İKTİSADİ VE İDARİ
BİLİMLER FAKÜLTESİ
Faculty of Economics
and Administrative Sciences

ATATÜRK ÜNİVERSİTESİ / ATATÜRK UNİVERSITY

ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ÇALIŞMALARI DERGİSİ

THE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDIES

E-ISSN: 2791-724X **Aralık/December** 2021 **Cilt/**Volume 01 **Sayı/**Issue 2

ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ÇALIŞMALARI DERGİSİ (UİÇD)

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Cilt : 1
Sayı : 2
Yıl : 2021
İngilizce Editörü: Hulusi Ertuğrul UMUDUM
Adres **:** Atatürk Üniversitesi İİBF Yakutiye/Erzurum
Posta kodu **:** 25240
Fax **:** 0442 2311907
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THE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDIES (JIRS)

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Volume : 1
Issue : 2
Year : 2021
Language Editor : Hulusi Ertuğrul UMUDUM
Address : Atatürk University FEAS Yakutiye/Erzurum
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ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ÇALIŞMALARI DERGİSİ (UİÇD)

THE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDIES (JIRS)

Cilt/Vol 1 | Sayı/Issue 2 | Yıl/Year 2021

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(UİÇD)

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EDİTÖRÜN NOTU

Kıymetli Okurlarımız,

Atatürk Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü akademisyenlerinin editörlüğünde hazırlanan Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışmaları Dergisi'nin (UİÇD) ikinci sayısını takdirlerinize sunmanın mutluluğunu yaşıyoruz.

Bu sayıda, uluslararası ilişkiler alanında hazırlanmış dördü İngilizce olmak üzere beş özgün makaleye yer verilmiştir. Öğretim Görevlisi Önder Çoban, "USA-Russia Relations in the Obama Period: Reflections of Reset Policy" başlıklı çalışmasında Obama döneminde Rusya ile normalleşebilmek için uygulamaya konulan "reset politikasını" ve bu bağlamda ortaya çıkan çıktıları Amerikan dış politikası üzerinden değerlendirmektedir. Dr. Ufuk Alkan ise "Europeanization of Turkey's Relations With Greece" isimli makalesinde Türkiye'nin Yunanistan ile ilişkilerinin Avrupalılaşmasını Türkiye-AB ilişkileri kapsamında ele almaktadır.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol ve Doç Dr. Şafak Oğuz, "Turkey and NATO: Questioning The Solidarity" konulu çalışmalarında günümüzde çetrefilli bir hale dönüşmüş olan Türkiye-NATO arasındaki ilişkileri güncel sorunlar üzerinden kaleme alıp müttefiklik ilişkisinin geleceği üzerine değerlendirmelerde bulunmaktadırlar. Araştırma Görevlisi Recep Kemal Kuzu, makalesinde "Ulusal, Bölgesel ve Küresel Güç Mücadelesi Bağlamında İran'ın Suriye İç Savaşı'ndaki Rolü" üzerinde dururken; Doktorant Enescan Lorci, "The Chinese Model of Cyber Sovereignty: Main Principles and Implementations" isimli orijinal çalışmasıyla Çin'in Siber Egemenlik Modelini temel ilkeler ve uygulamalar kapsamında incelemektedir.

Son olarak; Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışmaları Dergisi'nin ikinci sayısında makaleleriyle katkı sağlayan yazarlarımıza, kıymetli görüşleriyle değerlendirmelerde bulunan hakemlerimize ve yayın kurulunda görev yapan değerli bilim insanlarına katkılarından ötürü teşekkür ederiz.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Sait DİLEK
Aralık 2021

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

We are blissful since we have published the second volume of The Journal of International Relations Studies (JIRS) which was prepared by the editorship of the scholars of the International Relations Department of Ataturk University.

In this volume, five articles four of which are in English have been given place. T.A. Onder Coban, in his "USA-Russia Relations in the Obama Period: Reflections of Reset Policy" titled study has evaluated the "reset policy" which was implemented for normalisation with Russia in the Obama Period through US Foreign Policy. Dr. Ufuk Alkan takes the Europanization of Turkey-Greece relations through Turkey-EU relations in his "Europeanization of Turkey's Relations with Greece"

Prof. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol and Assoc. Prof. Safak Oguz in their "Turkey and NATO: Questioning The Solidarity" study has evaluated the Turkey-NATO relationship which became complicated today through the current issues which are about future of the alliance relations. Research Assistant Recep Kemal Kuzu examines "The Role of Iran in the Syrian Civil War in the context of National, Regional and Global Power Struggle" Enescan Lorci PhD Student, in his authentic work "The Chinese Model of Cyber Sovereignty: Main Principles and Implementations" examines the Cyber Sovereignty model of China by its basics and applications.

Finally, we would like to thank authors who contributed to The Journal of International Relations Studies (JIRS) with their articles and peers who evaluated the journal by their opinions and the scholars who work for the journal.

Prof. Mehmet Sait DİLEK
December 2021

USA – RUSSIA RELATIONS IN THE OBAMA PERIOD: REFLECTIONS OF RESET POLICY

Önder ÇOBAN*

Makale Geliş Tarihi/Received: 26/07/2021
Makale Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 22/11/2021
Makale Yayın Tarihi/Published: 31/12/2021
Atıf İçin/To Cite: Çoban, Ö. (2021). USA – Russia Relations in the Obama Period: Reflections of Reset Policy. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışmaları Dergisi, 1*(2), 94-110.

Abstract: The main theme of the article is the reset policy by which USA put forward her relations with Russia during the Obama era, and which constitutes a process of rapprochement in bilateral relations. In addition, the research question discussed in the article, to what extent has the reset strategy succeeded in USA-Russia relations? The reset strategy, which revealed a process of convergence in military, political and economic issues in bilateral relations, also played an important role in Russia's process of becoming a rising power. In this context, serious steps have been taken on issues such as disarmament, Iran's nuclear program, missile defense systems and cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The USA and Russia, which took joint measures against countries such as Afghanistan and North Korea, turned to a global cooperation process. However, Putin's return to the presidency in 2012 marked the beginning of the end of the zero policy. Particularly in the South Caucasus, the Middle East and Ukraine, a period of great disagreement with the USA has been entered. The annexation of Crimea in 2014 was the last spark that caused the USA to abandon the reset policy to a large extent.

Keywords: Barack Obama, Reset Strategy, Russia, Cooperation, Rising Power

OBAMA DÖNEMİNDE A.B.D.-RUSYA İLİŞKİLERİ: RESET SİYASETİNİN YANSIMALARI

Özet: Makalenin ana teması, ABD'nin Obama döneminde Rusya ile ilişkilerinde ortaya koyduğu ve ikili ilişkilerde bir yakınlaşma sürecini oluşturan reset politikasıdır. Ayrıca makalede tartışılan araştırma sorusu, ABD-Rusya ilişkilerinde sıfırlama stratejisi hangi ölçüde başarılı olmuştur? İkili ilişkilerde askerî, siyasi ve iktisadi konularda bir yakınlaşma sürecini ortaya çıkaran reset stratejisi Rusya'nın yükselen bir güç olma sürecinde de önemli rol oynamıştır. Bu bağlamda silahsızlanma, İran'ın nükleer programı, füze savunma sistemleri ve terörle mücadele kapsamında işbirliği gibi konularda ciddi adımlar atılmıştır. Afganistan ve Kuzey Kore gibi ülkelere karşı ortak önlemler alan ABD ve Rusya, küresel bir işbirliği sürecine yönelmişlerdir. Ancak Putin'in 2012'de yeniden devlet başkanlığına dönüşü, sıfırlama politikasının sonunun başlangıcı olmuştur. Özellikle Güney Kafkasya, Ortadoğu ve Ukrayna'da ABD ile büyük anlaşmazlık sürecine girilmiştir. 2014 yılında Kırım'ın ilhak edilmesi ise reset politikasının ABD tarafından büyük ölçüde terkedilmesine neden olan son kıvılcım olmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Barack Obama, Reset Stratejisi, Rusya, İşbirliği, Yükselen Güç

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Introduction

The relations between the USA and Russia, which were extremely tense during the Bush period and saw the peak of the crises with the Georgian War in 2008, gained a new dimension after the Obama period. Obama stated that he was distant to the cowboy diplomacy used by those who criticize the American foreign policy during the Bush era. In the USA National Security Strategy Document published on May 27, 2010, it was seen that the USA took a step so that the two nuclear powers, which had tense relations especially towards the end of the Bush Era, could turn a white page again (Dilek, 2019: 39). As a matter of fact, thanks to the strategy named as reset policy, cooperation was experienced on many issues, especially until 2012. Then, with the arrival of Putin, the reset strategy was damaged and bilateral relations entered a period of deterioration. The Obama government, which suffered a great loss of reputation after the events in Crimea in 2014, had to abandon this policy.

In this study, which comprises an analysis of the reflections of the reset policy on the Russian and USA relations, the period of 2009-2014 is discussed. USA President Obama's zero policy has been one of the factors that caused Russia, which is a rising power, to become stronger in its region. In addition, the mutual competition process in the Middle East finally brought the reset policy to the end. However, thanks to the reset, an important friendship process has been experienced in bilateral relations.

According to Khalifazadeh (2014: 83), the Obama administration's "reset" has been seen as an important tool to improve relations with Russia and to solve the problem of trust. The purpose of the reset policy was to replace disputes with cooperation on issues that are the most critical goals of the United States. However, in this study, the negative consequences of the reset policy and some crucial developments after 2012 have not been mentioned much.

In another important study, Aristova (2013) found it odd because of the Obama government's wrong policy, as well as the "big deal" between the USA and Russia as an element of the administration's efforts to reset it with Russia. But here, the development process and positive results of the reset strategy of the relations between both countries are not mentioned. Therefore, in this article, the effects of the reset policy on Russia's transformation to a rising power will be discussed.

In addition, political scientists at both sides of the Atlantic expressed deep concern about Obama's success in enhancing Russia-USA relations. For example, some have criticized Barack Obama for his policy of "surrendering" to Russia and entering into a "dangerous bargaining" process with it, even "not seeing evil". David J. Kramer (2010) spoke for the Washington Post as follow: “Obama would follow a 'Russia first' policy for the sake of Russia's neighbors and focus on 'Russia only' policy, overlooking the region or even leaving it”.

Similarly, Dr. Ariel Cohen (2010), Heritage Foundation researcher stated that “only Russia” policy harms the interests of the country to a great extent. He harshly stated that Obama's "reseting" was ineffective in enhancing mutual relations and that Russia was given a lot for the sake of American goals. As a matter of fact, he never mentioned the positive results of the reset tactic. On the other hand, Michta (2014a) stated that the “reset” strategy has disappeared and is weak in defending and advancing American interests. In addition, Barack Obama's "reset" has

shown America to be weak around the world, and this situation has brought up the miscalculations of Putin about America's investment in global responsibility and foreign policy strategies.

On the other hand, according to Charap (2009), the reset strategy was an opening tactic, not a long-term policy. The Bush government's strategy of alternating encirclement and distancing from Russia demonstrated the need for a plan and direction for immediate decisions. Therefore, this distinction is important in the development of the reset policy.

In contrast to the mentioned studies, this study will mainly examine the consequences of the Obama administration's relations with Russia in regions such as the Caucasus, Crimea and Syria. Yılmaz (2019) mentioned that, there was only a short-term improvement in relations with Russia thanks to the reset policy. This positive atmosphere, which coincided with the Medvedev period, gave its place to new problems after Putin became president again. The Obama administration generally had difficulties in reflecting the liberal internationalism and had to pursue politics based on real politics.

As a result, the literature mainly focused on both positive and negative aspects of the reset policy. In this study, the reflections of the reset policy in the regions which has not been mentioned before will be examined. Therefore, this situation will allow the analysis of the reset strategy as a whole within an analytical framework. As a result, different from the studies conducted, this study will try to analyze the crucial role of the reset strategy in terms of Russia's position in becoming a rising power. In addition, the effectiveness of this policy in the Crimean events will be analyzed and different findings will be obtained from the common literature.

1. Emergence of Reset Policy and Subjects of Bilateral Cooperation

The Cold War era witnessed an effort to establish power and hegemony on a global scale between USA and Soviet Union. As a matter of fact, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, both the Russian people and the newly independent countries found themselves in a new process. In addition, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the USA was perceived by the Russians as both an ideological and a strategic rival (Kuchins and Zevelev, 2012: 152).

Furthermore, like many countries in the world in the early 2000s, Russia under Putin administration also made efforts to balance the hegemonic power of USA. Although, after September 11, support messages were given to the USA by the Russians, some later developments brought bilateral relations into a competitive dimension. Bush's initiatives had led Russia to think that the USA's intention was to seek world domination (Efegil, 2008: 113). Moreover, the Russian-Georgian War of 2008 has deteriorated bilateral relations further (Rojansky and Collins, 2010: 2).

Barack Obama, who won the Presidential elections held in the USA in November of the year after the war, was elected as the new leader of his country. Obama, who ruled his country until 2016, abandoned most of George W. Bush's policies after his election as President. In addition to being a democrat, Obama, who advocated a liberal understanding of internationalism, started a new era in relations with Russia and advocated a strategy to reset mutual relations (Yılmaz, 2019: 1).

The 2010 National Security Strategy was created with an understanding of security in certain regions such as Afghanistan and Iraq, and in certain regions such as Afghanistan and Iraq, instead of a global scale (centered on the Broader Middle East in the 2006 Strategy) and an indefinite period of war in its 2002 predecessor. Thus, America gave up the gradual unilateralism of the Bush era by re-emphasizing its alliances and operating multilateralism. This strategy ended the "Transition Period from Unilateralism to Multilateralism" that started in 2006. But here, the USA has positioned itself superior in its relations with its allies in accordance with the hypothesis of strong side and weak allies (Kandemir, 2011: 144).

According to Kramer (2010: 61), Obama's efforts to improve the deterioration in relations with Russia were praised by Russians. So much so that the crisis process experienced after Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 has largely disappeared thanks to the reset strategy. Although Russian foreign policy officials viewed Obama's strategy with suspicion, an important turning point in bilateral relations emerged.

In fact, Obama's reset strategy has emerged as a must. As a matter of fact, the failure of the policies implemented under Bush administration, the consequences and economic difficulties in regions such as Iraq and Afghanistan put Obama in a different search. Indeed, Obama's first promises were to reset relations with Russia and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons (Yılmaz, 2019: 6). Similarly, Cohen (2011) argued that the reset strategy is an important tool to eliminate distrust between two countries. According to him, what was aimed by the Obama Administration was the establishment of permanent, not temporary, cooperation mechanisms with Russia.

In addition to these, the reset strategy developed by Obama has had important consequences for areas such as the South Caucasus region, Afghanistan and Iran, which are still key regions in the relations between two countries. As a matter of fact, by 2008, the USA - Russia relations were described by many states as the new Cold War. Actually, the strategies that the previous US Presidents (especially Clinton and Bush) tried but failed to realize have succeeded thanks to the reset strategy under Obama (Goldgeier, 2009).

As mentioned, many events that trigger the reset strategy are actually a result of the strategies implemented during the Bush period in the USA. The most important of these are Iran's nuclear program, NATO's expansion strategy towards the East, the missile defense systems planned to be established in Central Europe and the 2008 Russian - Georgian War (Khalifazadeh, 2014: 83).

On the other hand, important foreign policy writers from several countries have raised their concerns about Obama's reset strategy. Indeed, they emphasized that this strategy would be insufficient to improve mutually distorted relationships. In this context, they argued that Obama actually surrendered to Russia and even entered into a very dangerous bargain with him. Therefore, they blamed the Obama administration, by arguing that the reset strategy meant excessive concessions to Russia (Aristova, 2013).

Whatever comments may be made, US-Russia relations, which took a very bad turn after the 2008 Russian-Georgian War, underwent a significant transformation after Obama's appointment. So much so that, thanks to the reset strategy, mutual common interests and increasing mutual communication have become possible to establish various cooperation

mechanisms. In fact, the Presidential Commission established between the parties within the framework of bilateral cooperation has brought partnerships in many important areas ranging from agriculture to security (Rojansky and Collins, 2010: 2).

As a result, Obama's reset strategy for Russia, who took office in the USA after eight years with George W. Bush, created a new atmosphere for two countries reaching the dimensions of global cooperation. Expressing his satisfaction with this situation, Russian leader Medvedev followed his colleague in many ways. Moreover, Medvedev, speaking in the Russian Parliament after Obama's victory, gave warm messages about the West (Zygar, 2016).

1.1. Obama - Medvedev Collaboration: First Reflections of the Reset

The reset strategy developed by Barack Obama has been an important element of the changing - USA global strategy. In addition, the Obama Administration believed that the continuation of the George W. Bush administration's foreign policy strategies would harm American national interests. As a matter of fact, Obama, who opposed unsuccessful operations such as the invasion of Iraq, argued that the USA should be a more moderate country in order to be the strong leader of the World (Suslov, 2015).

Accorrding to Zygar (2016), the newly elected American government informed Russia that the environment of mutual crisis and competition that occurred during the Bush period is now history. Speaking at a conference first held in Munich, Vice President Joe Biden mentioned that the two countries should press the reset button in bilateral relations. Then, the foreign ministers of both countries, Sergei Lavrov and Hillary Clinton, in Geneva, pressed the symbolic reset button that will carry the relations between two countries to a new era.

After pressing the reset button, Medvedev first visited the USA in April 2009, and then Obama visited Moscow in July. As a matter of fact, both leaders made important statements after mutual talks. The most important issues dealt with in this context have been related to the transition of American soldiers to Afghanistan via Russia and the efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Barack Obama, who also had a meeting with Putin within the scope of this visit, gave the impression that the visit was important (Kramer, 2010: 61).

In addition, Vice President Joe Biden, who visited Georgia and Ukraine after Obama, touched upon the demographic problems of Russia, its deteriorating economic structure and its diminishing reputation in the region. Moreover, referring to the importance that Russia attaches to the nuclear weapons reduction process, Biden has addressed many problems faced by the country. Emphasizing that this situation is positive for American interests and that cooperation can be made on many issues, Biden gave the first signals of the agreements to be made (Spiegel, 2009).

In this context, first of all, a document was created between the parties regarding Russia's long-term development programs. As a matter of fact, this document, which was approved by the Russian leader Medvedev in February 2010, revealed the strategy of Russian foreign policy to carry out common economic policies with the Western world. In addition, this document aims to increase the interdependence between the West and Russia and to develop new investment opportunities (Blank, 2014: 333).

According to Charap (2010), one of the most successful results of the reset policy is the treaty signed between USA and Russia in April 2010 on the Reduction and Restriction of New Strategic Weapons (NEW START). This agreement, which was seen as the priority issue of the reset strategy by Obama, brought about a significant decrease in the arms assets of both parties. As a matter of fact, the signing of the New START Treaty was seen as an important opportunity for the future of relations between both countries. In addition, this treaty has shown the significant progress brought about by the reset policy between the parties.

In addition, with the New START Agreement, the military strategies of the Bush Administration have been changed to a great extent. As a matter of fact, approximately 1550 warheads were determined and some of the heavy bombers were included in these figures. In addition, restrictions were placed on the ICBM and SLBM type weapons of the parties and a limit of approximately 700 units was determined for such weapons (Blank, 2014: 336).

According to Suslov (2015), the most concrete success of the reset strategy was New START. According to him, this treaty, which has a very symbolic importance, is critical in terms of developing bilateral relations and replacing the START agreements signed previously. Moreover, according to Stent (2014: 221), the assurance that Russia will restrict its nuclear existence by this agreement has been an important element of cooperation. In addition, this agreement, which was seen as extremely critical for Russia's process of becoming a rising power, was deemed necessary in terms of international prestige. Mutual talks allowed Medvedev's country to take place on an equal footing with the United States.

Within the framework of this agreement, the parties also made commitments for the loss of approximately 70 tons of plutonium assets and the destruction of nuclear weapon depots (Philipps, 2010). As a matter of fact, these commitments have strengthened the environment of mutual trust between the parties. President Medvedev and Obama gave messages on mutual friendship at the APEC Summit held in Japan in 2010. Indeed, while Obama referred to "My friend Dmitri" and "a quality partner", Medvedev spoke as "we understand each other very well" (Stolberg, 2010).

New START has given a rapid impetus to the international struggle against the increase in nuclear elements and terrorist activities. So much so that this treaty, which prevented states without nuclear weapons from pursuing nuclear militarist strategies, also prevented access to civilian nuclear technologies. The parties, which made significant progress after this agreement, also tried to create a reliable environment among themselves (Charap, 2010).

Another important reflection of the reset policy is the establishment of a cooperation mechanism between Obama and Medvedev on the missile defense systems. The abandonment of Obama's missile defense systems project to be placed in Poland and the Czech Republic after the non-proliferation treaty had important consequences. As a matter of fact, the American Administration aimed to create a different missile defense system against threats from Iran. Moreover, Obama denied the claims that there was a Russian influence behind this decision. Frankly, then Defense Minister Robert Gates also made statements supporting Obama (Kramer, 2010: 65 - 66).

Cooperation in the field of missile defense systems has been one of the most critical issues in bilateral relations. As a matter of fact, an important mechanism has been developed within the framework of the European Progressive Adaptive Approach (EPAA) between Obama and Medvedev, which have turned to cooperation in this field thanks to the reset strategy. However, Russia's call for binding laws on this issue has not been evaluated by the United States (Deyermond, 2012: 77).

In addition to these, a request was submitted to the USA by Medvedev for a new security agreement in November 2009. However, the Obama administration partially disappointed Medvedev by arguing that security agreements were already handled within the OSCE framework. As a result, according to Putin and Bush period, the parties that made significant progress in this field gave great importance to this issue in terms of their national security (Ulyanov, 2015).

Apart from these, one of the first reflections of the reset policy was the support of the Obama Administration for Russia's World Trade Organization (WTO) membership process. As a matter of fact, the friendship process that occurred by the reset policy accelerated the membership negotiations (Blank, 2014: 334). In addition, the President of the Russian National Economic Council paid a visit to USA in April 2010. Moreover, commitments have been made by the Obama administration to provide all kinds of technical support to accelerate the membership process within the framework of Russia's Customs Union (The White House, 2010).

To summarize, the first reflections of the reset policy have brought improvement between two countries ranging from nuclear cooperation to the WTO membership process. In addition, the disruptions in economic relations during the Bush period have largely disappeared and the 123 agreements that were suspended have been re-enacted by the Obama government. After the reset, cooperation was developed in not only on these issues but also in the areas of engagement, education, culture and arts. According to Rojansky and Collins (2010: 3), this was one of the most important contributions of the reset policy made Russia becoming a rising power.

1.2. Strategic Cooperation Areas (Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea)

Mutual friendly relations developed between USA and Russia by the reset strategy have been the trigger factor for cooperation on strategic issues such as Afghanistan, Iran and North Korea. As a matter of fact, both countries have common interests in these regions has led the Obama and Medvedev administrations to seek common interests. In addition, according to Kramer (2010: 69), this situation has brought a short-term and not comprehensive cooperation mechanism to the agenda.

In this context, Migranyan (2009), the Secretary of the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation in the USA, first brought up the cooperation of both countries on sanctions against Iran. It has been argued that in order for Russia to continue to impose sanctions on Iran, the United States should avoid openly intervening in the former Soviet territory. Moreover, it was stated that the USA should not provide any support to the countries that are hostile to Russia.

With US support, Russia found it unacceptable for Iran to have nuclear weapons. Indeed, Iran was declared as a potential threat in the statement published in Moscow in July 2009 by Medvedev and Obama. The same statement made by Medvedev again at the UN General Assembly in September of the same year gave hope to the USA regarding the sanctions to be

imposed on Iran. As a result, the decisions taken against Iran were supported by both countries (Sestanovich, 2008: 12).

Russia then gave up the S-300 missiles it had previously planned to be given to Iran. One of the most concrete achievements of the reset policy was that Russia changed this strategy, which had previously given these missiles to Iran despite the reactions of the USA and Israel. As a matter of fact, the Russians, who were afraid that Israel would hit Iran, informed the Israeli president that delivery of the S-300s were abandoned. In other words, Russia has shown the whole world that there were cooperation with the USA on Iran.

In addition to these, Russia, disturbed by the secret uranium presence in Iran's city of Qom, supported the resolution 1929 at the UN Security Council under the leadership of the USA. In this context, cooperation was achieved against Iran's nuclear program. Moreover, Medvedev described these sanctions against Iran as smart sanctions (Ulyanov, 2015). However, the demand not to exceed the sanctions against Iran before and after the reset strategy was the only request of Russia (Blank, 2014: 355).

The resolution numbered 1929, issued after both countries' intense struggle against Iran's nuclear program, also created a preventive content on the ballistic missile program. Moreover, the USA and Russia stated that the failure of Iran to fulfill its obligations regarding the nuclear program, thanks to this decision, would be a heavy cost for the country. In this context, the strong cooperation between Obama and Medvedev has occurred in the matter of expelling P5 + 1 as well as enriched uranium in the country (The White House, 2010).

Besides Iran, another country in which a cooperation mechanism was created within the scope of the reset strategy between the USA and Russia was Afghanistan. As a matter of fact, the operations carried out by the USA and NATO against terrorist groups in Afghanistan increased the need for Russian support in this period. Russian support for this struggle was provided by allowing the free passage of territory and airspace for USA and NATO troops. In fact, the Pakistani Government's closure of the Southern Roads on the grounds that its soldiers were killed by the USA increased the need for Russia in this sense (Rojansky and Collins, 2010: 3).

Russia, on the other hand, adopted an agreement in 2009 that offered an opportunity to transport military equipment and supplies to Afghanistan over its airspace. As a matter of fact, within the framework of this agreement signed in Moscow in July, approximately 4500 flight rights have been given to the USA. Moreover, these roads opened to the USA by Russia were considered as an important alternative by the Obama Government and approximately two flights were made daily (Charap, 2010).

In this context, the transit agreement made to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan has facilitated the interventions of the USA and NATO (Kramer, 2010: 71). As a matter of fact, the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) paved the way for sending equipment to American troops in the region. In fact, approximately 65 percent of this aid was provided by the passageways established through Russia. In other words, Russia's support for this struggle enabled the USA to expand its routes. Moreover, Russia's support was provided not only by flight permits, but also by helicopters and fuel support (The White House, 2010).

According to Charap (2010), one of Russia's support to the USA was the recognition of the right to pass the railroad starting from Latvia to Afghanistan. Providing extremely advantageous facilities and convenience for the US to reach Afghanistan in nine days, this route enabled most of the equipment to be transported via Russia. Not only providing support through routes, Russia has also supported initiatives to prevent the spread of the drug trade in Afghanistan. Medvedev, who signed a joint declaration with Obama, ensured that Russian anti-narcotics personnel were sent to Afghanistan.

Another issue where bilateral cooperation came to the fore was North Korea. As a matter of fact, this country's nuclear weapon tests in May 2009 met with reaction from Russia. Russia even supported the UN Security Council resolution condemning North Korea on this issue. Not satisfied with this, North Korea made a re-trial in the summer of the same year. Russia reacted to this situation during this period due to friendly relations with the USA. In addition, Russia's low commercial and economic interests with North Korea was an important factor in its behavior in this way (Kramer, 2010: 69).

Later, the UN Security Council took the decision no 1874 on North Korea's nuclear tests. This decision, which clearly condemns North Korea's nuclear activities, also brought some sanctions to the country. As a matter of fact, this decision prohibiting the export of nuclear weapons to North Korea and the purchase of weapons by North Korea also stated that the countries that are members of the Security Council are responsible for the inspection of all prohibited products entering this country (The White House, 2010).

2. The Return of Putin: Dispute Process and Emergence of Major Conflicts

As mentioned before, after the emergence of the reset strategy, friendly relations were established between Russia and USA, and cooperation was achieved on many issues. For example, cooperation was made on nuclear issues, an agreement was reached on missile defense mechanisms, and joint steps were taken in critical regions such as Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea. In fact, cooperation was not limited to these, and the WTO membership process of Russia was supported, and friendship mechanisms were developed in all areas through various economic and commercial agreements (Rojansky and Collins, 2010: 1).

However, this atmosphere, which coincided with the Medvedev period, came to an end in 2012 after Putin became president again. According to Yılmaz (2019: 19), as a matter of fact, following the arrival of Putin, the Obama administration had difficulties in maintaining the liberal internationalism approach it had maintained in relations with Russia since 2009 and had to pursue a policy based on real politics. Moreover, Putin's re-presidency in 2012 has been described as a threat to Russia-US relations and a blow to Obama's policy of reset (Kuchins and Zevelev, 2012: 159).

In this context, Russia's reaction to the West after 2012 was expressed not only in political issues but also in national security strategies. As a matter of fact, the Putin Administration reacted to the US 'strategies, regional interests and NATO's activities (especially in the Middle East). In the military doctrine announced in Russia under Putin, NATO was described as one of the biggest foreign threats (Ondrejcsak, 2016: 19).

The upheavals that broke out in the Middle East in the spring of 2011 and called the Arab Spring, brought along some disagreements in USA and Russia relations. As a matter of fact, the biggest disputes in this region were experienced in Libya and Syria issues. The friendship process created between Obama and Medvedev contributed to the conclusion of an agreement for Libya in March 2011. As a matter of fact, common views were shared with the effect of the reset strategy in the first place because the Gaddafi regime was opposed by both countries (Zygar, 2016).

The dispute between the parties on Libya occurred after NATO's flight decision. As a matter of fact, Medvedev supported the UN Security Council's resolution on Libya, while Putin opposed the attempts to kill the Libyan leader. It should be emphasized that the disagreements that emerged on this issue and the developments in the following period greatly damaged the reset strategy (Ulyanov, 2015). Syria became the most important address of the conflicts that followed.

In fact, Russia's desire to maintain its strategic position in the Mediterranean region and presence of its naval base in the region were the most important factors in supporting Syria. Therefore, Russia's constant veto of UN Security Council resolutions on Syria was an important source of disagreements between Putin and Obama administrations. As a matter of fact, Russia, which is one of the biggest supporters of the Assad regime in Syria, has been the biggest obstacle of the US initiatives against this country (Wezeman, 2013).

In addition to these, the sanctions made by the UN Security Council against the Assad regime since 2012 have been vetoed by Russia and China. As a matter of fact, this situation caused the USA to contradict with Russia and to have different allies. In addition, the recognition of the National Coalition of Opposition and Revolutionary Forces in Syria increased the tension between Moscow and Washington. Moreover, the adoption of the Magnitsky Act by the USA paved the way for Russia's intervention in human rights violations in the region. This situation was the biggest source of the damage of the reset strategy in the Middle East (Pifer, 2015: 115).

Especially after 2013, Russia has become the biggest challanger of the USA-backed global system (Ondrejcsak, 2016: 19). According to Stent (2014: 246), the reason for disagreements between two countries regarding the Middle East was due to ideological and philosophical topics. USA efforts towards humanitarian intervention were at odds with Russia's strategy of non-intervention in internal affairs. As a matter of fact, since the intervention against Iraq initiated by the USA in 2003 was a source of failure and instability, it was not a coincidence that there was a dispute with Russia on this issue after 2011. In other words, the Putin administration opposed the USA policy in the region, fearing that similar results would occur.

The South Caucasus was another important region where the conflicts between the Putin Administration and the Obama government that damaged the reset strategy. In fact, the USA, which reacted to the Russian - Georgian War in 2008, established close relations with both the countries of the region and Russia with the effect of the reset strategy. Therefore, the USA, following a balance strategy between the two sides, wanted to cooperate with Russia against Iran to prevent possible threats in the region (Blank, 2014: 336).

In fact, although bilateral relations showed a positive course in general by the reset strategy, Russian foreign policy towards the South Caucasus continued to be a source of problems between two countries. While Russia defends its right to "privileged interests" in the land it sees as its backyard, it perceives the presence of the West and NATO in this region as a threat (Trenin,

2009). On the other hand, the USA implemented strategies within the framework of the open door policy to the region. As a matter of fact, the support of Georgia's NATO membership process caused heavy reactions from Russia (Medvedev, 2009).

Furthermore, although the reset policy did not cause much debate between the USA and Russia in the Caucasus region at first, Obama administration's strategies to develop military capacity brought the relations to a competitive dimension. In addition, the strategies of the USA to regain the reputation it lost in the region after 2008 especially disturbed Putin. Finally, after the change of power in Georgia in 2013, Georgia's close relations with the West brought Russia and the USA face to face once again. (Ulyanov, 2015).

In summary, the reset strategy that initiated many cooperation processes in bilateral relations has gradually weakened due to the conflicts emerged after 2012. As a matter of fact, the disagreement that first emerged in the Middle East and after the Obama government increased its influence in the South Caucasus, it reached a competitive dimension. According to Ulyanov (2015), although the commissions established between the parties provided cooperation, this was not sufficient. Moreover, the prominence of the characteristic influence of the leaders prevented the realization of some cooperation issues on an institutional basis.

As a result, the fact that bilateral relations moved to the dimension of disagreement caused the reset policy to cease to be a positive strategy. After this period, while Russia was described as a cooperative power by the USA, the Putin Administration took the opposite steps against the USA. The USA, on the other hand, continued its struggle not only in the Middle East but also in the South Caucasus in order not to compromise on regional security and not to leave its allies in the region alone (Ondrejcsak, 2016: 18).

3. End of Reset Strategy and Russia as a Rising Power

The relations and conflict process that deteriorated as a result of the policies implemented by the Putin Administration after 2012, entered a worse period with the events in Ukraine in 2014. As a matter of fact, this situation has witnessed results that deeply affect the reset strategy. Developments in the Middle East and Obama's policies towards Syria encountered Russia's response in Crimea. So much so that the Crimean events were an important message that Russia gave to the world. The Crimean events, a result of the Putin Doctrine, were experienced as part of Russia's strategy to revitalize the empire and to become a superpower again (Khalifazadeh, 2014: 87).

The first anti-government demonstrations in Ukraine in 2013 were met with criticism of the Ukrainian government's actions against civilians. Subsequently, the Obama Government condemned the Russian intervention and accused the Putin Administration of not respecting the will of the people in Ukraine as in Syria. Therefore, Russia was held responsible for the situation in Ukraine. Russia's response to this situation was a military intervention in Crimea and an occupation of this region. However, as the US reset strategy is still ongoing, it has not gone beyond efforts to seek diplomatic solutions.

In addition to these, Russia started military exercises both in Armenia and in the Caspian Sea in February 2014. Vice President Zhirinovsky spoke humiliating words for Ukraine while calling for Russia's invasion of Georgia (Khalifazadeh, 2014: 87). Fedunyak (2014) reported that

Ukraine would be attacked by Russia, just like Georgia, which suffered in 2008. He also described this country as a victim of Russia's new war approaches. In this context, Russia resorted to the strategy of using force in Crimea and the events flared up.

The events that continued with the annexation of Crimea by the Russians and the process of internal turmoil experienced created a great crisis environment in the USA - Russia relations. These developments, which dealt a significant blow to the reset strategy, put the bilateral relations in a worse process. In this context, the USA stated that Russia violated international law and that some sanctions would be applied. Subsequently, border violations between NATO and Russia took place and the tension reached high levels. Therefore, deterioration in USA-Russia relations deeply shaken the reset strategy (Kuchins, 2016: 7).

n addition, the annexation of Crimea and the Russian domination of Ukraine affected the strategic situation in the region. As a matter of fact, the Russians, targeting the territorial integrity of Ukraine, ignored the European security and military strategies. After this date, Russia was perceived by the USA as an important military threat. Because, after this incident, Russia has emerged as an important power not only in the Black Sea, but also in Central and Eastern Europe. The Putin Administration, which organized psychological operations, propaganda activities and various military exercises, turned to a very comprehensive power struggle (Ondrejcsak, 2016: 20).

Although the USA and NATO could not take very concrete steps after the Crimean events, they took some initiatives. Prioritizing economic sanctions, the Obama Administration also tried to prevent activities in the region with military unit reinforcements. For example, in June 2014, a financial aid of 1 billion dollars was provided to the region by the USA. In this context, NATO, which carries out activities to support the USA, has tried to take various measures on the Black Sea coastline (The White House, 2014).

After the Crimean Crisis, a general perception has emerged that the deterioration in Obama-Putin relations is incompatible with Putin's interests and poses an extremely threatening element to international security. Despite the Obama Administration's pressure on Putin regarding the Minsk 2 commitments, no steps were taken. As a matter of fact, the Ukraine issue and the events in Crimea were described as the biggest frozen conflict process that took place after the dissolution of the USSR (Kuchins, 2016: 22).

In addition, the annexation of Crimea by Russia has emerged as an unsuccessful result of the reset strategy used by Barack Obama in his relations with Russia. Indeed, the failure of this strategy has produced significant results in the long run. The State Department Rice (2014) argued that this policy is driving the country to failure and the country should regain its power in the international environment. In addition, after the Crimean crisis, Russia took action to balance its military presence in Armenia in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Indeed, it is inevitable to emphasize that the reset strategy is ineffective in improving the political complexity in the South Caucasus and in ending regional problems. Indeed, it is inevitable to emphasize that the reset strategy is ineffective in improving the political complexity in the South Caucasus and in ending regional problems (Khalifazadeh, 2014: 89).

In line with the analysis, it is possible to say that the turning point in Russia - USA relations was the Arab Spring and the developments after it. The conflict between Putin and Obama was later reflected in the Caucasus and the events in Ukraine. As a matter of fact, Putin, who described Medvedev as naive and inexperienced, fought to bring the Russian power in the region to the highest levels with the annexation of Crimea. In other words, Putin's re-leadership in Russia was the beginning of the end for the reset policy (Kuchins, 2016: 21).

The events in 2014 initiated an important change process not only in Europe and NATO but also in the US regional policy. As a matter of fact, within the scope of Obama's reset policy, Russia was wanted to be included in the international system under the leadership of the USA. However, as can be seen, while this process did not cause a great change in bilateral relations, it could not go beyond a short-term moderate process and some cooperation initiatives. Therefore, after 2014, the USA had to abandon this strategy and focused its attention on the developments in the region (Ondrejcsak, 2016: 13).

One of the most important consequences of the reset policy was that it caused Russia to strengthen its influence in the region and to consolidate its position. In addition, Russia put pressure on the USA to withdraw in the South Caucasus and increased its influence on the countries in the region. As a matter of fact, it was understood that the USA gave up its reset strategy and it was seen that it was insufficient to protect the interests of the country. In fact, the Obama Administration realized that the reset strategy made its country weak, and again turned to efforts to increase engagement activities in the regions around Russia (Michta, 2014b).

Obama Administration, which had to end its reset strategy, followed a strategy of increasing its investments in countries under the influence of the Soviet Union. In addition, it was understood that the USA should have a closer relationship with the countries in the region and it had to develop new strategies. Apart from these, the EU had to renew its Eastern Partnership project and NATO had to take a step towards tighter policies (Khalifazadeh, 2014: 90).

As a result, the US Secretary of State and the President of France paid a visit to the South Caucasus countries in the summer of 2014 in order to eliminate the loss of reputation caused by the reset policy. Thanks to these visits, various contacts were established with the countries of the region and it was aimed for the Western countries to regain the dominance in the region. An Obama policy has begun to emerge, wanting to show that Russia is against its imperialist goals. In other words, it has been understood that the USA should abandon its reset policy and show its global power again for peace.

Conclusion

Barack Obama introduced a new strategy that started a new era in the relations between the USA and Russia after this date. With this policy, which was first announced by Biden in 2009 and called the reset strategy, a process of rapprochement and cooperation was experienced in the USA and Russian relations, albeit for a short time. As a matter of fact, moderate relations have been experienced until 2012, thanks to the reset policy between the two countries, which cooperate in many issues. However, these moderate relations continued in Russia in 2012 as long as Putin became the leader again.

Thanks to the reset policy, the two countries have taken important steps in economic and political cooperation. In this context, serious steps have been taken in areas such as the limitation of nuclear weapons, combating terrorism, and cooperation in missile defense systems. In addition, important support was provided from the Obama Administration during the membership process of the World Trade Organization, which has an important impact on Russia's becoming a rising power. In addition to these, joint activities were carried out in countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and North Korea, and the bilateral cooperation process reached high levels.

However, after 2012, bilateral relations, which entered the competitive process again because of Putin, started to harm the reset strategy. For example, during the Arab Spring, mutual struggle started in the Middle East and especially tense relations were experienced in Syria. In addition, the competition in the South Caucasus region has reached the highest levels and the process of returning to the crisis environment in 2008 has started. Therefore, the reset policy has been called a failure for the USA and a negotiation process with Russia.

he reset strategy, which is referred to as an unsuccessful policy of the Obama administration, was largely abandoned after the Crimean incidents in 2014. As a matter of fact, the developments in Ukraine and the USA's failure to take a concrete step towards these developments increased the reactions towards this country. The USA, which supposedly reacted to the annexation of Crimea by Russia, left Georgia alone against Russia in 2008, this time it left Ukraine alone. Therefore, this situation weakened the reputation of the USA in the region and harsh criticisms against the Obama administration came to the fore. In addition, the Obama administration had to abandon this strategy and turn to a process of cooperation with countries in the former Soviet space.

From the point of view of Russia, our analysis has shown that the reset policy has important contributions to the process of this country becoming a rising power. The cooperation process experienced during the Medvedev period and the developments after it played an active role in increasing Russia's regional and global power. Russia, which strengthened its hegemony over the South Caucasus, annexed Crimea and put Ukraine under pressure. As a result, Russia, strengthened in military, economic and political terms, emerged as the party that was successful in the reset process, which can be considered as Obama's failure.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar(lar) çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan eder.
Disclosure Statement: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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EUROPEANIZATION OF TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH GREECE[*]

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Makale Geliş Tarihi/Received: 13/09/2021
Makale Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 22/11/2021
Makale Yayın Tarihi/Published: 31/12/2021
Atıf için/To cite: Alkan, U. (2021). Europeanization of Turkey's Relations with Greece. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışmaları Dergisi, 1*(2), 111-129.

Abstract: The Europeanization of Turkey's relations with Greece is significant in that it exemplifies to some extent the way the EU has influenced Turkish Foreign Policy, especially after the 1999 Helsinki European Council. It is also illustrative of the rational instrumentality underlying Turkey's Europeanization. Therefore, it is argued in the article that Turkey has been consistently instrumental in its approach to the Europeanization of its relations with Greece. In this respect, the main research question concerns Turkey's relations with Greece and its impact on EU-Turkey relations. To this end, the Europeanization framework is applied to understand and explain how EU conditionality helps EU member states achieve their national interests. As a matter of fact, what the EU obliges Turkey to fulfil before its accession is decided unanimously by its member states. The member states of the EU have the opportunity to shape the conditions set out by the EU for fulfilment by Turkey through conditionality. Therefore, it is concluded in the article that for the advancement of relations with the EU, Turkey needs to improve relations with member states.
Keywords: Europeanization, Turkish-Greek Relations, Turkish Foreign Policy, Aegean Dispute

TÜRKİYE'NİN YUNANİSTAN İLE İLİŞKİLERİNİN AVRUPALILAŞMASI

Öz: Türkiye'nin Yunanistan ile ilişkilerinin Avrupalılaşması, özellikle 1999 Helsinki Avrupa Konseyi'nden sonra, AB'nin Türk Dış Politikası'nı nasıl etkilediğini örneklemesi bakımından önemlidir. Ayrıca, Türkiye'nin Avrupalılaşmasının altında yatan rasyonel araçsallığı da göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, makalede, Türkiye'nin Yunanistan ile ilişkilerinin Avrupalılaşmasında sürekli olarak araçsal bir yaklaşımın etkili olduğu öne sürülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, temel araştırma sorusu Türkiye'nin Yunanistan ile ilişkileri ve bunun AB-Türkiye ilişkilerine etkisi ile ilgilidir. Bu amaçla, makalede, AB koşulluluğunun AB üye ülkelerinin kendi ulusal çıkarlarına ulaşmalarına nasıl yardımcı olduğunu anlamak ve açıklamak için Avrupalılaşma tartışmasına yer verilmektedir. Nitekim AB'nin Türkiye'ye katılımdan önce yerine getirmesi gerekenleri üye ülkeler oybirliği ile kararlaştırmaktadır.Katılımdan önce AB tarafından Türkiye'nin yerine getirmesi için belirlenen şartlar, üye ülkeler tarafından oybirliğiyle kararlaştırılmaktadır. AB üye ülkeleri, Türkiye'nin yerine getirmesi için AB tarafından belirlenen koşulları koşulluluk mekanizması kanalıyla belirleyebilmektedir. Dolayısıyla, makalede, AB ile ilişkilerin ilerlemesi için Türkiye'nin üye ülkelerle ilişkileri geliştirmesi gerektiği sonucuna varılmıştır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupalılaşma, Türk-Yunan İlişkileri, Türk Dış Politikası, Ege Sorunu

[*] This article is partly based on the author's master's thesis "The Europeanization of Foreign Policy in Turkey: The Case of The Aegean Dispute in Turkey-Greece Relations" (Marmara University, 2013).

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Introduction

Turkey's European Union (EU) accession negotiations have come to a halt, recently. The Europeanization of Turkey has become an obsolete subject. Rather than Europeanization, "de-Europeanization" or even "counter-conduct" have been voiced to define the current state of relations (Cebeci, 2016; Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber, 2016). Although the June 2018 General Affairs Council has noted that under present political circumstances there would not be negotiations for accession or modernization of the Customs Union with Turkey, the immediate post-Helsinki period was promising in terms of Turkey's European integration (Council of the EU, 2018: par. 35).

It is true that several domestic and EU level factors account for the current stalemate in EU-Turkey relations (noted below). Also, certain member states have been overly influential regarding EU-Turkey relations by uploading their national interests to EU level. For instance, the Council of the EU decided in December 2006 to suspend accession negotiations on eight chapters of EU *acquis* until Turkey applies the Customs Union equally to all member states, including to Cyprus (Council of the EU, 2006). In addition, Cyprus vetoes negotiations in six chapters of EU *acquis* and France in two chapters[1]. Prior to the start of rapprochement, Turkish-Greek bilateral differences had also hampered EU-Turkey relations. The Turkish-Greek rapprochement started to become Europeanized when Turkey's candidacy was declared at the 1999 Helsinki European Council. This means that it became an issue of the EU when bilateral differences between Turkey and Greece were referred to at the Helsinki European Council. Currently, bilateral differences over the Eastern Mediterranean also escalete the tension. Yet, this article's emphasis is on the pre-Helsinki European Council period. Post-accession negotiations period (namely, the period after 3 October 2005) is assessed briefly with reference to the loss of the EU's credibility in the eyes of Turkey[2].

The Europeanization of Turkey's relations with Greece is significant in that it exemplifies to some extent the way the EU has influenced Turkish Foreign Policy (TFP), especially after the 1999 Helsinki European Council. It is also illustrative of the rational instrumentality underlying the Europeanization of TFP. Therefore, it is argued in the article that Turkey has been consistently instrumental in its approach to the Europeanization of its relations with Greece. Turkey has been instrumental in its approach to Europeanization because it expects membership of the EU in return. Socialization of Turkey into the EU's rules and norms is not likely given that Turkey is not in a position to upload its national interests to EU level. It only downloads from EU level. This is mainly because of the fact that Turkey is not represented in the EU's institutions and decision making processes. What the EU obliges Turkey to fulfil before its accession is decided unanimously by its member states. The member states of the EU have the opportunity to shape the conditions set out by the EU for fulfilment by Turkey through conditionality. In other words, they are able to upload their national interests to EU level. Therefore, it is concluded in the article that for the advancement of relations with the EU, Turkey needs to improve relations with member states.

The influence of the EU on TFP gained impetus after the 1999 Helsinki European Council. This is mainly because of the fact that there was a lack of credibility with respect to accession prospects of Turkey, especially after the 1997 Luxembourg European Council at which Turkey's candidacy was not declared. Thus, in the absence of a credible membership perspective, Turkey believed that it had virtually insignificant incentives for Europeanization.

[1] On the Cyprus issue and current developments, please see: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cyprus, (https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-cyprus-issue-overview.en.mfa).

[2] On Turkey-Greece relations, please see: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations between Turkey and Greece (https://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-greece.en.mfa). On the Aegean dispute, please see: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Background Note on Aegean Dispute (https://www.mfa.gov.tr/background-note-on-aegean-dispute.en.mfa).

The policy of Greece to use the EU as a leverage against Turkey, *inter alia*, accounts to some extent for the EU's decision not to declare Turkey's candidacy at the 1997 Luxembourg European Council. Actually, accession of Greece to the EU in 1981 provided it with the opportunity to use the latter as a weighty leverage against Turkey[3] (Tsakaloyannis, 1980: 44; Aydın, 2000: 132). By using the EU as a leverage against Turkey, Greece aimed at forcing the country to concede from its policy towards the Aegean dispute and the Cyprus issue. Thereby, Greece sought to benefit from the conditionality mechanism embedded in the EU's relations with the third countries. This means that Turkey had to satisfy Greek national interests to advance its relations with the EU.

In the pre-Helsinki period, Greece was the only member state that opposed the referral of Turkey's membership application to the European Commission for an opinion in 1987, and it blocked final implementation of the Customs Union between the EU and Turkey in 1994 for political reasons (Uğur, 1996: 18). In addition, Greece blocked the forthcoming meeting of the Turkey-EU Association Council, and did not fulfil its commitment to drop its veto against the releasing of the Fourth Financial Protocol to Turkey in response to the Kardak crisis that broke out in early 1996. As a matter of fact, in some cases, the EU had to make some assurances in line with the Greek national interests to overcome the Greek veto. As a clear manifestation of its uploading strategy, Greece dropped its veto against the establishment of the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU in March 1995 conditionally only after the EU committed itself to confirm the eligibility of Cyprus for membership six months after the July 1996 Intergovernmental Conference which was to review the 1992 Maastricht Treaty (Veremis, 2001: 44).

After experiencing some crises in their relations following the 1997 Luxembourg European Council, Greece concluded that engaging Turkey in EU accession process could be a better choice for the settlement of their bilateral differences. In other words, Greece expected that Europeanization of Turkey through conditionality would pave the way for the improvement of their relations (Triantaphyllou, 2005: 333; Diez et al., 2006: 579). Greece was well aware of the fact that it had a comparative advantage within the EU given its membership. In other words, Greece was able to project its national interests to EU level, and induce resolution of its bilateral differences with Turkey in line with its national interests[4].

Thus, the post-Helsinki process of rapprochement between the two countries is not new but unique because of the EU's involvement in it. Its involvement rendered the process of rapprochement stronger because it provided the respective governments in both countries with arguments to justify their preference for the settlement of the Aegean dispute against domestic politics and veto players (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2008: 130). More importantly, accession to the EU became an important incentive for Turkey to reconcile its bilateral differences with Greece.

[3] Greece applied for membership in 1975, after seven years of dictatorship. The EU was particularly concerned with the implications of accession of Greece to the EU on Turkey-Greece relations. In its January 1976 opinion regarding accession of Greece, the European Commission argued that the EU should not be a party to the disputes between Turkey and Greece and therefore bilateral differences between the two countries should be settled through a pre-accession period (European Commission, 1976: 1). However, the opinion of the European Commission was disregarded by the Council of Ministers, and Greece could accede to the EU in 1981 without going through a pre-accession period (Tsakaloyannis, 1980: 35). Since then, Greece used the EU as a leverage against Turkey until the 1999 Helsinki European Council (Aydın, 2000: 132; Economides, 2005: 484).

[4]Another view is that Greece dropped its veto against Turkey's candidacy to achieve its goal of acceding to the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) Firstly, military expenditures wrought a heavy burden for the Greek economy at a time when the country aimed at achieving membership to the EMU Given that threat perceptions from Turkey have shaped Greek military expenditures for decades, accession to the EMU was highly dependent on avoiding arms race with Turkey. Arms race would end when the two countries resolved their bilateral differences. (Larrabee, 2001: 236).

1. Theoretical Framework

The 1970 Luxembourg Report which led to the establishment of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) has initiated a process of consultation on foreign policy matters between the Member States of the EU. After cooperation proved fruitful, the Member States aspired to further coordinate their national foreign policies (Giegerich and Wallace, 2010: 433-434). In addition, some structural changes in the international system increased the Member States' quest for a common foreign and security policy. These structural changes are i) the end of the Cold War; ii) the rise of new security concerns; iii) the emergence of a unipolar world; iv) dissolution of the former Yugoslavia; and v) the security implications of the EU's enlargement to the Eastern Europe (Tonra and Christiansen, 2004: 2). The Member States that became aware of the usefulness of cooperation in the field of foreign policy pushed for a common foreign and security policy. Thus, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty established Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU (CFSP).

Actually, CFSP is remarkably different from the EU's supranational policy fields. First of all, it is mainly intergovernmental being only politically binding. Therefore, assessing the Europeanization of foreign policy is rendered useless by the lack of concrete models for adoption and by the lack of the EU's exclusive competences in the field of foreign and security policy. This is why the research on Europeanization has belatedly penetrated into the field of foreign and security policy.

Theoretically, it is believed that cooperation in an intergovernmental policy field is hard to achieve. This is the basic assumption of intergovernmentalism which posits that the Member States will not sacrifice their national interests because decision making in intergovernmental policy fields happens through unanimity. Accordingly, any decision or agreement will perfectly reflect the core national interests of the Member States (Moumoutzis, 2011: 614). Such an assumption means that foreign policies of the Member States will not change because the core national interests of all Member States are represented in these unanimously made decisions and agreements. Conversely, liberal intergovernmentalism and rational-choice institutionalism argue that the final decision or agreement that is reached unanimously at any intergovernmental setting is the lowest common denominator of all Member States (Moravcsik, 1993: 500-501). There may be some mismatch between national and European interests because unanimity provides all Member States the equal chance to contribute to the content of the decision or agreement irrespective of their size and preferences (Moravcsik, 1993: 499-502). Thus, the final decision or agreement would not represent perfectly the interests of the even most powerful Member State. Another argument regarding mismatch between national and European interests is that national interests are not static because they change over time, thus a mismatch may occur over time (Moumoutzis, 2011: 614). Thus, Europeanization becomes relevant for foreign policy, as well.

The research on the Europeanization of foreign policy mainly deals with the implications of CFSP on national foreign policies, and it seeks to account for the transformation of national interests into European interests and vice versa (Cebeci and Aaltola 2011: 29). Europeanization in the field of foreign and security policy is described as being mainly "voluntary and non-hierarchical" because national foreign policies are Europeanized in the absence of a concrete model for adoption and in the absence of the EU's exclusive competences (Bulmer and Radaelli, 2004: 7). The Member States are only politically required to align their national foreign policies with CFSP. Non-alignment would incur no legal responsibility on them.

The Europeanization of foreign policy may have different implications on national foreign policies. The most important of these are i) political and bureaucratic adaptation of foreign policy structures and processes to those of the EU; ii) changes in national actors' values, norms, role conceptions and identities; iii) changes in the actual content of national foreign policies; and iv) overcoming of both domestic and external resistance to change (Tonra, 2000: 225; Manners and Whitman, 2000: 246-9). Firstly, bureaucratic adaptation is important to implement CFSP properly. Thus, national foreign ministries must have structures compatible with the structures of CFSP. Secondly, Europeanization becomes easier when values, norms

and role conceptions and identities of States converge withEuropean ones. Thirdly, the content of national foreign policies may be far more different from the content of CFSP before Europeanization. Therefore, the Member and Candidate States must incorporate into the content of their national foreign policies the issues in European Foreign Policy (EFP). Last but not least, the legitimizing strength of Europeanization may help national reformers to tackle domestic and external opposition to their reforms. In other words, domestic reformers may justify their reforms with the necessity of adapting to the EU.

Regarding CFSP, the Candidate States adopt the EU's rules and norms as long as they serve their interests better than the other alternatives (Hill, 1998: 38). Accordingly, the EU offers some rewards when its norms and rules are complied with by the Candidate States. In the context of CFSP, there are three sorts of conditionality that induce the Europeanization of foreign policy. These are "conditionality through political criteria", "conditionality through CFSP acquis" and "conditionality through de facto political criteria" (Aydın and Açıkmeşe, 2009: 268-269). 'Conditionality through political criteria' refers to foreign policy implications of political criteria, e.g. democratization and good neighbourly relations (Aydın and Açıkmeşe, 2009: 267). On the other hand, 'conditionality through CFSP acquis' means to align national foreign policies with CFSP (Aydın and Açıkmeşe, 2009: 268). Lastly, 'conditionality through de facto political criteria' refers to the fact that the Candidate States are obliged to comply with some rules and norms that are not part of the EU's political criteria, e.g. higher standards for nuclear safety that were introduced as part of the EU's conditionality at the 1999 Helsinki European Council (Aydın and Açıkmeşe, 2009: 268).

Accordingly, Europeanization of foreign policy in Candidate States can be defined as changes in the national foreign policy practices and in the structures of institutions that guide national foreign policy for the purpose of aligning them with rules and norms of CFSP upon the awareness that the core national interests are to be achieved better not individually but collectively in European policymaking. Furthermore, there are some intervening variables specific to the Europeanization of foreign policy. These variables are "ideological hostility to further integration", "domestic politics" and "international forces and special relationships with the third countries (Hill and Wong, 2011: 18). Political elites may be ideologically hostile to integration in foreign and security policy on the pretext that national sovereignty is contingent on an independent national foreign and security policy (Hill and Wong, 2011: 18). Domestically, the public may oppose to a common foreign and security policy (Hill and Wong, 2011: 18). In the international fora, unilateral political or economic relationships with the third countries outside the EU may prejudice the Europeanization of foreign policy (Hill and Wong, 2011: 17). It is noteworthy that intervening variables and the logics embedded in the Europeanization of foreign policy determine the patterns of the Europeanization of foreign policy.

2. Path towards the Process of Rapprochement

The process of rapprochement between Turkey and Greece and the Europeanization of Turkey-Greece relations are separate but interrelated phenomena. While the process of rapprochement started with the letter of the Turkish Foreign Minister, İsmail Cem to his Greek counterpart, George Papandreou in March 1999; the Europeanization of Turkey-Greece relations started when Greece dropped its veto against Turkey's candidacy to the EU at the December 1999 Helsinki European Council (Kotzias, 2009: 268).

The process of rapprochement between Turkey and Greece was sparked on 24 May 1999 when the Turkish Foreign Minister wrote a letter to invite his Greek counterpart to embark on talks to improve their bilateral relations. Actually, it may well have started earlier in 1996 after the crisis over the Kardak rocks broke out. As a matter of fact, Costas Simitis who saw engaging Turkey in EU accession process as a prerequisite for the improvement of relations with Turkey took the leadership of Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) in January 1996 (Athanassopoulou, 1997: 88). However, rapprochement did not materialize

until 1999 mainly because of the intra-party opposition to rapprochement in Greece (Rumelili, 2007: 118). For instance, Cem approached his Greek counterpart, Theodoros Pangalos from PASOK for rapprochement earlier in 1998. However, the Greek Foreign Minister did not welcome the initiative. Therefore, the process of rapprochement could materialize only with the letter of Cem to G. Papandreou after the March 1999 Kosovo crisis[5].

The first incident with potential to mar bilateral relations after the 1996 crisis over the Kardak rocks took place in January 1997 when Cyprus announced that it was planning to buy S-300 missiles from Russia to defend the new airbase on its soil constructed for the landing of Greek fighter aircraft for refuelling and rearming purposes in line with the joint defence pact concluded in 1993 (Diez, 2002: 146). Turkey reacted noting that it would destroy them through an air strike in case they are placed on Cyprus (*Milliyet*, 1997). However, a crisis was prevented from emerging when Greece and Cyprus decided to install S-300 missiles not on Cyprus but on the Greek island of Crete. A tentative attempt at improving relations between Turkey and Greece took place subsequently when the President of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel and the Prime Minister of Greece, Costas Simitis met in Madrid in July 1997 during a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) meeting to discuss how to lead their future relations on a peaceful basis (Kut, 2001: 263). The most tangible outcome of the meeting became a joint declaration which promulgated six basic principles for the future of Turkey-Greece relations. These are: i) mutual commitment to peace, security and the continuing development of good neighbourly relations; ii) respect for each other's sovereignty; iii) respect for the principles of international law and international agreements; iv) respect for each other's legitimate, vital interests and concerns in the Aegean which are of great importance for their security and national sovereignty; v) commitment to refrain from unilateral acts on the basis of mutual respect and willingness to avoid conflicts arising from misunderstanding; and vi) a commitment to settle disputes by peaceful means based on mutual consent and without the use of force or threat of force (Madrid Declaration, 1997: 1).

The joint declaration is important in that it shows how the two countries wanted to lead their future relations. In other words, it is illustrative of how Turkey and Greece viewed each other and of what they understood from good neighbourly relations. It is understood from references in the joint declaration to 'respect for other's sovereignty' that the two countries viewed the Aegean dispute as a sovereignty issue. Actually, it may be argued that the more an issue is associated with sovereignty the more difficult becomes its settlement given that sovereign rights are deemed non-negotiable.

Furthermore, the emphasis on 'respect for each other's legitimate vital interests and concerns in the Aegean' illustrates that both Turkey and Greece viewed their vital interests prejudiced in the Aegean by the activities of the other side. Both of them viewed some of what the other side calls its 'vital interests' as illegitimate given the emphasis on the 'legitimacy of vital interests'. For instance, Greece views having a 10-nautical-mile national airspace for its islands in the Aegean as a vital interest. For Turkey, this is illegitimate.

On the other hand, there is also the issue of unilateral acts. It is clear that by 'unilateral acts' the two countries referred to their respective previous activities on the continental shelf of the Aegean Sea. Actually, the two countries had already committed themselves to refrain from unilateral acts at the 1976 Bern Agreement. This shows that principles for the settlement of the Aegean dispute emerged throughout years.

Lastly, by referring in the joint declaration to the peaceful settlement of disputes on the basis of 'mutual consent' and 'without use of force or threat of force', the two countries may have meant their previous experiences. Turkey may have referred by 'mutual consent' to the unilateral referral of Greece to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) the delimitation of the continental shelf in 1976. Greece may have

[5] The March 1999 Kosovo Crisis is qualified as the ultimate "triggering event" that enabled the process of rapprochement (Heraclides, 2010: 145).

referred to the 1995 *casus belli* resolution of Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) by 'without use of force or threat of force'.

However, the joint declaration was not potent enough to reconcile bilateral differences mainly because of the incidents that ensued. Firstly, relations between Turkey and Greece and the EU deteriorated following the confirmation by the EU of the eligibility of Cyprus for membership in early 1997 as it had promised Greece in 1995 in return for dropping its veto against the Customs Union with Turkey. Relations further deteriorated when the EU declared the candidacy of Cyprus at the 1997 Luxembourg European Council (European Council, 1997: par. 11). At the same time, Greece continued its veto on the Fourth Financial Protocol during the 1997 Luxembourg European Council. Furthermore, while Turkey hoped for candidacy status from the 1997 Luxembourg European Council, the EU confined itself to confirm its eligibility for membership mainly because of the country's problematic relations with Greece and Cyprus (European Council, 1997: par. 31). However, Turkey's eligibility for membership had already been confirmed in the 1989 Commission avis on Turkey (European Commission, 1989: par. 13). The 1997 Luxembourg European Council repeated the obvious and therefore did not satisfy Turkey. Turkey-EU relations were strained to the extent that Turkey threatened the Union with suspending political relations (Hale and Avcı, 2002: 41).

Although Turkey's candidacy was not declared at the 1997 Luxembourg European Council, the European Commission issued a European Strategy for Turkey in March 1998 "to prepare Turkey for accession by bringing it closer to the European Union in every field" (European Commission, 1998: 1). To that end, it is stated in the Strategy that the possibilities afforded by the 1963 Ankara Agreement should be developed, the Customs Union between the EU and Turkey should be intensified, the financial cooperation should be implemented and Turkey's participation in certain EU programmes and certain agencies should be assured (European Commission, 1998: 1). In addition, Turkey was invited to the upcoming Pan-European Meeting (European Commission, 1998: 1). However, to show its disapproval of not being declared a candidate and of candidacy of Cyprus to the EU, Turkey did not attend the March 1998 Pan-European Meeting that was held in London, the United Kingdom (UK).

Secondly, the capture of Abdullah Öcalan in February 1999, the leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) which has been waging separatist terrorist attacks against Turkey since 1984, with a Greek Cypriot passport on his way to the airport in Nairobi, Kenya upon leaving the Greek embassy after being provided with shelter endangered bilateral relations seriously. The Öcalan affair had significant domestic implications both in Turkey and Greece. As a matter of fact, Simitis was facing a great pressure to resign because of the engagement of the Greek government in such an affair. However, the Greek Prime Minister did not resign but dismissed Pangalos and Ministers of Internal Affairs and Public Order for their involvement. Dismissal of the Greek Foreign Minister had particular resonance for Turkey-Greece relations as G. Papandreou, alternate Greek Foreign Minister known for his willingness to improve Turkey-Greece relations became the new Greek Foreign Minister (Öniş, 2003: 171).

Domestic implications of the Öcalan affair in Turkey were notable, too. Süleyman Demirel criticized Greece, harshly. The Turkish President even hinted Turkey's right of self-defence (*Milliyet*, 1999). In response, Greece put its troops on alert along its border with Turkey (Ker-Lindsay, 2007: 38). The two countries did not end up fighting. Nonetheless, Turkey did not rely on military means but diplomacy, and complained about the act of Greece before the United Nations (UN) via a letter (*Milliyet*, 1999a). On the other hand, rise of G. Papandreou to foreign ministry marked a new beginning in Turkey-Greece relations as both the new Greek Foreign Minister and his Turkish counterpart were willing to foster good neighbourly relations (Öniş, 2003: 171).

Willingness of the two Foreign Ministers for good neighbourly relations converged when the Kosovo crisis broke out in March 1999. The 1999 Kosovo crisis concerned both countries given their geographical proximity to the region (Nachmani, 2002: 116; Öniş and Yılmaz, 2008: 127). This proximity made them vulnerable to the consequences of the crisis. The 1999 Kosovo crisis is important in that it provided the two Foreign Ministers with intense contacts on how to cooperate on the consequences of the crisis. These contacts led to a rapport between the two statesmen (Heraclides, 2010: 145). Thereafter, they came to the conclusion that they would better cooperate with each other than confront to resolve their bilateral differences.

The first step came from the Turkish Foreign Minister who wrote a letter to his Greek counterpart on 24 May 1999 to "share some views on ways in which to ameliorate bilateral relations" (Letter from Mr Ismail Cem, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey, to Mr George Papandreou, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Greece, 24 May 1999). In his letter, the Turkish Foreign Minister proposed to conclude an agreement to combat terrorism in addition to developing a plan to reconcile bilateral differences between the two countries through resorting to all peaceful means referred to in the UN Charter. In the letter, it was implied that Greece had to detach itself from supporting terrorism if it desired to improve its relations with Turkey.

Actually, Turkey expected certain benefits from improving its relations with Greece, e.g. to "limit the danger of a crisis in the Aegean" and "put international pressure on Greece to abandon its veto against Turkey's candidacy to the EU" (Heraclides, 2010: 145). This means that fostering good neighbourly relations was viewed as necessary to prevent future crises from emerging in the Aegean and to overcome the Greek veto against Turkey's candidacy.

In response to the letter, G. Papandreou called his Turkish counterpart to congratulate his second-term in office as Foreign Minister under the new government in power since May 1999 and asked for some time before an official reply to the letter. The June 1999 Cologne European Council convened before G. Papandreou officially replied. Whether Greece would continue its veto against Turkey's candidacy was on the top of the agenda of the 1999 Cologne European Council (Ker-Lindsay, 2007: 47). Actually, Turkey expected Greece drop its veto in the face of the recent developments in their relations. However, it soon became clear that Greece was not in a position to drop its veto on the grounds that Turkey had not still agreed to refer the delimitation of the continental shelf to the ICJ (Ker-Lindsay, 2007: 48). In the face of the stance of Greece, the EU committed itself to review the prospects of Turkey's candidacy at the 1999 Helsinki European Council (European Council, 1999: par. 59). Meanwhile, G. Papandreou clarified that Greece would not have opposed to Turkey's candidacy in case it had fulfilled the same criteria applied to all other Candidate States (*Athens News Agency*, 1999). It was the first sign of the fact that Greece no longer wanted to use the EU as a leverage against Turkey to achieve its national interests.

Meanwhile, the Greek Foreign Minister officially replied to the letter of İsmail Cem on 25 June 1999. G. Papandreou invited Turkey to initiate dialogue on issues of low political significance like tourism, environment, culture, organized crime, trade, regional issues and energy transfer lines (Letter from Mr George Papandreou, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Greece, to Mr Ismail Cem, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey, 25 June 1999). Turkey welcomed the letter. Soon afterwards, The Turkish Foreign Ministry announced a meeting between the two Foreign Ministers in New York at a UN Secretary-General sponsored meeting over Kosovo on 30 June 1999. The two Foreign Ministers met as scheduled, and agreed to hold meetings for dialogue and sign bilateral agreements on cooperation on the issues specified in the letter of Papandreou (Heraclides, 2010: 146). Accordingly, delegations from the two countries started to hold bilateral talks to foster cooperation on the aforementioned issues of low political significance.

Subsequent to the talks between the two delegations, Foreign Ministers of the two countries signed several bilateral agreements on cooperation[6].

There happened an earthquake measuring 7.4 on Richter scale on 17 August 1999 in İzmit, Turkey. Soon after the disaster, the Greek Foreign Minister called his Turkish counterpart to offer assistance. It was the first call Turkey received (*Athens News Agency*, 1999a). The Greek rescue team was dispatched to Turkey together with a number of doctors, nurses, seismologists and firefighting planes (*Hürriyet*, 1999). Turkey offered its assistance to Greece when an earthquake measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale hit Athens on 7 September 1999. Turkey dispatched its rescue team to Greece (*Milliyet*, 1999b). Thus, the process of rapprochement was legitimized on the eyes of the public given the mutual sympathy developed after the disasters (Larrabee and Lesser, 2003: 86). This is evidenced by the increasing civil-society dialogue between Turkey and Greece (Rumelili, 2007: 117).

The process of rapprochement acquired a new dimension after the 1999 Helsinki European Council. At the 1999 Helsinki European Council, accession of Turkey was tied, *inter alia*, to the resolution of its bilateral differences with Greece. Therefore, the process of rapprochement was Europeanized.

3. The Europeanization of the Rapprochement

At the 1999 Cologne European Council, the EU committed itself to review the prospects of candidacy of Turkey at the 1999 Helsinki European Council. Therefore, the issue of Turkey's candidacy came to the fore as the 1999 Helsinki European Council loomed large on the horizon.

In the meantime, there was an emerging consensus within the Greek Foreign Ministry to drop the Greek veto against Turkey's candidacy. However, Greece hoped a gesture from Turkey in return for dropping its veto (*Athens News Agency*, 1999b). To that end, the Greek Prime Minister, Costas Simitis wrote to his Turkish counterpart, Bülent Ecevit to reiterate the quest of Greece for a gesture (*Athens News Agency*, 1999b). By a gesture, the Greek Prime Minister may have referred to the reopening of the theological school at Heybeliada in Istanbul or to the lifting of the *casus belli* resolution of the TGNA (Ker-Lindsay, 2007: 85). On the one hand, the Greek government was particularly concerned with a gesture from Turkey because Simitis was afraid of risking victory prospects of PASOK at the upcoming general elections (Ker-Lindsay, 2007: 95). In the view of the Greek Prime Minister, a gesture from Turkey would increase the public support for Turkey's candidacy. On the other hand, Greece feared alienating Turkey, and endangering the process of rapprochement and the Europeanization of the country through vetoing its candidacy (Ker-Lindsay, 2007: 95). In addition, Greece expected certain benefits from dropping its veto. The first gain would be to make Turkey agree to proceed to the ICJ for the delimitation of the continental shelf (Aksu, 2004: 106). The second gain would be to guarantee the accession of Cyprus to the EU irrespective of the resolution of the Cyprus issue (Economides, 2005: 484-485). Thus, Greece conditioned dropping its veto on assurances from the EU for its cause regarding the Aegean dispute and the Cyprus issue.

[6] For instance, five cooperation agreements were signed in November 2001 in areas like culture, environment and academic cooperation. In addition, a cooperation agreement on issues like terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and illegal immigration came into force in July 2001. Another agreement was signed in March 2002 to build a natural gas pipeline to supply natural gas from the Caspian Sea to Greece through Turkey. Construction of the natural gas pipeline was finalized in 2006. For the EU, the construction of the pipeline is a symbolic move as "it is a physical link between the two countries" (European Commission, 2002: 44). Furthermore, a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of a Joint Disaster Response Unit under the UN was signed in September 2002. Another agreement on double taxation was signed in December 2002. Furthermore, a High Level Cooperation Council was established and further agreements on cooperation in the fields of border controls, diplomatic missions, standardization, investments, forestry, environment, energy and climate change, education, science technology, communication, illegal immigration and culture and tourism were signed between the two countries in May 2010 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, 2010: 1)

The 1999 Helsinki European Council convened on 10 December 1999. Turkey's candidacy was declared although it did not offer a gesture. Greece did not veto Turkey's candidacy because it could upload its national interests to EU level through the Presidency Conclusions of the 1999 Helsinki European Council (Aksu, 2004: 106; Triantaphyllou, 2005: 337). This means that Greece prioritized improvement of relations with Turkey to the extent of disregarding domestic implications of dropping its veto. Greece must have considered long-term benefits of improved relations with Turkey. As a matter of fact, after Greece lifted its veto, bilateral differences between the two countries turned into an issue of the EU and the accession of Cyprus to the EU was secured at the 1999 Helsinki European Council (Keridis, 2001: 18).

Greece could upload its interests regarding the Aegean dispute and Cyprus issue into the Presidency Conclusions of the 1999 Helsinki European Council. Paragraph 4 stated:

> The European Council reaffirms the inclusive nature of the accession process, which now comprises 13 candidate States within a single framework. The Candidate States are participating in the accession process on an equal footing. They must share the values and objectives of the European Union as set out in the Treaties. In this respect the European Council stresses the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and urges Candidate States to make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes and other related issues. Failing this they should within a reasonable time bring the dispute to the International Court of Justice. The European Council will review the situation relating to any outstanding disputes, in particular concerning the repercussions on the accession process and in order to promote their settlement through the International Court of Justice, at the latest by the end of 2004. Moreover, the European Council recalls that compliance with the political criteria laid down at the Copenhagen European Council is a prerequisite for the opening of accession negotiations and that compliance with all the Copenhagen criteria is the basis for accession to the Union (European Council, 1999a: par. 4).

The EU may have emphasized the equality of all Candidate States in the aforementioned Paragraph to strengthen the credibility of EU membership for Turkey given that Turkey had already felt discriminated when its candidacy was not declared at the 1997 Luxembourg European Council. Peaceful settlement of border disputes was referred to as one of the EU's values that must be respected to accede to the EU. Thus, the referral of border disputes to the ICJ became a Community principle of the EU with the 1999 Helsinki European Council (Rumelili, 2008: 105). Whether referral of border disputes to the ICJ would be referred to in the Presidency Conclusions of the 1999 Helsinki European Council without input from Greece is contested. By the peaceful settlement of border disputes, the EU meant the methods set out in the UN Charter. In the UN Charter, negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means are stipulated as means to settle disputes peacefully (UN Charter, article 33.1).

In the Presidency Conclusions of the 1999 Helsinki European Council, the EU reached a compromise between the respective views of Turkey and Greece on how to resolve the Aegean dispute. As a matter of fact, it was stated that referral of bilateral differences to the ICJ must be preceded by other means to settle bilateral disputes peacefully. However, to prevent the talks from failing, the EU invited the two countries to refer their bilateral differences to the ICJ by 2004. The possibility of referral to the ICJ for adjudication may have made the two countries adhere to bilateral talks more. In other words, the future ruling of the ICJ may not satisfy the either side in case the dispute is referred to the ICJ for adjudication. Therefore, Turkey and Greece may have preferred to continue their talks to resolve the Aegean dispute along their interests.

In addition, Paragraph 9.b enabled accession of Cyprus to the EU irrespective of a final settlement of the Cyprus issue. Paragraph 9.b stated:

> The European Council underlines that a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. If no settlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council's decision on accession will be made without the above being a precondition. In this, the Council will take account of all relevant factors (European Council, 1999a: par. 9.b).

The aforementioned Paragraphs illustrate uploading by Greece to EU level of its national interests in return for dropping its veto against Turkey's candidacy. On the Aegean dispute, Greece could upload its preference for adjudication. To create time pressure on Turkey, the year 2004 was set as a time limit for negotiations. On the Cyprus issue, Greece could guarantee accession of Cyprus to the EU irrespective of a final settlement.

4. Turkey-Greece Relations in the Post-Helsinki Period

The Europeanization of Turkey increased after the 1999 Helsinki European Council. As a matter of fact, Turkey had to meet sufficiently the Copenhagen political criteria to qualify for the launching of accession negotiations as stipulated at the 1999 Helsinki European Council (European Council, 1999a: par. 4). Thus, the prospects of launching accession negotiations was an important incentive for Turkey to Europeanize its domestic and foreign policy and institutional arrangements (Özer, 2012: 51). Accordingly, Turkey adopted several measures to align with the Copenhagen political criteria between 2001 and 2004. Meanwhile, the 2002 Copenhagen European Council convened on 12 and 13 December 2002. The 2002 Copenhagen European Council is important in that it increased the credibility of membership for Turkey. As a matter of fact, it stated:

> If the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay (European Council, 2002: par. 19).

Democratization of Turkey was important for the improvement of Turkey-Greece relations, as well. Compliance with the Copenhagen political criteria paved the way for the civilianization of foreign policy in Turkey, i.e. the decline of the military's influence in TFP (Özcan, 2010: 25). Thus, the post-Helsinki period witnessed further improvement of relations between Turkey and Greece. Cooperation between the two countries increased notably. For instance, A Task Force on the EU was established upon a suggestion by Greece in January 2000 to assist Turkish officials in EU affairs (Heraclides, 2002: 24). In the same period, some seminars were organized both in Turkey and Greece on customs administration, financial and agricultural matters, police cooperation and issues related to the transposition of EU *acquis* into national legislation (Heraclides, 2002: 24). Furthermore, Turkey participated in Dynamic Mix 2000 exercise of NATO which took place in Greece in May-June 2000. For the first time after Turkey's military intervention in Cyprus in 1974, Turkish troops and military aircraft were in Greece (European Commission, 2000: 67).

Tensions between the two countries reduced significantly in the same period (Larrabee, 2001: 237). For instance, in the summer of 2001, a Turkish vessel decided to embark on a seismological survey in the continental shelf of the Aegean Sea, but it was cancelled after consultations between G. Papandreou and Cem (Tsarouhas, 2009: 52). In addition, bilateral contacts between the two countries increased. For instance, the Greek Foreign Minister, G. Papandreou paid an official visit to Turkey on 19 January 2000. It was the first time in 38 years that a Greek Foreign Minister officially visited Ankara *(Milliyet*, 2000). The Turkish Foreign Minister, İsmail Cem visited Greece officially one month after his Greek counterpart's

visit to Turkey. It was the first time that a Turkish Foreign Minister visited Athens officially in 40 years (*Milliyet*, 2000).

Moreover, the two countries have engaged in adopting Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) since October 2000. They agreed to develop three sorts of CBMS: i) CBMs within the framework of the 1988 Papoulias-Yılmaz Memorandum of Understanding; ii) Tension Reduction Measures; and iii) measures of good neighbourliness (Heraclides, 2002: 24). These CBMs are predominantly military in nature. They include, *inter alia*, commitments by the two countries to reduce the number, size and scope of their respective exercises in the high seas of the Aegean Sea; to notify the time schedule of national exercises for the following year; to fly disarmed over the Aegean Sea; to set up a direct telephone line between their Ministries of Foreign Affairs; to implement exchanges between military academies and military hospitals; and to clear landmines along the Meriç river (European Commission, 2001: 31; European Commission 2003: 53).

It was earlier noted that the process of rapprochement was strengthened in two ways by the EU's involvement. Firstly, accession prospects increased Turkey's adherence to its commitments (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2008: 130). Secondly, both governments could capitalize on the EU to justify their preference for rapprochement (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2008: 130). Therefore, the process of rapprochement did not come to a halt when different political parties came to power in Turkey and Greece. For instance, Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in November 2002 in Turkey. The Europeanization of Turkey and improvement of its relations with Greece continued thereafter.

On the other hand, the New Democracy (ND) led by the Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis came to power in March 2004 in Greece. The process of rapprochement continued under the new government, as well. Improvements in Turkey-Greece relations have been referred to in the respective annual Progress Reports of the European Commission on Turkey, Accession Partnership Documents (APDs) and National Programmes for the Adoption of Acquis (NPAAs) as well as Presidency Conclusions of the European Councils. For instance, in the first NPAA of Turkey which was adopted in 2001, it was assured that "Turkey will continue to undertake initiatives and efforts towards the settlement of bilateral problems with Greece through dialogue" (NPAA, 2001, Introduction). Thus, Turkey referred to dialogue as the main instrument for the resolution of its bilateral differences with Greece. Furthermore, in the APD of Turkey, under Short Term Priorities for Political Dialogue, it is stated that Turkey must:

> pursue further efforts to resolve any outstanding border disputes in conformity with the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the UN Charter including, if necessary, jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and unequivocally commit to good neighbourly relations; address any sources of friction with neighbours; and refrain from any threat or action which could adversely affect the process of peaceful settlement of border disputes[7] (Council of the European Union, 2008: 10).

This means that for the improvement of Turkey-Greece relations: i) the option of proceeding to the ICJ in case bilateral talks fail should not be excluded; ii) bilateral differences between the two countries must be resolved peacefully; and iii) the use of force or threat of using force must be avoided.

The year 2004 was important in that it was the time limit set out by the EU at the 1999 Helsinki European Council for bilateral talks over the Aegean. The Aegean dispute has not been resolved to date although 'exploratory talks' continued until March 2016. The 60th round of exploratory talks took place on 1 March 2016, in Athens. However, Greece did not push for proceeding to the ICJ in 2004. Greece may

[7] The same was stated verbatim in the 2005 Negotiating Framework Document of Turkey (Council of the European Union, 2005: par. 6).

have believed that accession to the EU would be a stronger incentive for Turkey than time pressure (Rumelili, 2008: 105). In line with that, at the 2004 Brussels European Council, the EU did not call on Turkey to proceed necessarily to the ICJ but stated:

The European Council, while underlining the need for unequivocal commitment to good neighbourly relations welcomed the improvement in Turkey's relations with its neighbours and its readiness to continue to work with the Member States concerned towards resolution of outstanding border disputes in conformity with the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter. In accordance with its previous conclusions, notably those of Helsinki on this matter, the European Council reviewed the situation relating to outstanding disputes and welcomed the exploratory contacts to this end. In this connection it reaffirmed its view that unresolved disputes having repercussions on the accession process should if necessary be brought to the International Court of Justice for settlement. The European Council will be kept informed of progress achieved which it will review as appropriate (European Council, 2004: par. 20).

Thus, the EU confined itself to welcoming the improvements in Turkey-Greece relations. The December 2004 Brussels European Council is also important in that it paved the way for the launching of accession negotiations on 3 October 2005 (European Council, 2004: par. 29). The Europeanization of Turkey slowed down subsequent to the launching of accession negotiations to the extent that the post-2005 period is called de-Europeanization of Turkey (Cebeci 2026, Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber, 2016). This is mainly because of the fact that membership of the EU became a less credible objective for Turkey thereafter.

On the part of Turkey, several reasons underlie the loss of credibility of membership of the EU. First of all, the emergent negative stance in some of the Member States of the EU, e.g. Austria, France, the Netherlands and Denmark on Turkey's accession and the country's Europeanness caused loss of credibility (Müftüler-Baç, 2008: 67; Sedelmeier, 2010: 424). In this regard, Nas argues that the case of the Europeanization of Turkey's identity is different from the cases of the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs), Malta, Cyprus and the Western Balkans because of the fact that "Turkey's candidacy and accession to the EU is not justified but contested on the ground of Europeanness" (Nas, 2012: 25). In addition, the public opinion in the EU has been increasingly against membership of Turkey on the pretext that Turkey is different culturally and religiously (Özer, 2012: 60). Also, the accession of Cyprus to the EU in 2004 without a final settlement, and suspension of accession negotiations on eight chapters in 2006 because Turkey does not apply the Customs Union to Cyprus resulted in further loss of credibility. Moreover, the ambivalent language of the 2005 Negotiating Framework Document on Turkey's accession reduced credibility of membership (Özer, 2012: 60). It states that:

These negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand. While having full regard to all Copenhagen criteria, including the absorption capacity of the Union, if Turkey is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that Turkey is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond (Council of the European Union, 2005: par. 9).

Actually, references in the aforementioned Paragraph to anchoring "Turkey in the European structures through the strongest possible bond" and to the "absorption capacity of the Union" have overtones of membership alternatives.

Conclusion

This article attempted to portray the Europeanization Turkey's relations with Greece. To that end, the Europeanization of the process of rapprochement at the 1999 Helsinki European Council, and Turkey-Greece relations in the post-Helsinki period have been evaluated.

In this respect, it has been argued that rational instrumentality underlies Turkey's quest for fostering good neighbourly relations with Greece, i.e. the Europeanization of Turkey's relations with Greece. The rationalist approach of Turkey is evidenced by the fact that Turkey hoped to overcome the veto of Greece against its candidacy through rapprochement. This is mainly because accession of Turkey to the EU was tied, *inter alia*, to the improvement of the country's relations with Greece at the 1999 Helsinki European Council (European Council, 1999a: par. 4). This means that while Turkey hoped to overcome the veto of Greece against its candidacy through initiating rapprochement, it aims at achieving membership of the EU through further fostering good neighbourly relations with it.

On the other hand, it has been noted that the Europeanization of Turkey has decelerated because the prospects of membership has lost credibility after accession negotiations started on 3 October 2005. Slowing down of the process of Europeanization had implications for the process of rapprochement between Turkey and Greece, as well. Because accession of Turkey was tied, *inter alia*, to the resolution of its bilateral differences with Greece at the 1999 Helsinki European Council, the loss of credibility of the prospects of membership may have decreased Turkey's quest for fostering good neighbourly relations with Greece. However, although the loss of credibility and the Greek debt crisis that broke out at the end of 2009 leading major instability in the country slowed down the rapprochement, a High Level Cooperation Council was established and further agreements on cooperation in the fields of border controls, diplomatic missions, standardization, investments, forestry, environment, energy and climate change, education, science technology, communication, illegal immigration and culture and tourism were signed between the two countries in May 2010 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, 2010: 1).

Actually, when membership of the EU was valued notably, Turkey could overlook some domestic criticism to the resolution of the Aegean dispute and Cyprus issue, especially when the credibility of the prospects of membership was high. This means that Turkey had to undergo some political costs when fulfilling certain conditions set out by the EU for its accession. The weakening of the credibility of accession prospects has resulted in the slowing down of the Europeanization process. This has caused Turkey's alienation and impair Turkey's identification with the EU.

It is still difficult to answer the question of whether relations between Turkey and Greece would be normalized by the process of rapprochement and Europeanization. This can only be possible if the process of rapprochement further progresses and cooperation between the two countries is no longer limited to the issues of low political significance. In addition, socialization of Turkey into the EU's norms and rules subsequent to its accession or through other means may facilitate the emergence of a relationship with Greece similar to that between France and Germany that was desecuritized despite their conflict-ridden past. Increased cooperation and interdependence triggered by the EU between France and Germany may this time work for Turkey and Greece.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar(lar) çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan eder.
Disclosure Statement: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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TURKEY AND NATO: QUESTIONING THE SOLIDARITY

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Makale Geliş Tarihi/Received: 15/10/2021
Makale Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 28/11/2021
Makale Yayın Tarihi/Published: 31/12/2021
Atıf İçin/To Cite: Erol, M. S., Oğuz, Ş. (2021). Turkey and NATO: Questioning The Solidarity. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışmaları Dergisi*, *1*(2), 130-148.

Abstract: Turkey and NATO have been going through a complex and complicated relation especially after Turkey has decided to buy first Chinese Air Defense Systems and then S-400 Air Defense Systems from Russian Federation. The Alliance's reaction with the expression of Secretary General Stoltenberg has been mild so far highlighting that the procurement of defence systems is a national decision. Individual member states, especially the US, however, have been vehemently opposing Turkey's decision and the US has resorted to several measures, such as removing Turkey from the F-35 program or imposing sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). Turkey's main argument that member states, namely the US, denied selling Turkey Air Defense System, such as Patriots and they did not consider technological transfer to Turkey, which has been regarded by Turkey as a key factor for the procurement, was overlooked by Allies. The critics even included questioning Turkey's NATO membership.

Turkey's cooperation in recent with the Russian Federation, including procurement of defence systems, has been criticized by the West as well as among scholars and politicians in Turkey. Turkish officials, including President Erdogan and Defense Minister Akar, however, insistently underlined Turkey's position in the Alliance and Turkey's decisiveness for the membership. This paper analyses the relations between Turkey and NATO in the light of the recent crisis and argues that Turkey, as clearly states by Turkish officials, does not question its membership.
Keywords: S-400, Air Defense Systems, Turkey, NATO, CAATSA

TÜRKİYE VE NATO: DAYANIŞMANIN SORGULANMASI

Özet: Türkiye'nin önce Çin'den Hava Savunma Sistemleri sonra da Rusya Federasyonu'ndan S-400 hava savunma sistemleri almaya karar vermesinden bu yana NATO ve Türkiye arasında karmaşık ve sorunlu bir dönem yaşanmaktadır. Savunma sistemleri tedarik etmenin milli bir karar olduğunu ifade eden Genel Sekreterin ifadeleri ile NATO'nun tepkisi oldukça yumuşak olmuştur. Ancak başta ABD olmak üzere bazı üye devletler bireysel olarak Türkiye'nin kararına oldukça sert tepki göstermektedirler. Örneğin ABD Türkiye'yi F-35 programı dışında tutma ve CAATSA olarak bilinen Hasımlarına Yaptırımlar Yoluyla Karşılık Verme Yasası kapsamında yaptırım uygulama gibi tedbirlere başvurmuştur. Türkiye'nin ittifak üyelerinin özellikle de ABD'nin PATRIOT gibi hava savunma sistemleri satmayı ya da Türkiye için hayati önemde bir faktör olan teknoloji transferini reddetmelerinden dolayı S-400 alımına başvurduğuna yönelik temel argümanı üyeler tarafından göz ardı edilmiştir. Bu konudaki eleştiriler Türkiye'nin NATO üyeliğinin sorgulanmasını bile içermiştir.

Türkiye'nin yakın dönemde savunma sistemlerinin tedarik edilmesi dâhil Rusya Federasyonu ile yaptığı işbirliği batılı devletlerde olduğu kadar Türkiye'deki bazı siyasiler ve akademisyenler tarafından da eleştirilmektedir. Ancak Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan ve Savunma Bakanı Akar'ın da içinde bulunduğu resmi yetkililer Türkiye'nin ittifak içerisindeki konumunu ve üyeliğe yönelik kararlılığının altını çizmişlerdir. Bu çalışma yakın dönemde meydana gelen krizler ışığında Türkiye ve NATO arasındaki ilişkiyi analiz etmekte ve Türk yetkililer tarafından da sıklıkla vurgulandığı şekilde Türkiye'nin NATO'ya üyeliğini sorgulamadığını öne sürmektedir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: S-400, Hava Savunma Sistemleri, Türkiye, NATO, CAATSA

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Introduction

Collective Defense, the doctrine in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty by which "members agree that an armed attack against one or more of them shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them will assist this state including the use of armed force," has formed the backbone of the NATO Alliance since its establishment. Apart from symbolic maritime operations after the September 11 attacks, though, Article 5 has never been invoked, and the "solidarity" of members in a real threat has never been tested. Nonetheless, solidarity has become the most used motto of NATO and has been described as the backbone of its success.

European members have always questioned the solidarity and reliability of the USA during the Cold War in the event of Soviet aggression, especially in a nuclear attack. Yet none of them dared to give up the US military commitment, especially its nuclear umbrella, with the one exception of De Gaulle's France, which challenged US hegemony by withdrawing France from NATO's military structure in 1966. America's urging European members to adopt a "flexible response strategy" notwithstanding, European states preferred to accept American leadership rather than escalating problems into a crisis that could result in the dissolution of the Alliance.

The post-Cold War period opened a new era for Europe with the disappearance of the Soviet threat, and the major European States, under the leadership of France, focused on the idea of structuring a European Army without the US, questioning the existence and effectiveness of NATO. Europe's inability to stop the genocide in Bosnia without US involvement, however, underlined for Europe the importance of the Alliance as well as US military capabilities. NATO invented new tools to show its effectiveness, such as Crisis Management, an Out-of-area strategy, and cooperation with non-Member states, yet Europe did not give up the dream of establishing European security without the US. But then, the Russia-Ukraine crisis and the Russian annexation of Crimea served as a wake-up call for NATO and especially for Europeans, highlighting the importance of US military capabilities against the Russian threat.

Under direct Soviet threat since the beginning of the Cold War, Turkey has been one member of the Alliance that did not question NATO's solidarity, despite crises such as the withdrawal of Jupiter missiles without consultation, or the US embargo on military equipment to Turkey after the Cyprus Peace Operation of 1974. During and after the Cold War, Turkey has hosted crucial NATO military bases and US nuclear weapons under the NATO command, despite serious crises about the Alliance's solidarity. Neither has Turkey or the Alliance ever questioned Turkey's membership, nor has a strategical partnership with Russia been on the agenda of the Turkish community.

As Europe focused on the idea of a European Army, Turkey, along with the US and UK, remained fervent supporters of the Alliance. Turkey has been urging NATO allies, especially the US to stop the support the PKK terror organization. Turkey harshly criticized the Allies' attitude, however, and NATO's symbolic support during the Gulf War such as the reluctant deployment of Patriot missiles against Iraq's Scud missiles and withdrawal of the missiles in a very short time raised concerns for the Alliance's solidarity and NATO's commitment to defend Turkey.

More recent crises—the deal with China for procurement of an air defence system, the rapprochement between Turkey and Russia, Turkey's purchase of S-400 missiles from Russia, political divergences with the Allies on Syria, and especially the Allies' open support for the PYD terror organization—all resulted in discussion among member states of Turkey's adherence to the Alliance, and NATO's solidarity and commitments in Turkey. Some Turkish officials and academics have raised the issue of Turkey's exit from the Alliance and potential membership in Eurasian organizations such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which would constitute an important divergence from the current strategical orientation of Turkish foreign policy.

This article discusses the future of NATO-Turkey relations in the framework of recent and current crises and discussions. It argues that despite the recent crisis between Turkey and the Allies (especially the US), both NATO and Turkey have strategical interest in being in the same boat. Statements by NATO and Turkish officials have bolstered this idea and underlined that both sides see recent developments as a temporary crisis that will not change Turkey's strategical relations with the West, especially with the NATO Alliance.

1. History of Relations between NATO and Turkey

Devastated during WW2, Europe desperately needed American conventional and nuclear military support to deter the Soviet Union immediately after the war. Still, some Europeans, especially De Gaulle's France, remained dubious about the reliability of the US and UK. De Gaulle claimed that if the Red Army were to overrun West Germany, NATO's integration of forces would fall apart because the destruction of West Germany would inevitably lead to the divergence of national interests. With the Soviets in control of Germany, American and British leaders would have to focus on the survival of their forces, as Churchill had done in May-June 1940 with Operation Dynamo (Varat, 2008: 100).

After the Soviet acquisition of nuclear capability in 1949, American nuclear forces became crucial for the security of Europe. The Alliance, therefore, adapted the "massive retaliation" concept in 1954, which called for the massive use of nuclear weapons to defend Europe against aggression. (Pedlow). Despite the fact that Europe would be devastated while the North American continent would remain untouched, Europeans did not have another option to deter Soviet aggression than massive retaliation, the most feasible concept to spare huge conventional forces. Signs of mistrust remained, however, including credible deterrence, control over nuclear forces, and strategic flexibility between the US and Allies (Johnston, 2017: 88).

Soviet acquisition of intercontinental missiles capable of striking North America changed the security paradigm for the US, which replaced its official "massive retaliation" concept with the "flexible response" concept that provided flexibility for the President in case of a Soviet conventional attack rather than deciding directly for the use of the nuclear weapons. Thus, the flexible response concept institutionalized a weakened American commitment to European defence, replacing the specific guarantees of massive retaliation with fungible and vague ones (Johnston, 2017: 111).

The US officials then urged Allies to endorse flexible response strategy in NATO whose purpose is "to allow NATO a greater flexibility and to provide for the employment as appropriate of one or more direct defence, deliberate, escalation and general nuclear response, thus confronting the enemy with a credible threat of escalation in response to any aggression below the level of major nuclear attack." (MC 14/3) The European Allies, especially France, strongly opposed America's efforts to persuade NATO to adapt the flexible response concept, and consequently, the situation remained deadlocked until France withdrew from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966 (Duffield, 1991: 132). The remaining Allies, without France, reluctantly endorsed the flexible response strategy; still, the solidarity problem persisted in minds until the end of the Cold War.

Doubts concerning America's commitments have been continuing since the establishment of the Alliance. For this reason, since the end of the Cold War, Europe, under the leadership of France, have been urging the EU to create a European Army without US hegemony and leadership. States that staunchly oppose an ineffective NATO include the UK and Turkey, which sees no chance of joining the EU soon.

For Turkey, the issue of solidarity is more acute than for Europeans because of Turkey's many reasons not to rely on the US and European allies. Both the Cuban crisis, in which the US withdrew its Jupiter missiles without consulting Turkey, and America's embargo after the Peace Operation in Cyprus in 1974, clearly indicated that Turkey could not rely on the Alliance, and especially the US, during the Cold War. America's embargo on weaponry after the 1974 Peace Operation highlighted for Turkish politicians the need for an independent defence industry, investing in the first Turkish defence companies.

During the first Gulf War, the Alliance declared support for Turkey if Iraq attacked Turkey. (Friedmann, 1990) At Turkey's request, between August 1990 and March 1991 the Alliance executed Operation Anchor Guard, the first real mission in NATO's history, in which NATO AWACS flew 1,129 missions and 8,581.8 hours. (1990-1991 Operation Anchor Guard) Subsequently, in January 1991, in response to the Turkish request, NATO launched Operation Ace Guard, in which NATO deployed ACE Mobile Forces (Air) in Turkey. In this, 42 German, Belgian and Italian planes were stationed in eastern Turkey as a tripwire in case Iraq attacked, (Haberman, 1991) in addition to the 96 US fighters. In addition, the US and the Netherlands sent Patriots to bolster Turkish air defence.

The Alliance officially provided support for Turkey, yet the statements by Belgium and Germany, that both would need to consult their governments before authorizing these fighters' use in case of aggression, lay the groundwork for Turkey's questioning NATO's commitment and solidarity. (Molla, 2019: 36) In the Turkish view, the Allies' Operation Provide Comfort, which operated under the guise of protecting the people of northern Iraq, the role of troops from İncirlik (the "Poised Hammer Forces") in creating an autonomous region in northern Iraq, and these NATO members' support for the PKK terror organization, gave rise to the current security threat against Turkey in northern Iraq and Syria. Thus, Turkey retains doubts about the real purpose of Allied support for Turkey.

NATO again failed in honouring its commitments when Turkey asked for support in its fight against the PKK terror organization, which has been robustly supported by the "Allies." France and Germany, have always criticized Turkey's fight against the PKK, ignoring the fact that Turkey's opening its borders for refugees from northern Iraq has constituted one of the main reasons for the rise of PKK activities in Turkey in the 1990s, because many terrorists entered Turkey then under the guise of being refugees.

The Second Gulf War, in 2003, provided another test of both NATO's commitment to Turkey and US-Europe relations within the Alliance. Turkey's requests provoked a crisis in the Alliance and paralyzed NATO, especially when France vetoed Patriot deployment plans. America's call for support of Turkey in the event of an Iraqi offensive did not receive Europe's support, triggering a serious crisis in the Alliance. In February 2003 Turkey requested consultations within the framework of Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The Alliance finally deployed AWACS and Patriots to defend Turkey, in the so-called Operation Display Deterrence, on 20 February 2003, but the mission, which ended on April 16, clearly indicated the reluctance of the Allies, especially the Europeans, despite America's efforts.

As mentioned above, Turkey has been having crisis problems individually with Allies rather than NATO. Trust and solidarity have always been a serious problem in the Alliance and not only for Turkey. Like Turkey, other members always had problems and crises with other Allies. However, despite these serious crises, Turkey's membership in NATO has not been on the agenda of either Turkey or the Alliance, and yet Turkey's moves alarmed members, especially the US, resulting in their questioning Turkey's adherence to NATO.

2. Recent Crises

The history of Turkey-NATO relations is replete with solidarity issues between Turkey and its NATO Allies. But both sides devised ways to sort out problems by allowing the Alliance to develop common policies to resolve them. Recent crises in the defence area increased doubts about solidarity between the Allies and Turkey and resulted in questioning Turkey's membership in the Alliance and the extent to which Turkey could rely on NATO in a real crisis. As Dursun-Ozkanca pointed out, thus far the strongest case illustrating Turkey's potential break with the West lies in defence matters (Dursun-Ozkanca, 2019: 116).

2.1. The Chinese Air Defense System

Turkey's air defence system is part of NATO's Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense (ALTBMD), established in 2005 to protect the Alliance's deployed forces. In 2010 the Program was extended to protect NATO's territory and population with a comprehensive Ballistic Missile Defense Program, called EPAA, and which includes the radar station in Kürecik in Turkey. Turkey has been part of ALTBMD since the beginning of the program. However, Turkey's focus on missile defence systems, and its efforts to achieve a robust missile defence capability, date back to the Gulf War of 2003, when Turkey asked NATO to deploy missile defence systems against the ballistic missile threat from Iraq (Egeli, 2014: 40). Based on NATO's decision, the Dutch deployed Patriot systems under NATO command in southern Turkey; the Patriots remained in Turkey only about three months, however, before the Netherlands withdrew them.

Turkey again asked the Alliance to deploy a missile defence system in 2012, after Syria shot down a Turkish fighter and fired rockets into southern Turkey that resulted in the death of Turkish citizens. In response, to demonstrate the solidarity of the Alliance the US, Germany, and the Netherlands deployed Patriot systems under NATO command in three Turkish cities. Over time, political divergences on Syria between the Allies and Turkey, and especially Turkey's operations against PYD terror organizations, which unfortunately NATO members openly and robustly supported, created fractures within NATO and led to the Allies' (except Spain) withdrawing their Patriot systems, thereby demonstrating why Turkey should opt for a national missile defence system. In other words, Turkey's efforts to establish a national air defence system heralded a crisis between the Allies and Turkey.

The major crisis began with the announcement by the Turkish Undersecretariat for Defense Industries in September 2013 that Turkey had selected a Chinese state-owned company to build Turkey's first long-range air defence system. The Chinese FD-2000 system won the bid, competing with the US Patriot, Russian S-300/S-400, and French-Italian Samp-T systems (Akşam, 26 September 2013). Turkey insisted that price, co-production, and technology transfer were the major factors in selecting the Chinese firm.

NATO members, especially the US, reacted harshly to Turkey's decision, maintaining that the Chinese system is not interoperable with NATO's ALTBMD architecture and that Chinese missiles connected to the NATO architecture could infiltrate or exfiltrate secret data concerning NATO's systems. Seven senators sent a letter to the Obama administration advising the administration to "exert all available diplomatic pressure to prevent Turkish procurement of a CPMIEC missile defence system and ensure NATO will never allow such a system to be integrated into NATO's security architecture", and proposed several measures, including Turkey's expulsion from the NATO Air Defense Ground Environment (Meick, 2013). The US National Defense Authorization Act of 2014 banned funding for integration of any missile defence systems of the People's Republic of China into the missile defence systems of the United States or NATO (National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, 2013), opening the door to a crisis if Turkey continued with its decision.

The US brought forward the issue that the Chinese company is under American sanctions for violations of Iran, North Korea and Syria Nonproliferation Act. U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Frank Ricciardone stated that the US is concerned about that Chinese company, and its role as a nuclear weapons technology proliferator in the world (Hurriyet Daily News, 02 October 2013). However, as Rıza and Brannen pointed out, it is worth noting that "U.S. concerns about CPMIEC, which, along with its subsidiaries, have been sanctioned multiple times by the US for violations of Iran, North Korea and Syria Nonproliferation Act and other U.S. laws since 2003, were publicly aired only after the Turkish decision" (Ali Rıza and Brannen, 2013).

Meanwhile, NATO Officials warned Turkey with a softer tone. Secretary-General Rasmussen said that while choosing a defence system was a national decision, "the system acquired by the individual country must be able to work and operate with the systems in other countries," implying that the Chinese system does not comply with that expectation (Fraende, 2012). The international media came alive with reports referring to anonymous NATO officials who warned of possible serious outcomes. One of the officials even termed the incorporation of

the Chinese system into NATO's system a "virus" and "a possible most futile effort (Bekdil, 2013).

Comments emerged that Turkey was trying to push western companies to bargain. Statements by Turkish officials seemed to prove this allegation. After Minister-President Erdoğan stated that Turkey had already decided on the Chinese company, Turkish officials remained optimistic about CPMIEC's bid, estimating a deal could be signed by April 2014, with the delivery of the SAM system by 2017; but then-President Abdullah Gül stated that the CPMIEC deal "is not definite and there is a shortlist, and China is at the top of it," (Hurriyet Daily News, 30 September 2013) thereby keeping the door open for other options.

Despite the optimism of Turkish Officials, however, Turkey declared in late October that the bidding deadline was extended to the end of January 31, 2014. Later Turkey extended the bidding deadline first to the end of April and then to the end of June. Having been the staunch supporter of the Chinese option, Erdoğan hinted at the flexibility of the decision, stating that due to technical problems about know-how and co-production, Turkey might go for the French-Italian company, which was number two on the shortlist (Cumhuriyet, 08 September 2014).

Both pressures by NATO members and problems with the Chinese company concerning technology transfer (or so stated Turkey to cover its cancellation decision) resulted in the cancellation of the deal in mid-November 2015, after 26 months of discussions with the Chinese company. Turkish officials also declared that they decided to embark on an R&D project for a national missile system rather than purchasing from other states.

As during the Cold War, so too during this crisis neither NATO nor Turkish officials questioned Turkey's membership in the Alliance. As noted above, the NATO Secretary-General implied that NATO expected the deal would be cancelled, but he did not officially call for cancellation because he cannot openly criticize member states for their national policies. Member states, though, the US in particular, reacted severely and took concrete steps to discourage Turkey. American senators urged the administration to exclude Turkey from the ALTBMD architecture, which would have included the crucial radar station at Kürecik, but Turkey's membership never became an issue.

It was the same on the Turkish side. While some Turkish officials and politicians were proclaiming their resolute decision on the matter, including Erdoğan, President Gül declared that the decision was not definite, adding "there is no doubt that Turkey is primarily in NATO" (Hurriyet *Daily News*, 30 September 2013). On October 25, roughly one month after the decision, Erdoğan softened his stance by announcing that if there are proposals from other companies, they could be considered (Bekdil, 2013). In the end, Turkey cancelled its decision and the coherence of the Alliance remained intact.

2.2. S-400 Missiles

Turkey declared that it cancelled the deal with the Chinese company for the air and missile defence system because of technical problems with the company, but many observers commented that Turkey yielded to pressure from its Allies. Turkey continued with its policy to purchase the system in parallel to develop national R&D projects. Immediately after the announcement of the cancellation, Turkey reportedly started negotiations with Russia to procure the S-400 system, having previously rejected Russia's offer to sell Turkey the S-300 system.

The meeting between Erdoğan and Putin in March 2017 formed the cornerstone of the negotiations. After the meeting, Putin's spokesperson reported that both leaders agreed on the sale of the S-400 missile system while Fikri Işık, Turkish Minister of Defense, stated that while major progress had been made, he could not confirm that the deal was in the signature phase. (Akşam, 16 Mart 2017) The media reported (and Erdoğan later confirmed) that both sides agreed in July and that the agreement was signed in December 2017. However, a written statement by the Turkish Ministry of Defense on July 12, 2019, about the first shipment of S-400 batteries (even though Russian and Turkish authorities once stated that delivery would occur in early 2020) claimed that the deal for the purchase was signed on April 11, 2017 (S-400 Uzun Menzilli Bölge Hava ve Füze Savunma Sisteminin İntikali, 2017). With delivery having begun in July 2019, all components of the S-400 missiles had arrived in Turkey as of October 2019 and it was reported that Russia had started the training program for Turkish officers.

In April 2017, Fikri Işık stated in a meeting with US Defense Officials that Turkey had tried to procure the urgently needed air defence system from NATO states first, but they did not provide a cost-effective proposal, and after that Turkey looked for other options *(*Yeni Şafak, 14 April 2017). Turkey simultaneously continued negotiations with France and Italy for procurement of SAMP-T systems and they signed an agreement in early 2018 for an 18-month-long study to determine the needs and priorities for the potential joint production of an anti-ballistic missile system. However, as noted by Turkish Defense Industries Directorate Chair İsmail Demir, France's stance against Turkey's Operation Peace Spring operation in Syria seemed likely to prevent a comprehensive deal with both NATO states (Hürkuş, 2020).

Turkey officially stated that the first Russian-built system will be operational in April 2020 and that the timetable for the second system, to include technology transfer and co-production—the so-called red line for Turkey—was not yet clear (Ersöz, 2020). As Gürcanlı noted, though, the Russian TASS agency quoted a Russian official as stating that technology transfer had not been included in the agreement (Gürcanlı 2020).

Turkey's decision resulted in a severe American reaction, just as it had when Turkey announced a potential deal with the Chinese company. US officials brought up the issue of interoperability with NATO systems as well as the security of NATO systems and threatened that the Russian deal might overshadow cooperation between Turkey and NATO states in defence matters.

Five days later, the chairs and ranking members of the US Senate's Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees published an op-ed stating that Congress would block Ankara from purchasing F-35 fighters, cancel Turkish participation in the F-35 program, and impose sanctions on Turkey under the US's Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) if Turkey accepts delivery of the S-400 systems (Inhofe et al, 2019). Thus, in the first week of April 2019, both the US administration and senators warned Turkey of the serious consequences of the deal. On June 7, 2019, the US Secretary of Defense again sent a letter to his Turkish counterpart warning of consequences if Turkey did not step back from a deal by July 31, in particular excluding Turkey from the F-35 fighter program, and implementing sanctions under CAATSA which is against the basic principles of being Ally (Dilek and Oğuz, 2021). None of these warnings, in addition to others, prevented the delivery of the S-400 systems to Turkey

between July and October 2019, opening a new phase in the crisis between the US and Turkey. There have been also some news in the media arguing that there have been ongoing discussions between Turkish and Russian officials for the procurement of second S-400 systems.

Discussions were focused on whether the S-400 missiles will be operational in April 2020 as announced by Turkey. All Turkish officials, though, including President Erdoğan, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu and Minister of Defense Akar, have insistently stressed that the system will be operational as planned. Çavuşoğlu even stated that the recent crisis between Turkey and Russia, when dozens of Turkish soldiers died in İdlib in an Assad regime attack supported by Russia, the most serious crisis since Turkey shot down a Russian fighter in October 2015, would not affect the implementation of the S-400 systems (Milliyet, 15 February 2020). However, Turkey announced a delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Warnings by member states (especially the US) notwithstanding, NATO officials stuck to the Alliance's principles. Secretary-General Stoltenberg described Turkey's purchase of the Russian system as Ankara's own "national decision" (as the former Secretary-General had done for the Chinese missile system deal), adding that it is a challenge and that it is well known there is a disagreement between Turkey and especially the US on this issue (Hurriyet Daily News, 15 September 2018). He reiterated his views in April 2019 before the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs: "It's a national decision for each NATO Ally to decide on procurement of capabilities. But at the same time, we see that this is now an issue that has created disagreement between Allies. And NATO provides a platform for Allies to address issues like this" (Doorstep statement by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg ahead of the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers", 04 April 2019).

Turkey insisted that America's concerns about interoperability, cyber security, or information secrecy are groundless, because the Russian system is planned to be stand-alone, and if connected to NATO architecture, there will be interface software developed by Turkey. Some international analysts or experts also have announced that the US' concerns are not valid. Michael Kofman, an analyst with the CNA Corporation, for example, said "American concerns are overblown and their talking point is not technically valid. The only thing the S-400 can do with its radars is tracking the flight profile of the F-35, something that Russia already does in the Middle East and the Baltics, as the S-400 in Syria and radar stations in Kaliningrad track American aircraft such as the F-35 and F-22 all the time" (Mueller and Gibbons-Neff, 2019).

Unlike the Chinese deal, the expulsion of Turkey from the Alliance has been officially stated during the S-400 crisis. In April 2019, Mike Pence, US Vice President, warned Turkey bluntly, "Turkey must choose. Does it want to remain a critical partner in the most successful military alliance in history or does it want to risk the security of that partnership by making such reckless decisions that undermine our alliance?" With this, a high official opened the question of Turkey's membership. Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay responded to Pence's comments by referring to American support for the PYD: "The US must choose. Does it want to remain Turkey's ally, or risk our friendship by joining forces with terrorists to undermine its NATO ally's defence against its enemies?" (Chiacu, 2019).

Apart from spontaneous statements such as these, though, Turkey, the US, and NATO remained calm about the issue, without questioning Turkey's membership in the Alliance. As when Turkey decided on the Chinese company, NATO members, mainly the US, brought up the issue of interoperability and threatened/implied sanctions to Turkey. Other members, influenced by the US, mainly highlighted their concerns rather than taking any action against Turkey. Apart from anonymous comments, NATO officials stressed that this is a national decision, to which each Ally has a right. Başat Öztürk, Turkey's permanent representative to NATO, maintained that the S-400 is not a NATO problem, it is a bilateral problem, and that including NATO in this issue and harming the coherency of the alliance would be a mistake (Hurriyet Daily News, 25 June 2019).

As the ambassador pointed out, the crisis is between individual members, in particular, the US and Turkey rather than between the Alliance and Turkey. Therefore, describing the issue as a NATO crisis would be a mistake. Certainly, questioning Turkey's membership would provide Russia with an excellent opportunity to argue against the solidarity and cohesion of the Alliance. Despite problems with several Allies, especially the US and France, as one of the strongest members of the Alliance Turkey is firmly part of NATO politically and militarily. As Özer put it, "the purchase of the S-400 has indeed destabilized Turkey's relations with the US and other NATO allies, but it has not changed its geopolitical vision and traditional alignment with the West" (Özer, 2019).

2.3. The Syria Crisis

The Syrian crisis became a test as to how far the Alliance was bound to its commitment to Turkey in case of aggression by a third party. The downing of a Turkish jet by the Syrian regime heralded a deeper crisis between Turkey and Syria. Turkey informed the Alliance of the incident in the context of Article 4 of the Washington Treaty, then officially requested the Alliance to provide air defence systems when Syrian missiles struck southern Turkey. The Alliance declared support for Turkey and Rasmussen stated that "obviously Turkey can rely on NATO solidarity and NATO has all necessary plans in place to protect and defend Turkey if necessary" (The Guardian, 09 October 2012). Patriot missiles from the US, the Netherlands, and Germany were deployed in southern Turkey against Syrian missiles in early 2013. Spanish patriots then replaced Dutch batteries in 2016 while Italy deployed SAMP-T systems to replace the German patriots in June 2016.

The US withdrew its Patriots at the beginning of 2016 while Spain and Italy maintained them until the end of 2019, as Italy withdrew its SAMP-T when Turkey launched Operation Peace Spring. Spain extended the deployment of Patriots for another six months, until June 2020 (Hayatsever, 2019). France had declared it was considering deployment of SAMP-T missiles in Turkey but there has been no development on this matter. Thus, NATO's air defence support for Turkey continues with the Spanish Patriots. In other words, Turkey experienced conditional air defence support, which changed based on political divergence or convergence, rather than unconditional support in the framework of solidarity between Allies.

The Alliance's solidarity was tested again during the Russia-Turkey crisis of October 2015. Russian violations of Turkish airspace and Turkey's downing of a Russian fighter led to a serious diplomatic crisis. Turkey called for a NATO emergency meeting in September and October 2015

because of Russian air space violations and the Alliance strongly condemned Russian incursions in the meetings. It is worth noting that during the meeting of ministers on October 8, no concrete measures were adopted. In reply to a question whether there had been any discussion that NATO might send ground troops to Turkey, Stoltenberg stated that "The idea of rapid forces is that by increasing preparedness and readiness we can deploy forces to the south or the east if and when needed," (Press conference by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Defence Ministers session, 08 October 2015) without giving a concrete response.

After Turkey shot down the Russian fighter—the first downing of a Russian fighter by a NATO member since the 1950s—in late October, Turkey called for another emergency NATO meeting. Stoltenberg underlined the Alliance's solidarity again but refrained from articulating any specific strong commitments, instead of calling for lowering the tension between the two sides (Statement by the NATO Secretary General after the extraordinary NAC meeting, 24 November 2015). After the meeting of Defense Ministers on December 1, he repeated the existence of contingency plans to defend Turkey (Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers on Assurance to Turkey, 01 December 2015). After the meeting of Defense Ministers in February 2016, he described a packet of measures, including air surveillance or AWACS, air policing, increased maritime and military maritime presence in the eastern Mediterranean, and other military capabilities (Pre-Ministerial press conference by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, 09 February 2016).

Turkish operations in Syria created another problem between Alliance members and Turkey. The Alliance officially supported Turkey's military operations in Syria although individual members, especially the US and France, harshly criticized it. Concerning Operation Olive Branch, launched in January 2018, Stoltenberg stated that Turkey, as do all NATO members, has the right to defend itself, adding that this must be done in a proportionate and measured way (Daily Sabah, January 25, 2019). Again, Operation Peace Spring, launched in October 2019, created a major rift between the Allies. President Trump had reacted against the S-400 deal less vehemently than American senators but dispatched a letter to President Erdoğan before the operation threatening harsh economic sanctions if Turkey embarked on the operation. US senators voted for economic sanctions after the operation started. French President Macron, who described America's withdrawal of troops from Syria without coordinating with Europeans as "brain death," asked what NATO's mutual self-defence pact, enshrined in Article 5 of its founding treaty, might mean in the future, and pondered whether it could be invoked if President Bashar al-Assad's forces retaliated against Turkey's military operation in northern Syria (France24, 13 October 2019). Thus, Macron openly questioned the basis of the Atlantic Treaty underlining that Allies might not defend Turkey in case of a possible Syrian attack.

Despite Turkey's clear statement that the operation was directed against the PYD terror organization, almost all NATO Allies, except Hungary (Hürriyet, 11 Ekim 2019), criticized the Turkish operation. The EU passed a resolution to limit arms sales to Turkey, EU leaders urged Turkey to withdraw its troops, and Macron called the operation "madness" and NATO's failure to reach a "serious mistake". (Muller, 2018) During his meeting with Stoltenberg, Macron accused Turkey of undermining NATO solidarity, arguing that "Turkey cannot expect solidarity with other

NATO allies if it carries out military operations in Syria without consultation or coordination" (Peel and Milne, 2019).

But the greatest crisis between the Allies and Turkey has been the Allies' support of the PDY terror organization. Turkey's Syrian policy had been aligned with the NATO Allies for a long time, but the rise of DAESH (called also ISIL or ISIS) in summer 2015, along with Iran and Russia's support for the Assad regime, changed the situation on the ground, prompting Western states, led by the US, to accept the PYD terror organization, an affiliate of the PKK terror organization, as their partner in the fight against DAESH. Thus, NATO allies, especially the US, have been providing heavy weapons and ammunition to the PYD since then, first secretly, then openly. Turkey prioritized the removal of Assad from power, while the US prioritized the fight against the DAESH, arguing that the Kurds were the best-organized force on the ground in the fight against DAESH in Iraq and Syria Dursun-Özkanca, 2019: 118).

The Allies openly refused to recognize the PYD as a terror organization. Furthermore, many described it as a close and effective partner against DAESH, even more, effective than Turkey. The crisis escalated to the extent that Turkey, in the meeting of leaders in December 2019, threatened NATO with vetoing the Baltic Defense Plan unless the Alliance stopped supporting the PYD terror organization and officially recognized the PYD as a terror organization. In the end, Turkey endorsed Baltic Defense Plan while plans to defend Turkey will be revised, which was reflected in the summit declaration as "We are adapting our military capabilities, strategy, and plans across the Alliance in line with our 360-degree approach to security" (London Declaration, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3-4 December 2019). It was agreed in the meeting that the plans to defend the Baltics and Turkey will be issued at the same time. This was later verified by Turkish and foreign officials (Sözcü, 10 Aralık 2019: Milliyet, 09 Aralık 2019). Thus, the crisis between the Allies was resolved, nevertheless.

Support of the Allies for the PYD terror organization under the guise of their so-called fight against DAESH created a crisis between Turkey and the Allies, rather than between NATO and Turkey. The Allies continue to support the PYD even though Trump declared several times that DAESH was defeated (Rogers et al, 2019)—thereby revealing their real purpose of undermining Turkish policies in the region rather than fighting against DAESH.

The Alliance's refusal to declare the PYD as a terror organization might be regarded as a crisis between NATO and Turkey rather than between members. However, problems in the Alliance, as in the Baltic Defense issue, were solved nevertheless through the Alliance's procedures. As Hulusi Akar noted, "NATO is stronger with Turkey, and questioning Turkey is meaningless" (Milliyet, 09 Aralık 2020). Therefore, Turkey should insistently continue to persuade the Allies to stop supporting the PYD, especially since they lost their fake argument that the PYD is fighting against DAESH. It is worth noting that Russia also does not accept that the PYD is a terror organization, and there is a PYD office in Moscow.

3. The Future of NATO-Turkey Relationship

The existing and future security environments, mainly in Eurasia, and the changing security perceptions of the Alliance, should be analyzed before predicting NATO-Turkey relations in the

future. Russian policies especially play an important role in future policies of the Alliance because they directly affect the security of member territories. In recent years Russian active involvement in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria especially played a crucial role in shaping and defining NATO's policies.

In essence, the early post-Cold War era provided a period of relative peace between Russia and NATO. But the 2008 Russian-Georgian war, and especially the ongoing Ukrainian crisis that resulted in Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea (the first border change by force in Europe since the Cold War), altered the security paradigm in Europe. Europeans, who had been aiming toward a security system without the US, concluded again, as during the Bosnian war, that Europe needs the US against the Russian threat, as had been the case during the Cold War against the Soviet threat. Thus, NATO, which Europeans had been trying to replace with a European Union Army, became once again vital for the security of Europe.

The Ukrainian crisis served as a "wake-up call" for the Alliance (Young, 2014). In the face of the growing Russian threat, at the Wales Summit in 2014 NATO adopted the Readiness Action Plan (RAP). RAP consists of "assurance measures" that comprise a series of land, sea, and air activities, reinforced by exercises and "adaptation measures" that provided long-term changes to NATO's forces and command structure, to enable the Alliance to react swiftly and decisively in emerging crises.[1] After the Ukrainian crisis, the Alliance renewed its focus on defending member states from external threats, namely Russia; thus collective defence became once again the focus of the Alliance. Europeans, especially Eastern Europeans, increased efforts to bolster the American guarantee, by increasing the US military presence in the continent.

NATO has been called the strongest military alliance in history. Despite several failures, such as creating ongoing chaos in Libya, it has played a crucial role in peace and security in the post-Cold War era, especially in preventing genocide in Bosnia and Kosovo given Russian blocking efforts in the UN Security Council. It has been the only Alliance system that can leverage Russian and Chinese military capabilities. It is the main platform that provides US nuclear and conventional assurance for Europe, including Turkey, although there have been serious concerns about the American commitment in a real war. Despite failures, as vis-a-vis Turkey in the struggle against the PKK, and ambiguities and suspicions over possible future crises, as articulated by Macron in case of a possible Syrian assault against Turkey, NATO still provides assurance and deterrence for members against external threats.

Changing security perceptions after Russian actions also altered the Alliance's attitude against this state, which had been described as a partner less than 10 years previously. Since the Ukrainian crisis, Russia has been perceived as the main threat against the Allies, although NATO prefers to refrain from openly articulating this position in official texts, just as Russia is regarded as the main reason for violence and insecurity in the Euro-Atlantic region (Wales Summit Declaration, 2014). On top of this, the London Declaration in December 2019 for the first time in history referred to Chinese "growing influence and international policies" as a challenge for the Alliance, thus opening a new page in the Alliance's history.

[1] For more information about RAP see "Readiness Action Plan" on NATO Official Website, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm, (Accessed on 21.03.2020)

Turkey has been a member of the Alliance since its accession in 1952, with NATO's second-largest army after the US. Turkey has been hosting several strategically important NATO bases, including İncirlik, and is one of the five states that still host American tactical nuclear weapons under the NATO umbrella. The radar system of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), namely the European Missile Shield, is located in Kürecik, Malatya. Turkey establishes a buffer zone between the Middle East/Asia and the European part of the Alliance, while it is one of the three NATO states that border on the Black Sea, where NATO has been pursuing policies to contain Russia. The Turkish Straits play a crucial role in restraining access by the Russian Navy into the Mediterranean and providing more options for NATO in the Black Sea.

Turkey has been part of NATO missions such as in Bosnia or Kosovo and provided a robust Land Forces presence for NATO missions in Afghanistan. Turkish Naval Forces are provided with an important contribution to NATO Operation Ocean Shield and Operation Active Endeavour, and it has been part of the ongoing Operation Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean while Turkish Naval Forces operate as part of NATO Standing Naval Forces in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Turkish Air Forces have participated in the air campaign NATO conducted against Libya in 2011 as they did in Bosnia and Kosovo in the past. Turkey provides an airbase for NATO AWACS flying over Iraq and Syria for the support of Coalition forces fighting against DAESH. Turkish Armed Forces are also one of the most contributors to NATO exercises all around the world.

Turkish Armed Forces is an important part of NATO's Gradual Readiness Forces system. In 2021, Turkey will assume the command of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), a joint force consisting of a land component supported by air, maritime and special forces, that will be deployed in a very short time in case of aggression against member states. If the Alliance would decide, Turkish forces will consist of the Spearhead of NATO Response Forces and will be the first military unit to involve in the conflict to deter and dissuade aggressive forces, most probably the Russian military in 2021.

NATO is stronger with Turkey and Turkey feels safer with NATO, keeping in mind solidarity might be a problem in a real case, as it was during the Cold War for all Europeans. Turkey's strategic orientation has been staying part of NATO and becoming part of the EU, which seems unrealistic for the short and mid-term. Although not welcomed for now by other nations, President Trump's call to include some Middle East Nations into the Alliance again underlined the importance of Turkey for the Alliance again.

Therefore, it is fair to underline that Turkish strategic orientation has not changed. As pointed out in the report prepared by SETA, despite setbacks in the relation between Turkey and NATO since Turkey's accession into the Alliance, motto's like "NATO without Turkey" or "Turkey without NATO" seems not a product of rational thinking (Seren, 2020). As Hulusi Akar, Minister of Defense, stated, for both Turkey and the Alliance "NATO is stronger with Turkey and questioning Turkey's membership is pointless" (Milliyet, 09 December 2019).

Conclusion

One of the most adherent members of NATO and its policies, Turkey has been undergoing hard times in converging its policies with NATO members, especially in the just-past decade, although not for the first time. When considering the crises of the Cold War, though, two important factors have changed the situation compared to previous incidents. First, Turkey has focused on self-sufficiency in the defence industry, which has mitigated the threat of Western sanctions. Secondly, Turkey has cooperated with Russia and China to counter Western policies that conflict with its national interests.

Turkey's agreements first with China and then with Russia to procure an Air and Missile Defense System, and Turkey's policies divergent with its Allies because of Western Allies' betrayal and back-stabbing of Turkey in Syria emerged as hot topics that created friction between the Allies and Turkey. Turkey's deal with China for Air and Missile Defense Systems was cancelled for political or technical reasons, but Turkey went on to purchase and deliver S-400 systems from Russia, and execute operations in Syria, despite strong pressure from NATO allies, especially the US.

Many commentators inside and outside Turkey consider the deals with China and then with Russia as a major change in alignment, even to the extent of theorizing that Turkey plans to exit the Alliance. However, Turkey repeatedly and insistently has stressed that the decision was based on military requirements, not politics, and added that Turkey had been ready to negotiate with the Allies for procurement of the same systems if the technological transfer issue could be solved.

Turkey started the adventure in Syria in the same boat as NATO Allies. But the Allies' opted to support the PYD terror organization, which has been declared a threat against Turkey's national security by Turkish authorities and changed their Syrian policies in a way that conflicted with Turkish policies and priorities. Thus, Turkey cooperated with Russia and sometimes with Iran that conflicts with the policies of its Allies, especially after their heavy support for the PYD.

The recent rapprochement between Turkey and Russia seems a tactical strategy rather than a strategical orientation or change of axis, again as argued by some politicians or scholars. Two episodes make it clear that the rapprochement is temporary rather than a strategical partnership: Turkey's call to NATO for assurance after the Turkish Air Force downed a Russian fighter; and the crisis with Russia in Idlib, after some fifty Turkish soldiers were killed in artillery fire by Syrian regime forces backed by Russia. Despite recent serious crises between the Allies and Turkey (not between Turkey and NATO), the Turkey-NATO relationship remains strategically and critically important for both parties.

Turkey has placed its security and deterrence efforts with the NATO Alliance since its accession, during which time Turkey has provided massive security and political and military contributions to the Alliance. Given the security environment in the recent past and near future, the Allies cannot risk losing Turkey, and Turkey cannot risk exiting the world's strongest military alliance—especially considering recent crises such as Ukraine and Syria. NATO and Turkish officials have repeatedly underlined this fact. In sum, the recent crises that affected relations between some Allies and Turkey will in no way harm the relationship between Turkey and NATO.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar(lar) çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan eder.
Disclosure Statement: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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THE CHINESE MODEL OF CYBER SOVEREIGNTY: MAIN PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATIONS*

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Makale Geliş Tarihi/Received: 26/10/2021
Makale Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 21/12/2021
Makale Yayın Tarihi/Published: 31/12/2021
Atıf için/To cite: Lorci, E. (2021). The Chinese Model of Cyber Sovereignty: Main Principles and Implementations. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışmaları Dergisi, 1*(2), 149-163.

Abstract: The invention of the internet by a group of engineers in the United States of America in the late 1990s caused enormous changes in people's lives and brought some major debates in the international arena. Undoubtedly, one of the most important of these debates was what should be the scope and limits of states' sovereignty in cyberspace that emerged with the use of the internet. This issue caused a serious disagreement between the US with a techno-optimistic approach, and authoritarian states such as China, Russia, and Iran. While the countries adopting the techno-optimistic view opposed the hegemony of the states in cyberspace, authoritarian states including China argued that cyberspace is a reflection of the physical territory of the state and that states should have full sovereignty in cyberspace. In this context, this article explains China's position in this debate through the explanation of the existence, development, and implementation of China's concept of cyber sovereignty**.**
Keywords: China, The United States, Internet, Cyberspace, Cyber Sovereignty

ÇİN'İN SİBER EGEMENLİK MODELİ: TEMEL İLKELER VE UYGULAMALAR

Özet: 1990lı yılların sonlarına doğru internetin Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde bir grup mühendis tarafından icat edilmesi insanların yaşamlarında büyük değişiklere neden olduğu gibi bazı büyük uluslararası tartışmaları da beraberinde getirdi. Şüphesiz bu tartışmaların en önemlilerinden bir tanesi internetin kullanımıyla birlikte ortaya çıkan siber alanda devletlerin egemenliklerin kapsam ve sınırlarının ne olacağı konusuydu. Bu mesele konuya tekno-iyimser bir yaklaşıkla bakan ABD ve Batı devleriyle Çin, Rusya, İran gibi otoriter devletler arasında ciddi bir fikir ayrılığına neden oldu. Tekno-iyimser görüşü benimseyen ülkeler, devletlerin siber alanda hegemonya sahibi olmasına karşı çıkarken Çin'in de içinde bulunduğu otoriter devletler siber alanın devletin fiziksel sınırlarının bir yansıması olduğu ve devletlerin siber alanda tam egemenliğe sahip olması gerektiğini savundular. Bu bağlamda bu makale Çin'in bu tartışmadaki konumunu, Çin'in siber egemenliği kavramının oluşum süreci, gelişimini ve uygulamaları üzerinden açıklamaktadır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Çin, ABD, İnternet, Siber Alan, Siber Egemenlik

* This article was produced from the master's thesis that was completed on 29.06.2021 titled "Chinese Cyber Sovereignty in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Perspective of Digital Colonialism".

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Introduction

The lexical meaning of technology is the branch of knowledge that deals with the creation and use of technical means and their relationship with life, society, and the environment, drawing upon such subjects as industrial arts, engineering, applied science, and pure science. The development of technology dates back to ancient times, even back to the making of the first simple tools. After the Middle Ages, the modern technology era started, especially with the “Industrial Revolution”. In the 20th century, the development of technology reached in an unprecedented speed and began to change the living standards and styles of people. With the mass production in automobile production, for instance, in the 1900s, automobile prices decreased and the number of people who own cars in industrial societies increased accordingly. In this way, traveling from one city to another or from rural areas to urban areas became easier. In addition to this, thanks to development of electronic technologies first transatlantic radio message were sent and few years later television invented as a new mean of communication. Finally, with use of modern computer after Second World War the internet was invented in United States by group of engineers.

The rapid development of the internet and related technologies affected all aspects of people’s life. Besides, noticeable changes in people's lives, the rapid development of the Internet and related technologies also brought some new debates in international politics. Undoubtedly, one of the most important of these discussions was what should be the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of states in the cyberspace that emerged with the internet. In other words, what should be the scope and limitations of the cyber sovereignty of the states? Although, many different definitions of sovereignty could be made, this article will focus on the concept of territorial sovereignty, as it explores state sovereignty in cyberspace. Territorial sovereignty can be explained as a "state exercises principal means of authority within a given territory" (Goldsmith, 1998). Despite the fact that "given territory" is always one of the fundamental elements while talking about sovereignty, for some scholars because of the architectural design and the definition of the internet, it cannot be territorialized (Goldsmith, 1998).

According to the techno-optimistic view that emerged especially in the USA after the invention of the Internet, the Internet is a communication tool that was invented on libertarian foundations with the main purpose to increase communication between individuals and societies(Creemers, 2020). Thus, these techno-optimists argued that the internet cannot correlate with the physical location because cyberspace is a separate place removed from our world. Hence, states do not have sovereignty in cyberspace. Although this techno-optimistic view, supported by many thanks to the moderate atmosphere that emerged in the international arena after the cold war, it did not take long for opposing ideas to emerge. The main point defended by those oppositions of techno-optimistic view was although the internet does not necessarily correlate with physical location due to its architecture, the basic structural elements that create the internet such as software and hardware are located within the borders of a certain state, and therefore, the activities carried out in the cyberspace should not be contrary to the regulations of the current state (Creemers, 2020). Otherwise, every individual will be responsible for their activities towards governments in cyberspace (Goldsmith, 1998).

In the next period, the states also initiated to express their opinions about how the state's sovereignty in cyberspace should operate. In the United States where the internet was invented and used with the liberal foundations for the first time, and Western states that deem value issues such as democracy and human rights adopted a view close to the techno-optimists and argued that states cannot be a hegemon in the cyberspace (Schia & Gjesvik, 2017). On the other hand, authoritarian states such as China, Russia, and Iran see cyberspace as a reflection of the physical territory of the state and underlined that all individuals and institutions operating in cyberspace are obliged to comply with the rules of that state. (Schia & Gjesvik, 2017).

When the development of the internet and cyberspace was analyzed in China, many Western and American scholars argued that the spread of the internet in China would enable the Chinese people to reach information outside of China and learn more about the Western democracies. Thus, the people would demand more freedom and democracy which would, later, lead to the collapse of the communist party. However, contrary to what scholars thought, the spread of the Internet in China did not lead to the collapse of the Communist party, but rather played a crucial role in increasing the control and legitimacy of the party over the Chinese people. The main reason why the spread of the Internet in China did not cause the collapse of the communist party but rather increased its legitimacy was the Chinese government, from the very beginning, saw the Internet not as a tool to increase freedoms and communication, but as a must-have tool to achieve its economic goals (Jiang, 2010). The main purpose of the Chinese government was the reach economic development and stability that the internet would lead to but at the same time avoid any possible harm that would exist with the adoption of the internet. Thus, the Chinese government, from the early beginning, hold the internet under control with many legislative and administrative regulations. Moreover, the Chinese government transformed the internet into a tool for controlling Chinese society (Jiang, 2010). This mechanism, with Xi Jinping's coming to office, started to call Chinese cyber sovereignty. This movement, undoubtedly, is seen as the Chinese government's way of legitimizing its unethical actions in cyberspace.

In this context, the main purpose of this article is to explain what is the concept of Chinese Cyber sovereignty, its development process, and its implementations in China.

1. Sovereignty in Cyberspace

The concept of sovereignty has been a grand issue discussed by both social scientists and politicians from the past to the present. When the meaning of sovereignty is examined, according to Ayers (2016), the understanding of Sovereignty in the Western world is not only a political or juridical understanding but a combination of these two. According to the general approach in the world, the concept of sovereignty is explained in its simplest form as follows; Sovereignty is the supreme authority that will155 keep a government out of the intervention of other governments within the absolute boundaries of the country (Ayers, 2016).

This definition for the concept of sovereignty has its roots in the 1648 peace of Westphalia. According to some political scientists, the emergence of today's sovereign nation-states is a result of the Treaty of Westphalia. According to Creemers (2020), the international system created with the 1648 Peace of Westphalia was based on principles such as non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states and sovereign-equality. According to Ayers(2016), the Westphalian world

order was not fully functional due to the existence of empires and the irresistible understanding of colonialism until the end of World War II. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as two superpowers after the World War II. While the colonial lands of Germany, Italy, and Japan, the defeated countries of the war, were completely liquidated or shared by other powers, the victors such as Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands faced the growing liberation movements in their colonies at the same time (Çiftçi, 2018). Colonies countries which started the struggle for independence after the Second World War soon gained their independence and started their construction as a nation-state (Çiftçi, 2018). Most of the states, which gained independence from the colonial powers and launched to build a nation-state, adopted the Westphalian sovereignty understanding, which excluded any foreign intervention or actor within the borders of the country (Ayers, 2016).

Nowadays, with the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) and their incremental effect on human life, some new discussions have surfaced beyond the classical understanding of Sovereignty and the discussions made in this context. The most important of these discussions is sovereignty in cyberspace or in other words cyber sovereignty. Studies that analyzed the relationship between the Internet and the concepts of sovereignty have continued in the academic world since the 1990s (Zeng et al., 2017). According to Creemer (2020), in the early years of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the purpose of the development and use of these technologies was basically related to national security policies, such as espionage, surveillance, and projects such as Apollo, which would increase the country's prestige.

In the following years, with the increase in the use of ICTs by both the business sector and individuals, the absolute role and control of states on communication and information technologies began to evanesce (Creemers, 2020). In the 1990s, a group of American engineers and scientists developed the internet as we know it today, which was a turning point in terms of ICTs and their use because, in the United States, the internet was founded on ethical values such as freedom, transparency, and openness (Creemers, 2020). Although at first, the governments showed resistance to the internet approach based on libertarian principles, thanks to the moderate atmosphere that emerged after the end of the "Cold War", this libertarian understanding was also adopted by most of the governments (Creemers, 2020).

According to this techno-optimist view created by the internet based on libertarian foundations, cyberspace has become a new phenomenon in which the traditional understanding of government does not have an absolute role and control (Creemers, 2020). Issues such as cyberspace and the sovereignty of states in the cyber field have become crucial in international politics. According to Zeng (2017), cyberspace emerged as a radical sphere that has its own sovereignty beyond the powers and authorities of states. John Perry Barlow's "Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace" defines states as "weary giants of flesh and steel". According to him, governments no longer have sovereignty in the digital domain (Morrison, 2009).

According to the Creemers (2020), technology businesses effusively embraced this narrative of openness which rejects strong government regulations and allows them to grow rapidly on a global scale. The initiative to attenuate the role of the state has become an explicit goal in many aspects of internet governance, for example, in the "ICAAN (Internet Corporation

for Assigned Names and Numbers)" and the "IETF(Internet Engineering Task Force)", the multi-stakeholder actors such as the technology and business communities, and non-governmental organizations became as important as governments (Creemers, 2020). Although the foundation of the İnternet was based on libertarian values, reducing the role and control of the governments in cyberspace and internet governance for the United States and most of the Western Democracies, it was not the case for some countries that supported Westphalian understanding of sovereignty in cyberspace like China, Russia, and Iran.

In sum, according to Zeng et al. (2017), cyber sovereignty and, more broadly, internet governance differ widely between states. What vital issue for one state may be seen as less important or insignificant for the other state. In this sense, the divergent apprehension of cyber sovereignty by states is the basis of behavior that creates political disputes between governments (Zeng et al., 2017). This is particularly significant in the relations between China and Western democracies, especially the United States (Zeng et al., 2017). The perceptions of the United States and China towards Cyber sovereignty and Internet governance are diametrically opposed. While in the United States advocates a self-sovereign, individual-centered, and market-driven cyber sovereignty, China advocates a border-based, state-centered, cyber sovereignty that emphasizes the responsibilities of individuals rather than the rights of individuals (Jiang, 2010). Additionally, China's approach towards cyber sovereignty aspires to maximize economic benefit while making sure there is no political risk for the one-party state (Jiang, 2010).

2. China's Notion of Cyber Sovereignty

China, compared to the western world particularly the USA, met with the internet a little bit later. The first use of the internet by the civil community in China began in 1982 when FTP (File Transfer Protocol) and IP (Internet Protocol) protocols became legible. (Negro, 2017). It is a symbolic and important development that in 1987 the "Internet Project of the Chinese Academic Network (CANET)" team sent an e-mail from China to the University of Karlsruhe in West Germany with the subject of "joining the world by crossing the great wall" (Negro, 2017). In 1990, "National Computing and Networking Facility (NCFC)" launched the project that aims to establish a direct link between China and the whole world and will form the basis of the "China Science and Technology Network (CSTNET)" in the future (Negro, 2017).

According to Negro (2017), the year 1990 is very important for the development of the internet in China because China started its first cooperation with the ARPANET internet center and registered the country's domain name ".cn." in the same year. Although China registered for the country's domain name in 1990, the official recognition of the internet in the country took place in April 1994. After the official recognition of the internet in China, it has developed and spread very rapidly (Negro, 2017).

According to Negro (2017), the first steps taken in the development of the internet in China were basically the steps aimed at economic development as the paramount animus. Early times of the development of the ICT industries, former president Jiang Zemin played a leading role (Meng & Li, 2002). According to Negro (2017), former president Jiang Zemin fully understood the relationship between the information society and economic development and therefore valued the investments in the field of ICT. Jiang Zemin emphasized the importance of ICT investments

in many of his speeches in the 2000s. The most notable of these speeches are, the opening speech of the "National People's Congress (NCP)" and the "Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)" on 3 March: during the "16th World Computer Congress" on 21 August, and during a meeting of the "Central Military Commission (CMC)" on 11 December (Creemers, 2020).

Negro (2017) argued that during the leadership of Deng Xiaoping the development of information and telecommunication sectors were based on the adaptation of developed countries. Negro (2017) explained adaptation of technology from the developed countries with Gerschenkron's "advantage of backwardness" theory. According to the advantage of backwardness theory, backward countries such as China can achieve high-speed economic development by taking advantage of the development already made by developed countries (Jiang, 2010). As mentioned above during the Deng Xiaoping period, the adaptation of foreign technologies was the main policy however in the Jiang Zemin period, investments were made with the understanding of the "competitive edge of a late start" to make China a leader in the newest and sophisticated ICT industries (Creemers, 2020). As a result of all these policies and investments, China has become a country with a strong economy and a leading position in many of the ICT sectors.

The development and spread of the Internet have considerably transformed people's lives in the USA and the Western world. The most essential of these transformations is the increase in rights and freedoms. During the development of the Internet in China, the Chinese government sensed the Internet as a tool for economic goals, on the other hand, the Chinese government ensured to prevent the spreading of USA-centered understanding of the internet in the country and harm the existence and legitimacy of the communist party.

In this context, from Xi Jinping's leadership China started to promote its own understanding of Cyber Sovereignty, which is border-based, state-centered and, emphasizes the responsibilities of individuals rather than the rights of individuals (Jiang, 2010). China's idea of "Cyber sovereignty" is a high-profile resurgence of a concept first presented in a 2010 white paper called "Internet in China". The white paper interpreted that "China's Cyber sovereignty" means "in Chinese territory, the Internet is under Chinese sovereignty." The white paper said that all individuals and organizations operating in China are expected to comply with China's Internet laws and regulations (Tiezzi, 2014).

At the 2012 Budapest Conference on Cyber issues, China proposed five principles for international cooperation in cyberspace (Creemers, 2020). The first of these, sovereignty, defined as the right of each state to formulate its policies and laws in the light of its history, traditions, culture, and language (Creemers, 2020). The Wuzhen Declaration, published at the first "World Internet Conference" in 2014 argued that "We must respect the rights of every country in the development, operation and governance of the Internet, and avoid misuse of resources and technological powers to violate other countries Cyber sovereignty" (Zeng et al., 2017, p. 24).

At the second "World Internet Conference" held in 2015, Xin Jinping again highlighted the issues mentioned in the Wuzhen Declaration and stated that according to Cyber Sovereignty, surveillance or hacking activities against any sovereign society would not be tolerated. (Ayers,

2016, p. 58) At the Cyber Forum held in May 2016, Chinese ambassador Liu Xiaoming made a speech similar to Xi Jinping's speech in 2015, stressing the following issues:

1. All sovereign states have the right to make and choose their own way in internet development

2. All sovereign states have the right to develop their own model of regulation and enforcement in Internet-related matters

3. All sovereign states have an equal right to attend to international cyber governance

4. The approaches from the Cold War era and zero-sum games should be deserted

5. No state should intervene with the international relations of other sovereign states or engage in cyber actions that would endanger the national security of other states

6. Any arms race in cyberspace should be avoided (Ayers, 2016).

According to Creemers (2020), the most important document written about the sovereignty debate in cyberspace is found at the International Cyberspace Cooperation Strategy meeting held in 2017. In his book Creemers (2020), draws attention to three important normative principles of China's Cyber Sovereignty understanding.

Firstly, independent states can use their cyber sovereignty against other nations, which is a response to the understanding of online openness, which is a general acceptance in the world. This principle explains that the state has the right to regulate and control all activities within its borders, including the opposing ideas such as free expression and access to information in cyberspace (Creemers, 2020).

The second principle argues that the state has absolute and full sovereignty over all cyberspaces. This principle makes it clear that any multi-stakeholder actor such as civil society organizations or non-state organizations should not have any control over internet governance (Creemers, 2016). According to this principle even though technical and trade institutions play an important role in internet governance the final decision should be made by nation-states through inter-governmental organizations (Creemers, 2020).

The third principle of what Creemers (2020), defined as normative dimensions of China's Cyber sovereignty is that all the sovereign states have equal participation in Internet governance, no states should have more rights than others or be in the quest for hegemony.

Apart from the normative principles of China's Cyber sovereignty Creemers (2020), also mentioned the domestic measures of China's Cyber sovereignty which he defined in his book as "The Capability Dimensions" of China's Cyber Sovereignty. The essential purpose of these domestic measures is to guarantee sovereignty at home for Chinese society even though there is no international adoption. According to Creemers (2020,), it is possible to gather these measures around three fundamental concepts: territorialization, indigenization and, investment (p. 122-131)

Territorialization refers to the territorial borders of cyberspace. From the techno-optimist view there is no border presence in cyberspace however the Chinese government has taken the opposite discourse to this view (Creemers, 2020). According to the CAC director, Lu Wei cyberspace is an appendage of the physical space for this reason it should not be excluded from the legal arrangement. The Great Firewall of China, hardware that basically controls the flows of the information, can be taken as a sample of implementation of this measure (Creemers, 2020).

The second measure, indigenization, aims to enhance the market share of Chinese companies in the manufacture of the technologies used in China (Creemers, 2020). According to the report published by party journal in 2014, 82 percent of the servers, 73.9 percent of storage equipment, 91.7 percent of databases and, 95.6 percent of operating systems in China are driven by foreign enterprises (Creemers, 2020). The article points out the vulnerability of China towards foreign-sourced enterprises in the technologies used in cyberspace. For instance, in 2014 Microsoft announced that it will withdraw its support from the Windows XP system while the Windows XP was still used by most Chinese users (Creemers, 2020). To prevent this vulnerability China's government developed indigenization as a key component and increases the investment and support for China's own ICT companies such as Huawei, Vivi, Xiaomi and, Oppo. Owning to this massive support and a large amount of investment, some of these companies become leader status of the ICT sectors such as Huawei in 5G technologies (Creemers, 2020).

With the favor of these three measures, China's notion of Cyber sovereignty was adopted and implemented in China successfully. The adaptation of the Cyber sovereignty just by China itself, however, not enough for the ambitious Chinese government. Since the United States has already taken the hegemon position of cyberspace for many aspects and in many countries the only way to change this status quo, from the Chinese perspective, could be the international adaptation of Chinese notion of Cyber Sovereignty. Thus, to increase adaptation of its understanding of Cyber Sovereignty China targeted developing and underdeveloped countries as potential recipients.

3. Legislative and Technical Actions to Implement Cyber Sovereignty in China

According to Tai (2005), the world has witnessed a global revolution in the last two decades thanks to Information and Communication Technologies. China, like many other states, realized the socio-economic transformation created by technological developments and accelerated its investments in this field (Tai, 2005). According to Thomala (2021), China hosts the world's largest digital community with 989 million internet users. The Chinese government is aware of the benefits of ICTs that develop with the internet for the country's economy, as well as the risks that this technological transformation may create.

The existence and legitimacy of the party, undoubtedly, comes first in Communist China. Both economic and any other policy often serve a single essential purpose; preserving the existence and legitimacy of the party because, for the Chinese government, the existence of the party means the existence of the whole state. Tai (2005), underlines that, in the policies of development of internet and ICTs, as in all other policies, China's primary goal was to make sure that the party's authority would not be damaged while gaining economic advantages that comes with the internet.

According to Tai (2005), China actually revealed its intention to control the Internet and the cyber space from the very beginning with the regulation titled "Regulation for the Protection of Computer Information System" in 1994. Since its first regulation to control the internet in 1994, China has managed to keep cyberspace systematically under control in many different levels. (p. 140-143) Discussions about the need for Internet monitoring and control in China began in the mid-1990s (Negro, 2017).

The first document on the regulation of cyberspace in China, named "Regulation for the Protection of Computer Information System and Safety" was published September 18, 1994 (Negro, 2017). In this revision published by the "State Council, The Ministry of Public Security" was defined as the main body of the administration, and it was emphasized that the primary task of this body was to supreme to the infrastructure and investigate online criminal activities (Negro, 2017). Tai (2005), states that the essential point of the regulation made in 1994 was to control physical entity of the information system in the country however, the regulation did not give much attention to content control. (p. 141)

Before long, the Chinese Government realized that content control was also very important, and the State Council published the first official regulation for content control with the title "Implementation Measures for Enforcing the Temporary Decree on the Management of Computer Information Network International Connectivity in the People's Republic of China" (Tsui, 2003). This regulation, which was organized in February 1996 but started to be implemented in 1997, stated that the use of the Internet to produce harmful and obscene content that could harm the People's Republic of China is forbidden (Negro, 2017). According to Tai (2005), the problem with this regulation wasn't that it was controlling the content, because all nation-states may want to ban content that would harm the country, but the problem with this regulation was that the government did not fully explain what types of content would be deemed harmful. Therefore, in this way, the government would be able to evaluate the information in cyberspace as harmful and harmless in its own interest.

Negro (2017) highlighted that another important regulation made for the control of the internet was the "State Secrets Protection Regulations for Computer Information Systems on the Internet" published by "National Security Bureau" in January 2000. (p. 64) According to this regulation, sharing state secrets or discussing state secrets online was prohibited. In addition, it was underlined that all these IPSs and ICPs organizations were forced to obtain security certification and they considered responsible for the security of the state (Tai, 2005). Tsui (2003), emphasizes that, as in other regulations, the concepts were not fully explained in this regulation. Sharing state secrets online was not welcomed by any state nation, but the important issue here was what kinds of information would be considered state secrets, but the Chinese government did not clearly explain this in the regulation. According to Tsui (2003), since the concept of state secret could be expanded in many different ways, not fully disclosing it would increase the perception of "stay on the safe side" among the public and a natural control mechanism would have been formed for the Chinese Government. (p. 39)

Another important development in the regulation of cyber space in China is the establishment of the country's first Cyber Police Force in Anhui province in August 2000 (Tai, 2005). The main task of the Cyber Police Force defined as administrating and sustaining the order on computer networks (Negro, 2017). The application, which first started only in Anhui province in 2000, was initiated by other regions in a short time. By the end of 2000, it was reported that there was 300,000 active cyber police force in China and about 12 million people were monitored (Negro, 2017).

In addition to these regulations, in order to strengthen internet control, the Ministry of Information has published a statement demanding all website owners operating in China to register with Chinese authorities by June 2005. At the end of the time given by the Chinese government, about 1000 websites were closed for not meeting this requirement (Tai, 2005). According to Tai (2005), companies that do not want to comply with the Chinese government's regulations were quickly punished. The best example of this would be Google, which was frequently used by Chinese users but suddenly banned to access in August 2002 by the Chinese government because of Google refusal to implement the filter policy of the Chinese Government. Google later backs out and accepts the terms of the Chinese government but was banned again for another dispute in 2010.

Eventually, Tai (2005) states that the simplest way to control unsolicited content is to block it altogether. This is the motivation behind the Chinese "The Golden Shield Project" which is World's most sophisticated blocking and filtering system (Negro, 2017). In another word, The Golden Shield project is the technological implementation of legislative regulations on İnternet control. The Great Firewall is the name given to the project by the Western World because of Its structure. The official name of it is "The Golden Shield Project" which first occurred in 1996 but started to be fully implemented in 2006 (Chandel et al., 2020). Tsui (2003) states that the essential reason for the launch of "The Golden Shield Project" is to increase the adaptation of information and communication technologies to catalyze content control in cyberspace and to strengthen the combat against crime in the cyber space.

According to Chandel et al. (2020), the Golden Shield Project, which has occurred for so-called reasonable reasons, has turned into a highly sheltered, heavily monitored, fully controlled system that deserves to qualify as "The Great Firewall". The name "Golden Shield" given to the project by the "Ministry of Public Security" and the main purpose of the project explained to combat and protect China's İnternet from harmful and illegal content mostly from outside of the country (Negro, 2017). From the day the Golden Project became fully active, dozens of web pages, IPs, and URLs were blocked including the most popular social media applications such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram. (Chandel et al., 2020).

According to Chandel et al. (2020), the development of "The Golden Shield Project" can explain in four phases. Chandel et al. (2020) state that, the first phase of The Golden Shield Project started with the blocking of some specific domain names and IP addresses within the country. "The Golden Shield System" used to identify users who violated this rule. For the effective implementation of this practice, Chinese officials asked all internet cafes in the country to install spying software approved by local authorities on their computers. In this way, the state gained the ability to monitor all the transactions of computers in internet cafes (Chandel et al., 2020). In addition, Chinese authorities required all internet cafe users to register with an ID card before using computers so that people who violate the rule can be identified and punished immediately.

According to Chandel et al. (2020), the second phase of The Golden Shield project started with the application of key-word filtering. With the implementation of this application, internet users who make a search on the content designated as "sensitive content" are directly disconnected from the content (Chandel et al., 2020). The third phase of The Golden Shiel Project is the blocking of the most widely used VPN providers such as Free VPN and Tianxins VPN by

the system upon the realization that some internet users violate the bans using VPN . The fourth phase of Great Firewall development in China is to introduce legal regulations that will penalize VPN providers in order to prevent violations of the bans on Internet Use through VPNs (Chandel et al., 2020).

As a result, with all these developments and increased controls, The Golden Shield Project turned into The Great Firewall, the world's most advanced content control system. The Firewall plays an essential important role for China to legitimate what they call İnternet Sovereignty. While China sees The Great Firewall as a tool to protect their Cyber sovereignty, for the USA and the Western World, this system and the Chinese model of Cyber Sovereignty are the efforts of the Chinese government to legitimize its repressive policies.

4. The Internet in China as a Tool of Social Management

From the early years of development of the Internet in China, Chinese leaders were aware of the damage that the Internet's impact on society could cause to the Communist Party, and for this reason, they aimed to make the Internet and all technologies developed with the Internet controllable and accountable by turning it into a social management tool. Zeng et al. (2017) states that, in many of the official documents published by the Chinese government especially after 2010, special emphasis is placed on issues such as "stability", "public security", "legitimacy of the CCP".

According to Zeng et al. (2017), the reason of Chinese government's behavior can be seen as response to the global revolution that has emerged with the development of technology. The Communist Party of China sees the existence and legitimacy of the party as the source of stability in the country and they believe that the party's existence can be guaranteed by strong social management.

According to Creemers (2020), the internet is one of the most important tools for social management because the government can be more powerful and resourceful online, while also being less direct and invasive. China's use of the internet and other advanced technologies to keep society under control is realized through both government official institutions and private technology companies. "The State of Information Office", which was established in 2011 is being at the head of China's advanced internet censorship mechanism. Besides this official institution, leading state-owned telecommunications companies China Telecom, China Unicom, and China Mobil are also important constituents of the internet censorship system.

One of the most important milestones in the Internet's becoming a surveillance tool in China is the "Cyber Security Law" issued in 2017. With this law, all technology companies operating in China have become responsible for their customers' cyber activities. According to this law, all technology companies had to monitor their customers' activities and report of the authorities if any illegal activity is carried out (Internet Censorship in China Explained - Daxue Consulting - Market Research China, 2020). As a result of both the legal regulations and the cooperation of the Chinese government with the main telecommunications and internet providers, China has succeeded in transforming the internet, which was initially supposed to change the system by increasing freedoms, into a tool of social management. According to the Market Research's report, 6,000 websites in 2018 and 733 websites in January 2019 alone were shut

down by the Cyberspace Administration of China for violating regulations (Internet Censorship in China Explained - Daxue Consulting - Market Research China, 2020). In addition, 9,382 mobile apps and more than 7 million pieces of information were removed from the online environment for the same reason.

In addition to censorship activities to increase social management, the Chinese government also uses "face recognition technologies" as a control tool. W. H. Gravett (2020) argues that China is the country where facial recognition technologies are developing the fastest in the world because the Chinese government has understood the great potential of these technologies in social management. Facial recognition technology is a very advanced technology that helps to identify the facial features of a person in less than a minute, to distinguish that person from thousands of other people, and to provide a lot of information about the person by making potential matches (W. H. Gravett, 2020). Thus, facial recognition technologies are a unique opportunity for the Chinese government, which is trying to make the internet and the technologies that develop with the internet a tool to keep society under control.

On this basis, the Ministry of Public Security of China started a project in 2015 to develop the world's most advanced facial recognition system. According to the ministry's statement, when the project is completed, the system will have the capacity to analyze the data of 1,393 billion Chinese citizens within just three seconds (Dong, 2012). In addition to this project, it is known that the Chinese government already uses facial recognition technologies to control the people especially in areas where minorities live. According to the Chinese government's argument, authorities are using facial recognition technologies for the benefit of society to combat "terrorism, separatism and extremism", which the government has identified as the three evils (W. Gravett, 2020, p.18). However, according to many Western human rights institutions, since the Chinese government does not clearly define the scope and limits of the concepts, the use of facial recognition technologies becomes a means of control, espionage, and assimilation, far beyond combating "terrorism, separatism and extremism" (W. H. Gravett, 2020).

As a result, the Chinese government used the Internet for socio-economic development with the discourse of "cyber sovereignty", while it reduced the political risks and made the Internet a tool of social management. Although many Western states, especially the USA, are against the high rate of state censorship, "China's notion of cyber sovereignty" argues that all states have the right to choose their own path of cyber regulation and development of public policies for the internet.

Conclusion

In the 1990s, a group of American engineers and scientists developed the internet based on ethical values such as freedom, transparency, and openness (Creemers, 2020). Although at first, the governments showed resistance to the internet approach based on libertarian principles, thanks to the moderate atmosphere that emerged after the end of the "Cold War", this libertarian understanding was also adopted by most of the governments (Creemers, 2020). According to this techno-optimist understanding, cyberspace has become a new phenomenon in where the government does not have an absolute role and control. However, this new understanding of the Internet which did not accept the absolute control and sovereignty of the governments in

cyberspace was not suitable for all the states. Undoubtedly China was one of these states. In the early years of adaptation of the internet in China, the Chinese government discerned the internet and related technologies as only a tool for high economic development. For this reason, the Chinese government did not want to miss the opportunities that the internet would create. However, at the same time, the Chinese government was aware of the possible harm that USA-centered understanding of the internet based on a libertarian foundation, would create for the legitimacy of the Communist party. Thus, the Chinese government needed to develop its understanding of cyber sovereignty, with its characteristic which is opposite to the techno-optimistic view to control the spread of the internet in China. In this regard, the concept of Chinese cyber sovereignty first appeared in the White Paper published in 2010, although its applications have been seen since the early years of the Internet's adaptation in China. The White Paper defines the Chinese notion of cyber sovereignty as: in Chinese territory, the Internet is under Chinese sovereignty, all individuals and organizations operating in China are expected to comply with China's internet laws and regulations (Tiezzi, 2014).

Thanks to the practices of this cyber sovereignty, China prevented the spread of the internet based on American values which expected to lead the collapse of the Chinese Communist Party. Since the internet, for the Chinese Government, is seen as tool for economic development and used for this goal, the Chinese government achieved increased economic welfare and stability of the people. Thus, this leaded the Chinese government to increase the party's legitimacy thanks to the internet and concept of the cyber sovereignty.

Consequently, although the Chinese government still has many legitimacy lacks, mainly in corruption, rule of law, public safety, and social inequality, the party is still viewed legitimately by most Chinese netizens. (Jiang, 2010) From the government's viewpoint, although the Internet poses some significant challenges to the government, it is possible to overcome such challenges and secure its survival by producing economic growth, social stability, and national identity. In this regard, the Chinese government aims to use the Internet not only to increase its authority in society but also to enhance its legitimacy.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar(lar) çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan eder.
Disclosure Statement: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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ULUSAL, BÖLGESEL VE KÜRESEL GÜÇ MÜCADELESİ BAĞLAMINDA İRAN'IN SURİYE İÇ SAVAŞI'NDAKİ ROLÜ

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Makale Geliş Tarihi/Received: 14/11/2021
Makale Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 17/12/2021
Makale Yayın Tarihi/Published: 31/12/2021
Atıf İçin/To Cite: Kuzu, R. K. (2021). Ulusal, Bölgesel ve Küresel Güç Mücadelesi Bağlamında İran'ın Suriye İç Savaşı'ndaki Rolü. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışmaları Dergisi*, *1*(2), 164-175.

Özet: Aralık 2010'da "Arap Baharı"nın başlamasıyla birlikte Ortadoğu'da birçok değişiklik meydana gelmiştir. İsyanın başlangıcında barışçıl bir şekilde yapılan protestolar Esad yönetiminin ayaklanmaları bastırmak için halka karşı şiddet kullanmasıyla bir iç savaşa evrilmiştir. Bu iç savaş birçok bölgesel ve küresel aktörü kendisine çekmiş ve her bir aktör kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda bu savaşa doğrudan veya dolaylı bir şekilde dâhil olmuştur. Bu aktörlerin başında ise İran gelmektedir. Bu makalede, İran'ın Arap Baharı ayaklanmalarından sonra Suriye politikasını anlamak temel amaçtır. Bu bağlamda, İran'ın Arap Baharı ayaklanmalarına karşı tutumu ve bu tutumun Suriye'de değişimi incelenmiştir. Arap Baharı'nın sunduğu fırsattan yararlanan İran, Suriye'deki sadık tabanını sağlamlaştırıp ekonomik istikrarsızlık ve çalkantılara rağmen bölgedeki gücünü genişletmeye devam etmiştir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Baharı, Suriye İç Savaşı, İran, Güç Mücadelesi, Ortadoğu

THE ROLE OF IRAN IN THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL POWER STRUGGLE

Abstract: With the beginning of the "Arab Spring" in December 2010, many changes occurred in the Middle East. The peaceful protests at the beginning of the rebellion evolved into a civil war when the Assad administration used violence against the people in order to supress the uprisings. This civil war has attracted many regional and global actors and each of these actors has involved this civil war directly or indirectly in accordance with its own interest. Iran is the prominent of these actors. In this article, understanding to Iran's Syrian policy after Arab Spring revolts is the main objective. Taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the Arab Spring, Iran has solidified its base of loyalists in Syria. Despite the economic instability and upheaval, it has continued to expand its power in the region.
Keywords: Arab Spring, Syrian Civil War, Iran, Power Struggle, Middle East

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Giriş

Arap isyanları, ilk başlarda demokratik haklardan uzak tutulan geniş bir coğrafya halklarının kendini yönetmesine imkân sağlayabilecek bir 'fırsat' olarak değerlendirildi (Ramadan, 2012: 8-12). Zaten 'bahar' denmesinin sebebi de buydu. Fakat geçen zaman açıkça göstermektedir ki 'bahar' 'kışa' dönmüştür (Mihaylov, 2017: 3-14). Çünkü Yemen'e, Libya'ya ve özellikle de bu yazının odak noktası Suriye'ye bakıldığında reformdan çok darbe, karşı devrim, iç savaş ve dış müdahaleler göze çarpmaktadır. Olayların ilk ortaya çıktığı zamanlarda Suriyeliler, asker ve istihbarat devleti olarak tanımlanan tek adam diktatörlüğünden kurtulacaklarını tahayyül ederlerken şimdilerde ya ülkelerini ettiler ya da iç savaşın en acımasız tecrübelerini yaşamak zorunda kaldılar ('Arap Baharı' Kışa Döndü', 2018).

Süreç, bölge halkları açısından umulanın tam tersi bir yöne evrilirken, İran'ın, Arap isyanlarına yönelik yaklaşımı ne yöndedir? diye sorulacak olursa; en temel olarak, İran'ın ikircikli bir politika izlediğini söyleyebiliriz. Tunus'ta başlayıp hızlıca Mısır'da yankı bulup Körfez ülkelerinde de kıpırdanmalara sebep olan Arap Baharı, İran tarafından 'İslami Uyanış' söylemiyle desteklenmiştir (Tasken, 2018). Hatta İran yönetici elitleri, bu desteklerini bir adım daha ileri götürerek Tunus, Mısır ve Körfez ülkelerindeki hareketlenmeleri 1979 İslam Devrimi'nin yansımaları olduğunu belirterek bu hareketlerin kendilerinden esinlendiğini iddia eden açıklamalarda bulunmuşlardır. İsyanların başladığı ülkelerdeki Batı aleyhtarı atmosferin etkisini artırmak için bu durumu fırsat bilen Tahran, halk hareketlerinin ilk başladığı ülkelerdeki isyancıları desteklediğini açıklarken, Batılı ülkeleri, halk ayaklanmalarının yaşandığı ülkelerdeki otoriter yönetimlere destek vermekle suçladı ve daha da ileri giderek Batılıların bu desteklerinin Ortadoğu halklarının özgür ve demokratik isteklerine ket vurduğunu dünyaya ilan etti. Ancak halk hareketleri Suriye'de başlayınca Tahran yönetimi izlediği politikayı değiştirerek, Suriye halkını desteklemek yerine Suriye yönetimini desteklemiştir (Yalçın ve Duran, 2017: 207).

Suriye, İran Devleti'nin Ortadoğu'daki ulusal çıkarları açısından son derece önemli devletlerin başında yer almaktadır. Şöyle ki Tahran'ın varoluşsal meseleleri arasında *Şii hilali ve onun kontrolden çıkmaması* ve *Hizbullah ile bağlantısının kopmaması* gibi hususlar büyük bir önem arz eder (Yalçın ve Duran, 2017: 205). Bir de bunlara ek olarak, İran yönetimi, Suriye'de Sünni bir nüfuz sahasının oluşmasını kendileri için tehlike çanlarının çaldığının habercisi olarak yorumlamaktadır.

Bilindiği üzere, Arap Baharı sonrasında patlak veren Suriye İç Savaşı, şiddetin çok yoğun bir şekilde yaşanması hasebiyle Ortadoğu'nun en büyük krizlerinden biri halini almıştır. Bu makalede, Suriye'deki son dönemde önde gelen aktörlerden biri olarak Tahran yönetiminin ulusal, bölgesel ve küresel olmak üzere üç aşamalı olarak yürüttüğü Suriye politikası tartışılacak ve sonuç kısmı "Barışa Doğru Mu?" sorusu üzerinden değerlendirmeye tabi tutulacaktır.

1. Ulusal Bağlamda İran'ı Suriye İç Savaşı'nda Müdahil Kılan Faktörler

Her ne kadar İran ve Suriye farklı etnik yapı, ideoloji, dil, kültür ve hatta mezhep inanışına sahip olsalar da İran mevcut rejime her türlü desteği vermektedir (Goodarzi, 2006: 11). Peki, bunun arkasındaki itici güç nedir? Bazı uzmanların iddia ettiği gibi Tahran yönetiminin, Suriye yönetimini desteklemesinde mezhebin etkili bir rol oynadığı düşüncesi ne kadar doğrudur? Suriye yönetimi baskın gelen mezhebi Nusayrilik ile Şiilik iddia edildiği gibi benzer midir veya

benzerlikler taşır mı (Abdo, 2017: 146) veya İran, Suriye'de salt mezhepçilik için mi vardır diye soracak olursak; cevaplarımız büyük oranda 'hayır' olur. Tahran-Şam iş birliğini Ortadoğu'daki Sünni devletlere karşı mezhep odaklı bir hareket gibi okumak mümkünmüş gibi gözükse de söz konusu iş birliğinde stratejik çıkarlar daha baskındır (Ebrahimi, 2018: 4). Daha ayrıntılı bakıldığında İran'ın resmi mezhebi olan Oniki İmami Şiiliğince değerlendirmede bulunan birçok önemli din adamı tarafından Nusayriliğin pek çok dini inanç ve pratiklerini sapkın olarak nitelendirip Şia'nın aşırı ve sapkın kolları anlamına gelen 'Gulat-ı Şia' sınıflandırmasında yer vermişlerdir (2018: 6). Bu sebepledir ki Tahran-Şam ortak hareket etmesini tarihi ve jeopolitik nedenler üzerinden aramak daha sağlıklı olacaktır.

İran İslam Cumhuriyeti 1979'da kurulduğundan beri Suriye, Irak ve Lübnan üçlüsündeki varlığını İsrail ve ABD karşıtlığına dayandırırken, DAEŞ karşıtlığına vurgu yaparak Suriye'deki etkinliğini daha da pekiştirme fırsatını bulmuştur. Devrim sonrası, Suriye İç Savaşı öncesi, İran'a alan açılmasında en belirleyici tarih 11 Eylül saldırıları olmuştur. Bu saldırıların ardından Ortadoğu'daki tutumlarını bariz bir şekilde sertleştiren Amerikan yönetimi, İran'a, temas halinde oldukları ülkelerle safları sıklaştırmaktan başka yol bırakmamıştır. İran'ın Ortadoğu'da en önemli paramiliter gücü ve stratejik ortaklarından biri olan Lübnan Hizbullah'ıyla ilişkileri en üst seviyede tutmanın yolu kara bağlantısı olan Suriye'den geçmektedir. Yani kısaca, iki temel faktör mezhepten çok stratejik çıkarların ön planda olduğunu gösterir: i) İslami Cumhuriyet için Suriye rejimini devrilmesi demek Ortadoğu'da nüfuz alanının büyük ölçüde yitirilmesiyle aynı anlama gelmektedir, ii) Lübnan Hizbullah'ı ile kara bağlantısının kopmaması gerekli bir durumdur. Bu iki faktöre ek olarak, İran, Suriye'den sonra sıranın kendisine gelmesinden çekindiği için Suriye rejimine güçlü destek verdiği yönde açıklamalar da yapmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, Devrim Rehberi Hamaney'in açıklamalarında da görüleceği üzere, başta İsrail ve ABD gibi Batılı ülkelerin amaçlarının, İran, Suriye, Hizbullah eksenli "direniş hattı"nı yıkarak İran'daki rejime son vermek olduğu yönündedir (2018: 5). 2003'te ABD'nin Irak'ı işgal etmesinden sonra Şam yönetiminin Batı ile olan münasebetleri ciddi olarak bozulmaya başlamıştır (Çomak vd., 2016: 480). Bu bozulma Şam-Tahran ilişkilerinin pekişmesine vesile olmuştur. Hatta bu pekişme 2006'da resmileşerek ABD ve İsrail tehdidine karşı ortak savunma ilkesine dayalı bir güvenlik antlaşmasına dönüşmüştür (Pouladi, 2019). İşte bu oluşum, Tahran ve Şam tarafından direniş cephesi olarak adlandırılırken, diğer bölge ülkeleri tarafından Şii ekseni olarak yorumlanmıştır. Kimi devletler, direniş cephesi veya Şii ekseni, her nasıl tanımlanırsa tanımlansın, başta İsrail'in güvenliğini tehdit etmesi, sonrasında bölgedeki diğer başkentlerde huzursuzluk yaratması ve nihayetinde Batılı diğer başkentlerde tehlike çanlarının çaldırmasından ötürü bu gibi girişimleri güçsüzleştirmenin yollarını aramaya başlamışlardır. İran için bu kadar çok karşıt çıkarlarla başa çıkmanın yolu olarak askerî gücünü seferber etme olarak görülmüştür. Devrim Muhafızları Ordusu'ndaki İranlı milislerden tutun da Afgan Fatimiyyun Tugayları ve Pakistanlı Zeynebiyyun Tugaylarına kadar birçok İranlı askeri birim Suriye'deki iç savaşta bilfiil yer alıp iç savaşın uzamasında ve çok daha fazla şiddetlenmesinde rol oynamışlardır.

İran yönetiminin Suriye İç Savaşı'na müdahil olmasını ve DAEŞ gibi bir örgütle mücadele etmesini kendi kamuoyunda nasıl meşrulaştırdığına bakıldığında, işte tam da burada mezhebi söylem ortaya çıkmaktadır. İran halkı yaşamış olduğu siyasi krizlere, ekonomik darboğaza rağmen Suriye'de devletlerinin çok aktif bir şekilde bulunmasının maliyetlerine katlanmasında,

Cuma hutbeleri, dini heyetler, rejimin yazılı basın ve sosyal medyadaki mezhep vurgusu ve DAEŞ tehdidi açıklamaları milli birlik ve beraberlik gibi hususlar etkili olmuştur.

Kısacası, Suriye'de halkın çok büyük bir kısmının Sünni olmasından ötürü Nusayri yönetim, devamlılığını sağlayabilmek için İran ile ortak hareket etmek zorunda kalırken İran da açılan bu kanal üzerinden Şii yayılmacılığını gerçekleştirebilmek için meşru bir söylem ve eylem zemini bulmaktadır.

2. Bölgesel Güç Mücadelesi Kapsamında İran'ın Suriye İç Savaşı'nda Rolü

İran ve Suriye kendilerini bir eksenin parçaları olarak (direniş ekseni) görmüşlerdir. İran İslam Cumhuriyeti, faal bir bölgesel güç kapsamında varlığını devam ettirebilmek için Şam yönetiminin iktidarda kalması zorunlu görülmektedir. Ehteshami ve Hinnebusch'in, "orta büyüklükte güçte olan devlet" olarak tanımladıkları İran, (1997: 102) aslında bölgesel gelişmelerde aktif bir rol oynayarak orta büyüklükte bir devlet olmaktan bölgesel lider olma yolunda politikalar belirlemektedir. Bununla birlikte, Tahran-Şam yakınlaşması, Hizbullah'a verilen ortak bir destekle perçinlenmektedir. Ayrıca Tahran-Şam yakınlaşmasının daha tarihsel kökenlerine bakıldığında ise İsrail ve Saddam Hüseyin'e yönelik ortak bir karşıtlıktan beslenildiği görülmektedir. Halkın demokratik taleplerinin önünün açılması halinde Sünni bir yönetimin iktidara gelme olasılığının kuvvetli oluşu İran için kesinlikle istenmeyecek bir durum oluşturmasından ötürü, Tahran yönetimi elindeki tüm siyasi, ekonomik ve askeri enstrümanları kullanmaktan çekinmemektedir. Bölge ülkelerinden Suriye yönetimine yönelik gerçekleştirilebilecek müdahaleler, içişlerine karışma girişimleri veya Suriye yönetimini yalnızlaştırma teşebbüsleri, Tahran tarafından mümkün olduğunca bertaraf edilmektedir. Ayrıca İran bölgedeki artan nüfuzunu kullanarak Irak ve Hizbullah'ın, Suriye yönetimine destek vermelerini teşvik etmiştir (Sofuoğlu, 2016).

Suriye meselesine bölge ülkelerinden Türkiye gözünden bakıldığında rejimin, halkın demokratik taleplerini karşılaması olması gereken bir durumdu. İran ise hangi şartlar altında olursa olsun Suriye yönetimini koşulsuz destekleyen bir yaklaşıma sahip olmuştur. Suriye İç Savaşı'nda birbirinden tamamen farklı saiklerle hareket eden Türkiye ve İran, zaman zaman birbirlerini birincil derecede tehdit kaynağı olarak görmektedir. Ek olarak, tehdit algılamaların da farklı olması durumu daha da karmaşık hale getirmektedirler. Türkiye açısından PYD/YPG terörist bir örgüt olup Suriye'nin kuzeyinde sözde bir Kürt devletinin kurulması kabul edilemez iken, İran için durum değişmektedir. İran açısından DAEŞ birincil derecede mühim mezhepsel tehdit olup terörist bir yapılanmadır. Ankara'nın, Suriye kaynaklı, milli güvenliğine tehdit olarak gördüğü terör örgütlerine karşı askeri operasyonlarına Tahran karşı çıkabilmektedir (Haber Türk, 2019). Körfez Savaşı sonrasında Irak'ın kuzeyinde Kürt yönetimi oluşturan Amerikan yönetimi, şimdi de Suriye'nin kuzey hattı boyunca Türkiye'ye hasım sözde bir Kürt etnisitesi oluşturmayı hedeflemektedir. Burada kurgulanan Türkiye'ye tehdit oluşturacak bir "garnizon devlet"in temellerini atmaktır. ABD'nin 30 bin tır dolusu ağır silahı PYD/YPG'ye vermesi, Türkiye'nin Fırat Kalkanı ve Zeytin Dalı harekâtlarıyla Fırat'ın batısında terör koridorunu işlevsiz hale getirmesini engelleyememiştir.

Fırat Kalkanı ve Zeytin Dalı Harekâtlarına kadar askeri manada bölgesel güç rekabetinde daha önde olan İran, Türkiye'nin bir de Barış Pınarı Harekâtı'nı başlatarak bölgede yeni olasılıklar meydana çıkartabileceği ihtimalini göz önünde bulundurmuş olup bu operasyonu da Suriye'deki stratejik çıkarlarına tehdit olarak algılamıştır (Farzam, 2019). Ankara'nın belirttiği gibi bu harekâtta temel amaç Kuzey Suriye'de sınır boyunca YPG/PYD'nin aralıksız hâkim olduğu bir bölgenin oluşmasını önlemek olmuştur. Oysa İran, belirtilen bölgedeki Kürt unsurların Şam yönetimi ile bir şekilde uzlaşarak Suriye topraklarının tümünde merkezi hükümetin hâkimiyetinin sağlanmasını amaçlamaktadır. Nasıl ki Tahran, 2019'da Barış Pınarı Harekâtı'na karşı çıkıyorsa, geçmişte de Fırat Kalkanı ve Zeytin Dalı Harekâtları'na da karşı çıkmakta yetinmemiş; Ankara'nın muhtemel her operasyonuna ket vurmak için YPG/PYD ile Şam yönetimi arasında bir çeşit uzlaşı gerçekleştirebilmek için emek sarf etmiştir. Afrin-El Bab-Cerablus hattında fiilen hâkim olan ve İdlib'de ciddi manada askerî varlığı bulunan Ankara'nın, Fırat'ın doğusunda ilk aşamada 120 km uzunluğunda ve 30 km derinliğindeki bir bölgede hâkimiyet kurması, Türkiye'nin Suriye'deki rolünün gerek diplomatik gerekse askerî olarak pekişeceği anlamına gelmektedir. Yani kısaca, askerî manada kısıtlanacağını düşünen İran rejimi, Türkiye'nin Suriye'de gücünü artırmasından ciddi manada rahatsızlık duymaktadır.

Her ne kadar İran ve Türkiye'nin farklı çıkarları, beklentileri ve uygulamaları olsa da her iki ülke de birbirleriyle olan diplomatik görüşmelerini devam ettirme yönünde hareket etmişlerdir. Bu durumun oluşmasında belli başlı üç etkenin varlığından bahsedilebilir: Birinci olarak, küresel güçlerle yaşadıkları sorunlu ilişkilerden ötürü bölge ülkeleri olarak birbirlerinden destek bulacakları ümidi; ikincisi, sınır güvenlikleri sağlama düşüncesi ve son olarak iki ülkenin ekonomilerinin birbirlerini tamamlayabilecek alanlara sahip olmasıdır.

Suriye'de bölgesel güç mücadelesi kapsamında Riyad'ın "ayaklanmaya" ve Tahran'ın "rejime" destek vermesi, mezhepsel aidiyet ekseninde kutuplaşan siyasal bir alanın tekrardan kurulmasına neden oldu. Mezhepsel olarak kutuplaşma "Şii hilali"ne karşı "Sünni çember" (Ismail, 2011: 540) İran ile Suudi Arabistan arasında sürmekte olan bölgesel rekabet, savaşın milisleştirilmesi ile daha vahim bir hal aldı (Baczko vd., 2016: 16). Özellikle P5+1 ülkeleri ile İran arasında gerçekleştirilen nükleer anlaşmayla birlikte İran etkisinin gün geçtikçe artacağı riskinden ötürü Riyad yönetimi İran'ı dengeleyebileceği her türlü girişimi desteklemeye başladı. Diğer bir ifadeyle, Arap Baharı'nın başlamasıyla İhvan karşıtı sert bir pozisyon alan ve ulusal güvenlik politikalarını İhvan karşıtlığı üzerinden tayin eden Riyad yönetimi, nükleer anlaşma sonrası bölgesel düzlemde kökleşmiş tehdit olan Tahran'ı öncelemeye başladı. Üstüne üstelik bir de Riyad'ın daha yakın coğrafyasında – Bahreyn'de Şii muhalefet, Yemen'de Husiler, Suudları daha da İran karşıtlığına itmektedir. Suud-Fars bölgesel rekabetini kızıştırmış olan bir başka etken ise ABD'nin Körfez güvenliği yerine Obama yönetimince belirlenen İran ile yakınlaşma politikası olmuştur. İlaveten, Şiilik üzerinden yayılmacı politikalar belirleyerek nüfuz alanını günden güne artıran İran, Suudi Arabistan açısından ulusal güvenlik meselesi haline gelmiştir. Suudi Arabistan hem ülkesindeki Şii nüfusun İran'ın etki alanına girmesinden hem de bölgedeki Bahreyn gibi ülkelerdeki Şii nüfusun İran'ın etki alanına girmesinden endişe etmektedir (Oğuzlu ve Çiçekçi, 2019: 170). Tüm bu etmenler neticesinde Riyad yönetimi, İran'a karşı inisiyatif alıp güçlü savunmacı aktivizm stratejisi belirleyerek ve refleksif güç kullanarak cevap verdi (Yalçın ve Duran, 2017: 236). Kısaca, Irak, Yemen, Bahreyn, Lübnan ve Suriye'de İran etkisi artıkça

Suudların güvensizlik hissiyatları artmış; Riyad'ın daha katı ve öfkeli politikalar belirlemesine neden olmuştur (Oğuzlu ve Çiçekçi, 2019: 170).

Suriye Krizi, bölgesel ve küresel aktörlerin sürece dâhil olduğu geniş ölçekli bir sorun niteliğindedir. Bu kapsamda sorunun çözümü için bölgesel ve küresel güçler devreye girmiştir. Krizin çözümünde kuşkusuz en etkili bölgesel güçler Türkiye ve İran olurken, küresel güçler ise Rusya ve ABD'dir. (Golkarian, 2020). Türkiye, Rusya ve İran tarafından başlatılan ve Eylül 2017'de Kazakistan'ın başkenti Astana'da başlayan görüşmelerin sonucunda, üç ülkenin de üzerinde uzlaşmaya vardığı ilkeler duyurulmuştu. Bu anlaşmaya göre İdlib çatışmasızlık bölgesi ilan edilmiş, "El Kaide, IŞİD ve bağlantılı gruplar" ile mücadele edileceği ifade edilmişti (Ayvaz, 2020: 53). Fakat, Suriye'de yaşanan olayların bölgesellikten çıkıp uluslararası krize dönüşmesinin ardından Türkiye, Suriye'ye yönelik stratejisinde özellikle güvenlikle alakalı nedenlerden dolayı değişikliğe gitmiştir. Çünkü terör örgütü PKK'nın burada yürüttüğü faaliyetler, Türkiye'nin güvenliğine yönelik tehdidi artırmıştır (Yeşiltaş, Pirinççi, 2020: 71,72).

Astan görüşmeleri barışı tamamlayıcı bir sürece dönüşerek toplamda 14 kez gerçekleşmiştir. Türkiye ve Rusya ikilisinin büyük rol oynadığı Astana görüşmelerinde krizin çözümüne yönelik önemli kararlar alınmıştır. Bu süreç, Cenevre Konferansları ile paralel özellikler taşıyan ve Suriye'de çatışmaları sonlandırmaya yönelik, kalıcı barışın sağlanmasını amaçlayan bir süreçtir. Suriye Krizi'nde Cenevre, Astana ve Soçi süreçleri, bir bakıma birbirinin tamamlayıcısı süreçler olarak ifade edilebilir.

Astana Süreci devam ederken gerçekleşen Soçi görüşmeleriyle beraber Suriye Krizi'nin çözümü üzerine Türkiye ve Rusya arasındaki işbirliği olanağı artmaya başlamıştır. İdlib üzerine yoğunlaşan muhtıra hem Türkiye'nin sınır güvenliği hem de Suriye'nin toprak bütünlüğü bakımından önem arz etmektedir. Bu nedenle, Soçi Muhtırası ile kabul edilen maddelerin sahada uygulanabilmesi için ortak bir denetim mekanizması kurulmuştur. Bu gelişmeler Türk-İran ilişkilerinin son dönemi açısından da kayda değer bir gelişmedir.

Sonuç olarak, Suriye İç Savaşı çok açık göstermiştir ki Tahran, var olan koşullar altında bölgesel güç olma yolunda ilerleyebilmesi için ekonomik kırılganlığını giderebilmesi şarttır. Bunun için de ABD yaptırım politikasını hafifletecek stratejiler belirlemelidir. Ayrıca Tahran, Ankara ve Riyad gibi iki bölgesel aktör ile uzlaşmacı bir politika üzerinden ortak noktalarda buluşabilmesi hayati önem arz etmektedir.

3. Küresel Güç Mücadelesi Bağlamında İran'ın Suriye İç Savaşı'ndaki Rolü

Ortadoğu, ülkeler arasındaki güç mücadelelerini tekrardan tanımlayan ve sömürge zamanından miras kalan sınırları tehdit eden genelleşmiş bir krizin içinden geçmektedir. Bu kriz aslında bir tek krizden oluşmayıp bir krizler silsilesi olarak devam edip en son Suriye İç Savaşı ile cisim kazanmıştır. 90'lı ve 2000'li yıllarda, ABD'nin Irak'a yaptığı müdahaleler, Kürtlerin ve Şiilerin lehine; Sünni Arapların ise aleyhine sonuçlar doğurdu. Çünkü iktidarın Şii çoğunluğa geçişi ile birlikte Sünni bir ayaklanmanın temelleri atıldı. Suriye sorununun, dünya kamuoyunu ciddi manada meşgul eder bir hal almasında, küresel terörizm, insan hakları ihlalleri, mülteci sorunu, etnik ve mezhepsel çatışmalar, kitle imha silahları, vekâlet savaşları, uluslararası müdahalelerin meşruiyeti gibi güncel sorunlar başlığı etkili olmuştur. Bu krizde, bu kadar çok hassas başlığın bulunması, ABD, Avrupa Birliği, Çin, Rusya gibi uluslararası aktörlerle birlikte,

BM, G7, Avrupa Birliği, Arap Ligi, NATO gibi uluslararası kurum ve kuruluşlar denklemde yer almalarına neden olmuştur. Hiç kuşkusuz, bazı durumlarda İran bu bahsedilen küresel güçlerle/örgütlerle ikili, üçlü ilişkilere girerek ulusal çıkarlarını sağlamaya çalışmaktadır.

Halk hareketlerinin başlamasında küresel güçlerin mi yoksa ülkelerin iç dinamiklerinin mi etkili olduğu sorusu Suriye İç Savaşı'nı daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunacaktır. Cevap olarak da ilk başlarda isyanların patlak vermesinde belli bir birikimin kendi kendine patlaması sonucu ortaya çıkmıştır denilebilir (Çubukçu, 2011). Belli bir zaman sonra küresel güçlerin olaya dâhil oldukları görülmektedir. Aslında bu müdahil olma durumunda sadece küresel güçlerin kendi kendilerine verdikleri kararlar etkili olmamış, Suriye özelinde de görüldüğü üzere, halklarıyla karşı karşıya gelen otoriter yöneticiler kurtuluşu "biz gidersek İslamcılar gelir" söylemiyle adeta küresel devletleri sahada yer almaya davet etmişlerdir (Çubukçu, 2011).

Batının, Suriye'de sivillerin katledilmesine sessiz kalması ve Rusya'nın alınabilecek önlemleri BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nde veto etmesi aslında en çok Şam ve Tahran yönetimlerinin işine yaramıştır. Bir de bölgesel güç olan Türkiye'nin, Şam'a karşı muhalifleri oluşturan Suriye Ulusal Konseyi'ni desteklemesi, Suriye ve İran için safları daha da sıklaştırma vesilesi olmuştur. Ayrıca, Tahran'ın DAEŞ'e karşı mücadele etmesi, Batılıların nezdinde olumlu karşılanarak desteklenmiştir (Dueck, 2015).

ABD, Irak işgalinin ağır maliyetlerinin ardından, Ortadoğu'daki sorunlarda taraf olmada daha temkinli olurken bu durum, artık Washington'un bölgede hegemonik bir güç olmak istemediği şeklinde yorumlanmıştır. Suriye'deki iç savaşın vuku bulduğu dönemde Obama yönetiminin benimsemiş olduğu *mevzilenme* (retrenchment) (Dueck, 2015) stratejisinin temel iki unsuru, *izolasyonculuk* ve *yeni liberal kurumsalcı zihniyet* neticesinde alanda oluşan boşluğu İran ve Rusya doldurmaya çalışmaktadır. Doğal olarak, bölgesel ve küresel diğer aktörler İran'ı çeşitli şekillerde baskılamaya çalışmışlardır. Başlarda, Suriye krizinde aktif olarak yer alıp maliyet üstlenmekten kaçınan Obama yönetimi, DAEŞ tehdidine karşı İran'a ve Suriye Kürtleri'ne destek vermiştir. Özellikle DAEŞ'in Musul'u ele geçirmesinin ardından bu destek gözle görülür bir şekilde artmıştır (Dueck, 2015).

Daha önce de belirtildiği üzere, Suriye yönetiminin devrilmesi demek İran'ın en önemli nüfuz alanını kaybetmesi ve Hizbullah ile olan kara bağlantısının kopması demektir. Bilindiği üzere, Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nin beş daimi üyesi ve Almanya (P5+1) ile İran arasında uzun bir süredir devam etmekte olan İran'ın nükleer programına yönelik müzakereler Temmuz 2015'de olumlu sonuç verdi: İran'ın nükleer programının sıkı bir şekilde denetlenmesi karşılığında yaptırımların kaldırılacağı ve İran'ın yeniden uluslararası sistemin meşru bir üyesi kapsamında değerlendirilmesi kararlaştırıldı. Fakat ABD'de yeni başkan Donald Trump'ın Mayıs 2018'de, ABD'nin tek taraflı olarak nükleer anlaşmadan çekildiğini deklare etmesi ve tekrar yaptırımlar uygulamaya başlaması Tahran yönetimini zora sokmuştur (İRAM, 2018). Tahran, ekonomik darboğaza girdikçe ve siyasi sıkışmışlık yaşadıkça, Suriye krizine daha fazla angaje olmakta, dikkatleri dışarı çekerek içerideki problemleri unutturmaya çalışmaktadır.

İkinci mesele olarak, İran'ın, bölgesel ve küresel güçlerin, Suriye'nin içişlerine müdahale etmemesi hususunda savunduğu meşrulaştırıcı gerekçe, Suriye'nin yasal ve meşru bir hükümete sahip olduğu tezidir. Bu söylemin ortaya çıkmasındaki asıl neden, batılı devletlerin, isyancıları destekler yönde açıklamalar yapmaları olmuştur. Tahran'a göre, isyanlar nedeniyle bölgede

müttefiklerini tek tek kaybeden Batılı ülkeler, Körfez monarşileri marifetiyle Suriye'de yeni bir müttefik oluşturmaya çalışmışlardır. Bu durum da İran için kabul edilemez bir durumdur (İRAM, 2018).

Üçüncüsü, ABD'nin artarak devam eden İran'ı baskılama girişimleri, İran açısından 'direnç' olarak karşılık bulmakta ve diğer bir küresel aktör olan Rusya ile ilişkilerini derinleştirme ihtiyacını artırmakla kalmayıp Suriye'deki askerî varlığını muhafaza etme konusunda daha hassas hale gelmesine sebep olmaktadır. Aslın da bu durum şöyle bir ikileme zemin hazırlamaktadır: Suriye özelinde İran-Rusya ilişkisi gelişip İran'ın askerî varlığı daha görünür hale geldikçe ABD politikasını artırıyor; baskı dozu artınca da İran'ın direnci kuvvetleniyor. Ama İran ekonomisinin kırılganlığı bu ikilemin sürdürülebilirliğinde Tahran açısından dezavantaj kaçınılmaz kılıyor. Askerî harcamalar, İran'ın Suriye'deki varlığını ciddi anlamda sorgulatmaya başladığında ise Tahran için çıkış yolu olarak bölge ülkeler – Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan – ile ilişkilerini tekrar gözden geçirmeye ve çatışma noktalarını azaltmaya yönlenmektedir (İRAM, 2018).

Son olarak denilebilir ki, İran İslam Cumhuriyeti, Suriye krizinin patlak vermesinden bugüne kadar geçen sekiz yıllık dönemde elde ettiği küresel avantajları muhafaza ederek iç savaş sonrası Suriye'yle ilgili görüşmelerde masadaki en güçlü oyunculardan biri olarak yerini almıştır.

Sonuç Yerine: "Barışa Doğru Mu?"

İran, Suriye'de olayların patlak verdiği sıralarda, Suriye yönetimini muhaliflerle uzlaşmaya davet ederek olayların bu raddeye gelmesini önleyemez miydi? Askerî güçlerini kullanmayıp, bu işin maliyetine katlanmayarak Suriye bataklığında uzak durabilir miydi veya ne kadar uzak durmalıydı? Şu an yürütülmekte olan Cenevre ve Astana süreçlerine gerek kalır mıydı? Cenevre ve Astana gibi diplomatik süreçler en başlarda mı gündeme alınmalıydı? Hiç şüphesiz Suriye'deki insanlık krizini çözebilmek için bölgesel düzeyde olaylardan en fazla etkilenen Türkiye ve İran ikilisinin inisiyatif alması kadar, Rusya ve ABD gibi küresel güçlerin de taşın altına ellerini samimi bir şekilde koymaları gerekmektedir.

XXI. yüzyılın en sistematik insan hakları ihlallerini gerçekleştiren Suriye yönetiminin akıbetinin ne olacağı son derece belirsizdir. Görüldüğü üzere, Tahran, Ortadoğu'daki tek müttefiki ve bölgesel stratejisinde ciddi ehemmiyeti olan Şam yönetimine her türlü desteği vermektedir. Aslında, son derece açıktır ki Suriye krizi İran İslam Cumhuriyeti için risk düzeyinin fırsatlara göre kuvvetli olduğu bir durum oluşturmuştur. Çünkü her ne kadar resmî olarak İran'ın Suriye'deki varlığını temin etmek ve sürdürmek için harcadığı askeri ve mali harcamaların ne kadar olduğu bilgisine ulaşılamasa da ekonomik açıdan her an daha da kötüye giden İranlıların hayat standartları, harcanan meblağları (Çomak vd., 2016: 488) sorgulatmaya başlamıştır. Ayrıca özelde Suriye'de genelde Ortadoğu'da demokratik yönetim deneyimi bulunmaması, demokrasiye uygun yönetimlerin yeşermesinde önemli bir sorun olarak karşımızda durmaktadır.

Tahran açısından Suriye meselesine yönelik sistemli bir bakış açısı ortaya koyarak politikalar belirleyecek bir liderlik yaklaşımı mevcut değildir. Çünkü Arap isyanlarının kendi devriminden ilham aldığını iddia edip tüm Müslümanları kapsayan bir politika izlediği izlenimi veren Tahran, Suriye sorunun ortaya çıkmasıyla tüm değerleri göz ardı edip stratejik çıkarlarını birinci öncelik haline getirmiştir.

Kısa vadede bitecek gibi durmayan, lakin İran başta olmak üzere Suriye konusunda etkili olan tüm aktörlerin lafı geldiğinde siyasi bir çözüm konusunda aynı düşüncede olması bir umut olarak yorumlanabilir. Hatırlanacağı üzere 2012'de BMGK, Cenevre Bidirisi'nin uygulanması için çağrıda bulunmuştu. Bu bildiriye göre "iki tarafın rızasıyla oluşturulacak bir geçici hükümet kurulmasını" öngörüyordu. Yalnız, 2014'ten beri BM'nin gözetiminde gerçekleştirilen ve Cenevre 2 süreci olarak adlandırılan dokuz görüşmeden herhangi bir sonuç alınamadı. Sonuç alınamamasında Suriye yönetiminin gittikçe muhaliflerle görüşmekte isteksiz davranması kadar, muhaliflerin de herhangi bir mutabakata varılabilmesi için yönetimin görevi bırakmasını şarta bağlamaları Cenevre sürecini baltalamaktadır. Cenevre sürecini işin diplomatik kısmı olarak yorumlamamız mümkün gibi gözükürken, Batılıların Rusya'yı Cenevre'ye paralel bir siyasi süreç ortaya çıkarmakla bu süreci sabote etmekle suçladığı Astana sürecini ise işin saha kısmı olarak görebiliriz. İran ve Rusya ikilisinin ise Astana sürecine meşruluk kazandıran temel argümanı, bölge dışı güçlerin bölge haritalarını şekillendirme girişimi karşısında alternatif bir çözüm arayışı olsa da Astana süreci de çözüm konusunda ilerleme sağlamaya tek başına vesile olacak gibi görünmüyor. Çünkü İran ve Rusya, Suriye krizi süresince Şam yönetimi üzerinde ciddi bir nüfuz sahibi olmuşlardır ve her iki ülke de bu nüfuzu kaybetmek istememektedir. Türkiye'ye göre ise Astana, Cenevre'nin alternatifi değil tamamlayıcısıdır. Astana süreci boyunca açıkça görülmektedir ki bu üç ülke arasındaki fikir farklılıkları, üzerinde mutabakata vardıkları minimum müştereklerden çok ama çok daha fazladır.

Mevcut durum barışın, istikrarın ve düzenin habercisi olmasa da Suriye'de bir güçler dengesi bulunmaktadır. Bu denge sadece rejim ve muhalefet arasında değil; iç savaşa dâhil olan çok sayıda dış aktör arasındadır. Yani bu denge, küresel ve bölgesel güçler arasında sürmekte olan bir dengedir. Bu denge öyle bir dengedir ki yeri geldiği zaman İran gibi bölgesel güçler, ABD gibi küresel güçlerin hareket alanını kısıtlayabilmektedir. Bu hesaplar çatışmasında orta ve uzun vadede Suriye için bir barış ikliminin kurulabileceğini söyleyebilmek çok güçtür.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The Syrian crisis is the result of the Arab Spring which started in Tunisia and travelled to many parts of the Arab world. It reached Syria with a difference. Everywhere else the 'change' and people's revolt started receding with the support of regional and international actors, but in Syria the change is being forced with a limited strike just averted, and with it the risk of a regional or even global war. The local Syrian dynamics were converted into regional rivalry and global threat. The ideological and military competition over regional hegemony by the competing states engulfed the entire region.

Syria is a vital link for the furtherance of Iranian regional influence in the Middle East through a chain of states. Hezbollah, with Iranian support and assistance, is a credible Iranian proxy in the regional context. Therefore, in Middle Eastern security complexes, Syria is the focal point of contention, conflict and rivalry. The outcome of the Syrian crisis will determine who rules the regional order, Iran or Saudi Arabia. However, the Syrian crisis has revealed some striking realties: limits to power, end of unilateralism and emerging multi-polarity. Despite having super military might, the US ability to use force has been circumvented by domestic and international pressures. The previous examples of interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, with or without authorization, have also been curtailed as the US, despite its willingness and ability, cannot intervene in Syria. Moreover, the waning global support for US intervention, Russian assertiveness and direct military threats by Vladimir Putin, backed by China, has initiated the process of multi-polarity in the military and defence realm, which was previously witnessed in the political, diplomatic and economic spheres.

For the moment, the intensity of the Syrian crisis may have been reduced in the global context, but it is still boiling at the local and regional levels; the civil war and the regional ideological confrontation between the 'Sunni Axis' and the 'Shia Crescent' poses the danger of a regional war. Therefore, the future of the regional security order Middle East is uncertain. However, one thing is certain, that Syria holds the key to regional peace and stability in the Middle East.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar(lar) çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan eder.
Disclosure Statement: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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