

TURKEY'S ROLE WITHIN REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX THEORY: A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS ON TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 TERRORIST ATTACKS

* Neslihan YAVUZ
** Barış ÖZDAL

Abstract

This paper aims to analyse Turkish Foreign Policy (TFP) in the post September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks period. In this regard, while examining security relations between Turkey and the neighbouring states, it employs Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) which takes the geography as complexes that are shaped through securitization processes based on historic friendship and hostility relationships. Further it examines the RSCT conceptualisation of Turkey as an insulator state which is excluded from all encircling RSCs and also separating them from each other. In this regard, while analysing the impacts of security and conflict related issues in the surrounding RSCs on foreign policy making processes in Turkey, the viability of the insulator state role attributed to Turkey in the international conjuncture is also evaluated through utilising prospective scenarios.

Keywords: Turkish Foreign Policy, 9/11 Terrorist Attacks, Regional Security Complex Theory, International Terrorism.

BÖLGESEL GÜVENLİK KOMPLEKSİ TEORİSİ BAĞLAMINDA TÜRKİYE'NİN ROLÜ: 11 EYLÜL 2001 TERÖR SALDIRILARI SONRASI TÜRK DIŞ POLİTİKASI'NIN ANALİZİ

Öz

Çalışma, 11 Eylül 2001 Terör Saldırıları sonrası Türk Dış Politikası (TDP)'ni analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu kapsamda Türkiye'nin etkileşimde bulunduğu yakın çevresiyle kurduğu güvenlik ilişkileri incelenirken kuramsal çerçeve olarak, dünya coğrafyasını komşu devletler arasındaki tarihi dostluk ve düşmanlık ilişkilerine dayalı güvenikleştirme süreçleri üzerinden şekillenen kompleksler biçiminde ele alan Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Teorisi (BGKT)'den yararlanılmıştır. BGKT'nin Türkiye'yi kendisini çevreleyen komplekslerin arasında, bu kompleksleri ayıran "yalıtkan" bir devlet olarak ele alan anlayışı da çalışma kapsamında özellikle irdelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda Türkiye'yi çevreleyen kompleksler içinde güvenlik ve çatışma ekseninde yaşanan gelişmelerin politik karar alıcıların siyasa belirleme sürecinde etkili olup olmadığı da analiz edilirken, Türkiye'ye atfedilen yalıtkan devlet rolünün uluslararası konjonktür içinde sürdürülebilir olup olmadığı da ileriye dönük bazı senaryolar üzerinden irdelenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Türk Dış Politikası, 11 Eylül 2001 Terör Saldırıları, Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Teorisi, Uluslararası Terörizm.

* Lect., T.C. İstanbul 29 Mayıs University School of Foreign Languages & Graduate Student, Turkish National Defense University, Atatürk Institute of Strategic Research, Department of International Relations and Regional Studies, e-mail: nyavuz.29mayis.edu@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0002-0427-1380

**Prof. Dr., Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Economics & Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations & President of Association for Research on Diplomacy (DARD), e-mail: barisozdal@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0001-5460-6655.

Cite as/ Atf: Yavuz, Y., Özdal, B. (2020). Turkey's role within regional security complex theory: a contextual analysis on turkish foreign policy after september 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. *Barış Araştırmaları ve Çatışma Çözümleri Dergisi* 8(2), 1-33.

Received/Geliş: 29.6.2020

Accepted/Kabul: 3.7.2020

Introduction¹

Turkey's exceptional geopolitical position on the intersection of different continents and regions enables it to interact with a variety of actors located in different regions, each having specific security dynamics within. Hence, the concept of national security has been one of the most important components of TFP since the founding of the Republic of Turkey. Besides the relations between Turkey and its neighbours, the development in the international system has also affected the security perceptions and policy making processes in TFP. This paper particularly aims to analyse the impacts of September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks on TFP, in relation to the crises and changes within the surrounding geography.

In order to assess the securitization practices that Turkey shares with the neighbouring states and regions we employ *Regional Security Complex Theory* (RSCT) framework which categorises the states in a given geographical area as a regional cluster, namely *Regional Security Complex* (RSC), based on security interdependencies. Initially, we aim to portray Turkey's geopolitical position in the international setting according to the *descriptive* frame provided by RSCT. In this respect we try to provide a retrospective outlook over the major events that have taken place in Turkish domestic politics and in the international system, particularly in the regions encircling Turkey. Second, we apply the *predictive* approach of the theory to forecast scenarios in relation to *insulator* state status which excludes Turkey from all surrounding regions. Thus, Turkey's regional status in the post September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks conjuncture is evaluated through a number of prospective scenarios in order to foresee Turkey's engagement with the neighbouring RSCs.

¹ This article is mainly derived from the theoretical part of the master thesis “11 Eylül 2001 Sonrasında Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksi Teorisi Bağlamında Türk Dış Politikası'nın Analizi”/ “An Analysis on Turkish Foreign Policy after September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks within the Context of Regional Security Complex Theory” which was supervised by Prof. Barış ÖZDAL and successfully defended at the Atatürk Institute of Strategic Research International Relations and Regional Studies Department International Relations Programme on June 25, 2020.

1. Theoretical Framework

First introduced by Barry Buzan from Copenhagen School in 1983, the concept of RSC is based on the claim that it provides an alternative to the inadequacy of the approaches that evaluate the relationship between international security and anarchy through the structural features of the international system. Buzan argued that these theories were insufficient to explain the effects of the special conditions on state behaviour in the international system in which states are the main actors.

Underlining that the threats that come from neighbouring countries are prioritized in the understanding of national security in general, RSCT takes the state as an actor over the nature of its historical relations with the other political structures within its surrounding geography. RSCT opens an intermediate field of study on the vertical line descending from the international system to the actor at the bottom. Additionally, by framing clusters of states that are mutually connected with each other based on security issues within a given geographical area regions are classified as the RSCs.

3

According to Buzan, who defines security complexes as "*a group of states whose primary security concerns link together closely that their national securities cannot be considered apart from one another*" the reasons that connect actors within the complex can be "*geographical, political, strategic, economic, historical and cultural*".² According to this definition the possibility of security complexes to be shaped was linked with the regional and geographical circumstances.

Furthermore in 1998, the book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, which considered regions as sub-systems to be analysed in order to foresee comparative studies between regions, updated the definition of RSC. The main features of classical complex classification, in which the perception of security is concentrated on political and military fields, were as being "*composed of two or more states*", "*constituting a geographically coherent grouping*", having "*deep and durable security interdependence*" among each other, "*either positive or negative*". According to this expanded definition, the basic structure of a security complex is based on the location of the units in it, the friendship-hostility patterns between and how the power is

² Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983, p. 106.

distributed among them.³ Buzan and his colleagues, who utilise the constructivist point of view of the Copenhagen School by concentrating on the friendship and hostility relations between the units in a complex, also benefit from the neo-realist understanding with taking the distribution of power among the units into consideration.

Nevertheless, RSCT gained a deeper conceptual content with the study *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* by Buzan and Waever in 2003, which points out that Post-Cold War international security was interpreted through three different theoretical perspectives, namely neo-realist, globalist and regionalist, all of which have deficiencies in explaining the actual phenomena. While neo-realism aims to explain the structure and operation of the system by predicting a two-level analysis framework, as system and unit⁴, the globalist approach on the other hand, ignores international security as a whole, underestimating the role of geography and dependence on the area. At this point, RSCT tries to implement an understanding that covers and complements both the neo-realist and regionalist approaches of security and territoriality.⁵ Suggesting that neo-realist and globalist approaches highlight the global level and underestimate the role of the lower levels, RSCT also aims to adapt the global level understanding of neo-realism to its own multi-level analysis scheme: unit, region, interregional and global.⁶ Although the territorial state remains as the main actor whose security is considered, the security problems arising from the geography are prioritized for RSCT. As “*most political and military threats travel more easily over short distances... insecurity is often associated with proximity*” and “*most states fear their neighbours more than distant powers*”.⁷ In this respect, the regional level provides a common level of analysis where national and global security are intertwined.

³ See Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1998, pp. 13-15.

⁴ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

⁷ Buzan, Waever, de Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

The historical basis of the theory depends on the 16th century Europe, where the first example of the regional security complex began to take shape with the birth of the sovereign state. Further, observing the transformations the system has since had, RSCs have been thought to have gone through three different stages, including the Cold War Period between 1945-1989 and recently Post-Cold War years, from 1990 up to today.⁸

The interactions between the old European powers which started to display an international system of equal states are considered to be reflecting the general characteristics of security and interdependence relations of security complexes. This European-centred system has turned into a global-international system by the 20th century which was assisted by the rapid spread of technology, as well as the new forms of interdependence and inter-state relations.⁹ Therewithal, the anarchic structure of the international system with the realization of the interactions in a more competitive context led to two major wars which were the natural outcome of the expansion of the system and likewise, they also became the reason for the shifting power distribution within the system.

5

Moreover, through the decolonization process, new security dynamics among the increasing number of actors in international system paved the way for the formation of new RSCs during the Cold War.¹⁰ However, these structures are called *unstructured complexes*, since the weak security dynamics in these regions impeded the security relations between constituting states to be fully defined and in addition, although they are geographically located out of the two blocks, they could not stay outside the struggle between these two poles. These under-operational structures, depending on their formation potential, have been identified either as *pre-complexes*, which have mutual security dependencies contrary to low interaction between countries or *proto-complexes* which differ from the surrounding regions in terms of security features, yet where regional dynamics are not strong enough.¹¹

⁸ Buzan, Waever, op. cit., p. 14.

⁹ James E. Dougherty, Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Politics: A Comprehensive Survey*, London: Longman, 2001, p. 110.

¹⁰ Buzan, Waever, op. cit., p. 16.

¹¹ See. Ibid., pp. 62-64.

Another factor that restricted the formation of RSCs during the Cold War Period was the power projection of the superpowers to strategically important regions, in order to gain clout over each other. This strategy, which is called *overlay*, was mostly actualized by having military assets in the region and making the countries of the region a part of the bipolar power struggle, therefore leaving the security dynamics between the local countries obscure.¹²

The period which has been going on since the end of the Cold War, however, offers a new environment where the visibility of RSCs has increased. By the dissolution of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the third world countries that evaded the competition of superpowers acquired autonomy to some extent and besides, the new security issues superseded the military security concerns that had been on the agenda since 1970s.¹³

Furthermore, by the 1990s, the United States of America (USA)'s claim to be the only hegemonic power in a unipolar world began to become apparent. With the effect of this new era in which liberal democracy declared its victory over the socialist planner-state model in general, the belief that economic interest is a motivating factor in regional integration begun to gain strength. In this period when the neo-functional theory, which applies an economic perspective of regionalism based on inter-state integration became popular, regionalism in international security studies focused on the idea that transnational and intra-country conflicts might spill over the borders and turn into regional problems affecting all neighbouring countries.¹⁴

Contrary to the regional approaches which emphasise regional integration in international relations, as within the scheme of the European Union (EU), RSCT claims that RSCs are by-products of the anarchic structure of the international system.¹⁵ Regional integration, since it transforms the region into an integral unit¹⁶

¹² Buzan, Waever, de Wilde, op. cit., p. 12.

¹³ Buzan, Waever, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

¹⁴ Louise Fawcett, "Regionalism from a Historical Perspective", *Global Politics of Regionalism*, ed. Mary Farrell, Björn Hetne, Luk Langenhove, London: Pluto Press, 2005, p. 25.

¹⁵ Buzan, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁶ Buzan, Waever, de Wilde, loc. cit.

within the international system, makes a sub-system analysis impossible as it brings order to the regional anarchic structure. Besides, regions are the sum of geographically clustered units, and although they are part of a larger system, they have a separate structure of their own. In this respect, although they have an analytical and ontological basis, they have no effects as actors in the system.¹⁷ On the other hand, the integration of only a limited number of states in a region causes changes on the balance of power in that complex.¹⁸

Nevertheless, sometimes a group of states within the complex can seek for cooperation against a state, which is perceived as a threat. At this point, the importance of friendship and hostility patterns arising from long-term interaction becomes apparent. According to RSCT, the main feature of a local regional complex is either friendships, shaped by cultural affinity as a result of being located within the area encompassed by the same civilization, or long-term interdependencies that emerged out of long-lasting hostility interactions throughout the history. Explaining the concepts of friendship and hostility from a social constructivist perspective, the theory suggests that, since they are socially constructed, the borders and the number of the members in a RSC can be changed and restructured depending on the prioritization and securitisation preferences of regional actors.¹⁹ In this context, it seems possible that two states, who see each other as threats due to historical or ideological reasons, can also opt for cooperation that goes beyond the perceptions of friendship and hostility, according to their security priorities.

As well as the interactions between regional actors, the main basis for security policies within a complex is the form of polarization, where the behaviour of smaller states is determined by the behaviour of regional powers. Sometimes acting with a global power outside the region may also be preferred by a regional power as a strategy to create pressure on the rival state. This situation, which brings the intervention of a global power into the regional security dynamics, constitutes the point where regional security coincides with global security. In this context, RSCT claims to create both descriptive and predictive frameworks of analyse in regional security studies. In the

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁸ Buzan, Waever, de Wilde, loc. cit.

¹⁹ See. Buzan, Waever, op. cit., pp. 45-48.

descriptive plane, it aims to be able to conduct empirical studies within a matrix, which covers the internal affairs of the regional countries, inter-country relations and the region's possible relations with other regions, along with the interplays of the global powers with the region. The purpose of the predictive approach on the other hand, is to use the theory to forecast scenarios that are likely to happen. Assuming that complexes can change in time, depending on internal or external factors in relation to the evolving security perceptions, the predictive analysis aims to deduce the possibilities of transformations within a complex by considering intra-regional security discourses and interactions between different regional complexes as well.²⁰

As it can be interpreted from the information conveyed above, RSC theorists divide the post-Cold War world map into geographical regions, ranging from widely spread continental super-complexes to regional complexes and sub-complexes. Interregional boundaries in this context are generally determined by geographical features and the interaction between them is also observed to be low. Sometimes the border between these regions is created by an *insulator* state, which has similar security issues with the surrounding regions, but nonetheless, lacking the power to combine them as a single unit.²¹ Although it is possible to find geographical location of an *insulator* confusing in terms of its position when compared to the member states, the inclusion or exclusion of a state to a complex is not only based on its geographical location. As the theory takes RSCs as socially constructed structures, the criterion of being a member in any complex is completely focused on the mutual security interactions among the states. Consequently, while Turkey, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Afghanistan and additionally the African Sahel region states are exemplified as *insulators* due to their intersectional locations between different RSCs, the term *insulator* state is accepted as an underdeveloped concept by the theoreticians themselves.²²

2. Evaluating Turkey within Regional Security Complex Theory

²⁰ See. Ibid., pp. 43-67.

²¹ Ibid., p. 41.

²² Ibid., p. 483.

RSCCT defines Turkey as an actor which experience security issues associated with all encircling regions and yet, extracted from them. Having situated between regions with specific security problems different from each other, Turkey interacts with all these complexes, however the interactions between the complexes are expected to be limited. Moreover, although Turkey is depicted as an *insulator* between Middle East, Europe and Post-Soviet RSCs, Turkey's insulating role between Middle East and Europe is particularly highlighted.²³ From this perspective, classification of Turkey as a different entity with a distinct identity distinguishing from all neighbouring states, is not only rooted in its geographic location but also the historical and political circumstances it has experienced.

More broadly, Turkey's adjoining position between industrialized Europe and the oil-rich Middle East, in addition to its location as a junction of major air, land and sea routes leaves it open to the effects of all developments in both near and distant geographies, as well as of the changes in the international or regional balances of power.²⁴

9

Beyond constituting a geographic and cultural intersection, the historical process which shaped today's Turkey started with the 17th century Westphalia Peace Treaties, after the reflections of modern nation-state concept began to spread all over the world and this process has been decisive for Turkey's exceptional status. First considering European RSC as a composition of nation-states which are remainders of the empires which had originated in the Middle Age, Turkey might have as well be directly or indirectly included in the European RSC, like the Balkan states which emerged along by the disintegration process of the Ottoman State. However, besides the multidirectional expansion strategy which targeted all the regions around the Ottoman State, the fact that Ottomans never grounded their security concerns fully on European states accounts for the main difference in its relations with the region. This expansion strategy characterises the Ottoman State as a super-power in its era, which has a

²³ See. Ibid., p. 187, 258, 392.

²⁴ Mustafa Aydın, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 1999, Vol. 35, 152-186, p. 165.

complex of its own, and reflects its power to the surrounding geography including Europe. Moreover, this fact marks the Ottoman State as an external threat to Europe.²⁵ On the other hand, the same discussion can be applied for Turkey and the present-day states founded on the Middle Eastern territory of the Ottoman State. As its peripheral location to the region limits the number of states which Turkey can establish security relationships, it also has averted Turkey from becoming a part of the Middle East. Additionally, unlike its Middle Eastern neighbours, the fact that modern Turkey was established free from colonial experience and it adopted a Westernised administration model refusing the Ottoman heritage, led Turkey to keep its interactions with the region in a limited scale. In relation to this, the RSCT theorists Buzan and Waever regards the motto '*Peace at home, peace in the world*', on which the foreign policy of Turkey was based on, as an indicator of the passive attitude that is required for an *insulator* state. On the other hand, Turkey's efforts in keeping the interactions with the surrounding regions at minimal levels to avoid taking part in conflicts, in addition to its pursuit of an European identity albeit having a problematic relationship with the region is also underlined by the RSCT.²⁶

This passive attitude seemed to be functional regarding Turkey in the Interwar Period, when it expended its energy for restructuring and as well as the Cold War Era, whereby Turkey needed shelter under NATO. On the other hand, Turkey could no longer maintain its uninvolved foreign policy conduct, since it was affected by the disintegration of the USSR which had long constituted a real and potential physical threat to Turkey, than it had to any other European NATO members.

After the Soviet disintegration, Turkey has experienced the surrounding instability with Iraqi invasion in Kuwait in the Middle East, the clashes between newly independent states and the sub-ethnic local groups aspiring for political recognition in the Caucasus and with a similar ethnic conflict environment, that took shape in the Balkans after disintegration of Yugoslavia. In this period, another significant event in

²⁵ Buzan, Waever, op. cit., p. 348.

²⁶ See Ibid., p. 392-393.

the international system was the impersonation of the USA as the global hegemon in the absence of a rival super-power.

However, from the beginning of the Post-Cold War years up until September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks, having limited ability to pursue new initiatives in foreign policy led Turkey to continue its traditional alliance with the USA. As a result, developing close relations with the USA was considered as an asset that can assist Turkey's impact in regional and international politics. Besides, this period was also significant as Turkey faced certain security problems with its neighbours Greece and Syria. On the other hand, these problems remained at bilateral level since both countries belong to different complexes. To sum, in 1990s, when Turkey fell far from portraying an affiliated image with any of the surrounding regions, Turkey's *insulator* role seemed compatible. On the other hand, Turkey's attempts to increase its visibility in regions like the Balkans and Central Asia, highlighting the historical and cultural links in order to strengthen its international role during this period, is perceived as a challenge to its insulating role.²⁷

11

However, while Turkey is claimed as an *insulator* excluded from all surrounding regions, it's noteworthy that RSCT also describes Turkey as a regional power.²⁸ At this point, Şaban Kardaş objects the solid framework applied by RSCT, arguing that excluding Turkey from RSCs due to its incapacity to bind different regions into a single unit makes it hard to understand the current empirical data. Kardaş suggests that since Turkey is affected by the security issues in different complexes and while it must be taken into account by the countries from different complexes, there should be no inconvenience in defining Turkey as member to multiple RSCs. According to Kardaş Turkey should be analysed as a multi-regional or inter-regional power as it acts as a regional power in all these regions separately.²⁹

Furthermore, Turkey's multi-regional identity in foreign policy has become more apparent since September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks. Through the democratization and economic liberalization process in the 2000s, Turkey begun to enlarge its

²⁷ Ibid., p. 394.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁹ Şaban Kardaş, "Turkey: A Regional Power Facing a Changing International System", *Turkish Studies*, 2013, Vol. 14, 637-660, pp. 646-647.

perspective which had before prioritized security in international relations. In order to promote regional security and prosperity, Turkey adopted a new strategy which emphasises political cooperation with neighbouring countries.³⁰ During this period, Turkey's rise as a regional power and its confidence imposing that it would be able to act more independently in its foreign policy put Turkey's *insulator* identity more open to discussion. These arguments can be analysed more clearly by comparatively examining the circumstances that Turkey faced and the reflexes it accordingly developed before and after the terrorist attacks.

3. The Impact of September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks on the International System

The 9/11 Terrorist Attacks have transformed the traditional security perceptions worldwide when they revealed the capacity of terrorist organizations to perform more advanced and violent strikes. While proving that nothing and nobody can be physically safe against terrorism in the modern world, attacks also became the onset of a new period in international system by triggering the Global War on Terrorism³¹ practices.

Assessing the attacks in relation to RSCT which is based on territoriality, Buzan and Waever regard this new form of non-territorialized terrorism as an example of how “*international security is generated by the specific interplays of regional and global security dynamics*”.³² In other words, Al Qaeda, which was forged by the altered security dynamics after the Gulf War, demonstrates how a regional issue can turn into a novel security phenomenon on global-scale in the case of the Middle East.

The response of the USA and its NATO allies to these non-territorialized attacks however targeted Afghanistan, where the lack of legitimate state mechanism gave a hand to terrorist enterprises. The Operation Enduring Freedom was also supported by Turkey and its active engagement in ISAF (International Security Assistance Force)

³⁰ Kadri Kaan Renda, “Turkey’s Neighbourhood Policy: An Emerging Complex Interdependence?”, *Insight Turkey*, 2011, Vol. 13, 89-108, p. 99.

³¹ See “President Bush Discusses Global War on Terror”, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060929-3.html> (Accession: 23.04.2020).

³² Buzan, Waever, op. cit., p. 450.

hinted Turkey's ascending profile in international relations for the following years ahead.

However, President George W. Bush manifested the intention to extend the borders of its mission onto the three *rouge states* of the international system, namely Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Bush accused these states of creating an Axis of Evil against the world peace by trying to develop Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Moreover, Bush Doctrine, under the cloak of 2002 National Security Strategy, introduced the term *pre-emptive war* which would be utilised as a justification for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Nevertheless, the operation did not attain the necessary international support, even from the most of European states and further, notable NATO allies rejected providing any contributions arguing that the organization would loop in a 'logic of war' while the peaceful solution efforts by the UN still continued.³³

The operation neither bring the promised freedom and prosperity for Iraq nor any evidence for Iraqi WMDs, but resulted in further chaos and civil casualties, in addition to accounts of abusive treatment and torture on prisoners in Abu Ghraib Prison and Guantanamo Bay. Hence, while the unipolar American hegemony came under question, the re-emergence of Sunni-Shia sectarian tension during the restructuring phase of new Iraqi state mechanism, *inter alia*, paved the way for DAESH (al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham). At this point we can trace the similarities in the formation processes of Al Qaeda and DAESH. Since the penetration of the USA, as a superpower to the region by the 1990 Gulf War is attributed to the emergence of Al Qaeda³⁴ through a narrative based on victimization of Muslim world; a similar environment was created by the second intervention of the USA between 2003-2011 Iraq War.

President Barrack Obama, who took over the office in 2009 under a burden of negative image in foreign policy, deteriorated relations with the Islamic world and a stagnated economy, also did not hesitate to describe the emergence of DAESH as an undesired

³³ Dominic McGoldrick, *From 9-11 to the Iraq War 2003: International Law in an Age of Complexity*, Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing, 2004, p. 14.

³⁴ Buzan, Waever, op. cit., pp. 209-210.

result of the occupation in Iraq.³⁵ During Obama's two-term presidency, albeit trying to maintain leadership status, the foreign policy strategy of the USA was determined by multiple cooperation, seeking solutions to supra-state problems, peaceful approach to new emerging powers in the international system and modernization of international institutions.³⁶

However, the Arab Spring became the critical point where Obama's Middle East policy put under test. The anti-regime protests which sparked in Tunisia spread to different countries in the Middle East over the time, eventually turning into serious internal conflicts in Libya and Syria. With the lessons learned from the Iraq War and due to its economic vulnerability, the USA waited for its Arab and European allies to take the initiative to intervene in violence in Libya and Syria.³⁷ The hesitation in intervening in international crises during this period started to erode the irresistible super-power perception befitted the USA. Even though the USA remained the biggest military and economic power, the financial burden of Afghanistan and Iraq Wars and the discontent caused by military losses revealed that the overseas operations as a way of power demonstration were not sustainable. Consequently, when hegemonic collapse scenarios began to be vocalized and scholars like Joseph Nye, who evaluated the state power through resources and capacities, argued that the USA would lose his superpower status in the near future as the other states in the system increase their power, yet not in a pattern of absolute destruction or collapse, but a relative decrease.³⁸

Donald Trump, who was elected as the 45th President at the beginning of 2017, after a controversial campaign and election process, fixed his foreign policy agenda on the restoration of USA to its former power and he has revealed that the USA would endeavour to return to its hegemonic status by the slogan "Make America great again".

³⁵ "Obama: ISIS Unintended Consequence Of Invading Iraq, Which Is Why We Should Aim Before We Shoot", https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2015/03/16/obama_isis_unintended_consequence_of_invading_iraq_why_ch_is_why_we_should_aim_before_we_shoot.html (Accession: 30.03.2019).

³⁶ Stewart Patrick, "The Evolving structure of World Politics", *International Relations Since the End of Cold War: New and Old Dimensions*, ed. Geir Lundestad, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 16-41, p. 23.

³⁷ Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Obama Approach to the Middle East: The End of America's Moment", *International Affairs*, 2013, Vol. 89, 299-323, p. 308.

³⁸ Joseph S. Nye, "The Future of American Power: Dominance and Decline in Perspective", *Foreign Affairs*, 2010, Vol. 89, 2-12, p. 11.

In this context, it is also necessary to assess the current power configuration in the international system. Buzan and Waever claims that during the period between the end of the Cold War and September 11, 2001 Terrorist attacks, the USA was the only superpower while the EU, Russian Federation (RF), China and Japan were great powers on a 1 (super-power) + 4 (great power) pattern. Additionally, they argue that the international system may continue within this configuration for a while, depending on the rise of the EU or China to super-power position and on the other hand, this configuration may turn into a 2 (super-power) + x (great power) or, in the case of an American power decline, into a 0 (super-power) + x (great power) pattern.³⁹

As it is inferred from the information we have conveyed, since 2001, whether the USA can maintain its dominant superpower position has been under question. On the other hand, it is also observed that the economic concerns led the USA administration to change the understanding of overseas intervention. With the 2015 National Security Strategy Document of Obama Period, the USA announced that instead of costly wide-ranging field operations, it would rather cooperate with allies or new local forces reinforced with training, equipment and technological support when necessary.⁴⁰ Particularly in the Middle East after the Arab Spring, the practices such as supplying technological equipment and intelligence to the allied states, the training of local paramilitary forces as in the cases of as Syria and Libya and providing air support to local forces and even to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards who fought against DAESH in Iraq proves that with the new strategy of *surrogate warfare* the USA will continue to project power in accordance with its interests.⁴¹

However, it is discerned that it has not been easy for the USA to benefit from the advantages of being a single pole in the absence of a second super-power that could create balance. For this reason, the current situation is considered as the continuation

³⁹ Buzan, Waever, op. cit., p. 446.

⁴⁰ “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2015)”, p. 9. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy_2.pdf (Accession: 14.12.2019).

⁴¹ Andreas Krieg, “Externalizing the Burden of War: The Obama Doctrine and US Foreign Policy in the Middle East”, *International Affairs*, 2016, Vol. 92, 97-113, pp. 106-107.

of bipolarity in the neo-realist perspective since RF is still considered a strong state in terms of military power.⁴²

As a matter of fact, RF's ability to stand against the USA-West alliance and put forward its own agenda in company with Iran as in Syrian Crisis case on one hand and the increased military presence of China in Asia on the other, prove that the global power struggle still continues in geopolitically important zones.

4. Turkish Foreign Policy after September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks

The transformation process of the international system, which was prompted by the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks, chronologically coincided with the beginning of a new era in Turkish domestic politics. After a decade determined by frequently changing coalition governments, the newly emerged Justice and Development Party gained majority with November 2002 elections with its conservative-democratic discourse. Along with the dynamism it brought to domestic politics, the JDP government also signalled change in TFP. In this context, TFP was redesigned according to the new foreign policy approach, which was framed in 2001dated book *Strategic Depth* by Ahmet Davutoğlu. As a politician with academic origin, Davutoğlu served as foreign policy advisor, foreign ministry and prime minister respectively between 2003 and 2016.

Another prominent feature of the TFP in this period was the application of *soft power* as a successful foreign policy instrument. During this period, going beyond the conventional definitions of national interest, Turkey acted as a mediator in regional and international crises. Besides cooperating with international organizations, it was also actively engaged in humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping missions.⁴³

Initially, the new *strategic-depth* approach carried out through principles such as *rhythmic diplomacy, zero problems with neighbours, multi-dimensional and pro-*

⁴² Georg Sorensen, "International Relations Theory after the Cold War", *The Eighty Years Crisis: International Relations 1919-1999*, ed. Tim Dunne, Michael Cox, Ken Booth, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 83-100, p. 98.

⁴³ Ziya Öniş, "Multiple Faces of the New Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique", *Insight Turkey*, 2011, Vol. 13, 47-65, pp. 62-63.

active foreign policy seemed successful. Especially in the Middle East, the foreign policy rhetoric based on the idea of a common civilization enabled Turkey to cultivate a sense of regional leadership. However, as matters got worse in the course of time, the optimism that had been enjoyed by TFP circles gradually vanished.

The first significant impact of the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks on Turkey was the decision of overseas operations by the Bush administration within "Global War on Terror" initiative. After opening the Incirlik Air Base for coalition forces, Turkey also took part in ISAF mission in December 2001, by providing military personnel. Having cultural ties with Afghanistan, Turkey was also earnestly involved in the rebuilding process of new Afghan state after the military operation.⁴⁴ During this period Turkey outshined as a model country in the Muslim world with its democratic, secular and Western identities. By the same token, Turkey's support enabled the USA to prove that the military operation was carried out against terrorism, not Islam.⁴⁵ However, things turned bitter between Turkey and the USA after the military intervention decision to Iraq.

17

Remembering the Gulf War experience, which gave autonomy to Iraqi Kurds, made Turkey adopt an active approach considering that an inevitable intervention might result in independence for Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). In addition, the concerns about a possible Iraqi division between Shiite and Sunni populations would give Iran an upper hand in the region made Iraq's territorial integrity more important for Turkey. In order to stay in the game, Turkey started negotiations with the USA after the request on using Turkish-Iraqi border for military operation. The March 1, 2003 motion, which aimed to allow the USA military presence in Turkey and also authorise Turkish troops beyond the border, was however rejected, due to the lack of the required majority in Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

Aside from the strained relations between Turkey and the USA after the rejection of the motion, circumstances of the intervention in Iraq brought new security problems

⁴⁴ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official Website, "IV. Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations", http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv_-european-security-and-defence-identity_policy-esdi_p_en.mfa (Accession: 29.10.2019).

⁴⁵ Ömer Taşpınar, "The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey", Brookings Institution, 2005 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/taspinar20051116.pdf> (Accession: 16.11.2019).

for Turkey. With the lack of state authority in Northern Iraq, PKK regained strength and Turkish firms operating in Iraq became target of the terrorist attacks due to the internal turmoil and instability in the country.⁴⁶

However, the relations between Turkey – the USA, which had been shaped by both constant interests and variable factors since the beginning, entered a recovery phase through mutual diplomatic initiatives by 2005. Despite of the disagreements on other regional issues about Syria, Iran and Palestine, the relations eventually began to improve with *Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish - American Strategic Partnership Document*.⁴⁷

On the other hand, the rejection of the March 1 Motion strengthened Turkey's image in the Middle East. Along with contributing to the diplomatic opening towards the region, the democratic image of Turkey allowed further approximation to the EU.⁴⁸ While Turkey continued the reform process required for accession, the belief that the Aegean and Cyprus problems between Turkey and Greece would finally reach a solution marked the beginning of a new phase in the relations. However, in 2005, when some EU members attempted to extend the negotiation process claiming to have found the reforms insufficient, the positive Turkish sentiment towards EU membership began to reverse and led the reform process slow down accordingly.⁴⁹

The deadlock in Turkey-EU relations has been also interpreted as a result of EU's underappreciation of Turkey's strategic position in the new conjuncture. Turkey's central position, which enabled it to become a part of the West during Cold War, lost its significance for its European NATO allies since the EU was based on economic grounds rather than security.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2005, p. 77-78.

⁴⁷ Füsün Türkmen, "Turkish-American Relations: A Challenging Transition", *Turkish Studies*, 2009, Vol. 10, 109-129, p. 125.

⁴⁸ Ramazan Gözen, "Causes and Consequences of Turkey's Out-of-War Position in the Iraq War of 2003," *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 2005, Vol.36, 73-99, p. 87.

⁴⁹ Çiğdem Nas, "Turkey and the European Union: A Stumbling Accession Process under New Conditions", *Turkey in the 21st Century: Quest for a New Foreign Policy*, ed. Zeynep Oktav Özden, Burlington: Ashgate, 2011, 159-184, pp. 164-165.

⁵⁰ Paul Kubicek, "Turkey's Inclusion in the Atlantic Community: Looking Back, Looking Forward", *Turkish Studies*, 2008, Vol. 9, 21-35, pp. 32-33.

On the other hand, while the course of relations between Turkey and the West followed a fluctuating pattern after September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks, commentaries about the potential of religion and civilization as new sources ideological polarization in the international system became more widespread. With the Al Qaeda alleged terrorist attacks carried out in Madrid in March 2004, the doubts towards Islam and foreigners further increased in the West.

During this period, while Turkey promoted collaboration through Alliance of Civilizations Initiative in global plane, it also began attempting to develop relations with all neighbouring states that it long had mutual problems. Turkey not only tried to repair its bilateral relations but also adopted an active approach to the problems that had potential to turn into international crises in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus. Through *zero problems* strategy, the current problems with KRG, Syria and Armenia were frozen, and a method of cooperation diplomacy was put into conduct with all neighbours.

19

Nevertheless, the relations with the Gulf States also improved during this period. As the West adopted a suspicious manner towards Arabian capital after the September 11, 2001 attacks, the wealth accumulating in the Gulf, in parallel to the rise in oil prices, channelled to Turkey which was seeking foreign investment to reduce the impact of the 2001 economic crisis.⁵¹ Therewithal, the need of diversifying its energy resources also led Turkey improve relations with its neighbour Iran. During the moderate President Mohammad Khatami period in Iran, two states favoured focusing on partnership on economic interests and regional security, thereby leaving ideological differences aside.⁵²

On the other hand, the region that has generated the most serious security problems for Turkey since September 11, 2001 has been the Middle East. By 2003, Turkey was targeted by Al Qaeda affiliated cells with a series of terrorist attacks and in the following course it struggled against the instability in Iraq. Moreover, falling far from

⁵¹ Nuri Yeşilyurt, "11 Eylül Olayı Ertesinde AKP Dönemi: Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler", *Türk Dış Politikası III*, ed. Baskın Oran, İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2013, 401-462, p. 453.

⁵² Bayram Sinkaya, "Rationalization of Turkey-Iran Relations: Prospects and Limits", *Insight Turkey*, 2012, Vol. 14, 137-156, p. 139.

meeting the expectations of a peaceful democratic transition, the Arab Spring added up to the intrinsic disorder in the region.

However, at its very beginning the Arab Spring demonstrations brought the discussion that Turkey could be taken as a model for other Middle Eastern countries with its experience with democracy as a Muslim country. In addition to the increasing economic power in the 2000s, factors such as JDP's religious and cultural affinity of the Middle East, the support for the Palestinian cause and consequent distance with Israel are thought to have made Turkey an attractive example for the region.⁵³

However, in the end, the Arab Spring has only brought democratic change to Tunisia. A similar transition attempt led by Muslim Brothers organization in Egypt was interrupted by a military *coup d'état* after the new government failed to turn over the bad trend in the economy. Another reason was the withdrawal of Western support to democratization process, presuming the relations between Egypt and Israel would deteriorate in the long run. Further, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which saw the Muslim Brothers Movement as a threat for their own regimes, are claimed to provide financial support to opposition groups and the press during the anti-government protests⁵⁴ that brought the short-lived democracy trial at an end. Following the coup, Turkey's condemning statements against the undemocratic practices in Egypt have strained relations between two states.

The Arab Spring protests that started in Libya on the other hand, resulted in international intervention after the long-lived Muammar al-Qaddafi regime tried to halt the opposition with the use of violence. Due to the economic assets and investments owned by Turkish firms in the country, the case of Libya has since required attentive monitoring. After the Qaddafi regime, the relations between two states continues with the newly established National Transitional Council.

⁵³ Alper Yılmaz Dede, "The Arab Uprisings: Debating the Turkish Model", *Insight Turkey*, 2011, Vol. 13, 23-32, p. 28.

⁵⁴ İsmail Numan Telci, *Devrim Sonrası Mısır Dış Politikası: Dönüşüm Arayışından Meşruiyet Çıkamazna*, İstanbul: SETA Kitapları, 2018, pp. 9-10.

Eventually, when the anti-regime protest turned into a civil war in Syria, Turkey was affected by the spilling turmoil as well. From the very beginning of the Syrian Crisis, Turkey adopted an open-door policy towards Syrian refugees in accordance with its humanitarian stance towards Arab Spring. However, having gained the military and political support of the RF in the absence of an international consensus of diplomatic solution, the Syrian Regime has further advanced. As a result of the security problems created by the terrorist organizations and regime brutality in Syria, Turkey still continues to tackle the economic and social burden of sheltering millions of refugees.

In the meantime, Turkey militarily confronted the direct physical threat of DAESH at the south-eastern border. While providing support to the Global Coalition against DAESH, the Operation Euphrates Shield, launched through Syrian border, cut the organizations contiguity with Turkey in August 2016. Although the Iraqi Army declared victory against DAESH in 2017, the clashes between the organization and the Syrian Democratic Forces which was supported by the international coalition continued. At this point, there appeared frictions between Turkey and the Western partners of the coalition about the counterterrorism methods applied on the ground. The assistance provided to armed Syrian Kurdish groups under the pretext of alliance against DAESH was protested by Turkey since these groups were identified as PKK affiliates. However, as the search for international support against the increased activities of these armed groups had been inconclusive; Turkey resorted to military operations to clear out this “terror corridor”.

DAESH presences in the region have also provided the international actors such as the RF and Iran a partial legitimacy to act within the Syrian borders and support the Syrian regime. RF is considered to ensure its military presence in the Mediterranean by its USSR remainder base in Tartus in return of its backup to Bashar al-Assad. On the other hand, Iran, which grounds its regional foreign policy on sectarian politics, sees the Syrian regime as a natural ally to break off the Sunni circle surrounding it geographically. Iran stands by Syrian regime in terms of political, economic, and military support since the beginning of the crisis. In addition, it is known that Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah militia and similar Shia militant groups trained by the

Iranian Intelligence and Revolutionary Guards have been fighting along with Syrian Armed Forces since 2015.⁵⁵

In conclusion, since September 11, 2001, a series of sequential events -particularly the Arab Spring- have reversed the TFP initiatives aiming to foster a stable environment in which all regional actors could peacefully coexist and prosper.

5. A Future Outlook on Turkey's Role within RSCT

Yet at the end of 1990s, RSC theorists Buzan and Waever, distinguished Turkey as an *insulator* that did not prefer to adopt its attributed "relatively inactive" role due to its foreign policy vision.⁵⁶ Analogously, the term between September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks and the Arab Spring in 2011 was a period during which Turkey tried to open a ground for itself through diplomacy in the international system. In this context, this active approach overlaps with the RSCT characterization of Turkey as a power that "... seems to challenge this, by playing an increasingly active role from its insulator position".⁵⁷ Besides, forcing to move the RF, Syria and Greece from different complexes to strategically act together and by that means, create a new strategic area of its very own is specifically underlined as an alternative that can be developed out of the *insulator* position. However, Turkey was not assessed as strong enough to bring these three states together in the same plane and therefore blur the borders between the surrounding RSCs.⁵⁸

While this opinion, which was asserted in 2003 -a time when the impacts of the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks had not yet taken form- may sound reasonable for the context it was uttered, in the following period it has lost its validity due to the changes that took place not only in the RSCs around Turkey but also in the nature of its relations with neighbours. When compared to earlier years, Turkey in 2000s is seen as stronger and more influential in regional politics. Through conducting a strategy that prioritised finding solutions to historical *securitization* issues through diplomatic

⁵⁵ Aron Lund, "Not Just Russia: The Iranian Surge in Syria", <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/63650> (Accession: 05.12.2019).

⁵⁶ Buzan, Waever, op. cit., p. 394.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 485.

means, Turkey seems to have focused on holistic security understanding and regional stability applying a *de-securitizing* policy.

Firstly, the foresight that Turkey and the RF would maintain Cold War traditions is rooted in competitive attitudes that two states are likely to undertake in order to create spheres of influence in Caucasus and Central Asia. RF's increased military and political influence in the Caucasus, Central Asia and finally the Middle East under Putin's Presidency has been interpreted as adoption of a Neo - Eurasian foreign policy based on the ideal of establishing an Eurasian Alliance against the USA-led Atlantic Alliance.⁵⁹ RF's active foreign policy approach is also seen as a sign implying that it is in quest of the USSR super-power legacy.

On the other hand, the need for integration to the global economy makes Turkey an attractive economic partner for RF. In this sense both states have opted to give priority to well-structured economic relationship based on mutual dependence, especially on energy. By 2000s, the transfer of RF's rich energy resources to foreign markets has become one of the main points in mutual relations. However, since the RF perceives any other energy transmission routes as alternatives to the energy monopoly it tries to create on Europe, it has increased its grip on Caspian states as other energy suppliers. RF's intervention in Georgia in 2008 for example, can be interpreted as a result of the strategic struggle between the RF and the regional states.

Although the RF has adopted an aggressive foreign policy strategy based on the power maximization against the possibility of containment by the USA, the fact that unlike the Cold War years, Turkey oversees the balance in its relations with the USA and the RF minimizes the possibility of a crisis between Turkey and the RF unless both target each other on national security issues. However, regarding the current and potential issues of confrontation between two states, while an alliance is not likely to be in the making, the relations can be described as peaceful and cooperative⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ Selim Kurt, "Neo-Avrasyacı Perspektiften Rusya Federasyonu'nun Güvenlik Algısı", *Güvenlik Stratejileri Dergisi*, 2018, Vol. 14, 91-125, p. 93.

⁶⁰ Şener Aktürk, "Toward a Turkish-Russian Axis?: Conflicts in Georgia, Syria and Ukraine and Cooperation over Nuclear Energy", *Insight Turkey*, 2014, Vol. 16, 13-22, p. 22.

On the other hand, the changes in relations with Greece constitute the other pillar of the given scenario. Despite being in a slowdown phase in the negotiation process for the long-term crises in Turkey - Greece - Cyprus triangle, the period which was marked by escalation of the tension as in 1990s seems unlikely to recur.

Although problems like the determination of Aegean continental shelf, the status of islets with uncertain sovereignty and the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) in the Eastern Mediterranean constitute the main problems between Turkey and Greece, both sides do not seem willing to meet on a ground of negotiation, which is perceived as a kind of concession that disrupts the status quo in favour of the other party.

Nevertheless, the scenario including Syria as the third actor in the speculative region suggested by Buzan and Waever should be assessed considering the anticipated victory of the Syrian Regime. In such a case, the support for PKK and the allocation framework on Euphrates and Tigris Rivers seem likely to regenerate the previous crises between two states whose bilateral ties are seriously corrupted. Furthermore, yet the alliance between the RF and Syria appears to be problematic for Turkey, the willingness of Greece to join these two states against Turkey should also be taken into consideration within probable scenarios.

Yet another scenario that had been put forward by RSC theorists for Turkey is that it would be more linked to the Middle East due to the interdependencies developed with the region. However, Turkey is not seen able to intertwine Middle Eastern security dynamics with other regions.⁶¹ On the other hand, with recent studies on RSCT, different comments on the argument have also emerged. Robert Stewart-Ingersoll and Derrick Frazier prefers to classify Turkey as a member of the Middle East RSC referring to its stronger interactions with the region by 2000s.⁶²

Although Turkey has been experiencing occasional problems with a number of states and non-state actors in the region, it also shares common security concerns with all the states in the Middle East in general. Along with economic and cultural ties it has, the

⁶¹ Buzan, Waever, op. cit., p. 258.

⁶² Robert Stewart- Ingersoll, Derrick Fraizer, *Regional Powers and Security Orders*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012, p. 45.

security of the regional energy resources is also a matter of concern for Turkey. In this sense, not only the local problems arising from the security dynamics within the region but also interference of external forces is a critical component of regional affairs. With the growing energy need of a growing economy in 2000s, Turkey sought for establishing strong ties with the resource-rich regional countries to avoid the risks of being dependent on a single supplier. The energy security agenda also led cooperation between Turkey and KRG in order to take advantage of the energy resources in northern Iraq, as well as Kirkuk and ensure the safety of Ceyhan Pipeline.⁶³

On the other hand, the current Middle Eastern balance of power seems to be shaped around the polarization between the USA-backed Gulf States and Israel on one side and Iran on the other. Thus, as a medium-sized power, inclusion of Turkey to the Middle Eastern RSC may naturally generate a new pole in the region. However, Turkey refrains from any initiatives that may endanger the stability and considers the maintenance of the regional *status quo*. In this context, when the geographical distinction that caused Turkey to become surrounded by different regions constitutes a disadvantage that requires much energy and caution, on the other hand its peripheral location provides the opportunity to limit the security interdependencies with any of these RSCs and prevents the possibility of absorption into the regional conflict dynamics.

However, after September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks, the events that have taken place in the Middle East not only affected Turkey but also its relations with the EU. Except for the sub-complex formed by the Balkan states, the European continent resembles a security community with the long-resolved security problems among European states.⁶⁴ While being located at the intersection of Asia and Europe results in geographical exclusion of Turkey from the European RSC, however the EU accession may bring Turkey the membership to this complex, depending on the positive outcome of the process. For EU on the other hand, Turkey's membership means adjoining of the external borders with the Middle East and its alarming security dynamics.

⁶³ Ahmet Kasım Han, "Turkey's Energy Strategy and the Middle East: Between a Rock and a Hard Place", *Turkish Studies*, 2011, Vol. 12, 603-617, pp. 610-611.

⁶⁴ See. Buzan, Waever, op. cit., p. 375.

Beyond cultural and religious differences, the fact that the Middle East has a reputation of instability and chaotic environment constitute the underlying concerns of the EU. In addition to this, the prevailing refugee mobility to the West, which is caused by the Arab Spring has become a security problem for Europe, although these refugee flows have been largely absorbed by Turkey.

As a result, Turkey's accession adventure which was grounded on the discourse of 'centre-country' that would build a bridge between Europe and the Middle East⁶⁵ does not seem to be tempting for the EU. It is clear that the EU, which perceived Turkey as a physical barrier rather than a bridge between Europe and the Middle East during the Cold War⁶⁶, does not want to give up the comfort provided by Turkey as a buffer zone.

Unlike the USA or RF, the fact that the EU as a political entity lacks the motivation or the capacity to develop such policies to project its power to different geographies highlights the boundaries of Europe with the other RSCs. While Turkey's EU admission may bear the possibility of solution to the problems between Turkey and Greece under the supranational EU framework, it may also result in the linking of the security issues which Turkey experiences with the Post - Soviet or the Middle Eastern RSCs into Europe. In this case the role attributed to Turkey as an *insulator* between the different regions alters into being a conductor, transmitting varying security dynamics between different RSCs.

Moreover, in an environment where the presence of NATO was under discussion and the decision of Iraq intervention further underlined the divergences between the allies, the USA announced that it would focus on an expanding its vision to the East and the South. Istanbul NATO Summit in June 2004 concerted the outline for dialogue with the Middle East with the foundation of Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. This initiative, along with the acceleration of the Mediterranean Dialogue process, which was initiated earlier, granted Turkey the possibility of playing a more prominent role in the Alliance

⁶⁵ Soner Çağaptay, *The Rise of Turkey: The Twenty-First Century's First Muslim Power*, ABD: The University of Nebraska Press, 2014, p. 129.

⁶⁶ Bill Park, *Modern Turkey: People, State and Foreign Policy in a Globalized World*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012, p. 39.

due to its central location between the West and the region. Turkey, perceiving the formation of a "zone of peace" around itself crucial in order to progress in domestic democratization, economic development and de-securitization, actively supported NATO's expansion initiatives, in relation to its identity as a security and stability exporting country.⁶⁷

Similarly, the earlier inclusion of Turkey to the Euro - Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED) by the EU signalled that the Union regarded Turkey as a neighbour rather than a prospective member. In 2008, the EUROMED initiative paved the way for Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which intends cooperation among Mediterranean states. In addition to the political openings on the Mediterranean, the discovery of rich hydrocarbon reserves in the east of the sea further increased the strategic importance of the region.

The economic and strategic value of the discovered natural energy resources has made the allocation of these resources in a convenient and fair manner in accordance with the EEZ frameworks an important issue for the Eastern Mediterranean. On the other hand, the absence of an organization or regime to bring the regional countries together on a common ground has created an environment in which the processes of determination and declaration of maritime jurisdictions are carried out through bilateral negotiations. But the current situation becomes more complicated for finding a reconciliation ground between Turkey, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus due to international recognition issues between the parties.⁶⁸ Especially for Turkey, which is already at odds with Greece on the Aegean and Mediterranean continental shelf terms, the EEZ negotiations among Greece, Greek Cypriots and other riparian states should be monitored with great vigilance. The neglectful attitudes of Greece and Greek Cypriots towards the principals of the 1982 United Nations Law of the Sea Convention that ensures the proclamation

⁶⁷ Tarık Oğuzlu, *NATO Ortaklıkları ve Türkiye: Barış için Ortaklık, Akdeniz Diyalogu, İstanbul İşbirliği Girişimi*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2013, p. 30.

⁶⁸ Hasan Sencer Peker, Kübra Öztürk Oktay, Yavuz Şensoy, "Doğu Akdeniz'de Deniz Yetki Alanları ve Enerji Kaynakları Çerçevesinde Türkiye Enerji Güvenliği", *Güvenlik Bilimleri Dergisi*, 2019, Vol. 8, 85-106, p. 97.

of continental shelves and EEZs in accordance with international law⁶⁹ has recently become a crucial issue on TFP agenda.

Besides, the activities of the multinational oil companies that have been licensed to investigate potential energy resources in the declared EEZs, as well as the inclusion of European oil companies within the scope of the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) and the border surveillance duties of FRONTEX on prevention of illegal immigration to Europe pose common securitization issues for both the EU and other riparian states in the Mediterranean.

In this context, with reference to the roles played by securitization processes of the regional actors in the formation of the RSCs, it is plausible to note that the Mediterranean, which is a common geographical area for three continents, has the potential to turn into a new complex by bringing together the states belonging to different RSCs at the security domain. In such a case, its central position in the region can bring Turkey a complex member status within the Mediterranean RSC that is likely to occur.

While the RSCT emphasizes the securitization practices stemming from historical friendship and hostility patterns in formation of the regions, emergence of a Mediterranean or Eurasian RSC, based on energy geopolitics, may be anticipated for the future. In case of a new security dynamics formation, developing security strategies in advance would be wise for Turkey as a regional power. Other prospects would be the revision of the RSCT component which categorizes Turkey as an *insulator* or development of an inter-regional state status that would be characterized by Turkey's exceptional condition.

Conclusion

By the turn of the new millennium, Turkey pursued a cooperative approach towards its neighbouring states with the advantage of its economic growth and an active foreign policy vision. However, a series of sequential events after September 11, 2001

⁶⁹ See Yücel Acer, "Deniz Alanlarının Sınırlandırılması Hukuku", *Doğu Akdeniz'de Hukuk ve Siyaset*, ed. Sertaç Hami Başeren, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 2013, pp. 307-326.

Terrorist Attacks reversed the TFP initiatives aiming to create a stable environment in its region. By employing RSCT framework, the present analysis aims to highlight the impact of the attacks on TFP in relation to the crises and events that has taken place in the RSCs neighbouring Turkey. In this context, besides examining the *insulator* state role attributed to Turkey in RSCT, Turkey's regional status is also evaluated through a number of future scenarios.

Considering the role played by the securitization practices of regional actors in the formation of RSCs in addition to the recently emerging security dynamics in the international system, it is notable that the Mediterranean Region or Eurasian landmass may bring states from different complexes together on their security relations and turn into new RSCs. It should be taken into account that, in such a new complex transformation process Turkey may become a member of these complexes with its central geographic location. Hence, as a regional power, it is crucial for Turkey to develop further strategies in case of a new security dynamics formation. Another possibility would be the revision of the RSCT and introduction of a new inter-regional state status regarding Turkey's exceptional position.

References

- “IV. Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations”. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official Website. http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv_-european-security-and-defence-identity_policy-_esdi_p_.en.mfa (Accession: 29.10.2019).
- “Obama: ISIS Unintended Consequence of Invading Iraq, Which Is Why We Should Aim Before We Shoot”. https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2015/03/16/obama_isis_unintended_consequence_of_invading_iraq_which_is_why_we_should_aim_before_we_shoot.html (Accession: 30.03.2019).
- “President Bush Discusses Global War on Terror”, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060929-3.html> (Accession: 23.04.2020).

- “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2015)”. s. 9. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy_2.pdf (Accession: 14.12.2019).
- Acer, Yücel. “Deniz Alanlarının Sınırlandırılması Hukuku”. *Doğu Akdeniz’de Hukuk ve Siyaset*. ed. Sertaç Hami Başeren. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 2013, 307-326.
- Aktürk, Şener. “Toward a Turkish-Russian Axis?: Conflicts in Georgia, Syria and Ukraine and Cooperation over Nuclear Energy”. *Insight Turkey*. C. 16. S. 4 (2014): 13-22.
- Aydın, Mustafa. “Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs”. *Middle Eastern Studies*. C. 35. S. 4 (1999): 152-186.
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1998.
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Waever. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Buzan, Barry. *People, States and Fear*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983.
- Çağaptay, Soner. *The Rise of Turkey: The Twenty-First Century’s First Muslim Power*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2014.
- Dede, Alper Yılmaz. “The Arab Uprisings: Debating the Turkish Model”. *Insight Turkey*. C. 13. S. 2, (2011): 23-32.
- Dougherty, James E., Robert L. Pfaltzgraff. *Contending Theories of International Politics: A Comprehensive Survey*. London: Longman, 2001.
- Fawcett, Louise. “Regionalism from a Historical Perspective”. *Global Politics of Regionalism*. ed. Mary Farrell, Björn Hettne, Luk Langenhove. London: Pluto Press, 2005, 21-37.
- Gerges, Fawaz A. “The Obama Approach to the Middle East: The End of America’s Moment”. *International Affairs*. C. 89. S. 2 (2013): 299-323.

- Gözen, Ramazan. "Causes and Consequences of Turkey's Out-of-War Position in the Iraq War of 2003". *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*. C.36 (2005): 73-99.
- Han, Ahmet Kasım. "Turkey's Energy Strategy and the Middle East: Between a Rock and a Hard Place". *Turkish Studies*. C. 12. S. 4 (2011): 603-617.
- Kardaş, Şaban. "Turkey: A Regional Power Facing a Changing International System". *Turkish Studies*. C. 14. S. 4 (2013): 637-660.
- Krieg, Andreas. "Externalizing the Burden of War: The Obama Doctrine and US Foreign Policy in the Middle East". *International Affairs*. C. 92. S. 1 (2016): 97-113.
- Kubicek, Paul. "Turkey's Inclusion in the Atlantic Community: Looking Back, Looking Forward". *Turkish Studies*, C. 9. S. 1 (2008): 21-35.
- Kurt, Selim. "Neo-Avrasyacı Perspektiften Rusya Federasyonu'nun Güvenlik Algısı". *Güvenlik Stratejileri Dergisi*. C. 14. S. 28 (2018): 91-125.
- Lund, Aron. "Not Just Russia: The Iranian Surge in Syria". <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/63650> (Accession: 05.12.2019).
- Mango, Andrew. *Turkey and the War on Terror*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2005.
- McGoldrick, Dominic. *From 9-11 to the Iraq War 2003: International Law in an Age of Complexity*. Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing, 2004.
- Nas, Çiğdem. "Turkey and the European Union: A Stumbling Accession Process under New Conditions". *Turkey in the 21st Century: Quest for a New Foreign Policy*. ed. Zeynep Oktav Özden. Burlington: Ashgate, 2011, 159-184.
- Nye, Joseph S. "The Future of American Power: Dominance and Decline in Perspective". *Foreign Affairs*. C. 89. S. 6 (2010): 2-12.
- Oğuzlu, Tarık. *NATO Ortaklıkları ve Türkiye: Barış için Ortaklık, Akdeniz Diyalogu, İstanbul İşbirliği Girişimi*. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2013.

- Öniş, Ziya. "Multiple Faces of the New Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique". *Insight Turkey*. C. 13. S. 1 (2011): 47-65.
- Park, Bill. *Modern Turkey: People, State and Foreign Policy in a Globalized World*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012.
- Patrick, Stewart. "The Evolving structure of World Politics". *International Relations the End of Cold War: New and Old Dimensions*. ed. Geir Lundestad. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 16-41.
- Peker, Hasan Sencer, Kübra Öztürk Oktay, Yavuz Şensoy. "Doğu Akdeniz'de Deniz Yetki Alanları ve Enerji Kaynakları Çerçevesinde Türkiye enerji Güvenliği". *Güvenlik Bilimleri Dergisi*. C. 8. S. 1 (2019): 85-106.
- Renda Kadri Kaan, "Turkey's Neighbourhood Policy: An Emerging Complex Interdependence?", *Insight Turkey*, C. 13. S. 1 (2011): 89-108.
- Sinkaya, Bayram. "Rationalization of Turkey-Iran Relations: Prospects and Limits". *Insight Turkey*. C. 14. S. 2 (2012): 137-156.
- Sorensen, Georg. "International Relations Theory after the Cold War". *The Eighty Years Crisis: International Relations 1919-1999*. ed. Tim Dunne, Michael Cox, Ken Booth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 83-100.
- Stewart- Ingersoll, Robert, Derrick Fraizer. *Regional Powers and Security Orders*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012.
- Taşpınar, Ömer. "The anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey". Brookings Institution. 2005. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/taspinar20051116.pdf> (Accession: 16.11.2019).
- Telci, İsmail Numan. *Devrim Sonrası Mısır Dış Politikası: Dönüşüm Arayışından Meşruiyet Çıkmazına*. İstanbul: SETA Kitapları, 2018.
- Türkmen, Füsun. "Turkish-American Relations: A Challenging Transition". *Turkish Studies*. C. 10. S. 1 (2009): 109-129.

Yeřilyurt, Nuri. “11 Eylül Olayı Ertesinde AKP Dönemi: Orta Doęu’yla İliřkiler”.
Türk Dıř Politikası III. ed. Baskın Oran. 2. bs. İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık,
2013, 401-462.