

TÜRKİYE SAHRA ALTI AFRİKA (SSA) ÜLKELERİ İLİŞKİLERİNDE YENİ DÖNEM

ÖZ

SAA ülkeleri ile ilişkiler Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na kadar dayansa da, ilişkilerin ivme kazanması 2000'li yılların başında olmuştur. Türkiye bu tarihte uygulamaya koyduğu yol haritaları ve programları ile SAA ülkeleri ile ilişkilerini başta; devlet yardımları, alt yapı yatırımları, sosyal ve kültürel projeler, eğitim ve öğretim, savunma sanayii konuları ve özel sektör girişimlerini belirli bir noktaya getirmiştir. Türkiye'nin Afrika'ya olan bu ilgisinin altında, son yıllarda bölgesel güç olarak küresel meselelerde söz sahibi olma isteğinin, bu isteğinin de genel anlamda yardıma muhtaç veya haksızlığa uğramış toplum ve devletlerin yanında yer alma yönünde olduğu söylenebilir. Bunun teorik bazda yansımaları ise; humanitarizm, girişimci diplomasi ile açıklanabilir. İlişkilerin artarak devam etmesinin bir nedeninin de, Türkiye tarafından uzatılan bu dost elin karşılık bularak, SAA ülkelerinin Türkiye ile ilişki ve işbirliğini artırma hevesleri de etkili olmuştur. Bu arada, bu ülkelerde 2000'li yıllardan itibaren etkili olan, bu ülkelerde hükümetin desteğini alan Fetullah Gülen Cemaatinin, 2013'den itibaren Türkiye içerisinde hükümete karşı komplo faaliyetlerini artırması, Türk Hükümeti tarafından terör örgütü ilan edilmesi (Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü-FETÖ) faaliyetlerinin Türkiye içi ve dışında yasa dışı ilan edilmesi, SAA ülkelerinde bir kafa karışıklığı yaratmıştır. Bu kafa karışıklığı, FETÖ terör örgütünün, Temmuz 2016'da Türkiye'de askeri bir darbeye kalkışmasından sonra, Türk Hükümeti'nin ilişkilerin yönetilmesi ile ilgili yaptığı yapısal değişiklikler, bu ülkelere yapılan üst düzey ziyaretler ve bölgede bulunan resmi yetkililerin gayretleri ile giderilmiş, ve giderilmeye de devam edilmektedir. İlişkilerin gelinen aşamasında; yeni dönemle ilgili olarak ilk temasın sağlandığı, bundan sonra yapılacaklar ile her alanda ilişkilerin artırılması için çalışmaların karşılıklı olarak devam edeceği öngörülmektedir. Makalede; mevcut ilişkiler irdelenerek, ilave olarak geliştirilecek alanlar ile ilgili tespitlerde bulunulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sahra Altı Afrika, SSA, Afrika



Sadık AKYAR
sadikakyar@gau.edu.tr
Orcid:0000-0001-9485-5488

Araştırma Makalesi

Başvuru Tarihi: 22.05.2019
Kabul Tarihi: 25.06.2019

NEW PERIOD IN TURKEY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SUB SAHARAN AFRICA: RE-LOADING

ABSTRACT

Although Turkey's relationship with SSA countries dates back to the Ottoman Empire, it started to accelerate in the early 2000's. Turkey has implemented roadmaps and programs with SSA countries starting at this time, including infrastructure investments, social and cultural projects, education, defense spending and private sector ventures. This interest in SSA countries stems from Turkey's interest in becoming a regional power and having a say in international matters, which is due to its desire to support underprivileged nations. Theoretical reflections of this are; humanitarianism and entrepreneurial diplomacy. A reason that the relationship is growing is that SSA countries have also been willing in this regard. By the way, the Fetullah Gulen Community, backed by the government, has been present in these countries since the 2000's, and it has led to some confusion that the Turkish government later announced this group a terrorist organization with their increasing conspiratorial actions in Turkey beginning in 2013, and declared the Fetullah Gulen Organization's actions illegal in Turkey and abroad. The resulting confusion has decreased and is continuing to decrease after the attempted coup in Turkey by FETO in 2016, Turkish officials' repeated visits and the effort of government officials in the region. At the point that the communication between two countries is strained, it is foreseen that talks on the new period have begun and both parties will try to increase cooperation on all fronts. In this paper, the current status of affairs will be evaluated, and areas of improvement will be analyzed.

Keywords: Sub Saharan Africa, SSA, Africa



Sadık AKYAR
sadikakyar@gau.edu.tr
Orcid:0000-0001-9485-5488

Research Article

Date Received: 22.05.2019
Date Accepted: 25.06.2019

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to analyze Turkey's relationship with countries in Sub Saharan Africa, to evaluate it, and to reach conclusions based on this evaluation. Although some countries are specifically mentioned with regards to special cases, a general analysis on this relationship will be done and some conclusions and suggestions will be put forward accordingly. In addition, Turkey's interest in the area will be evaluated from a historical and theoretical perspective.

The continent of Africa contains a lot of paradoxes alongside its dynamic structure. Although it has vast lands, many people's housing needs continue to exist. Even though it has had large populations of people since ancient times, slavery and the slave trade has been destructive. Even today these crimes manifest themselves in different ways. The best example of this is "African Albinos", who are believed to age slower than the rest. These people are kidnapped illegally to make anti-aging medicine. Even though this continent is full of natural resources, natural beauties and agricultural product variation, the poorest countries are also there. These countries have been colonies for a long time and when they regained independence, civil war, corruption and military coups have taken their toll. Therefore, it would be correct to say that Africa is a paradoxical place.

The sources of problems that SSA countries continue to encounter are fabricated country lines, addiction, corruption, tribalism, communalism, racism and dictatorship. European educational and economical systems are both an advantage and a disadvantage. In addition to these, climate change affects these countries to a large degree. As a result of this, some countries are grappling with drought, hunger and malnutrition.

Along with these, a young and dynamic population, and a wealth of areas for investment and cooperation, SSA countries are a rising star.

A GENERAL LOOK ON THE HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

POST-COLONIAL VIEW

Turkey's interest in the region is related to "New Ottomanism". According to this, there are claims that Turkey wants to enter the region in relation to Ottoman Empire ideals and take the region under its hegemony. The most popular of these allegations is that the Suakin island of Sudan, once an Ottoman land, will be given to Turkey by Sudan and restored with Turkey's efforts. This has taken place in the Greek media¹ as well. The issue of "New Ottomanism" is completely a fabricated percept. This perception is the reason that Turkey's relationship with Middle Eastern countries, specifically Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Egypt, not being at an ideal level. Recent issues with these countries have revolved around "Arabism", and as a reflection of this, "New Ottomanism". This is the reason that Turkey's interest in Africa is encountered with the perception "New Ottomanism". Turkey's interest in Africa and SSA Countries is also interpreted as "New colonialism" on some occasions. The basis of this interpretation is once again that Ottoman Empire was a colonial one, and Turkey maintains this aim too. Ottoman Empire joined together with seven colonialist countries and signed the treaty as result at the Berlin Conference in 1855. The main theme

¹ Retrieved June 10, 2019 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJ_UqyOESik ,

of this treaty was “Scramble for Africa” which is projecting the official partition of the continent. Despite signing the treaty, Ottoman Empire had never participated in this colonizing movement envisaging the division of Africa. The Ottoman Empire as characterized by its name, was just an empire and had incorporated several nations and states. Not being a colonial empire of Ottomans could be explained by those two facts. Except Ottoman Empire, all the countries which signed the treaty of Berlin Conference still exist today. But the Ottoman Empire has taken its place in history well in advance. The other fact is the language issue. Today almost all countries in Africa and Latin America speak the languages of the countries which colonized them back then or officially recognize those languages as their second language. Whereas a little Turkish is still spoken today only in the Balkans previously dominated by Ottoman Empire. For instance, none of the Middle Eastern countries speak Turkish today. Since the Ottoman Empire had defined itself as the “Protector of Islam”, in order to establish an easy communication with those countries, developed and used an artificial language called Ottoman Turkish which is close to Arabic let alone forcing the Turkish as a mandatory language. Therefore, the arguments of Ottomans’ being a colonial empire and Turkey’s approaching African Countries with the same aim are not considered as consistent. Turkey’s condemning the slave market in Goree² Island in Senegal as disgraceful to human dignity presents openly the distinction between the approaches of colonial countries and Turkey to the region.

The relations between Turkey and SSA Countries have been gaining momentum since the beginning of the 2000’s. The effects of Post-colonial and globalization³ concepts on these relations are obvious. Nevertheless, Turkey’s not having any colonial relation in the past, forces us to search for other reasons. As western colonialist countries, despite losing their dominances in these countries after independence movements after the 1960’s, have developed various vehicles in order to maintain their privileges and interests. Establishment of “Commonwealth” between United Kingdom and its former colonies and countries with which it has close relations in the past and France’s “Francophone Countries Community” could be given as examples to these vehicles. The theoretical foundation underneath the continuity of those relations is prescribed as the of Post-colonial theory. According to this theory⁴, economic, social and cultural interactions between Colonialist Empires and their colonies continue even though those countries have gained their independence. Nonetheless, of the foremost biggest problems effective in almost every sector which are needed to be confronted by these pre-colonial countries, the most important ones come from the colonial era, “Colonial Remnants”⁵ and those problems could be revealed as the main cause of maintaining the relations between these countries, since the dependencies to language and education system still remain a big challenge in all areas. However, such a concern is not valid for Turkey. This convenience helps the relations between Turkey and SSA Countries to expand significantly.

CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

Turkish Economy has gained momentum since the beginning of 2000’s and along with its economic growth, Turkey’s attention to the countries which are underdeveloped and need financial aid has increased simultaneously. This attention, like a water drop generating bigger circles gradually, has

² Retrieved June 10, 2019 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-senegalde-feto-okullarinin-kapatilmasi-cok-cok-onemli-40758199>

³ Nanjira Daniel Don, African Foreign Policy and Diplomacy from Antiquity to the 21st Century, p:496

⁴ Gözen Ramazan, Uluslararası İliřkiler Teorileri, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2016, p:405

⁵ Nanjira, a.g.e. p:450

started primarily from nearby and neighboring countries then this determination expanded to SAA Countries too. Somalia in Africa and Myanmar in far East are the leading ones among these countries. As much as Turkey's, growing power and potential of Africa have contributed to the improvement of these relations extensively.

In the Ambassadors Summit⁶, held in Ankara at the end of 2016, the Turkish Foreign Ministry declared that Turkey was approaching the improvements taking place in the regional countries and the world in an "Ethic, Moral Realism" framework'. According to this; Ethic Realism, could be described as using power only for humanitarian causes and peace in a limited time frame and subsequently directing the existing power to provide peace and prosperity. Thus, it was stated that while using anarchic atmosphere, enforcement of power and equation of forces, Turkey would never compromise the ethical values. Whereas according to Machiavelli, there is no place for ethic and moral values in realism. (WEBER 2005) In my opinion Turkey's Syrian Policy could be considered in the context of "Ethic Realism". Moreover, the defense and security related issues pursued with SSA Countries could be thought of in this context as well. It is believed that additional approaches are required in relations with SSA Countries. Considering Turkey's relations with SSA Countries, we could indicate that, beyond ethic realism, Humanitarianism, concept and implementation stand out first.

Humanitarianism principle that Turkey has implemented on this issue considers moral values, one of the most important subjects of refugee law which liberal world generally has ignored. Modern world must not have ignored, amoral and ethical values though it has implemented liberal and realist policies (DAUVERGNE 1999). As it will be enlightened in more detail in further sections of this article, Turkey mostly invests in these countries as courtesy and at some investment and cooperation venues, gives all of her support to them for developing and reaching the modern life standards set by UN. Consequently, it is evident that Turkey carries her activities in SSA Countries by featuring the humanitarian causes mainly.

Another policy which has been put into effect by Turkish Foreign Ministry in recent years in order to be more active in foreign affairs is "Enterprising Diplomacy". In accordance with this policy, Turkey initiates close relations with relevant countries in the framework of a plan rather than waiting in her own geography for other countries to reach her and establish such relations. In addition, African initiative has been illustrated that Turkey realizes those relations by expressing her own principles and policies to the related countries and conducts diplomacy along with economy by acting proactively instead of waiting to generate policies. It is stated that, rather than remaining unresponsive, Turkey puts all of her effort to solve her years long lasting "Frozen Problems".⁷

Naturally, Atatürk's historical and everlasting principle which constitutes the foundation of Turkish Foreign Policy "Peace at Home, Peace in The World" is prominent also in relations with SSA Countries.

⁶ Çavuşoğlu Mevlüt (MOF), Turkish Foreign Policy in a Time, of Perpetual Turmoil, Insight Turkey(Journal), SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, Winter 2017 Edition, Ankara, p:11

⁷ Akyar M. Sadık , Mr. Mevlüt ÇAVUŞOĞLU's Visit of Cyprus, Retrieved April 11, 2019 from <http://www.kibrispostasi.com/mobile/gau-akademisyeni-dr-akyar-tc-disisleri-bakani-cavusoglundun-k>

THE PERIOD OF MOMENTUM AT TURKEY SSA COUNTRIES RELATIONS

HISTORICAL PROGRESS

Even the relations of Turks with African Countries have dated back to the 9th century, the relations with Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) Countries started in 16th century. It is argued that Ottoman Navy commanded by Zaydi Ali Reis had fought with western ships at that time⁸. Once again during the era of Padishah 3rd Murat, a defense agreement had been signed between Ottoman and Kanam Bornu Empires and some warfare equipment had been sent to Kanam Bornu⁹. Since the beginning of 20th century, a period of stagnation has been experienced in relations due to the Ottoman Empire's disintegration, the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the world wars and the cold war. Although there were no significant progress in the relations in this period, it is apparent that the Turkish Independence War had become an inspiration for some African Countries.

The momentum of Turkey-SSA Countries relations was increased with Turkey's "African Action Plan" coming into effect in 1998. Later, 2005 that was celebrated as "African Year" in Turkey accelerated this even more. Following these, between 18-21 August 2008 in Istanbul and between 19-21 November 2014 in Malabo the capital of Equatorial Guinea, the 1st and 2nd Turkey-Africa Partnership Summits were held. These summits essentially contributed to the relations reaching their current state.

Turkey's efforts in improving African and SSA Countries were corresponded to immediately in 2009. Turkey was selected as a United Nations Security Council Member for 2009-2011 by taking the 151 of 192 votes, approximately 80% of total votes. Consequently, Turkey's Foreign Minister¹⁰ of the time attributed this much vote to improving relations with African Countries. This occurrence could be the reflection of African countries not remaining unresponsive against the attention given to them. In terms of the future of the relations, it also represents to us the below perspective. It is quite apparent that the intensity of the relations which Turkey and SSA Countries established with each other will increase the gains of both sides and they will be pleased with the outcome. Another factor underlying this improvement is the profound tradition and culture owned by these countries.

As a result of the increasing momentum in relations, in the Continent of Africa, the number of Turkey's foreign representative offices has increased as well. The numbers of Turkish Embassies in Africa in the years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 are 15, 23, 27, 31 and 35 respectively¹¹. There are also undersecretaries of foreign trade in 26 of these Embassies. As a parallel to this, the number of African Countries Embassies in Ankara rose to 32 in 2014. Anatolian Agency (AA), the official news agency opened its first representative offices in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia and Nairobi/Kenya.¹² In addition, it began to broadcast in French along with English and Arabic on Africa related topics since then. Those broadcasts accommodated the awareness between Turkey and these countries. In recent years, by increasing Turkey's contacts globally besides Africa, Turkish Airlines has significantly contributed to the development of her economic and cultural relations and it stands out as Turkey's foremost entity in this respect. THY has constantly been increasing the destinations in Africa and the

⁸ Zanzibar is very popular travel destination in Turkey nowadays.

⁹ Retrieved May 07, 2019 from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afrika-iliskileri.tr.mfa>

¹⁰ Retrieved 10 April, 2019 from <http://www.cnnturk.com/2008/dunya/10/17/turkiye.bmde.gecici.uyelige.secildi/497124.0/>

¹¹ Retrieved 05 February, 2019 from http://www.mfa.gov.tr/les-relations-entre-la-turquie-et-l_afrique.fr.mfa

¹² Retrieved 05 February, 2019 from <http://aa.com.tr/tr/p/yurt-disi-burolar>

number of flights to those places recently. As of today, THY has approximately direct flights to 52¹³ destinations in African Countries. This number is rising day by day. By doing so, Istanbul and Turkey consequently have become a transit hub for African Countries as well. A noticeable mission recently performed by THY for Turkey's good, is that it opens first a correspondent or representation office in a country and because of this the relations between Turkey and the respected country are being developed as one might expect.

The visits conducted at the level of the head of government or the state are also important achievements which contributed to the development of the relations. Former Prime minister and current President Erdogan's visit to Somalia on 18 August 2011 attracted a great attention from all of the world especially Somalia and neighboring countries. Since Somalia concurrently was experiencing the hardest famine disaster or in short, a humanitarian tragedy of the last 60 years. Afterwards those president level visits continued by increasing in number. In relation to that, President Erdogan visited the 22 of SSA Countries between 20 November 2014 and 08 July 2018. Most of those visits were conducted on bilateral basis. The frameworks of those visits were the "2nd Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit" for Equatorial Guinea Visit dated 20 November 2014 and "BRIC Summit" for South Africa Visit which held between 25-27 July 2018. The destinations and the dates of the country visits¹⁴ performed in above mentioned period were shown in Annex-A.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND AIDS

In recent years, as a result of not remaining unresponsive against what happens in the world, Turkey has become the country with the highest humanitarian assistance in the World.

(Especially the humanitarian assistance to Palestine, Myanmar and Syrian Refugees) As shown below, with 8,070 billion US Dollar expenses, Turkey is the largest donor country of the world in 2017.¹⁵

¹³ Retrieved 07 May, 2019 from <https://www.cnnturk.com/ekonomi/dunyada-en-cok-ulkeye-ucan-havayolu-thyden-yeni-bir-hat-daha?page=1>

¹⁴ Retrieved 12 December, 2019 from <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/emineerdogan/yurtdisiziyaretler/?&page=11>

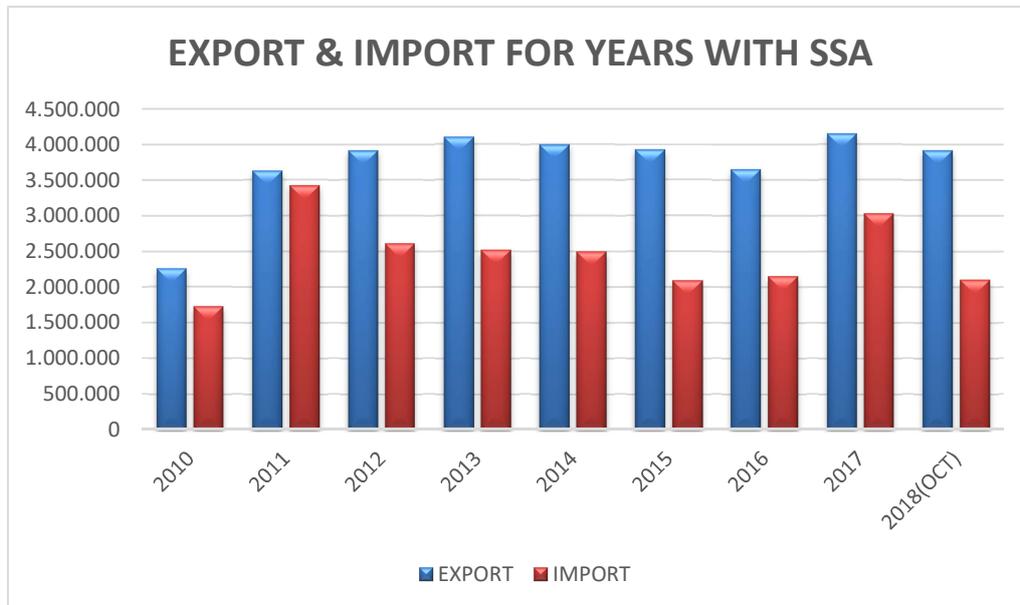
¹⁵ Development Initiatives, Global Humanitarian Assistance 2017 Report, 2018, Bristol England

Figure 1. Contributors of The Largest Amounts of humanitarian Assistance, Governments and EU Institutions, 2017



Of course, SSA Countries have been taking a substantial amount of this assistance and considering the further relations this, unsurprisingly, will continue. In recent years the scale of the trade between Turkey and African Countries has continually gone upwards. While the overall size of trade between Turkey and SSA Countries was around 4 billion US Dollars in 2010, this figure is now exceeding 7 billion US Dollars according to September 2018 data.¹⁶ The volume of the trade is shown in detail below table.

Table 1. Export and Import for Years with SSA



¹⁶ Retrieved 10 January, 2019 from <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist>

Needless to say, these figures do not include the investments of Turkish companies in these countries. Currently it is estimated that the amount of ongoing investments of Turkish companies in SSA Countries is higher than 6 billion US dollars.¹⁷ Taking in to account the building and infrastructure requirements which are not satisfactory due to the geographic circumstances in those countries, it is obvious that these investments will increase even more.

Besides Turkey's diplomatic missions, a number of governmental organizations have also adapted themselves to this development. An important one of those, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), along with 16 Program Coordination Offices, has been operating in SSA Countries. TİKA is quite remarkable here. TİKA¹⁸ is an official aid organization established to develop relations with the countries and communities which Turkish State presently has or will have in near-term close cooperation due to historically and culturally strong collaborative ties. TİKA carries out contributions, assistances and the processes in financial, commercial, technical, social, cultural, and educational sectors by means of projects, programs, and activities. Therefore, during the existing cooperation with countries, all assistance activities are being performed in a more systematic and institutional fashion. Having 16 Program Coordination Offices in SSA Countries, could be perceived as the echo of Turkey's willingness and commitment in developing relations. This unbiased assistance efforts could be assumed as the outcome of the Turkish Nation's deep tradition and culture just as in African Countries.

EDUCATION AND STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

A lot of students and academicians from SAA Countries currently reside in Turkey for education and academical purposes. The below table shows the number of African students schooling in Turkey¹⁹ and Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic²⁰ (K.K.T.C) as of 2018. The students from SSA Countries constitute the 80% of the African students in Northern Cyprus.

According to the table, the number of African Students is an increasing trend in comparison to the students from other countries. This increase has nearly doubled in the last three years. As of 2016, there are about 116 academicians in Turkey as well. Almost all students get scholarships from Turkey, his or her own country or the respected university.

Table 2. African Students in Turkey



Table 3. African Students in Northern Cyprus



¹⁷ Retrieved 07 December, 2018 from http://www.mfa.gov.tr/les-relations-entre-la-turquie-et-l_afrique.fr.mfa

¹⁸ Retrieved 19 April, 2019 from http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/organisation_law-8529

¹⁹ Retrieved 30 May, 2019 from <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>

²⁰ Retrieved 30 May, 2019 from <http://mebnet.net/?q=content/2018-2019-y%C3%BCsek-%C3%B6%C4%9Frenim-%C3%B6%C4%9Freni-verileri>

One aspect of these scholarships is that it clearly indicates how African people could be successful if they are given the right opportunity and they increase the motivation of Africans as being “the role model”. Some students from Africa share their in-Turkey achievements in digital environment by using social media. These success stories show us that education is one of the biggest difficulties for Africa to overcome its unfortunate destiny.

DEFENSE AND SECURITY ISSUES

Long before the African opening in 2008, Turkey had already made her necessary contribution in the defense and security sectors by deploying to Somalia in 1993 a battalion size unit under UN Command in order to bring African people rest and peace. In fact, Turkey gave her first lost throughout this UN led mission after the Korean War. Lieutenant General Cevik BIR, who was later promoted to a 4-star, assumed the command of this UN in the Somalia operation for a period. (UNOSOM-1 April 1992- March 1993).²¹ The other UN operations in Africa supported by Turkey are as listed below.²²

- 2005-2007, EU Police Mission, Democratic Republic of Congo (EUPOL KINSHASA)
- 2006, UN Mission, Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Cargo aircraft support for elections. (Accomplished)
- 2005-2010, UN Mission, Sudan (UNMIS): Personnel support.
- 2006-2011, UN Mission African Union, Darfur: Personnel, training, transportation support.
- 2008-2016, NATO Operation Ocean Shield: Combat against sea pirates.
- 2013, UN Assistance in Somalia (UNSOM), Mentorship Program).

Turkey, besides her contribution to multinational operations, also provides necessary training for the military personnel of requesting countries. As of 2014, 2202 military personnel were trained, and the training of 249 personnel is still ongoing. It is very likely that with the increase of military agreements, this number will be even higher.

As of 1999, Turkey has signed 22 military agreements with 14 African Countries total.²³ A closer look to these agreements show that they were initially about training mostly, besides training, agreements about cooperation in the defense industry stand out nowadays. In the defense and security domain between Turkey and African Countries, the Defense Industry has the most potential for cooperation. On a daily basis, Turkey progresses to become one of the rare countries in the world which has a self-sufficient national defense industry. The proportion of Turkey’s own national defense industry assets to encounter her military requirements has reached the levels of 70% for the Army and Navy.²⁴ This proportion is a little bit lower for the Air force. The cause of this comes

²¹ Retrieved 28 March, 2019 from <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unosomi.htm>

²² Retrieved 28 March, 2019 from <https://www.tsk.tr/Sayfalar?viewName=ContributionToTafToPeace>

²³ FARHAOI Fouad, İşleyiş ve Zorluklar bağlamında Türkiye: Afrika Stratejik ilişkileri, JOBEPS (SAGE) issues, 2015, Ankara

²⁴ Speech’s MOD Akar, Retrieved 28 July, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/bakan-akar-savunma-sanayinde-yerlilik-ve-millilik-yuzde-70-lere-cikti-2342125-ekonomi>

from the complexity of Air Force projects. Once again, the suitability for NATO and international standards is one of the biggest aspects of the Turkish Defense Industry. Hence, these products could be harnessed by user countries without hesitation. Currently, in the defense industry, a cooperation in terms of mass production between Turkey and African Countries does not exist. However, considering the number of the agreements signed, we are optimistic due to the remarkable level of this cooperation. In addition, agreements of this kind require approval of national assemblies of respected countries. It is likely that some more progress could be achieved on this cooperation with the completion of these approval processes.

BREAKING POINT IN RELATIONS AND NORMALIZATION PERIOD

A couple of president level visits were paid to Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, and Gambia in February 2016 and to Uganda, Kenya and Somalia in June 2016. These visits have specific content beyond being classical presidential visits. Since, together with a crowded group of businessmen, Defense, Energy and Economy Ministers join the President's party throughout these visits. Besides normal economic investment and activities, especially, the existence of Defense and Energy Ministers could be a sign of a rise in cooperation in respected fields.

An important subject not spoken publicly before but stated after the visit was about the cessation of the activities of FETO (Fethullah's Terrorist Organization) in these countries. Because this issue apparently created some confusion not only in those visited countries but also in other African Countries. The Turkish government was supporting all of the so called "service" activities of Gulen's Cult abroad as well. Nevertheless, in 17 and 25 December 2013, some prosecutors and police chiefs who are the members of Fethullah's Terrorist Organization initiated some attempts against the government with the accusation of corruption. As a result of these attempts the government realized what FETO is all about. The government called these attempts made against itself as a "coup". Then all the activities of Gulen's Cult were brought under deep scrutiny and this cult was declared as an illegal organization. In Turkey, thousands of indictments were prepared for the crimes committed by FETO members. In addition, in many countries, firstly the USA where the ringleader of FETO, Fethullah Gulen is currently residing, several consultations on the legal and political basis have been set in order to terminate the activities of FETO. Due to these incidences, the highest-level officials constantly request to terminate the activities of FETO, in the countries visited an organization once supported illegal side of which came to the surface later. In fact, during his Nigerian visit, President Erdogan himself spoke about three FETO associates' being taken out from a meeting.²⁵ Especially after FETO attempted the coup in Turkey in July 2016, the confusion about FETO in these countries has begun to resolve. As expected, Turkish Government Officials enlighten this issue broadly in these countries as they do in others. All required measures have been taken in order to prevent any setback in the activities performed by this organization with the support of all Turkish State Institutions in the past. It is foreseeable that all cultural and educational efforts will be performed by the "Yunus Emre Foundation" and the "Maarif Foundation" from now on. Thus, the quality of cultural and educational services in these countries would get better by delivering them in a prompt and institutionalized way. In my opinion, the countries which outlaw this terror organization will be

²⁵ Retrieved 15 March, 2019 from <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/03/04/erdogan-uc-paralel-isim-tespit-ettik#>

supported more by Turkey in the future. Since the Turkish Government has been making its best effort in order to end the activities of this organization and its members.

FUTURE OF RELATIONS AND POTENTIAL SECTORS

It is foreseen that the relations between Turkey and SAA countries will grow gradually. One might consider that in due course, the African Countries notice well enough Turkey's disinterested assistance, and realize that the aid comes really from a trusted ally, then comes the uplift in these relations. Because, most of the countries which established close relations with African Countries historically, despite giving big promises initially, exploited their national resources and became reluctant to deliver those promises. Africa has the most tragic experiences in this respect. On the other hand, Turkey has become the "custodian of the lonely" of the recent epoch. In this regard, the most vital evidence which Turkey will demonstrate to these countries and all of the world is that Turkey is hosting nearly four million refugees escaping from the civil war in Syria and sharing her own livelihood with them. A closer look at the relations indicates that the sectors and domains which have more potential in the near-term, as shown below.

EDUCATION

The Yunus Emre Institution²⁶ was established in Turkey by law. The tasks in its mission statement are, to introduce Turkish cultural legacy, language, culture and art, to promote Turkey's friendship and cultural interchange with other nations, to avail in or out of country documents to the world, to deliver training to those who request education about Turkish culture, language and art. This foundation is an official institution of the Turkish State. It has 44 branches in 35 countries around the world. Six of those branches are in Africa and two of them are in SSA Countries.

The Maarif Foundation was established after the 15 July 2016 coup attempt. Legal tasks; to provide scholarship in all education phases from pre-school training to university education, to establish schools, educational institutions and student lodging facilities, to educate the tutors in these facilities, to conduct scientific research and research-development efforts, to release publications, to develop methods and conduct other educational activities in line with the legal procedures of the country where it operates. As the law comes into force, all educational institutions connected to FETO in foreign countries have been taken over by this foundation.

As a result of some policies being put into action simultaneously with the Trump Administration coming into power in USA in January 2017, ethnocentrism, racism and islamophobia have started to be on the rise in western countries, particularly in US. Therefore, Turkey and the Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic (K.K.T.C) have stood out as safe havens particularly for African Students. In addition, the inner instabilities happening in some African Countries like the strike of University academicians that started in August 2017 in Nigeria and the coups in Zimbabwe and Sudan have increased the significance of this. The students in Northern Cyprus can work part-time while they study in universities. This was not the case until 28 July 2016 in Turkey. But the law²⁷ (International Labor Force Act) which came into force at that time stated that foreign students in Turkey can work too. One other aspect of this law is that it facilitates to get Turkish citizenship from now on.

²⁶ Retrieved 20 March, 2019 from <https://www.yee.org.tr/en>

²⁷ Retrieved 25 March, 2019 from <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6735.pdf>

The number of student and academicians who study in Turkey has reached a certain level and the system has been operational. Now this achievement in education needs to be carried to a higher level. Among the projects to be realized in education and training, colleges and universities could be established and operated in aforementioned countries by using these academic students who previously studied in Turkey. This kind of projects could contribute significantly to the education of relevant countries since they will be performed in line with the circumstances of those countries.

During the transition phase of this project, by selecting the people who fill the manpower requirements of the Yunus Emre Institution and the Maarif Foundation from those who speak Turkish and have previously studied in Turkey could promote the requested motivation. An example of this project was initiated by aluminum producers in Turkey. The Turkish Aluminum sector has decided to invest in South Africa due to extra taxes imposed by USA. They developed a project to be able to employ the required manpower. They planned to bring the people from South Africa to Turkey for training then to carry them back to their native country in order to employ. This and similar practices would evolve according to circumstances of Turkey and the related country.

The problem of SSA countries about delivering professional standardization and certification which is originating from various reasons like visa, quota etc. undermines the competition with westerners and creates barriers for the foreign capital. The related departments of the universities in Turkey and Northern Cyprus could easily mitigate this problem. Since they have internationally valid certification programs at almost every field particularly security, maritime and logistics.

SECURITY AND DEFENSE

Turkey, besides supporting UN operations, cares much about developing bilateral relations in Africa. In this context, Turkey puts much effort to increase her presence in relevant countries along with training military personnel on her soil. The Turkish Military Base in Mogadishu/Somalia, (Anatolian Barracks) has become operational since 30 September 2017 within this scope. In addition, the Suakin Island was opened to the use of Turkey by the Sudan Government. Particularly, the Suakin Island had been given to England by the 17th paragraph of the Lausanne Treaty in 1923 like Cyprus. Turkey declared that the buildings in this island of which belonged to the Ottoman Era would be restored. Though, international sources say that Turkey would establish naval and army bases there. However, it is stated that just before the coup in Sudan, the restoration had been delayed and partially halted.

Turkey and Turkish Armed Forces have been fighting with the PKK Terrorist Organization for 40 years. In other words, they have the greatest extent of experience and practice in struggling with terrorists and terrorist organizations. So, they could help transferring that experience to relevant countries in fighting with the terrorist organizations Al-Shabab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria. The prevention of the conflicts which take place every year between the cattle herders²⁸ and local farmers in Nigeria is another subject that Turkey could help specifically. Each year extremely violent confrontations between local farmers and the herders passing thorough all Nigeria by following the seasons in order to find fresh food for their cattle. The Nigerian Government sometimes must use even the air force in order to intervene in these incidents. The nomadic system

²⁸ Retrieved 25 March, 2019 from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/252-herders-against-farmers-nigerias-expanding-deadly-conflict>

being put in order and reserved by legal organization in Turkey would be a very suitable model for these conflicts to come to a halt in Nigeria.

Improvement of the defense industry relation at the maximum extent (production, acquisition, maintenance and repairment, spare parts support) in order to reduce the bureaucracy as in educational, cultural and economic sectors could necessitate the new institutions. Even though the Defense Industry Presidency attached directly to the President could fulfill those activities, the model suggested here foresees a structure like the one FMS “Foreign Military Sales” established for countries using American made weapon and equipment and NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) established for member countries. Such a structure would create a result parallel to the effect of TİKA and the Maarif Foundation. By doing so, upon signing the framework agreements with the related countries, a continuous and rapid procurement process would be realized.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUILDING INVESTMENTS

The investments in SSA Countries done by the State or private sector in SSA are likely to gain momentum in the long-term view. Additionally, during the presidential level visits after 2016, economic and trade relations have been brought up. Moreover, throughout these visits the relevant countries were given the briefings about the Public-Private-Partnership-PPP and Build-Operate-Transfer-BOT models which were functionalized and insisted by Turkey. Turkey’s progress in development and national income issues were elaborated via these two models.²⁹

POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS

Africa is a region that attracts the attention of all states now. Thus, SSA Countries are also included in this assessment. Former colonialist countries England, France, Belgium are there also at their European Union capacity. Besides individual relations of these countries, the European Union attempts to develop its relations as a coalition too. USA reveals itself in the region both economically and militarily with African Command. USA shows its strength particularly by using the democracy, human rights and terrorism motives and executes economic relations. In recent years, China stands out with its investment and cooperation policies. The policies instigated in the region by China are called New Globalism by some authorities. China, by giving loans to these countries in the region, implements a policy that makes them depend on itself. Israel, historically one of the important actors of the region. Russia currently is not so operational as it wishes but it has put all its effort to achieve this.

Turkey could continue her policies by cooperating with the actors in the region and even competing with them when necessary. However, the countries that might constitute problems for Turkey stand out as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates that have some complications existant in relations. These countries argue that Turkey’s military footprint in Africa is increasing explicitly. They call the military bases in Somalia and Sudan even by merging with the base in Qatar as the “Turkish Triangle”. Hence, Turkey is encountering problems with the administrative bodies in Sudan and Libya supported by these countries.

²⁹ President Erdoğan ’s Speech in Kenya Business Forum, Retrieved 19 June, 2016 <http://www.tcgb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/45476/turkiye-kenya-is-forumunda-yaptiklari-konusma.html>

CONCLUSION

SSA countries reflect the specifications of the African Continent wherein they take place. They struggle with their paradoxes, problems originating from colonial era and difficulties that come from climate change. Along with their history, culture and traditions, their natural resources, manpower and big marketing opportunities have flashed and attracted attention recently.

Even though the relations between Turkey and SSA Countries had dated back to the Ottoman Era, the rise in relations started in the early 2000s. Along with the beginning of Turkey's interest in the region, the critics from third parties also began.

The core element of criticism against Turkey, is that this interest comes from New Ottomanism and the Ottoman Empire being a colonialist one. However, it was stated that both critics do not match with historical facts. Later, this subject was analyzed from a constructivist perspective and Turkey's interest in SSA Countries was explained within the framework of ethic realism, enterprising diplomacy, humanism and the principle of "Peace at Home Peace in The World".

The improvement of Turkey-SSA Countries relations was amplified along with the implementation Turkey's "African Action Plan" being put into action in the early 2000's. During this period, relations in economic, commercial, education, defense and security sectors were enhanced significantly. Of these sectors, education and training topics are worth mentioning particularly. In that period students and academicians from SAA Countries have studied in Turkey and the Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic (K.K.T.C). Then, the aids from state to state was also the primary factor augmenting the relations.

A stagnation and hesitancy period had been exercised in the relations between 2013 and 2016. The Gulen Movement which launched itself as a non-governmental organization, with the support of the Turkish Government, was very active in these countries by concealing itself as so called "service". Nevertheless, its activities are outlawed domestically and abroad following the movement organizing a conspiracy at the end of 2013 and attempting a coup in July 2016 against the government. However, this initiative caused some confusion and uncertainty in SSA Countries. The confusion and uncertainty were mitigated by high level visits to these countries and efforts of Turkish delegations in foreign countries, later a new term has begun in relations. Additionally, in this new term, some structural reforms were introduced in order to realize education in other countries, culture and student exchange programs. The Yunus Emre Foundation" and the "Maarif Foundation were established as well.

New visa limitations of the USA, together with some legal steps realized by Turkey facilitated Turkey and Northern Cyprus to become safe havens for African Students. Moreover, in order to integrate SSA Countries to the modern world in new term, besides undergraduate education, aiming the establishment of partner common educational institutions by employing new graduate students and academicians who previously studied educational subjects, is worth considering.

In the defense and security sector, relations have reached a certain level and continue to expand. Somalian Armed Forces are being supported in the training of their personnel, at the military base established in Somalia. In Sudan, despite the reactions from third parties, the process of the restoration of Suakin Island and to be used as a military base is ongoing. Turkey, with its great experience and practice, could help in struggling with the Al-Shabab and Boko Haram terrorist organizations, provide mentorship and training support in encountering the conflicts between local groups. Cooperation in defense and security and acquisition of weapon and defense equipment are

among the areas that have potential to grow. Significantly, in the remit of procurement of weapon and equipment, some regulatory steps need to be taken in order to be able to establish and facilitate a steady and sustainable supply chain. In this respect, it is suggested to constitute a “Turkish Foreign Military Sales Office” type of structure for promoting procurement activities.

In the long view, while exercising its policies in SSA Countries, Turkey would deal with different actors from other nations for various reasons. This requires cooperation and even competition every now and then with those countries. One might foresee that the course of events happening in her neighboring environment would dictate the course of these relations as well. Therefore, Turkey’s further steps in Syria and the East Mediterranean Sea could have an effect on her African policy in a positive or negative way.

At this stage, the first contact between Turkey and SSA Countries has been set and positive headway achieved. These accomplishments could easily be sensed as the arguments that will promote the relations in almost every sector in the future.

REFERENCES

AKYAR M. Sadık, “Mr. Mevlüt ÇAVUŞOĞLU’s Visit of Cyprus”, Retrieved April 11, 2019 from [http://www.kibrispostasi.com/mobile/gau-akademisyeni-dr-akyar-tc-disisleri-bakani-cavusoglundun-k-ÇAVUŞOĞLU Mevlüt \(MOF\), Turkish Foreign Policy in a Time, of Perpetual Turmoil, Insight Turkey\(Journal\), SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, Winter 2017 Edition, Ankara, p:11](http://www.kibrispostasi.com/mobile/gau-akademisyeni-dr-akyar-tc-disisleri-bakani-cavusoglundun-k-ÇAVUŞOĞLU Mevlüt (MOF), Turkish Foreign Policy in a Time, of Perpetual Turmoil, Insight Turkey(Journal), SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, Winter 2017 Edition, Ankara, p:11)

DAUVERGNE Catherine, “A Morality and Humanitarianism in Immigration Law” 37 Osgoode Hall L. J. 597, Sydney, 1999

Development Initiatives, Global Humanitarian Assistance 2017 Report, 2018, Bristol England

FARHAOI Fouad, “İşleyiş ve Zorluklar bağlamında Türkiye: Afrika Stratejik ilişkileri”, JOBEPS (SAGE) issues, 2015, Ankara,

GÖZEN Ramazan, Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorileri, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2016, p:405

<http://aa.com.tr/tr/p/yurt-disi-burolar>

<http://mebnet.net/?q=content/2018-2019-y%C3%BCksek-%C3%B6%C4%9Frenim-%C3%B6%C4%9Frenci-verileri>

<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-senegalde-feto-okullarinin-kapatilmasi-cok-cok-onemli-40758199>

<http://www.cnnturk.com/2008/dunya/10/17/turkiye.bmde.gecici.uyelige.secildi/497124.0/>

<http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6735.pdf>

http://www.mfa.gov.tr/les-relations-entre-la-turquie-et-l_afrique.fr.mfa

http://www.mfa.gov.tr/les-relations-entre-la-turquie-et-l_afrique.fr.mfa

<http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/03/04/erdogan-uc-para-el-isim-tespit-ettik#>

http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/organisation_law-8529

<http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist>

<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unosomi.htm>

<https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>

<https://www.cnnturk.com/ekonomi/dunyada-en-cok-ulkeye-ucan-havayolu-thyden-yeni-bir-hat-daha?page=1>

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/252-herders-against-farmers-nigerias-expanding-deadly-conflict>

<https://www.tccb.gov.tr/emineerdogan/yurtdisiziyaretler/?&page=11>

<https://www.tsk.tr/Sayfalar?viewName=ContributionToTafToPeace>

<https://www.yee.org.tr/en>

NANJIRA Daniel Don, African Foreign Policy and Diplomacy from Antiquity to the 21st Century, p: 496

President Erdogan's Speech in Kenya Business Forum, Retrieved 19 June, 2016
<http://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/45476/turkiye-kenya-is-forumunda-yaptiklari-konusma.html>

Speech's MOD Akar, Retrieved 28 July, 2019 from <https://www.haberturk.com/bakan-akar-savunma-sanayinde-yerlilik-ve-millilik-yuzde-70-lere-cikti-2342125-ekonomi>

WEBER Cynthia, "International Relations Theory" Routledge, Abington,2005