SURİYE KRİZİ'NDE TÜRKİYE: ORTA BÜYÜKLÜKTE GÜCÜN DIŞ POLİTİKA LİMİTLERİ

ÖZ

Literatürde "orta büyüklükte güç" kavramını tanımlayan iki temel akım mevcuttur. Bunlardan birincisi kavramı ülkelerin materyal kapasitelerine bakarak tanımlarken; ikincisi devletlerin dış politika karakterlerini önemsemektedir. Türkiye, her iki akıma göre de uluslararası alanda bir orta büyüklükte güçtür. Orta büyüklükte gücün uluslararası sistem içerisindeki rolü ve etkinliği üzerindeki temel faktör büyük güçlerin kendi aralarındaki ilişkisinin doğası ve orta büyüklükteki güç ile büyük güçler arasındaki ilişki tarzıdır. Bu durum orta büyüklükte bir güç olması hasebiyle Türkiye için de geçerlidir. Bu çalışma bahsi geçen belirleyici faktörün Türkiye'nin Suriye Krizi'nde izlediği dış politika üzerindeki sonuçlarını analiz etmektedir. Uluslararası politika ve Türk Dış Politikası bağlamında en temel güncel sorun olması Suriye Krizi'nin çalışma alanı seçilmesinde önemli bir nokta olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Büyüklükte Güç, Büyük Güç, Akıllı Güç, Türk Dış Politikası, Arap Halk Hareketleri, Suriye Krizi

تركيا في الازمة السورية : حدود السياسة الخارجية للقوة المتوسطة الحجم

هنالك نظريتان اساسيتان في الادبيات السياسية في تعريف مفهوم «القوة ذات الحجم المتوسط». اذ بينما تعرّف احداهما هذا المفهوم بالنظر الى خزين البلاد من الوثائق والمستندات، فان الثانية تاخذ بنظر الاعتبار اخلاقيات السياسة الخارجية للدول. وتعتبر تركيا وفقا لكلا النظريتين دولة ذات قوة متوسطة في الحجم في الساحة الدولية. ان العامل الاساسي في دور وتأثير دولة ذات حجم متوسط داخل النظام العالمي يتحدد عن طريق طبيعة علاقات الدول الكبرى بين بعضها البعض وعلاقة الدولة ذات الحجم المتوسط بالقوى الكبرى. ويعتبر هذا الوضع واردا بالنسبة الى تركيا ايضا، باعتبارها دولة ذات حجم متوسط. تتناول هذه الدراسة تحليل نتائج العامل الفاعل المنوّه به حول السياسة الخارجية التي تتّبعها تركيا بصدد الأزمة السورية. وقد اضحى اختيار الأزمة السورية كأكبر مشكلة معاصرة في خضمّ السياسة الدولية وسياسة تركيا الخارجية موضوعا ذا اهمية كبيرة.

الكلمات الدالّة : القوة ذات الحجم المتوسط، القوة العظمى، القوة العاقلة، سياسة تركيا الخارجية، الحركات الشعبية العربية، الأزمة السورية.

TURKEY IN THE SYRIAN CRISIS: THE LIMITS OF A MIDDLE POWER FOREIGN POLICY

ABSTRACT

There are two main strands that define the concept of "middle power". One defines the concept based on material capabilities, and the other one through the foreign policy characteristics. Based on its material capabilities and foreign policy characteristics, Turkey can be defined as a middle power in international relations. The role and effectiveness of middle powers in international system is mainly determined by the quality of the relationship between great powers and the relationship between the middle power and great powers. Since Turkey is a middle power, this determinant factor constitutes one of the main limitations to Turkish Foreign Policy. This article analyzes the consequences of this limitation of Turkey in the Syrian crisis. Syrian crisis is chosen as the case study, because it is one of the most serious current problems in international politics and Turkish Foreign Policy.

Keywords: Middle Power, Great Power, Smart Power, Turkish Foreign Policy, Arab Revolutionary Movements, Syrian Crisis

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Introduction

Turkey, especially during the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) period, has been referred to as a 'central country', 'regional great power', 'pivotal country', 'trading state', 'rising power' and/or a 'model country' both in the academia and in the discourse of its leaders. In this article, through a careful and detailed conceptualization of the term, we seek to understand whether Turkey can be defined as a "middle power" because a state's foreign policy primarily depends on its national power in international politics. Having made a case for defining Turkey as a middle power, we then analyze the limits of Turkey's foreign policy in the Syrian crisis.

Accordingly, this article has two parts: one theoretical/conceptual and one empirical. In the theoretical part, we analyze the implications of two different middle power conceptualizations, arguing that it is necessary to integrate both conceptualizations to gain a complete understanding of the concept. The second part explains why Turkey can be defined as a middle power through an analysis of Turkey's material capabilities and new foreign policy principles introduced by Ahmet Davutoğlu. Finally, we analyze the limits of Turkey's foreign policy in the Syrian crisis using the concept of middle power.

The reason for choosing the Syrian crisis as the case study is that it is one of the most serious current problems in international politics, significantly affecting both regional and global affairs. Alongside its regional and global impact, the crisis constitutes the primary challenge for Turkey's foreign policy, because Turkish-Syrian relations were the centerpiece of Turkey's policies towards the Middle East in the last decade. Since it shares 911 km. border with Syria, Turkey can be described one of the most affected countries by the crisis.

The Concept of Middle Power

Middle power has become a popular concept in the IR literature, especially in the last decade, being widely applied to explain the power status of various states in the international power hierarchy. However, although there are many studies using the concept, it is hard to claim that there is agreement on what it means, considering that different traditions in the literature focus on different aspects of the concept based on their own theoretical foundations. Overall, two main strands can be identified that define the concept of middle power: realist one and liberal one. While the realist strand defines middle power based on material capabilities, the liberal strand focuses on states' foreign policy characteristics and behaviors.[1]

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1 While we classify definitions of *middle power* into realist strand and liberal perspectives, Chapnick presents three distinct models: functional, hierarchical, and behavioral. However, since we view Chapnick's functional and behavioral models similar, we find it more appropriate to place them within the same liberal category. For more information about Chapnick's three models, see Adam Chapnick, "The

Holbraad is one of the leading thinkers of the realist strand on the concept of middle power. He defines a middle power as "a state occupying an intermediate position in a hierarchy based on power, a country much stronger than the small nations though considerably weaker than the principal members of the state system."[2] In order to determine power status of a state, Holbraad focuses on tangible resources. Accordingly, he considers GNP and population as primary indicators, and the size of the military, military expenditure and quantity of particular armaments as secondary indicators.[3] In this regard, a middle power is a state that possesses fewer tangible resources than great powers, but more than small powers. Based on these resources, a middle power has far greater freedom of movement in international politics than a small power. This is to say that, as White states, a middle power, rather than simply obeying the great powers, has the capability to negotiate with and even resist them to some extent.[4] However, this is not to say that middle powers are immune to the influence of great powers. On the contrary, middle powers' capability to pursue their own interests in international politics is limited compared to great powers. Therefore, even though a middle power desires to escape from the total influence of great powers, the major determinant of its role in international politics is the quality of relationships that exist among great powers, if there are multiple great powers in the international system.[5] In addition, the quality of the relationship between a middle power and great powers is another determinant of a middle power's policies in international politics.

For proponents of the liberal perspective, the realists' analysis in terms of material power ranking is problematic because it is highly dependent on quantifiable measures of power.[6] Liberals criticize the realist neglect of the nature of middle power behavior, soft power capabilities and foreign policy strategies. To overcome this, the liberal strand defines a state as a middle power based on analyzing its behavior in international politics. Evans and Grant, for example, list certain behavior modes of middle powers, such as "their tendency to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, their tendency to embrace compromise positions in international disputes, and their tendency to embrace notions of good international citizenship to guide their diplomacy."[7] Similarly, Higgott and Cooper claim that middle powers fol-

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Middle Power", *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, Vol.7, No.2 (1999), p.73. In addition, Yalçın classifies definitions of *middle power* as realist or liberal; see Hasan Basri Yalçın, "The Concept of Middle Power and the Recent Turkish Foreign Policy Activism", *Afro Eurasian Studies*, Vol.1, No.1 (2012), p.199.

2 Carsten Holbraad, "The Role of Middle Powers", *Cooperation and Conflict,* Vol.6, No.1 (1971), p.78.

3 Carsten Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics,* (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), p.77-9.

4 Hugh White, "Power Shift: Australia's Future between Washington and Beijing", *Quarterly Essay,* No.39 (2010), p.67.

5 Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics,* p.178.

6 A. F. Cooper, R. A. Higgott and K. R. Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order,* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993), p.17.

7 Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant, *Australia's Foreign Relations: In the World of 1990s,* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1991), p.19.

low, support, maintain and strengthen the norms of the international system,[8] while Cooper et al., characterize middle power behavior in terms of three patterns: catalyst, facilitator and manager. Being a catalyst refers to the capacity to trigger an initiative on an international issue and gather followers around it. Being a facilitator represents the capability to form collaborative and coalitional activities on issue-specific areas. Lastly, being a manager involves the ability to build institutions and develop norms in international politics.[9]

Thus, the basic behavior characteristic of middle powers is that they seek multilateral cooperation. As Keohane claims, middle powers are states that cannot act alone effective but are able to have an important impact in a group or through an international institution.[10] Mares, too, argues that middle powers are able to increase their influence in international system through building and actively participating in coalitions.[11] It can be said that middle powers seek multilateral cooperation in order to escape from the influence of great powers. Since multilateral settings provide platforms on which middle powers are able to express and pursue their interests more freely than in bilateral settings.

Although the realist and liberal strands offer two different perspectives on middle power, they should not be seen as competitors. On the contrary, as Müftüler and Yüksel argue, in order to gain a complete definition of the concept and a broader understanding of the power status of states, these two strands should be integrated.[12] Accordingly, a middle power, first, occupies an intermediate position in terms of material resources between great powers and small powers. Second, a middle power, thanks to its tangible (economic and military) and intangible (diplomatic and political) resources, builds coalitions, triggers initiatives to gather other states around it and actively participates in international institutions to realize its own interests, behaving as a good international citizen that follows the norms and rules of the international system.

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8 R. A. Higgott and A. F. Cooper, "Middle Power Leadership and Coalition Building: Australia, the Cairns Group and the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations", International Organization, Vol.44, No.4 (1990), p.606.

9 Cooper, Higgott and Nossal, Relocating Middle Powers..., p.19-25. Also see Sook Jong Lee, "South Korea's Middle Power Activism and the Retooling of Its Public Diplomacy", Jan Melissen and Yul Sohn, Understanding Public Diplomacy in East Asia: Middle Powers in a Troubled Region (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.111.

10 Robert Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics", International Organization, Vol.23, No.2 (1969), p.298.

11 David Mares, "Middle Powers under Regional Hegemony: to Challenge or to Acquiesce in Hegemonic Enforcement", International Studies Quarterly, Vol.32, No.4 (1988), p.456.

12 Meltem Müftüler and Müberra Yüksel, "Turkey: A Middle Power in the New World Order", Andrew, F. Cooper, Niche Diplomacy (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), p.185.

Turkey as a Middle Power

Having given broad definition of the concept of middle power that incorporates both realist and liberal perspectives, we can now explain why Turkey can be regarded as a middle power due to its material capabilities and foreign policy behaviors.cIn terms of the realist strand, Turkey occupies an intermediate position in the international system based on its tangible resources such as its geography, GDP, military strength and population. First of all, Turkey occupies an advantageous geographic location positioned between the industrialized West and the Middle East and Caspian basin with their rich energy resources.[13] In addition, the strategic value of the Dardanelles and Bosporus straits increases Turkey's influence in international politics.[14]

Economic indicators are also a crucial factor for a middle power. Following chronic economic crises and instabilities in the 1990s, Turkey recovered in the 2000s to achieve a GDP (nominal) in 2014 estimated at 798,429 billion US dollars, making it the world's 18th largest economy.15 Turkey's GDP (purchasing power parity) in 2014, at 1,457,863 billion US dollars, was the 17th largest.16 With these numbers, Turkey's economy has a place in the Group of 20 (G-20). Alongside its powerful economy, Turkey also has a considerable, young and dynamic population which stood at 78,741,053 on 31 December 2015. 67.8% of the population was between 15-64 years old,17 with about 50% under 30. Turkey's population is expected to reach around 94.6 million by 2050.18

Regarding military strength, the Turkish Armed Forces is NATO's second largest at 687,089 personnel,19 while military expenditure was 22,755 billion US dollars (15th in the world), or 2.2% of GDP (nominal) in 2014.20 In

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13 Baskın Oran, "TDP'nin Uygulanması", Baskın Oran, Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, I. ed., (İstanbul: İletişimYayınları, 2009), p.20.

14 William Hale, Turkish Foreign Policy: 1774-2000, (London,: Frank Cass, 2000), p.xiii.

15 World Bank, Gross Domestic Product 2014, accessed 5 February 2016, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/GDP.pdf.

16 World Bank, Gross Domestic Product 2014, PPP, accessed 5 February 2016, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/GDP_PPP.pdf.

17 "Adrese Dayalı Nüfus Kayıt Sistemi Sonuçları 2015", Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (Turkish Statistics Institute), 28 January 2016, accessed 5 February 2016, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21507.

18 "Türkiye'nin Demografik Yapısı ve Geleceği: 2010-2050", Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (Turkish Statistics Institute), 11 January 2012, accessed 5 February 2016, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=13140.

19 "Personel Mevcutları 2015", Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri (Turkish Armed Forces), May 2015, accessed 5 February 2016, http://www.tsk.tr/3_basin_yayin_faaliyetleri/3_4_tskdan_haberler/2015/tsk_haberler_34.html.

20 "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database", The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, accessed 5 February 2016, http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database.

order to meet the military's equipment needs, Turkey has been investing on its defense industry, which has reduced its military dependency on other states. Currently, it supplies 55% of its military needs from domestic sources.21

In addition to its middle power capability in terms of tangible resources, Turkey constitutes a middle power with respect to its foreign policy behavior. As outlined above, according to the liberal strand, middle powers tend to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, play mediator roles internationally, comply with international system norms and guide their diplomacy on the basis of good international citizenship. Especially since the AK Party took power in 2002, Turkey has conducted a foreign policy compatible with the behavior characteristics of middle powers. In this respect, the current government's *Strategic Depth Approach* or *Davutoğlu Doctrine* provides a useful framework for understanding Turkey's new foreign policy orientation under the AK Party. This orientation is built on five principles, introduced by Ahmet Davutoğlu.[22]

The first principle is *balance between security and democracy* which aims to enlarge freedoms without sacrificing security needs. With this perspective, Turkey has developed policies that simultaneously provide security and expand freedoms.[23] For example, even in the post-September 11 international environment, Turkey incorporated European Union norms into its domestic structure. As a result, Turkey has been reviewing and revising its laws in order to improve its democratic credentials. At the same time, as Davutoğlu states, Turkey has been waging its own "war on terror" against the PKK without harming the freedoms and liberties of its citizens.[24]

The second principle is *zero problems and maximum cooperation with neighbors.*[25] In the past, Turkey believed that it was surrounded by enemies, which

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21 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Savunma Bakanlığı (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Defense), Teknoloji Yönetim Stratejisi 2011-2016, (Ankara: Milli Savunma Bakanlığı, 2011), accessed 5 February 2016, http://www.ssm.gov.tr/anasayfa/kurumsal/Documents/201116_TYY.pdf.; "Savunma Sanayinde Yerlilik Oranı Yüzde %55'i Geçti,", TRT Haber, 25 February 2015, accessed 5 February 2016, http://www.trthaber.com/haber/ekonomi/savunma-sanayinde-yerlilik-orani-yuzde-55i-gecti-169966.html.

22 Davutoğlu served as Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister's office from 2003 to 2009 before serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2009 to 2014. Between August 2014 and May 2016, he was the leader of AK Party and Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

23 Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", Insight Turkey, Vol.10, No.1 (2008), p.79.

24 Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", p.79.

25 Today, Turkey has problematic relations with its neighbors, especially with Syria and Iraq. However, this does not constitute a contradiction with the zero problem principle since it emphasizes a change in the geographic imagination of Turkish society in which its decision-makers and elites imply to ordinary citizens that Turkey's neighborhood is not full of risks but there are also opportunities. Turkey should therefore not approach its environment with a hostile paranoia that alienates it from its neighbors. Instead, it should seek to create a cooperative environment based on mutual trust. Zero-problem principle

had some adverse effect on Turkish foreign policy, as it alienated from neighboring countries.[26] To eradicate such thinking, Turkey has begun to rediscover neighboring regions and build economic and political interdependence. Economically, researchers have discussed whether Turkey has become a trading state,[27] which fits well with middle power behavior characteristics. Moreover, Turkish leaders, diplomats and officials have emphasized cultural and historical ties with Turkey's neighborhood. This rhetorical change has been reflected in its geographic imagination as Turkey has started to identify its geography with respect to social, political and commercial opportunities rather than security concerns.[28]

The third principle is *developing relations with the neighboring regions and beyond.* This principle promotes policies to contribute to the security and stability of the international system,[29] which necessitates pro-active diplomacy. Turkey has achieved this in its foreign policy through establishing mediation and peacekeeping mechanisms, contributing to high-level political and diplomatic dialogue platforms and integrating economically with its neighbors and multi-cultural formations. Turkey's mediation initiatives between Syria and Israel, Syria and Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia and Hamas and Fatah, and its contribution to a peace settlement in Gaza and the Lebanon wars were the outcomes of this third principle. Turkey was also elected to co-chair with Spain of the UN's Alliance of Civilizations initiative in 2005. Turkey has emerged as an important donor for humanitarian development in the world. In 2013, for example, Turkey increased its humanitarian aid to 1.6 billion US dollars, making it the world's third largest contributor to humanitarian assistance. It should be also noted that Turkey was the largest contributor in terms of the ratio of humanitarian aid to GDP.[30] In addition, Turkey increased its foreign aid to 3.3 billion US dollars in 2013. Turkey has supported developments in education, health, water and water sanitation, agriculture, shelter,

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is concerned with establishing this new thinking to replace the former paranoid psychology in the minds of Turkish people.

26 Bülent Aras, "The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", Insight Turkey, Vol.11, No.3 (2009), p.128.

27 Kemal Kirişci, "Transformation of Turkish foreign policy: The Rise of the Trading State", New Perspectives on Turkey, No.40 (2009), p.42-52.

28 Bülent Aras and Hakan Fidan, "Turkey and Eurasia: Frontiers of a New Geographic Imagination", New Perspectives on Turkey, No.40 (2009), p.197.

29 "Article by H.E. Ahmet Davutoğlu published in Estado de Sao Paulo Newspaper (Brazil) on 9 October 2011", Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 9 October 2011, accessed 3 February 2016, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/article-by-h_e_-ahmet-davutoglu-published-in-estado-de-sao-paulo-newspaper-_brazil_-on-9-october-2011.en.mfa.

30 The biggest contributor was the United States (4,7 billion US dollars) and the second biggest the United Kingdom (1,8 billion dollars). See "Uluslararası Yardımlarda 'En Cömert Ülke' Unvanını Taşıyan Türkiye'nin Yardım Seferberliği Sürüyor", Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbabakanlık Kamu Diplomasisi Koordinatörlüğü (Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Office of Public Diplomacy), accessed 7 February 2016, http://kdk.gov.tr/haber/turkiyenin-dis-yardimlari-2013/494.

and administrative and civil infrastructure in 48 countries in the Middle East, Africa, Balkans, Central Asia, Latin America and Caucasus.[31] These indicators demonstrate Turkey's increasing soft power capabilities which is an important middle power currency in international politics.[32]

The fourth principle is *rhythmic diplomacy*, aiming to bring activism to Turkish foreign policy through participating in international organizations.[33] This aim is also in line with one of the basic characteristics of a middle power, namely multilateralism. In this regard, Turkey's active participation in the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, the United Nations (UN), D-8, the G20 and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization are reflections of this principle.

The fifth principle is *multi-dimensional foreign policy*, according to which Turkey's relations with global actors should be complementary instead of conflictual.[34] Under this principle, it is important for Turkey to simultaneously develop relations with the United States, Russia, China and the European Union countries. This principle also reflects an important characteristic of a middle power since it necessitates multi-dimensionality in relations with all global actors. Hence, Turkey aims to diversify its ties as much as possible to increase the effectiveness of its policies on the liberal premise that a middle power's role in international politics depends on the quality of relations among great powers and the quality of its own relations with them.

In sum, based on its material capabilities and foreign policy behavior, especially in the last decade, Turkey can be described as a middle power in terms of both the realist and liberal strands. It possesses more tangible resources than small powers, though less than great powers. Moreover, it conducts an active foreign policy in international politics by following the norms of the international system, protecting the balance between security and democracy in its domestic affairs, contributing to the peace and stability of its neighborhood and beyond as a good international citizen, seeking active representation in international organizations and diversifying its relations with multiple global actors. The following sections analyze Turkey's policies in the Syrian crisis in

31 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı (Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency), Annual Report 2013, (Ankara: TIKA), accessed 7 February 2016, http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/publication/TIKA%20ANNUAL%20REPORT%202013.pdf.

32 For an analysis on Turkey's soft power capabilities see Meliha Benli Altunışık, "The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East", Insight Turkey, Vol.10, No.2 (2008): 41-54; Mehmet Şahin and B. Senem Çevik, Türk Dış Politikası ve Kamu Diplomasisi, (Ankara: Nobel Yayınları, 2015).

33 "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy", SETA Foundation's Washington D.C. Branch, 8 December 2009, accessed 2 February 2016, http://setadc.org/multimedia/texts/202-unofficial-transcript-of-foreign-minister-ahmed-davutoglus-speech.

34Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", p.82.

order to investigate the limits of a middle power in an ongoing domestic and international conflict that involves the intervention of great powers.

The Limits of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Syrian Crisis

The Syrian crisis is one of the most serious and urgent problems in world politics. It is one of the extensions of the Arab revolutionary movements, or the Arab Spring, which started in Tunisia on 18 December 2010 before spreading to many other Middle Eastern countries. However, the revolutionary protests in Syria took a different direction, leading to a civil war that has continued for 5 years so far. This has caused a humanitarian disaster in which over 250,000 Syrians have died and 12 million people have been displaced.[35] Among these, 4.5 million Syrians have become refugees in the neighboring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt,[36] meaning that the civil war has affected not only the lives of its own citizens but also regional and global politics.

Since the Syrian crisis has such an impact, foreign powers have become involved in the civil war to secure their competing interests in Syria's future. As a result, both the Assad regime and the Syrian opposition[37] have received military, diplomatic and financial support from foreign countries, while the conflict has created complex patterns of alliances and enmities between global powers, regional powers and non-state actors, including terrorist organizations in Syria. Although it is difficult to fully portray the complexity of these alliances and enmities, the table below simplifies this web of relations in Syria.

As the table suggests, the alliance and enmity patterns in the Syrian civil war are too complex even to easily categorize the patterns as pro or anti-Assad because there is not even unity within these camps. For example, while both Turkey and ISIS oppose the Assad regime, they also oppose each other. Likewise, Turkey and the US belong to the anti-ISIS coalition yet have contradictory attitudes towards the PYD. While the United States sees it as an important component in the fight against ISIS, for Turkey, both the PYD and ISIS are terrorist organizations, and therefore a threat to international peace and security.

This complexity has prevented an international solution of the crisis, with the UN Security Council unable to pass any resolution to stop the civil war due to Russian and Chinese vetoes.[38] Likewise, although the Arab League ini-

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35 "Alarmed by Continuing Syria Crisis, Security Council Affirms Its Support for Special Envoy's Approach in Moving Political Solution Forward", United Nations Coverage and Press Releases, 17 August 2015, accessed 3 February 2016, http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12008.doc.htm.

36 "Syrian Regional Refugee Response", UNHCR, 7 February 2016, accessed 10 February 2016, http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php.

37 It is impossible to consider the Syrian opposition as a unified body. Instead, when we talk about the Syrian opposition, we refer to diverse factions that are variously friendly or hostile to one another.

38 "Syria Resolution vetoed by Russia and China at United Nations", The Guardian, 4 February 2012,

tiated an observer mission on 24 December 2011 and the Annan peace plan was launched in March 2012 under the mandate of both the Arab League and the UN, the bloodshed and humanitarian disaster could not be prevented.

Table: Complex Patterns of Alliances and Enmities in the Syrian Civil War[39]

	Assad Regime	ISIS/DAESH*	PYD**	Islamist Groups	Moderate Groups
US	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with military action	Support with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with military action	Support with diplomacy or logistics
Russia	Support with military action	Oppose with military action[1]	Support with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with military action	Oppose with military action
UK	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with military action	Support with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Support with diplomacy or logistics
France	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with military action	Support with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Support with diplomacy or logistics
Turkey	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with military action	Oppose with military action	Support with diplomacy or logistics	Support with diplomacy or logistics
Iran	Support with military action	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Support with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with military action
Saudi Arabia	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Oppose with military action	Oppose with diplomacy or logistics	Support with diplomacy or logistics	Support with diplomacy or logistics
Assad Regime	Support with military action	Oppose with military action	Not Clear[2]	Oppose with military action	Oppose with military action

    * Known as both "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" and "ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī 'l-ʿIrāq wa-sh-Shām", ISIS/Daesh is a Salafi Jihadist terrorist group.

    ** Known as the "Democratic Union Party" or "Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat", it is the Syrian branch of PKK (the Kurdistan Workers' Party), a terrorist organization targeting Turkey. The People's Protection Units (YPG) are the PYD's armed units.

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accessed 29 January 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/04/assad-obama-resign-un-resolution.

39 The table is a modified version of a chart in The Guardian. See Kareem Shaheen et al., "Who Backs Whom in the Syrian Conflict", The Guardian, 2 December 2015, accessed 7 February 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2015/oct/09/who-backs-whom-in-the-syrian-conflict.

In the Syrian crisis, Turkey has pursued a typical middle power foreign policy. Firstly, it tried to persuade the Assad regime to introduce democratic reforms and hold elections to meet the demands of the Syrian people.[40] However, the Assad regime rejected Turkey's reform calls and bloodily repressed domestic demonstrations. In response, Turkey changed its attitude towards regime, supplying diplomatic and logistic support to the Syrian opposition.[41] In doing so, Turkey was actually demonstrating a consistent foreign policy towards the Arab Spring since the beginning, Turkey had supported the demands of Arab people in the region for democracy. For example, Turkey's then Prime Minister R. Tayyip Erdoğan described the protests in many Arab countries as a struggle for freedom and democracy against authoritarian regimes.[42] As Cebeci and Üstün put it, "Turkey did not ... endorse the authoritarian *status quo*; on the contrary, Turkey advocated for reform, change, and responsiveness to the 'legitimate demands of the people'".[43] Consistent with this, Turkey has also hosted a massive refugee influx. According to the UNHCR, Turkey is currently hosting 2,503,549 Syrian refugees, which is the world's largest refugee population.[44]

As a middle power, Turkey advocates multilateralism in the Syrian crisis, first by seeking regional solutions. It thus supported the Arab League's measures against the Assad regime, such as diplomatic and economic sanctions and suspension of Syria's membership on 12 November 2011.[45] During this period, Turkey was against an international intervention in Syria since it believed such an action could have unexpected harmful consequences.[46] However, upon the failure of Arab League's initiatives, Turkey called for international support for the establishment of no-fly/buffer zone in northern Syria to create a safe environment for refugees and bolster Turkey's border security.[47] However, Turkey's call was ignored due to disagreements on the future of Syria among great powers.

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40 Ian Black, "Turkey Tells Bashar al- Assad to Cease Syria Repression", The Guardian, 23 June 2011, accessed 29 January 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/23/syria-bashar-al-assad-turkey-refugees.

41 Erol Cebeci and Kadir Üstün, "The Syrian Quagmire: What's Holding Turkey Back?", Insight Turkey, Vol.14, No.2 (2012), p.15; Şaban Kardaş, "Turkey's Syria Policy: The Challenge of Coalition Building", The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 17 February 2012, accessed 30 January 2016, http://www.gmfus.org/publications/turkey%E2%80%99s-syria-policy-challenge-coalition-building.

42 "Erdoğan'dan Kahire'de Tarihi Konuşma", Sabah, 13 September 2011, accessed 1 February 2016, http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2011/09/13/erdogan-kahirede-konusuyor.

43 Cebeci and Üstün, "The Syrian Quagmire", p.15.

44 "Syria Regional Refugee Response- Turkey," UNHCR, 31 December 2015, accessed 1 February 2016, http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224.

45 Müjge Küçükkeleş, "Arab League's Syrian Policy", SETA Policy Brief, No.56, April 2012, accessed 4 February 2016, http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/arab-league%E2%80%99s-syrian-policy.pdf.

46 Zenonas Tziarras, "Turkey's Syria Problem: A Talking Timeline of Events", Turkish Policy Quarterly, Vol.11, No.3 (2012), p.133.

47 Tziarras, "Turkey's Syria Problem", p.134.

Turkey has also behaved as a good international citizen by actively participating in the international coalition against ISIS.[48] Apart from allowing the coalition to use its airbases, its own warplanes have joined coalition air raids. In addition to its contribution to the war on terror, Turkey has respected the norms and rules of the international system, with its response following the downing of a Turkish RF-4 Phantom by the Assad regime being a good example. Instead of taking military action against the Assad regime, Turkey put the issue on the agenda of the UN and invoked Article 4 of the NATO charter. In addition, Turkey called on the United States and the United Kingdom to intervene in Syria.[49] This demonstrates a typical middle power behavior in that Turkey abstained from unilateral action and respected international law. However, Turkey's calls were ignored by the US, UK and other NATO members, while other powers, such as Russia and China, opposed direct intervention.

The ways that these developments limited Turkey's options in the Syrian crisis can be usefully explained through the concept of middle power. Recalling the middle power conceptualization, two factors determine the role of a middle power in international politics. The first is the state of relationships between the great powers. In this respect, Syria constitutes a battlefield in which, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, both the US and Russia are militarily engaged in the pursuit of their conflicting interests. While Russia has deployed its forces in order to support the Assad regime and has been bombing mainly Western-backed opposition groups, the United States has accused the Assad regime of widespread atrocities, and has been providing arms to moderate opposition groups. Such a context dramatically reduces a middle power's freedom of movement.

The second factor is the quality of relationships between the middle power and great powers. Although Turkey can be put in the same camp as the United States since both wish to topple the Assad regime, they have pursued different policies with respect to the PYD and Islamist groups within the Syrian opposition. Moreover, whereas Turkey is a strong advocate of taking more decisive steps to bring down the Assad regime, the US has conducted a more cautious strategy, even signaling that it may accept a transitional role for Assad in any negotiated settlement for the future of Syria.[50] Meanwhile, concerning the relations with Russia, Turkey shot down a Russian SU-24 fighter jet that had violated Turkish airspace despite warnings while Russia has been conducting air

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48 Gül Tüysüz and Zeynep Bilginsoy, "Ministry: Turkey Joins Coalition Airstrikes against ISIS in Syria", CNN, 29 August 2015, accessed 5 February 2016, http://edition.cnn.com/2015/08/29/europe/turkey-airstrikes/.

49 Simon Tisdall, "Turkey Calls on Major Powers to Intervene in Syria," The Guardian, 19 October 2012, accessed 6 February 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/19/turkey-britain-us-intervene-syria.

50 Shaheen, "Who Backs Whom in the Syrian Conflict".

raids against Turkish-backed Turkmen groups in northern Latakia. In short, Turkey has a fragile relationship with both great powers involved in the Syrian crisis, which has limited the effectiveness of its middle power foreign policy.

Conclusion

Turkey is a middle power in terms of the international power hierarchy based on both material capabilities and foreign policy behavior characteristics. It possesses more resources, particularly geography, GDP, military capacity and population, than a small power, but less than a great power. Hence, Turkey's power status lies between that of a small power and a great power in international politics, making it a middle power. In addition, since it actively participates in international organizations, follows the norms and rules of the international system, contributes to international peace and stability and seeks diplomatic and multilateral solutions to international problems, Turkey's foreign policy exemplifies typical middle power behavior.

In the Syrian crisis, specifically, Turkey has pursued a foreign policy with middle power behavior. It has brought the issue to multilateral platforms, implemented policies to prevent a humanitarian disaster, particularly by welcoming huge numbers of refugees, and respected the norms of the international system. However, Turkey's effectiveness in the crisis has been limited because its interests have contradicted those of the great powers. Moreover, disagreement and conflict between the great powers has further limited Turkey's foreign policy because it has made it impossible to find the international solution to the crisis that Turkey advocates. To overcome this middle power limitations, Turkey should reformulate its strategies in the Syrian crisis by taking more into account the state of relationships between the great powers and its own relations with them. This is also a necessity in the Middle East since its dynamic geography requires a dynamic foreign policy. In this regard, Turkey needs to adopt a well-planned strategy based on a combination of hard and soft power assets, consistent with its actual strength towards well-designed foreign policy objectives. In other words, to borrow Nye's concept, Turkey should act more as a "smart power" in the Syrian crisis.[51]

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51 For the concept of smart power see Joseph S. Nye, The Future of Power, (New York: Public Affairs, 2011); Joseph S. Nye, "Get Smart," Foreign Affairs, Vol.88, No.4 (2009).

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