Changing Balancing Behaviors in Turkish Foreign Policy During AKP Period (2002-2019)

AKP Döneminde (2002-2019) Türk Dış Politikasında Değişen Dengeleme Davranışları

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Öz

Devletlerin dış politikaları ve bunları gerçekleştirmek için uyguladıkları stratejiler sabit değildir. Uluslararası ve iç dinamikler değiştiğinde politikalar ve stratejiler de değişime tabii olur. Bu değişimde sistemik faktörlerin rolü olmakla birlikte, hükümet ve rejim değişiklikleri çoğu zaman başat faktör olarak öne çıkar. Türkiye'de 2002'de iktidara gelen AKP'nin 17 yıllık döneminde dış politikanın hedeflerinde ve vasıtalarında önemli değişimler yaşanmıştır. Türkiye gibi orta büyüklükteki devletlerin dış politika uygulama vasıtaları arasında dengeleme davranışları önemli bir yer tutar. Bu makalede Türkiye'de dış politikanın değişim süreci incelenirken değişen dengeleme davranışları ve stratejileri vurgulanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda makalenin birinci bölümünde, dış politikada dengeleme davranışları kavramsal boyutuyla incelenmektedir. İkinci bölümde, yeni bir hükümetin dış politikayı yeniden şekillendirme süreci ve dinamikleri analiz edilmektedir. Son bölümde ise Türkiye'de dış politikanın yeniden oluşturulmasında değişen dengeleme davranışları 2002-2019 dönemine odaklanarak tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Dış politika, Dengeleme, Dengeleme davranışları, Değişim, AKP

Abstract

States' foreign policies and their strategies to attain them are not fixed. When international and domestic dynamics change, policies and strategies may change. Although systemic factors play role in this process, government and regime changes come into prominence as principal factors. During the 17-year period of AKP which came to power in 2002, there have been significant changes in the goals and the means of foreign policy. Balancing and balancing behaviors are among important foreign policy implementing means of middle powers like Turkey. In this article, as change process of foreign policy in Turkey is examined, changing balancing behaviors and strategies are emphasized. In this context, states' balancing behaviors are discussed with a literature review in the first part. In the second part, the question of how a new government restructures a state's foreign policy is analyzed. In the final part, Turkey's changing balancing behaviors with regard to the foreign policy restructuring are studied by focusing on the period of 2002-2019.

Key Words: Foreign Policy, Balancing, Balancing behaviors, Change, AKP

Introduction

As states have long been living in an unprecedented unstable international political environment after the end of the Cold War, their governments often

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change their foreign policies and foreign policy behaviors in order to respond the new challenges and capture the emerging opportunities. Such foreign policy changes are both externally initiated and internally driven. When governments undergo profound changes, similar to a regime change, significant adjustments are seen in foreign policies since new governments come to power with different perceptions of environment and new agendas. Some of the changes can mark a reversal or, at least, a profound redirection of a country's foreign policy.

In such circumstances, lacking the sufficient capacity to deal with the challenges on their own, middle powers look for better balancing options. Consequently, they may prefer different balancing behaviors; new alignments begin, existing ones end, and alliances and coalitions may be reconfigured.

In this article, I argue that Turkish foreign policy has undergone profound changes after AKP came to power in 2002 with different perceptions, agendas and goals. Political power change in Turkey coincided with dramatic changes in international and regional strategic environment which both opened new windows of opportunities and also posed new challenges. This accordingly required using different means and changes in balancing behaviors. However, foreign policy changes have been mainly driven by AKP elites who had different perspectives and goals.

This article is structured as three parts. In the first part, states' balancing behaviors in general and alliances in particular are discussed with a literature review. In the second part, the question of how a new government with overreaching regional goals restructures its foreign policy is analyzed. In the final part, Turkey's changing balancing patterns in the context of the foreign policy restructuring are studied by focusing on the period of 2002-2019.

Balancing Behaviors in Foreign Policy

Balancing is the consequence of anarchy in the international system. Anarchy means without rule, the absence of a central government or higher authority similar to a legitimate government of a given state that would be able to enforce rules and set limits to hostilities between states.[1] As Kenneth Waltz has put it, states use several means to further their security interests in anarchical international security environment, which fall into two broad categories: internal and external efforts.[2] When states attempt to balance threats by an increase of their national capabilities such as economic and military power this is called as internal balancing. Alternatively, when they try to balance against a prevailing threat by establishment of informal or formal alliances

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1   Andrew Heywood, *Global Politic*, Palgrave, New York, 2011, p.8.
2   Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Random House, New York, 1979, p.118.

with other states, this is known as external balancing.[3] Through internal and external efforts, states can either increase their own capacity or impair that of the rival. While the former is called positive balancing, the latter is negative balancing.[4] Another distinction is between hard and soft balancing. States use mainly their military and economic capacities in hard balancing, whereas soft balancing suggests the use of diplomatic and cultural means, and attractiveness.[5] Balancing can appear in the form of onshore and offshore balancing. In onshore balancing, a great power (namely USA) deploys some of its capacity forward in selected regions to contain a rival as it was the case during the Cold War period. Offshore balancing, on the other hand, describes a strategy in which a great power keeps most of its capacity, particularly military capacity, at homeland and uses regional powers and/or proxies to balance the threatening powers.[6] Omni-balancing is a more suitable strategy to explain the balancing behavior of the leaders of the third world states. The concept suggests that omnibalancing explains Third World alignments as a consequence of leaders seeking to counter internal and external threats to their rule. the leaders of third world countries seek alliances to counter internal and external threats to their rules.[7]

Three patterns of balancing behavior are; alliance, alignment, and coalition.[8] Although they are used interchangeably and bear a number of common properties, there are also some important differences. An alliance is "a formal agreement that pledges states to co-operate in using their military resources against a specific state or states and usually obligates one or more of the signatories to use force, or to consider (unilaterally or in consultation with allies) the use of force in specified circumstances".[9] Alliances are established to deal

3   Joseph M. Grieco, "Realist International Theory and the Study of World Politics", *New Thinking in International Relations Theory*, Michael W. Doyle, J. G. Ikenberry (eds), Westview Press, CO: Boulder, 1997, pp.163-210.
4   Reuben Steff, N. Khoo "Hard Balancing in the Age of American Unipolarity: The Russian Response to US Ballistic Missile Defense during the Bush Administration (2001-2008)", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. XXXVII, No.2, 2014, p.227-28.
5   Michel Fortmann, T. V. Paul and J. Wirtz, "Conclusions: Balance of Power at the Turn of the New Century", *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, Thazha V. Paul, J. Wirtz and M. Fortmann (eds.), Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2004, p.362-365; Thazha V. Paul, "The Enduring Axioms of Balance of Power Theory", *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, Thazha V. Paul, J. Wirtz and M. Fortmann (eds.), Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2004, p.3.; Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States", *International Security*, Vol. XXX, No.1, 2005, p.9-10.
6   Michael E. Brown, O. R. Cote Jr., S.M. Lynn-Jones, S.E. Miller, *America's Strategic Choices*, Revised Edition, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2000, p.166.
7   Steven R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment", *World Politics*, Vol. XLIII, No.2, 1991, p.231.
8   Michael D. Ward, "Research Gaps in Alliance Dynamics", *Monograph Series in World Affairs*, Vol.19, 1982, p.14.
9   Robert E. Osgood, *Alliances and American Foreign Policy*. The Johns Hopkins University Press,

with mainly military security affairs. Therefore, the principal goal is to ensure political sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security on the basis of collective military defense.[10] Morgenthau and Thompson classify alliances as mutual and one-sided, general and limited, temporary and permanent, operative and inoperative alliances.[11]

There are three basic types of formal military alliances; defense pact, non-aggression/neutrality and entente.[12] The signatories to a defense pact determine the threats in the treaty and concretely prepare to respond to them together. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is most frequently cited example of a defense pact. Nonaggression pact is an alliance that the signatories pledge not to resort to military action against other pact signatories. An example of a non-aggression treaty is Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany during World War II. A neutrality pact includes a promise to avoid support of another country that acts against the interests of any of the pact signatories.[13] Neutrality involves contracting out of world conflicts either for internal safety or not to incur the displeasure of a big nation or for other reasons such as smallness in size. Active neutrality is a policy of offering support to one side in a conflict or dispute without directly participating in that conflict or dispute. Passive neutrality, on the other hand, is defined by doing everything conceivably possible to stay out of the ways of the conflicts, sticking your head under the covers. While neutrality is temporary, neutralization is a permanent status both in times of peace and war. A neutralized state such as Switzerland or Austria is "assured by other states that it will not be involved in any war and the neutralized state itself refrains from taking positions in international disputes".[14] Third is an entente, where the signatories merely agree to consult one another in the event of military interactions. No firm commitments exist between partners.[15] An example of an entente is the British-French Entente Cordiale of 1904.

There are some types of relationships which are often confused with alliances and coalitions: strategic partnership and security community. The term

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Baltimore, 1968, p.17.

10 Volker Krause, J. D. Singer, "Minor Powers, Alliances, and Armed Conflict: Some Preliminary Patterns", *Small States and Alliances*, Erich Reiter and H. Gärtner (eds), Physica, Heidelberg, 2001, p.16.

11 Hans J. Morgenthau, K. Thompson, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6.Edition, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1985, p.203.

12 J. David Singer, Melvin Small "Alliance Aggregation and the Onset of War, 1815-1945", *Quantitative International Politics*, J. David Singer (ed), The Free Press, New York, 1968, p.247-286.

13 Brett Leeds, J. Ritter, S. Mitchell, A.Long, "Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944", *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations*, Vol. 28, No.3, 2002, p.237-260.

14 V.N. Khanna, *Foreign Policy of India*, Vikas Publishing House, 2018, p.55.

15 Robert A. Kann, "Alliances versus Ententes", *World Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 1976, p.611-615.

"strategic partnership" has been widely used to describe the security align-ments between Japan-Australia, US-India, US-Turkey and NATO-EU among others. Strategic partnership is neither an alliance nor coalition, rather a struc-tured collaboration between states to take joint advantage of economic oppor-tunities or to respond to security challenges more effectively. It is focused on a narrow range of goals. For example, the US has strategic partnerships with sev-eral countries to fight terrorism. In strategic partnership, resources are shared between two nations for the purpose of achieving the goals they are partnering on in order for each nation to bolster its weaknesses with the other's strength. In the general context of strategic partnership, there are different types of ar-rangements between various states. After the Cold War and with intensified in-terconnectedness and interdependences as gradual impacts of ever increased globalization, the rising states have pursued high-level strategic cooperation in the form of committees, councils and meetings with mainly their neighbor-ing states. Strategic partnership is also defined as "model partnership" as in the case of US-Turkey partnership in 2008. Security community, on the other hand, refers to the creation of a peaceful community of states through gradual confidence building and integration. While alliance and coalition are clearly collective defense/offence institutions, security community is a collective se-curity system.[16] A security community can only be created if the attainment of a sense of community with robust institutions, good practices and expecta-tions of peaceful change are settled within a territory.[17] A typical example of such relationship is EU.

An alignment is considered as a general commitment between states in order to achieve mutual security goals. Its objectives are cooperation and col-laboration which are broad and vague rather than narrow and explicit.[18] Non alignment, first applied in world politics by India, is not supporting or depend-ing on any powerful country or group of countries. It is a policy of keeping out two great alliances of the Cold War. Non-aligned country has a freedom to choose the policies in relation to world politics on its own wishes. It actually means and demands an active, positive and dynamic role in world affairs.[19] Isolationism is not non-alignment. It is abstention from military alliances and other international political and economic relations. It means total aloofness from problems of other countries. The USA is known for its isolationism before the First World War.[20]

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16   Karl W. Deutsch, S.A. Burrell, R.A. Kann, M.Lee Jr, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957, p.5-6.

17   Emanuel Adler, Barnett, M., *Security Communities*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.

18   Krause, Singer, ibid, p.16.; Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 1990, p.105.

19   Khanna, ibid, p.56.

20   Ibid.

Gazi

Akademik
Bakış

57

Cilt 13
Sayı 25
Kış 2019

A coalition is characterized by the commitment of two or more states to coordinate their behaviors and policies in order to perform particular functions or pursue specific goals. It is often formed during conflict.[21] Members of coalitions tend to be acting in concert at *x* time regarding one to *n* issues.[22] Regarding the term "coalition", another term "coalition of willing" is put in use since the end of the Cold War such as the 1991 Gulf War coalition, the 2003 Iraq invasion coalition, and the international coalition of the willing to confront the ISIL in 2014 among others.

Within the balance of power politics, bandwagoning is another strategy employed by especially small states. It is an alignment with and joining the stronger side and the source of danger for the sake of protection from fear or and payoffs for greed, even if this meant insecurity vis-à-vis the protecting power and a certain sacrifice of independence.[23] There are some important differences between bandwagoning and balancing. "The aim of balancing is self-preservation and the protection of values already possessed, while the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension: to obtain values coveted. Simply put, balancing is driven by a desire to avoid losses; bandwagoning by the opportunity for gain".[24] Two types of bandwagoning are differentiated: defensive and offensive. In a defensive type which is a form of appeasement, a state aligns with a threatening power to avoid being attacked. Offensive bandwagoning is alignment with a dominant state for the payoffs.

In addition to balancing and bandwagoning, a state's behavior is revealed through other strategies. In this regard, one strategy is "hiding" from threats. This could take various forms: simply ignoring the threat or declaring neutrality in a general crisis, trying to withdraw into isolation, assuming a purely defensive position, or seeking protection from some other powers without joining that power as an ally or committing itself to any use of force on its part.[25] Another strategy is "transcending" which is defined as an attempt by states to deal with the dangers both of concentrations of power and of concrete threats by taking the problem to a higher level, establishing norms of a legal, religious, moral, or procedural nature to govern international prac-

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21 Snyder, ibid, p.106.
22 Edwin H. Fedder, "The Concept of Alliance", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No.1, 1968, p.80.
23 Paul W. Schroeder, "Historical Reality versus Neo-Realist Theory", *International Security*, Vol. 19, No.1, 1994, p. 108-148.; Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1987, p.21; John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W.W. Norton, New York, 2001; John A. Vasquez, C. Elman, *Realism and The Balancing of Power: A New Debate*, Practice Hall, New Jersey, 2003.
24 Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit", *International Security*, Vol.19, No. 1, 1994, p. 74, quoted in Thomas Richard Bendel, *On the Types of Balancing Behavior*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 1994. p.40.
25 Sangit Sarita Dwived, "Alliances in International Relations Theory", *International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research*, Vol.1, No.8, 2012, p.226.

tice.[26] Finally, "buck-passing" is a behavior of a state when it refuses to balance against a rising state, hoping that another threatened state will spend the necessary blood and treasure.[27]

There are three different theories to explain alliance formation, alliance performance and its nature; balance of power, balance of threat and balance of interest. The classic realist theory of alliance formation among states is known as the balance of power theory. For Morgenthau, domestic balancing inside a country and balancing behavior in international system have similarities, thus the theory can be applied to international politics. He lists four principal balancing strategies/tactics employed by states: divide and rule, compensations, armaments and alliances.[28] Kenneth N. Waltz argues that the balance of power politics occurs when two requirements are present: anarchic order and presence of states challenging for survival.[29] George Liska uses historical cases to demonstrate the significance of the theory.[30] To him, international relations and alliances are two indispensable concepts, and they always exist together.

Stephen Walt does not completely reject the theory of balance of power, but modifies it by claiming that states do not balance against power but rather against threats. His theory takes into account the factors such as geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and perceived intentions on alliance formation.[31] According to Walt, pragmatic interests and security needs of states are more important for alliance formation than ideological considerations.[32]

The theories of balance of power and balance of threat mainly focus on the alliance behaviors of threatened states and ignores the behavior of unthreatened states. There are, however, several examples of alliances in which unthreatened states formed alliances. Randall Schweller sees this missing point and presents the balance of interest theory. He argues that states tend to bandwagon for profit contrary to the balancing behavior claimed by realist theorists.[33] To Schweller, alliances are responses not only to threats but also to opportunities. He regards alliances as tools to make gains, as well as to avoid losses.

Gazi

Akademik
Bakış
59
Cilt 13
Sayı 25
Kış 2019

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26   Vasquez, Elman, ibid, p.119.
27   Thomas J. Christensen, J. Snyder, "Progressive Research on Degenerate Alliances", *Realism and The Balancing of Power: A New Debate*, John A. Vasqueze, C. Elman (eds), Practice Hall, New Jersey, 2003. p.73.
28   Morgenthau, Thompson, ibid.
29   Waltz, ibid, p.121.
30   George Liska, *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1962, p.32-33.
31   Walt, ibid, p.5.
32   Ibid, p.33.
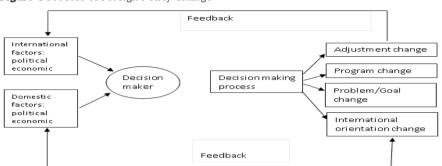33   Schweller, ibid, p.99.

Figure-1 Process of Foreign Policy Change[40]

The typology is connected to two feedback arrows, indicating that once a change has taken place this might affect international and domestic factors, possibly contributing to a new round of policy change".[41] According to Gustavsson, there are two broad categories of sources leading the change in foreign policy: international and domestic factors. Each category is subdivided as political and economic factors. While international political factors include power relations between states and changes of military capacities and other elements of national power, international economic factors concern cross border economic transactions and institutional conditions governing such transactions.[42] Hermann also argues that most foreign policy change results from a perception by government leaders of some change (generally external shocks) or initiative (or lack of it) in the external environment. External shocks are large events in terms of visibility and immediate impact on the recipient. They cannot be ignored, and they can trigger major foreign policy change.[43]

At the domestic level, political factors involve the support needed from voters, political parties, and societal actors to uphold a certain foreign policy. The focus here is placed on electoral results, opinion polls, and the coalitions formed between major political actors.[44] Domestic politics may affect FP through several different dynamics.[45] An existing regime may change its FP to distinguish itself from opponents or to prevent defeat if it perceives that new alignments will better serve its interest to balance internal rivals. This may resemble an omni-balancing. Changes in essential constituents of a regime such as new attitudes and beliefs, radical transformation of the political sys-

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40   Jakob Gustavsson, "How Should We Study Foreign Policy Change", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 34, No.1, 1999, p.85.
41   Ibid, p.84
42   Ibid.
43   Hermann, ibid, p.12.
44   Gustavsson, ibid, p.8.
45   Hermann, ibid, p.7.

tem, restructuring or transforming the economic system can also be sources of FP change. The economic factors involve general development of economy such as GDP growth, the rate of inflation, and the level of unemployment, and institutional conditions influencing the relationships between the state and the parties of labor market.[46]

The next step is the cognitive factor. Gustavsson argues that the structural conditions can have no independent impact on FP decision-making. In other words, it is not the objective reality that counts, but how this is perceived and reacted to by the decision-makers. The role of individual decision-makers emerges here. In fact, the decision-making variables of personality and perception are regarded as a powerful explanation of change in various case studies.[47] Another factor is the resistance to change in institutions meaning that change in existing policies and alliances are sometimes not accepted voluntarily by some actors in the government and ministries, especially when the changes are radical such as program, goal and reorientation changes. The model is therefore based on the assumption that sources of change need to be perceived by individual decision makers and trigger alterations in their beliefs in order to have an impact on foreign policy. The cognitive factor is followed by the decision-making process which may include any or mix of rational actor, bureaucratic, organizational, cognitive and psychological models.

When decisions are made on various aspects of FP, a graduated level of changes as conceptualized by Hermann[48] may take place. Hermann's model operates at four stages from the lower level of intensity to highest level. In this regard the adjustment changes occur in a way that the methods, means and goals do not change. Intensity of activities and target audiences change. Second stage includes program changes. In other words, the methods or means by which the goal or problem is addressed change. These changes may involve new instruments of state: more diplomacy, mediation, regional collaborator, economic interactions. In this stage, while the ways the policies are implemented change, goals, objectives and desired end states remain same. Third stage involves problem/goal changes. The initial problem or goal that the policy addresses is replaced or simply forfeited. In this foreign policy change, the purposes themselves are replaced. The most extreme form of foreign policy change involves the redirection of the state's entire orientation toward world affairs. In contrast to lesser forms of change that concern the state's approach to a single issue or specific set of other actors, orientation change involves a basic shift in the state's international role and activities. Not one policy but many are more or less simultaneously changed.[49]

Gazi
Akademik
Bakış
62
Cilt 13
Sayı 25
Kış 2019

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46   Gustavsson, ibid, p.84.
47   Holsti, ibid, p.211.
48   Hermann, ibid, p. 3-21.
49   Ibid, p.5-6.

Changing Balancing Behaviors During AKP Period (2002-2019)

When the interests of middle powers like Turkey are threatened by a major power or an alliance of more than one power, the solution to their security problem must come from outside, either through an alliance or through the exploitation of a balance of forces between the powers in the regional/international system. In such circumstances, middle powers are forced to adopt various foreign policy strategies and balancing actions.[50] In Turkish political history, from the period of the late Ottoman era to 2002, different types of balancing behaviors such as firm alliances, neutrality or non-belligerency were adopted, depending on the dynamics of international/regional environment at the time, the state's capacity to respond these dynamics and the domestic political factors.

In the 19th century, Ottoman FP was mainly defensive. Ottoman rulers either formed alliance with one or more of the European powers against the external and internal threats they perceived or remain outside alliances and hoped that rivalries between the powers would deter any of them from destroying the empire.[51] Consequently Ottomans changed alliances periodically between Britain, France and Russia during the 19th century until the First World War (WWI).

WWI made it difficult to play balancing game between two great alliances (Central Powers and Allies), and Ottoman government established a wartime alliance with the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungry). During the war of independence, besides the great determination and commitment of Turkish people and the leaders of the nationalist movement, Atatürk resorted to balancing actions by exploiting the differences between war weary great powers. Atatürk balanced Great Britain and Greece by increasing internal capacity of the national movement (internal balancing) and providing military and economic aids from the Soviets (external balancing). After the war of independence, Turkish state returned to neutrality between all the main European powers and did not search for a firm alliance with any state. Towards the mid-1930s, because of Italy's expansionist policies and later German threat in the Mediterranean and the Balkans, Turkey launched initiatives to form a coalition, consequently the Balkan Entente was Established. Similarly, Turkey successfully brought together Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan in Sa'dabad Pact in 1937. It was an agreement of non-aggression and friendship at a critical time two years before the start of the Second World War (WWII). It was, on the other hand, an agreement against perceived Kurdish separatist threat in three countries.[52] In the later part of the 1930s, recognizing the inevitability of the WWII,

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50   William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, 3rd Edition, Routledge, London, 2013, p.2.

51   Ibid, p.250.

52   Onur Ay, "Why did Turkey Become a Part of Sa'dabad Pact", *Journal of Political Sciences & Public Affairs*, Vol.4, No.3, 2016, p.2.

gazi

Akademik
Bakış

63

Cilt 13
Sayı 25
Kış 2019

Turkey cautiously got closer to the Soviets, Britain and France without provoking Germany. While the Tripartite Alliance was established between Turkey, Britain and France in 1939, two years later a non-aggression pact was signed with Germany in July 1941. Despite its commitments in the Tripartite Alliance and pressures from both sides, Turkey, thanks to rational and smart national leaders, accomplished to remain non-belligerent during the active phase of the WWII.

During the Cold War period, Turkey, being a middle to small power, felt to choose a firm and long-lasting alignment with the West, particularly with the USA after a short mutual reluctance period until 1952. Because of the bipolar structure of international system, a tough competition between the USA and Soviet Union and Turkey's big threat perception from the Soviets during the first phase of the Cold War until the Cuban Missile crisis, Turkey's strict alignment with the USA and the US-led western system could be regarded as bandwagoning. In the later part of the Cold War from 1963 until 1980, Turkey alignment with USA was more flexible, allowing Turkey to approach the Soviets and other actors. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Reagan's aggressive foreign policies ended the détente in the Cold War, the second phase began. During this period, Turkey, with the military regime of 1980s, returned to the strict alignment with USA. With the end of the Cold War, while the alignment with the West continued, Turkey found policy windows to access to the surrounding regions; the Balkans, the southern Caucasus, the Central Asia and the Middle East, with US Support.

After 2002, transformation of Turkish foreign policy has received great interests from scholars inside Turkey and outside. While it is generally regarded that there have been minor as well as major changes in Turkish foreign policy during 2002-2019, the question of whether there is a total international orientation change is debated.[53] Leaving such a debate aside, it is believed that Gustavsson's model in Figure-1 is explanatory to understand the dynamics of change process in TFP.

The AKP came to power in 2002 when the dramatic changes in international and domestic politics were taking place. In international dimension, the most significant changes were the 9/11 attacks in the USA and unilateral and aggressive policies of W. Bush and his neo-con inner circles in global politics. The unipolar international system dominated by the USA had almost ended. The new power centers such as China, Russian Federation under Putin and some others began to emerge. The new world system started to resemble a

Gazi
Akademik
Bakış
64
Cilt 13
Sayı 25
Kış 2019

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53   Burak Cop, Özge Zihnioğlu, "Turkish Foreign Policy under AKP Rule: Making Sense of the Turbulence", *Political Studies Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2017, 28–38, p.37.

multipolar structure, offering the middle powers like Turkey some policy windows to maneuver in their regions.

In Turkish domestic policies, political and economic instabilities had prevailed during 1994-2002. The weak coalition governments were not able to manage frequently occurring crises. Turkish electorate lost the confidence to the existing political parties which were seen incapable to deal with the hard pressing internal and external challenges. Turkey's long-standing allies, the USA and European countries, searched for new partners to support. In such turbulent circumstances, AKP had been established, well accepted internally and externally, and won the 2002 national elections. By giving the signals to make some radical changes in TFP, for example Cyprus issue, Armenian question and Kurdish issue/PKK terrorism, AKP believed that better relations could be established with USA and EU and this would also better serve its interests to balance its internal rivals. In the economic dimension, fast GDP growth, decrease in the rate of inflation, increase in the level of employment consolidated AKP electoral bases over time and gave it relatively a free hand to plan and implement FP changes.

Regarding the application of the cognitive factor in Gustavsson's model to AKP's initiated FP change process in Turkey, there are striking similarities. The international and domestic conditions had to be perceived and reacted by Turkish decision-makers. As AKP was working with existing state institutions in FP planning, Ahmet Davutoglu was appointed as chief FP adviser of Prime Minister Erdogan in 2003. Although this was a low visibility appointment, in fact an alternative foreign policy planning team to the existing foreign policy making system comprised of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Turkish Armed Forces and the National Security Council had been established. After serving six years in this position, Davutoglu filled the chair of Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 2009. Davutoglu formulated his foreign policy concepts in a book titled "Strategic Depth".[54] The main approaches in the book included the "strategic depth", "zero-problem policy with neighbors", "Turkey as a central country", "historical legacy of Ottoman Empire", and soft power among others. In short, while the strategic depth is a perspective arguing that Turkey is a central country having the ability to reach to various regions, thus it can be accepted as regional leader by the Middle Eastern countries owing to its soft power and the historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire, the zero-problem policy means having good relations with the countries in its surrounding regions and avoiding firm alliances in international power politics. His arguments were mostly accepted by AKP elites, and included in the party and government

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54   Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul, 2008.

programs.[55] So it could be said that AKP leadership, Erdogan, Abdullah Gul and Davutoglu among others, perceived the domestic and international dynamics and reacted accordingly. However, especially after the 2014 presidential elections, Erdogan took more role in foreign policy. His personal perceptions largely defined the course of foreign relations. This was clearly the case in relations with the Sisi regime in Egypt and categorical rejection of coming to terms with the Assad regime.[56] Moreover, Turkey has officially switched to an executive presidency after President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took the oath of office on 9 July 2018.[57] While the role of Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) and political parties has dramatically decreased, Erdogan has become the ultimate decision-maker by directly controlling all relevant institutions in foreign policy area such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Intelligence, the Ministry of National Defense and the committees and agencies.[58]

AKP's 17-year term can be divided into four consecutive periods: 1st term (2002-2007), 2nd term (2007-2011), 3rd term (2011-2016) and 4th term (2016-2019). While the first three terms correspond the national elections of 2002, 2007 and 2011, the last term starts after 15 July coup attempt in 2016.

In the first term, AKP mainly followed the previously established FP strategies and adhered to existing alliance patterns mainly in line with the US and Europe, and strengthened them. Regarding external balancing against Iran in the Middle East, and the Russia in the wider Black Sea and the Central Asia, AKP benefited from the alignment with the USA. However, there were some significant crises in bilateral relations with the USA in the first years of AKP period. The first event erupted on 1 March 2003 when TGNA unexpectedly rejected the bill allowing American forces to invade Iraq by using Turkish territory.[59] The second crisis, the 'hood incident', took place on 4 July 2003, in the city of Sulaymaniyah in Iraq where the US troops detained members of the Turkish Special Forces troops, accusing them of plotting to assassinate a local Kurdish leader. The Turkish military personnel were hooded and transported to Kirkuk for interrogation, and it was 60 hours later that they were released.[60]

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55   Party Programme, http://www.akparti.org.tr/en/parti/party-programme/; 59. Hükümet Programı, http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2003/03/20030324.htm; 60. Hükümet Programı, http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2007/09/20070907M1-1.htm; 61. Hükümet Programı, http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2011/07/20110717-1.htm

56   Bülent Aras, Turkish Foreign Policy After July 15, *Istanbul Policy Center*, February 2017, p.5-6.

57   "New government system begins in Turkey after President Erdoğan takes oath"
      Hurriyet Daily News, 09.07.2018, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/new-government-system-begins-in-turkey-after-erdogan-swears-in-134364

58   Kaysis: Devletin Altyapısı, http://www.kaysis.gov.tr/

59   Michael Rubin, "A comedy of errors: American-Turkish diplomacy and the Iraq war", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2005, p. 220–233.

60   Ayşe Ömür Atmaca, "Turkey-US Relations (2009–2016): A troubled partnership in a troubled world?", Pınar Gözen Ercan (Ed.), *Turkish Foreign Policy: International Relations, Legality and Global*

These events were another critical turning points after the US sanctions on Turkey's military intervention in Cyprus in 1974 and described as a crisis of confidence between two countries. The hood incident was perceived by a considerable majority of Turks as American revenge of Turkey's refusal of the 1 March Bill.

AKP, still perceiving great threat to its survival from domestic opponents despite holding the majority in the TGNA and ruling the country with one party government, easily accomplished to manage the worsening relations with Washington. AKP leadership warmly accepted the role given by the USA in highly discussed and criticized the Greater Middle East Project.[61] Later, in July 2006, two administrations agreed on "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership".[62] However, it needed some time to be realized.

With regard to EU-Turkey relations, AKP government was enthusiastic to go ahead with the reforms in the period between 2002 and 2005. It hoped for the approval of the Annan Plan by both Cypriot communities. If this were the result, Cyprus would join the EU as a whole, and this would facilitate Turkey's membership by eliminating obstacles. AKP also believed that improved relations with EU would strengthen it against the meddling military and political opponents who were suspicious of its intentions.[63]

In the second term, AKP, gaining more confidence after the 2007 election victory, began to restructure Turkish FP. Regarding Turkish-Us relations, both countries needed each other for different interests. The US needed Turkey's support to withdraw from Afghanistan and Iraq. This meant a greater role for Turkey in the Middle East. Consequently, Turkey was presented as a moderate Islamic model to Arab world.[64] AKP, on the other hand, was in need of American support to demonstrate itself to the world as a central country. AKP elite believed this relationship would support its role in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere as an EU candidate, mediator, collaborator and role model. This relationship would also strengthen the AKP domestically against still powerful rivals. The result was that almost sixty years strategic alliance

Reach, Palgrave MacMillan, 2017, p.64.

61   Dışişleri Bakanı Abdullah Gül'ün 25 Ekim 2005'te Ankara Palas'ta İKÖ ülkeleri büyükelçileri onuruna verilen iftar yemeğinde yaptığı konuşma http://www.abdullahgul. gen.tr/TR/19.06.2006; Erdoğan'dan "BOP eşbaşkanı" eleştirilerine yanıt", Habertürk, 13.01.2019, https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/121091-erdogandan-bop-esbaskani-elestirilerine-yanit

62   "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership", MFA, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.en.mfa?45b45ccf-8814-4029-9224-5685e8ca3542

63   Funda Keskin Ata, "EU-Turkey Relations (1999–2016): Conditionality at Work?", Pınar Gözen Ercan (Ed.), *Turkish Foreign Policy: International Relations, Legality and Global Reach*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2017, p. 122.

64   Ömer Taşpınar, "Turkey: The New Model?", *Brookings*, 25.04.2012, https://www.brookings.edu/research/turkey-the-new-model/

gazi

Akademik
Bakış
67
Cilt 13
Sayı 25
Kış 2019

was renamed as "model partnership" which drew attraction from both countries and discussed in the Congress.[65] However, nothing went as thought. AKP was quick to overemphasize its power and influence and tried to diversify its balancing strategies.

In this period AKP placed EU membership lower on the political agenda. The negotiations slowed down and progress on the negotiation chapters was limited because of mainly negative implications of the Cyprus question. However, keeping the EU prospect alive was critical for the AKP in its internal struggle for power.[66] AKP continued with selective reforms in accordance with its political interests. It, for instance, adopted new constitutional amendments in 2011, mainly dealing with civilian control of the military and changes to the judicial system[67], eventually leading the presidential system in 2017.

Acting as a role model in the Arab world compelled Turkey to deeply get involved in the Middle East. "As of the early 2000s, Turkey started to cooperate with the Arab Middle East. Several agreements concerning mutual trade, business and visa exemption were signed alongside the high-level diplomatic visits that took place between Ankara and its Arab neighbors."[68]

Turkey's policy toward the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) also started to change following the end of the cross-border operation in 2008. It is argued that the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq compelled the Kurds to find an ally against potential aggression by the Baghdad government. Turkey, on the other hand, regarded this cooperation as an opportunity to expand its sphere of influence.[69] One of the motives leading Turkey to align with KRG was the need to balance the increased Iran influence in Iraq.

Taking more open sides in the Israel-Palestine conflict, including improved relations with Hamas which is accepted as terrorist organization by Israel and several western countries, relations with Israel begun to deteriorate. Turkey's almost 20-year military alliance and political partnership with Israel ended after Davos crisis in 2009 and the Mavi Marmara Incident in 2010. In this period AKP upgraded the bilateral relations with several Arab countries to

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65   The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership, Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Europe   of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 14 May 2009, Serial No. 111-16, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-111hhrg49711/html/CHRG-111hhrg49711.htm

66   Ata, ibid, p. 115.

67   Ibid.

68   Defne Günay, "The Roles Turkey Played in the Middle East (2002–2016)", Pınar Gözen Ercan (Ed.), *Turkish Foreign Policy: International Relations, Legality and Global Reach*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2017, p.198.

69   Burak Bilgehan Özpek, "Paradigm Shift between Turkey and the Kurds: From Clash of Titans to Game of Thrones", *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2018, 43-60, p.49-50.

the strategic level as a part of its general perspective towards the region.[70] In this context, Turkey established high level strategic councils with Iraq, Syria, Russia, Greece, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Egypt, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Qatar, Uzbekistan, and Tunisia. Also, a quartet high-level strategic cooperation council was formed between Turkey, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon on June 10, 2010.[71] Turkey has used the various elements of its soft power such as commerce, industry, tourism, infrastructure, transportation, development, education, culture and environment in these strategic initiatives. Before 2002, this type of relationship had been established in defense area with Azerbaijan, Pakistan, South Korea, the USA and Israel. Turkey's relations with Iran in this period had ups and downs. While the decision to install NATO Missile defense radar in Kurecik/Malatya made relations tense, Turkey did not vote for the draft UNSC resolution to sanction Iran because of its nuclear program, and mediated with Iran for its enriched uranium despite US reaction.

The third term (2011-2016) corresponds the third election victory and Arab uprising a while before. AKP assessed the Arab Spring which started in 2010 as a precious opportunity to further its regional role in the Middle East. Thus, it supported Muslim Brotherhood (MB) affiliated movements to topple the existing regimes.

The government changes in Tunisia in 2010 and in Egypt in 2012 were warmly welcomed. The uprising, later civil war and external intervention in Libya produced mix consequences for AKP leadership. However, the biggest shock for AKP leadership was Syria civil war. While Ankara hoped an easy and quick victory for MB affiliated opposition to take over the Syrian government, a long-lasting civil war ensued producing negative consequences for Turkey. The collapse of MB affiliated Morsi regime in Egypt in July 2003 and durability of Sisi regime has been another shock for AKP leadership. Thus, the realities of the Arab Spring have increasingly compelled Turkey to cooperate with the USA and NATO, despite some divergent strategies, particularly regarding Syria. Russia, China and Iran had been in the opposing camp.[72]

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70   Turkey's Relations with the Arab Countries, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-relations-with-the-arab-countries.en.mfa

71   Turkey has strategic cooperation councils with 13 countries, Anatolia Agency (AA), 24.12.2012.   https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-has-strategic-cooperation-councils-with-13-countries/292447; Ünal Çeviköz, *Turkey in a Reconnecting Eurasia: Foreign Economic and Security Interests*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. p.9.; Christopher Phillips, "Turkey's global strategy: Turkey and Syria", *LSE IDEAS*, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK, 2011. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43498/1/Turkey%27s%20Global%20Strategy_Turkey%20and%20Syria%28lsero%29.pdf

72   Ziya Öniş, Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Turkey and Russia in a shifting global order: cooperation, conflict and asymmetric interdependence in a turbulent region", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2016, p.82.

Changing regional dynamics with the start of Arab Spring and the rise of PKK affiliated PYD/YPG during Syrian civil war alerted Ankara to take some measures for PKK terrorism and Kurdish issue. Syrian civil war led to unstable conditions and paved the way power and role shifts for the actors including PYD/YPG and PKK in the region. PYD has gained de facto autonomy in northern Syria and begun to control and rule a territory Turkey reconsidered both its domestic and diplomatic stance toward the Kurdish issue in the region, including relations with the KRG in northern Iraq ruled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK) and PKK.[73] The result was a Peace Process (2012-2015) with PKK and better relations with KRG in Iraq.

Regarding Russia-Turkey relations, while the nature of relations during 1990s can be characterized as mainly conflictual with some elements of cooperation, the degree of conflict significantly reduced by the pragmatic turn in Turkish foreign policy; Turkey largely refraining from an active regional role in areas considered to be in Russia's sphere of influence.[74]

In the third term the relations with EU continued to deteriorate due to mainly policy differences in Arab Spring, Libyan and Syrian civil wars, alleged human rights violations and lacking the rule of law in Turkey after Gezi Park protests, flow of Syrian refugees to Europe from Turkish territories. Turkey was heavily criticized by EU institutions. AKP elites and Turkish society were alienated from EU membership. Ankara no longer viewed the accession as the sole option to shape the future of the country as it did 10 years ago, some EU members were also reluctant about Turkey's full membership.[75] Although the refugee crisis that peaked in 2015 introduced a new dynamic to the relationship, it seemed just a bargaining not for full membership, but a visa liberalization for Turkey and management of refugee crisis for EU.

In the case of Coalitions against ISIS, Turkey at the beginning did not participate in this coalition. Turkey was applying a hiding and a transcending strategy believing that ISIS may intensify its attacks Turkey and harm Turkish hostages and that other powers like USA would certainly fight against it. So, Turkey aimed to hide from the threat and transcend it to the other powers.

Overall, the third term witnessed the isolation of Turkey mainly from the Middle East and partly from surrounding regions because of breaking and deteriorating relations with Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Russia, the USA and EU. AKP elite defined such a situation as "precious loneliness", and although it was compared with the "splendid isolation" strategy that the Brit-

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73   Mustafa Coşar Ünal, "Is it ripe yet? Resolving Turkey's 30 years of conflict with the PKK", *Turkish Studies*, 17:1, 91-125, p.107.
74   Ibid, p.77.
75   Ata, ibid. p. 116.

ish Empire adopted in the second half of the 19th century[76], it was neither a value oriented nor rationally structured strategy. Thus, it constitutes a set of significant flaws in Turkish FP rather than the isolationism strategy discussed in the first chapter.

The fourth term starts after 15 July 2016. In this period, three major factors need special emphasis; the coup attempt and subsequent developments, increasing strength of PYD/YPG in Syria, and deteriorating relations with west and rapprochement with Russia. After 15 July coup attempt, Ankara espoused a more critical tone against the Western alliance, due to alleged links of the Gülenist putschists with NATO.[77] Erdogan and his inner circle initiated a conspiratorial campaign against Western powers on the belief that Western alliance abandoned AKP and supported domestic opposition to change the government further isolated Turkey.[78]

While the relations with the west were deteriorating, the alignment with Russia was taking a different form. AKP had to deal with a consistent denial of Turkish access to the Syrian war theater due to Russian blockage after 24 November 2015 incident of Russian jet shutdown, and thus it had to revise its Russia policy.[79] Both countries, with different motives, moved to a type of strategic alliance. One factor in such an intensified relationship is attributed to Putin's support to Erdogan following the coup attempt when Turkish government has been criticized for violation of human rights and Erdogan's autocratic attitudes during the state of emergency for almost two years. In fact, AKP, starting from Gezi Park protests, believed that the west has been trying to topple him by supporting opposition groups and instabilizing the country's economy. This belief has gained strength after 15 July event on the ground that the USA and European countries provided sanctuary for accused suspects of 15 July Coup attempt, did not extradite the leader of Fetullah Gulen Terrorist Organization (FETO) and did not give sincere support to Erdogan. On the contrary, there are news that Russia informed Erdogan on the coup attempt in advance, and appreciated his actions.

Improved relations between Ankara and Moscow gave Turkey a relatively free hand in Northern Syria. Turkey launched two cross border military operation in Syria, Operations Euphrates Shield in 2016 and Olive Branch in 2018 after Russian green light. Turkey joined the triple mechanism with Russia and Iran and became one of the guarantors of the ceasefire period in Syria.[80]

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76   Tarık Oguzlu, "Precious Loneliness and Turkey's Awakening to Regional Realities", *Orsam*, 02.09.2013, https://orsam.org.tr/en/precious-loneliness-and-turkey-s-awakening-to-regional-realities/
77   Aras, ibid, p.9.
78   Ibid, p.6.
79   Ibid, p.9.
80   Özpek, ibid, p.56.

Consequently, Turkey established observations posts in Idlib and deployed military assets.

Both countries furthered cooperation in several areas including strategic arms procurement like S-400, nuclear energy, oil and gas transmission issues. In fact, they successfully "compartmentalize economic issues and geopolitical rivalries in order to avoid negative spill-over effects".[81] In the fourth term of AKP, the regime types of both countries more resembled and this facilitated the forming a strategic partnership. Against this background, Ankara's close relationships with Moscow could be regarded as both an omni-balancing and bandwagoning. It is an omni-balancing for AKP on the ground that it is against both external threat by USA and EU, and domestic threats perceived from the internal oppositions at home. It could be regarded as bandwagoning since Turkey overwhelmingly needs Russian support in Syria and against the USA policies favoring PYD/YPG in the northern Syria. From this perspective, moving toward close rapprochement with Russia could be assessed a necessity rather than a preference to hedge against its growing isolation.[82]

Turkey's balancing actions by supporting Free Syrian Army (FSA) affiliated and Islamic military arm groups and leading their operations are seen a type of offshore balancing against both PKK affiliated PYD/YPG and its major sponsor the USA, ISIS, and Esad regime forces and their sponsors, Russia and Iran. Although Turkish operations areas in Syria are not far from Turkish borders, Turkey did not deploy considerable forces inside Syria and preferred to leverage the proxies. On the contrary, Turkey unprecedentedly established military bases in Qatar and Somalia on top of post-Cold War military presence in third countries via bilateral (Azerbaijan) and multilateral (Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia, Lebanon, Georgia) engagements.[83] These actions give signals to the onshore balancing behaviors.

Conclusion

Although TFP and its balancing strategies had undergone changes since the late Ottoman period, the firm alliance with the USA and West at the beginning of the Cold War is regarded as the first major turning point. Transformation of Turkish foreign policy after 2002 has received great interests. While the policy and strategy changes in the first years (2002-2007) are regarded as minor adjustments, the changes in balancing behaviors in the later periods are seen as goal and program changes beyond adjustments. However, the question of whether there is a total international orientation change is still debated. In this regard, the sum of changes in the AKP period is assessed as a second turn-

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81   Öniş, Yılmaz, "ibid, p.81.
82   Aras, ibid, p.8.
83   Aras, ibid, p.8.

ing point after the late ottoman period until now. Gustavsson's model in Figure-1 fits AKP led transformation process to analyze the dynamics and factors. It is found that international and domestic factor, both political and economic, are the driving factors behind the transformation process. However, the third dimension, cognitive factor, is also assessed critical in this process. AKP elite, Erdogan and Davutoglu among others, perceived the changing internal and external conditions and reacted accordingly.

During almost 17-year period of AKP rule, Turkish foreign policy and its balancing behaviors have undergone important changes. While, balancing behaviors in the first term (2002-2007) generally remained unchanged in favor of the USA and West, the second term (2007-2011) witnessed some important changes. The traditional alliances with USA and the EU wakened and the Turkish-Israel relations have come to breaking point. Conversely AKP tried to diversify its bilateral relations with the Muslim countries in the Middle East and other neighboring areas. The third term (2011-2016) produced more negative consequences for Turkey. After the breaking relations with Israel, Syria and Egypt, and deteriorating relations with USA, EU and the West inclined Gulf states, Turkey reached to the edge of isolationism. In the fourth term (2016-2019), AKP was left with a few options but was strictly aligned with Russia although both countries fast approached to an open armed conflict in November 2015 when a Russian aircraft was shot down by Turkish air forces.

Turkey, as a middle power and situated in the middle of highly volatile geopolitical hotspots, has resorted to different balancing behaviors and changed alliances from the late Ottoman period to 2002. Its western orientation, however, remained unchanged. The period between 2002 and 2019 differs in two major points. Firstly, it is seen that in this period Turkish leaders' perspectives and threat perceptions have more role in planning of FP and restructuring balancing actions than systemic factors. The second is that whether Turkey is drifting away from its Western allies and joining the "other camp", or adopting a more independent line of foreign policy is debated.

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Cilt 13
Sayı 25
Kış 2019

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