Lebanese American University

Turkey's Foreign Policy and Realism

(2002-2010)

By

Rima Fakhry Alban

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in International Affairs

School of Arts and Sciences

November 2011

Thesis Proposal Form

Lebanese American University

School of Arts & Sciences - B. Beirut Campus

Thesis Proposal Form

Name of Student:

RIMA FAKHRY

I.D.#:

Program / Department:

MA INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS - BEIRUT

On (dd/mm/yy):

15 Dec. 2010

has presented a Thesis proposal entitled:

TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST
(2002 - 2010)

in the presence of the Committee Members and Thesis Advisor:

Advisor:

Walid Moubarak

(Name and Signature)

Committee Member:

Imad Salamay

(Name and Signature)

Committee Member:

Bassel Salloukh

(Name and Signature)

Comments / Remarks / Conditions to Proposal Approval:

Changes in the first ch. & literature
review.

Date:

Acknowledged by

(Dean, School of)

cc: Department Chair
Thesis Advisor
Student
School Dean

Thesis Defense Result Form

Name of Student: RIMA FAKHRY ALBAK I.D.#:

On (dd/mm/yy): 28/9/2011 has defended a Thesis entitled:

Turkey's Foreign Policy and Realism

In the presence of the following Committee members:

Advisor

Dr. Walid Moubarak
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member

Dr. Bassel Saloukh
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member

Dr. Imad Salamy
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member

(Name and Signature)

The student has passed ☒ not passed ☐ the Thesis defense in partial Fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of MA/MS in _____

Comments/Required Changes to Thesis due on (dd/mm/yy)

The thesis is an attempt to explain Turkish Foreign Policy through neo-realism. In the conclusion try to put the limitations of this theory in explaining Turkish Foreign Policy

Advisor's report on completion of above Thesis conditions:

Changes Approved by Thesis Advisor:

Signature: W. Moubarak

Date: _____

Acknowledged by _____
(Dean, School of Arts and Sciences)

cc: Registrar
Advisor
File Graduate Studies

Date of the Thesis defense public announcement (dd/mm/yy) _____

Thesis Approval Form

Lebanese American University

School of _____ - B _____ Campus

Thesis Approval Form

Student Name: RIMA FAKHRY I.D. #: _____

Thesis Title : TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD
THE MIDDLE EAST : 2002 - 2010

Program / Department MA INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, SOCIAL SC. Dept.

School ARTS & SCIENCES

Approved by:

Thesis Advisor: DR. WALID E. MOUBARAK

Committee Member Imad Salamey

Committee Member Bassel Sallouh

Date 24 November, 2011

THESIS /PROJECT COPYRIGHT RELEASE FORM

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

By signing and submitting this license, I (Rima Fakhry Alban) grant the Lebanese American University (LAU) the non-exclusive right to reproduce, translate (as defined below), and/or distribute my submission (including the abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video. I agree that LAU may, without changing the content, translate the submission to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation. I also agree that LAU may keep more than one copy of this submission for purposes of security, backup and preservation. I represent that the submission is my original work, and that I have the right to grant the rights contained in this license. I also represent that my submission does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright. If the submission contains material for which I do not hold copyright, I represent that I have obtained the unrestricted permission of the copyright owner to grant LAU the rights required by this license, and that such third party owned material is clearly identified and acknowledged within the text or content of the submission. IF THE SUBMISSION IS BASED UPON WORK THAT HAS BEEN SPONSORED OR SUPPORTED BY AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN LAU, I REPRESENT THAT I HAVE FULFILLED ANY RIGHT OF REVIEW OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS REQUIRED BY SUCH CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT. LAU will clearly identify my name(s) as the author(s) or owner(s) of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to my submission.

Name: Rima Fakhry Alban

Signature:

Date : October 2011

Plagiarism Policy Compliance Statement

I certify that I have read and understood LAU's Plagiarism Policy. I understand that failure to comply with this Policy can lead to academic and disciplinary actions against me.

This work is substantially my own, and to the extent that any part of this work is not my own, I have indicated that by acknowledging its sources.

Name: Rima Fakhry Alban

Signature:

Date: October 2011

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the help and assistance of many persons.

First I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Moubarak for his guidance throughout my Thesis work. I am also deeply grateful to Dr. Salamey and Dr.Salloukh for being on my thesis committee.

Finally, special thanks go to my friends and family for their long support.

To my husband

Turkey's Foreign Policy and Realism

Rima Fakhry

Abstract

Turkey has always played a prominent role in drawing the history of the Middle East. However, with the rise of the secular Turkish Republic under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923, Turkey chose to turn to the West to build its strategic alliances. In this context, Turkey's foreign policy makers were interested, throughout the Cold War, in consolidating their relations with the western countries in general, the USA specifically, without forgetting Turkey's relations with Israel.

This approach in foreign policy did not change despite the end of the Cold War, the changes of many political and geographic conditions, and the emergence of new challenges and opportunities.

The turning point in Turkey's foreign policies took place in 2002, with the advent of the "Party of Justice and Development" into power when it was asked to form the government after its success in the parliamentary elections. This party, with its Islamic background, drew a new scene in the state's policies; especially in the field of foreign policy as based on the "Historical Depth Strategy", mainly with its current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu. This strategy led to a remarkable openness to the Islamic and Arab worlds, especially to neighboring states.

To understand the behavior of the party governing Turkey since 2002, one needs to study the AKP's background, its political behavior especially in the field of international relations, its work for Turkey's best interests, especially in economic and security fields, in addition to maintaining the state's strength and power in different other fields, and building alliances to improve Turkey's position and provide it with an effective role in the international system. The very diversity of Turkey's foreign policy under AKP calls for a systematic school of thought to explain the party's practices and in this context, the Realist Theory rises to the occasion.

Hence, this theory and the behavior of the AKP in foreign policy will be studied in this thesis, in an attempt to understand the basis of Turkey's foreign policy today, the path of this policy, as well as the potential benefit for all those working in the field of international relations.

Key words: The Party of Justice and Development in Turkey, Foreign policy, Neo-realism, Strategic depth theory,

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	vii
Introduction	1-8
Chapter One: Theories that explain the behaviors governing international affairs	9- 14
Neo-realism	10
Liberal theory	12
Critical theory	12
Constructivism	13
Levels of analysis	14
Chapter Two: The historical development of Turkey's foreign policy	16- 20
1. The Cold War period	17
2. The post Cold War era	18
Chapter Three: Factors influencing the shaping of Turkey's foreign policy	21- 46
1- The State Level of Analysis	21
a. The Ruling Group (AKP)	21
b. The Military Establishment	27
c. Turkey's Economy	30

d. The Minorities Factor	33
2- The Individual Level of Analysis:	35
The Minister of Foreign Affairs	
3- The International Level of Analysis	41
a. The Geographic Location and Geopolitical Position	41
b. The Newly Emerged Security Challenges	44
c. The Newly Emerged Economic Role	45
 Chapter Four: Turkey's Behavior toward Some Middle Eastern Issues	 47- 67
Introduction	48
a. The role of Turkey in the Iranian Nuclear Issue	52
b. Turkey and the Arab-Israeli struggle	60
c. The Turkish –Iraqi relations	64
 Conclusion	 68
 References	 73

List of Maps

Map of Turkey	42
Bako-Cihan Pipeline Map	46
Nabucco Pipelines Map	56

Abbreviations

AKP: Is the “Party of Justice and Development” known in the Turkish language as “Adelet ve Kalkinma Partisi”.

PKK: Is the “Kurdistan Workers Party”, known in the Kurdish language as the “Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan”.

CHP: Is the “People’s Republican Party”, known in the Turkish language as “Cumhur Halk Partisi”.

NSC: The National Security Council

PLO: The Palestinian Liberation Organisation

Introduction:

Since 2002, Turkey has emerged as an active player on both the regional and international scenes. This active participation drew the attention of the observers focusing on the Middle Eastern issues. Throughout the Cold War and for years after its end, Turkey chose to spin its policies away from its Arab and Islamic neighbors, preferring to connect to the West instead, and to be the leading ally of the United States in the area (Salem, 2010). However, Turkey made a comeback to its Arab and Islamic roots after the victory of the “Party of Justice and Development” with its Islamic background. This party chooses to go beyond a simple comeback to the Arab and Islamic world, but to integrate actively in its affairs, as Prime Minister Rejep Tayyip Erdoğan said "not just cooperation but also integration"(Acikalin, 2009). However, forming new relations and alliances, as a result of this policy, does not always suit the US, it even led to tension between Turkey and Israel, keeping in mind that Turkey acknowledged Israel in 1949 , an event that threatened Turkey's relation with its Muslim's community for years.

The importance of what is happening in Turkey lies within the new circumstances that were imposed on the Middle East, and with what they may cause in the future. In fact, during the ten years of its governance in Turkey, the AKP has shown rationality in dealing with different issues, and an interest in achieving advantages and benefits for Turkey, after a careful consideration to the equilibrium between the different axes, whether external or internal. Hence, the experience of the AKP is considered worthy of being studied as an attempt to investigate its background, and the causes of such a shift in Turkey's foreign policy. This may also help in understanding Turkey's ability to make use of what is happening around it, starting with the American occupation of Iraq, and reaching the revolutions in the Arab world, mainly those in

Egypt and Tunisia whose leaders left office allowing new leaderships to take their place.

This thesis analyzes Turkish foreign policy toward the Middle East in general, and tackles some controversial issues: the Iranian –nuclear crisis, the peace process, and the Turkish-Iraqi relations. All these issues will be studied from the realist theory's point of view. This is mainly because researching the AKP's foreign policy shows clearly that the state's interests, either on the security, economic or even the national levels always direct their strategies. This study includes a comprehensive examination of the basic geopolitical, cultural and domestic circumstances shaping Turkey's foreign policy. It maintains that since Turkey's strategic importance is based on making use of all its points of strength and since the valid use of these factors contribute in empowering Turkey and opening for it new horizons, thus the AKP proposed their strategy of "zero problems" and cooperation with the neighbors. The AKP's aims and goals from such a strategy are discussed in the thesis. It is clear that the state's interests always direct them either to increase and maximize these interests, or to prevent problems. Furthermore, this thesis benefits and learns from Turkey's experience, specifically from the Party of Justice and Development, and more precisely by the model provided by Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu, at least his behavior in the field between 2003 and 2010, hence prior the “ Arab Spring”. In fact Davutoğlu proposed a model in international relations that may be worthy to be followed as it combines national behavior with cultural and moral values, a matter that may be helpful in attaining international peace and stability.

The thesis is organized into four chapters with a conclusion. An opening chapter is devoted to present the theoretical framework that guides the research. This chapter

gives a quick review of the neo-realist theory, after briefly defining a theory and showing its importance in the field of international affairs. In addition, the discussions comprise a few of the most influential theories in this field but in a way to support the choice of the Realist theory for studying the AKP's behavior.

Hence, the focal point of this thesis is the theory of neo-realism, and its main literature and principles, but always by comparing it to the AKP's foreign policy. Moreover, at the end of this theoretical chapter, the three levels of analysis in International Relations: the international, the state and the individual levels, are discussed very briefly. This is because they will be the base, for the study in chapter three that explains the influence of regional and domestic factors in shaping the AKP's theory.

To understand the current Turkish foreign policy toward the Middle East, one should go back to its historical causative factors and examine the process of decision making in the field of foreign policy throughout that history, noting that this is the soul of Minister Davutoğlu's theory in foreign relations. Accordingly, chapter two provides information about the historical path of Turkey's foreign policy, starting with the Ottoman Empire down to the present time. However, while discussing the Cold War and the Post Cold War eras, the factors that have driven Turkish foreign policy in these periods are discussed and evaluated. This evaluation helps in focusing on key areas that witnessed a shift in Turkish foreign policy in relationship to regional and international developments. This historical overview examines the impact of this shift on shaping the current Turkish foreign policy. In the same sequence, to understand the factors influencing the making of Turkey's foreign policy, it was necessary to look at the three levels of analysis utilized in international affairs in order to comprehend different foreign policy behaviors. Accordingly, each factor and

its influence on the foreign policy of Turkey during the Cold War period and post it was discussed including the period of AKP's governance till now with focus on the effects of the geographic location and geopolitical position on the issue.

The study shows that due to modifications that took place in the region around Turkey, two challenges came into existence and forced the government to take them into consideration whenever moving outside the borders. Those two challenges are the security factor, precisely that of the Kurdistan Labor Party (PKK), and the newly emerging economic role of Turkey. However on the state level, the ruling group, that is the AKP is examined; its historical development, ideology and some of its basic literature such as pluralistic and conservative democracy, its understanding of secularism in addition to its adoption of the economic principle of the free market, are all discussed. The aim is to show that this group came to power with an Islamic background but at the same time a realistic practice of its ideology because it is taking into consideration the threats of being banned if accused of being anti-secular. Hence, the study would show that the AKP came to power with a developed interpretation of democracy and secularism. Another aim is to prove that these interpretations are part of the AKP's ideology and beliefs, yet they have been used to enforce the party's governance from different sides.

On the same level, the role of the military establishment, the state's economy and the minority's factor will also be discussed. As for the military establishment, it has always been a dominant player in Turkey's foreign policy making. However, it would be interesting to clarify how the AKP has succeeded in limiting the power of the military institutions from intervening in the civil affairs of the state, including its foreign relations and policies (Onis, 2003). Meanwhile, it would be fair to say that the AKP has always been cautious when dealing with two issues: limiting the

authorities of the army on one hand, and preserving the security of the state on the other.

While discussing the economic factor and its influence on shaping foreign policies, the thesis tackles the economic predicament that faced Turkey since the seventies, and reached its peak with the 1994 financial crisis. Therefore, when the AKP reached power in 2002 they inherited a difficult economic situation. So, what is significant to this study is to trace the extent of AKP's success in solving the economic problems. In addition, it is important to point out that the AKP builds upon their economic success to improve their status in the state, boost their power in different domains, including that of foreign affairs.

As for the minorities issue, discussing the PKK dilemma is an important factor to illustrate the AKP's methodology in dealing with domestic problems, as well as the influence of such problems on the making of the state's foreign policies.

Whereas, on the individual level Ahmet Davutoğlu's theory of "Strategic Depth", his contribution to Turkey's foreign policy and its existence and influence on the regional level, are all discussed.

In fact Davutoğlu may be given and presented as an example of the influence of leaders on their countries' policies making, thus a good case-study for understanding the contribution of the individual level of analysis and comprehending the process of policy making.

The third level of analysis to be examined is "the state level", under which the role of the military establishment, the state's economy and the minority's factor will be discussed. As for the military establishment, it has always been a dominant player in Turkey's foreign policy making. However, it would be interesting to clarify how the AKP has succeeded in limiting the power of the military institutions from intervening in the civil affairs of the state, including its foreign relations and policies (Onis, 2003). Meanwhile, it would be fair to say that the AKP has always been

cautious when dealing with two issues: limiting the authorities of the army on one hand, and preserving the security of the state on the other.

While discussing the economic factor and its influence on shaping foreign policies, the thesis tackles the economic predicament that faced Turkey since the seventies, and reached its peak with the 1994 financial crisis. Therefore, when the AKP reached power in 2002 they inherited a difficult economic situation. So, what is significant to this study is to trace the extent of AKP's success in solving the economic problems. In addition, it is important to point out that the AKP builds upon their economic success to improve their status in the state, boost their power in different domains, including that of foreign affairs.

As for the minorities issue, discussing the PKK dilemma is an important factor to illustrate the AKP's methodology in dealing with domestic problems, as well as the influence of such problems on the making of the state's foreign policies.

Chapter 4 discusses three cases of Turkey's foreign affairs and their relations. These cases are the attempt of Turkey to play a role in the Iranian nuclear issue, the role of Turkey in the Arab- Israeli Peace Process, mainly on the Syrian-Israeli path, and Iraqi-Turkish relations in the after- math of the American occupation of Iraq (2003). So, the main features of these affairs are mentioned, as well as the Turkish interest in each case, in an attempt to examine whether it is a rational behavior and if it may be explained by the neo-realist theory.

Finally, even though it is clear to the observer that the behavior of AKP on the regional level is developing, it still provokes questions. In an unstable region full of challenges for all concerned parties, where would this role lead Turkey? Is it toward maximizing the state's interests, or toward new problems or challenges? It must be also mentioned that Turkey's enthusiasm for assuming new positions and roles in the

area may lead to an environment of competition with other regional and international powers. In this respect, the conclusion is tied with what Ankara expects as a result of assuming such a role in international affairs. Thus, in the concluding chapter, Turkey's aims and opportunities would be explored, and then the challenges facing the AKP's policies would be discussed. Based on this, the thesis question would be answered: Is the AKP's behavior in international affairs a rational one; hence is the neo-realist theory able to explain it best¹? or are other theories suitable to help?

The study is based on a research approach that made use of many scholarly references, several academic articles, in addition to relevant online data. Furthermore, the thesis builds mostly on interviews via e-mails with leading personalities in the Turkish government; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu, and the General Secretary of the National Security Council, Mr.Serdar

¹ - Professor Davutoğlu answering the question: **Do you agree with the viewpoint saying that the Neo-realist theory in international affairs best explains the behavior of the AKP in the field of foreign affairs?** There are certain aspects of Kenneth Waltz's neo-realist theory such as the need for states to enter into alliances with others which in broad terms reflects our general foreign policy approach. Indeed Turkish foreign policy today puts multi-dimensional cooperation and joint action above anything else.

However, what leads us to seek cooperation and alliance with others is not a security dilemma where we try to balance and/or contain the influence of others. On the contrary, we see no one as our adversary and approach other states with a perception of opportunity rather than one of threat. As such, we see international relations not as a zero-sum game but as something where everyone can expand its security, stability and prosperity through enhanced economic interdependence, increased political dialogue and deepened cultural understanding.

It is also impossible to not agree with the neo-realists that the international system acts as an important determinant on state behavior. For instance and particularly in today's world, where peace, security and development have truly become indivisible, cooperation among states is becoming ever more necessary. The challenges of our time, ranging from terrorism to climate change, all exceed the ability of a single country to deal with them. Our survival and prosperity depends on our ability to act in genuine partnership in pursuit of common goals.

So, one might see the traces of the general principles of neo-realist theory in Turkish foreign policy. However, the underlying reasons for this orientation are completely different, if not contradictory. Indeed, we are not acting in reaction to perceived threats as called for in the neo-realist theory, but led by a proactive vision driven by opportunities. We also do not entertain a pessimistic view of the world, which the neo-realists claim to stand on a confrontational balance of power, but we believe that shared interests make cooperation and partnership a more viable way of progress.

Likewise, we do not share the neo-realist view that security of a state is above any consideration and that long lasting peace is never likely. On the contrary, we believe that a new balance has to be struck between the security of a state and people's freedom to the benefit of the latter. Moreover, it is our firm conviction that, between democracies sharing common values and objectives, conflict becomes less likely and that the more we move in this direction, the more we approach the goal of long-lasting peace and stability.

Kılıç, and the Deputy Directorate General for Iraq- IRGY, Mr. Yunus Demirer, in addition to an interview with the Lebanese specialist in Turkish affairs, Dr. Mohammad Nureldine. They all enrich this work with more in-depth perspective and analysis.

Chapter One

Theories that Explain the Behaviors Governing International Affairs

“We put ourselves in the position of a statesman who must meet a certain problem of foreign policy under certain circumstances, and we ask ourselves what the rational alternatives are from which a statesman may choose...and which of these rational alternatives this particular statesman, acting under these circumstances, is likely to choose. It is the testing of this rational hypothesis against the actual facts and their consequences that gives meaning to the facts of international politics and makes a theory of politics possible.” (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993:36)

Hans J.Morgenthau

Since its inception as a separate field of study, International Relations has been a theoretical discipline, hence based on theories. A theory by definition “is a set of interrelated propositions that aims to explain or predict phenomena, thereby attempting to make the world more intelligible. The explanation involves accounting for, or understanding causes of such phenomena as war, arms races, and regional integration. In a loose sense, the predictions of a theory amount to forecasting, but in a strict sense, it implies explanation sufficient to anticipate outcomes, given the presence of certain variables or conditions” (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993:595). Accordingly, theories “provide intellectual order to the subject matter of International Relations, they enable scholars to conceptualize and contextualize both past and contemporary events, and they provide a variety of ways of interpreting complex issues” (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993:36). For example, to explain the behavior of the ruling party in Turkey, “the Party of Justice and Development” (AKP), between 2002 and 2011, in the field of international relations, one or even more international relations’ theories may be used. This is to understand the influential variables

shaping Turkey's foreign policy and to anticipate future outcomes. However, the differences between the methodologies used in the field, and the diversity of the basic criteria that must be studied, led to the emergence of many theories and schools of thought in international relations. Among these theories are neo-realism, neo-liberalism, critical theory, constructivism and others.

In this thesis, neo-realism will be chosen as a theory to explain Turkey's foreign policy (2002-2011). What is it? What are its main principles? How does it differ from other theories? And why does it explain the AKP's foreign policy best? All these questions will be discussed.

Neo-realism first started with Realism, *realpolitik* or "power politics", as the oldest and most frequently adopted theory of International Relations (Burchill, Linklater, Devetak, Matthew, and True, 1996: 83). Different definitions of Realism share a clear family resemblance, and realists emphasize the constraints on politics imposed by human selfishness, **egoism**, and the absence of international government, **anarchy** (Burchill, Linklater, Devetak, Donnelly, Nardin, Paterson, Smit, and True, 2009: 32). More precisely, for the realists, "**state** is the principal actor" and the study of International Relations focuses on this unit, hence state and interstates relations (Burchill et al., 2009: 45). In addition, realists "assume that among the array of world issues, **national security** tops the list for states, so military and political issues dominate the agenda" (Burchill et al., 2009: 43) and states act to maximize the so called **national interests**. In other words, states try to maximize the likelihood that they will achieve whatever objectives they have set. These objectives include high political concerns of assuring state survival (security matters), as well as the low political objectives in such fields as trade, finance, monetary exchange, and health.

Consequently, states use the power they have to serve their interests or achieve their objectives.

The Realist theory has developed, and in the 1980s, Kenneth Waltz proposed “**neo-realism**” or “**Structural Realism**” where a greater importance was given to the **systematic constraints** on each state in order to answer the question: “why do states exhibit similar foreign policy behavior despite their different political systems and contrasting ideologies?” (Burchill et al., 1996:85). Neo- realism aims to “set aside those features of international relations that depend on the character of the actors or the nature of the interactions, in order to highlight the constraining impact of the structure of the international system where they are embedded” (Burchill et al., 2009: 36). For Waltz, **hierarchy** and **anarchy** are the two key political ordering doctrines. This means that “international political structures differ only in their distribution of capabilities, and they are defined by the changing fates of great powers” (Burchill et al., 1996:87). Hence, international orders vary according to the number of great powers or polarity.

Accordingly, it looks that many of neo-realism’s principles can explain Turkey’s foreign policy in this era, mainly when noting that for AKP, the state is the principal actor, it is the center and Turkey’s interests will always be drawn inside the state and all policies, whether domestic, regional or international serve these interests. In addition, the AKP’s behavior reflects rationality of the state and unity among all policy makers for the sake of the state’s interest. For them, the state acts to maximize the interests. This was apparent throughout the past 10 years where the AKP, mainly by applying the theory of “Strategic Depth” for Turkey’s foreign policy, has opted to maximize the country’s interests on different levels. It is noticed that both the Turkish Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs declare their rejection of

the anarchic international system, and propose the establishment of a regional system ruled by the Middle East's states. Such behavior, mainly toward neighboring states, such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria, show attempts to form new coalitions and alliances based on new interests and new backgrounds.

However, it seems difficult for the Liberal theory to explain Turkish foreign policy behavior. This is mainly because, for liberals the individual is the most important unit of analysis, and the state is to play a minimal role in a liberal society, predominantly acting as arbiter in disputes between individuals and ensuring the upholding of conditions under which individuals enjoy their rights to the fullest (Viotti & Kauppi , 1993:230). Hence, liberals, and more specifically neo-liberals, characterize states as utility maximizer, as actors that will promote cooperation so long as it promises absolute gains in their interests (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993:230). Scholars engaged in studying decision-making processes from a pluralist perspective emphasize that decisions are made by individuals and not by states (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993:230).

On another hand, when discussing critical **theory**, one may feel that it is very close to Davutoğlu's theory of "Strategic Depth". The Critical theory is concerned with comprehending "the central features of contemporary society by understanding its historical and social development, tracing contradictions in the present which may open up the possibility of transcending contemporary society and its built-in pathologies and forms of domination" (Burchill et al., 2009: 160). Hence critical theorists argue that actors are inherently social, their identities and interests are socially constructed, the products of inter-subjective social structures. Critical international theory takes the global configuration of power relations as its object and asks, "how" that configuration came about, "what costs" it is bringing with it, and

“what” alternative possibilities remain unexposed in history (Burchill et al., 2009: 165).

However, this theory neglects polarity and the balance of power existing in the world, the influence of state’s interests in its foreign policies, and the role of state as a main actor.

Finally, with **Constructivism**, the emphasis is on **normative or ideational structures**, such as beliefs and values, seen to be just as important as material structures. Constructivists argue that “understanding how non-material structures condition actors’ identities is important because **identities inform interests** and, in turn, actions” (Burchill et al., 2009: 221) . Constructivists are not opposed to the idea that actors might be self-interested, but they argue that this helps researchers understand how actors define their “selves” and how this informs their “interests”. In addition, they contend that **agents and structures are mutually constituted** (Burchill et al., 2009: 218). Normative and ideational structures may well condition the identities and interests of actors, but those structures would not exist if it were not for the knowledgeable practices of those actors (Burchill et al., 2009: 221). On closer reflection, it may be seen that constructivists are better classed “as **structurationists** emphasizing the impact of non-material structures on identities and interests” (Burchill et al., 2009: 221), thus by emphasizing the role of practices in maintaining and transforming those structures.

Even though this theory may explain the influence of both the national and the Islamic identities of the AKP’s behavior, this cannot be the whole story, since it totally neglects the strength of “interests”, “polarity”, “security dilemma”, and others.

The Levels of Analysis:

When studying international relations, an important question any scholar should ask is: where should one focus his/her research efforts?

This has been a common question for scholars belonging to all schools of the field. However, it has been highly illustrated by Kenneth Waltz in his book “Man, the state, and war”. Waltz was interested in giving a causal explanation of war, and he founded that any explanation “combines three levels of analysis: individual, state and society” (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993:123). Hence, as for the first level; the individual; according to Waltz, it deals with “the nature and behavior of man” (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993:126). This means that studying any event on the international level, requires taking into consideration the influence of some leading personalities such as Davutoğlu in the case of Turkey, as well as their nature and behavior. While when taking the second factor into consideration, thus the internal structure of states, and since international politics take place among states, Waltz believes that “the internal organization of states is the key to understanding war and peace” (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993: 127). This means that the influence of the state’s political system, its military establishment, the demography of its society and others, must be studied for a better understanding.

However, because Kenneth Waltz ‘ realist theory is based on the belief that the international system is anarchic, so “any state may at any time use force to implement its policies, ...all states must constantly be ready either to counter force with force or to pay the cost of weakness” (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993:129).

Accordingly, the behavior of any state on the regional or international level is influenced by the circumstances in which it exists, the distribution of power among

states , the alliances that appear clearly, for example, when studying the Turkish-Iranian relations.

Based on this methodology, a best study is the one that takes those three levels of analysis, with all their aspects , into consideration.

Chapter Two

Historical Development of Turkey's Foreign Policy

“In our region where human interaction has probably been more diverse and intense than any other part of the world, history carries a bigger weight in the minds and hearts of the people. This region, which has been the birthplace of all three monotheistic religions as well as many ancient civilizations, is in fact where history of mankind is greatly shaped. Therefore, in such geography it will be naïve to think of international relations without understanding history's impact on it. This region is blessed with a deep and rich historical background and the relationships that have been forged and lived throughout centuries are extremely important in understanding the dynamics that define today's relations”.

(Davutoğlu, personal communication, May 31, 2011)

Understanding both the behavior and orientations of today's governing group in Turkey in the field of foreign policy requires, in one of its aspects, knowing and understanding the historical path of this policy and its relation to Turkey's history starting with the Ottoman Empire down to the present time. This is what the current Foreign Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu, calls “the historical heritage” and the “historical accumulation”. In Davutoğlu's words, “historical accumulation is one of the essential factors which determine greatly the society's status... It is impossible to change this historical accumulation or neglect it.” (Davutoğlu, 2001: 87). Therefore, to be able to understand Turkey's status on the international level, and understand its relations in the different fields and domains, it is necessary to determine and define the course of the change that altered its historical heritage.

The Ottoman State that came into existence in 1288 and spread to reach its summit in terms of power and influence during the period of Emperor Suleiman Alkanouni in 1520, extended all over three continents: Asia, Europe, and Africa. This empire governed Asia Minor, Hejaz, Iraq, the Levant, Egypt, Sudan, Maghreb, Somalia, the Balkans, Austria, Italy, Romania, Georgia, and Greece. However, it started losing

power by 1900 due to internal and external conflicts that “ eventually tore apart the Ottoman Empire and sent it to the graveyard of dead nations”². Later by 1922, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk dissolved the Ottoman Empire and declared the rise of the secular, modern republic of Turkey.

The Ottoman Empire left behind, in the countries it ruled for hundreds of years, a history rich with greatly important spaces of influence in addition to population groups from turkish origins. However the level of making use of this historical, cultural, and demographic heritage in the state’s foreign policy has differed according to the international situation, the regional conditions and the party or coalition governing Turkey at different periods of its history.

1- The Cold War Period:

The secular turkish republic with western orientations was established in 1923 , around the same time of the establishment of the Soviet Union (1992) , the communist state facing mainly the western axis . However since both countries used to share bordes at many locations specifically at Georgia and Azerbaijan , and due to the ideological differences that used to govern them, and because of the cold struggle existing between the western axis presided by the US , and the eastern one presided by USSR, Turkey lived through out the Cold War era under the stress and fear of the ideological and security expansion of USSR into Turkey . This fact influenced greatly the making of Turkey’s foreign policies and orientations. Thus , one of the main features of this policy was the movement of Turkey totally toward the Western camp seeking protection, and among the main consequences of that policy was Turkey’s membership in NATO (1952) .

² - University of Leicester. "The Fall of the Ottoman Empire". Retrieved from http://www.historyguy.com/fall_of_the_ottoman_empire.htm

So during the Cold War era,"the perception of the Soviet threat was one of the main themes in Turkish foreign policy. And as a NATO member, Turkey and its allies shared the same security concerns regarding the Soviet Union³.

Hence,throughout that period the Turks focused their efforts on protecting the borders of their republic and preserving their secular regime, raising the main slogan of Atatürk : "Peace in nation, peace aboard ". But following this policy in international relations led to Turkey neglecting its historical areas of influence , thus the Islamic and Arabic surrounding, in addition to those areas constituting its historical depth , those countries that were under the authority of the Ottoman Sultanate

2- The Post-Cold War Era:

If the Cold War period (1945-1990) was built on the struggle and the race between the two big poles; the United States and the Soviet Union, for deterrence purposes, the dissolution of the USSR in 1990 and the breakdown of the socialist camp, led to dramatic changes in the path of international relations. In this era, the US appeared as the unique great power trying to build the new international regime. This status forced Turkey to face new historical changes in concurrence with the national and religious Turkish movements and parties resuming their powers and proposing their different social and political projects and policies. These parties benefited from the international developments on one hand, and the state applying to the membership of the European Union⁴ in 1987, on another hand.

³ - Kasim, Kamer. The Journal of Turkish Weekly. Retrieved from <http://www.turkishweekly.net/article/18/turkey-s-fore-305-gn-policy-towards-the-russian-federation.html>

⁴ - For the membership of the European Union, Turkey is asked to fulfill booklet of conditions that includes providing more liberties and freedom on both the social and political scale.

So, external factors along with some internal ones obliged all those who have governed Turkey in the post-Cold War era to rethink of the state's foreign policy, based on Turkey's role in the international scene, the political geography and the historical heritage of the country.

Despite this reconsideration, Turkey kept on affirming its role in the Western axis, For instance, it is worthy to note that the peak of the relation with Israel was in 1996 when both states signed a strategic treaty (Nureldine, personal communication, May 26, 2011).

However, the dramatic change started with the Party of Justice and Development (AKP) reaching power in 2002. This change surpassed the tactics to the roots of the applied policies, noting that this party came into power with a different and advanced view in relation to the position and role of Turkey on both the regional and the international community. Ahmet Davutoğlu says: “without a true reading of the international conditions and changes, one cannot understand Turkey's foreign policy and then understand its new strategic view” (Davutoğlu, 2001).

With the Party of Justice and Development, those drawing on Turkey's foreign policy could no longer work while focusing on a unique goal, that is protecting the state's borders and the Western ally secular regime. With the AKP, Turkey is moving forward from a country “bridge”, to a basic central country in the Middle East and wherever there are people from Turkish origins. This historical path of Turkey's foreign policy shows that it has always been based on interests. Before the AKP, the governments found their interests in the alliance with the West, joining the European Union, and by protecting the secular nature of the state. Nevertheless, with the AKP,

the strategy of reading the state's interests has changed without a change in the goals themselves. Hence, it has always been a realist policy.

Chapter Three

Factors Influencing the Making of Turkey's Foreign Policy

“All three images are a part of nature. So fundamental are man, the state, and the state system in any attempt to understand international relations that seldom does an analyst” (Waltz- quoted from Singer, 1960).

1- The State Level of Analysis:

“We will reintegrate the Balkan region, Middle East and Caucasus... together with Turkey as the center of world politics in the future.”⁰⁵
(Ahmet Davutoğlu)

The state level of analysis requires the focus to be placed on domestic aspects of states (Faruque, 2010). This requires studying the domestics including political parties, the state's economy, ethno-national communities and the military establishment of the corresponding state.

a. The Ruling Group:

By 2002, "the Party of Justice and Development", known in the Turkish language as "Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi" (AKP), appeared on the Turkish scene as one of the most important players. Since that date, everybody has started talking about a new era in the history of the Republic of Turkey, in different fields.

⁵ - speech in the opening ceremony of a conference in Sarajevo. Retrieved from:
www.ius.edu.ba/dzsusko/Davutoglu_transcript_dzs.doc

So, how did this party reach power? What are the main principles of its doctrine and cultural background? These form a group of questions that will be discussed in the current chapter.

The Historical Development of the AKP:

The Party of Justice and Development (AKP) may be considered as a normal product of the development of the movement of Turkish Islamists, either the political or the interactive social movement. For instance, the first Turkish political party with explicit Islamic references was the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP) founded in 1970 under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, a Professor of engineering from Konya (Hale and Özbudun, 2010:3). However, the MNP was dismantled by the constitutional court in 1971 on account of its alleged anti-secular activities, partly as a result of the political conjuncture created by the military intervention in 1971(Hale and Özbudun, 2010:3).

Since that date, the history of Turkey has witnessed the emergence of several Islamic parties, the most important of which were:" The National Salvation Party" (Milli Selamet Partisi -MSP) in 1972, the "Welfare Party "(Refah Partisi -RP) in 1983, and the "Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi - FP) in 1998 (Hale and Özbudun, 2010:4-5). However, all those parties met similar fate; banned and dissolved under the stress of the military and by a decision taken by the Constitutional Court.

On another hand, during this period, two orientations among the Islamists came into existence, the modernists and the traditionalists. However, the banning of the "Fazilet Partisi" finalized the split between these groups, where the modernists founded the AKP under the leadership of the current Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, while the traditionalists were organized in the "Felicity Party" under the leadership of Recai Kutan.

In 2002, the AKP won the parliamentary elections with a “34.3 % landslide of the vote and almost two-thirds of the parliamentary seats” (Hale and Özbudun, 2010:5), hence a new era started in Turkey's history.

The AKP's Ideology and Basic Literatures:

The AKP's 2002 and 2007 election platforms, as well as numerous statements by its leaders, strongly emphasize such universal values as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, limited government, pluralism, tolerance and respect of diversity. In its constitution⁶, the party "considers the will of the nation, the rule of law, reason, science, experience, democracy, the fundamental rights and freedom, and morality as the main references of its conception of government " (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 20). In addition, one of its most important characteristics is that it describes the Republic "as the most important acquisition of the Turkish nation" and asserts, “The will of the nation is the only determinant power” (Hale and Özbudun, 2010:20).

This idea reminds us of one of the main principles of the Realist's theory; “the state is the most important actor and unit”.

On another hand, in the field of economy, the AKP aims at establishing a free market economy, with all its institutions and rules, and recognizes the role of the state in economy only as a regulatory and supervisory capacity (Hale and Özbudun, 2010:100).

In addition, the AKP promises to “bring the human rights standards in Turkey to the level envisaged by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European convention of Human Rights, Paris Charter and Helsinki final Act” (Hale and

6-The AKP's constitution, article 4. Retrieved from

<http://eng.akparti.org.tr/english/partyprogramme.html#4.1>

Özbudun, 2010: 21). So in its constitution, the party specifically mentions the freedom of thought and expression, the right to information, the right to seek justice and to a fair trial⁷.

It is important to note that this new literature and slogans play an important role in raising the popularity indicator of the AKP. In addition, such principles are known to be among the fundamental requirements for Turkey's entry to the European Union.

Pluralistic and Conservative Democracy:

For the AKP, democracy is more pluralistic than majoritarian (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 21). This is so because they take into account the existence of minorities, and more precisely the Kurds and the Alevis. So, for the AKP, majorities must, under no condition, interfere with the fundamental rights and freedoms of minorities. In addition, the AKP's program makes frequent references to the need to strengthen civil society organizations and enhance their role in policymaking. This attitude boosts the popularity of the party, increases the voting rate to their favor during elections, and decreases the chances of accidents' occurrence that may create an atmosphere of instability. This clearly appears when dealing with the Kurdish issue in southeast Turkey.

Similarly, the AKP raises the slogan of "Conservative Democracy". For Minister Erdoğan, "conservatism is not against change, but it advocates change for the sake of development and progress" (Somer, 2004).

The AKP advocates a change based on an evolutionary, gradual, and natural societal transformation. Mr. Erdoğan makes this clear when he states that "all efforts that

7-The AKP's constitution, article 2.1. Retrieved from

<http://eng.akparti.org.tr/english/partyprogramme.html#2.1>

impose or order certain principles and aim at a homogenous society, or are based on social engineering are obstacles to a healthy democratic system ... our identity as conservative democrats makes us oppose all kinds of social and political engineering"(Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 21). Hence, for the AKP, the notion of politics that they substituted is based on compromise and reconciliation, not on conflict.

Secularism

The AKP program clearly supports secularism, which is one of the most delicate issues in Turkey. In the AKP's manifesto, it is stated "Secularism allows people of all religions and beliefs to practice their religion in peace, to express their religious convictions and to live accordingly, but also allows people with no religious beliefs to organize their lives in their own direction. Therefore, secularism is a principle of freedom and social peace "(Kuru, 2006).

However, the AKP believes in the conception of secularism which is prevalent in most western democracies, which implies "state neutrality toward various religions and allows the public visibility of religion" (Kuru, 2006) and not the one whose ultimate aim is to privatize and individualize religion and to ban or limit its visibility in the public space. In fact, it is under the slogan of secularism and the secular regime that the AKP could achieve many reforms, whether in politics, culture or even in restricting the power and intervention of the army in citizen's daily lives. Taking into account the ideology of the AKP, the basic slogans that it is raising, such as pluralistic conservative democracy and secularism, its commitment to a functioning free-market economy regulated and supervised by the state, one may state that this party is behaving realistically with the Turkish complicated issue. This is because it won't be easy for an Islamic group to govern a secular state where the

army, since the establishment of the republic in 1923, had followed " passive secularism " whose" ultimate aim is to privatize and individualize religion, and to ban or limit its visibility in the public space " (Hale and Özbudun, 2006: 22), and had banned all parties having an Islamic back ground from participating in the political scene.

In addition, it is clear that the AKP is aware of the diverse features of the Turkish society and the sensitivity of some minorities concerning the behavior of the different successive governing groups. Moreover, the AKP is looking forward to the membership of the European Union, where democracy and rights of minorities are among the primary requirements. In addition, the party is trying to gratify its voters⁸, either the 15-20% of Turkey's population that consists of devout and practicing Muslims or the other 27-32% many of whom are leftists (Nureldine, personal communication, May 26, 2011).

The Hijab Issue:

The roots of the hijab issue go back to mid-1980 s, when some university administrators did not allow the wearing of hijab at universities, that attitude was supported by the Council of State and the Constitutional Court. The court argued that in a secular political system, laws could not be based upon religious injunctions, even though there is no such statement in the Turkish constitution.

The AKP government made no attempt to lift the hijab ban during its first term of office. But this became the number one issue on the political agenda in early 2008 when the party accumulated power.

⁸ - These percentages are estimated on the basis that the AKP took in 2007 parliamentary elections 47%of the votes, and it is known that in Turkey the hard Islamic block constitutes 15-20% of the voters (Nureldine, 2011).

However, the door did not open for change until September 2010, when a referendum⁹ managed by the AKP's government, succeeded in modifying the law of the Constitutional Court, so restricting the power of the military inside the court. Hence, the AKP, with these modifications, no longer feared being proscribed for causing harm to the secular nature of the state.

b. The Military Establishment:

Historically, it was agreed upon that foreign policy making in Turkey was the output of a classic tripod consisting of the foreign ministry, the Prime Minister, and the military (Makovsky and Sayari, 2000:4).

The foreign ministry runs day-to-day foreign policy and serves as a major source of expertise on issues that concern Turkey's international relations. The Prime Minister is a key political actor in the foreign policy making process, but the involvement and influence of Turkish Prime Ministers in shaping their country's relations with the world have varied significantly according to the intensity of their interest in foreign affairs. For example, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit (4 terms in office, 1977 – 2002) had always been keenly interested in international politics, whereas Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel (5 terms in office as Prime Minister) gave more attention to domestic affairs (Makovsky and Sayari, 2000:4).

The military has often been a dominant player in Turkish foreign policy (Makovsky and Sayari, 2000:4). Institutionally, it used to exercise its influence primarily through the National Security Council (NSC), half the members of which were military leaders, this occurred particularly when military, and security issues, including domestic security, were at stake (Makovsky and Sayari, 2000:4). For example, the

⁹ - Nureldine, Mohammad. "The September' 12 Referendum: the Fate of the Turkish Model Between "Yes" and "No". Assafir Newspaper 11689. (September 2010).

military, historically, took the lead in decisions regarding Turkish policies in northern Iraq and the fight against the PKK.

However, this classic tripod model has been modified since the early 1980 s, with the presidency emerging as a fourth major pole of decision-making (Makovsky and Sayari, 2000:5). In fact, this was a consequence of the 1982 constitution, which increased the powers of the presidency (Makovsky and Sayari, 2000:5). It also reflected changes in the mission of the NSC, whose powers and those of the president as its chairperson, were enhanced by the 1983's law. Further changes took place later with the constitutional amendment dated October 3rd, 2001 and related legal amendment dated January 15th, 2003 that led to changes in composition, duties and working conditions of the NSC. With these changes, Deputy Prime Ministers and Minister of Justice were included in the NSC, so the number of NSC members increased to fourteen; nine of which are civilian. So in the present format, the President chairs the NSC, whose members are the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, the Chief of the General Staff, the Ministers of Defense, the Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Justice, the Chiefs of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Gendarmerie (Kılıç, personal communication, May 31, 2011).

On another hand, the parliament is rarely a player in foreign policy (Makovsky and Sayari, 2000:5). The parliament does have a role in certain extraordinary situations and specifically the parliamentary approval is constitutionally required to declare war, commit Turkish troops abroad, or allow foreign troops to use facilities in Turkey (Makovsky and Sayari, 2000:5). However, the parliament was, for example, on the sidelines in the fall of 1998 when Turkey threatened Syria with military action in response to Damascus's support of the PKK, at that time, the decision was taken by the military (Makovsky and Sayari, 2000: 6). On another hand, the parliament voted

against American forces to use Incerlik air base during the U.S. occupation for Iraq in 2003.

With the arrival of "the Party of Justice and Development " to power, many rational changes started to appear, enhancing the power of the civil institutions in the country, such as the cabinet and the ministry of foreign affairs, and restricting the potency of the National Security Council in the process of foreign policy making, but without neglecting the importance of the security issues. Now, "the NSC has to take into account any issue that concerns national security, be it social, economic, military etc....but the NSC does not have the authority to implement these decisions on its own, it is up to the Council of Ministers whether to adopt these decisions or not", as Mr. Kılıç, the General Secretary of the Turkish NSC said (personal communication, May 31, 2011).

Meanwhile, the attitude of the AKP was always cautious, and its government was reluctant to openly challenge the military institution, which is deeply rooted in the Turkish regime since independence (1923). They were afraid from the power of the army as well as that of the Constitutional Court. They were mainly afraid from being banned, as it was the fate of different former Islamic parties. This explains why they moved systematically toward reform, until September 2010's referendum, when they organized a referendum for popular vote on a series of constitutional reforms.

The referendum succeeded in modifying 26 constitutional articles. According to these modifications, the number of the members of the constitutional court increased from 12 to 17, 3 of them to be named by the parliament, instead of the army¹⁰. In addition, the reforms restricted the authorities of the Highest Council of Adjudication

¹⁰ - The Economist, Sep. 13, 2010. Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2010/09/turkeys_constitutional_referendum

in resolving the political parties, the sword that was threatening those parties since the establishment of the Republic in Turkey.

In conclusion, when one follows the AKP's behavior since 2002, and their attempts to overcome the obstacles posed by the military institution, one may come up with two conclusions. The first is that the ruling party was very cautious and applied reforms through the constitution itself. This is further explained by the Constructivist theory that emphasizes on the role of structures to bring about changes. While the second conclusion is that, the AKP's leaders are highly disciplined under the stress of the security dilemma, so they work hard to improve the attitude of the different military institutions and they consider the security issue when drawing the state's foreign policy.

c. Turkey's Economy:

The Turkish economy experienced at the beginning of 1994 a major financial crisis, that had a spillover effect on the economy. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell 4.7 % in that year (Rittenberg, 1998: 17), and the government launched a stabilization program in order to rescue the economy. Nevertheless, it soon became clear that the program was destined to fail. That situation remained problematic until the beginning of the new millennium.

Since 2001 the Turkish economy registered a dramatic positive change, and as a result of many policies, the Gross National Product (GNP) increased, between 2002 and 2008, from 300 billion dollars to 750 billion dollars, in an average growth rate of 6.8% (Rittenberg, 1998: 17). Also, in the same period, the per-capita annual income went up from 3300 dollars to 10.000 dollars. Accordingly, Turkey ranks 16th

amongst the biggest economies on the international level, and 6th on the European level (Bakir, 2010: 22).

During that period, full of economic challenges on the international level, a new factor entered into the political and economic life of Turkey, it was the AKP. In 2002, one of the main tests for the AKP's government was whether it could restore growth and price stability to the economy, while reducing unemployment, increasing overseas earnings and capital inflows to finance the expected increase in imports (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 105). This called for a series of economic policies, in an attempt to balance promoting economic growth in a market economy, integrated into the global system, with the economic demands of its supporters. In its manifesto issued for the 2002 elections, the AKP declared, "the strength of private enterprise of our nation is the most important source of economic progress" (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 100). For the AKP, the economic role of the state would be restricted to "ensuring the conditions for free competition in the market, and removing the obstacles facing private enterprise" (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 100).

Another important feature of the economic policies taken by the AKP is that the government supported Turkey's integration into the global economic system, as well as the privatization of the large state industrial and services sector (Boyras, 2011). Meanwhile, to attain greater social justice, the AKP undertook reducing unemployment and took serious actions to balance income distribution (AKP election manifesto).

These titles, mentioned mainly in the AKP's manifesto issued for 2002, 2007, and 2011 elections, (AKP's official website) have many points in common with the liberal economy. However, the party could not be so liberal in two cases, the first

when they stated the role of the government as a protector director of the market, while the second when implementing social justice.

This would be carried out in a context of social sensitivity, especially that Turkey is defined in Article 2 of the Turkish constitution as a "social state".

From 2002 until 2011, the AKP has been giving serious interest to the end of strengthening Turkey's position in the global economy, as well as balancing the demands of its domestic constituency. Whether they succeeded or not is a different story. What is important for our research is that, the economic issue has always been on the agenda of all negotiations undergone between the Turkish government and mainly its neighboring countries.

Moreover, when discussing the role of Turkey on the regional level, Dr. Paul Salem¹¹ says: "it is based largely on Turkey's economic interests. Turkey became a tiger among economies of the world and has been growing by leaps and bounds."

Hence, for Turkey to grow, it needs access to as many markets as it can secure, and it needs stability and peace to interact with these places. This may be explained with Mr. Erdoğan's last trip to Iraq when he presided an official and economic group of 200 Turkish business persons. One of his main ambitions on this trip was to raise the level of commercial exchange between the two states from 7.4 billion US dollars in 2010, to 10 to 15 billion US dollars in 5 years. (Demirer, personal communication, May 31, 2011)

On another hand, for the AKP, strengthening the economic ties with any state, mainly neighboring ones, is a stabilizing factor that enhances peace in the region.

This is illustrated in the words of Mr. Demirer (personal communication, May 31, 2011): "Turkey has long been supporting the development of a sense of regional

¹¹ - Paul Salem, *Rising Turkey in a Changing World* .the Carnegie Institute. / 6-7-2010

ownership. Strengthening peace and regional stability through close cooperation and economic interdependence in our region is our priority”. This view explains the Turkish behavior with Iraq, Iran, Syria and Russia, at least till the end of 2010, thus before the “Arab Spring”. Also this view reminds us of the Liberal theory of "Economic Interdependence", which suggests that trade ties facilitate interstate peace (Barbieri, 1996).

d. The Minority's Factor:

By September 31, 2010 Turkey had a population of 73.722.988 persons (Kılıç, personal communication, May 31, 2011), 99.8 % Muslims, mostly Sunnis, and the other 0.2 % mostly Christians and Jews. Among the Muslims, the Alevis are 10 to 15 millions. On the other hand, the Turkish population is made of a wide diversity of ethnic groups; the biggest are the Turks (70 – 75 %), the Kurds (18 %), the Arabs, and others¹². It is well known that among Turkey's population, Kurds and Alevis constitute important and influential minorities¹³. They are influential because they have proved historically that they could affect the government's policies and in many times the state's stability whenever their interests are threatened. However, the thesis will discuss the Kurdish dilemma because it has a great effect on the state's foreign policy, especially with neighboring countries.

The Kurds: The Kemalist notion of nationalism, stated in the 1982 constitution, aimed to the creation of a homogenous Turkish nation based on the unity of culture, language and ideals. Thus, the People's Republican Party (CHP) program adopted in

¹² - The USA Central Intelligence Agency, the World Fact book. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

¹³ - “Minorities in Turkey are determined by the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 and consist exclusively of non-Muslim religious groups, namely Armenians, Greeks and Jews. Therefore, Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin, or Alevi belief are not minorities, but enjoy equal rights with the rest of our population” (Davutoğlu, 2011).

1931 defined the nation “as a political and social body composed of citizens tied to each other by the unity of language, culture and ideals ”(Taşpınar, 2005: 52-66). Clearly, this definition does not leave much room for the recognition and development of cultural, ethnic and linguistic sub-identities. This definition of the “Turkish Citizen” upset the different ethnicities in Turkey, especially the Kurds, in addition to the Islamists. Therefore, the Turkish Islamist parties found themselves at odds with the secular character of the kemalist notion of nationalism. In their view, "the republic's militant secularism and the Kemalist suppression of the country's Islamic heritage had antagonized Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin by destroying the Islamic bond between Turks and Kurds (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 86). Thus, they find the secularist nationalism of the Republic as mainly responsible for the emergence of the Kurdish question. These were mainly the views of the Rafah Partisi, and later on those of the AKP. The AKP views the cultural differences in the Turkish regions, where the Kurds exist, mainly in the South East, as a feature of "richness" (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 139-77). They consider cultural activities in languages, other than Turkish, as a factor strengthening the unity of the country, as long as the official language and the language of education remain the Turkish language. Prime Minister Erdoğan frequently cited ethnic, religious and regional nationalism as the three red lines of the party (Argun, 1999). Nevertheless, the AKP government failed to develop and implement a coherent policy on the issue¹⁴. This is mainly because of the opposition of the military, and their fear that a too liberal policy on the Kurdish issue leads to the emergence of separatist projects on the

¹⁴ - “Turkey considers the Kurdish issue as a matter of democratization, with a view to improve the enjoyment of fundamental rights by all Turkish citizens. There is no ethnic discrimination in our country. As Turkey ensures more progress in democratization, this issue will be solved. Our government is paying due attention to this and continues its efforts with good faith and conscientious responsibility. For instance, our government established TRT 6, which is broadcasting in Kurdish language on a 24 hour basis. Departments of Kurdish language and literature have been opened in our universities. In short, this issue should be solved within the principles of democratic republic and constitutional order” (Kılıç, 2011).

South East area. The opposition of the military to the AKP's policies on this issue may be also part of the struggle on power between these two parties.

The Kurdish issue, with the policies set by the AKP, and the restrictions posed by the Turkish military institutions, have always been present on the tables of negotiations between the Turks and, especially, their neighboring regimes. It started with the Syrian regime in 1998 when they signed the Adana treaty¹⁵ that eliminated tensions between Turkey and Syria, and led to security cooperation between both countries, mainly to control the activities of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Syria. Similar treaties were signed with the Iraqi's successive governments since 2003, even though the problem of the PKK is deteriorating with Iraq because Northern Iraq, especially the Qandil Mountain region, is considered as the vital depth for the PKK. With the Kurdish question again, it is the security dilemma, especially when dealing with foreign policies. Again, it is one of the most important principles of neo-realism that looks better suited to explain the AKP's behavior toward Turkey's neighboring countries.

2-The Individual Level: Ahmet Davutoğlu:

Analysing and understanding any situation, event or behavior on the international level requires, according to Kenneth Waltz, focusing and studying key individuals and actors in politics (Viotti & Kauppi , 1993: 126). Hence, aspects of the individual include “ the personal characteristics, personality, opinions, activities, and choices that contribute in drawing any behavior in international affairs. And under the individual level of analysis, “ the individual is usually a political leader, decision maker, or major actor within the international system” (Faruque, 2010).

¹⁵ - “Minutes of the Agreement Signed by Turkey and Syria in Adana”. 20 October 1999; Retrieved from <http://www.mafhoum.com/press/50p2.htm>.

Accordingly this section aims to study the influence of Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, on his country's foreign policy in general, but more specifically those policies toward the Middle Eastern states, between 2002 and 2011.

Ahmet Davutoğlu was appointed foreign Minister of Turkey on May 1st , 2009 (Aras, 2009). He has been a close associate of Prime Minister Erdoğan, and his chief advisor on foreign policy since 2003. Davutoğlu is known as “the intellectual architect of the ruling party's foreign policy and has been influential in a number of foreign policy developments” (Aras, 2009). There is a consensus that "it was Davutoğlu who largely changed the rhetoric and practice of Turkish foreign policy, bringing to it a dynamic and multi-dimensional orientation" (Aras, 2009).

In fact, it is Davutoğlu who set the vision and the style of the new Turkish foreign policy line. His touches on the field of foreign policy may be given as an example of the influence of leaders on their countries' policy making.

The new Turkish foreign policy took form under the impact of Davutoğlu's re-definition of Turkey's role on the regional level, as well as the international one. He introduced the theory and concept of “Strategic Depth” to Turkish foreign policy when he published his Turkish International Relations' book having the same title in 2001¹⁶.

The main thesis of Davutoğlu's book states that “a nation's value in world politics is predicated on its geo-strategic location and historical depth” (personal

¹⁶ - “I wrote the book when I was a professor at the university and it was published in 2001. The purpose of my book was to reinterpret Turkish geography and history in light of the new conjuncture of post-Cold War politics. To be frank, when I was writing the book I did not imagine that I would be asked to implement this theory. However, following the general elections in 2002, when I was asked to serve as the chief foreign policy advisor to the Prime Minister, I have seen that the Government has the necessary political will and the ability to put my theory into action.” (Davutoğlu, 2011; answering the question: How do you think Turkey is applying today the theory, "the Strategic Depth" toward the Middle East?

communication, May 31, 2011). He considers that Turkey's history constitutes the state's strategic depth and the state should take it into account when making its foreign policies, as is explained in his words: "For us the Turks, who have always been an instrumental element in making of this region's history, this heritage becomes even more important. With all the countries in our broad neighborhood, we enjoy shared history, which carries until present unique cultural, social and political ties.... We believe that the historical heritage we inherited from our common past provides a sound basis to further enhance our relations and turn our commonalities into joint benefits" (personal communication, May 31, 2011).

Following the logic of Davutoğlu's proclaimed theory, Turkey's value in world politics is highly influenced by its location in geopolitical areas of influence, particularly its control of the Bosphorus, and its historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire. This theory leads policy makers to emphasize Turkey's connections to the Balkans, the Middle East, and even Central Asia (Joshua, 2010). In the same vein, Davutoğlu argues, "Turkey is the natural heir of the Ottoman empire that once unified the Muslim world and therefore has the potential to become a Muslim regional power" (Joshua, 2010).

According to Davutoğlu, three methodological and five operational principles drive Turkey's foreign policy today (Davutoğlu, 2010). The first methodological principle is its "visionary" approach to the related issues instead of the "crisis –oriented" attitude that dominated Turkey's foreign policy during the Cold War period (Davutoğlu, 2010). For example, Turkey, with Davutoğlu, has a new vision toward the Middle East that encompasses the entire region. According to this visionary approach, Turkey can use its unique understanding of the Middle East, and its diplomatic assets to operate effectively on the ground (Davutoğlu, 2010). For

instance, Turkey's attempts to mediate between Syria and Israel, and its involvement in the Iranian nuclear issue are integral parts of Turkey's foreign policy vision for the Middle East.

The second methodological principle is to base Turkish foreign policy on a "consistent and systematic" framework around the world (Davutoğlu, 2010). So according to Davutoğlu "Turkey's vision for the Middle East is not in opposition to its approach in Central Asia or in the Balkans" (Davutoğlu, 2010). Turkey is also actively trying to improve relations with nearby countries like Greece, Iraq, the Russian federation, and Syria. So instead of solely being an ally to the West, the AKP is trying to build balanced relations with all countries worldwide, a fact that helps Turkey become an influential and effective state. Such methodology may be noticed in Turkey's relations with struggling powers such as the different Palestinian groups, mainly Hamas, and the Israelis or the Americans. The third methodological principle is the adoption of a new discourse and diplomatic style, which has resulted in the spread of Turkish soft power in the region (Davutoğlu, 2010). Hence, according to Davutoğlu, "Turkish diplomats and politicians have adopted a new language in regional and international politics that polarities Turkey's civil –economic power." However, soft power for the AKP is not restricted to diplomacy. It is, according to Davutoğlu, practiced through "robust economy, social dynamism, advanced democracy, as well as unique historical and cultural ties with many countries in all four directions... Turkey's support to developing countries... setting up high level strategic cooperation councils in bilateral and multilateral formats, concluding free trade agreements and enabling visa free travel with numerous countries in our wider neighborhood"(Davutoğlu, personal communication, May 31, 2011). This broad meaning of soft power becomes more important when used for the sake of security, as the secretary general of the National Security Council, Mr. Kılıç says: "in the prevailing international environment, it is

obvious that security can no longer be confined to merely military terms, and that historical, social, cultural, political and economic factors increasingly enter into play and affect the security environment. Indeed, with its fast growing economy; social dynamism; improved democratic standards emanating from a well-established set of values and a clear vocation; unique historical ties with a large number of countries in all four directions; and a rich cultural diversity, Turkey's soft power is more relevant and effective than ever in a wide geography" (personal communication, May 31, 2011). Here, Davutoğlu's third methodology is close to the Constructivist theory that gives an important role to diplomacy for structuring and reconstructing international behaviors.

In this sequence, five operational principles guide Turkey's foreign policy-making process according to its Foreign Minister (Davutoğlu, 2010). The first one is "the balance between security and democracy". Davutoğlu considers that "the legitimacy of any political regime comes from its ability to provide security and freedom together to its citizens". However, in the case of Turkey this is quite a difficult issue because of the old problems with many ethnic groups such as the Kurdish parties looking for separation, like the PKK terrorist group. The second principle is that of "zero problems toward neighbors". In reality, during the past nine years, Turkey has managed to spin good and strategic relations with many of its neighbors, namely Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Furthermore, in 2009 they achieved considerable diplomatic progress with Armenia (Joshua, 2010), which nevertheless remains the most problematic relationship in Turkey's neighborhood policy due to the bloody events that took place between Turks and Armenians during World War 1. However several obstacles are facing this policy and preventing the AKP from making use of this principle. One important obstacle came into existence with Turkey's attempts to deal

with the events taking place in Syria since March 2011. Turkey is standing disconcerted between accepting the way the Syrian regime is dealing with the domestic problems, for the favor of the Turkish benefits in economy and security, or supporting the popular uprising, mainly the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood groups for the favor of raising their popularity among the Sunnis in Turkey and abroad. The third operative principle is "proactive and pre-emptive peace diplomacy" which aims to take measures before crises emerge and escalate to a critical level (Davutoğlu, 2010). There are many examples of this principle like Turkey's mediation between Syria and Israel, Turkey's efforts to achieve Sunni-Shiite reconciliation in Iraq, as well as other examples elsewhere. One should always bear in mind that all Turkish diplomatic efforts are based on "security for all, high-level political dialogue, economic integration and interdependence, and multicultural coexistence" (Davutoğlu, 2010). The fourth principle is "adherence to a multi-dimensional foreign policy" (Davutoğlu, 2010). This means that Turkey's relations with other global actors aim to be complementary, not of competitive nature. So when Davutoğlu defends this principle, he gives the example of Turkey's relations with the US through the two countries bilateral strategic ties and through NATO, and considers that both states aim to complement each other.

Finally, the fifth principle is "rhythmic diplomacy" (Davutoğlu, 2010), that implies active involvement of Turkey in all international organizations and on all issues of global and international importance.

Thus it appears that some of the strategic depth' methodologies as well as some of its principles are closer to the constructivist theory, especially when relying on diplomacy to eliminate problems and struggles, or even to build trust, and when emphasizing on the role of identity in understanding states' behavior. In 2010,

Davutoğlu stated the goal of Turkey in becoming one of the world's top ten powers by 2023. Moreover, in a 2003 speech in Sarajevo, he laid out Ankara's ambition: "We will reintegrate the Balkan region, Middle East and Caucasus... together with Turkey as the center of world politics in the future" (Davutoğlu, 2003).

3-The International Level of Analysis:

Kenneth Waltz's Structural Realism views the world from an anarchic perspective, and believes that "with many sovereign states, with no system of law enforceable among them, with each state judging its grievances and ambitions according to the dictates of its own reason or desire, conflict... is bound to occur" (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993: 129). So since any state in this world is part of the international regime, it is very essential to study its location in the system from a geopolitical perspective. For instance it is mentioned in this study (page 20) that the neighborhood of Turkey with the USSR during the Cold War era was among the main reasons pushing it toward the West, asking the NATO's membership.

a- The Geographic location and Geopolitical position:

The geographical location of Turkey has always played an essential role in the process of decision-making, and this factor is highly important for several reasons. The first is that Turkey lies between the continents of the Old World, Asia, Europe and Africa, a position that has always given it the ability to interact actively in its regional environment in a way that it affects and is affected by the neighboring political, social, economic, and cultural factors. Also, Turkey, 783562 km square¹⁷, stretches out between Asia and Europe, where the part located in western Asia

17- The USA Central Intelligence Agency. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>

constitutes about 97% of the country's overall area and is called the "Anatolia area", while the rest lies in south-east Europe. The second reason is that Turkey shares borders with eight¹⁸ states: Georgia (252 km), Armenia (268 km) and Azerbaijan (9 km) in the south East, Iran (499 km) In the East, Greece (206 km) in the West , Bulgaria (240 km) in the North-West, Syria (822 km) and Iraq (352 km) in the South.

Map of Turkey¹⁹

Therefore, these long and diversified borders give the state vast opportunities upon choosing their policies and alliances.

Third, Turkey's location factor is highly important because it is bordered by water from three sides: the Black sea in the north, the Aegean Sea in the west, and the Mediterranean in the south. In addition, Turkey reigns over two important waterways, the Bosphorus in north Marmara, and the Dardanelles Channel in south-west Turkey, which joins Marmara Sea and the Mediterranean, knowing that this particularity gives the state additional access. On another hand, Turkey lies in the center of the international crossing areas, mainly those points tying the Euro-Asian

¹⁸- PREVIOUS REFERENCE

¹⁹- The USA Central Intelligence Agency. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>

land block with the hot seas and Africa through two important crossing roads, the Balkans and the Caucasus as well as the aqueous channels (Davutoğlu, 2001:142).

Therefore, the location of Turkey and its geographic characteristics have always constituted a strategic agent. Moreover, this location has also played an essential role in drawing the foreign policies and alliances of the different and executive Turkish governments.

For instance, one notices that the most important reason behind Turkey moving toward the West during the Cold War period, and forming the alliance with the NATO, as well as working for the membership of the European Union was the geography of the state, its proximity to the Soviet Union's areas of influence; its possession of essential geographic capabilities in terms of surface area; its location in the center of the Middle East, and on the land and water cross-roads that join the East, rich with resources mainly oil, with the West in need of those resources.

These factors have enabled Turkey to profit from its strategic location to gain Western support, and to become the only non-Atlantic state member of NATO. Based on this, Turkey used its geographic position to draw its foreign policies and form its alliances during the Cold War era. The policy had been based on achieving balance between the NATO and WARSAW pacts.

With the end of the Cold War in 1990, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, new geographic facts emerged, and new states declared their independence from Russia, thus constituting new neighbors and new challenges calling on the need to restructure Turkey's foreign policy priorities. So Turkey is no longer able to act in the Middle East as just a member of the NATO, but is now obliged to take into account the circumstances of the neighboring states. In addition, Turkey had to take into consideration the newly emerged security challenges such as that of the terrorist

group, the “Kurdistan Workers Party” (PKK) which is active in southeast Turkey. Moreover, the changes taking place in Turkey due to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, led to the emergence of new economic roles such as that of transmitting oil to Europe from the Caspian Sea and Iraq.

b- The Newly- Emerged Security Challenges:

Upon taking the security issue as an example, one will find that many years ago, Turkey was highly interested in solving the tendency of the PKK for separation. And because the Kurdish issue is common among Turkey, Syria and Iraq, where Kurds constitute minorities in each of the three states, this problem was considered as a cornerstone in the relations among the three states.

For example, Prime Minister Erdoğan expressed the importance of Syria for Turkey when commenting on the events that Syria experienced in March 2011, by saying: "Turkey is interested in what is happening in Syria, and we cannot stay quiet toward what is going on. We share with Syria 800 km of borders, and we have blood relationships with the Syrians"²⁰, that are mainly the Kurds in both states. Hence, Erdoğan was worried about what was happening in Syria because any anarchy in it may affect southeast Turkey where the PKK is still active.

The same conditions took place during his visit to Iraq in March 28, 2011, when he emphasized his anxiety concerning the danger of the PKK that finds shelter in northern Iraq. So, in his speech in the Iraqi parliament, Erdoğan said: "the most important problem facing the advancement of relations between our countries is the fact that the terrorist organization, the PKK, is taking the North as its quarters. I hope

20-“Erdoğan Is Anxious from the Dissolution of Syria.” Assafir Newspaper, 16 May 2011.

we can stand up to this terrorist organization together "²¹. Similarly, the Deputy Directorate General for Iraq, Mr. Demirer, says that the "PKK terrorist organization continues to be a threat against Turkey, Iraq and the Iraqi Kurds. PKK terrorists still operate in the camps located in the north of Iraq where they obtain logistical support, arms and ammunition. We expect Iraq and KRG (Kurdistan Region) to take concrete steps in preventing the terrorist organization to use Iraqi territory as a safe haven"(Demirer, personal communication, May 31, 2011). Therefore, these security challenges have caused the AKP to form new alliances since 2002, and have posed new orientations in foreign policy, mainly toward Iraq and Syria.

Consequently, these new orientations maybe justified as the party deals realistically with the surrounding circumstances, and prioritizes the national security issue among the state's interests as it is constantly under the pressure of the security dilemma to the extent that this is a frequent and common point in its leaders' political speech.

c- The Newly -Emerging Economic Role:

Another new role has been given to Turkey due to its geographic features, and to the passage of pipelines transmitting gas and oil from the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Turkey itself, to Europe. One such line, for instance is "Bako-Cihan"²², which passes on natural gas and crude oil from Caspian Sea and Azerbaijan through Turkey, to Europe. This pipeline passes from Azerbaijan, through Georgia, to Turkey with a length of 1770 km and holding about one million barrels per day.

21- Assafir News Paper, March, 29, 2011, issue 11849.

22-Bakir, Ali. "*Bako-Cihan Pipeline in the Atmosphere of the Russian- Georgian Crisis.*"²⁴August 2008, (accessed 29 May 2011); Retrieved from <http://alibakeer.maktoobblog.com>

Bako-Cihan Pipeline-Map²³

It is clear that such a project gives Turkey a primary and strategic role in the oil and gas industry, on one side, because this commodity is vital to Europe, and on another side because this dispossesses Russia of the chance to monopolize the supply of oil to the West.

Again, it is a matter of interest or more precisely of maximizing interest. Moreover, this helps the West in strengthening their alliance, hence strengthening polarity in the international order.

23- Bakir, Ali. "Bako-Cihan Pipeline in the Atmosphere of the Russian- Georgian Crisis." 24 August 2008, (accessed 29 May 2011); Retrieved from <http://alibakeer.maktoobblog.com>

Chapter Four

Turkey's Behavior toward Some Main

Middle Eastern Issues

“If Turkey wants to be influential in the region, it has to produce policies through which it can bring down the walls separating it from its neighbors, instead of building an electronic wall as that of Berlin. If Turkey's relations with its neighbors continued to be troubled due to the pretext of fear of a civil war break out as a result of the situation in northern Iraq, or the pretext of fear from the influence of some ideologies as is the case of the relations with Iran, or by shifting the occasional crisis into chronic and long lasting crisis as occurred with Syria at some other times, this fear would isolate Turkey within its borders and control it indirectly. What should happen is overcoming the sense of fear, putting Turkey in a position where it can build rational treaties with its neighbors and improve its external influence by signing different international treaties”

(Davutoğlu, 2001: 172)

Introduction:

The Middle East encompasses a geographic area joining the Arab speaking countries in both Asia and Africa, to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey with both its Asian and European parts. Different geo-strategic and geo-economic factors participated in drawing the borders of this area since ancient history. With the passage of time, there came about the idea, that to reign over the world, any international power had to rein the Middle East first.

The importance of this region derives from many facts. First, the Middle East cradles the basic lines of humanitarian history, on both the spiritual and materialistic levels. The first cities and human population resided in this region, and the main religious ideologies in human's history were launched from this region.

In addition, the Middle East constituted a geo-cultural connecting line between East and west. This was because many of the region's states occupy important locations on the international roads, and contain the most important maritime passageways, noting that the Middle East is known to be the richest in natural resources, especially oil.

Due to this strategic location and these properties, this region fell under the influence of the struggle between great international powers, where each power, be it a state or an axis, trying to impose its power and leverage on the Middle East. During the Cold War period, this region experienced the strongest contradictions and calamities due to the struggle between the western axis headed by the US, and the eastern axis headed by the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union aimed to extend its power to reach the warm waters while the US considered the line starting from northeast Turkey, through north Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, as the most important geo-political belt separating the two great camps.

During the Cold War era, every axis set forth its suitable geo-cultural, geo-economic and geo-political characteristics and once the geo-economic fortunes of the region became highly focused around oil, the Middle East and oil became two faces of the same coin.

Later on, by the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, additional factors, other than the geo-political location and oil joined the struggle, among which were water resources, agricultural areas, and issues like pathways for transporting energy resources.

For instance, the water element emerged during the eighties on the theoretical and diplomatic levels, but later this started to act as an internal source of crisis in the M.E. This explains why the use of both Tigris and Euphrates rivers has a special importance in the interrelations of Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Also , it explains how the water crisis facing Israel has been influencing the path of the peace process since 1990. On the other hand, due to the collapse of the two-axis of the international system, these resources that used to be under the control of Communist camp, became new and important geo-economical factors for the Middle East. In this environment, Turkey gained increasing importance due to its geo-strategic location.

Thus, if we take into consideration the geo-political and geo-economic challenges facing Turkey by the end of the Cold War, mainly due to redrawing the borders of several entities and camps, and to the strategic historical and cultural depth that govern the AKP's policies, we can logically explain many of the current policies taken by Turkey, concerning the neighboring countries.

Davutoğlu considers that "Turkey's capability to open wide environments to its foreign policy on the regional level stops with its ability to reorganize its relations with those neighbors, who form a tangible link with close land areas. No state that

faces recurrent crises with its close neighbors can produce regional and international policies outside its borders. For example, concerning the Middle East, no one treaty can balance the losses caused by a foreign policy that runs against Iran, Syria and Iraq. It is necessary to evaluate those welfares resulting from external treaties according to their positive influence on the state's borders (Davutoğlu, 2001:170).

In addition , Davutoğlu considers that the most important step to be followed with the Arab environment, to prevent many bad influences resulting from the Turkish-Israeli relations, is " by improving the dual relations with the Arab countries, each alone, through diversifying these relations and deepening them so that mutual interests will be met and widened " (Davutoğlu, 2001:451).

Further to this, the Turkish leaders find, in strengthening relations with Iran, a strategic move capable of breaking Turkey's regional isolation if at any time the latter's relations with the Arabs become critical.

In this context, it is important to note that the view of the AKP, in the field of foreign policy, considers that the balance in the M.E. occurs within a strategic triangle where Egypt, Turkey and Iran form its edges, and that this triangle has gained importance with the discovery of oil (Davutoğlu, 2001:391). In this triangle, the intra-relations interact with those of the international regime. And by following these relations, one can understand and know the new projects related to the M.E. For instance, understanding the relations of this triangle helps in understanding Turkish – Iranian relations, either during the fifties or in these current times.

Also the balances of this triangle constitute a web of interlinked relations with another internal triangle, the edges of which are Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia. This triangle is influenced by what is occurring in another smaller triangle that of Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon, related directly with Israel.

Hence, Davutoğlu considers that the dialectical relations between these three triangles is based on alliances formed to meet interests, and even when struggle takes place between different parties, this will lead to power and materializing capabilities. Understanding the AKP's background in the field of foreign relations, as well as their assimilation with the M.E. and how relations are built in it, makes it easier to appreciate the background of Turkish – Iranian relations, among the external triangle, the Turkish – Iraqi relation between the external and internal triangles, as well as the role of Turkey in the settlement of the Arab-Israeli struggle.

Finally, it is essential to note that the AKP's period of governing Turkey (2002 – 2011) was full of dramatic events, which gave the party many opportunities that they tried to invest to improve their power in Turkey and to strengthen their role in the region. Meanwhile, as the most important event in the 21st century was the US-occupation of Iraq, and the collapse of Saddam Hussein's Regime, which brought about a new era to the Middle East in which Turkey finds significant contributions to make, mainly when acting as a European democratic and secular country that is attached firmly to the principles of a free – market economy, and as it has valuable and unique experience in implementing reforms, modernity and regional cooperation.

a- **The role of Turkey in the Iranian Nuclear Issue :**

“We are absolutely against the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and in the rest of the world. In this vein, we have been very clear on the point that we do not want Iran to develop nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, we are adamant on the right to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in a transparent manner and in accordance with international law. We would like to see Iran as a partner that would make positive contributions to tackling regional and international questions. We aim at developing our relations further with Iran in accordance with the principle of good neighborliness. ”

(Davutoğlu, personal communication, May 31, 2011)

1- A historical back ground of the relations between Turkey and Iran:

The borders between Turkey and Iran (499 km) are characterized as being the calmest and the most stable since the end of the Cold War era (Davutoğlu, 2001:467). The relation between both states passed through different periods, sometimes those of harmony and other times some problems, but what had always governed it, was the pragmatic view based on the mutual historical experience.

With the Islamic revolution in Iran (1979), it was expected to see tensions in the relations between the Iranian revolution and its ideology that adopted the slogan of animosity against the US, and secular Turkey especially as a member of NATO and a close ally of the US in the Middle East. However, these differences were governed by considerations of mutual interests, where both countries used diplomatic means to solve any crisis that may arise.

For instance during its eight- years war with Iraq in the eighties, Iran counted on Turkey in its trade relations with the outer world, and Turkey adopted the policy of neutrality and non-partiality. It was not an ally to neither Iran nor Iraq, but Turkey benefited from the situation for the sake of its economic policies based on opening the export gates toward the M.E. With the end of the war in 1988, some tensions

appeared, as Iran was accused of plotting the assassination of several leaders of secularist opinion in Turkey. Whereas Iran blamed Turkey for sheltering the Iranian organization Mujahiddin-Khalq , which was attempting to overthrow Ayatollah Khomeini's regime. Further clashes occurred in 1999, when the PKK used Iranian territory for attacks in Turkey, and the Turkish air force reportedly bombed Iranian border villages. But those crises forced the two sides to sign a mutual security agreement in 1999 (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 139-140) because no one party could tolerate the consequences of a long lasting crisis.

On the other hand, it is important to note that the geo-political vacuum left with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, especially in Caucasus and Middle Asia, created new necessities for both Turkey and Iran, mainly in the fields of economy and security. Moreover, in 2003 when Ankara refused to support the American invasion of Iraq, and tensions in the relationship between Turkey and the US started to show up, and a new strategic environment has been challenging both states; they both started cooperating from one side to counterpart the possible threats, from the other side to make use of possible opportunities.

2- What does Iran mean to Turkey?

“Iran is a neighbor of Turkey’s, located at the confluence of the Middle East, South Asia and the Caucasus. We cannot afford to remain indifferent to developments with regard to our neighbors including Iran, as they are of direct consequence to Turkey.” (Davutoğlu, personal communication, May 31, 2011)

“Engagement and dialogue with Iran would help transform our region in a positive direction.” (Kılıç, personal communication, May 31, 2011)

The geo-political importance:

Iran is located on the Eastern border of Turkey. One of the most important features, that determine its relations with Turkey, is that it lies, like Turkey, on the southern,

Euro-Asian passage road; this makes both states act as alternative to the northern crossing point that is governed by Russia, when moving from Asia to the pen plains. As well, both states are located in west Asia, Turkey attached to southern Europe while Iran is attached to Southern Asia. This has a great importance since it facilitates the movement between the two continents.

In addition, the importance of Iran in involving Turkey's politics toward the M.E. may be present at different levels. The first level is related to the importance of the Turkish- Iranian relations in the triangle of Turkey- Iran- Egypt. That triangle, as mentioned previously, is considered by the AKP's leaders, mainly Davutoğlu, to be the historical and geo-political counterweight to the other groups in the M.E.; the second level is based on the geo-cultural line formed from the Turkish, Arab and Persian regions. This level reflects the balances between ethnic and cultural groups located in non-Arab states in the M.E, who are obliged, for their own interests, to spin relations with their Arab neighbors. However, the third level of the importance of Iran to Turkish foreign policy is related to the line joining the Persian Gulf and the Mesopotamia. This line constitutes the Fertile Crescent in the M.E. Therefore, the Turkish- Iranian relations constitute a balancing unit for the regional and international competition on the line that encounters the greatest reserve of oil worldwide.

The fourth important level, especially in the post-Cold war era, is related to the increase in the level of relations between the Caucasus and the M.E, to the extent that the line extended between the Caspian Sea and the Black sea became a strategic field of communication. Further to this, the interests of both states reach other areas in the M.E, such as the cases of Palestine and Lebanon.

The security Issue:

Mr Kılış considers that one of the important issues of common interest between Turkey and Iran, is the security issue. Since 9/11 events in the US, the NATO occupation of Afghanistan, and the US occupation of Iraq, a new situation emerged in the M.E. and new security challenges were posed on both Turkey and Iran. For instance, both governments were opposed to the territorial breakup of Iraq, and Iran was challenged by Kurdish insurgents of the "Free Life Party of Kurdistan" or PEJAK, operating from northern Iraq (personal communication, May 31, 2011). This appeared to have close links with the PKK that has a base in the Quandil Mountains in northern Iraq, an area close to both the Turkish and Iranian borders.

Hence, Turkey and Iran had a common interest in defeating the Kurdish insurgents, whether PKK or PEJAK, and in April 2008, they started high-level talks on security cooperation (Hale, 2009).

The Economic Issue:

In another domain, Ankara is interested in acquiring increased supplies of natural gas from Iran, even though this puts Turkey in direct conflict with the West, especially the US, which opposes strengthening economic relations with Iran, mainly because Iran is subject to several punitive UN measures. However, for Turkey, the main motive for strengthening economic relations with Iran was to reduce Turkey's reliance on Russia for natural gas (Uslu, 2009). It also aims to act as a major conduit for non-Russian gas to central and Eastern Europe, via the planned "Nabucco" pipeline project estimated to work on 2015 (Uslu, 2009).

Nabucco Pipelines map²⁴

In July 2007, Turkish and Iranian Ministers signed a memorandum of understanding under which a new pipeline would be built, to carry 30 billion cubic meters of gas per year from Iran to Turkey and Europe (Uslu, 2009). Most of the gas would originate from Iran, but some would come by another existing pipeline to Iran from Turkmenistan.

In addition, both countries are highly concerned in activating the commercial activity between them, where the volume of trade between the two countries increased from \$ 1.3 billion in 2002, to \$10 billion in 2008 (Poyraz, 2009).

The Iranian Nuclear Issue:

Another issue of interest that headed the Turkish-Iranian agenda, derived from Iran's nuclear project. Consistently, the AKP government agrees with the West that Iran has to drop any attempt to produce nuclear weapons. They used to declare that they favored a completely denuclearized Middle East, by implication, covering Israel and Iran. Since 2002, Turkey launched diplomatic efforts to persuade Iran to accept western conditions for a cessation of its uranium enrichment program, or say to take this dispute to an end for three main reasons: the first, because Turkey was cautious and opposed hints from the United States and Israel that military actions could be

²⁴ - Nabucco Pipeline. Retrieved from <http://www.maref.org/index.php>

taken against Iranian nuclear sites. Hence, Turkey knows well that by such attacks, an environment of stress and war will predominate the area, and this will alter the aims of the Turks to establish a flourishing area where Turkey can forego economically, and be safe security wise. This is clearly illustrated in Davutoğlu's words: "In our view, negotiations offer the only venue to a lasting solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. We do not believe in the merits of aggravated sanctions. Military intervention, which would have devastating effects on an already volatile region is not an option" (personal communication, May 31, 2011). The second reason goes back to the anxiety of Turkey from Iran's efforts to build up its scientific and military power. The Turks believe that "in the long term, Iran's nuclear status would decisively shift the balance of power towards Tehran" (Elliot, 2010). Hence Turkey is aware of maintaining a balance of power with Iran, as a preemptive attempt to protect itself as a state, and to protect its interests in the M.E., whether in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, or Palestine. In addition Ankara believes that any successful attempt from Iran to produce nuclear weapons would prompt Turkey, as well as other countries, to do the same, thus prompting a non- conventional arm race in the region. It is the security dilemma that has always been governing Turkey's behavior, in the past when the threats used to appear from USSR, or the contemporary expected threats appearing from Iran. Accordingly, this explanation of the Turkish attempts and goals behind dealing with the Iranian nuclear issue, with all its titles: deterrence, arm race to build up power, and security dilemma, clarifies more the importance of using the neo- realist theory to explain Turkey's foreign policy. The other reason is that Turkey is always looking for the role of mediator capable of solving the area's disputes. Here again, the interests of both countries, Turkey and Iran, met in a critical

period of the M.E. history. Hence in an environment where the group of 5 + 1²⁵ failed to reach a solution for the Iranian nuclear crisis, the US is under the influence of the war in Afghanistan, and President Obama failed to reach a settlement for the Palestinian- Israeli conflict; both countries, with the help of the Brazilian president Lula da Silva, reached an agreement regarding this problem in May 2010²⁶. The so-called Turkish-Brazilian agreement stated that Iran would exchange all the enriched uranium it has on the Turkish territories with ready-to-use uranium given by the West. However, that agreement failed to reach a happy end maybe because it clashed with the interests of the international great powers.

On another hand, the American and French diplomatic efforts obtained access to issue Resolution 1929²⁷ from the UN-Security Council to increase the level of sanctions against Iran. Turkey was among few to vote against the resolution, in a position that is coherent with its attempts to solve the Iranian issue according to its precession. In fact, Turkey wants to prove that “these kinds of Turkish political and economic initiatives will not only serve the interests of the Turkish and Iranian states but also have the potential to replace the aggressive military rhetoric of western countries in dealing with Iran” (Poyraz, 2009).

All through the path of the Turkish – Iranian relations, Turkey has historically been working to meet its interests, on either the economic level, or the security and political levels. Since the year 2002, the AKP has been trying to maximize the country's profits of its relations with Iran, based on the view of Davutoğlu that Iran, together with Turkey and Egypt constitute the strategic triangle of balances in the

²⁵ - Group of 5+1 is the group constituted of the 5 permanent members in the Security Council, that is: the USA, France, Britain, China, and Russia in addition to Germany.

²⁶ - Reuters, Tehran. 2010. “Iran welcomes Turkish, Brazilian nuclear fuel ideas.” Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6470IW20100508?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews>

²⁷ - Security Council. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sc9948.doc.htm>

M.E. He also believes that Iran as Turkey is a state whose influence goes beyond the region.

Turkey's view regarding Iran as a central state in the M.E urges the AKP to increase the levels of relations on the different fields, as well as the attempts of the AKP to take advantage of the environment of trust existing between both states in order to mediate on the path of the Iranian nuclear problem, and to eliminate the threat of war. All the above mentioned could be used as good indicators to the realist politic adapted by the AKP in the field of international affairs.

b- Turkey and the Arab – Israeli Issue:

“The core issue in the Middle East continues to be the Arab-Israeli conflict, and at the very heart of this problem lies the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. The settlement of this dispute would be the key to the normalization of intra-regional relations, opening new horizons for full regional cooperation and development. We strongly support a two-state solution that would give way to the establishment of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, to live in peace and security with the State of Israel.”

(Davutoğlu, personal communication, May 31, 2011)

The continuous dead lock in resolving the dispute with Israel among the Palestinians and the Syrians prompted AKP, with its new foreign policy posture to use its mediation efforts towards finding a lasting peace settlement among the varying parties. So the AKP made many attempts to achieve a peace agreement between either the Palestinians and Israel in 2007²⁸, or between Syria and Israel in 1995, in 2000, or in 2008, but they all failed. Davutoğlu considers that the main gap lies in the fact that Turkey does not have the necessary diplomatic load upon each of the Arabs and Israel (Davutoğlu, 2001:458). He believes that there is an imbalance between the security responsibility asked from Turkey and its economic interests. Thus he says that "Taking up the role of a policeman in the area, without the necessary authority regarding the economic resources in the M.E, and the attempt to attain regional security in this way, seems as an easy task, but actually it is a dangerous risk. Turkey has to wonder why it is asked to be present in the front rows in matter of security settlements, while this is not the case inside the economical congregation (Davutoğlu, 2001: 459). The other reason behind Turkey's failure in realizing any progress in their role as a mediator for settling the Arab- Israeli struggle goes back, according to Davutoğlu, to the Israeli new strategy in the M.E..

²⁸ - In 2007, Turkish president Abdallah Gül arranged in Ankara a meeting between the President of the Palestinian authority: Mahmoud Abbas, and the President of Israel: Shimon Peres (Nureldine, 2011).

Hence, while the strategy of Israel during the Cold war period was based on using its military power to defend its borders, they found that this strategy kept them away from Middle Eastern resources, namely water and oil. In fact the Israelis used the peace process launched on Oslo²⁹ (1993) to start a new era in the struggle. Once the Palestinians acknowledged the state of Israel, new doors in the Arab world were opened to it, thus mediators no longer have the same role and same importance as before.

According to Davutoğlu again, " After Oslo, Israel worked on the acquisition of a flexible and active diplomacy, trying to benefit from the differences that appeared among the region's states based on the peace process itself " (Davutoğlu, 2001: 422). So, Israel inclined toward creating a web of relations to benefit from the areas' resources, mainly water, oil and gases. Example, the Qatari economic office opened in Jerusalem. In other words, it may be said that Turkey is a need for Israel as being a Muslim, non- Arab country, and that Turkey was an essential requirement for Israel when the doors of the Arabs were closed, since Israel worked to achieve a "Periphery Pact"³⁰ devised by David Ben-Gurion³¹. This was mainly for security reasons and because Israel felt the anti- inimical environment around it.

²⁹ - The Oslo agreement: It called for a five-year transitional period in which Israeli forces would withdraw from occupied territories and a Palestinian Authority would be set up, leading to a permanent settlement. It was signed on the White House lawn in September 1993 in the presence of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. (Retrieved from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7385301.stm)

³⁰ - Periphery pact: Israel had long wanted a broader "periphery strategy" with Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia to foster friendly relations on the borders of a hostile Arab world... The pact included cooperation agreements in the diplomatic, military, commercial, and intelligence areas." (Codispoti, Joseph)

³¹ - David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) was the chief statesman and political leader of Israel, and became the first prime minister and chief architect of the state of Israel. He is still revered as the "Father of the Nation." (<http://www.jewishmag.co.il/43mag/bengurion/bengurion.htm>).

While after Oslo (1993) and the PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist as a state, and the establishment of the Palestinian authority in the West Bank and Gaza, Israel signed with Yasser Arafat first, and later with Mahmoud Abbas, several agreements mainly on the security level. Those agreements help in reducing the level of stress, security wise, on Israel. Hence the Israeli is no longer in hurry to settle the remaining problems with the Palestinians, nor to settle the dispute with Syria. Adding that the Israeli could open some holes in his relations with some Arab countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and others. So for Israel, without waiting for the accomplishment of a general settlement with the Arabs, in order to enter the Arab world, It was trying to form side relations. This strategy reduced Turkey's role in the settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Meanwhile the AKP has its own view for solving the Palestinian case. They believe that this may occur through a peace plan, applicable, and based on the principles of international law. But for Turkey, this plan requires solving five big problems. The first, is the future of Jerusalem, the second is the establishment of a cohesive state where both of its parts, the Western bank and Gaza strip, are linked together, the third problem is that of the Palestinian refugees who were obliged to leave their homes because of 1948 and 1967 wars, the fourth is the problem of using the economic resources, while the last is the problem of Jewish settlers. (Davutoğlu, 2001:626). However Israel rejects this view. They insist that Jerusalem is the eternal capital of their state, they refuse any discussions leading to removal of the Jewish settlements established on the West Bank, thus no cohesive Palestinian state, and they refuse the return of the Palestinian refugees from abroad since it would lead to demographic imbalance for the favor of the Palestinians.

All these different factors made it difficult for Turkey to play the role of mediator. So the relations between Turkey and Israel that reached its peak due to the agreements of 1996³², have been highly influenced by the AKP's views and criticism of Israel due to its war on Lebanon (2006), its war on Gaza (2008), and later the siege of Gaza. Even though the most important features of this tension appeared after the Israeli attack on the Flotilla, the fleet of aid-ships that attempted to break the Gaza siege, that attack which ended up killing nine Turkish activists.

In conclusion, it is obvious that the AKP desires a role in settling the struggle between the Arabs and Israel. They tried on the Syrian – Israeli path, but they failed. This is, according to Davutoğlu, because they failed to prove themselves as a reference for this issue in the area and because Israel is implementing a new strategy in the region where the “Periphery Pact “may not be a priority anymore.

However, Turkey could never stay away from the peace process in general because by playing a role on this path, they can prove themselves to be among the main players in drawing the history and the future of the M.E..

³² - The military accord entitled "the Agreement on Military Training Cooperation" was signed in Tel Aviv on February 23, 1996. A key component of the accords concerns the mutual access to the airspace and bases of both countries by their respective forces for separate or joint airforce and naval training exercises, for refueling and emergency situations and for mutually agreed electronic surveillance flights. Other aspects include intelligence cooperation to counter "common enemies"; border security; exchanges of military know-how and joint military ventures; observation of national military exercises; military academy exchanges; and the establishment of a security forum for a strategic dialogue between Israel and Turkey. (Retrieved from: <http://www.idis.gr/GR/Ekdoseis/newsletters/evriv.pdf>)

C- Turkish – Iraqi Relations:

“Iraq is one of the major priorities of Turkish foreign policy. Over the past seven years Turkey's policy towards Iraq was driven by the need to establish a stable and inclusive political and security environment which will help our Iraqi brothers devote all their energy on building a prosperous future for themselves.”(Kılıç, personal communication, May 31, 2011)

During three decades, the Turkish- Iraqi relations witnessed several tensions and disputes, either on the border level or on the regional level. Among the most frequent causes for the rise in the level of strain between these two countries were the Kurdish question related to north Iraq, the Iraqi-Iranian war in the eighties, and Turkey's support to the coalition headed by the US against Iraq during the second Gulf war (1991). In addition to all this is the historical water issue between the two countries.

With the escalation of the Iraqi-Iranian war in 1980, the Kurdish region was established in north Iraq. Davutoğlu describes this area in Iraq as " a geopolitically empty area " (Davutoğlu, 2001: 167) that changed with the first Gulf war to one of the most important issues in Turkish foreign policy, an issue that outlived the Cold War era. Davutoğlu considers this area as “a point of weakness for Turkey due to its connection with strategic external considerations, and of being used by the Kurdistan Labor Party" or PKK (Davutoğlu, 2001: 167), against Turkey.

So by the end of the second Gulf war, Iraq became divided and a Kurdish canton emerged in its north, changing the Turkish-Iraqi's borders to a confrontation line. This is mainly because the PKK, having separational intentions, found in northern Iraq a safe shelter. This fact influenced Turkey's security where its southern-eastern borders became hot ones, and this influenced even the state's internal security.

The second important issue causing historic tensions between Turkey and Iraq was that of water. In fact, the two main rivers, the Euphrates and Tigris that originate in

Eastern Turkey and run in both Syria and Iraq respectively, have always been a cause of tension between the two countries.

The Euphrates flows to Syria and on to Iraq, but the Tigris flows a short route of about 40 km along the Syrian-Turkish border, and then goes to Iraq which contributes 60 percent of the Tigris' total water (Acikalin, 2009) . Both rivers meet to form the Shatt Al-Arab, which flows to the Persian Gulf (Acikalin, 2009). The main problem regarding the riparian countries of the Euphrates and Tigris has been the construction of dams by countries up river, since this decreases the amount of water available for the use of countries down river that is mainly Iraq (Acikalin, 2009).

In the post 2003 period, when the US occupied Iraq, and after one year of the AKP rise to power in Turkey, Iraq has been the most substantial issue in Turkish foreign affairs. This is due to the intense domestic conflict and political instability in Iraq, with all the influences that the Iraqi problems may pose on Turkey.

In fact, the AKP considers two main principles governing Turkey's relations with Iraq, the first one is the threat of Iraq as a terrorist source toward Turkey represented by the PKK ability to work from Iraqi territories against the Turkish government. While the second principle is that Turkey is highly interested in protecting the " political demography " of Iraq, that is protecting the role of each ethnic or religious entity in ruling the state, whether Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, Turkmens, and Arabs (Davutoğlu, 2001: 621). Even though in reality this mainly has to do with the existence and participation in the governance of Iraq by two main groups, the Turkmens in Kirkuk and the Sunni Arabs.

More than any other Arab country , the AKP is highly interested in promoting Turkey's relations with Iraq for several reasons, First because it is one of the countries related to Turkey's strategic heritage. Second, it is a neighboring country,

sharing an essential controversial issue, that of the Kurds. Third, Turkey sees in Iraq a highly essential economic depth in different fields. Fourth, the competition on interests in Iraq, especially after the year 2003, between Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia. In fact these Turkish interests and views appeared mostly in Davutoğlu's words during his visit to Iraq in 2009 while preparing for the "High Level Strategic cooperation council" between Turkey and Iraq: "not only cooperation but integration"(The Turkish Weekly , 2009)

Considerable steps toward integration were done by signing in 2008 the "strategic economic cooperation and integration agreement" by the Prime Ministers of both countries, and by establishing in 2009 the "High Level Cooperation Council". According to these treaties, both parties agreed to the establishment of a common security framework, a high-level political dialogue, mutual economic dependence, and cultural cooperation (Demirer, personal communication, May 31, 2011). Currently the relations between the two countries are at best level where Iraq is the fifth largest partner for Turkish exports and Turkey is Iraq's largest trading partner, with the trade volume expected to reach 20 billion dollars by 2011, while it is important to note that Turkish investments in Iraq have focused mainly on construction (Acikalin, 2009). In 2008 both governments signed an energy agreement to upgrade the capacity of the Kirkuk –Yumurtalik oil pipeline from 800.000 barrels of oil a day to 1 million barrels (Uslu, 2007). However, there remain two important issues for improving the environment of trust between the two countries, shared water resources and common actions against terrorism. Regarding the water issue, current tension appears on the Iraqi side, where two Iraqi politicians, Ali el Dabbagh and Oussama el Najafi, made solving the water problem a condition for the Iraqi parliament to approve the "High Level Cooperation Council" between

Iraq and Turkey³³, even though Davutoğlu said, "Our perspective is that the water issue is our common fate" (Acikalin, 2009).

On another hand, the AKP believes that economic improvement between the two countries and their increased mutual interests will help marginalize the PKK. For example the project for the common industrial zone planned to be established on the borders between Turkey and Iraq aims at securitizing the borders through mutual cooperation, on one level, and at focusing on energy investments to meet the electricity and petrol refinery needs of Iraq on another (Davutoğlu, 2001:173). Davutoğlu says: " Turkey can become a commercial crossing center that acts as a tool for foreign policy able to diminish the tone of disagreements with the regions' states, and this can be achieved by transforming north Iraq to a southern belt of southern Anadolu, on the economic level in order to accomplish a true economic integration and eliminate any animosity between these countries " (Davutoğlu, 2001: 173).

Hence, it is a matter of using economic development and economic relations to solve problems between neighboring states. The AKP believes that economic development is a main tool to relieve tensions. However, can this be explained as a win-win solution³⁴ practiced by the AKP in order to solve historical problems with Iraq?

It could be a win-win solution used as a method to reach the situation of zero problems with neighboring states. Again, this is mainly to maximize the state's interests in economy, security, and political role. So it is again wise to use the Realist theory to understand the AKP's foreign policy.

³³ - "Rise of Tension between Turkey, Syria and Iraq."Assafir Newspaer, 27 May 2011, issue 11896.

³⁴ - Win-win conflict resolution: it is one of the main theoretical approaches to the study of international conflict resolution. It occurs when the parties to a dispute reach an agreement that satisfies them all. Hence, in win-win solution all parties are happy with the outcome because over time

Conclusion:

“There is no doubt that Turkish foreign policy of the last nine years has had a positive impact in both regional and global context. We not only have very good bilateral relations with all our neighbors, but we have also managed to forge a common regional identity where the relevant countries started looking into future through a common lens and took bold steps in prioritizing cooperation rather than confrontation in their relationship.

Given the challenges lying ahead in all four directions, this is a humble but important beginning. But, it is more so in the context of the Middle East where we are faced with a historic transition.”

(Davutoğlu, personal communication, May 31, 2011)

The fear concerning the secular identity of the state, as well as the anxiety from the spread out of the Soviet Union’s influence in the Middle East, prevented the development of an active Turkish foreign policy with the other Middle Eastern countries, in general, and its close neighbors in particular. However the end of the Cold War era and the dissolution of the Soviet Union influenced Turkey’s foreign policies, as it imposed new conditions to be taken into account regarding the whole international relations. This reconsideration of Turkey’s foreign policies developed and reached its peak with the arrival of the AKP to power in 2002, for different reasons. On one side, the regional and international development made it vital for Turkey to manage an on-going assessment of its foreign relations and policies, such developments as the American occupation of Iraq, the developments taking place on the Iranian axis especially the emergence of the Iranian nuclear file, in addition to the ambitions of the US President Obama to enhance the negotiation path between Israel, and the Palestinians and Syria. On the other side, several other considerations have influenced greatly the new trends in Turkey’s foreign policy such as the historical and geopolitical factors, the nature of the AKP itself, and the personality of Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The AKP found that Turkey, after the American occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, is facing new political, economic and security challenges. In addition, these newly-emerging conditions opened for Turkey new horizons and provided it with new opportunities to regain its role and presence as the true heir of the Ottoman Empire.

The policy of the AKP is based on a new and important strategy in the domain of international relations. It is the strategy of going back to the roots and investing all the constituents of the historic depth of the Ottoman's Turkey. This theory calls for adopting the strategy of "zero problems" with the eight neighboring states and going beyond that stage to strengthen multidimensional relations with them, and thus produce a multidimensional foreign policy.

Following this policy made it possible for Turkey during the past decade, to strengthen its political, economic and security relations with the neighboring states. It also helped the AKP to deal with all the Middle Eastern issues and crises in an attempt to play the role of the mediator that is accepted by all the parties and capable of solving crises and disputes. These explain the existence of the Turkish mediator in the nuclear Iranian issue, and in the negotiations between Syria and Israel, as well as in settling the inter- Iraqi crisis.

Yet this status-quo posed a challenge for the scholars of International Affairs to understand the Turkish behavior, its aims, motives and likelihood to become a model in international affairs. This challenging task necessitates the use of the theories approved in the field, such as Realism, Constructivism, Liberalism, as well as others. The first impression and remarks point out that the AKP's behavior has many common features with those of the neo-realist theory. Therefore, this study aimed at studying the validity of such impression, hence to conclude that neo-realism is able to explain the behavior of the Party of Justice and Development ruling Turkey.

This is what happened. The AKP proved since 2002 that it has been working to maximize the gains and profits, for their party as well as the state, even Davutoğlu's theory, the Strategic Depth, serves in boosting these profits to Turkey.

It is worth mentioning that for the AKP, the state is the major actor, it is rational and unitary. Moreover, the study shows that the national security issue, in addition to the economy, have always been given priority on top of the state's interests. According to the AKP, even though developing the country's economy is essential in itself, but it is also important for the country's prosperity, as a tool for attaining peace in the region, and a mean to assert their power in the state's institutions.

The study's conclusive findings show that Turkey's foreign policies are rational and are best explained by Kenneth Waltz' neo-realist theory. To some extent, Davutoğlu agrees with this when saying³⁵: "There are certain aspects of Kenneth Waltz's neo-realist theory such as the need for states to enter into alliances with others which in broad terms reflects our general foreign policy approach" (personal communication, May 31, 2011). Meanwhile, in particular cases, a certain behavior might harmonize with other theories, as is the case of Turkey's economic doctrine that is close to the liberal theory, where for the AKP the economic role of the state would be restricted to "ensuring the conditions for free competition in the market, and removing the obstacles facing private enterprise" (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 100).

In addition, it is noted that one of the principles of Davutoğlu's theory, which states the "proactive and pre-emptive peace diplomacy" conforms to the constructivist theory, which contend that agents and structures are mutually constituted (Burchill et al., 2009: 218), hence enhances the practice of diplomacy in foreign policy.

So, the AKP provided a new experience of forming relations among states, especially neighboring ones, an experience that reflected an environment of comfort and stability in Turkey and its neighborhood. However the Turkish experience has faced some true setbacks on the basis of events taking place in the Arab world, especially in Syria³⁶. The AKP's government that views Syria as one of its backyards, sharing with it long borders (800 km), and a somehow similar demography³⁷, could not adopt a diplomacy capable of protecting at the same time, both its economic and security interests that were drawn with President Bashar el Assad' regime³⁸, and its relations with the different groups of the Syrian opposition, especially the Sunnis. That is why the official relations with both states are receiving high levels of mutual criticism³⁹.

Despite this, the model Turkey is trying to present on the international level, once applied with less rationality, could be presented as a model capable of enhancing peace among neighboring states. This is why the expression, "the Turkish model", has been highly used with the changes that took place in the Egyptian and the Tunisian regime during Fall 2011.

Finally, it is important to note that the study of Turkey's foreign policy toward the M.E. between 2002 and 2011 faced some difficulties. One of the main complications comes from the the escalation of the movements asking for change in the Arab

³⁶Mohammad Nouredin- a Lebanese specialist in Turkish issues- commented on Turkey's behavior with the Syrian's events by saying: " Turkey is exposing its relations and all its deep strategies to defeat , and in all fields, and not only with Syria" (Assafir-issue nb. 11888/ 17-5-2011)-

³⁷ - Syria' population: Ethnic composition: Arab 90.3%, Kurds, Armenians, and other 9.7% Religious composition: Sunni Muslim 74%, other Muslim (includes Alawite, Druze) 16%, Christian (various denominations) 10%. (Retrieved from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html>)

³⁸ - Turkey and Syria signed a treaty to establish a High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. The treaty was signed by President Bashar e lAssad and Prime Minister Erdogan. Retrieved from: <http://arabic.people.com.cn/31662/6760326.html>

³⁹ -http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/26/world/europe/26turkey.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2011/07/05/137628798/syrian-foreign-minister-opposition-should-join-dialogue>

world, movements that reached in March 2011 Turkey's borders; Syria. Since that date, events started escalating, so that currently the general feature of the region is that of turmoil and instability. Another limitation facing the research procedure comes from the fact that this study falls under the social studies' category, hence it is difficult for one theory to explain all the features of a specific topic. So, even if the Neo- realist theory could explain the AKP's foreign policy thoroughly, other scholars may find that other features of this policy may be explained by other different theories (as mentioned before in the conclusion).

Based on all the above-mentioned, a throughout study⁴⁰ on a wider scale of the AKP model in the field of international relations, would indicate more precisely the points of strength and those of weakness.

⁴⁰ - A deep and wider study is suggested on the scope of the experience with Syria based on the events that are taking place since April 2011. So the Turkish behavior poses new questions about the aims of the AKP, and if it is ready to go far in order to accomplish the state's interests? Dr.

References

- Açıkalın, S. (2009). Turkish-Iraqi relations in light of Davutoğlu's visit to Iraq. *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*. Retrieved from <http://www.usak.org.tr/EN/makale.asp?id=1029>
- Aras, B. (2009). Davutoğlu era in Turkish foreign policy. *Today's Zaman*. Retrieved from <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-179504-159-davutoglu-era-in-turkish-foreign-policy.html>
- Argun, B. (1999). Universal citizenship rights and Turkey's Kurdish question. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 19, 85-103. Doi: 10.1080/13602009908716426
- Bakir, A., Öztürk I., Abed el Jalil T., Nureldin M., & el Labbad M. (2010). *Turkey between internal challenges and external bets*. Beirut: Arab Scientific Publishers, Inc.
- Barbieri, k. (1996). Economic interdependence: A Path or source of interstate conflict? *Journal of Peace Research*, 33. Doi:10.1177/0022343396033001003
- Burchill, S., Linklater A., Devetak R., Donnelly J., Nardin T., & Paterson M. (2009). *Theories of international relations*. The United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Boyraz, C. (2011). The Justice and Development party in Turkish politics: Islam, democracy and state. *Turkish Studies*, 12(1), 149-164. Doi: 10.1080/14683849.2011.564053
- Cagaptay, S. (2006). *Islam, secularism, and nationalism in Turkey: Who is a Turk?* London: Routledge.
- Cagaptay, S. (2011). Turkish foreign policy under the AKP: The rift with Washington. *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 3. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pubPDFs/PolicyNote03.pdf>
- Davutoğlu, A. (2001). *Strategic depth: Turkey's international position*. Beirut: Arab Scientific Publishers, Inc.SAL.
- Davutoğlu, A. (2009, December). Address by H.E. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey. *The Alliance of Civilizations' First South East Europe Ministerial Conference*. Sarajevo.

- Davutoğlu, A. (2010). Turkey's zero problems foreign policy. *Foreign Policy Magazine*. Retrieved from http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy?page=0,1
- Doğan, E. (2005). The historical and discursive roots of the Justice and Development Party's EU stance. *Turkish Studies*, 6(3), 421-437.
- Faruque, S. (2010). The three images: Causes of war in international relations. *International Affairs*. Retrieved from: <http://salehafaruque.suite101.com/the-three-images-causes-of-war-according-to-kenneth-waltz-a324519>.
- Gordon, P., & Taspınar Ö. (2008). *Winning Turkey: How America, Europe, and Turkey can revive a fading partnership*. Washington: The Brookings Inst.
- Hale, W., & Özbudun E. (2006). *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The case of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey*. London: Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics.
- Hale, W. (2009). Turkey and the Middle East in the new era. *Insight Turkey*, 11(3). Retrieved from: <http://www.setav.org/ups/dosya/53098.pdf>
- Hentov, E. (2011). No longer hot and cold: Turkey and Iran's normalization of relations. *International Relations*. Retrieved from: <http://www.e-ir.info/?p=12975>
- Karpat, K. (2010). *Elites and religion: From Ottoman Empire to Turkish republic*. Istanbul: Timaş Publishing.
- Kirisci, K. & Winrow, G. (1997). *The Kurdish question and Turkey*. London: Frank Cass Publisher.
- Kuru, A. (2006). Reinterpretation of secularism in Turkey: The case of the Justice and Development Party. *University of Utah Press*. Retrieved from www.rohan.sdsu.edu/~akuru/docs/Kuru_Emergence.doc.
- Makovsky, A. & Sayari, S. (2000). *Turkey's new world: Changing dynamics in Turkish foreign policy*. Washington: the Washington Institute for Near East.

- Mastny, V. & Nation C. (1996). *Turkey between East and West: New challenges for a rising regional power*. The USA: West view Press.
- Natali, D. (2005). *The Kurds and the state: Evolving national identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Onis, Z. (2003). Democratic politics, international norms and challenges to the state: Turkey-EU relations in the post-Helsinki era. *Journal of Democracy*, 14(2), 95-107. Doi: 10.1353/jod.2003.0042
- Pope, N., & Pope H. (2004). *Turkey unveiled: A history of modern Turkey*. New York: The Overlook Press.
- Poyraz, S. (2009). Turkish-Iranian relations: A Wider perspective. *SETA Policy Brief*, 37. Retrieved from <http://www.setav.org/ups/dosya/7815.pdf>.
- Rittenberg, L. (1998). *The political economy of Turkey in the post-Soviet era: Going West and looking East?* London: Praeger Publishers.
- Shankland, D. (2003), *The Alevis in Turkey*. London: Routledge.
- Salem, P. (2010). *Rising Turkey in a changing world*. Beirut: The Carnegie Institute.
- Singer, J. D. & Waltz K. (1960). International conflict: Three levels of analysis. *World Politics*, 12(3). Retrieved from http://sitemaker.umich.edu/jdsinger/files/international_conflict_3_levels_of_analysis.pdf
- Somer, M. (2004, March). *Muslim Democrats in The Making? Explaining Turkey's AKP*. The Annual Convention of the International Studies Association. Montreal, Quebec.
- Taşpınar, Ö. (2005). *Kurdish nationalism and political Islam in Turkey*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Thomas, L., & Frey, R. (1951). *The United States And Turkey and Iran*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Uslu, E. (2007). Toward a new era in Turkish-Iraqi relations. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 5 (136). Retrieved from:
http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33811&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=393&no_cache=1
- Uslu, E. (2009). Turkey-Iran relations: A trade partnership or a gateway for Iran to escape international sanctions?. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 6(4). Retrieved from
http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews
- Viotti, P., & Kauppi M. (1993). *International Relations theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism*. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- Walker, J. (2007). Learning strategic depth: Implications of Turkey's new foreign policy doctrine. *Insight Turkey*, 9(3). Retrieved from
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7057/is_3_9/ai_n28498505/