic. In addition, he initiated a comprehensive economic program in Chechnya. Then, Putin’s reforms following this war increased Moscow’s authorities over the federal units.<sup>425</sup> In the end, Putin’s main aim is to create a Russia, which would unilaterally pursue policies in the CIS without taking into consideration the FSU countries and the West.<sup>426</sup> Kabus Abushov similarly claims that Russian foreign policy towards the South Caucasus mainly aims to:

*“...guaranteeing its exclusive military and political presence in the area; the avoidance of a NATO presence in the area; restricting Western intrusions; the disturbance of regional cooperation; and the use of warm-water Black Sea port in Abkhazia.”*<sup>427</sup>

There are military, political, energy-based, economic and socio-cultural tools of this assertive policy. In military aspect, Russia has provided the states that it has close relations with equipment and cooperated with them in a way which increase their dependency on Russia. Moreover, the declarations of the Russian authorities have been sometimes referring to the military power of Russia that can be used against the countries which Russia has problematic relations with. In politics, Russia has supported pro-Russian leaders and campaigned against the pro-Western ones. In

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<sup>422</sup> German, p.1652.

<sup>423</sup> Komsomolskaya Pravda, (19.02.2010), [www.kp.ru/daily/24444/609760/](http://www.kp.ru/daily/24444/609760/), (20.01.2011), cited in German, p.1660.

<sup>424</sup> German, p.1660.

<sup>425</sup> Tanrisever, p.185.

<sup>426</sup> Mark Kramer, “Russian Policy toward the Commonwealth of Independent States: Recent Trends and Future Prospects”, **Problems of Post-Communism**, Volume:55, Issue:6, 2008, p.4.

<sup>427</sup> Abushov, p.204.

energy, Russia increased the energy prices, which caused rises in other countries' debts, and by this way has taken control of the important sectors in these countries. Finally, Putin's policies regarding the spread of Russian language in the region constitutes the "soft power" dimension of Russian policies.<sup>428</sup> Putin's Caucasus policy mainly converges on three aims: Russia's internal security in the North Caucasus, maintenance of the hegemony on the South Caucasus and preventing other countries from becoming an important regional actor.<sup>429</sup>

After the victory in the Russo-Georgian War in 2008, Russia once again demonstrated its dominance on the region and furthermore, by establishing military bases in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and increasing the level of military cooperation with Armenia, has consolidated its regional power status.<sup>430</sup> As stated by Tracey German, the military aspect of Putin's policy is the basic element of achieving Russia's aims.<sup>431</sup> The table below shows the Russian military installations in the South Caucasus as of 2012.

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<sup>428</sup> Tanrisever, p.186.

<sup>429</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, "The Pawn of the Great Powers: The East West Competition for Caucasus", **Journal of Eurasian Studies**, Volume:1, Issue:1, 2010, p.13.

<sup>430</sup> German, p.1650.

<sup>431</sup> German, p.1652.



**Table 5:** Russian Military Installations in the South Caucasus

Country	Location	Base	Purpose	Personnel
Azerbaijan	Gabala	Dar'yal radar station	Radar monitoring; missile attack warning	Approximately 1,400
Armenia	Gyumri	102 <sup>nd</sup> military base	Cover for Russia's southern flank; guarantee defense of Armenia as a member-state of CSTO	3,200
Georgia: Abkhazia	Gudauta	7 <sup>th</sup> military base including air base, parachute regiment	Secure the Abkhaz-Georgian border	Approximately 1,700
Georgia: South Ossetia	Tskhinvali, Djava	4 <sup>th</sup> military base	Secure Russia's southern borders	Approximately 1,200

Source: Izvestiya, "Bazovaya Tsennost", 20.08.2010, [www.izvestiya.ru](http://www.izvestiya.ru), (24.07.2011), cited in German, p.1653.<sup>432</sup>

### 3.3.1. Relations with Georgia

Georgia is the country that Russia has most problematic relations with in the South Caucasus in the post-Cold War era. Georgia's efforts to make a closer cooperation with the EU and become a member of the NATO have drawn reaction from Russia. Furthermore, Georgia's unwilling attitude towards helping Russia

<sup>432</sup> It should be noted that Russia's agreement with Azerbaijan on the use of Gabala radar station ended in 2012.

against Chechen rebels and moreover, the government's efforts to close Russian military bases on Georgian territory also exacerbated the situation. On the other hand, Russian support for Abkhazia and South Ossetia has been the main reason for Georgia's negative attitude towards Moscow.<sup>433</sup>

Even in the Second Chechen War, the support of Chechen rebels who live in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge, a valley region in Georgia bordering Chechnya, tensed relations with Russia.<sup>434</sup> Even though the two countries signed an agreement in 2000 on cooperation against terrorism, organized crime, and arms and drug trafficking,<sup>435</sup> the problems have not been solved and Putin stated that Russia would establish visa control regime on the border since Georgia could not prevent the infiltration of Chechen militants.<sup>436</sup> Georgia's reaction against increasing Russian pressure was to take US help in order for balance. As the US policy towards the Caucasus after September 11 attacks coincided with this, the Georgia Train and Equip Program was initiated. Through the program, the US trained Georgian army and modernized part of the military equipment. This move caused reactions in Russia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia.<sup>437</sup>

Mikheil Saakashvili became the President of Georgia in the 2004 elections and this was signaling a new period in Russian-Georgian relations. Saakashvili wanted to make Georgia a NATO member and increase the degree of cooperation with the EU.<sup>438</sup> Russia, on the other hand, threatened the West by suspending the NATO-Russia Council, which could negatively affect the disarmament negotiations between Russia and the US, if Georgia and Ukraine become members of the NATO.<sup>439</sup> In accordance with the political tool of Putin's foreign policy, opposition

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<sup>433</sup> Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", p.75.

<sup>434</sup> Stephen Mulvey, "Why Russia threatens Georgia over Pankisi", **BBC News Online**, 12.09.2012, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2253792.stm>, (24.03.2014).

<sup>435</sup> Justin Burke, "Georgia, Russia Sign Security Agreement", **RFE/RL**, 16.06.2000, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1142178.html>, (25.03.2014).

<sup>436</sup> Pavel, K. Baev, "Russia's Policies in the Southern Caucasus and the Caspian Area", **European Security**, Volume:10, Issue:2, 2001, p.101.

<sup>437</sup> Alan Parastayev, "US Deployment in Georgia Angers South Ossetia", **IWPR Caucasus Reporting Service**, Issue:121, 22.03.2002, <http://iwpr.net/report-news/us-deployment-georgia-angers-south-ossetia>, (24.03.2014).

<sup>438</sup> David J. Smith, "The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies Before the 2008 War", **The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia**, (Ed. Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr), M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, 2009, p.123.

<sup>439</sup> Kakha Jibladze, "Russia's Opposition to Georgia's Quest for NATO Membership", **China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly**, Volume:5, Issue:1, 2007, p.50.

leaders in Georgia were invited to Russia and how Saakashvili's policies were deteriorating the relations was told to them by Russian authorities.<sup>440</sup>

In September 2006, another crisis occurred between the two countries "... when four military officers, along with eleven Georgian citizens, were arrested in Tbilisi on charges of espionage."<sup>441</sup> Russia reacted harshly against this action and recalled its ambassador from Georgia and stated that it would not accept visa applications from Georgian citizens.<sup>442</sup> Although the Russian officers were released later, Russia suspended all air, railway, road, maritime transport and postal communications between the two countries.<sup>443</sup> The normalization after the crisis was achieved in April 2008.<sup>444</sup>

When Georgia and Ukraine did not become NATO members at the Bucharest Summit in 2008, this was a relief for Russia which strengthened its hand. Thus, when Georgia attacked on South Ossetia in August 2008, Russia reacted more harshly and won the war. This was followed by Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independences, which means violating Georgia's territorial integrity.<sup>445</sup> After the war, Georgia wanted to gain as much as possible from this situation and in exchange for its support for Russia's membership to the WTO; it got the opportunity to obtain information regarding custom activities in Moscow's borders with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This was a symbolic gain for Georgia, because the Georgian authorities thought that they weakened Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by this way.<sup>446</sup>

The uncertainties regarding Georgia's NATO membership, complicated situation in the breakaway regions, increasing unemployment and corruption and

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<sup>440</sup> RFE/RL Caucasus Report, "Georgian Leaders Assess External, Internal Threats", 10.03.2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgian\\_Leaders\\_Assess\\_External\\_Internal\\_Threats/1507451.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgian_Leaders_Assess_External_Internal_Threats/1507451.html), (24.03.2014).

<sup>441</sup> Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", p.78.

<sup>442</sup> Diana Petriashvili, "Russia Recalls Ambassador to Georgia, Plans Evacuation", **Eurasia Insight**, 27.09.2006, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav092806.shtml>, (25.03.2014).

<sup>443</sup> Diana Petriashvili, "Georgians Express Outrage at Russian Sanctions, Deportations", **Eurasia Insight**, 09.10.2006, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101006.shtml>, (25.03.2014).

<sup>444</sup> RIA Novosti, "Russia Reopens Postal Links with Georgia After 2.5 Year Freeze", 21.04.2008, cited in Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", p.79.

<sup>445</sup> Tanrisever, p.191.

<sup>446</sup> Ellen Barry, "Deal for Russia to Join W.T.O. is Accepted by Georgians", **The New York Times**, 27.10.2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/28/world/europe/georgians-suggest-wto-deal-for-russia-is-near.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/28/world/europe/georgians-suggest-wto-deal-for-russia-is-near.html?_r=0), (24.03.2014).

decreasing foreign investments in the country led to the emergence of an opposition movement among the public against Saakashvili. The bilateral relations began to change with the election of Bidzina Ivanishvili as the Prime Minister of Georgia in 2012. Although Ivanishvili is also one of the supporters of the membership to the EU and NATO, he has strived to establish good relations with Russia too. Since then, the political, economic and cultural relations between the two countries have made progress. It should be noted that Ivanishvili has been leaving the clarification of the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to time.<sup>447</sup> Ivanishvili's president candidate Giorgi Margvelashvili was elected as the new president in October 2013<sup>448</sup> and Ivanishvili voluntarily resigned from his post in November 2013. However, his long-time close associate Irakli Garibashvili became the new Prime Minister<sup>449</sup> and this situation consolidated new foreign policy in post-Saakashvili period.

### 3.3.2. Relations with Azerbaijan

As it is stated before, both H. Aliyev and I. Aliyev have strived to pursue a balanced foreign policy. Accordingly, Azerbaijan has attached importance to the relations with both Russia and the West. Furthermore, Azerbaijan has not been enthusiastic like Georgia to become a member of the NATO and therefore does not pose a risk for Russian security policies.<sup>450</sup> On the other hand, the military cooperation between the two countries has remained limited.<sup>451</sup>

However, it should also be noted that at the end of the 1990s, the treatment of injured Chechens in Azerbaijani hospitals at the Second Chechen War,<sup>452</sup> the Chechen leader Shamil Basayev's appearance on television in Baku<sup>453</sup> and hosting a

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<sup>447</sup> Kerim Has, "Rusya-Gürcistan İlişkilerinde Yeni Döneme Girilirken", **USAK Analizleri**, 05.04.2013, [http://www.usak.org.tr/analiz\\_det.php?id=17&cat=365366638#.U5Sem\\_1\\_uCl](http://www.usak.org.tr/analiz_det.php?id=17&cat=365366638#.U5Sem_1_uCl), (08.06.2014).

<sup>448</sup> Nerdun Hacıoğlu, "Gürcistan seçiminde sürpriz yok", **Hürriyet**, 29.10.2013, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/planet/25000535.asp>, (08.06.2014).

<sup>449</sup> Civil Georgia, "New PM Wins Confidence Vote", 20.11.2013, <http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26705>, (08.06.2014).

<sup>450</sup> Tanrısever, p.193.

<sup>451</sup> Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", p.85.

<sup>452</sup> Interfax, "Chechens Receiving Medical Treatment in Azerbaijan", 06.01.2000, cited in Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", p.83.

<sup>453</sup> Hikmet Hadjy-zadeh, "The Chechen War Echoes in Azerbaijan", **Eurasia Insight**, 23.08.2000, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav082400.shtml>, (25.03.2014).

school constituted by the children of Chechen refugees revealed how Azerbaijani people supported the Chechens. The main reason for this warming approach is the fact that some Chechens fought on the side of Azerbaijani people in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.<sup>454</sup> In return, Russia bombed Kımır village and made military maneuvers with Armenia near the border between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and also imposed visa restrictions on Azerbaijani citizens.<sup>455</sup>

Then, both sides extradited criminals to each other and signed agreements on preventing terrorism and deepening cooperation against the smuggling of arms and narcotics across the border in 2000.<sup>456</sup> This development signaled the resolution of the problem.

The disagreement about the status of the Gabala radar station, which is in northern Azerbaijan, in 2002 also contributed to the development in bilateral relations. Russia had used the station in order to detect the ballistic missiles in the Persian Gulf and Middle East.<sup>457</sup> However, it should be noted that the negotiations on the extension of rental contract was stopped without success. Azerbaijan wanted to increase the price from 7 million dollars to 300 million dollars. Azerbaijan's close military cooperation with Israel, discontent with Russia's attitude in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and disagreement about the status of the Caspian Basin concerning energy resources led to the change in Azerbaijan's attitude. Russian authorities, on the other hand, also stated that the Armavir Radar Station in Krasnodar would do the same job and thus, the loss of the Gabala Radar Station is not a big deal.<sup>458</sup>

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia constitutes the most important dimension of Azerbaijani-Russian relations. Armenia's military success while occupying seven regions other than Nagorno-Karabakh in 1993-1994, despite the fact that both countries had similar military power led to a conviction

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<sup>454</sup> Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", p.83.

<sup>455</sup> Okan Yeşilot, "Azerbaycan'daki Çeçen Mülteciler ve Rusya ile İlişkilere Yansımaları", **Değişen Dünya Düzeninde Kafkasya**, (Ed. Okan Yeşilot), Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004, p.197, cited in Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", p.83.

<sup>456</sup> RFE/RL, "Russia, Azerbaijan Condemn Terrorism, Separatism", 07.02.2000, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1142088.html>, (25.03.2014).

<sup>457</sup> Nair Aliiev, "Aliiev and Putin: New Best Friends", **IWPR Caucasus Reporting Service**, Issue:114, 01.02.2002, <http://iwpr.net/report-news/aliev-and-putin-new-best-friends>, (24.03.2014).

<sup>458</sup> Nerdun Hacıoğlu, "Azerbaycan Rusya'yı gözsüz bıraktı", **Hürriyet**, 11.12.2012, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/planet/22127673.asp>, (24.03.2014).

among Azerbaijani people that Russia had helped Armenia.<sup>459</sup> Although Russia took an initiative after the Russo-Georgian War for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it has not seemed to be so sincere about its efforts.<sup>460</sup> Russia's position in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be explained in detail later.

Another important topic between the two countries is the energy issue, particularly the status of the Caspian Basin. Russia pragmatically supports Iran and Turkmenistan's position in security and sovereignty issues while endorsing Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan's thesis in sharing hydrocarbon resources.<sup>461</sup> In return for Moscow's support, Azerbaijan granted 10% share of the Azerbaijan International Oil Company consortium to the Russian oil company LUKoil. Nonetheless, the route that will be followed in transporting the energy resources to Europe has been a problematic issue between the two countries. While Russia wants Azerbaijan to use only the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline, Azerbaijan is also supplying oil to the BTC pipeline and natural gas to the BTE pipeline.<sup>462</sup> Furthermore, the plans and agreements regarding the establishment of TANAP<sup>463</sup> and TAP reveals the policies of Azerbaijan regarding the diversification of the pipeline routes which is also in parallel with the EU energy policies.

### 3.3.3. Relations with Armenia

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Armenia has been dependent on Russia. This dependency particularly shows itself in security and economic fields. Apart from securing Armenia's borders, Russia has also modernized Armenia's military equipment and even signed agreements with Armenia for exporting weapons

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<sup>459</sup> Tanrisever, p.194.

<sup>460</sup> IISS, "Moscow Plays Both Sides on Nagorno-Karabakh", **Strategic Comments**, 2010, p.1.

<sup>461</sup> "In October 2003, with the participation of Kazakhstan, a trilateral agreement was signed between the three countries dividing the northern sixty-four percent of the Caspian Sea into three unequal parts according to a median line principle, allocating Kazakhstan twenty-seven percent, Russia nineteen percent and Azerbaijan eighteen percent." (Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", p.84).

<sup>462</sup> Tanrisever, p.195.

<sup>463</sup> Vladimir Socor, "Direct Road to Europe: Azerbaijan's Trans-Anatolia Gas Pipeline", **Eurasia Daily Monitor**, Volume:9, Issue:2, 04.01.2012, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=38834&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=587&no\\_cache=1#.UzAu2v1\\_uCk](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38834&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=587&no_cache=1#.UzAu2v1_uCk), (24.03.2014).

and military equipment to other countries.<sup>464</sup> With the two intergovernmental agreements signed in 2001, Russian military advisors and experts were sent to Armenia. Besides, the conditions of the Russians working in the Russian bases in Armenia were ameliorated and a new area was granted to the 102<sup>nd</sup> Russian military base in Armenia<sup>465</sup>. Russia has two military bases in Armenia; one in Gyumri and the other in Yerevan.<sup>466</sup> The two countries have increased the level of military cooperation at a multidimensional level by establishing the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) with Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.<sup>467</sup> The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and consequently Azerbaijan's increasing military expenditures are the main reasons for Armenia's acceptance of Russian influence in the country.

Other than security concerns, the Armenian Diaspora in Russia is also important for close relations between the two countries. This bond takes its roots from the Soviet period. The Armenians living in Russia are mostly well-educated people who have strong positions both in the public and private sector. This situation made an important impact on the relations between the two countries and also between the people.<sup>468</sup>

Armenia's economy is mostly dependent on Russia. The closure of border with Turkey is also one of the factors in this regard. Armenia has had difficulties in paying its debts to Russia, and Russian companies have used it to buy Armenian state enterprises. Especially in the energy sector, there is an overwhelming Russian dominance.<sup>469</sup> Apart from energy, Russia, by using Armenia's debt, has become dominant also in telecommunications, transportation, finance and mining sectors in Armenia.

Although Russia won the war against Georgia in August 2008 and consolidated its position in the South Caucasus region, its involvement in regional

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<sup>464</sup> Emil Danielyan, "Armenia, Russia Sign Arms Export Deal", 17.12.2009, <http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/1906988.html>, (24.03.2014).

<sup>465</sup> Caspian News Agency, "Armenian, Russian Defense Ministers Signed Two Intergovernmental Agreements", 14.09.2001, cited in Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus under Putin", p.86.

<sup>466</sup> Tanrisever, p.196.

<sup>467</sup> Fraser Cameron and Jarek M. Domanski, "Russian Foreign Policy with Special Reference to its Western Neighbours", **EPC Issue Paper**, Issue:37, 13.07.2005, p.7.

<sup>468</sup> Tanrisever, pp.197-198.

<sup>469</sup> Tanrisever, p.198.

issues damaged Russian image of neutrality and mediator role in the regional conflicts.<sup>470</sup> When Turkey decided to increase its activism in the Caucasus region after the Russo-Georgian War in 2008 and exerted efforts for the normalization of relations with Armenia, Russia wanted to involve in the process by supporting it, at least rhetorically, in order to offset Turkey's activism and fix its image of mediator. Besides, this process could lead to the isolation of Georgia and increase the pressure on the Georgian government.<sup>471</sup> Moreover, there were some problems between Russia and Armenia, such as the price for gas, and as Torbakov summarizes in one of his article;

*"... the controversies over a number of Armenian industrial enterprises that Russia acquired in the "assets for debts" deals but that did not receive the promised investment; the Russian military base in Gyumri for which Moscow does not pay the rent; and the nature of relations between Russia and Azerbaijan, which, some in Yerevan argue, does not sit well with the Russian rhetoric about the strategic alliance with Armenia."*<sup>472</sup>

Nonetheless, when the normalization process seemed to be stopped due to the problems stated before, Russia receded from the process and when asked, the authorities stated that it is a bilateral issue between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>473</sup> Considering the problems between Turkey and Azerbaijan because of the process, Russia seems to be has accomplished its goal which;

*"...consists of keeping Armenia beholden to Russia, building up ties with Azerbaijan by fostering the split between Turkey and Azerbaijan over the Armenian issue, strengthening cooperation with Turkey in regional and energy issues, and keeping the United States from getting too involved in the negotiations – all while appearing like the region's benevolent mediator."*<sup>474</sup>

### **3.4. SOUTH CAUCASUS POLICIES OF THE NON-REGIONAL ACTORS IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD**

#### **3.4.1. Policies of the US**

"The Great Game" term was used to describe the political and strategic rivalry between the British Empire and Tsarist Russia in Central Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Torbakov, p.32.

<sup>471</sup> Torbakov, pp.36-37.

<sup>472</sup> Torbakov, p.37.

<sup>473</sup> Torbakov, p.31.

<sup>474</sup> Stratfor, "Russia: Trying To Maintain a Balance in the Caucasus", 24.11.2009, cited in Torbakov, p.37.



century. The rivalry in Central Asia and Caucasus existed also in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but with new actors like, the US, Russia and several European countries. This is referred as “The New Great Game” and its content is mainly related with economic interests, energy routes and finding new markets. In short, rather than the political rivalry like in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, economic rivalry constituted the basis of this competition.<sup>475</sup>

The energy resources in the Caspian Basin are important for the US for several reasons. First, the energy-rich region provided the regional supplier countries with the opportunity to affect prices. Hence, the US wants to have an influence on these energy-rich countries to control the energy prices. Second, the European countries are dependent on Russia in terms of energy. Russian policy of using it as a policy device was seen in the instances of in 2006 and 2009 when Russia cut the natural gas that flows to Ukraine. In order to protect its European allies and reduce their dependency on Moscow, the US has been striving to diversify energy transit routes. Third, there are many energy companies in the US that have investments in the Caspian Basin. These companies are lobbying the US to support their ventures. Fourth, the US support for pipeline routes that go through Azerbaijan and Georgia leads to close relations with these states and increases US influence in the region.<sup>476</sup>

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, main concerns of the US about Russia were to keep nuclear arms within Russian territory and ensure the recession of Russian forces in Baltics.<sup>477</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski also stressed that Russia should be integrated to the global system, and supporting democratic efforts in Russia and granting important roles to it in international organizations can be encouraging methods in this regard.<sup>478</sup>

The September 11 attacks caused a dramatic change in US foreign policy. The US began to make interventions, like in Afghanistan and Iraq, and involve in regional issues much more. The support of the American public coincided with the hawkish approach of the Bush administration. Although the significant part of the

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<sup>475</sup> Mustafa Aydın, “Orta Asya’nın Değişen Dinamikleri ve Jeopolitiği”, **Küresel Politika’da Orta Asya: Avrasya Üçlemesi I**, (Ed. Mustafa Aydın), Nobel Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005, p.6, cited in Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “ABD’nin Kafkasya Politikaları”, **Kafkaslar Değişim Dönüşüm (Avrasya Üçlemesi III)**, p.148.

<sup>476</sup> George Khelashvili and S. Neil Macfarlane, “The Evolution of US Policy towards the Southern Caucasus”, **Uluslararası İlişkiler**, Volume:7, Issue:26, 2010, p.109.

<sup>477</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, p.150.

<sup>478</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, “A Geostrategy for Eurasia”, **Foreign Affairs**, Volume:76, Issue:5, 1997, p.56.

concentration has been on the Middle East, the US activeness also increased in the Caucasus region. When the US decided to attack on Afghanistan, Russia helped the US in terms of intelligence and logistic, because Taliban was also a threat for Russia. Furthermore, the NATO-Russia Council was established in 2002. In addition, the US policy in Chechnya has also partially changed by supporting Russians, although in the 1990s the violation of human rights in Russia's attacks on Chechnya had been one of the criticism points.<sup>479</sup>

The relations with Georgia significantly developed particularly after the Rose Revolution, which led to the pro-Western leader Saakashvili's presidency. The US aid to Georgia increased and training programs were initiated for Georgian army.<sup>480</sup> In addition, Georgia's membership to the NATO started to be discussed. However, the Russo-Georgian War in August 2008 brought about some problems in bilateral relations. The US did not meet the Georgian demands for intervention in favor of Georgia in the war. The Obama administration, which came into office in 2008, pursued a more cautious policy in the Caucasus region, unlike the Bush administration.<sup>481</sup>

The US policy in Armenia has focused on the democratization of Armenia. It should be noted that the Armenian Diaspora in the US has an important role in the development of bilateral relations. Regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the US has been striving to resolve the problem through the activities of Minsk Group. It also contributed to the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia. On the other hand, Armenia's dependency on Russia hinders the further development of the US-Armenia relations.<sup>482</sup>

After the regional states gained their independences, the US began to provide them with financial aid. On the other hand, the powerful Armenian Diaspora in the US prevented the country from doing this for Azerbaijan. Hence, the relations between the US and Azerbaijan did not develop as with the other regional countries.

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<sup>479</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, pp.149-151.

<sup>480</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, p.161.

<sup>481</sup> Ahmet Öztürk, "Obama Yönetiminin Gürcistan Politikası: 2008-2010", **Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları**, Volume:5, Issue:9, 2010, p.19.

<sup>482</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, pp.161-162.

However, Azerbaijan's rich energy resources increased its importance in the eyes of the US<sup>483</sup> in time and the investments between the two countries have risen.<sup>484</sup>

As it is well known, the US has significant degree of energy needs and particularly after the oil crisis in 1973, it has been struggling to keep oil prices at a low level.<sup>485</sup> On the other hand, cheap oil prices increase the US consumption of oil given the fact that low prices made the establishment of oil fields in the US relatively more expensive, which consequently causes a rise in imports. In addition, cheap prices also increase oil consumption.<sup>486</sup> Therefore, it should not be surprising that the US is interested in the Caspian Basin and Persian Gulf which have more than two thirds of oil and 40 % of the natural gas resources in the world. In this regard, the East-West Energy Corridor, which requires cooperation among Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the US, was established to transport the oil and natural gas resources in the Caucasus and Central Asia to the Western markets by bypassing Russia and Iran. The BTC, BTE, the Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy and Nabucco Project (or we could mention TAP instead of Nabucco after Azerbaijan's decision) should be evaluated in this context. The joining of Kazakhstan to the BTC as a supplier also extended the cooperation. Yet, the US efforts for the diversification of energy resources seem to be decreased after the BTC Project.<sup>487</sup>

In conclusion, it could be stated that the US policy towards the Caucasus in the 1990s was mostly based on the transition of energy resources to the international markets and maximizing economic gains. Apart from the energy issue, the US has also supported the democratization process of the regional countries in order to limit Russian and Iranian activities.<sup>488</sup> Yet, after the September 11 attacks, security concerns gained importance. On the other hand, the US intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq and focus on the Middle East has reduced the importance of the Caucasus region in the US policy.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> Jim Nichol, "Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests", **Congressional Research Service for Congress**, Washington, October 2011, p.2.

<sup>484</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, p.162.

<sup>485</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, p.163.

<sup>486</sup> Tayyar Arı, "ABD'nin Gizli Enerji Politikası", **Yorumlar-Karşı Yorumlar**, [www.tayyarari.com/download/eskiyazi/abdinin\\_enerji.doc](http://www.tayyarari.com/download/eskiyazi/abdinin_enerji.doc), (28.03.2014), p.2.

<sup>487</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, pp.165, 167.

<sup>488</sup> Gawdat Bahgat, "Pipeline Diplomacy: Geopolitics of the Caspian Sea region", **International Studies Perspectives**, Volume:3, 2002, pp.314-315, cited in Kahveci, p.265.

<sup>489</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, p.171.

### 3.4.2. Policies of the EU

Although there are criticisms to the EU regarding its low degree of focus on the Caucasus region, it cannot be said that it has not been interested in the region completely. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the EU began to make policies towards the region on account of the region's rich energy resources, the potential to become a new market for the member countries and the need for securing the borders.<sup>490</sup>

At this point, it should be noted that the European countries began to use the energy resources in the North Sea after the oil crisis in 1973. Yet, the resources diminished in the 1990s and the European countries made agreements with Russia in order for the diversification of energy resources. However, this raised concerns about member countries' energy dependency on Russia, while their energy needs were significantly rising.<sup>491</sup>

After the Eastern enlargement of the EU in 2004, which make the EU's borders closer to the South Caucasus, the organization has become more active in coordination with the UN and OSCE for the resolution of regional conflicts.<sup>492</sup> The containment of Russian influence and fear of Islamic movements supported by Iran also have led the EU to harmonize its policies with the US.<sup>493</sup> On the other hand, it should be underscored that the safe transition of oil and natural gas to Europe through the most appropriate route is the main concern.<sup>494</sup> In addition, the reform of public institutions and the establishment of infrastructure for the integration of the Caucasus countries with the world markets are two needed things for the development of trade between the EU and the Caucasus countries.<sup>495</sup> The EU has several policy tools in order to achieve its aims in the region, such as Technical

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<sup>490</sup> Demet Şefika Acar, "Kafdağı'nın Ardında Saklı Kalan Komşuluk: Avrupa Birliği ve Güney Kafkasya", **Karadeniz Araştırmaları**, Volume:6, Issue:22, 2009, p.30.

<sup>491</sup> Kahveci, p.282.

<sup>492</sup> Acar, p.30.

<sup>493</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Geopolitics of Central Asia and The Caucasus; Continuity and Change Since The End of The Cold War", **The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations, Research Center for International Political and Economic Relations**, Ankara University Faculty of Political Science, Ankara, 2002, p.183.

<sup>494</sup> Acar, pp.30-31.

<sup>495</sup> Ali Resul Usul, "Avrupa Birliği'nin Orta Asya Politikaları: Sessiz ve Derinden", **Küresel Politikada Orta Asya**, (Ed. Mustafa Aydın), Nobel Yayınları, Ankara, 2005, p.195, cited in Acar, p.31.

Assistance to CIS (TACIS), Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation to Europe (INOGATE), Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) and Wider Europe-New Neighborhood.<sup>496</sup>

The TACIS program was shaped in December 1990 in order to help the CIS in the transition process from socialism to free market economy through the establishment of liberal democratic regimes and institutions. The fields like education, energy, transportation, food production and distribution, and the subvention to industrial and commercial companies were considered as the prior ones to provide aid.<sup>497</sup> In short, the EU is striving to constitute pro-Western regimes and modernize the CIS, which also includes the Caucasus countries, also for its own security.<sup>498</sup>

INOGATE, which involves the modernization of the oil and natural gas transportation systems, was initiated within the frame of TACIS.<sup>499</sup> TRACECA, also within the frame of TACIS program, was initiated in 1993 with the joining of the countries like Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The project aims at increasing the volume of trade and developing Central Asia-Transcaucasus-Europe Transportation Corridor.<sup>500</sup> The development of trade in Central Asia and Caucasus, and facilitation of transportation through land, sea and air have been main concerns of the project, which also makes cooperation with the BSEC in this regard.<sup>501</sup>

One other important policy tool of the EU is the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Through the ENP;

*“... the EU works with its southern and eastern neighbors to achieve the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration. This goal builds on common interests and on values – democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and social cohesion. Partner countries agree with the EU and ENP action plan demonstrating their commitment to democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development”*<sup>502</sup>

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<sup>496</sup> Acar, p.31.

<sup>497</sup> Usul, p.196, cited in Acar, p.32.

<sup>498</sup> Acar, p.32.

<sup>499</sup> INOGATE, [www.inogate.org](http://www.inogate.org), (30.03.2014).

<sup>500</sup> Zeyno Baran, “The Caucasus: Ten Years after Independence”, **The Washington Quarterly**, Volume:25, Issue:1, 2002, p.228.

<sup>501</sup> Usul, p.206, cited in Acar, p.34.

<sup>502</sup> “European Neighbourhood Policy”, [http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/index_en.htm), (30.03.2014).

The Action Plans for the South Caucasus countries were designed in 2005. Three states have shown different degrees of success in implementation of the plans.<sup>503</sup> Georgia, under the leadership of Saakashvili who was striving to make his country a member of the NATO and cooperate closely with the EU, has made significant progress in terms of liberalization and democratization. The country has benefited greatly from this process. On the other hand, Azerbaijan and Armenia have not distanced themselves from Russian influence as much as Georgia in this regard.<sup>504</sup>

Other than the ENP, the three South Caucasus countries were also included in the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) in 2007 and Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009.<sup>505</sup> The BSS, which was initiated in 2007, aims to increase the level of cooperation both within the Black Sea region and between the region and EU.<sup>506</sup> Likewise, the EaP was also designed to promote cooperation with the EU and its eastern neighbors. The main areas of cooperation in the EaP are political association, economic integration, visa liberalization and civil society.<sup>507</sup> As a consequence of all this developments, the trade between the EU and regional countries has increased significantly and made the EU the main trade partner of each country.<sup>508</sup> In the end, it can be stated that the issues of energy security, opening of the borders, integration with the global economy, reduction in security risks and resolution of the conflicts have constituted the points which Turkey's and EU's interests converge on.<sup>509</sup>

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<sup>503</sup> Nelli Babayan, "Fear or Love Thy Neighbour? EU Framework of Fostering Regional Cooperation in the South Caucasus", **Journal of Contemporary European Research**, Volume:8, Issue:1, 2012, p.50.

<sup>504</sup> Kamil Ağacan, "AB'nin Güney Kafkasya Politikası", **Stratejik Analiz**, Issue:51, January 2007, pp.48-49, cited in Acar, p.35.

<sup>505</sup> Haydar Efe, "Foreign Policy of the European Union Towards the South Caucasus", **International Journal of Business and Social Science**, Volume:3, Issue:17, 2012, p.187.

<sup>506</sup> "Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union and of the wider Black Sea area", 14.02.2008, [http://eeas.europa.eu/blacksea/doc/joint\\_statement\\_blacksea\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/blacksea/doc/joint_statement_blacksea_en.pdf), (30.03.2014).

<sup>507</sup> Efe, p.195.

<sup>508</sup> Efe, p.190.

<sup>509</sup> Aybars Görgülü and Onnik Krikorian, "Turkey's South Caucasus Agenda: The Role of the State and Non-State Actors", **Eurasia Partnership Foundation**, 2012, p.7.

### 3.5. CONTENDING ISSUES IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS BETWEEN TURKEY AND RUSSIA: FROZEN CONFLICTS

#### 3.5.1. Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

One of the issues in which Turkey and Russia have taken different stances is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Before explaining the divergence, the historical background of the conflict should be briefly mentioned for better understanding.

Nagorno-Karabakh, in which the Armenians were making up nearly 70% of the total population in 1989, was an autonomous region within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) in the Soviet period. When the dissolution of the Soviet Union began to be estimated at the end of the 1980s, the soviet of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast applied to the soviets of Azerbaijan SSR, Armenian SSR and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) for seceding from Azerbaijan and joining Armenia. The Azerbaijan SSR rejected this application by basing its arguments on the constitution of the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union took the region's control in January 1989.<sup>510</sup>

After the declaration of independence in 1991, Azerbaijan abolished the autonomous status of the region and linked it directly to the central authority. However, the Armenians in the region made a referendum and consequently indicated their declaration of independence. In 1992, the Russian forces withdrew from the region and then the war erupted. Armenia, with the help of Russia, did not just gain control of Karabakh, but also the wide area near it. Armenia did not comply with the demands of the UN for withdrawing from the occupied territories.<sup>511</sup> As a consequence of the war, 20.000 people died and more than one million people had to change their places. Besides, Armenia took control of 14% of the Azerbaijani territory.<sup>512</sup>

When there were signs of the spread of conflict to the whole region the Minsk Group, consisting of 11 members including Turkey, was formed through the decision

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<sup>510</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, p.401.

<sup>511</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, p.401.

<sup>512</sup> Thomas de Waal, "Remaking the Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process", **Survival: Global Politics and Strategy**, Volume:52, Issue:4, 2010, p.159.

of the OSCE in order to resolve the issue.<sup>513</sup> The Minsk Group was co-chaired by France, the US and Russia. This co-chairmanship structure was established in order for balance between the West and Russia in the mediation efforts. However, the conflict has not been resolved. On these days, as Thomas de Waal summarizes "...the 'Nagorno-Karabakh Republic' is a de facto Armenian entity with functioning institutions, but is not recognized as a sovereign state by any other country, including Armenia".<sup>514</sup> Throughout the negotiation process, Armenia has strived to maintain the status quo and hoped that this would gain international legitimacy in time. On the other hand, Azerbaijan has tried to take support of the international community and also prepare militarily for a prospective war to regain the territory.<sup>515</sup> In 2008, the United Nations General Assembly made a decision regarding the issue. Accordingly, Armenia has to recede from Karabakh and the Azerbaijani people who had to migrate should get compensation and return to their lands safely. However, the decision had no authority for enforcement.<sup>516</sup> The conflict has not been resolved. Even at the end of May 2014, two Azerbaijani soldiers were killed due to the gunfight in the border<sup>517</sup> and this reveals how possible that a new war could break out.

The Azerbaijani suggestion for the resolution of the conflict is that the Nagorno-Karabakh would be under Azerbaijan's control while having the highest degree of autonomous status. Armenia, on the other hand, emphasizes self-determination and suggests the independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh or unification of the region with Armenia.<sup>518</sup>

Initially, Turkey strived for being neutral and acted as a mediator between the two sides. Turkey's diplomatic efforts also contributed to the involvement of the OSCE in the crisis. However, the public opinion in Turkey was on behalf of Azerbaijan particularly after the Khojaly Massacre. Moreover, the President Turgut

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<sup>513</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, p.401.

<sup>514</sup> Waal, "Remaking the Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process", p.159, 164.

<sup>515</sup> Waal, "Remaking the Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process", p.160.

<sup>516</sup> Yoldaş, sf.145

<sup>517</sup> Anadolu Ajansı, "Ermenistan-Azerbaycan cephe hattında çatışma", 28.05.2014, <http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/haberler/335965--ermenistan-azerbaycan-cephe-hattinda-catisma>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>518</sup> Kamil Ağacan, **Güney Kafkasya**, Asam Yayınları, Ankara, 2006, p.12, cited in Yoldaş, p.143.



Özal's pro-Azerbaijan statements damaged Turkey's prospective mediator role in the negotiations.<sup>519</sup>

The public in Turkey made pressure on the government to become more active and support Azerbaijan. On the other hand, such a policy could create costs for Turkey in the Caucasus. Besides, Turkey's relations with Russia, the NATO and the Western world in general would be affected negatively. This conflict prevented Turkey from solving the historical problems and developing good bilateral relations with Armenia. In addition, the determination of energy routes caused new debates. Moreover, Iran, which has significant Azerbaijani population, began to support Armenia due to its concerns about Azerbaijan's nationalist rhetoric. All of these have made the issue much more complicated for Turkey.<sup>520</sup>

In the international arena, Turkey endorsed the position of Azerbaijan, joined the embargo on Armenia and avoided establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia. The officials also stated that the normalization of bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia could not occur without the cessation of Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani territories. So, the public pressure and criticism of the opposition parties forced the government to take a more pro-Azerbaijan stance in time. The aids provided by the Western countries to Armenia were also hindered. On the other hand, Turkey has not supplied any significant military aid to Azerbaijan. Besides, Turkey sometimes allowed the passage of humanitarian aid to Armenia, sold 100.00 tons of wheat and signed an agreement in November 1992 about 300.000.000 kilowatt/hour energy. Yet, the agreement was not ratified due to the opposition parties' reaction against it. Therefore, it was cancelled. The diplomatic efforts for the resolution of the conflict had also been maintained.<sup>521</sup>

At the beginning of the conflict the Russian Federation had no clear policy. Russia had been criticized for its inconsistent policies towards the issue, particularly by the pro-Russian political elite in Azerbaijan. The Khojaly massacre further increased the pressure on Azerbaijani government and led to the replacement of the government by more anti-Russian and pro-Turkish one under Elchibey. It should also be remembered that there were wide spread suspicions for Russian support for the

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<sup>519</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, pp.402-403.

<sup>520</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, p.400.

<sup>521</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, p.402, 404.

Armenian forces. Kavus Abushov puts forward that the Russian administration and local army officers in Karabakh took place on the side of Armenia, which is the reason for earlier Russian assistance to Armenian forces.<sup>522</sup>

Russia began to pursue a more solid and decisive policy towards the issue in 1992. The political elite in Russia perceived this conflict as a tool to achieve their interests in their bilateral relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan. For example, the Armenians withdrew from their demands for removal of Russian military bases in their territories by taking into account the importance of Russian assistance.<sup>523</sup> On the other hand, considering its assistance to the Armenian forces, Russia wanted the Azerbaijani side to join the CIS, allow the establishment of military bases and accept the joint use of the resources in the Caspian Basin.<sup>524</sup> Although Azerbaijan joined the CIS, Aliyev did not allow the presence of Russian forces on Azerbaijani territory or the joint exploration of the energy resources in the Caspian Sea.<sup>525</sup> So, even though Russia could not achieve much of its desires, it is revealed that Russia could use the regional conflicts to maximize its interests. For example, "... the BTC runs just 15 kilometers to the north of Nagorno-Karabakh and, although it runs underground, any renewal of the conflict in the region would still impact on global crude oil prices and could threaten regional security."<sup>526</sup>

In the following years, although Russia officially supported the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, it has increased its level of military cooperation with Armenia.<sup>527</sup> Abushov claims that Russia has not the capacity to resolve this conflict by its own means and moreover, the resolution of this conflict could remove the pressure on Armenia and thereby reduce its dependency on Moscow. Such a situation could cause Moscow to lose its closest ally in the region. The Nagorno-Karabakh

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<sup>522</sup> Abushov, pp.195-196.

<sup>523</sup> Dmitri Trenin, "Casus Kosovo", **Journal of Russian Foreign and Internal Policies**, Volume:10, Issue:6, 2006, p.12, cited in Abushov, p.196.

<sup>524</sup> Rajan Menon, "After empire: Russia and the southern near abroad", **The new Russian foreign policy** (Ed. Michael Mandelbaum), Council on Foreign Relations Press, New York, 1998, p.129, cited in Abushov, p.196.

<sup>525</sup> Abushov, p.196.

<sup>526</sup> Tracey German, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia: Security Issues in the Caucasus", **Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs**, Volume:32, Issue:2, 2012, p.225.

<sup>527</sup> Rainer Freitag-Wirringhaus, "Armeniens Aussenpolitik zwischen den Ansprüchen der Mächte-Grundlagen und Grenzen des Konzepts der Komplementarität", **Orient**, Volume:46, Issue:1, 2005, pp.67-92, cited in Abushov, p.198.

conflict helps Russia to maintain its military bases in the Armenian territory.<sup>528</sup> Moreover, Armenia decided to join the Russian-led Customs Union rather than increasing its level of cooperation with the EU.<sup>529</sup>

### 3.5.2. Georgian-Abkhazian Conflict

Abkhazians are one of the ethnic groups in the North Caucasus. The place they live, known as Abkhazia, is located near the Black Sea.<sup>530</sup> Although Abkhazia joined the Soviet Union with the same status that Georgia had, its status decreased to the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics of the Soviet Union within the Georgian SSR in 1931 by Stalin.<sup>531</sup> This was considered as the beginning of the problem.

Georgia was one of the countries that strived heavily for gaining independence from the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. The policies of the political elite in Georgia included nationalist elements and this caused negative reactions among the Abkhazians and South Ossetians living in Georgia. In return, Russia used this opportunity by provoking the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict started in July 1989. In August 1992, the Abkhazians declared their independences with the support of Russia. These developments led Eduard Shevardnadze to become the president of the parliament with the presidential authorities in Georgia and the country joined the CIS and resolved the problem about the Russian military bases in Georgia on behalf of the Russian interests. As a result of this, Georgia's internal problems and the war with Abkhazians ceased immediately. In accordance with the ceasefire agreement, 3000 Russian soldiers were deployed in the region under the CIS peacekeeping force, which caused the removal of de facto Georgian control over the region.<sup>532</sup>

Apart from Georgia's anti-Russian stance, there were other factors that led to early Russian support for the Abkhazian cause. First, the emergence of a negative image of Georgia in the North Caucasus would damage the integration efforts of the

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<sup>528</sup> Abushov, p.207, 209.

<sup>529</sup> Marianna Grigoryan, "Armenia: Customs Union Commitment Risks EU Cooperation Chances", **Eurasianet**, 10.09.2013, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67482>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>530</sup> Kantarcı, p.24, cited in Yoldaş, p.189.

<sup>531</sup> Kantarcı, p.82, cited in Yoldaş, p.189.

<sup>532</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, p.417.

Caucasus by Chechens and Georgia. Second, the focus of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, which is a political organization consists of militants from the North Caucasian republics of the Russian Federation, shifted from gaining independences from Russia to support Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>533</sup> Third, Russia thought that it could benefit from Abkhazia's strategic importance by using it for further influence in the Black Sea.<sup>534</sup>

Turkey had a firm position in this issue, which is to support the territorial integrity of Georgia. Turkey also prevented the Abkhazian secessionist people in Turkey from organizing on Turkish territories. Turkey has strived for the resolution of the problem by cooperating with the international organizations. Sending five military observers to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), supporting the Geneva Process for the resolution of the issue and bringing the two sides together in İstanbul in 1999 could be given as examples in this regard.<sup>535</sup>

The Abkhazian people living in Turkey, however, organized demonstrations and tried to make pressure on the government to take a position on the Abkhazians' side. Although Turkey's mediation offers continued in the 2000s, these were left unanswered by Georgia. Since Turkey and Georgia developed extensive partnership, Turkey had to remain passive and indirectly support the Georgian cause. Georgia's refusal to the Abkhazian proposal of the establishment of ferry services between Turkey and Abkhazia can be given as an example of this process. On the other hand, Georgia's strategy of isolating Abkhazia caused the Abkhazian people to take Russian passports and get under the influence of Russia. Turkey's attitude also made Russia emerge as an influential power for the Abkhazian cause. Although Turkey perceived this fact and tried to contact relations with Abkhazia at a certain extent – with the approval of Georgia-, these attempts have not led to any significant progress.<sup>536</sup>

Russia, on the other hand, has pursued a different policy from Turkey. Russia opened its border to Abkhazia and allowed the development of de facto trade. The

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<sup>533</sup> Abushov, p.194.

<sup>534</sup> Yaşar Kalafat, **Kırım-Kuzey Kafkasya Sosyal Antropoloji Araştırmaları**, Asam Yayınları, Ankara, 1999, p.175, cited in Yoldaş, p.192.

<sup>535</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II: 1980-2001**, pp.417-418.

<sup>536</sup> Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler", **Türk Dış Politikası Cilt III: 2001-2012**, pp.488-489.

employment of Russian retired officers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia was also supported.<sup>537</sup> Moreover, the people in Abkhazia and South Ossetia were granted the opportunity of getting Russian passports, which Russia legitimized by emphasizing humanitarian causes. Russia withdrew from its bases in Gudauta in Abkhazia and Vaziani, near Tbilisi in early 2000s. The other Russian bases in Georgian territory, one is at Akhalkalaki and the other at Batumi, were returned to Georgia in 2007.<sup>538</sup>

Even though this situation led to a decrease in Russian pressure on Georgia, Russia began to cooperate more intensively with Abkhazia and also South Ossetia. It should also be noted that there were two Russian military forces under the CIS in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. After the Russo-Georgian War in August 2008, Russia quickly recognized the independences of these two breakaway regions.<sup>539</sup> Furthermore, the plans were announced to establish bases in these two regions despite Georgia's criticism. Russia's presence in Abkhazia has also increased its influence in the Black Sea. Moreover, several agreements were signed with Abkhazia and South Ossetia in April 2009 on the joint protection of borders.<sup>540</sup>

On the other hand, an important distinction between Abkhazia and South Ossetia should be mentioned. Unlike South Ossetia, which wanted the unification with North Ossetia in Russia until 2008, Abkhazia wants a complete independence including from Russia, even though the cooperation with Russia has also been emphasized. This perception was also revealed during the presidential elections in 2009. Besides, the operation of the military bases in Abkhazia wanted to be made jointly by Abkhazians.<sup>541</sup>

Although the relations between Russia and Georgia began to improve after the change of government in Georgia, the tension regarding the status of breakaway regions still exists. For instance, when Russia temporarily expanded the security zone

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<sup>537</sup> Nicu Popescu, "Outsourcing de facto statehood", **CEPS Policy Brief**, Issue:109, 2006, pp.4-5.

<sup>538</sup> Vladimir Socor, "The Russia squeeze on Georgia", **Russia and Eurasia Review**, Volume:1, Issue:2, 2002, cited in Abushov, p.199.

<sup>539</sup> Nicaragua, Venezuela and Nauru are other states that recognized Abkhazia's independences. Although Vanuatu and Tuvalu also did the same, they later withdrew their recognitions.

<sup>540</sup> German, "Securing the South Caucasus", pp.1652-1657.

<sup>541</sup> German, "Securing the South Caucasus", pp.1657-1658.

of the Winter Olympic Games of Sochi to the extent of including Abkhazia, Georgia protested this act.<sup>542</sup>

### 3.5.3. Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict

The Georgian-South Ossetian conflict is one another conflict in the South Caucasus. Actually, the problem has its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the Caucasian War of 1817-1864, Russia divided Ossetia into two and gave the southern part to Georgia in order to take support of the Georgian feudal lords and maintain its control on the region more easily. In the Soviet period, this divided situation continued to exist.<sup>543</sup>

Similar to Abkhazia, South Ossetians strived to secede from Georgia at the end of the 1980s. The main aim was to unify with the North Ossetia and become part of the Soviet Union. The reaction of Georgia against these developments was repressive in political, economic and social aspects. Moreover, the Georgian SSR prevented the political parties, which have regional activities, from joining the Georgian parliamentary elections through a decision in August 1990. Clearly, this decision was made against Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Consequently, South Ossetians declared the South Ossetian Democratic Republic and then Georgia described this move as invalid and abolished the autonomous status of South Ossetia. The following events led to a war between the two sides and Russia involved in the situation as a mediator which paved the way for ceasefire. One of the important point regarding the ceasefire agreement is that the security of the region would be provided by a peacekeeping force consisted of 1500 people including Russians, Ossetians and Georgians.<sup>544</sup>

The important thing is that, like in Abkhazia, Russia has tried to use this conflict as a device to control the South Caucasus region and make pressure on Georgia. As in the Abkhazia conflict, the creation of a negative image for Georgia and directing the focus of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus to

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<sup>542</sup> BBC News, "Sochi games: Georgia protests as Russia expands border zone", 21.01.2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25830623>, (09.06.2014).

<sup>543</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, "Kuzey Kafkasya'da Anlaşmazlıklar, Çatışmalar ve Türkiye", **Beş Deniz Havzasında Türkiye**, p.89.

<sup>544</sup> Çelikpala, "Kuzey Kafkasya'da Anlaşmazlıklar, Çatışmalar ve Türkiye", pp.90-91.

the defense of South Ossetia and Abkhazia have been the main factors of this policy. In addition, similar to its policy in Abkhazia, Russia encouraged the employment of Russian retired officers in South Ossetia<sup>545</sup> and granted the opportunity of getting Russian passports to South Ossetians.<sup>546</sup> Furthermore, Russia has paid 660 Russian roubles (approximately 23 dollars) to South Ossetians that have Russian citizenship.<sup>547</sup>

As stated before, Georgia attacked on South Ossetia to regain its control over the region in August 2008. In the war,

*“Georgian artillery caused substantial damage to civilian residences and infrastructure and numerous civilian and military casualties, including reportedly, a number of Russian peacekeepers... The next day, claiming that an act of genocide and ethnic cleansing was occurring, and citing their duty to defend Russian citizens and their right to respond to attacks against their peacekeepers, Russia counterattacked, clearing Georgian forces out of the region in two to three days.”*<sup>548</sup>

Russia later invaded Georgia and the ceasefire occurred through the EU mediation under the leadership of then the French President Nicholas Sarkozy.<sup>549</sup> Then, Russian recognition of the independence of South Ossetia occurred. Nicaragua, Venezuela and Nauru are the other countries that recognized the independence.<sup>550</sup> Then, Russia established a base in the South Ossetia (near Djava and Tskhinvali) and in April 2009, made an agreement with it on the joint protection of the latter's borders.<sup>551</sup>

As in the Abkhazian conflict, Turkish foreign policy towards this issue has been based on the territorial integrity of Georgia. On the other hand, the Turkish politicians also suggested their Georgian counterparts resolving their problems with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These issues have caused instability in Georgia and put the sustainability of the BTC, BTE and the regional trade at risk. After the war in

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<sup>545</sup> Popescu, pp.4-5.

<sup>546</sup> Socor, “The Russia squeeze on Georgia”, , cited in Abushov, p.199.

<sup>547</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), “Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia”, **Europe Report**, Issue:159, p.18.

<sup>548</sup> S. Neil MacFarlane, “Frozen Conflicts in the Former Soviet Union-The Case of Georgia/South Ossetia”, **OSCE Yearbook 2008**, p.30.

<sup>549</sup> The ceasefire involves the cessation of the appliance of force and military activities, the allowance of the humanitarian aid, the return of the Georgian and Russian forces to their old positions and the start of international negotiations for the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. (Çelikpala, “Türkiye ve Kafkasya: Reaksiyoner Dış Politikadan Proaktif Ritmik Diplomasiye Geçiş”, p.107.)

<sup>550</sup> Tanrısever, p.191.

<sup>551</sup> German, p.1654, 1656.

2008, Turkey has not recognized the independences of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and taken position on the Georgian side.

### **3.6. EVALUATION OF TURKEY AND RUSSIA'S SOUTH CAUCASUS POLICIES**

As stated at the end of the second chapter, Turkish-Russian relations have improved significantly in the 2000s. The high level of bilateral trade and their common policies regarding the prevention of non-regional countries from involving in regional issues in their neighboring regions further contributed to the progress in bilateral relations. This rapprochement even led to some debates about the “axis of the excluded”, which refers to Turkey’s and Russia’s problematic relations with the West and their diverging positions from the West in regional issues.

Yet, the Russo-Georgian War in 2008, and later the diverging positions in the Syrian issue damaged the progress, if not deteriorated the relations. Şener Aktürk puts forwards that the change in the balance of military economic power between Turkey and Russia has coincided with Russia’s military actions and more offensive positions in Turkey’s neighboring regions.<sup>552</sup> So, these two factors caused the emergence of perception of threat in Turkey for Russia. In his paper, Şener Aktürk tries to measure the military economic power of the two states by comparing their GDP, GDP/capita, population, and active manpower in the army. Yet, revealing the differences in GDP and active manpower in the army would be enough to show the broken balance between the two states in terms of economic and military power.

In terms of GDP, “... Russian GDP grew much faster in both absolute and relative terms than the Turkish GDP since 2000” and “from a Realist point of view, this means that Russia in 2011 had more than twice as much as economic resources to marshal against Turkey in the case of a military conflict as it had in 2000.”<sup>553</sup>

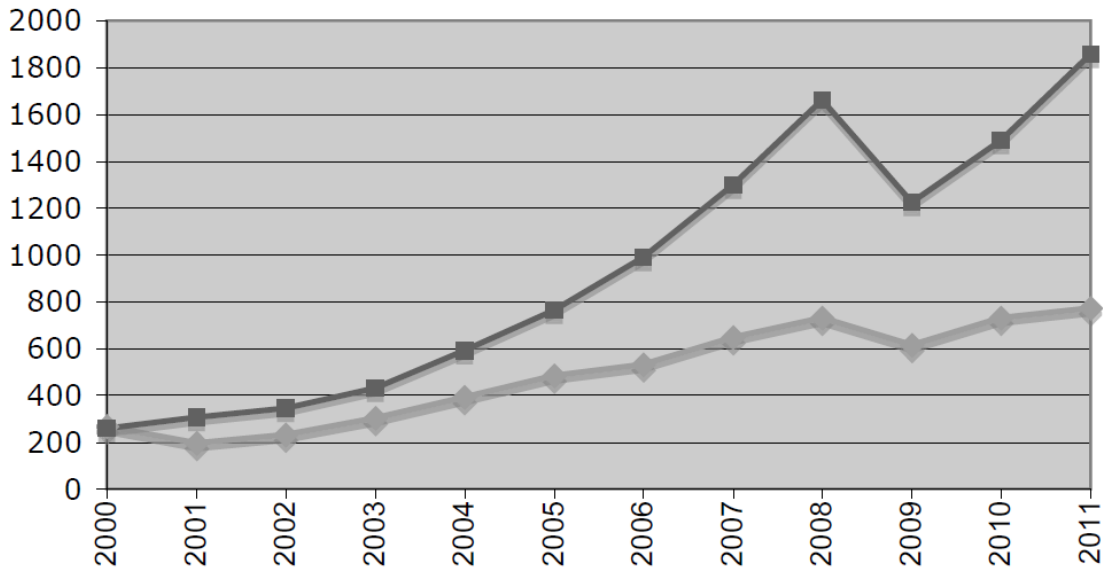
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<sup>552</sup> Aktürk, “A Realist Reassessment of Turkish-Russian Relations, 2002-2012: From the Peak to the Dip?”, p.13

<sup>553</sup> Aktürk, “A Realist Reassessment of Turkish-Russian Relations, 2002-2012: From the Peak to the Dip?”, p.14.



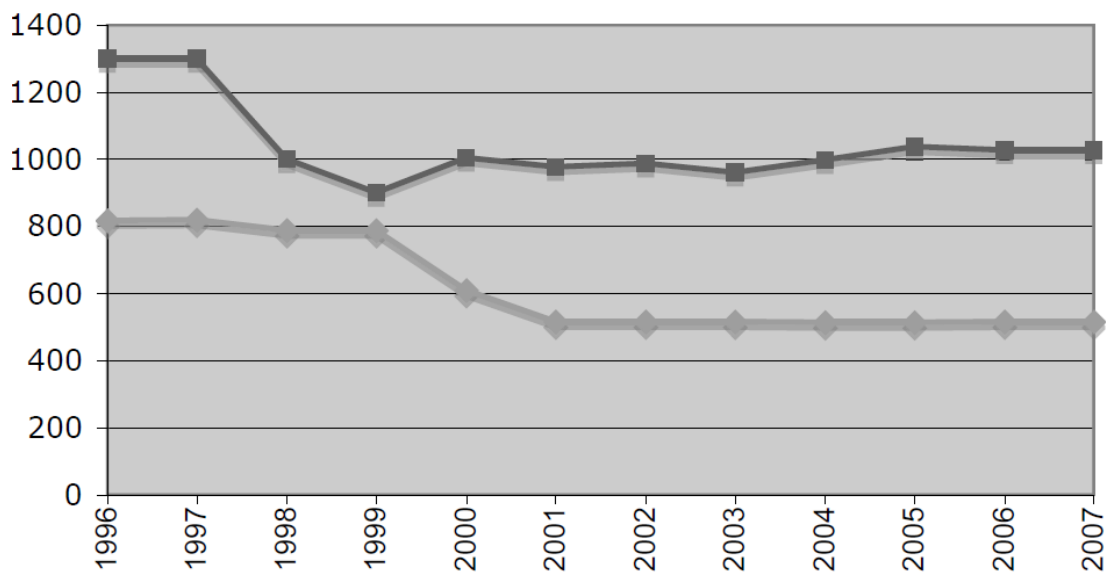
**Figure 3:** Russian (red) and Turkish (blue) GDP (in billion US dollar), 2000-2011



Source: World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD/countries>, cited in Aktürk, “A Realist Reassessment of Turkish-Russian Relations, 2002-2012: From the Peak to the Dip?”, p.14.

Other than the gap between the two countries' GDP, similar gap also increased in the 2000s in the Russian-Turkish military balance, which is to measure the relative differences in military power. The graph on the below compares the Turkish-Russian military balance between 1996 and 2007 in terms of manpower in thousands.

**Figure 4:** Russian (red) – Turkish (blue) Military Balance, 1996-2007 (Manpower in Thousands)



Source: The Correlates of War Project,

[http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/Capabilities/NMC\\_v4\\_0.csv](http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/Capabilities/NMC_v4_0.csv), cited in

Aktürk, “A Realist Reassessment of Turkish-Russian Relations, 2002-2012: From the Peak to the Dip?”, p.17.

The increasing imbalance in economic and military power in the 2000s did not stop the two countries to have made a significant progress in their bilateral relations, because the perception of threat did not exist. Turkey had accepted the Russian dominance in the Caucasus and Central Asia and the two countries did not want active US involvement in their neighborhood. In addition, high level of trade volume between the two countries paved the way for their cooperation. However, Russian military attack on Georgia in 2008 began to change the situation. Turkey has economic investments in Georgia and they are accepted as the strategic partners, along with Azerbaijan, in the Caucasus. In addition, the territorial integrity of Georgia is important for Turkey’s own security as it works as a buffer zone between Russia and Turkey.

In order to understand Russian policies, Mearsheimer’s arguments about offensive realism could be helpful. As mentioned in the first chapter, he claims that the geographical constraints, due to the stopping power of water, would hinder the emergence of a global hegemon and therefore, a great power should strive to become a regional hegemon. Russia, under Putin’s leadership, has tried to achieve this aim

while its power has been growing. Putin, firstly consolidated its power within Russian territory, won the Second Chechen War, threatened Georgia to stop the Chechen rebels in Pankisi Gorge, made flotilla exercises in the Caspian Sea, strived to increase number of its military bases in the FSU countries, suspended its participation in the CFE and increased its defense budget.<sup>554</sup> While Russian military and economic power has been increasing, it has become more self-confident, active and also offensive in its foreign policy choices. Even in Moscow, the politicians do not know that what Putin will do next in the territories of the FSU countries.<sup>555</sup>

It should be mentioned that Putin's speech at Munich Security Conference in 2007 could be useful for understanding Putin's aims. In his speech, Putin complaint about the US efforts to establish a unipolar world order and stated that the US presence in different parts of the world had not brought peace, but more violence.<sup>556</sup> He also added that the Middle East is now even more unstable than before. Besides, he criticized the enlargement policies of the NATO and questioned the reasons for it.<sup>557</sup>

In the Caucasus, Turkey has supported the independence, territorial integrity and stability of the newly independent states. Considering bad historical legacy with Russia, Turkish political elites wanted to preserve the independences of regional countries so that the region would be a buffer zone between Turkey and Russia. Furthermore, any instability in these countries could easily spread to Turkey, on account of geographical proximity and cultural ties. Thus, security concerns also exist in this regard. Although Turkey withdrew from its political ambitions in the region by the mid-1990s, the region has significant energy resources which have constructed the bases of Turkish foreign policy in the region since then.

Russia, on the other hand, wants to maintain its influence and hegemony in the field of energy in the Caucasus. Besides, Russian political elites have considered the South Caucasus as vital for the security of Russian territories in the North

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<sup>554</sup> Karagiannis, "The 2008 Russian-Georgian war via the lens of Offensive Realism", p.77.

<sup>555</sup> Mark Leonard, "The revolution in Putin's head", **Reuters**, 24.04.2014, <http://blogs.reuters.com/mark-leonard/2014/04/24/the-revolution-in-putins-head/>, (10.06.2014).

<sup>556</sup> Rob Watson, "Putin's speech: Back to cold war?", **BBC News**, 10.02.2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6350847.stm>, (14.06.2014).

<sup>557</sup> Thom Shanker, "Putin Says U.S. Is Undermining Global Stability", **The New York Times**, 11.02.2007, [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/11/world/europe/11munich.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/11/world/europe/11munich.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0), (14.06.2014).

Caucasus. That is why; Russia does not want any other power to become influential in the region.

It can be said that Turkey's policy of becoming a transit country and the diversification of energy suppliers is compatible with the US and EU's policies. Apart from energy sector, Turkey wants to increase its share in other sectors in regional countries and has strived to integrate the regional economy with the global market. In this sense, Turkey, the US and the EU have similar desires which also could contain Russia in the region. Considering Russia's offensive policies since 2008, there is a possibility that the situation could resemble to the early 1990s, when Turkey had the support of the West in the region and the Turkish and Russian interests conflicted with each other. As stated in the first chapter, this situation was one of the most important factors that led to the emergence of mutual threat perception between the two countries.

After its victory in the war in 2008, Russia signed cooperation agreements with Abkhazia and South Ossetia and deployed 7600 Russian troops in their territories, which is more than twice the number before the war.<sup>558</sup> In addition, "... by controlling Abkhazia, Russia has effectively added 215 km to its coastline along the Black Sea."<sup>559</sup> As pointed out in this chapter, Azerbaijan has become more cautious in developing its relations with the West. Moreover, the relations between Armenia and Russia became more consolidated. It can be stated that Russia could use the frozen conflicts to maximize its interests and therefore, Turkey should cooperate with international organizations and work for the resolution of regional conflicts through diplomatic methods.

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<sup>558</sup> Alec Rasizade, "A propos of the Georgian war: reflections on Russia's revanchism in its near abroad", **Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies**, Volume:11, Issue:1, 2009, p.17.

<sup>559</sup> Karagiannis, "The 2008 Russian-Georgian war via the lens of Offensive Realism", p.87.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the dynamics of Turkish-Russian relations in the post-Cold War period. The factors that have led to their rapprochement as well as the factors that have deteriorated their relations have been analyzed. The analysis has been made through the neorealist perspective.

Although Turkey and Russia had taken place in the opposite blocs throughout the Cold War, the end of the Cold War paved the way for new opportunities. Russia was dealing with internal problems and therefore, it did not focus on regional issues so much in early 1990s. Thus, it did not pose a threat for Turkey and Turkey wanted to develop good relations with the countries in its neighboring regions.

Considering the Turkic ties, the Caucasus and Central Asia regions were the main targets of Turkey not only for developing good relations but also having influence over. The US was also following the buck-passing strategy, which is supporting regional allies to deter the aggressor state and hindering the emergence of a regional power that could challenge the US in time. In this way, the US strived to reduce Russian influence and provide Turkey with its support for Turkey's regional aims. Russia, on the other hand, began to overcome its internal disorder in early 1990s, and with its near abroad policy, stood against Turkey in these regions. It should be noted that Russia perceives the territories of the FSU countries as vital for its own security.

The clashing of interests, coincided with the bad historical legacy, led to the emergence of mutual threat perception. Apart from these factors, disagreement about energy routes from the Caspian Basin to Europe, aggressive remarks of the politicians from both sides, the S-300 missile problem, their relations with secessionist groups in each other's countries also contributed to this perception. Eventually, this perception caused the situation of security dilemma and hindered the way for cooperation.

On the other hand, both countries were facing with serious economic crises at the end of the 1990s and in early 2000s. Yet, the volume of bilateral trade was increasing. Economic interests were forcing the two countries to cooperate with each other. Moreover, Turkey withdrew from its ambitious policies in the Caucasus and

Central Asia and this made a positive impact on the disappearance of mutual threat perception. This has been followed by the cessation of support for the secessionist groups with Ecevit's visit to Russia in 1999. After the visit, the two countries began to cooperate against terrorism. Turkey remained passive in the Second Chechen War and Russia adopted a constructive attitude during the capture of Öcalan.

In the 2000s, good economic and energy relations have constituted the engine of the rapprochement between the two sides. Yet, this factor has been endorsed by political ones. One of them is both countries' problems with the West. Turkey had been facing difficulties in the accession process to the EU and there were problems with the US regarding the intelligence sharing against the PKK. Turkish Parliament's decision about declining the US demand for using the Turkish territory against the Saddam regime was a significant factor in deterioration of the relations. Russia, on the other hand, did not want the enlargement of the NATO to the extent of its borders, and the interventions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo further tensed the relations. In addition to that, the Eastern enlargement of the EU led to the repeal of Russia's various agreements with the Eastern European countries and thus, made a negative impact on the Russian economy.

The Black Sea region was one of the areas that Turkey and Russia had converging policies. The EU wanted to become more active in the region in order for the diversification of energy routes and it also supported the democratization process in the regional countries. The US, particularly after the September 11 attacks, was striving to increase its presence in the region, considering the factors like the region's geographical proximity to the Middle East, arms smuggling in the region, containment of Russian influence, diversification of energy resources and having military bases in the region. Russia, on the other hand, wanted to maintain its influence in the region. Turkey wanted to preserve the balance of power in the region, thinking that otherwise Russia would develop more offensive policies and pose a threat against Turkey. Hence, Turkey was against the increasing NATO presence in the region and supported regional initiatives, like BLACKSEAFOR and Operation Black Sea Harmony. The color revolutions were also perceived by Russia as an attempt of the West against Russian interests and thus, Russian politicians reacted against those political developments. Turkey remained distant to such

movements by taking into account what has been done in Iraq. Thus, it can be said that Turkey and Russia did not perceive the situation in the Black Sea region as a zero-sum geopolitical rivalry and instead, they focused on cooperation and dialogue mechanisms.

About the Iraq War, firstly it should be noted that both countries had energy and commercial ties with Iraq. Moreover, Turkey had concerns that the war could lead to disintegration of the country and emergence of a Kurdish state. Turkish political elites were thinking that such a situation could also pose a threat for Turkey's own territorial integrity. In addition to its commercial ties, Russia also did not want a unipolar world order in which the US would freely pursue its national interests and therefore, used its veto power in the UNSC in this regard.

The US wanted the isolation of Syria from the international community. However, Turkey had developed good relations with Syria after the Adana Accords and the two countries were making cooperation against the PKK. The level of bilateral trade had also reached to the high levels until 2011. Russia had already good relations with Syria since the Soviet period and there were military cooperation agreements between the two countries. Moreover, as stated before, Russia did not want a unipolar world order, and Syria is one of the countries that Russia could make cooperation against the US.

In the Iranian nuclear issue, the US wanted to impose hard sanctions on Iran and called for the support of the international community. However, Turkey was making military cooperation with Iran against the PKK and PJAK and had developed significant economic and energy ties. Russia, on the other hand, had investments in Iranian nuclear energy sector. Furthermore, the two countries have been cooperating against the Sunni extremists in the Caucasus. Finally, like in Syria, Iran has been an important ally for Russia against the US.

Overall, it can be pointed out that Russia perceived its neighboring regions as vital for its national security. Russia's increasing political and economic power also led it to confront with the US. Turkey, on the other hand, thought that the US involvement in regional issues caused instability in the region, like the intervention in Iraq, which led to security concerns and economic losses for Turkey. Moreover, the US involvement in regional issues could make Russians pursue more offensive

policies due to their security concerns. Such a situation would pose a threat for Turkey eventually.

There were also problems between the two countries such as Russia's attitude in Cyprus issue, the Duma's decision of recognizing the 1915 incidents as genocide and the problems at customs. However, these issues did not make any significant impact on the relations. However, the ongoing crises in Syria and Ukraine have the potential to bring about the emergence of mutual threat perception between Turkey and Russia. The annexation of Crimea by Russia would change the balance of power in the Black Sea and this could lead to converging policies of Turkey with the West in time.

Putin's speech at Munich Security Conference in 2007 actually revealed the signals of Russia's offensive policies. The Russo-Georgian War in 2008 has underlined the Russia's capability of using regional problems for its own advantage. Turkey has significant economic interests in the region and moreover, energy resources in the Caspian Basin have an important role in meeting Turkey's energy demands. In addition to that, the region works as a buffer zone between Turkey and Russia. Thus, the third chapter focused on the South Caucasus.

As Şener Aktürk points out that the change in the balance of military economic power between Turkey and Russia, and in addition to that, Russia's military actions and offensive policies caused the emergence of threat perception in Turkey for Russia. The differences in economic and military power in the 2000s did not prevent the two countries from making cooperation, because the perception of threat did not exist then. Turkey recognized Russian dominance in the Caucasus and Central Asia and both countries did not want the US involvement in their neighboring regions. However, Russian military attack on Georgia, the country which Turkey perceives as a strategic partner along with Azerbaijan in the region, changed the situation. It is important to note that Georgia's territorial integrity is also vital for Turkey's own security since it constitutes a buffer zone between Turkey and Russia.

As Emmanuel Karagiannis puts forward that Russia, under Putin's presidency, has strived for becoming a regional hegemon, while its power has been increasing. After coming into power, Putin firstly won the Second Chechen War and



consolidated the central authority's power within the Russian territory. Then, Russia threatened Georgia to stop the Chechen rebels in Pankisi Gorge, made flotilla exercises in the Caspian Sea, tried to increase the number of its military bases in the FSU countries, suspended its participation in the CFE and increased its defense budget. It should be stated that Russia has considered the South Caucasus as vital for the security of the North Caucasus within Russian territories. That is why; Russia did not want any other power in the region that can confront with itself. In parallel with its increasing military and economic power, Russia has become more confident, active and also offensive in its foreign policy choices.

On the other hand, Turkey has supported independence and territorial integrity of the newly independent states in the Caucasus. Considering bad historical legacy and Russia's capabilities, Turkey wanted a buffer zone. Moreover, any instability in the region could spread to Turkey, given the geographical proximity and cultural ties. Security concerns have significant part in Turkey's policy towards the Caucasus. Apart from them, Turkey wants to increase its share in economic markets of the regional countries, diversify the energy suppliers in order to reduce its dependence on Russia, and integrate the regional economy with the global one. That is where the policies of the US, EU and Turkey are converging on. Considering Russia's offensive policies since 2008, the situation could resemble to the one in early 1990s, when Turkey had the support of the West in the region, and Turkish and Russian interests conflicted with each other. This situation was one of the most important factors that led to the mutual threat perception between Turkey and Russia in the 1990s.

After the war in 2008, Russia increased its number of bases in the region, consolidated its ties with Armenia and forced Azerbaijan to take more neutral position rather than completely becoming pro-Western. Considering Russia's gains, it can be pointed out that Russia could use the frozen conflicts to maximize its interests. Therefore, Turkey should cooperate with the international organizations and strive for the resolution of the conflicts through diplomatic methods.

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