

HOW DO TURKEY-EU RELATIONS INFLUENCE TURKEY'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY?

(Türkiye'nin AB İle Olan İlişkileri ve Bu İlişkilerin Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası Üzerindeki Etkileri)

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ABSTRACT

Ahmet Davutoğlu has been leading Turkish foreign policy since AKP came to the power. He has been transforming traditional foreign policy and has been trying to make Turkey a regional power. For this aim, Turkey formed very close relations with its neighbors and especially with Middle East countries. Western politicians and scholars are worried about this new foreign policy and they ask whether Turkey is leaving from the Western camp. In this paper, I am going to discuss why Turkey has been forming closer relations with Middle East countries. I am going to ask whether worsening relations between Turkey and EU get Turkey closer to the Middle East?

Keywords: Turkish Foreign Policy, Middle East, European Union

ÖZET

AKP iktidara geldiğinden bu yana Türk dış politikasını Ahmet Davutoğlu yürütmektedir. Davutoğlu Türkiye'nin geleneksel dış politikasını değiştirmek ve Türkiye'yi bölgesel bir güç yapmayı arzulamaktadır. Bu maksatla Türkiye komşularıyla ve bilhassa Ortadoğu ülkeleriyle yakın ilişkiler kurmuştur. Batılı siyasetçiler ve akademisyenler bu durumdan endişelenmekte ve Türkiye'nin Batı'dan kopup kopmadığını sormaktadırlar. Bu çalışmada Türkiye'nin niçin Ortadoğu ülkeleri ile yakınlaştığı tartışılacaktır. Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu'ya yönelmesinin bozulan Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinden kaynaklanıp kaynaklanmadığı soruşturulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Dış Politikası, Ortadoğu, Avrupa Birliği

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1. Introduction

Turkey's foreign policy has been in a transformation period since 2002, after AKP came to the government. This reorientation has been directed by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who wants to make Turkey a regional power which is active in all problems related with its neighbors. 'New' Turkish foreign policy is multi-dimensional therefore "foreign policy is perceived no longer as a series of bilateral relations or foreign policy moves, but as a series of mutually reinforcing and interlocking processes" (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2009;9). The idea behind this vision is that Turkey has multiple regional identities, its identity cannot be limited to a single region. Turkey should have zero problems with its neighbors. It should actively engage in problems in its region to provide its own national security and it also should provide security and stability for its neighbors.

Despite the fact that Turkey's EU accession process is continuing, the reform wave has waned since 2005. On the other hand, Turkey's attention to the Middle has been rising and Turkey builds closer relations with the Middle Eastern countries. Scholars and politicians ask whether Turkey is leaving from the Western camp. Is its foreign policy controlled by political Islamists? Even the most optimists accept that Turkey-EU relations are not going well. Turkey is not enthusiastic for joining to the EU as it was five years ago. The EU also seems glad from this lessening enthusiasm of Turks.

In this paper, I want to discuss how Turkey-EU relations influence Turkey's Middle East policy. Is Turkey closing to the Middle East because of the worsening relations between Turkey and the EU? If a new wave of reforms start and both Turkey and EU become more enthusiastic for Turkey's accession, will Turkey again move away from Middle East?

2. Why is Turkey closing to Middle East?

Many academicians argue that Turkey is not leaving the West, however the West loses its privileged position on the eyes of Turkish politicians (Kösebalaban, 2007), (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2009), (Ülgen, 2010), (Oğuzlu and Kibaroglu, 2009), (Kramer, 2010). According to Öniş and Yılmaz (2009), Turkey's foreign policy during the AKP leadership may be divided into two periods. First period between 2002-2005 may be called as the "Golden Age of Europeanization". In this period AKP government made economic and democratic reforms to fit norms of the EU. The second period after 2005 may be called as "loose Europeanization" or "soft Euro-Asianism (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2009;13). It was different from "hard Euro-Asianism" because the West and Atlantic relations continue to be important but loses its privileged position. Europeanization project is not abandoned however "EU will no longer be at the center-stage of Turkey's external relations or foreign policy efforts" (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2009;20).

What is the cause of this reorientation? Öniş and Yılmaz (2009) refers to the 'strategic depth' doctrine of Ahmet Davutoğlu. Davutoğlu defends that for a true strategic perspective, the historical depth should be taken into account which links between past, present and future as well as the geographical depth. These factors form the strategic depth of a country. According to Davutoğlu, Turkey owns the historical legacy of Ottoman Empire, it is a central country at the heart of Euro-Asia with multiple identities and "moreover, making an analogy of a bow and an arrow, he argues that the further Turkey strains its bow in Asia, the more distant and precise would its arrow extend into Europe" (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2009;9). When we

know these thoughts of Davutoğlu, it becomes easy to understand why Turkey transformed from a strong Europeanization to a soft Euro-Asianism. However Öniş and Yılmaz (2009) do not explain this transformation only by Davutoğlu's thoughts. Of course they accept that, Davutoğlu does not want Turkey to be isolated to a single region. But also skeptical feelings of the EU to Turkey modified views of the public opinion in Turkey about the EU. Enthusiasm for participation to the Union at the political elite and public level was undermined by the EU's policies and decisions against Turkey (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2009).

Ülgen (2010) also argues that Turkey's foreign policy has been in a period of reorientation since 2002. The EU and the United States is no longer at the center of Turkish foreign policy but "this does not mean that Turkey is moving away from the West or West has lost Turkey" (Ülgen, 2010;1). According to Ülgen (2010), the shift in foreign policy is deeply related with the EU's foot-dragging against Turkey. However Ülgen does not only explain this shift by the EU's approach. Davutoğlu's thoughts about making Turkey a regional power challenges the traditional Turkish foreign policy which aims stay away from the Middle East and wants to be considered as a Western country. Additionally to Davutoğlu's views, strategic environment brought Turkey closer to the Middle East. After the Cold War, Balkans were under EU effect, on the other hand the Caucasus was dominated by Russia therefore the Middle East was the most convenient area for Turkey's activism in foreign policy (Ülgen, 2010).

Ülgen argues that cultural and economic factors are also influential in Turkey's foreign policy shift. Political elites of the AKP have "a much greater cultural affinity for, and more extensive personal contacts in the Arab Middle East" (Ülgen, 2010, 7). The AKP political elite do not see European identity as an essential point. European identity is one of the identities of Turks and it does not have a priority. He states that when identity dimension is lost, membership to the EU becomes only a means for democratic reforms.

In addition to the cultural links between politicians, rising of a new economic elite is influential in Turkish foreign policy. In 1980s a group of small businessmen, small merchants and shopkeepers began to grow fast by new liberal political economy and export-oriented model of the prime minister, Turgut Özal and moved to big cities from provincial towns. Coming from Anatolian towns, this new business elite differentiated itself from the established business elite living in Istanbul (Narlı, 1997). This process fastened after AKP came to the power and these new economic elites have been favoring rapprochement with the Middle East countries to find new export markets. The birth of a new economic elite with high enthusiasm for trade, combined with Davutoğlu's aim to make Turkey a trading state (Ülgen, 2010). For trading states national security in foreign policy highly depends upon economic relations with other states, not only military capabilities or hard power. Ülgen (2010;11) says that "while Davutoglu's book *Strategic Depth* contains few references to economics, he has nevertheless elsewhere highlighted economic interdependence as a means of creating order in the Middle East". He also stresses that, Turkey's active policy has not only been visible in the Middle East but also in the Balkans. Turkey wants to have a constructive role in diplomatic relations of Balkan countries.

Oğuzlu and Kibaroglu (2009) argue that the transformation in Turkish foreign policy is highly related with economic and cultural issues. According to them, Turkey's outlook about the West depended on the identity perception of the founders of the Turkey. For political elites since 1923, Turkey with its secular structure belonged to the West, not to the Middle East. But especially after the Cold War, a logic of interest joined to the game beside

the logic of identity. On the other hand, within the EU there are two different camps which look at the issue from the identity perspective. According to first group “Turkey is not Christian, does not share Europe’s Greco-Roman cultural and historical heritage, and is not geographically located on the European continent” (Oğuzlu and Kibaroglu, 2009;580). The other group defends that the EU is a political union and the EU’s identity is composed of liberal democracy, universal human rights, rule of law and constitutionalism.

When we look at AKP, we can recognize that “AKP leadership does not believe that Western/European norms symbolize the climax of human development... the AKP considers Turkey to belong both to European and Islamic civilizations. Instead of first adopting the EU’s norms and identity and then acting as the representative of the EU in the Middle East, the AKP appears to think that Turkey should rather represent the Islamic civilizations within the EU” (2009; 585-586). Like Ülgen (2010), Oğuzlu and Kibaroglu (2009) also add the influences of the newborn economic elite during the AKP period and Turkey’s aim for being a trading state in the transformation of Turkish foreign policy.

On the other hand, Kramer (2010) argues that the new orientation in Turkey’s foreign policy depends upon an ideological foundation which has been developed by Ahmet Davutoğlu: “The vision of a ‘strategic depth’ abolished the prevailed domination of a Western orientation and the accompanying threat perception which tended to securitize relations with all ‘non-Western neighbors” (2010;34). According to Kramer, this ideological foundation was also supported by political affairs inside and outside of Turkey. Iraq’s occupation by USA, also USA’s worldwide war against radical Islamism, on the other hand Israel’s military actions against Hizbullah and Hamas in southern Lebanon and the Gaza strip which were not criticized by Western powers, West’s ‘biased’ attitude towards Iran about its nuclear program while Israel’s nuclear power is not mentioned and EU’s foot-dragging for Turkey’s accession... “All this contributed to fast growing disappointment in the Turkish public of the country’s narrow relations with the West” (Kramer, 2010;34). He also adds the influences of new economic and political elite in Turkey on the foreign policy.

Kramer (2010) asserts that Turkey could implement its policy of ‘strategic depth’ by support of these developments in the domestic and international arena. ‘Strategic depth’ doctrine is flexible and changes according to these developments. For Kramer, it may be said that “AKP’s foreign policy is much more a policy of ‘visionary pragmatism’ rather than ‘visionary idealism” (2010;35).

What does ‘strategic depth’ doctrine say about Turkey’s relations with the EU? Accession to the EU is still important for Davutoğlu’s theory, but it is not regarded as sine qua non because “Turkish identity is no longer defined exclusively as that of a ‘European country’ but as a country that shares fundamental values with the EU as an important ingredient of its strategic depth and multiple identities” (Kramer, 2010;30).

Kösebalaban (2007) also argues that the AKP elite think differently about cultural identity of Turkey from the founders of Turkey. According to them, Turkey is not only a western country, they refuse Europe’s civilizational centrality and they “present EU membership as a dialogue or meeting of two civilizations rather than as an entry of Turkey into the civilization represented by the West... Erdoğan has come to embrace Turkey’s entry into the EU as an opportunity ” (Kösebalaban, 2007;95). Kösebalaban says that AKP, while demanding accession to the European Union, differs from Islamist-nationalist circles, on the other hand, while rejecting its civilization’s centrality it differs from secular-nationalists.

We focused on thoughts of different scholars about Turkey's foreign policy. But what does Davutoğlu, himself recently say about Turkey's western perspective? In 2007, he defends main arguments of its 'strategic depth' theory and asserts that Turkey is in the middle of Afro-Euro-Asia's vast landmass and has multiple regional identities. Is Turkey a western country? Davutoğlu (2007;78) answers: "Turkey cannot be explained geographically or culturally by associating it with one single region". He criticizes Cold War perspective and redefines Turkey's position in the international arena. Turkey cannot be a peripheral country. It should not only provide security and stability for itself but also for its neighbors. Turkey should be more active in foreign policy. According to him, there are five principles of Turkey. Firstly there should be a balance between security and democracy in a country, if there is not, it cannot establish an area of influence. Secondly Turkey should have zero problem policy with its neighbors. "The third principle is to develop relations with the neighboring regions and beyond... The fourth principle is to adherence to a multi-dimensional foreign policy... The fifth principle is rhythmic diplomacy" (Davutoğlu, 2007;81-82). It may be interesting that, in 2007, Davutoğlu was not happy about Turkey's influence in the Middle East and says that, they should increase it. When we read this article, scholars, who argue that West is no longer at the center of Turkish foreign policy, seem right. Davutoğlu especially stresses that Turkey cannot be identified only with one region.

There is not much signal which shows that Davutoğlu's views has changed after 2007, however in 2010, maybe because of harsh criticisms coming from the West, he says that accession to the EU is priority for Turkey (Davutoğlu, 2010;13). He identifies himself as "European" and argues that Turkey and EU "share the same history, same geography, same vision, same values: democracy, human rights, rule of law..." (Davutoğlu, 2010;14). He also stresses that founders of Turkey was highly influenced by Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment processes of Europe and Turkish modernization was based on these grounds (2010;14-15). Davutoğlu again stresses the importance of proactive and multi-dimensional policy. According to him, Turkish foreign policy is based on four columns: "The first pillar consists of indivisibility of security. Security is not a zero-sum game whereby the safety of country A can develop at the expense of the well-being of country B. The second pillar advocates dialogue... Economic interdependence is the third pillar... The fourth pillar is about cultural harmony and mutual respect (Davutoğlu, 2010;12-13).

We may come back to scholars from 'old academician-new politician' figures. According to Habibi and Walker (2011), different factors contribute to the closing relations between Turkey and Middle East countries. One of the most important factors is economic relations. The volume of trade between Turkey and Middle East countries has intensively increased. In 2009 Arab region's share in Turkey's export increased to %20. In 2002, it was %9 (Habibi and Walker, 2011;3).

They argue that "official visits have played a key role in promoting economic cooperation agreements and facilitating trade relations between the two sides. The high priority of economic and trade objectives in these high-level visits is best reflected by the large number of business and commercial representatives who routinely accompany diplomats on these visits" (Habibi and Walker, 2011;4-5). When economic relations are considered, the influence of new business elite is also stressed by them. "It would be hard to make sense of Turkish foreign policy toward countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria without taking into consideration these new business interest groups" (Habibi and Walker, 2011;7).

However, according to them, closing relations between Turkey and Middle East countries cannot only be explained by economic pragmatism. Islamic orientation of the AKP makes it easy for political elite of the party for forming better relations. Grassroots of the party also supported these relations. Because “despite the traditional hostility of Turkey’s secular Kemalist elites toward the Arab world, the popular sentiment of most Turks has generally been more favorable” (Habibi and Walker, 2011;6). When democratically elected governments have been in the power, more closed relations were established between Turkey and Arab countries.

But does EU-Turkey relations push Turkey more to the Middle East? According to them, yes. They assert that “another key development that played an important role in Turkey’s reorientation toward the Middle East was the failure of its efforts to secure European Union membership” (Habibi and Walker, 2011;7). New situation of the Kurdish movement after the occupation of Iraq by the United States also necessitated Turkey to form closer relations with Iran, Syria and Iraq .

We see that Habibi and Walker explain closing relations between Turkey and Middle East countries by economic pragmatism, ideological/cultural position of the AKP and political developments in the domestic as well as in the international arena. In their view, EU’s foot-dragging for accession of Turkey is also a reason in Turkey’s new foreign policy.

Evin vd. (2011) connect the reorientation in Turkish foreign policy to the rise of a new political and economic elite. Middle East has been a very fertile soul for Turkey’s economic ends. Between 1991-2008, while level of the trade between Turkey and the EU rose eightfold, it grew twentyfold between Turkey and its neighbors. The new business elite called as Anatolian tigers benefited from these trade relations and became an actor in influencing Turkey’s foreign policy.

Change in the political elite also influenced the reorientation in Turkish foreign policy: “As a result of its Islamic past and Muslim outlook, the AKP has focused on the unifying character of the Ottoman Empire and Muslim values inherent in the Turkish Republic” (Evin vd., 2011;22). The AKP stresses the importance of cultural relations between Turkey and countries which belonged to the Ottoman territory and praises Turkey’s Ottoman past as a foreign policy plan. During the AKP period, civil and military bureaucracy’s authority decreased in foreign policy issues. Other state institutions, civil society organizations, businessman associations have involved in state’s foreign activities. AKP’s political elite should take into account the public opinion’s demands unlike bureaucracy elites (Evin vd., 2011). Graham Fuller (2004) agrees that the role of democratization is very important in Turkey’s new approach: “The new model is based on a serious utilization of democratic process, a willingness to act just not as a Western power but as an Eastern power as well; a greater exercise of national sovereignty supported by the people...” (Fuller, 2004;51). According to Evin vd. (2011) the anxiety in the West about Turkey is unnecessary. West is not losing Turkey. However, “Turkey is now an autonomous regional power that acts according to its own national interest and foreign policy objectives, which often align with EU and U.S. goals, but occasionally differ” (Evin vd. 2011). Fuller also says about Turkey’s new foreign policy that “...a greater independence of action that no longer clings insecurely to the United States or any other power in implementing its foreign policies...” (2004;51). Evin vd. (2011) don’t defend that Turkey is closing to the Middle East because of EU’s foot-dragging but they state that this approach of EU is one of the reasons for the setbacks in Turkey’s reform efforts.

Danforth (2008) connects the new approach in Turkish foreign policy with political incidents in the international arena. Concrete changes made easy Turkey-Iran and Turkey-Syria relations. Syria stopped supporting PKK, Iran abandoned its idea to export Islamic revolution. On the other hand, EU's foot-dragging may not keep Turkey on the axis of West: "European leaders would be naive to expect that Turkey's Kemalist, 'pro-Western' imperative will keep it on track towards EU membership in the face of repeated rejection" (Danforth, 2008;94).

Is it possible to explain friendly relations between Turkey-Iran and Turkey-Syria only by these states' new approach about issues related with Turkey? Aras and Polat (2008) argue that closer relations between these countries can be explained best by the desecuritization process in Turkish foreign policy. Until recently Turkey's foreign policy was controlled by civil and military bureaucracy and they were externalizing political problems like Kurdish question and political Islam. Civil and military bureaucracy didn't trust to political leaders and to protect their position they were securitizing issues. According to them it was impossible for Turkey to establish close relations with Syria because they were supporting the PKK. Neither getting closer to Iran was not possible because Iran was a threat for Turkey's secular constitution (Aras and Polat, 2008). After the desecuritization process, the isolation of foreign policy from the public opinion by civil and military bureaucracy was broken and elected politicians found an opportunity to have an initiative in foreign policy decisions. Turkey not only came closer to Syria and Iran but also controversial issues related with Cyprus, Armenia and Northern Iraq entered to the public debate. "The current process of desecuritization and democratization... has emancipated the policymaking process from ideational barriers, increasing the flexibility of foreign policy attitudes and creating more room to maneuver in regional policymaking" (Aras and Polat, 2008;503).

3. "West is losing Turkey"

We cannot say everybody agrees with the idea that although West is now not at the center of Turkish foreign policy, Turkey is not going away from the West. It is a highly controversial issue, it is discussed by politicians, foreign policy experts, scholars and so inevitably there are also negative views about Turkey-West relations.

Efraim Inbar (2010) discusses Turkey-Israel relations and he argues that Turkey is diverging from the West. Especially in the Middle East, AKP does not follow traditional Kemalist policy. Unlike Kemalists, AKP wants Turkey to be closer with Middle East's Muslim countries. Conclusion in Inbar's article is different from scholars until now I referred, however reasons are the similar about new orientation in Turkey's foreign policy. According to Inbar (2010) change in the strategic environment around Turkey triggered this new orientation. He argues that after the Cold War, Turkey's fears have decreased. Syria changed its approach towards PKK, Iraq was no longer a threat for Turkey and Iran was one of the countries which provide energy to. Turkey-EU relations also affected Turkey's new foreign policy. He blames the EU: "The EU's foot-dragging over Turkey's accession reinforced Turkey's distance from the West" (2010;141).

On the other hand, according to Inbar, not only the strategic environment but also ideological factors influence Turkey's Middle East policy. AKP leaders coming from an Islamist tradition give much importance to the relations with Muslim countries. Not only in foreign policy but also in domestic politics AKP institutionalizes Islamist policies (Inbar, 2010;142). He identifies this approach in foreign policy as neo-Ottomanism like many other

politicians and scholars. For example, according to Murinson “since the AK party government came to power in November of 2002, the Turkish government pursued the realization of the neo-Ottoman doctrine in its foreign policy” (2006;953). However, active engagement in the Middle East and shift from Kemalist tradition in foreign policy is not completely new. It can be traced back to Turgut Özal’s leadership and Ismail Cem’s foreign ministry period (Murinson, 2006), (Turan, 2010), (Inbar, 2010), (Evin vd. 2011), (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2009).

Çağaptay (2007) states that, AKP elites see Turkey’s interests in forming closer relations with Middle East’s Muslim countries. Turkey is leaving from pro-Western approach which influenced Turkish foreign policy especially after 1946. According to Çağaptay, after AKP came to the power, anti-Western nationalism, combined with Islamism, is increasing in Turkey. Governments, until AKP, were convincing the population that Turkey’s interests lie with the West, however AKP does not do that. AKP’s policies not only undermine pro-Western approach of Turkey but also secularism. “Pro-Western foreign policy and secularism are the Siamese twins of Turkish politics. Inevitably, weak political support for the West translates into stronger Turkish identification with Islam as well as with Muslim countries” (Çağaptay, 2007;Executive Summary). Çağaptay does not agree with thoughts which assert that new Turkish foreign policy is a continuation of Özal’s period. Özal was pro-American and for example he convinced the population about the legitimacy of the Gulf War. We cannot say same things for the AKP government: “With the government not making a case for Turkish foreign policy moves aligned with Turkey’s Western allies but instead putting a premium on Turkish ties with Muslim countries, the Turks are turning to the Muslim Middle East (Çağaptay, 2007;1). According to Çağaptay, the AKP needs popular support to stay in the government. And to increase its popular support, it criticizes the West and follows a populist policy. Criss (2010) also argues that the AKP government aims to increase its public support through populism. Its Middle East policy is “populist” and “sophist”: “Populism and sophistry towards the Middle East, a hopeful start towards normalizing relations with the Republic of Armenia, pragmatic initiative taking in Africa, reactive rhetoric towards the West (including Israel) describe the overall approach to foreign policy behavior during the AKP government rule” (Criss, 2010;10).

Turkey is leaving from the Western camp but why? In Ahmed Janabi’s analysis (2009), Mounzer Sleiman, the director of the Centre for American and Arab Studies, argues that the AKP is not the first government in Turkey which wants to set closer relations with the Middle East countries, however encouragement for joining the EU was a barrier for that. By the negative approach of the EU towards Turkey, AKP recognized that accession to the EU is difficult and they changed their way towards the Middle East. In the same analysis, Bashir Nafie, a Palestinian historian, states that Turkey recognized that its future lies not only with the EU, but more with the Middle East and Caucasia.

Dan Blefsky (2009) in New York Times, says that the old question, whether Turkey is turning to the East, entered again to the public discussions and Turkey’s joining to the EU is more difficult than before. In this analysis, Mr. Wexler, chairman of the European Foreign Affairs Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives criticizes the EU for worsening relations with Turkey. Wexler asks “You wonder why Turkey is curious about different avenues” and he answers “Look at your own behavior and attitude, Europe” (2009, New York Times). In the same analysis, Blefsky stresses that “some analysts blame the E.U.’s mismanagement of its relations with Turkey for pushing the country in another direction” (2009, New York Times). Turkish side has also a voice in the analysis. Hasan Arat, a Turkish capitalist, explains his disappointment with the EU. Egemen Bağış, the Minister for European

Affairs, rejects the view that Turkey is leaving from the West. He argues that to become closer to the Middle East and Caucasia also benefits Turkey's Western allies. He uses the bridge metaphor and defends that a bridge cannot stand only with one leg. İbrahim Kalın, the chief foreign policy adviser to Erdoğan, complains from the West's 'double standard': "When the U.S. makes an overture to Russia, everyone applauds this as a new era in diplomacy, but when Turkey tries to reach out to Iran, people ask if it is trying to change its axis" (2009, New York Times).

According to Fischer (2010), the West cannot have an influence in the eastern Mediterranean, in the Aegean, in the western Balkans, in the Caspian region and in the southern Caucasus, in Central Asia, and in the Middle East without Turkey. Fischer says that the future of the EU's security will be determined in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the Middle East. So EU needs Turkey but it does the opposite and pushes Turkey towards Russia and Iran. "Ever since the change in government from Jacques Chirac to Nicolas Sarkozy in France and from Gerhard Schröder to Angela Merkel in Germany, Turkey has been strung along and put off by the European Union" (Fischer, Today's Zaman-2010). US Defense Secretary Robert Gates also accuses the EU for pushing Turkey towards Iran: "I personally think that if there is anything to the notion that Turkey is, if you will, moving eastward, it is, in my view, in no small part because it was pushed, and pushed by some in Europe refusing to give Turkey the kind of organic link to the West that Turkey sought" (BBC, 2010). On the other hand, Barkey (2010) defends the EU and argues that the EU should not be blamed. According to him, "the current Turkish government led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) would have acted the same way even if membership to the EU were imminent" (Los Angeles Times, 2010). Turkish leaders exaggerate Turkey's position in the international arena. They highly trust Turkey's historical and cultural ties, strategic location and economic power. They want to follow an active policy to spread Turkey's influence in the region and in the world: "This ambition weighed down by an unhealthy dose of hubris is one of two drivers of the new foreign policy" (Barkey, Los Angeles Times, 2010).

4. Conclusion

Turkey's foreign policy has been basically determined by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's "Strategic Depth" theory. According to this theory, Turkey situates at the center of Afro-Euroasian landmass. It shares cultural and historical heritage with countries in that area. With multiple identities, Turkey should follow a multi-dimensional policy and its identity cannot be limited only by one region. Black Sea, Caucasia, Balkans, Mediterranean, Middle East are highly complex areas and they need custody of a power. Turkey as the inheritor of Ottoman Empire should fulfill this duty and if only these areas become secure and stable, Turkey can be in safe.

When we understand this theory it becomes understandable why Turkey has close relations with Muslim countries in the Middle East. But, of course, it is not possible to act only according to theories when it is met with realities. "Realities" of Turkey made Davutoğlu's theory applicable. Political elites of AKP agree that Turkey cannot be bounded only to a single region. Unlike founders of Turkey and unlike civil and military bureaucracy, they don't identify Turkish identity as Western. Religion is very important in their social life and they feel themselves closer to their 'Muslim brothers' in the Middle East.

On the other hand, Middle East is highly a productive land for Turkish traders. Not only newborn economic elites but also Turkey classical and secular economic powers need Middle Eastern consumers.

When we follow discussions about Turkey's foreign policy, it can be seen that not only domestic incidents but also international realities contribute Turkey's new foreign policy to actualize. And when we talk about international realities, Turkey-EU relations come firstly. Most of Turks do not trust the EU and popular support for Turkey's membership in the EU highly decreased. There are many things to say for AKP's leisureliness about reforms but it is also impossible to see uneager conservative French-German axis within the EU. We can add increasing fears of European public about Muslims and Islam to that. Cultural distance of European conservatism from Muslims and Turks combined with cultural distance of Turkish 'conservative-democrats' from the 'West' and the 'Western'. Therefore, it may be said 'theory' and 'practice' hand in hand brought Turkey closer to the Middle East.

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