

Turkey's Soft Power Challenges in the Arab World¹

Türkiye'nin Yumuşak Gücü'nün Arap Dünyası'ndaki Sorunları

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Abstract

This paper surveys Turkey's New Arab Vision, current reform initiatives in Turkish politics and economy along with emergence of independent civil society and media. This concluded with a view that Turkish role in the Arab world is defined not only by external powers like the United States and NATO also by internal forces which are real force behind current transformation. Growing popularity of Turkish foreign policy among Arab masses and governments originates from its pro Palestine positions and its potential role as counter Iran. Despite this popularity, Turkey's role may face limitations when it will encounter with domestic problems of the Arab states mainly political reforms, human rights and security concerns.

Keywords: *Soft power, nation state, Joseph Nye, Arab world, foreign policy*

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Özet

Bu makale Türk siyasetindeki ve ekonomisindeki güncel reform girişimleri ve ortaya çıkmakta olan bağımsız sivil toplum ve medya bağlamında, Türkiye'nin Yeni Arap dünyası vizyonunu incelemektedir. Makale Türkiye'nin Arap dünyasındaki yeni vizyonunun NATO ve Amerika gibi dış güçlerden ziyade, ülkenin kendi dönüşümünü de sağlayan iç dinamikler vasıtasıyla şekillendiğini iddia etmektedir. Arap toplumlarında ve yönetimlerinde yükselen Türkiye popüleritesi, Ankara'nın Filistin yanlısı pozisyonu ve onun İran karşısında potansiyel bir rakip olmasından doğmaktadır. Ancak bu popüleriteye rağmen, Türkiye'nin bu yeni rolü ve vizyonu Arap ülkelerinin politik reform, insane hakları ve güvenlik endişeleri ile bağlantılı kendi iç problemlerinden kaynaklanan kısıtlamalarla karşılaşmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yumuşak güç, ulus-devlet, Joseph Nye, Arap dünyası, dış politika

(Providing security and stability not for itself but also for its neighbouring regions, Turkey should guarantee its own security and stability by taking on more active, constructive role to provide order, stability and security in its environs) (Ahmet Davutoğlu 2008: 79).

Introduction

Soft Power has emerged as one of the most frequently used conceptual phrases in AK party's foreign policy discourses. The Turkish discourse on Soft Power has mainly focused on its sources and potential efficacy in its foreign strategy. The assessment of Turkey's Soft Power by Turkish and non Turkish analysts reveals that Soft Power is still a weak link in Turkey's pursuit for stronger and comprehensive national power; however it is becoming increasingly discussed. This paper consists of conceptual evaluation of Soft Power in international relations studies, its application in the Arab World positioning Turkey as Soft Power in the Arab World. Doing so, new era of Turkish foreign policy has appeared on Turkey's international engagement with some new priorities and new goals.³ A new vocabulary of foreign affairs has been introduced by AKP and its vision makers particularly Ahmet Davutoğlu, an academician foreign minister. Newly introduced vision "Zero Problem with neighbours" to maximize benefits of available "Strategic Depth", is major source of emerging discourses. This paper will also figure out limitations of Turkish Soft Power in the region as a conceptual relevance and contextual efficacy. In Turkey, there is lot of excitement and enthusiasm among AKP constituencies and scepticism among some and pessimism among its western allies. These three discourses are clearly visible in all coming debate over Turkey's emerging status in the regional and global politics.⁴ Sceptical are of the view that Turkey's secular history makes it an unattractive model for Arab states and it has prospects of failure similar to that of in Central Asia Turkey's relations with Israel and its NATO role also make Turkey an unwelcome actor in the region.

³ Ahmet Davutoğlu is considered as the architect of new foreign policy which has become AKP's official vision on foreign policy see for original work of Ahmet Davutoğlu (2001), *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, and see also Philip H. Gordon and Omer Taspınar (2008), *Winning Turkey*, Washington, DC: Brookings.

⁴ See for example Sahin Alpay, *Zaman*, July 10, 2003; Rusen Cakir, *Vatan*, June 15, 2005; Ibrahim Kalin, *Zaman* February 24-25, 2006; Ozdem Sanberk and Hakan Altınay in *Sabah* of January 8, 2008. Cited by Mohapatra, AK (2009) "Democratization in the Arab World: Relevance of the Turkish Model", *International Studies* 45: 271.

However Turkey's Soft Power has increased from its successes in social and economic profile of Turkey. Turkey stands far ahead of all of Arab and Muslim neighbours having improved its political and cultural institutions, human resources and cultural landscape. Turkey has more than 200 TV channels and nearly 1,000 radio channels which make it very different from what it was one decade ago. Turks own mobile phones twice the world average. Presence of foreign media in Turkey has also increased which include Al-Jazeera and other Arab TV Channels Bureaus in Turkey. For example bureau of Al Jazeera is second only to Al Jazeera's Washington Bureau in terms of team and stories filed from a non Arab country. There is growing sense of disappointment and pessimism among Turkey's NATO allies mainly the United States and some European countries as well as Israel who see Turkish shift towards Iran and Islamic world within project of political Islam.

Globalization, Nation State and Soft Power

Power of a state was recognized as central point of post-Westphalian politics in both national and international political system and the balance of power emerged as principle of peace maintenance. Power's definition 'the ability to coerce grows out of a country's military and economic might' had led the nation states to accumulate and control maximum ability, military or capital power which later was defined as hard power.⁵ The post-Westphalian nation state system is primarily located within competitive power relationship among units of the system and "national interests" are main driver of their external engagement. Most influential work on power and politics has been presented by Hans J. Morgenthau in his book *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace* where he defines power from realist perspective as the ability of states to use material resources to get others to do what they otherwise would not. States have been exercising 'coercion and inducement' as major sources of their power. This comes as fact that:

- Concept of Power is primarily identified in post Westphalian state system, particularly in relations among states of the European continent.

⁵ Ilgen, Thomas L.(ed.) (2006) *Hard Power, Soft Power and the Future of Transatlantic Relations*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

- Power is also defined in relation with national interests of a state and its use varies according to primacy of national interests. Primary national interest, as Morgenthau indicates, is survival and sustainability of a state within international system as an independent and sovereign entity followed by resources to sustain.
- Variability of national interest results in use of and definition of power and thus creating different forms of power struggle in different contexts.

Since there is growing understanding among scholars of international relations over explicit and logically systematic decomposition of the concept of power, limitations of realist power definition is facing theoretical and practical limitations in globalizing world. National interests are also being redefined in transnational context where interests of one state are heavily depended on the interests of other states and thus the national interests become transnational or global and sometimes universal interest such as environmental problem and global terrorism. They are affecting citizens of several nations and continents and require coordinated efforts towards resolving them. This necessitates kind of interdependency in which nation states are forced to share their sovereignty, if not compromise, with other states.⁶ This interdependency mainly in military, economic, ecological and social domains are serving as new source of power for nation states and helping to create transnational governance under aegis of international, transnational or global body.⁷ Failure of hard power generally came from its myths attached with invincibility of a state which could not stay as unchangeable unit.⁸ Recent example of this failure is disclosure of WikiLeaks about American diplomatic practices around the world. The old statement of Winston Churchill about capability of the United States “the best hope of the world lies in the strength, will, and good judgment of the US” has failed for United States itself. The strongest world power since Rome, the United States failed to secure many of its crucial international interests like international financial stability, drug trafficking, the spread of diseases, and most importantly avoiding tragedy of September 11 in 2001.

⁶ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye (1998), “Power and Interdependence in the Information Age,” *Foreign Affairs*, 77, no 5 (September/October) p. 86.

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Nye, Joseph (2004) *Power in the Global Information Age*, London: Routledge (pp 66)

These failures underscore limitation of power of a single state and its ability to protect its 'national interests' alone. 'Ability to get others to do what they otherwise would not do' is now available to states as well as many non state actors like terrorist groups and transnational corporations and emerging transnational civil society.⁹

The Great Transformation led to reconfiguration of modern world mainly because land, labour and capital became commodity and markets expanded from traditional territorial limits to transnational and even virtual limits (Karl Polanyi: 1957). This led to another ever speeding intensification of worldwide social relations (Giddens: 1990) and creation of transnational communities, media, culture and corporations and thus creating range of *sacpes* (Appadurai: 1996, Rantanen: 2005). This change in power discourse has been said as fourth stage of discourse which Joseph Nye started talking about as Soft Power in 1990s to suggest corrective measures for failing Unites States' international standing. Discourses on power in international relations have come through mainly four faces identified by Peter Digeser who concludes that current debate is dealing with fourth face of power. The central question in first phase of power discourse was who, is exercising power? The second face was about 'what issues have been mobilized off the agenda and by whom?' the third face talked of 'whose objective interests are being harmed? The current debate on power concept comes from fourth face of this change which discusses 'what kind of subject is being produced?'¹⁰ Measuring power in terms of the changed behaviour of others may be mistaken. Joseph Nye elaborates how power can be exercised in different ways. There are three ways to get the outcome:

- Coercion which comes through military power
- Inducement which is derived primarily from economic resources or other sources
- Attraction and co-option which comes through the model one state establish as successful state for its own people

⁹ Dahl, Robert A. (1961) *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. For more definitional insight of power see also James March (1966), "The Power of Power" in David Easton, (ed.), *Varieties of Political Theory*, New York: Prentice Hall.(pp 39-70); Herbert Simon, (1957) *Models of Man*, New York: John Wiley. Baldwin, David, "Power Analysis and World Politics," *World Politics* 31 (January 1979): (161-94) a good example of transnational civil society is Freedom Flotilla to end Gaza Siege

¹⁰ Digeser, Peter (1992) "The Fourth Face of Power", *Journal of Politics* 54 (4): 977-1007.

His critique of American reliance on hard power intensified particularly after tragedy of September 11, which he called as failure of hard power. Joseph Nye's critique of American foreign policy in recent decade has led to revival of Soft Power as a foreign policy strategy to win hearts and minds of international community. Defining the concept he emphasises on co-optive power--the ability to shape what others want, can rest on the attractiveness of one's own culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences.¹¹ He does not separate soft power from hard power but points out the distinction of one degree:

Hard and Soft Power is related because they are both aspects of the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behaviour of others. The distinction between them is one of degree, both in the nature of the behaviour and in the tangibility of the resources. Command power--the ability to change what others do--can rest on coercion or inducement. Co-optive power--the ability to shape what others want--can rest on the attractiveness of one's own culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic.¹²

In his description of Soft Power, the United States should focus on five critical areas: Alliances, partnerships, and institutions, Global development, Public diplomacy, Economic integration Technology and innovation.¹³ In an earlier article, Nye says that the ability to affect what other countries want tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions.¹⁴ He reasserts that the Soft Power of a country has three primary sources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).¹⁵

¹¹ Nye, Joseph S. Jr. (2004), *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs. (pp 7)

¹² Nye, Joseph S. Jr. (2004), *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs.

¹³ Nye, Joseph (2006) "Think Again: Soft Power." *Foreign Policy* (March/April)

¹⁴ Nye, Joseph S. (1990), "Soft Power," pp. 154.

¹⁵ Nye (2004), *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, pp. 11.

These definitions are also not free from problems and limitations which have been discussed when the context changes especially in the context of Turkish Soft Power. In this conception, hard power is visible in the practices of threat, coercion, sanction, payment, and inducement, whereas Soft Power is demonstrated in attraction, persuasion, appeal, and co-optation. Culture, ideology, values, and norms are also sources of resentment, repulsion, hostility, and even conflict. Hard power may not always be used for coercion, threat, intimidation, and inducement; rather it can produce attraction, appeal, and amity in certain circumstances. That makes a point for the argument that efficacy of Soft Power invariably involves a strategic marriage with hard power.¹⁶ For example, if a country pursues an aggressive cultural policy, it may effectively result in fear of cultural hegemony or cultural imperialism. Americanization, Westernization or Cultural Imperialism discourses in social sciences have been sources of intense opposition and reaction. This dichotomy of Soft Power potential implications requires distinction when culture is soft and when it is hard. In fact, culture and values are very much part of a country's foreign relations. If culture, ideology, and values can be used for coercion, military and economic strength can also be apparently used for attraction and appeal. Another critique of Nye's conception is that the production and various expressions of 'attraction' remain unaccounted for.¹⁷ Soft Power lies in the soft use of power to increase a state's attraction, persuasiveness, and appeal. If a nation state (or any other actor) makes good use of its resources of power through various domestic cultural, economic, and political programs to bring well-being to its own nationals, it may produce a lot of admiration from other countries. As Pinar Bilgin points out, Nye's evaluation of Soft Power stems mainly from United States' experience and he rightly questions "how it was that U.S. culture, political ideas and policies came to be considered 'attractive' by the rest of the world."¹⁸ Sources of Soft Power may vary country to country and region to region and so is the case of its appeal to other states. United State is accused for cultural imperialism for a long time and its attractiveness for other states mainly for Muslim and Asian countries fails, American Soft Power discourse is not very much relevant to the Turkish discourse.

¹⁶ Bing, Phar Kim (2008)

¹⁷ Bilgin, Pinar and Berivan Elis (2008) "Hard power, Soft Power: toward a more realistic power analysis" *Insight Turkey*, April.

¹⁸ Bilgin, Pinar and Berivan Elis (2008) "Hard power, Soft Power: toward a more realistic power analysis" *Insight Turkey*, April

Turkey's Soft Power originates from cultural values which are common to majority of Arab and Muslim states and respected by many Asian nations. Turkish foreign policy practices are not tagged as hegemonic practices for which United States and other Western countries are often blamed. The bigger problem lies within power discourse of United States' foreign affairs which has more alienating elements. American power is subject to intense criticism in the world politics which also failed to settle any of and long standing conflicts in the world like Arab-Israel conflict even in the post cold war period when the United States had full opportunity to resolve them. Turkey is among the emerging rest (Zakaria 2008) which is now actively engaged in regional politics to achieve 'Zero Problem with neighbours.'

Turkey's New Arab Vision

Although we are talking different languages in this vast geography, we should not forget that we have one history, one culture and similar values. We have given a shape the history together. Be sure that we will give a shape to the future altogether. We are the members of a civilization that gives high importance to neighbourhood. (Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, 25 November 2010)

There is much talk in Ankara about "2023 vision," to mark the Turkish Republic's centennial which also includes 'active, responsible and successful foreign policy' whose first step as Davutoglu says is "to integrate Turkey's foreign-policy discourse into its national discourse." Turkey's current foreign policy moves have raised doubts and hopes among political analysts, ideologues, political activists and policy makers. There are mainly three scenarios being projected by Western scholars about Turkish foreign policy which may be (a) Washington-oriented, (b) Brussels oriented and (c) independent Turkish foreign policy.¹⁹ There are also perceptions that Turkey may leave Western camp and enter Islamic camp. How can this shift be described? Is this shift towards an "eastern axis?" a notion often defined by Western analysts? Some calls "eastern

¹⁹ Graham E. Fuller (2008) *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press., also, Heinz Kramer (2010) "AKP's New Foreign Policy between Vision and Pragmatism, working paper, German Institute of International and security Affairs", June: Berlin.

axis” manifestation of “West’s inability to digest Turkey”.²⁰ Many suggest that the foreign policy shifts are directed to restoration²¹ Ottomanism and emergence of neo Ottomanism.²² Ahmet Davutoğlu, academic turned foreign minister of Turkish republic in Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi–AKP) regime is considered as the architect of new Turkish foreign policy. Davutogulo prescribes successful foreign policy operation under strategic depth guided by five key principals. (Davutoglu 2008: 79-84)

- Balance between democracy and security in Turkey
- Zero problem policy toward Turkey ‘s neighbours
- The development of relations with Turkey’s neighbouring regions and beyond
- Adherence to multidimensional foreign policy
- Rhythmic diplomacy

With these principals, Turkey wants to achieve many gains. The AKP government is more serious about EU membership as a process between equals and by presenting Turkey as a role model in the world, Turkey is mounting pressure as well criticizing EU of violating principal of “*Pacta sunt servanda*”. Powerful in the region and having strategic depth with zero problems with neighbours, Turkey is better with and without EU membership and Davutogulo does not see any contradiction between vision for Europe and vision for Turkey²³. Analysts see a Turkey with zero problems with neighbours, and active role in the region, is a strategic asset for the European Union and a win-win situation for EU and Turkey. ²⁴ For example, despite the arguments that Turkey is overestimating its influence on Iranian leadership as well as acknowledgement of Turkish ‘strategic depth’ by Iran, (Lesser 2010a, Lesser 2010b) Turkey’s efforts have been welcomed by larger global and regional community and Turkey’s role in peace efforts has been recognized. Though Turkey is a secular and democratic country, Turkey

²⁰ See observation of Soli Ozel, Professor of international relations at Istanbul’s Bilgi University, <http://mondediplo.com/2010/02/05turkey>

²¹ Heper, Metin and Sule Tokta (2003), Islam, Modernity, and Democracy in Contemporary Turkey: The Case of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. *The Muslim World*, April 2003, Vol 93.

²² Yavuz, M. Hakan (2009) ‘Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo-Ottomanism’, *Critique* 12 (1998), pp. 19-41; also see (Fisher Onar 2009, Taspinar 2008)

²³ Davutoglu 2009a

²⁴ Grabbe, Heather (2010) “Turkey and the Middle East: A Fruitful Relationship?” (Event Transcript) Thursday, 25th June, Brussels Carnegie Europe

didn't subscribe American project for democratization in the Arab world widely known as Greater Middle East Project. The project is based on top-down approach of reforms and exclude participation of Arab masses, civil society, scholars and politicians in the process which support their perception that American project is only for changing the leaders; regimes; and the borders.

What are the Turkish priorities and expectations from the Arab World? Turkey's key concerns in the region are unresolved Iranian nuclear issue, instable and insecure Iraq, increased Arab-Israel tensions along with problems in Caucasus, Balkan and Cyprus.²⁵ A survey of current dealing with Arab neighbouring reveals that Turkey's priorities are derived both from economic and security considerations. Formation of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council with Iraq, and proactive relation with Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), settlement of water and border dispute with Syria and formation of visa free region with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, Turkey has attracted more business flow from the region. Turkey has been helping Syria to reduce international isolation imposed by the United States and to get in negotiation process with Israel. Turkey's business environment has attracted Arab investors and banks to set up their operations in Turkey also. Turkey is actively engaged with regional and international groups with Arab states namely Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), League of Arab States (LAS) as permanent invitee and African Union where it holds strategic partnership status. For example Turkish position on Darfur crisis reflects Turkish coordination with regional groups towards dealing with crisis like. Turkey has clearly rejected international intervention and supported OIC, AU and Arab League efforts in the crisis. Turkish parliament ejected United States appeal to allow Turkish air base for America's operation enduring freedom in 2003. The rapprochement in Turkish foreign policy is not sudden rather it has come out of failure of West oriented foreign policy, economic failures and insecurity coming from these failures. Painful Turkish experiences from the Jupiter Missile (IRBMs) Crisis, then the Johnson Letter Crisis in 1964 and the arms embargo on Turkey in 1975, the ban of opium poppy cultivation in 1971 which make Turkey think beyond West and to adopt a multidimensional foreign policy.²⁶ Progress made by Turgut Ozal paved

²⁵ Tan, Namik (2010) "Turkish – U.S. Relations in a Changing World" speech at the United States CSIS, July 22, 2010

²⁶ Laçiner, Sedat (2009) "Turkey's New Middle Eastern Approach" 18th February 2009, accessed online on 20 November 2010 URL: <http://www.usak.org.tr/EN/makale.asp?id=890>

the way to use untapped potentials in Turkey's Arab World policy.²⁷ One of the important issues which shape Turkey's foreign policy towards Arab World is also energy prospects. Turkey aims to be energy hub by making itself which requires Turkey to become buying and selling centre as well as a transit country. With regional energy hub status, Turkey will be strategic asset for European Union as well as for Arab oil producing nations. In his recent speech Turkish foreign minister has elaborated his 2023 vision which consists of multiple identities.

The first step of this vision is to integrate Turkey's foreign-policy discourse into its national discourse. Any possible contradiction, gap or contrast between these two will make it difficult to carry out an active, responsible, and successful foreign policy. In the coming era, Turkey plans to deepen and strengthen its democracy, place relations between Turkish society and Turkey's governing institutions on firm ground, and show the world the strength of its own domestic balance. There is a continuous need to integrate domestic political accomplishments into the vision of foreign policy (i.e. democratization and cultural respect) and to inject foreign-policy activism and self-confidence back into the domestic political scene. Turkey's foreign-policy objectives and its vision of how to achieve them are very clear. Turkey has multiple goals over the next decade: First, it aims to achieve all EU membership conditions and become an influential EU member state by 2023. Second, it will continue to strive for regional integration, in the form of security and economic cooperation. Third, it will seek to play an influential role in regional conflict resolution. Fourth, it will vigorously participate in all global arenas. Fifth, it will play a determining role in international organizations and become one of the top 10 largest economies in the world.

The Ottoman-Islamic bond has been said as ideological base for future cultural and political partnership by Islamic political parties of the region. Linguistic and ethnic proximity with pan Turkic communities in Central Asia and Caucuses is another connector for Turkey's regional role in Central Asia. In this scenario, Turkey has aspirations and ambitions for a dignified role in regional and global politics. Given the existing difficulties in managing balance of power as well as balance of security in the Arab World, Turkey's regional role and aspirations is not

²⁷ Ataman, Muhittin (2002) "Leadership Change: Özal Leadership and Restructuring in Turkish Foreign Policy," *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 1, spring 2002, pp. 120-153.

unchallenged. To achieve its interests in the region, Turkey requires support both from governments and their people.

Turkey's new start in the Arab world, despite all welcoming gestures, cannot be defined by Turkey alone. Arab world as a region is unique in terms of number of stakeholders from within and without region. United States which is considered as security guarantor of the many countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain has most intensive and extensive engagement with all Arab governments. So is the case of EU and Quartet and former colonial powers like United Kingdom, France and Italy which now maintain closer relation with their former colonies. China and India are also emerging markets for energy rich Arab states and have caused 'Look East' shift in their foreign policies. Turkey as Muslim country has some advantages over other non Arab states but it has also several limitations for which it cannot disqualify western states' influence in the region.

The key defining features of Turkish role in the Arab world are Arab-Israel conflict, stability in Iraq, energy considerations and regional security. Turkey is engaged with two main rivals of the Gulf region Iran and Saudi Arabia. Iran has welcomed Turkey's role in its nuclear crisis and Saudi Arabia has also shown interests to support Turkey's role in the region. Other Arab States like Egypt might have reservations for Turkey's increased role in the Arab world. In this context Turkey faces many challenges from external and regional countries in the Arab world. Egypt with similar population, development requirements, and geopolitical importance has a kind of implied competition between the two countries though it is not explicit. Turkey and Egypt have recently enhanced their political, cultural transactions by undertaking various bilateral initiatives.

Turkish Soft Power: Emerging Trends

Turkish discourse of Soft Power encounters with series of questions about Turkey's changing role in the Arab World and other region and its effort to balance between conflicting roles. Though Turkish foreign policy regime calls its emerging and increasing role in all of major region as "consistent and systematic", Turkey's Arab vision may face number of challenges. Davutoglu maintains that Turkey's new discourse and diplomatic style have resulted in the spread of Turkish soft power in the

region. Turkey's new initiatives to strengthen its democratic institutions and intensifying relation between state and society aim not only acceptability for EU membership but also to be a successful model for international and regional community. According to Davutoğlu, the new language adopted by Turkish diplomats 'prioritizes Turkey's civil-economic power'.²⁸ However Turkey's soft Power efficacy depends on several prerequisites as Phar Kim Beng and others have pointed out some of them. First prerequisite is strong Turkish understanding of the regional characteristics of its theatre of operation, secondly to undertake necessary reforms at home to make Turkey's development attractive and persuasive to others and thirdly, to reconcile emerging tensions between its strategic alliances and new roles in the region.²⁹

Transformation within Turkey is derived by combination of EU membership process, economic and domestic political considerations. In an increasingly interdependent world, Turkey needs secured supply of energy for sustained economic growth and development projects, minimum or zero problems at its immediate borders and long term prosperity for Turkey's 27% younger population and 67% working population. Turkey's overdue economic problems in pre AKP era mainly unemployment, high inflation rates has also provided an opportunity to policy makers within Islamic in order to set development based political discourse of Islamic parties. This resulted in immediate breakup of Sadaat Party and emergence of AKP. There were little hopes coming for early membership of European Union due to strong opposition from France and Germany³⁰. Changing political discourse was more difficult for any old political party than that for new party like AK. The six Kemalist principals of republicanism, nationalism, populism, revolutionism, secularism and Etatism continued influencing Turkish national identities but recent changes have softened many of principals which worry many that Turkey is shifting away from its secular foundations. These observations have failed to figure out the fact that recent change is from within Turkish society. Some of these principals have been criticised for not allowing rural and traditional Muslim Turkish women to exercise right of higher education, employments and to join politics. Abolishing of

²⁸ Davutoğlu, Ahmet (2010) "Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy".

²⁹ Bing, Phar Kim (2008)

³⁰ In 2002, former French President and serving chair of the European Convention, said that Turkey should not be allowed to join the EU because geographically it was not in Europe. See his conversation in *Le Monde*, 9 Nov. 2002.

nominal Ottoman Caliphate in 1922 and subsequent Westernization offensive by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was never welcomed by Arab societies.³¹ Today's reform process was initiated by Prime Minister Turgut Özal in the '80s and speeded by the recent AKP government which has its root in political ideology of Islam.³²

Now there is another debate whether Turkey's new ambitious leadership can project Turkey as role model for the Arab World or not.³³ AKP with Islamic credentials as well as successful capitalist economy has appeal for both Islamists and secularists of the region. Section of Western policy makers is also interested to project Turkey as role model for Arab governments in their democratization process (Altunisik 2005; Bal 2000; Fuller: 2004, 2008, Mohapatra: 2001). Compatibility of Turkish model of democratization in the Arab World is contested by many observers. For example, some Arabs call it "democracy of tanks"³⁴ and Western critics generally highlight its illiberal elements (Kamrava 1998; Tessler and Altinoglu 2004). Fareed Zakaria, argues that "the greatest danger that illiberal democracy poses—other than to its own people—is that it will discredit liberal democracy itself, casting a shadow on democratic governance" (Zakaria: 1997 24). Many argue that Turkey's model differs on historical and structural conditions with its Arab counterparts. The change within Turkish political space is different in many terms as Ashwani K. Mohapatra (2010) describes:

First, the origins of Turkish democracy lay in a period when the country was largely agrarian and rural, accompanied by a high rate of illiteracy and low level of economic development. Therefore, it contradicts the argument of most modernization theories, which emphasize the correlation between levels of socio-economic development and propensity for democratic rule. Second, despite all its structural weaknesses and institutional limitations, the success of electoral democracy in Turkey has disproved the notion of West Asian exceptionalism, which holds that political systems in the region would never fit into general patterns of democratization elsewhere. It has, at the

³¹ Graham E. Fuller (2008) *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press. pp 17.

³² Zubaida, Sami (1996) "Turkish Islam and National Identity" *Middle East Report* April-June (10-15)

³³ Mohapatra, Ak (2008), "Democratization in the Arab World: Relevance of the Turkish Model", *International Studies* 45: 271.

³⁴ Middle East Mirror, 28 September 1998 (cited in Bengio and Özcan 2001).

same time, debunked the claim that Islam is incompatible with democracy. Third, the democratic framework in Turkey has offered political space for Islamist opposition and even led to a compromise between the demand for a secular state and the spiritual needs of the people, expressed in the ‘Turkish–Islamic synthesis.’ Last, but not the least, Turkey’s historical and institutional linkages with the West and its resolve to maintain these linkages have made the military sensitive to external pressures.

Comparing Turkey’s performance in the Arab World and in Organization of Islamic Countries, there is clear indication that Turkey’s progress is worth of international attention. Turkey is becoming largest economy of the Muslim world without having enough energy resources. In 2008 Turkey reached 930.9 billion USD GDP followed by Saudi Arabia (600 billion USD) behind it. Turkey has become most popular tourist destination of entire Arab and OIC group which has earned nearly 15 billion annually in 2005.³⁵ It is also most favourable country for foreign direct investment in entire OIC and attracted largest amount of FDI from across the world.³⁶ Freedom’s House ranking of press freedom counts Turkey as the only exception in the Arab World 52nd place in the world followed by Kuwait (57). Some survey says that 83 percent of those surveyed supported the people’s right to openly criticize the government and 68 percent believed the media should be able to report without government censorship.³⁷ Global Media Monitoring Project in its survey of 70 countries in 2000 that proportion of stories focusing on women is increasing in Turkey.³⁸ Turkey’s quest to become Soft Power in the Arab world and other regions can be measured by series of reforms and initiatives for reforms and foreign policies and cultural *scape*.

Reforming Turkish State

For a long time, turkey has been considered as conditional democracy, thanks to four military coups and rigid definition of secular character of the state which undermined individual liberty. On the other hand, Kurds’

³⁵ OIC Year Book 2006

³⁶ OIC Year Book 2006 PP 162

³⁷ Fahmy, Shahira and Thomas j. Johnson (2007) “The Caged Bird Sings: How Reliance on Al Jazeera Affects Views Regarding Press Freedom in the Arab World” in *New Media and the New Middle East* Seib, Philip., Palgrave Macmillan (pp 83).

³⁸ Sakr, Naomi (2004) *Women and Media in the Middle East Power through Self-Expression*, IB Tauris pp 6

separatist movement had helped to create an ultra nationalist passion towards uniting the country at any cost. To be accessed into the European Union, Turkey is required to ensure individual freedom to the extent which may not be imagined in Arab Islamic countries. In his address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on January 27, 2003, Abdullah Gul made an explicit answer when asked about new government's intentions towards military.³⁹

“We are reformists, so our aim is to upgrade Turkish democracy so that it meets the standards of the Council of Europe. We have therefore amended the Constitution and changed the nature of the nation's executive council. 51 That is, of course, a process that I think will continue”

Turkey under AKP government has undertaken series of reforms and has also reconstructed discourses on many controversial issues. In October 2001, Turkish parliament reduced police powers of detention and relaxed many curbs on human rights. Showing bold steps, it also has removed ban on Kurdish language broadcasts and allowed Kurdish language as medium of education in Kurdish region. Towards strengthening democratic institutions, National Security Council (NSC) was reformulated and civilian representation was increased which gives an impression that Turkey is coming out of 'national security syndrome'.⁴⁰ A new Civil Code became effective in January 2002 which helped to improve freedom of association and assembly. Penal code reform package and anti-terrorism law were introduced in February 2002. This reform offensive actually helped European Council to initiate accession negotiations with Turkey in December 2004. The "Harmonization Package" has accelerated institutional and individual freedom of expression along with greater role for civil officers in the National Security Council. These initiatives were in consonance with EU membership requirements and were widely welcomed by EU community. AKP's pro EU position has forced other nationalist and

³⁹ "The address by Abdullah Gul, the Prime Minister of Turkey, to the 2003 Ordinary Session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Strasbourg January 27, 2003. Press minutes

⁴⁰ Former Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, the leader of the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi-ANAP) a junior partner in the three-party coalition government between 1999-2002, made a speech to his party's convention on August 4, 2001 which sent shock waves right across the political divide where he claimed that Turkey is facing national security syndrome. See Cizre, Ümit (2003) "Demythologizing the National Security Concept: The Case of Turkey" *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (spring, 2003), pp. 213-229.

secular party to review their positions towards military's role, domestic reforms and foreign policy etc.

Foreign Policy

One of the most talked-about stories from Turkey these days is its changing foreign policy scenario which has surprised not only Western counterparts but also the regional governments.⁴¹ AKP's new start of foreign policy represents aspirations of new generation of Islamic movement which has long called European Union only a Christian Club and AKP government is asking European leaders to disprove the myth by allowing Turkey to be part of the union. Recognizing European Union as its principal goal of foreign policy, AKP has sought legitimacy in its reform initiatives which otherwise could have been rejected as anti secular.⁴² Curtailing military clouts in civilian politics was risky project which AKP has completed successfully convincing both secular parties as well as military establishment. The "the zero problem policy towards neighbours" is new ideology of AKP government engineered by Ahmet Davutoğlu who opened negotiations, and political engagement as major tool to resolve all outstanding problems at Turkish borders. Presidential visit to Armenia, close contacts with Iraqi government, opening doors for Syria, Lebanon, Jordan as visa free zone, settlement of water issue with Syria and active support for UN directed settlement for Cyprus are some indicators. This increased Turkey's trade with the region by six fold over the last seven years.⁴³ Turkey's role in bringing Syria and Israel on negotiating table was widely recognized which was marred by Israel's aggression on Gaza in 2008 and killing of nine Turkish peace activists of Freedom Flotilla in 2010.⁴⁴ Turkey's role in Afghanistan has support both from Pakistan and Afghanistan and other Arab nations which is not available for many Western NATO members. Turkey has closely worked to bring agreeable peace formula for Iraqi Sunnis and Shiites as well as Arabs and Kurds, Bosnian Muslims and Serbs, Opposing groups in Lebanon, Iranians and the international community.

⁴¹ See Armagan Kuloglu's statement who is a retired general and adviser at a new Ankara think-tank ORSAM (Centre for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies).

⁴² See AKP party's foreign policy principals in its official statements published on party's official website.

⁴³ Tan, Namik (2010) "Turkish – U.S. Relations in a Changing World" speech at the United States CSIS, July 22, 2010.

⁴⁴ <http://mondediplo.com/2010/02/05turkey>

With this scenario, Turkish parliament's refusal to allow the U.S. to station its troops on Turkish soil can be understood and recent disclosures have informed that the decision was carefully taken by Ahmet Davutoğlu.⁴⁵ Turkey has also rejected US pressure to isolate Syrian and Iran; rather Turkey sought to engage both countries to resolve all outstanding issues.⁴⁶ This new language of diplomacy has won support from Arab and Muslim governments as well as from their people which Altunisik says 'provides a win-win possibility'.⁴⁷

Iran and Israel

Turkey's key defining policy remains in its close historical relation with Israel which makes it the first Muslim country which recognized State of Israel and maintained close military and economic ties. Israeli aggression against Gaza in 2008 was turning point of Turk-Israel relations which went in all time low in 2010 after Israel attacked on Freedom Flotilla and killed 9 Turkish citizens members of humanitarian aid caravan. Turkish Prime Minister had already stormed out of a televised debate, on 29 January 2009, with Shimon Peres, the Israeli president "You are killing people".⁴⁸ Developments from humiliation of Turkish ambassador by Israeli foreign ministry officials in 2009 and Turkish decision recall its ambassador after Israel failed to comply with Turkish demands to apologize killing of Turkish citizens by Israeli commandos and eventually Turkey's decision to expel Israeli ambassador from Turkey have changed Turkey's use of power language. Once Israel's friend and facilitator of many secret peace negotiations between Israel and Arab countries, Turkey is confidently pursuing its Arab policy. Curtailing ties with Israel. After successful Arab Spring and victorious Islamic winter, Turkish model of politics has attracted both Islamists and secular and liberals of the Arab streets. Erdogan's post Arab spring visit of Arab countries such

⁴⁵ Yinanç, Barçın (2010) "Turkey's Davutoğlu 'warned' US about Iraq strategy, new book reveals" *Hürriyet Daily News* November 26, 2010. Accessed online URL: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=new-book-on-davutoglu-reveals-details-of-turkish-foreign-policy-2010-11-25>

⁴⁶ Syria Today, <http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/december-2009/466-politics/4747-syrian-turkish-relations-turkeys-soft-power-in-the-region>

⁴⁷ Wendy Kristianasen (2010), *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Kristianasen, Wendy (2010), Turkey's Soft Power Successes, http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Tr8-_Turkey_s_Soft_Power_Successes.pdf

as Egypt, Tunisia and Libya was given heroic welcome by regional leaders as well as people.⁴⁹

On the Eastern border, lies the historical rival of Ottoman Empire the former Safavid Empire and now Islamic Republic of Iran. The two empires; Ottoman and Safavid have fought many wars and have maintained deep sectarian and political differences over the centuries. Iran is placed with high importance in every regional security considerations. Iranian nuclear program and Iranian quest for greater regional role makes the region more complicated and creates uneasy diplomatic environment. In post Caliphate era, both countries underwent top bottom modernization process with leaders like Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Muhammed Reza Shah Pahlavi. Iranian revolution in 1979 and emergence of Islamic political parties in Turkey coincided and new beginning with was started. Given Islamic revolution's anti Arab rhetoric, Turkey stayed wary of the revolution and the Iranian revolution invited many international sanctions, war with Iraq and hostile relation with most of the Arab countries and most important hospitality from Israel over Iran's anti-Israeli ideology. Disclosure of Iranian nuclear program in 2003 has helped anti Iranian blocs to isolate Iran.

Despite Iran's unwelcomed and isolated position, Turkey chose to enhance its engagement and cooperation with Iran on all issues. Amid increasing international pressure on Iran, Turkey is the only Muslim country which has boldly came out to rescue Iran from declining into complete isolation. The question arises what Turkey aims at recent active engagement with Iran, is there a double game played by Turkey? With "Zero problem at border perspective" Turkey's main priority is to minimize possibilities of any military action on its eastern frontiers by any regional or international actor.⁵⁰ Iran's growing influence in Levant region and especially in Palestinian politics has raised eyebrows of Arab governments which see threats of 'Shite Crescent' emerging onto the Arab horizon.⁵¹ None other than Turkey can be better counterforce of Iranian influence in the region. Engulfing developments from Arab

⁴⁹ See news at *Hurriyet Daily News* 15 September 2011,

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=erdogan-visits-tunisia-during-the-arab-spring-tour-2011-09-15> and also see http://csis.org/files/attachments/100722_HE_Namik_Tan_CSIS_speech.pdf

⁵⁰ Davutoğlu, Ahmet (2010) "Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy" May 20 2010, *Foreign Policy*, Accessed online URL: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy

⁵¹ Terhalle , Maximilian (2007) "Are the Shia Rising" *Middle East Policy*, Volume 14, Issue 2, pages 69-83, June.

spring reveal that Turkey has played contradictory dual role on Iran. Turkey has allowed NATO Missile Shield on its eastern border and many believes that the missile shield is to watch Iran.⁵² However hosting a NATO Shield and using the missile are two different things but it certainly gives extra edge to Turkey over Iran's growing fear on entire Gulf region. In Arab Spring developments, Turkey has turned against Syria, one of the most important part of 'Shite Crescent' a policy which has weakened Iranian influences in the region.

Turkish and Arab interests in the region are not that much conflicting as Arab-Iranian interests is. One may observe implicit competition between Iranian and Turkish interests in the Arab World more visibly in post war Iraq crisis where Iran has greater influence over its formerly exiled Shite leadership.⁵³ Iran's territorial dispute with the United Arab Emirates and its unofficial claim on Bahrain and illicit support to Kuwaiti and Saudi Shi'a groups has disturbed many Gulf States.⁵⁴ Iran's support to Bahrain opposition groups in the wake of Arab Spring was met with stiff resistance and joint GCC military response was extraordinary. In case of nuclear Iran, Arab states particularly Gulf States may not find better option than Turkey to engage with Iran. Turkey has also tried to mediate between Iran and the West to find out a solution of Iranian nuclear standoff. Turkey and Brazil issued a joint declaration on 17 May 2010 which is also signed by Iran to end the nuclear crisis however Western countries rejected Turkish efforts.

Turkish Culturescape

On the cultural front, Turkish soaps, tourists' destinations, music, novel and spiritual inspiration of Rumi and historical magnificence are attracting millions of people from across the world. Reports suggest that 22 countries are currently importing popular Turkish television soaps and some of them have made record sales in the Arab World and some of them have touched \$3m annual sale.⁵⁵ Arabic dubbed Turkish soap opera

⁵² *Hurriyet Daily News* 22 December 2011, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/iran-again-criticizes-turkey-on-nato-missile-shield.aspx?pageID=238&nid=9736&NewsCatID=338>

⁵³ Chorin, Ethan and Haim Malka (2008) "Iran's Soft Power Creates Hard Realities" *The CSIS Middle East Program* accessed online on 25 September 2010 URL: http://csis.org/files/publication/0408_MENC.pdf

⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁵ <http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/q/55-khalid-al-jaber/120926-turkish-soap-operas-influencing-arab-culture-and-politics.html>, 21 July, 2010

“Noor” was all time hit in Arab streets during 2008 which attracted over 85 million Arab viewers mainly from young women. It was called as Noor mania which many newspapers reported, caused divorce over misbehaviour of Arab husbands⁵⁶. The same was “Years Gone Past” which received nearly 67 million viewers more than 50% were women.⁵⁷ Millions of Arabs were ferried from Gulf States by Turkish Airlines and charter boats for whom who want a glimpse of the waterfront villa where “Noor” was filmed.⁵⁸ So much so was the Noor Mania that its popularity sparked reaction from Iranian columnist calling it an effort to counter Shia influence in the Arab world. Increasing popularity of Turkish soft products is being perceived as Turkish inroad in to Islamic world once again and the Noor was called “Return of Ottoman”. An Iranian newspaper wrote that Saudis are supporting Turkey in the Arab World only to counter Shia Iran.

To counter the Shia culture and reduce its moral influence on the Shias of the Arab World, the Saudis shrewdly provided Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan access to their publicity organs so that Turkey could begin playing a more active role in the political, cultural, and economic life of the Middle East. (Tehran Times 28 August 2008).

In education sector, single factor ranking of the 20 universities of OIC countries indicates that Turkish universities (14 out of 20) are publishing more research papers than any other Arab and Islamic country like Iran and Egypt. In composite ranking index, 6 Turkish universities are ranked among 20 universities of the OIC. Among top 50 universities of the OIC, 26 are Turkish universities, 9 are Iranian, 3 are Egyptian and Malaysian and 2 are Pakistani universities. Turkey has produced largest number of research papers 43630 in entire OIC group (85974) followed by Iran (11520), Egypt (7056), Malaysia (3665), Saudi Arabia (2315) and Pakistan (1905) in the period of 2005.⁵⁹ Similarly Turkish film industry is also growing at record speed. There were only 18 national films released five

⁵⁶ See for detailed commentary at <http://muslimahmediawatch.org/2008/08/27/noor-mania/> Noor-Mania August 27, 2008.

⁵⁷ <http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/q/55-khalid-al-jaber/120926-turkish-soap-operas-influencing-arab-culture-and-politics.html>, 21 July, 2010

⁵⁸ Michael Kimmelman (2010), *ibid.*

⁵⁹ OIC (2007) Academic Ranking of Universities in the OIC Countries, Ankara: Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries.

years ago, and now there are 43 in 2007 and 51 in 2008. According to *Sinema Gazetesi*, *Variety*, *Hürriyet*, *Timeturk*, OBS Turkish National films achieved a record market share of 60%, a long way from the 7.4% share registered in 2002 and well above the previous year's 38%. In 2008, Turkish films captured top 10 places US films had to take second place, with an estimated 32% of total admissions, down almost 17 percentage points from 2007. European films accounted for 8.1%, compared to about 11% in the previous year. Turkish government has also launched its Arabic television service TRT Al-Turkiyah on the line of BBC Arabic, Rusiya al-Youm, France 24 etc. Commentators says that inauguration of TRT Al-Turkiya recived much attention than the launch of BBC Arabic. Though TRT al Turkiye is not a news channel like Al-Jazeera or Iranian Al-Alam TV, it aims to target general audiences informing them about Turkish Arab relations, cultural and civilizational bonds, Ottoman Arab relations and Turkey's efforts for peace in the region especially for Palestine. TRT programming includes drama, the arts, news, and the economy and comedy. Turkish Prime Minister himself inaugurated the channel and made an appealing speech.⁶⁰

Key indicators Turkey and the region

Heads	Turkey	Iran	KSA	Egypt	Iraq
Population in millions	73.0	72.4	24.7	80.1	29.5
Infant mortality rate (CIA fact book)	38.33	38.12	12.41	29.5	47.04
Adult Literacy Rate (% aged 15(UNDP) and above	88.7	82.3	85.0	66.4	74.1
Combined gross enrolment ratio in education(UNDP)	71.1	73.2	78.5	76.4	60.5
GDP per capita (PPP US\$) 2007(CIA fact book)	12955	8,700	13,800	4,200	1,900
Seats in parliament held by women (% of total (www.ipu.org)	9	2.8%(2008)	0	1.8%(2005)	25.2%(2010)
GDP US\$ billions 2009(UNDP)	655.9	286.1	381.7	130.5	NA
HDI Rank(undp,2010)	83	70	55	101	NA
Tourist arrival(rank)	9 th		21 st	23 rd	NA
Phone	15 th	22 nd	38 th	28 th	NA
Internet (rank wise) CIA fact book	15 th	17 th	33 rd	27 th	126 th
Research Papers published (2004-2006) OIC Report	43630	11520	2315	7056	NA
Patent (AHDR 2009)				1	
WTO membership(2008) wto.org	1995	observer	2005	1995	observer
Urban population	69.6	67%	81%	43%	67%
Life expectancy (UN,2005-10)	71.8	71.0	72.8	71.3	59.5

Sources: UNDP Human Development Report 2009, 2008, Turkish Human Development Report 2009, Arab Human Development Report 2009, 2008. CIA Fact Book.

⁶⁰ Mukkaled, Diana (2010) Al-Sharq Al-Awsat 9th April

Conclusion

Turkey's own international relations and priorities based on its primary and secondary interests also define limitations of its Arab vision. Turkey's interests in European Union is beyond ideological and identity politics. Its trade, cultural and social transaction with Europe is much intensified than its Arab counterparts. Also Turkey's NATO role and responsibility does not allow Turkey to be game changer in the region. Arab Israel conflict is not only opportunity for Turkey to become facilitator of peace process in the region but also a formidable challenge. Turkey has been close ally of Israel and has become peace broker with many of Israel's hostile neighbours in recent years. Turkey's role in European Union, NATO and its relation with Israel also define much of its Arab vision.

Turkey's next challenge is to uplift its growing population from unemployment, and poverty as well as better management of development projects within Turkey. Turkish economy has just started showing improvement which requires a long time to be a developed economy. Turkey's outlook towards Arab region is guided by these challenges and hence aimed to attract maximum resources from Arab World. European Union membership for Turkey attracts many Arab states to engage with Turkey so that Turkey becomes better channel between Arabs and Europe. Delay in membership process is another excuse for Turkish diplomacy to look beyond Europe and the West. As a soft power, Turkey has much extra miles to go particularly in the field of research and development, education and cultural industries. Arab spring has given extra ordinary opportunity to the Turkey but Turkey's internal challenges mainly independence of political authority from the military leadership, the Kurdish problem and issues of development within Turkey. There is no doubt that Turkey has produced excellent and abundant modern Turkish literature, there inflow in international and especially in Arab market is still limited. Increased cultural transactions between Arab and Turkish sides may allow positive results in future.

Turkey's successful remodelling of Islamic politics by AKP has become a major source of inspiration for many Islamic parties in the Arab world like Ennahdha and Muslim Brotherhood. In post Arab Spring scenario, Turkey has played vital role to facilitate peaceful power transfer as well

as rebuilding democratic discourse within Islamic parties. Many blame Turkey of using Muslim Brotherhood in Syria for Turkey's interests and to topple down Bashar Al Assad regime. Political problems within Arab states had originated from their undemocratic political systems and weak and dependent civil society. Arab states are now undergoing serious human development deficit which require not only resources but also speedy economic and political reforms. Turkey with its democracy and secular politics also fastest economic growth in the world, it has much to give to the newly emerged winner Islamic parties in Tunisia and Egypt. Countries where change has not yet come, there is lot of pressure on their rulers from within and outside for political reforms and democratization in Syria, Gulf countries, Algeria and Morocco etc. Turkey's current success story has been written by a political party which has its roots within Islamic movement of Milli Görüş. In fact, AKP has successfully used network of Milli Görüş in its support⁶¹.

Turkish ambition to be Soft Power does not mean that it has no immediate military threats in coming future. There is worrying scenario emerging from its neighbourhood where Iran is confronting American or Israeli military threats. Iraq has already been engulfed in deep sectarian violence after unpopular American war against Iraq. Iraqi Kurdistan has gained more autonomy and independence in its state affairs which might encourage Kurdish aspirations for greater autonomy in Turkey. Turkey has to deal with Gulf States which are disproportionately spending on their military. Last but not least, protracted tension between Israel and Arab states is biggest source of future military threats in the region and very recently Turkish Prime Minister has announced that Turkey will not remain silent, if Israel tries to bomb Gaza again.⁶² Hard power will still remain crucial for Turkey to guard its borders from any spill over of conflicts in the region. Being NATO member, Turkey's military capability is well ahead of any Arab state and Turkey is engaged in many international peace operations, however NATO status may not guarantee its unconditional support in case of Turkish intervention in Arab-Israeli conflict. With these prospects, current Turkish foreign policy shifts can be

⁶¹ In my interaction with several leaders and members of Milli Gorus, AK Party and other political groups, I understand that AK party is still enjoying huge support among Milli Gorus cadre for which Sadet Party is worried.

⁶² Gale, Patrick (2010) "In Lebanon's Beirut, shift of Turkish axis is welcomed" *Hürriyet Daily News* 25 November 2010. Accessed online URL: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-will-not-remain-silent-if-israel-attacks-lebanon-2010-11-25>

found as a careful effort for minimizing military threats in the region and enhancing its role in the region only through soft power tools.