

Neither Ideological nor Geopolitical: Turkey Needs a ‘Growth’-Based Grand Strategy

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Abstract

This article proposes a new conceptualization of “grand strategy” in International Relations terms, as a balance between capacity and aspiration. It first identifies the contemporary predicament of grand strategizing in the age of modern populist democratic trends, by highlighting the sustainability and consensus problem resulting from the public’s rapidly shifting support levels for such grand policies. It then discusses whether that predicament makes grand strategizing impossible in Turkey, concluding that with careful formulation, it can be overcome. It identifies status inconsistency as the prime instinct driving grand strategizing potential and desire in Turkey, and evaluates eight possible grand ‘ideas’ that have emerged at various times and could serve as reference points for Turkish grand strategy—three ideological ones: modernization, Islamism and Ottomanism; three geopolitical ones: ‘being part of the West’, Eurasianism and ‘being part of the East’; and two ‘others’: survival and growth. The discussion of these various ideas reaches the conclusion that the most feasible Turkish grand strategy is one based on the idea of growth, an apolitical concept that contains both domestic dimensions evolving around democratic liberalization, and international ones based on economic and trade development.

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Introduction

Significant discussion has revolved around broader disciplinary debates on the state of strategic studies, and reflects what can be considered a near existential crisis in the field. One can cite many possible reasons for this crisis, but a main one is the question of whether strategic studies as a discipline should be limited to its traditional military perspectives or should move beyond that into something broader, more interdisciplinary and more multi-perspective. Those adhering to the strict military view, Uyar for example, openly argue that “there is no strategy without blood, and there can be no strategic studies without a military perspective and focus.”¹ Such a view is understandable, as

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the founding father of strategic studies was Clausewitz, who had basically one thing in mind: the military.² The foundations of strategic studies were thus laid in an era in which war, and the winning of wars, was the ultimate goal of states and their leaders, and all wars were considered military practice.

I would argue, however, that the present crisis in strategic studies in fact stems *from* the straitjacket of this traditional military perspective, which has imposed a disciplinary impasse on scholars in the field. Two things have happened in the

decades since strategic studies emerged as an area of study within the International Relations (IR) discipline. First, the nature of global affairs has changed immensely, and second, the nature of warfare has been revolutionized. Perhaps the most significant change in global political affairs-for the purpose of discussions of strategy-is that in today’s international relations there are an abundance of actors, both states and non-states, many of which are unsatisfied with their status, and have tremendous revisionist potential. Examples abound, from states like China, Russia, Iran and Turkey, to non-state actors as widely diverse as the global Jihadists, transnational organizations and influential individuals in business, culture and society. In other words, the political universe and the realities that strategic studies are meant to explain have dra-

matically expanded and evolved, but because of the solely military focus in the concept of strategy and the ways of studying it, the outcomes of such studies remain limited and inadequate.

While some may advocate simply relegating strategic studies to the past as an anachronistic and no longer useful idea, this article argues that we should instead revive strategic studies and the concept of strategy by liberating it from its military focus and its Clausewitzian conceptual limitations. It proposes doing so by broadening its understanding of strategy and strategic studies beyond their limited military sense to one of 'grand strategizing'. Such a shift does not mean throwing aside the many valuable and essential aspects of the original Clausewitzian perspectives, but rather expanding upon them by drawing on international relations concepts to achieve a more current, relevant approach.

This paper presents a picture of 'grand strategizing' as a concept capable of addressing the new nature of global relations and the multiple, new, status-discontented actors with revisionist tendencies that inhabit this new reality. It offers perspectives on how such actors may approach developing a grand strategy, including whether there is a need to do so, and the challenges that may arise in such efforts. Finally, based on the above exploration, it examines the particular case of Turkey and proposes a possible grand strategizing approach for the country.

Grand Strategy: Definitions and Design

What is meant by 'grand strategy'?³ Is it a basic goal that a country is trying to achieve politically? Is it the prime directive in a country's foreign policy? Is it the ultimate belief that a country or nation is most committed to materializing? In a sense, it's all of the above, and more. In this paper 'grand strategy' refers to a grand objective, a prime directive so to speak, of a state or an internationally active non-state actor. This prime directive must emerge from and become internalized in a way that is consistent with that actor's historical, sociological and political realities and tendencies and must be 'permanent' in the sense that it is maintained by a cross-generational consensus and enjoys a relative autonomy from the changing nature of daily politics. As a grand strategy, this prime directive serves as a guiding principle for much of that actor's political, sociological, economic and military activities, with the ultimate goal being to guide that actor to achieve a desired status-either one the actor does not yet have but is aspiring to, or a status they have and would like to preserve. What constitutes the 'grandness' of a strategy? 'Grandness' may lie in

the process (execution) of the strategy, or in its goal or purpose. Real ‘grandness,’ however, is generally attributed to a strategy when there is a harmonious consistency between the purpose and the execution.

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Broadly speaking, how does an actor decide on a prime directive? An initial analogy may be drawn at the individual level, when you ask someone, ‘what do you want most in life?’ Ultimately, in that question, you are asking them what they value most. Some people, therefore, may want to preserve something they already have, while others may be seeking to build up something to which they aspire. Imagine asking this question to three individuals: a refugee, a tenured

university professor and Bill Gates. The first may name a goal like security and survival for himself and his family, the second may contentedly wish to maintain the status quo in her life and the third may say that he wants most to be able to help others.

In the case of large international actors, the process shares an initial similarity: they consider their context and current status. The prime directive may be offensive in nature (aspiring to something) or defensive (preserving something) or a combination of the two. A defensive goal is most likely assumed either by actors that are happy with who they are and want to preserve the status quo or by those that are so weak they just do not want to lose even the minimum they have. Offensive goals are most likely to be assumed by rogue actors or those with nothing to lose. Mixed goals may, arguably, be the most common, as larger actors, like individuals, want to guarantee the minimum but at the same time want to be ready to seize the opportunity to become ‘great’, whatever that may entail.

In many ways, grand strategizing revolves around the idea of balancing. This balancing must occur first at the level of imagining and formulating the grand strategy, and secondly at the level of execution. Each of these should be considered in turn.

Balancing the Imagination: Capacity vs. Aspiration

At the first level, grand strategizing involves a balancing of capacity and aspiration: Which of these does an actor begin with when initially trying to identify and formulate a grand strategy? How can that actor avoid the natural limitations of overemphasizing one over the other?

Clausewitz's defining of strategy begins by emphasizing the need to 'identify the situation'. In other words, know your environment and who is competing in it, in order to identify what you are able to do. This appears logical, coming from the military sense of 'intelligence before action'. In this view, grand strategy formulation begins with an assessment of one's capacity, both internationally and domestically. While there is an apparent logic to beginning with capacity assessment, it is not without its risks. Too much emphasis on capacity may limit one's imagination potential, and may even result in a conclusion that not being a 'powerful' enough actor means you cannot have a grand strategy. This is not true however, as even a relatively weak actor, or one with imperfect capacity, may still have a grand strategy, for example, improving capacity. Yet another risk of beginning with a capacity focus is that evaluations of capacity, perhaps domestic ones in particular, are often highly politicized, making them open to exaggeration or underestimation. In this way, leaders, in order to justify their domestic actions or even their personal or own group interests, may view the results of a capacity measuring situation analysis, and misrepresent the feasibility of certain moves for political gain, or may purposefully opt for *non-action*.

A reverse view might be that grand strategizing should therefore begin by thinking about what the actor aspires to. In other words, actors should *first* imagine, free from constraints, what they would like to have, and then start narrowing down from that dream into reality, based on the assessments they receive about themselves and the world. Of course, this route is not without its own risks. By starting with the dream one may be more likely to fall into unrealistic disillusionment, and therefore reduce the chance for success. There is the possibility that by starting out with aspirations, leaders may simply be dreaming or, more cynically, they may again take political advantage of these dreams by selling them to the public as realistic possibilities.

Actors engaged in grand strategy discussions are likely, therefore, to be in a process of juggling their aspirations with their capacities. An aspiration can be considered an internally motivated desire for some kind of higher status in international relations; in other words, the status quo, however defined or felt by that actor, is not satisfactory. As expressed above in the individual analogy,

some actors are more likely to be content with what they have, who they are and how they are perceived in international life, and do not seem to be in a struggle for greater aspirations. Others may not. They may not be content with who they are, what they have, how they feel and how they are perceived, and therefore look for an opportunity to move up to their aspired status.

Status Inconsistency

Perhaps the closest scholarly interpretation of the capacity-aspiration relationship can be found in the literature on status inconsistency. The concept of 'status inconsistency' has its roots in the fields of psychology and sociology, and can be linked to Weber's articulation of status as one of three parts of

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social stratification—the other two being class and power. At the individual level, status inconsistency occurs when people have imbalances in their rankings within each of these three conceptual fields and because of this inconsistency, are likely to feel greater dissatisfaction than their status consistent peers. Status inconsistency theories predict that the behaviors

of such individuals are more likely to be conflictual and that they will target those above them—indirectly at least, in the sense of joining political parties that are directed against higher status people.

Status inconsistency has also been addressed in the field of IR. At the state level, early work on status inconsistency theory defined the discrepancy as a gap between a state's self-conception of its own status, and the status ascribed to it by other states. Status is distinguished from concepts like power or capacity, in that it relates not to elements of hard power, but to 'softer' values, specifically, perceptions of honor or respect within the international community. As with individuals, status inconsistency in states is predicted to lead to more conflictual behaviors, in this case, as expressed through foreign policy activities.

Recent bodies of literature find their basis in the early definitions and empirical studies of status inconsistency, a primary (and sometimes admitted) shortcoming of which was the challenge of operationalizing a complex and subjective variable like 'status'. Building on Galtung's 1964 work introducing the idea of "rank disequilibrium" among varying degrees of 'top' and 'under' dogs and the subsequent likelihood of aggressive behaviors, researchers like East and Wallace attempted to test the idea by looking at aggressive behaviors of status inconsistent states.⁴ In both of these early studies, a state's 'status'

or prestige was quantified by counting the number of foreign embassies established in the country. Status *discrepancy* was seen as the gap between this measurement of a state's prestige and either the country's military or economic power, measured, respectively, by annual military expenditures and gross national product. Vertzberger, though using largely the same terminology and reaching similar findings, provided some development to the idea of 'status' by distinguishing between two angles of the concept—status ascribed by others (what others believe a state deserves) and self-ascribed (the status a state itself believes it deserves). Aside from these works, most studies of the post-Cold War era tended to rely on the Correlates of War (COW) project's definition and measurement of status for their calculations.⁵ In the COW project, rather than counting foreign embassies, the measurement of status ranking was based on the opinions of a number of experts, who were basically asked which states they felt had major power status.

While conventional approaches define status primarily on the basis of material attributes like wealth or military capability, discussions of the concept in more recent years have branched out to include other attributes, e.g. conceptualizing status as a function of relational processes rather than simply constituting a reflection of a state's attributes,⁶ and drawing on ideas from other social science fields such as sociology or psychology, where concepts of status (in)consistency are well developed and defined, as in the collaborative works of Volgy et al.⁷ Their works draw in particular on social identity theory (SIT) to develop state-level understandings, rather than viewing status attribution as a unidirectional process, attributed by others.⁸ The framework of Volgy et al posits that status is bidirectional, and that it takes a state's active desire for status (in the form of an 'expansive' foreign policy) to fill out the picture. In fact, they say that there are three levels of attribution that need to be considered: self-attribution, attribution by the international community and attribution by the existing major powers.

Motivation for a state to seek additional status may stem from a perceived mismatch between the status they are attributed and the status they feel they deserve, or a fear of losing the status they already have.⁹

Three characteristics/requirements are used to describe a state with 'major power' status. Such a state must have: capability: the opportunity and capacity to act like a major power (measured through such factors as military spending and GDP); willingness: the will to act like a major power, as displayed in an unusually "broad and expansive foreign policy" that extends beyond its own region and that is not enacted solely under the influence of other major powers, particularly the U.S. (measured using one of various event datasets, e.g.

COBDAB, WEIS or IDEA); and status: attributed by the policy makers of other states (external attribution).

In their subsequent works, Volgy et al focus on the last of these requirements, which they measure by looking at the number of diplomatic contacts and state visits between the country in question and the existing major powers. Thus their framework for evaluating major power status depends largely on perceptual judgements and on other states acting as gatekeepers.

Drawing on the above three requirements, Volgy et al note in their research a distinction between states with ‘properly’ attributed status, and those without. Thus, the idea of consistency ties in the idea of status (c) with a state’s capabilities (a) and actual behaviors/willingness (b). According to the (mis)match among these three categories, Volgy et al assign states one of three possible labels:

1. Status consistent (in which attribution equals power capabilities and behavior)
2. Status underachievers (in which they are not attributed the status proportional to their capabilities and their behaviors)
3. Status overachievers (in which they are attributed more status than their capabilities and behaviors seem to warrant)

Balancing the Execution: The Clausewitzian Trinity

Balancing also must occur at the level of execution of grand strategy and involve the relationship among the three main players within the Clausewitzian trinity. Clausewitz argues that strategy relied on a “paradoxical trinity”,¹⁰ essentially consisting of the tension between three fundamental elements of war: the government, the people and the army. Striking a balance at the level of the execution of grand strategy, however, requires incorporating a fourth element: management (*irade*), basically, the process of balancing within and among the three main factors, a role most often assumed by a skilled leader.

Another way of conceptualizing the balancing ‘within’ and ‘among’ the three players can be by looking at an objective (underlying) and subjective (triggering) potential. In this sense, the objective potential refers to a balanced and harmonious *desire* to make broad changes in the status quo that runs across and through all three elements of the trinity. In other words, at the societal level, the governing level and the military level, there is a broad, balanced consensus on a particular aspiration. In addition to running across the three

elements, a balanced harmony must exist *within* each of them as well. If any one component is incomplete in terms of maturity and consolidation, that will pose a major threat to the objective potential.

Subjective potential, on the other hand, can be considered the 'triggering initiative': a leader or movement that comes in with the skills and motivation to trigger the objective potential and manage the ensuing process. Execution level balancing involves managing the interaction between these two: the existing cross-community 'desire' (ideas, beliefs, aspirations-the objective potential) and the effective use of it to constitute a prime directive around which to build a grand strategy. This management or fourth factor, triggered by the leader/movement, involves identifying that desire, formulating it into a grand idea, strategically conveying that idea to the full group and fostering its acceptance and internalization to the point at which the grand idea becomes a widely accepted prime directive of the actor (the subjective potential).

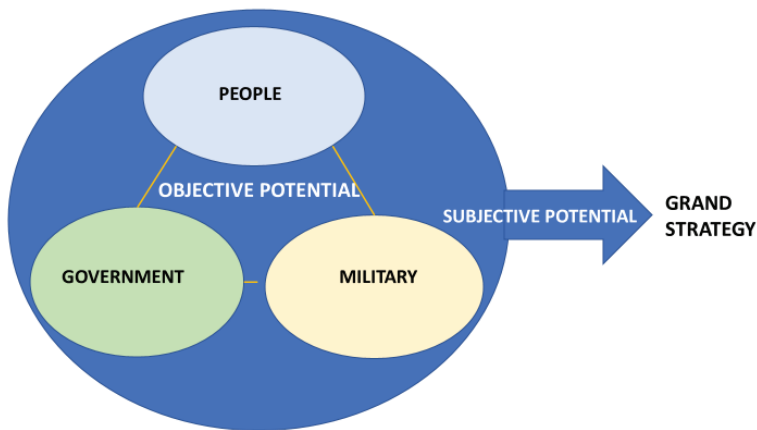


Diagram 1: Objective and Subjective Potential in Grand Strategizing

Power

While the literature on status inconsistency is helpful in interpreting the relationship between capacity and aspiration, the literature on conceptualizing power can lend a different perspective to the idea behind this fourth element of management; one that may be helpful for application to real-life cases. This management element, which is ultimately what makes grand strategizing possible, can, when actually applied to the case of an actor, be reflected as 'management power'-a third component to the more familiar concepts of 'hard' power and 'soft' power.

The notion of power is ineluctably linked to strategy since it is the means with which to achieve objectives. Whether it is a tangible resource that can be accumulated or a relationship between actors in which one can influence the other, power requires management. It has become customary to distinguish between hard and soft power. The former is often conflated with material capabilities, such as military force and economic power.¹¹ This interpretation is useful because it can engender an objective assessment of one's power in quantifiable terms and in relation to others. At the same time, accumulation of hard power is important primarily as a coercive component of statecraft. This leads to another relational aspect of hard power: the threat of the use of force, to use the Clausewitzian parlance, compels the enemy to do what we want if our latent potential for violence is more credible or potent.¹² Economic statecraft, and the resources that enable it, also operates as a kind of hard power since policies like aid or economic sanctions can influence an actor's decisions by means of transactions or through the promise of (economic) pain. Hard power, therefore, can be created, measured and deployed in the service of political ends by affecting the enemy's will.

Soft power, meanwhile, offers an alternative pathway to desired policy ends wherein intangible qualities translate into political influence. States' objectives, grand strategic or not, are not always mutually exclusive or incompatible, and states need not always coerce each other to pursue their desired policy outcomes. Sometimes, states may deem it beneficial to cooperate for no other

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reason than wanting to cooperate with you. As Nye coined it, soft power "is the ability to affect others through the cooptive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes."¹³ States in the modern world are interlinked through various economic,

institutional and cultural networks that require them to work together. Cultural, ideological and institutional power components do not immediately create tangible influence that can be exploited by a state. However, pursuing acceptable behaviors, professing familiar identities and familiar cultural practices can incentivize voluntary acquiescence. Soft power is difficult to wield and measure, but is an indispensable part of modern statecraft nonetheless.

Finally, there is what we might call management power, or how well a nation is able to convert power into influence, and regenerate power for further influence. This is not unlike Nye's discussion of power conversion or even his description of 'smart power'; that is, "the capacity to convert potential power,

as measured by resources, to realized power, as measured by the changed behavior of others.”¹⁴ In terms of management power, a nation may be strong in hard and/or soft power resources, but may not be able to handle them well and may squander them, like an individual who has money but spends it irresponsibly. The management of power is in some ways the most complicated kind of power to understand and assess, but it is critical to try to do so in terms of understanding and assessing a country's accumulation of power. Either internal efforts (moves to increase economic capability, increase military strength, develop best custom-designed strategies) or external efforts (strengthening existing alliances, improving public diplomacy or international image) are critically affected by the quality of the management potential in that particular actor. This is why the management element is included here as a distinct power type.

The above discussion tells us that any grand strategizing effort must include two types of effective balancing. The actor must first strike a custom-designed perfect balance between its capacity and aspirations, and must have a creative management power (leadership genius) alongside its hard and soft power capacity in order to strike an adequate balance among the Clausewitzian trinity of elements. The following section applies this framework to the Turkish case, starting with a vital, preliminary consideration of whether grand strategizing is even feasible in the Turkish case.

Grand Strategizing in Turkey: A Case Study

Is it Possible?

Many of the challenges that were identified at the outset of this paper are certainly valid when it comes to grand strategy discussions for Turkey. One may even reach the conclusion that, under the present conditions, Turkey cannot have a sustainable grand strategy. As discussed above, for a sustainable grand strategy to emerge, a fourth component must be considered in addition to the desire of the three elements in the trinity: namely, the ability to balance among them and within them (objective potential), and an effective leadership force capable of managing a minimum degree of harmony into a functioning power-generating engine for the imagining, consolidating and executing of a grand strategy (subjective potential).

For Turkey, as with any actor, the starting point for a grand directive to emerge must be a minimum consensus on what everyone wants the country to be; a common idea that must be at least minimally internalized by a steady majority

in each of the three pillars of the trinity. Some may argue that such consensus hasn't always been in existence in cases when grand strategy has nevertheless been successfully made. A striking example is the Monroe Doctrine, which was proclaimed in 1823, just a year before one of the most contentious presidential elections in U.S. history, in which societal 'consensus' produced a 'winner' who could not even earn a plurality of the votes! Such historical examples cannot refute the present need for consensus, however, as historically, and indeed, up until very recent times, foreign policy and grand strategy belonged solely to a narrow elite. In the past it was relatively easy for the elite to come up with an idea for grand strategy that the establishment could

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then slowly make available-and palatable-for public consumption without the need for immediate 'consensus'. In an era of populist democracy, however, even imagining grand strategy, let alone materializing it, becomes far more challenging. The task is even more difficult for countries like Turkey that are still undergoing a process of democratizing, and in which the public still lacks confidence in the country's democratic consolidation, institutions, norms and values, that might reduce their questioning of any grand strategizing efforts.

When we look at what constitutes the people, the government and the military (hard power) in the Turkish case, among the three, with the exception of some brief periods (e.g. the Liberation War and the early Republican period), existential harmony has rarely existed. In those exceptional times, under the heavy weight of imperial collapse and the struggle for survival, the historically extraordinary quality of leadership in the figure of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk managed to create a context out of which a sustainable grand strategy emerged (at least temporarily). Under these conditions, two components, that of modernity as an ultimate goal and that of protecting the continuity of the modernization process (as a prime directive) were able to constitute a grand strategy that drove the nation for several decades.

Considering today's Turkey, however, one can make the plausible argument that this minimum existential harmony is not fully there. In countries like Turkey, that have long been in search of an established identity, the understanding of even what constitutes 'national' is continually being redefined in tandem with the ongoing transformations at the sociological and political levels. Since a grand strategy requires a degree of timelessness, defining and

consolidating a national grand strategy is highly challenging. Instead, we see ethnic faultlines within society: ideological splits between secularism and Islamism and electoral democratic pressures that highlight these differences every election period, all of which conspire to make short-termism dominate the Turkish agenda. This short-termism renders the political landscape far from fertile for *sustainable*¹⁵ grand strategy formulation and implementation. One can further argue that whatever strategic thinking may seem to still be evident under these circumstances is far from stable, and could be overhauled by any change in the civilian governmental component of the trinity. The fact that the relationship among the trinity in Turkey is highly volatile and subject to change creates a natural uncertainty, out of which it is virtually impossible for a grand strategy proposal to become deeply enough digested for it to be pursued for decades to come.

Perhaps a more existential challenge in the Turkish case is what appears to be a conflation of two primary grand strategy aspirations. On one side, Turkey's grand strategy has long been perceived as modernization and Westernization-basically reaching a functional harmony among the trinity based on the completion of this goal. On the other hand, there has been a lust for a grand strategy of internationalization in the form of achieving a larger and more effective global status. At minimum, there seems to be an ordering problem between these two. While modernization is based on an introverted process, internationalization is obviously very much extroverted. Moreover, effective extroversion relies heavily on a developed internal development and coherence. Only then can an internationalist grand strategy be fully feasible. If Turkey decides that its apparently existing grand strategy of modernization and Westernization is not yet finalized and still deserves to be the number one priority of the land and nation, then radically progressive, internationalist status-based offensive grand strategizing does not appear viable. The first grand strategy is about the harmony of the three components, therefore it is a kind of base for the second. This paradox of grand strategizing in Turkey must be taken into account while imagining the top idea for a new grand strategy.

The remainder of this section begins by exploring the Turkish state's capacity

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(power) in the current setting, as well as what the country's major aspirations may be. It then offers a starting point for grand strategizing in the Turkish case, by assessing possible prime directives for the country.

Capacity

Turkey's capacity is assessed on the basis of three elements: material (hard) power, ideational (soft) power and management power.

Material (Hard) Power

Briefly speaking, there has been a tremendous jump in Turkish hard power over the last 20 years. If we consider economic growth since 2000, World Bank data show that Turkey's GDP annual growth rate has gone from -5.962% in 2001 to +4.8% in 2019 (down from a peak of +11.113 in 2011);¹⁶ despite the challenges of everything from the failed coup attempt in 2016, the ongoing Syrian war and resulting three million plus Syrian refugees living in Turkey, the country's GDP growth rate in 2018 exceeded 2.827%.¹⁷ Turkey's growth has gained it a spot among the G-20 top economies since 2009. National personal income has also risen in the country, from \$4,300 USD in 2000 to \$10,20 USD in 2018.¹⁸ Despite certain-seeming crises, Turkey is still growing in significant numbers, and its mega-projects and infrastructural investments (metro construction, high speed trains, etc.) are still underway. On the military growth side of the picture, Turkish military spending has not in fact fluctuated greatly over the last 17 years. Rather, reports show a fairly consistent annual spending that ranges between approximately 14 to 16 billion USD.¹⁹ There is, however, a general growth within the military sector, for example in the Turkish local defense industry, with the country's defense exports doubling between 2011 and 2016, and local design and production efforts aimed at achieving near full self-sufficiency in armaments in the next few years.²⁰ Furthermore, according to the Turkish Presidency of Defense Industries, Turkey is seeking to increase the value of its aerospace exports and services to an annual 25 billion USD by 2023.²¹

Ideational (Soft) Power

Turkey has also seen a growth in soft power-both in the sense of its overall use, and also in the sense of its freedom to use soft power in an unlimited fashion. In the Cold War era Turkey was a committed, though subordinate, member of the Western club. As such it had to copy the West, and was restricted in its foreign policies to doing things that were 'appropriate' for a subordinate member of a particular group. Turkey's ideational or soft power potential today is unlimited. Turkey can still embrace Westernization, but also be open to the East. The new Turkish elite can talk about siding with the oppressed globally, and

feel free to define the oppressed as they wish, thus adding a humanitarian and egalitarian appearance to their soft power practices.²² In the past, the freedom to do so was somewhat limited, since such soft power moves of siding with the oppressed risked being interpreted as taking a left-wing or Soviet perspective, one that was therefore non-NATO or non-Western. Turkish ideational power can now include Islamism when necessary, Turkish nationalism when necessary or global justice when necessary, all resulting in what seems to be a much larger ideational utilization potential. Most importantly, this potential is both eclectic and pragmatic, focused on gaining larger political standing in the world.

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With this greater freedom and potential, the 2000s have seen substantial growth in the actual implementation of Turkey's soft power initiatives. In Africa for example, Turkey's official humanitarian aid for regional development increased from \$3.8 million in 2004 to nearly \$250 million in 2012, and between 2002 and 2014 the number of Turkish embassies on the continent increased from 12 to 39.²³ We can also look to the broad distribution of Turkish television programs²⁴ and music, the widespread efforts at teaching Turkish abroad and investments in educational exchanges. Since 2011, for example, the Yunus Emre Foundation, a non-profit organization created by the Turkish government in 2007, has opened up institutes in 40 countries around the world, aimed at promoting Turkish culture and language.²⁵ A much broader example can also be seen in Turkey's approach to the refugee crisis, particularly Syrians. Turkey's response has added a great deal to the country's image-if not in the West, at least in more peripheral parts of the world. While European countries are trying to block refugees or at best handpick a select few, Turkey has had an open-door policy and is hosting more than three million. Turkey's position is that it is a humanitarian responsibility to host them, which is a major element in the country's soft power image.

Management (Initiative) Power

To better assess the possible growth or decline of Turkey's management power, it may be helpful to look at it from two angles-the entrepreneurial capacity to imagine and grow, and the institutional capacity to do so.

The first of these, the entrepreneurial capacity to imagine ways of sparking and sustaining growth, can be described as the governing elite's initiative-taking capacity or, as the governing elite themselves refer to it, *irade* (management). In the past, this psychological and political dimension of management

in Turkey was tamed by various issues. First, as discussed above, there was a fixed ideology of Westernization in foreign policy that in itself was self-limiting. Now we see in Turkish foreign policy actually a reduction of ideological influence, and a rationalization of international orientation and engagement. No longer does foreign policy have to be Western or Eastern or any single orientation at all. Turkey can act Western with the West, Islamist with the Muslim world, Eurasian with the Russians... a kind of *tous azimut* (all over the place) approach to foreign policy.²⁶ We can also call this rationalization of foreign policy a freeing from ideational straitjackets. In the past, taming was inevitable due to certain governance limitations. Governance was generally by coalition, and there was considerable political instability, which created a more introverted environment. Moreover, the Turkish political elite were focused on securing the domestic modernization project, and didn't have the time or energy to spend on international issues. This too, by its nature, kept any entrepreneurial capacity limited. These limitations are no longer as prevalent.

The second sub-element of management power is institutional capacity. Turkey in recent years has benefitted on this front from a unique period of unified governance. Before the 2000s, Turkey was characterized not only by coalition governments but by a well-documented dual-state structure. In this structure there was an inner state, the core of which was the Turkish military, which acted as an internal balancer against the surface, or governing state. Even when there was a strong political will and entrepreneurship capacity among the governing elite to do something internationally, generally this inner state acted as a brake and a 'veto' power. The Turgut Özal years of the early 1980s were a great example of this. Özal was a powerful, individual leader, but when he wanted to take larger international initiatives, such as intervening in Northern Iraq and Syria, the military, with the help of their civilian inner state allies, blocked him. Internationally, this meant that Turkey was not as powerful, as it was unable to operate and show power. In today's Turkey, the dual state structure has been for the most part eliminated, and the Turkish political authority controls all segments of the Turkish state structure. This is even more true with the recent changes to the Constitution regarding the presidency, which have resulted in a unified, single structure. While criticized as lacking checks and balances, this unified structure allows for strong institutional capacity and brings in solid and unchecked management power.

As a concrete reflection of the growth of management power, one can look at a country's ability to mobilize in response to security threats. Those countries that are able to mobilize their masses behind the moves necessary to counter such new threats can be considered as having greater management power

than those countries that cannot. The fact that President Erdoğan is able to mobilize both the Turkish masses and the military for outright war in Syria signifies a critical new dimension to Turkish national power. Both in terms of this mobilization capacity and the initiative-taking capacity necessary to imagine such moves, we can say that Turkey has now has more fungible management power than it has ever had in its modern history.

While these factors suggest positive potential in terms of Turkey's management power, there are still serious shortcomings to consider. Primary among these is the question of governance quality and the support that is being given to those in charge. Perhaps the greatest concern is in the area of human capital investment, such as education quality. In recent years, the number of universities in Turkey has expanded rapidly, from 73 in 2000, to 204 in 2019.²⁷ At these universities there are large numbers of what might be considered 'pro-government' scholars, or at least those who would wish to produce scholarship that could help guide effective policies for the governing elite. But overall we have yet to see evidence of a successful, sophisticated doctrine being produced that can match the political energy of President Erdoğan. Practice and ideology seem to go hand in hand, rather than having a preceding doctrine that guides the policy that follows. The potential risk, of course, is that this government may stall if it continues to fail to support its moves with informed knowledge production and strategic planning.

Aspirations

The most apparent aspiration that the Turkish elite/society has-and has long had-is that of an internationalist agenda. In other words, the desire for a visible, prestigious, influential international presence or status globally. This was obviously the case in the Ottoman era and is also evident in recent years. I would argue that it was even true in the early Republican era, even though the vision was one of 'peace at home, peace in the world'. First, you could not expect a more adventurous prime motto out of an extremely young republic, the result of a collapsed empire, whose primary purpose was nation-building and modernization. Second, at that time, the grand strategy of that period was the safety of the modernization process-that is why the focus was stability at home and abroad. Even then, however, at the time of the Republic's lowest capacity and international focus, the fact that half of the motto was 'peace in the world' meant that there was still a global awareness and vision.

The fact that President Erdoğan is able to mobilize both the Turkish masses and the military for outright war in Syria signifies a critical new dimension to Turkish national power.

In the last couple of decades, there is no question of Turkey's internationalist orientation and agenda. This internationalist instinct is the direct result of status inconsistency in the psyche of the society. Most Turks have long felt a major gap between 'where they are' (as a people and a nation) and 'where they believe they ought to be' in global politics. The idea that this gap must be closed, whether via expansion of territory, influence or international recognition, constitutes the potential offensive revisionism in Turkish internationalism.

There is also what we might label 'defensive revisionism' referring to actions that appear revisionist but, rather than aiming at coercive, aggressive goals, are conducted at least in part with defensive aims of protecting national security. While it is of course hard to tease apart intentions, in trying to understand Turkey's most 'revisionist' looking behaviors in recent years, it is important to consider the national psyche in Turkey. With the PKK remaining active and the YPG building up on the country's southern border, with the deadly coup attempt in 2016 and the subsequent ongoing investigations and arrests, with terrorist attacks taking place, and with the social strain that naturally may occur when there is an influx of millions of refugees into a country, the national feeling remains uneasy, despite Turkey's measurable growth in power. When we look at the most problematic of Turkey's 'acting out' behaviors, such as the 2019 military advances into Syria, it seems clear that they are largely being made to counter the PKK. The governing elite in Turkey, particularly with their recent domestic aligning with the Nationalists (after the June 2018 election now a consolidated majority in the '*Cumhur*' Alliance in the Parliament), agree that the biggest obstacle to sustainable Turkish political and economic growth is the Kurdish question.²⁸ When they look to the South, they see the international community apparently building up a Kurdish belt to block Turkish growth. From their perspective, Western actions in Syria in support of the Kurdish groups there are designed to keep Turkey down. First, if Turkey is kept busy dealing with the Kurdish challenge, it will waste its economic and other resources. Second, if Turkey is physically separated from the Middle East by a rival entity, its further political and economic growth toward the Muslim world/Middle East will be crippled.

By moving into Syria militarily, therefore, Turkey is trying to block the building up of an entity that would cut it off from any kind of genuine influence in the Middle East. It is not surprising that Turkey would view as a vital threat any Kurdish entity stretching along the southern border all the way from Iran to the Mediterranean-particularly one that harbors natural irredentist claims on Turkey's own heartland. Such an entity would clearly hinder the

new Turkish elite's dreams of becoming a major player in the region/world, and therefore defensive moves against such a blockage must be made. Ultimately, Turkey's governing elite's aim is to disrupt what they see as an international plan of physical containment, then turn inward and clean up Turkey's domestic PKK problem, and then turn their attention to projecting influence that would guarantee the sustainable growth of Turkish power. This ultimate goal of defending the sustainability of Turkey's growth is what distinguishes these actions as a kind of 'defensive' revisionism.

Grand Strategizing Proposal

Keeping in mind all of the practical and conceptual complications involved in grand strategizing in an age of democracy, populism and electoral liberalization, and considering that Clausewitzian grand strategizing may itself no longer be completely relevant in the age of empowered individuals, technically, the conclusion should be that a sustainable grand strategy for Turkey is an impossible task-if not a potentially destructive one (as a polarizing, politicized, radicalizing force). However, in terms of capacity, not only has there been a perceived increase in traditional components (hard/soft power), there currently appears to be some degree of management power in the Turkish case that can serve as the triggering initiative (*irade*), with the potential of attempting to grand strategize and find the balances both across and within the trinity. More importantly perhaps, the fact remains that one of the most stable, shared feelings among Turkish society and elite alike is that of status inconsistency; in other words, aspiration is abundant. For this reason, the search for a grand strategy to reach that imagined status will not end. And therefore, it seems important to discuss the best possible idea that may serve as a starting point for grand strategizing in Turkey.

What are the embedded, objective potential ideas have been entertained in Turkey in recent decades? The ideas proposed can be divided into three types: ideological, geopolitical, and other. Ideological ideas have included modernization, Islamism and Ottomanism; geopolitical ideas could be characterized as 'being a part of the West', Eurasianism or, more broadly, 'being a part of the East'.²⁹ The third category of 'other' refers to ideas that are neither clearly ideological nor geopolitical, which in the Turkish case refers to the prime directive of survival (*beka*).

This final section of this article looks at each of these in turn and concludes by proposing a new prime directive that may avoid their shortcomings and serve as a better goal for Turkish grand strategizing.

Survival

Survival (*beka*) refers to the fear of losing your existence, in other words, the most basic instinct of any actor, small or large. Such an existential fear of 'non-existence' is anathema to the concept of dreaming for something larger. To exist, therefore, cannot in itself be a purpose for a grand strategy. Even in those cases when an actor falls into a battle for survival, say a major interstate war or a civil war, saving the country, i.e. survival, can only serve as a *part* of something still larger, a grander aspiration that the society/nation would like to someday become. For example, during the Turkish liberation war, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk repeatedly expressed the idea that the liberation war itself was in fact the smaller war; the bigger one was Westernization. In other words, survival may have been the immediate goal, but the prime directive was something larger and more future-driven. Survival is thus a necessary but not sufficient element to qualify as a grand idea. Remembering the status inconsistency argument, grand strategy should be about moving ahead and upward, reaching for (or remaining as) what you would like to be at your best. Basic survival can never be the end goal.

When looking specifically at the Turkish case, survival (*beka*) is a loaded term, as it has been used to mean territorial integrity, the centralized nature of Turkish governance and the safety of existing dominant ideologies and nationalistic perceptions.³⁰ With these uses and interpretations, it cannot be an inclusive 'grand idea' because its overly nationalistic implications may be inherently exclusive to some. Kurdish separatism, for example, cannot be incorporated as part of a 'survival' grand idea thus understood. With a 'survival' prime directive, therefore, striking a balance becomes impossible among the pillars of the trinity.

Ideological/Geopolitical

Turning to ideological ideas, one of the ways that modernization in Turkey has been perceived is in the form of secularism.³¹ A significant portion of Turkish society has not, however, been on good terms with the implementation of secular modernization. Turkey's political experience with a strong Islamist movement is the sign of the significant societal faultline between Western-centric modernization and Eastern-centric Islamism. This divide again stands as a blockage to balancing both among and within the pillars of the trinity, and divides the very management power charged with creating that balance. Geopolitically defined possibilities for a grand idea, in other words, East or West, share similar limitations. There is in fact an obvious overlap between geopolitically defined (directional) ideas and ideological ones in terms of the polarization within the country. Basically, the unconsolidated, fragmented nature of

Turkish society and governance makes it virtually impossible to pursue either an ideologically or geopolitically defined grand idea.

This tells us that a 'grand idea' for possible Turkish grand strategizing must be defined in an apolitical manner. Moreover, it has to be future-centric enough so that the differences/faultlines that currently prevent the management power from succeeding in striking the necessary balances can be postponed and downplayed until such a point that an actual harmony becomes possible.

Growth

In order to overcome the inherent divisions and challenges in the Turkish case while remaining loyal to the country's aspirations, a feasible grand idea for Turkish grand strategy must be process-based. In other words, as a grand idea, it has to itself contribute to helping Turkey proceed along the road of building up that minimum degree of coherence among the three elements of the trinity to a point at which the fourth element—the management (*irade*) power—can potentially succeed. Arguably there is only one possible such grand idea: Growth. Such growth can be more specifically defined as economic growth internationally, in other words, the prioritizing of trade and liberal economic policies,³² and political 'growth' domestically in the sense of liberal democratization in line with European standards. Political liberalization as part of 'growth' may not immediately appear an obvious element for the initiation and sustainability of grand strategizing, but it is vital as it helps address the diversity that exists inside the country by creating a common cause that the majority can feel they may benefit from. This common cause can serve to turn that diversity from a fragmenting force into an integrating call for pluralism. As discussed earlier in this article, grand strategizing in an era of populism is difficult due to the fragmenting potential of political diversity. Through democratic development, in the form of a pluralist democracy and guaranteed basic liberal democratic freedoms, hope for inclusion can be engendered and a diverse society may become ready to believe in grand ideas for the nation as a whole.

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If such a scenario seems overly optimistic, one need only look back to the early 2000s, and the first years of the AK Party government in Turkey, to see evidence of how a minimum consensus amidst diversity can be built up and maintained. Between 2002 and roughly 2010, it was possible to see in

Turkey a broad spectrum of society, from leftwing liberals, Republican elites and pro-Kurdish movements to conservatives, nationalists and Islamists, all embracing the idea of a growing Turkey, both politically and economically. The naturally fragmenting forces in the society were in large part all able to entertain the idea of the country 'taking off' in a period marked by liberalization (through EU accession efforts), democratization, economic growth and a growing identity as a trading state. Crucially, there was even international recognition of a transforming and growing Turkey (the era of the Turkish 'model'), which fed back into the hopeful domestic consensus. For a brief time, divisive domestic agendas were postponed, as everyone saw a positive potential for themselves in that democratic and economic growth.

An idea sometimes suggested as being similar to growth, welfare (*refah*), is also a non-geopolitical or ideological idea; however, it does not have the same practical potential as growth for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, economic and democratic growth refers to a dynamic process and represents aspirational upward movement. Welfare, on the other hand, refers more to a status and thus is more static. Moreover, while the goal of 'welfare' raises the inevitable question of 'whose welfare', 'growth' is a more all-encompassing aim. Because growth involves hope and a futuristic ideal, it is more appropriate for strategizing. Growth surely encompasses welfare, but the same cannot be said necessarily in reverse. Moreover, while growth not only encompasses welfare, it does so not just for the present but for the future. The welfare concept begins lodged in the present, and raises the question of how are we going to share what we have right now in terms of welfare-an immediately problematic start to consensus building for grand strategizing. Growth, because it is futuristic, means that building up a consensus is likely to prove easier. This aspect makes growth a much more sustainable option for a prime directive. Since growth contains something for everyone, maintaining the minimum necessary consensual support within and among the trinity becomes more possible. As long as all citizens can all hope to gain something from it, the sustainability of that consensus is increased.

Another, practical benefit of a future-oriented directive like 'growth' in terms of economy (international trade) and democracy is that it can curb, or at least postpone, current, divisive debates within and among the elements of the Clausewitzian trinity, by saying let's grow first, and then decide what we will do. A focus on growth also lessens the chance of making premature internationalist and revisionist moves, and therefore does not provoke early containment from the country's rivals or the international community.

Moreover, the hunger for status that was noted as the primary reason for Tur-

key's grand strategizing in the first place, even if satisfied only little by little, still stands a better chance of being at least slowly addressed under a growth prime directive. With growth, all the pillars of the trinity have the chance to see that their status is changing, even if only gradually. Growth's reflection, even at the societal level and in individual lives, gives them the impression that their own status is improving, and comforts them that the nation's status as well is changing for the better.

Another advantage of growth as a grand strategy is that, because it could prove easier in garnering consensus, it would also be convenient for the redefining of certain major sub-policies, such as domestic and international security policy. Security policy under a prime directive of 'growing international trade and democratic development at home' would naturally become one of securing those priorities. Without any clear prime directive, or one with a geopolitical or ideological goal, there is much larger room for securitization. Turkey's tendencies in recent years toward a strategy of Islamism or Ottomanism led, for example, to an arguable overemphasis on the Middle East, a highly problematic open-door policy toward Syrians and a tendency to intervene in other countries' domestic affairs—all of which would likely have unfolded differently under a grand strategy of growth.

Finally, adoption of a grand strategy like 'growth' may also prove useful in a larger conceptual sense, in that it addresses the criticism that grand strategy ideas are not adaptive, and that, in the face of changing conditions domestically and internationally, they cannot survive. Because of these arguments, the concept of 'emergent strategy' as a recommended route to pursue in strategy studies and policy has been suggested. If, in an important case like Turkey, growth were to be adopted as a grand strategy, because of its apolitical nature, its futuristic character, and indeed because of the very vagueness about what will be done with the future power resulting from it, it would represent a strategy that is emergent in nature.

Conclusion

Dramatic changes in both the nature of global affairs and that of warfare demand that discussions of strategy, which too often remain overly entrenched in outdated, military-based concepts and understandings, need to be reconsidered in new ways. The discussion of 'grand strategy' in this paper sought therefore to propose a new framework for grand strategizing based on IR concepts, namely, the duality of aspiration and capacity. The paper identified what might be considered the most contemporary predicament of grand

strategizing in the age of populist democratic trends: the consensus-building and sustainability problems that emerge from rapidly shifting support levels among the masses. Despite this very real challenge, the paper argues that grand strategizing is still possible in Turkey, provided that it is structured around an appropriate basis.

Over the nearly 100 years of the Turkish Republic's existence, various broad ideas have served as potential bases around which a grand strategy could have been-and in some cases was attempted to be-constructed. From the ideological, like 'modernization' or 'Ottomanism,' to the geographical, be it looking Eastward or Westward, or even looking inward and emphasizing the basic survival of the nation as a driving principle, these ideas have all had proponents and detractors. Moreover, all can be cited for their shortcomings to serve in the current era as a feasible force to bring about a consensus around which a successful and sustainable grand strategy can be devised.

The idea of 'growth' holds within it the potential of hope for enough of the divergent actors within the Turkish state, military and society, that a grand strategy based on growth-both democratic expansion domestically and economic development internationally-has a chance to succeed.

One option, however, may stand a chance for achieving such consensus. The idea of 'growth' holds within it the potential of hope for enough of the divergent actors within the Turkish state, military and society, that a grand strategy based on growth-both democratic expansion domestically and economic development internationally-has a chance to succeed. But of course, as always, grand strategy proposals are simply ideas and cannot be turned into historical realities without extraordinary leadership.

All too often, political mobilization and consensus-building genius may not be matched by grand strategy vision, or vice versa. Therein lies the real tragedy of grand strategy discourse.

Endnotes

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