

Turkey's Foreign Policy in the Middle East During the Rule of Justice and Development Party

Abdolsalam Qezel¹

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Abstract

Turkey's new foreign policy in the Middle East is largely due to the Arab Spring and especially to the Syrian crisis in the recent years. The focus of Turkey's government is more on the security in the region, playing a role as a successful diplomat, influencing the Middle East and to serve as a model country for the region. Turkey's internal and strategic changes and economic growth are among the main factors behind the formation of Turkey's new foreign policy and the emergence of Turkey as a trading power, stability of forces, and the promotion of peace in the region. Now this question arises: What are the reasons for the success and failure of Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East during the Justice and Development Party (AKP)? The ruling party's success can be seen as an opportunism and withdrawal from its conservative policy in international politics, showing itself as a powerful country and even leading the region and implementing the ideology of Neo-Ottomanism. Turkey's failure can be explained by hasty policies, illogical plans and interventions and the AKP leaders' narcissism.

Keyword: Turkey, Justice and Development Party (AKP), Turkey's Foreign Policy, Arab Spring, Middle East, Syrian Crisis

¹MA. Candidate for International Relations, Department of Political Science, Chalous Branch, Islamic Azad University, Chalous, Iran,
Email: a.s.qezel.5@gmail.com

Introduction

Turkey which part of it is accounted as the Middle East has played an important role in Turkey's foreign policy at all times. Although during the Kemalist era, for the reasons of the developmental and expansionary policies it distanced away from the Middle East, which counting it as a sign of backwardness, and turned to the alignment of its foreign policy with the interests of the west and, in particular, with the United States, which mentioning it as the reason for advancement and progress and avoiding the danger of the growing power of the Soviet Union.

But this area got importance in other periods of Turkey's government due to getting into powership of the Islamist governments in Turkey's foreign policy; and during the ruling of the Justice and Development Party, it enjoyed of special importance in the context of the new ideology of neo-Ottomanism which included a major part of the redefinition of Turkey's foreign policy. These policies are influenced by the ideas and prescriptions of the former foreign minister and theorist of Turkey, *Ahmet Davutoğlu*. He believed in the fundamental transformation of Turkey's foreign policy strategy, namely, the normalization of relations with neighbors and the use of historical, cultural, religious, and geographic commonalities; and considering the west in his plans, like seeking membership in the European Union. He considered this kind of policy and engagement as a futuristic and forward movement for Turkey's development and the achievement of the ultimate power in the region and the world. For this reason, Erdoğan made major changes in the Turkey's foreign ministry.

When Turkey treated on the basis of zero problems with neighbors in its foreign policy, Iran, Turkey and Syria were neighbors with very good relationships, and they had broad cooperation prospects at commercial, economic and even political-security levels in their own programs. With the rise of the democratization process and the rapid economic growth which was significant during the years 2001 to 2005, Turkey was able to introduce itself as an important and influential actor in the region.

This paper tries to recount the principles of the foreign policy, the regional politics, the kind of behaviors with Arab Spring and Syria, and to discuss the failures and victories of the ruling government, which has been mixed by its flexible policies.

The reasons for Turkey's 180-degree shift in its foreign policy after the Arab Spring and turning into tense politics made us to ask: What are Turkish leaders looking for? In response to it can be said that the Neo-Ottomanism and the dream of a powerful country by 2023 and even the rush of the AKP leaders in some politics are considered as the factors in leaving the conservatism and flexible policies.

1. Conceptual and theoretical foundations

If we look at Turkey's foreign policy during the AKP, due to the special position of the statements like intellectual factors such as identities, cultures, norms and ideas, we can conclude that constructivism theory is close to Turkey's foreign policy. Because, from the constructivist point of view, identities, norms, and culture play an important role in explaining national interests and policies.

The ruling government of Turkey defines Turkey's foreign policy strategy based on identity, historical-cultural commonalities through its Neo-Ottomanism policy, which the prime minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, describes in his work, titled the "depth of the strategy". He sees these ideas as the capitals of the country that has remained from the Ottoman Empire and should be used for national interests. So, it has come closer from any period to the Middle East, for implementing policies and building a new identity for its greater benefits.

In constructivist theory, it is emphasized on the role of the culture in development and consistency of the foreign policy. The first step of constructivism in explaining the foreign policy is to focus on the peculiarities of the state identity. Identity is the intervening concept between the environment and the brokers. Accordingly, foreign policy brokers for advancing their collective interests show behavior that derives from the characteristics and norms that shaping their identity (Wendt, 1998: 269-272).

It is the emphasis on the identity, which considers the constructivism theory of the foreign policy as a critique of the human concept of the free economy, which is at the center of a realistic and neoliberal foreign policy analysis in which considers concepts, values, thoughts or norms merely as a means to emphasize on the special interests and to justify them. As it was mentioned, from the constructivism's view, the actions of the actors

are guided by norms, that is, common inter-subjectivity expectations based on values about the behaviors. As a result, an actor from their view is a sociologist and role player, not an economist man. From this view, decision-makers decide based on the norms and the rules that are themselves based on a history of mental factors, historical-cultural experiences, and presence in the institutions. The norms determine the proper behavior, consequently, the actors act on the basis of "rational or proportional logic" (Boekle, Rittberger and Wagner, 1999: 2-3).

However, from the constructivism's view actors build their own world, and the analysis of the foreign policy begins from the government as an actor, that is, the actors interpret, make decisions, announce and execute. Foreign policy is partly to act for making what actors decide, and this view reflects the influence of internal factors (identities, norms, and cultures) on the foreign policy. Therefore, it must be said that identities, norms and cultures play an important role in foreign policy from the constructivism's view. The identity and interests of governments are created by norms, interactions and cultures, and this process that prompts the importance of understanding the interactions between governments (Shafiey and Zamanian, 2011: 123-124).

An important point within the framework of the constructivist theory is that identities have fluid and evolving nature, that is, the actors' perception of themselves, their interests and goals are changeable. And, as a result of the formation of a new identity, new benefits are also posed for a state (Ritbergger, 2002: 124).

1-1. Foreign Policy of Turkey

The Turkish foreign policy from the historical and power structure always contains two different and conflicting centers of secular kemalism and Neo-Ottomanism. Because of these profound differences, these two tendencies have had constant conflicts. On the other hand, Turkey's policies are based on geopolitical, geostrategic, and geo-economic positions, as well as on historical and cultural issues.

Turkey's foreign policy can be investigated under three paradigms of realism, neoliberalism and constructivism.

The kemalism is based on the six principles set out in the Constitution of Turkey in 1937 including: nationalism, secularism, republicanism, populism, reformism and statism. Kemalism

Ataturkism is a set of comprehensive political, social, cultural and religious reforms planned for separating the modern Turkish state from the Islamism Ottoman tradition and embracing Western life for development and modernization which includes the establishment of democracy, political and civic equality for women, the state support of science and liberal education, many of which were introduced in Turkey for the first time in Ataturk's presidency and in his reform. It has to be said that the Kemalism principles have had a great impact on Turkish foreign policy.

The influence on foreign policy was that, under the influence of these principles, the new republic leaders built a community of two characteristics: the first feature removed Turkey away from the regional countries and from their issues, and the second feature, the foreign policy increasingly led it to the West (Cornell, 2001, p. 34). This Kemalism policy was based on neo-liberalism and neo-realism.

Accordingly, Turkish foreign policy approaches are based on policies such as:

1. Western-oriented unilateralism and the desire for coexistence and convergence with the Western world from the security, economic, intellectual and cultural dimensions.

2. Not paying attention to the East and non-intervention in the Middle East affairs. Of course, the only intervention in the economy to benefit from oil revenues in the Middle East, the expansion of relations with these countries were taken into account.

3. Avoiding interference in the disputes between the countries of the region, developing bilateral relations with all countries of the region and development of economic and trade relations with the regional countries.

4. The desire for convergence of the Turkish-speaking states of Central Asia and Caucasus and their unity through the role of a benevolent friend to serve their interests after the Cold War.

And in the light of the above mentioned principles, Turkey has defined these issues as its foreign policy strategy:

- 1- Utilization of western economic and industrial power
2. The effort to be known as a European nation and to be accepted in Western civilization
3. Non-intervention in Middle Eastern affairs

4. Avoiding interference in the conflict among the countries of the region,

5- Development of bilateral relations with all countries of the region,

6. Development of the trade and the economic relations with the countries of the region (Rezaei, Omidi, 2011: 237)).

In total, Kemalism foreign policy was based on realistic and beneficial policies, seeking peace both inside and outside the country, and it was based on the tendency toward the West, and to stay away from the Middle East and the Islamic world, which regarded them as the backwardness factors.

Turkey seeks to develop Islamist structure with the democratic ideas in the Neo-Ottomanism dimension that pursues constructivism-based policies. And Turkey, with its Ottomanism policy, called for a departure from the traditional Kamalism policy, which in the early days of the republics due to distancing away from the history and Islamic heritage referred to as "rejecting the heritage". And it tried to revive the circle of historical influence that has had many benefits to itself by regaining Islamic identity and returning to the past.

In 1983, with the arrival of Turgut Özal to power, he pursued a realistic policy. During his prime ministership's term, Özal, with his economic and political policies, led to the weakening of statism left over from the era of Kemalism, and, in turn, provide the developing of the civil society and the private sector (Ala'I, 2010: 1). Although, Turgut Özal was essentially considered as a Western-oriented, but he had interaction with the Islamists too.

While he was politically tolerant of Islamism, he created a favorable context for the growth of a range of Islamist entrepreneurs and investors by reducing the control of the state and liberating the country's economic environment. The economic upheaval of the Islamists led them to act more open-endedly in organizational activities (Ganbarlo, 1393: 150). Since Özal was a Western-oriented, he advanced policies that while was western-oriented had Ottomanism policies in itself too. Including the following:

1- Formation of the new government structure in accordance with international conditions;

2. Controlling the impact of nationalist movements by trying to form a new political and cultural identity;
3. coordinating the Western values with the traditional values;
4. Adherence to Europe through EU membership;
5. A strategy aligned with the superior powers of England and the United States as the only superpowers after the Cold War (Davutoglu, 2001: 85).

The flourishing of the Ottomanism must be known during the Justice and Development Party (AKP) era. The Justice and Development Party believes that Ottomanism has advented at least in two periods before the party's governance. First, in the 60s under the ruling of Adnan Menderes and the second during the governance of Ozal in the 1990s, however, the attention to the principles of the Ottomanism of the AKP prompted to know it as an Ahmad Davutoglu's account of the Ottomanism concept of the field of foreign policy by the influence of the Ozal narrative. The foreign policy of Turkey has been theorized by Davudoglu since 2002 (Perthes, 2010: 2).

Davudoglu is trying to reconcile the factors of the society with the environmental factors. That's why, he has emphasized on the concept of Islam (the agent of society), which is in harmony with the environment of the present-day Turkey. We can get his double emphasis on Eastern identity and Western values by pondering carefully in the writings of Davudoglu. This emphasis is also evident in the third premise of Davudoglu's view of civilization. This issue, as stated, is also evident in the Ozal narration (Gohari Moghadam, 1395: 131)

Mustafa Sahin and Hakan Yavuz consider the new strategy of foreign policy of justice and development, in the light of the bitter experience of Orbakan and the traditional Islamists, and the result of the weighed and conservative proximity of the new and the most recent generation of Islamists from the history, and also culture and Turkish identity in the contemporary policies. They consider this directional change as a realistic rethinking of the kemalism legacy to adapt to the new world based on Turkey's new goals and position in economy and politics, and calling this return not an attempt to revive the caliphate, but calling as a neo-Ottomanism or Ottomanism. (Sahin, 2011) In this regard, although the new policy

has a lot to do with the foreign policy of the Ottoman government, Shahin on the bases of the Turkey's foreign policy changes in the last decade, as well as by analyzing the content of the most important scientific-strategic text of Erdogan government, counted the commonalities between the Ottomanism and the neo-Ottomanism(Davutoğlu 85, 2001).

Ahmad Davoodoglu, a foreign policy theorist in the Erdogan government, in explaining the characteristics of methodology and the principles of the theory of foreign policy does not consider the transformation of Turkey's foreign policy as a "change-centered". In addition to denying the religious foundations and ideology, he believes: "I reject the interpretation and the notion of neo-Ottomanism, but I acknowledge that components such as the Ottoman history and the geography of Turkey are constant parameters that cannot change. How can one ignore variables such as historical relations and the relations of neighboring regions with the Ottoman state?The relations that are full of positive capacities of strengthening and expanding ties with nations and governments in the region. Those who have an ideological attitude, interpret these developments to such concepts "(Davutoğlu, 2009).

For this reason, the Ottoman paradigm can be considered as a constructive paradigm due to giving importance to the cultural issues, identity, values and ideas, and the movement of epistemology to the ontology. Because in the framework of the constructivism theory approach, the effective internal and external materials and non-materials were caused a change in a paradigm in defining the Turkish foreign policy. The development of the civil society and the new bourgeoisie of Anatolia as an internal material factor and the changing perspective of the Middle East, the growing tensions in the Turkish neighborhood and the redefinition of various regional areas are among the external material factors.

1-2- The objectives and principles of the new Turkish foreign policy

Foreign policy and regional goals of Turkey over the past three decades, especially during the Justice and Development Party, have witnessed transformations that have had significant differences with the traditional foreign policy of the country during the Cold War and before it. The great transformation in the Middle East regional order after the September 11 and the occurrence of the

chain revolution in the Arab Middle East in the recent years, have been the most important causes that have brought about a profound transformation of the security and peripheral environment of Turkey. These developments created opportunities and, of course, extensive challenges for the country, and provided a platform for the country's diplomacy to consistently adapt to the changing new international and regional environment to rethink its foundations, and approaches of the foreign policy. In the other words, to say goodbye to the traditional and conservative foreign policy which was dominant in the Cold War era.

For the same developments, the principles of the new foreign policy of Turkey have more to do with regionalism (the Middle East), which must be investigated in the doctrine of the Justice and Development Party, which holds the governance. Davutoglu refers to three methodical principles and several strategic principles in explaining the governing paradigm of modern foreign policy: the "visionary" foreign policy, based on "coherent diplomacy", and the use of "soft power", are three principles of the method which builds the basis of advancing the principles and doctrine of the country's foreign policy. Within this framework, the prospects of the country's foreign policy in the region are defined by strengthening the capacities of cooperation and relationship among the states with the prospect of achieving peace, prosperity, security and stability in peripheral regions such as Caucasus, Balkans and the Middle East. Coherent diplomacy or the coherence and match of its foreign policy in all regions of the world and in all international organizations, are the second principle of the method by which there must not be a conflict between approach and its foreign policy behaviors in different regions or international organizations. Within the framework of the third principle, both the achievement of soft power, and the priority of utilization and the mechanisms and resources of soft power along with the hard power to address regional issues and challenges are the goals of the Turkish foreign policy in the region. During the past decade, Erdogan's government has been working to set Ankara's foreign policy principles and doctrines based on these teachings in the following areas (Davutoğlu, 2009).

Principle 1: Balance between security and freedom

Based on this principle, foreign policy of countries has a firm relationship with domestic politics and strengthening its democratic processes. This principle derives from the Kantian's idea that sustainable peace and security will be possible in the course of expanding democratic states, in other words, democracies will not fight together. In this framework, the Turkish government for amending the structure under the military control has held two major constitutional reform referendums in 2007 and 2010. And the governing party, after winning the third parliamentary election in 2011, put it on its agenda to draft a new constitution with the participation of opposition parties in the parliament and effective civil society organizations. In the regional affairs, it has sought to support democratic processes in the countries of the region (Ben Hashemi, 2008).

Principle 2: Policy to zero problems with neighbors

Ankara statesmen, acknowledging that it is not possible to eliminate all the tensions and disputes with its neighbors, believing that declaring such a policy as a target would change the perceptions and the minds of the governments, the owners of the companies and the region's nations towards the prospects of regional policy of this country. Accordingly, Davutoglu points out that, because of the risky environment of the Middle East and shared fate, regional governments must move through the negotiations to reduce tensions and strengthen regional convergence. In this context, Erdogan's government has tried to reduce its political and security differences and conflicts with Greece, Cyprus, Iraq, Syria, Iran and the Arab Union over the past ten years by improving political relations and enhancing widespread economic and trade cooperation. And seeks to normalize its relations with Armenia ((Larrabee, 2007).

Principle 3: Peace diplomacy and active intervention on global issues

Based on this principle, Turkey's regional diplomacy mission, "Security for All in the Middle East", is defined through the strengthening dispute resolution mechanisms. Political talks and negotiations between hostile countries in high-level, mediation between governments and groups, economic convergence, and the promotion of multicultural coexistence are considered as the

mechanisms of strengthening achievement of the peace processes. In this regard, the mediation between Lebanese and Palestinian groups, encouraging the Syrian and Israeli governments to improve relations and hold several rounds of peace talks, conducting annual dispute resolution meetings between Pakistan-Afghanistan, Syria-Iraq, and an attempt to mediate between Iran and the West on the nuclear issue and host of nuclear talks can be evaluated within the framework of the principle of active diplomacy of peace (Bani Hashemi, 1391).

Principle 4: Multilateral Foreign Policy

Based on this principle, Turkey's foreign policy was abandoned from the Cold War constraints which was based on the unilateral relations with the West, as well as the transitional considerations which was mostly relied on military-economic relations, and Turkey's relations both regionally and in terms of subject matter and level of relations are expanding. Unlike the year 1990s, Turkey under the AKP period, creates new communication channels and builds its relationship based on trust and reducing misunderstandings. And these ties have been strengthened both through formal institutions and methods as well as through civil society networks and companies and trade and financial unions (Pirinççi, & Arı, 2010: 3). Based on this principle, Turkey is also trying to be effective in international and regional organizations. Membership in the Security Council, joining the G20 Group, participation in the Arab union and African Union as an observer member and the commencement of EU membership talks since 2005 are key symbols of Turkey's multilateral foreign policy in the recent decade.

Principle 5: A win-win strategy

In the new Middle East policy, Turkey's attempt was to bring the involved parties of the Middle East to adopt win-win game to resolve the existing tensions, and this policy was more real before the start of the Arab uprisings. In the framework of this principle, Ankara sought to have hopes for enemies of the past, such as the Arabs and Israel, to gain an outcome not on the basis of power, but through negotiation and compromise (Pirinççi, and Arı, 2010: 3). The main goal of Turkey in this framework is to achieve the greatest degree of convergence and cooperation of its neighbors

with this approach: "To eliminate all existing differences and tensions and increase stability in the region through economic interdependence and the search for innovative mechanisms and dispute resolution channels by encouraging positive actions and creating intercultural bridges through creating common discourse and understanding "are the tools and goals of this policy (Davutoğlu, 2009: 13). For example: Turkey's security, is not zero-sum game, that is, its security is not achieved at the expense of reducing the security of other countries (win-win); all issues and problems could and should be resolved with diplomacy and political cooperation; Establishing an economic interdependence is essential by considering the importance of peace and stability in the new approach, and mutual respect and cultural balance are part of its program in the foreign policy goals.

Because, Turkey's ultimate goal of this foreign policy was to demonstrate democracy to the nations and governments of the region and the west, thereby to find a better place in the international and regional arena, and in political and security terms, at least in the region, as a great power plays a major role in political decision-making and transformations, and consolidates the security of the region, In this way, seeking to increase economic power and supply and economic domination over the region, even on the basis of the cultural and historical background and geopolitical conditions that it has.

1. Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East during the Justice and Development Party

Turkey in the first decade of the AKP government by relying on the "soft power" policy, such as zero-problems with its neighbors, creating good relations both in the political and in the economy arena was seeking to be a model to the region countries by focusing on economics and staying away from tension as a democratic and Muslim country.

And in the case of Israel, Turkey after the Mavi Marmara event in 2010, which resulted in the killing of nine Turkish citizens by Israeli commandos, the relations between the two countries were darkened and Davoudoglu was asking for an apology and compensation. They also tried to restrain Israel on international platforms. It was a leniency for a major mutation in his foreign policy. But then, Turkey has changed its regional policy and have

been distanced from zero problems with the neighbors. Experts think that the position of Turkey against the Syrian government and the close ties with Assad's opponents or NATO's missile defense shield have affected this process. The government of Erdogan and its policies in the foreign policy are directly related to the issue. If Assad can overcome the difficulties of Syria, the current Turkish government will be the main loser in this course, because from the very beginning of the conflict in Syria, it openly took sides of the opponents of the legitimate Syrian government and did not give up from any assistance and accompaniment with the opponents. The internal changes in Turkey's foreign policy led this country's significance and power show off in the international transactions. The parameters of the change in the internal environment of Turkey can be seen as the high legitimacy of the Erdogan government, his stability in two ways, the marginalization of the military from the realm of politics, having a written map and optimization of the domestic developments, especially in the economy (90% growth). In the field of foreign policy, Turkey has tried to behave more practically and realistically, and has somehow tried to build confidence on the level of governments and nations. An example of confidence-building at the national level is the support of the Palestinian people.

During these years, Turkey has been trying to find a mediator place in the international community, and Davoudoglu's well-known plan was focused on relieving tensions with neighbors and moving toward talk with Armenia, Syria and Iraq. The activation of Turkish foreign diplomacy in the Middle East passing a trajectory, and has recently introduced some elements such as the terms of virtue and human values, opportunism and futurism in the foreign policy.

But what was actually seen from Turkey was discrimination between the common events in different countries. For example, Turkey has shown different and sometimes contradictory behaviors in relation to the Arab Spring in Egypt, Tunisia and Syria. In general, Turkey has pursued a policy of friendship with Iran, and this will for friendship, in addition to tangible economic relations is crystal clear. But now it seems that Turkey has become somewhat angular about this policy of friendship with Iran, for example, an

attempt to strengthen the Sunnis' view of the Shiism (www.andishepooya.com).

Turkey's policy has been based on national interest-based pragmatism, among the frictions between Turkey and Iran is the deployment of the missile defense shield. And the next sign is Turkey's stance towards the events in Syria, which is completely against the position of Iran regarding lack of interference in the internal affairs of Syria. Turkey accompanied from the very beginning with oppositions against the problems that came to Syria and paid active criticism of the Syrian government. Turkey has always tried to present itself as a political model in the Middle East, and tried to increase its capabilities in the Middle East. The main difference between Iran and Turkey is Iran's anti-dissident debate. In response to Syrian issues, Turkey seeks to support the flow of the Brotherhood, as it can attract the support of this group in other Arab countries such as Egypt and expand its influence in the Middle East.

Turkey clearly stated about Syria that it needs to intervene in terms of its interests in Syria, and any risks to them is a source of concern for Turkey. And Turkey has so far made every effort to help the West to succeed in overthrowing the Assad government. According to some experts, treatment with Syria is the end of Davudoglu's foreign policy. Turkey was forced to enter into an issue that was out of its capacity in a passive condition. In the opinion of this group of experts, the coming of the Islamic Party was the result of international financial assistance. The West needed Turkey to find itself (www.merc.ir).

Erdogan's government which was stuck in strategic terms in foreign policy in Syria, witnessed a military coup in July 2016. A year later, in August 2016, following the continued US support for the Syrian Kurdish forces, Turkey start launching a military operation known as the "Euphrates Shield" aimed at confronting ISIL and Kurdish forces through the creation of a buffer zone in northern Syria. The controversy between the US and Turkey in the Syrian war on the one hand, and the criticisms of American and European officials from Turkey for the sake of the pervasive suppression on the other hand, questioned Turkey's reputation as a committed country for human rights and democracy. EU senior officials also announced the suspension of supplementary

negotiations for Turkey's membership in the European Union, which has fueled distrust between Turkey and the West (<http://www.bbc.com>).

If the Syrian issue continues, instability on the Turkish borders will intensify and the army that plays gradually a smaller role in Turkey will be responsible for dealing with these insecurities. But today, the Islamic awakening moves ahead of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, which is a source of concern for Turkish authorities. The Turks are worried because they see Syria determined to provide its national security and express their dissatisfaction with Iran and its orientations towards Syria.

The Islamic Party of Justice and Development of Turkey has pursued its policies with Ottomanism aspirations and sought to influence the region and play a leading role in the Middle East. That is why, in the last few years, it has been trying to better play its part in the developments. The most important of which is the Arab Spring, especially the Syrian war.

1-1. Turkish foreign policy towards the Arab Spring during the Justice and development Party

The new Turkey, with a conservative and zero problems with its neighbor's policy and modeling in the region as an Islamic and a democrat country, was the cause of the Arab world's rise. This rise caused the change of Turkey's policies and balances in the region. And the policy of zero problems with neighbors exited from the priorities of the governing party's foreign policy. Turkey preferred to take a new stand on the regional developments, this change of manner has led some experts to say that "instead of the zero problem with neighbors stand, Turkey confronted by zero neighbor without problem stand" (Yaghoubi Far, 1392: 12)

The Justice and Development Party has had profound differences with Syria, which has great influence on Turkey's new orientation in the region, including not accepting Erdogan's recommendations on reforming the political, economic and social policies by Assad, who promised to cooperate. Erdogan was hoping that Assad could control regional developments and, like other Arab countries' rulers, will not become the victim of these changes. On the other hand, it aroused the anger of Syrian adversaries as well as the public opinions supporting the change throughout the Arab

world, since, according to the adversaries, Turkey was supporting an Arab dictator against his own nation (Yaghoubi Far, 1392: 15). For this, it changed its position and became against Assad, and called him a liar and described his government as a strict inhuman government. As long as in November 2011, Erdogan urged the Syrian president to step down from the power, and hosting a series of Syrian opposition sessions, as well as a second meeting of Syrian friends in Istanbul in April 2012, took an aggressive position to it. Suddenly, Turkey became a key actor in support of Syrian developments (BBC, 2012).

To the point where it moved to provide logistical and financial support to armed groups, as well as the support for the establishment of a no-fly zone and military intervention in Syria. And it was involved in other movements in Arab countries such as Egypt, Libya and Bahrain.

When the sparks of the revolution came to Egypt in January 2011, the AKP realized that serious developments are about to happen. Erdoğan was the world's first leader to call on Hosni Mubarak to step down, and Abdullah Gul was the first president who visited Cairo after the fall of Hosni Mubarak. This has increased the popularity of Turkey and its leaders in Egyptian society, as Abdullah Gul was widely welcomed after his arrival in Cairo in September 2011. Since Turkey was keen on expanding its economic ties with the largest Arab country, Erdogan took an important economic delegation to Egypt. The Egyptians appreciated Turkey's stance on the Egyptian democratic revolution, and many Islamists viewed the Justice and Development Party as a successful model of a moderate and pragmatic Muslim political party.

Like in Bahrain, the uprising in Libya also began in February 2011. But Turkey, unlike the developments in Egypt, Erdoğan refused to take a clear stance against Muammar Gaddafi, while warning about the likelihood of a scenario similar to that of Iraq in the event of continued engagement, he made efforts to compromise. When the Arab and Western countries announced the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya, Erdogan explicitly opposed to the fact that the entry of the United States and NATO will lead to the occupation of Libya and the occurrence of events similar to those in Iraq. As a result, demonstrations were held in

Benghazi against Turkey and publicly slammed against Erdogan. After the withdrawal of Turkish nationals and the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 and the creation of a no-fly zone, Turkey eventually shifted its position and deployed its navy to engage in NATO's no-fly zone operations, as well as provided humanitarian assistance to Libya.

And again, Turkey showed a different kind of behavior and appeared as a mediator for the uprising in Bahrain. Turkey had a lot of economic interests in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and had to respect their security concerns and, on the other hand, he did not want to encourage Iran to engage in issues in the southern Gulf region. Nevertheless, Turkey was willing to play the role of a diplomatic leader and to prevent an increased tension between Shiites and Sunnis that would affect the stability of the entire region. Ankara suggested mediating for a diplomatic solution to the crisis and advised Bahraini authorities to stay continent to avoid the outbreak of Shiite Sunni conflicts. Turkey also resorted to the Ayatollah Sistani in Najaf as a Shiite authority to help alleviate seizures. Erdogan intended to emphasize the regional diplomatic role of Turkey, demonstrating that Turkey, beyond its role as an important Sunni power, is also able to compete with Iran to protect the Shiite's interests and to manage the relations of Shiites and Sunnis. Nevertheless, the Gulf Cooperation Council virtually ignored Erdogan's solutions and launched a military suppression of the Bahraini uprising with the help of the forces of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other member states of the Council. Iran condemned this move as a military occupation, and Turkey quietly warned of the threat of increasing tension in the region. As a result, Turkey has suffered significant economic losses due to a sudden change in the stability of Arab countries. (Yaghoubi Far, 1392: 13)

It is still Syria that, because of the disagreement between the interventionist countries in the Syrian affairs, the disagreement between the domestic opposition and the Kurdish issue as a crisis country in the region, and in particular for Turkey, plays a role.

1-2- Turkish foreign policy towards Iran during the Justice and Development Party

The coming of the Justice and Development Party can be seen as a turning point in both the recovery and the complexity of the relations between Iran and Turkey. Relations between the two countries over the ten years of the Erdogan's government are divided into two distinct sections. In the first phase, including the years 2002-2010, the relations of the two countries expanded on the basis of cooperation and mutual trust in all areas of economic, political and security, and the views of the two countries become more and more commonplace to each other. The expansion of the volume of trade relations, the new position of Turkey towards Israel, Turkey's support for Iran's nuclear program in international circles, oil and gas related cooperation, security agreements on Kurdish nationalism, Turkey's non-compliance with unilateral sanctions of America and Europe, and avoiding the two sides from interfering in their internal affairs are the most important components, which reinforces and improves relations. Among the important areas of economic relations between the two countries, is the establishment of the oil and gas pipelines in 2001 of Iran-Turkey, and the beginning of the presence and investments of Turkish companies in Iran. In the area of trade relations, the last decade is the culmination of the expansion of relations between the two countries, based on the annual reports of the Turkish Center for Economic Statistics, the volume of trade relations between Tehran and Ankara increased ranging from almost \$ 2 billion in 2000 to \$ 16 billion in 2011 and \$ 23 billion in 2012. Until the Syrian crisis, the transformation of the Turkish-Israeli relations has been another cause of improved relations between Iran and Turkey over the last few years. The Ankara-Tel Aviv military-security strategic ties, which have always been the subject of concern and criticism of the Islamic Republic, have been transformed with the advent of the Justice and Development Party, especially after the military invasion to southern Lebanon and Gaza, and the Israeli invasion to the Azadi ship. The decline in the level of political relations between the two countries and the cancellation of a significant part of Turkey's military contracts and military exercises has become a major ground for increasing trust and expansion of Iran-Turkey relations (BaniHashemi, 1391: 20).

Erdogan's support for Iran's nuclear activities and its emphasis on peacefulness, as well as the repeated criticism of the West's dual behavior towards nuclear programs in the Middle East, especially in relation to Israel, have been other important issues in strengthening bilateral relations. Opposition to the Security Council resolution against Iran in November 2009, although, Russia and China voted in favor of this resolution, presenting a joint plan with Brazil to mediate Tehran's nuclear reactor fuel in May 2010 and hosting several rounds of Iran's talks with The 5+ 1 group, as well as the non-compliance to the sanctions of America and Europe to exert pressure on Iran, have been Ankara's independent foreign policy efforts to diplomatically resolve the issue. Some analysts see the main goals of the Erdoğan government for peacefully resolving Iran's nuclear challenge is the likelihood of the repetition of the Iraqi experience and the 2003 war. Ankara's politicians see the regional costs and consequences of a new crisis beyond the Iraq war, which could have unpredictable threats and consequences for the security and stability of the region and the country's growing economy (Barkey 2011: 12).

The new and differentiated relationship between Iran and Turkey during the Justice and Development Party dates back to 2010-2012, when the political crisis hit the Arabic Middle East. Of course, after the start of the revolutionary movements in North Africa, the two countries had a common view of the political developments in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and partly in Yemen, and they were content with the collapse of life-long pro-Western governments. But the beginning of the political crisis in Syria and Bahrain has seriously broke the ten-year trend in the two countries. Unlike the first period, the leaders of the governing party tried to pursue their regional policy not on the basis of strengthening state stability, regional security and non-interference in the internal affairs of the states, and generally based on the principles of peace diplomacy and zeroing tension with neighbors, but pursued through the change of government in Syria and the expansion of its influence in Iraq and the neglect of other geopolitical interests of the regional powers and the threats posed by the deepening of the crisis in the region. In fact, the most important factor in the decline of relations between the two countries is the difference in the views

of the two countries on the nature of the crisis in Syria. Iran sees the root of the political crisis in Syria, not the internal one, but "the conspiracy of Western governments to destroy the anti-Zionist resistance front" and the actors of the crisis are domestic and foreign mercenary terrorists, but Turkish government has more to say that the nature of the political crisis in Syria is like the developments in Egypt and Libya and Yemen as a revolutionary movement, and considers the uprising of the political and armed opposition of Bashar's government to be a struggle to achieve a democratic government. On this basis, the positions of the two countries are on the opposite directions and the geopolitical and security interpretation of some leaders of the Turkish governing party from the foreign policy of Islamic republic reflects the depth of the disagreement between the two countries in the Syrian crisis. Sinan Doegan, the representative of the Turkish Parliament and the Turkish International Center for Strategic Studies, in analyzing Iran's regional policies and practices in Syria believes that:

"Iran always wants to keep the front of war with its enemies beyond its borders. Syria is one of these fronts, with the arrival of the Arab Spring, Iranian government became very worried. With the collapse of the Assad government, Iran will lose one of the foreign fronts, and this will be a rear pull off the battlefield between the Iranian government and the Western countries to its land borders, which has worried the Iranian government "(Dogan, 2011)

Iran has repeatedly defined Turkey's policy towards Syria hostile and contrary to the principles of regional policy and the long-term interests of the country, and inline with the goals and strategies of Western powers, and has considered Turkey as an implementer of their goals. Many talks that have taken place between Iran and Turkey over the Syrian crisis in the recent months have not reduced the distance and the two sides have not been able to bring their positions closer to each other (Mousavi, 1391), but the continuation of the disputes in the Syrian crisis led the new issues cause the tension between the two countries' relation. The establishment of a missile defense shield in Turkey, Ankara's intervention in Iraqi affairs, and the protection of ethnic religious minorities against the central government of Iraq, the efforts to promote specific political Islam and secular governments, the relative change in the positions on the nuclear issue and

participation in unilateral sanctions and implicit support from some ethnical activities of Iranian Azerbaijanis in the land of Turkey were the issues that have affected the relations between the two countries since the Syrian crisis.

In the issue of deploying NATO's missile defense shield on Turkish territory and on the Iranian borders, Ankara did not welcome the US-NATO plan for a missile defense shield in the past few years due to Tehran's concerns. Although it was keen on deploying the system due to security needs, it avoided accepting or requesting for the deployment of the system to prevent Iran's agony and to avoid harming the mutual trust. . But the Syrian crisis created an opportunity for Ankara to accept the establishment of this system on the borders of Syria and near the western borders of Iran, regardless of the security concerns and the repeated warnings and threats by Iranian military officials (Hajizadeh, 1390). Ankara's official request from NATO to settle a defense shield against Syrian threats in the first half of November 2012 and the acceptance of this request by NATO foreign ministers at the December 14 meeting and the start of the installation of the system in January, more and more made the relations between the two countries tense and distrustful. Also, the gradual change of Turkey's position on the nuclear issue after returning from Iran in April 2012 and the unprecedented remarks by Erdogan regarding the integrity of Iran in the nuclear issue (Salimi, 2012), Turkey's gradual accompaniment towards unilateral sanctions of the West can be seen as the consequences of the Syrian crisis on the relations between the two countries. Accordingly, the Turkish energy minister announced in early 2012: Turkey in several stages will reduce its oil imports from Iran by 20% by the end of year 2012. This behavior of Ankara can be seen as aligning with the West and putting indirect pressure on Iran and in response to Iran's policy in Syria.

The hosting of some Azerbaijani ethnic groups and the beginning of the organization of the National Council of Iranian Azerbaijani Turks in Ankara (wahedi, 1391) and the media coverage of these activities by some circles close to the governing party, such as the "Today Time", is another example of Erdogan's government's shift in the policy of non-interference in the internal

affairs of neighboring countries. The issue that has had a great deal of sensitivity in the relations between the two countries over the past few years. The Turkish government due to its two internal challenges such as Kurdish nationalism and the Islamist movement tried to prevent Iran from provoking to enter into Iranian Azerbaijani issues.

The two countries also pursued political-security and economic relations in the coming years: Turkey supported from Iran's plan in the United Nations, entitled "world against Violence and Extremism", which we supported internationally in the United Nations General Assembly and was approved by resolution 127 / A / RES68 on December 18, 2013 (Bothaiyasl, 2011: 195). Cooperation in the fight against terrorism; Iran's support for Turkey's membership in the Security Council as well as, the two countries agreed to strengthen their cooperation and consultations in international organizations. Accordingly, Iran supported Turkey for its temporary membership in Security Council in the years 2015-2016; but the relationship between Iran and Turkey has undergone unpleasant conditions in the recent years. According to the statistics of these years, Turkey's export to Iran in 2015 was more than \$ 3.5 billion. Despite the fact that in 2016 it reached up to \$ 5 billion, but in 2017, turkey's exports to Iran were \$ 3.2 billion, the lowest level in the past last six years. According to the official statistics of the Turkish Ministry of Commerce in 2017, the largest export products to Iran were wood and wooden products, while in the import sector, Ethylene polymers were the largest import products of the country in the same year (Khojasteh, 1396). In the cultural field, Iran and Turkey have agreed to expand their cooperation, in particular through cultural centers and other relevant institutions, and by applying solutions to explore ways to further collaborate on cultural heritage as another important area in the future.

3 - Turkey's achievements and failures in the Middle East during the Justice and Development Party

The Justice and Development Party's achievements in the Middle East region began since 2012, when Turkey has withdrawn from its conservative policies and has engaged itself in regional affairs, for implementing its Neo-ottoman program in the Middle East.

On the one hand, Turkey took serious steps with the goal of turning Turkey into a global power with the motto of the great nation and great power in 2023. On the other hand, Erdoğan and his team have been trying to attend all international decisions and diplomatic passes, to show that Turkey's foreign policy is not unaware of any country and any region. So, within past year, Ahmed Davutoglu, a former foreign minister of Turkey, has traveled to many countries on one side, while none of other foreign ministers has done the same foreign trips to the region, on the other hand, major political figures have presented in international circles of Turkey as well as party circles (such as the presence of Mohammad Mursi, Massoud Barzani, Khalid Mashahal, Tariq al-Hashimi, Gerhard Schroeder and ... at the 4th Justice and Development Party congress). There is also a kind of serious look at Ankara in an effort to take or to play a major role in crises and cases such as Taliban talks with the Afghan government, the management of the Arab Spring, the Syrian and Cyprus case, and ... indicates that the Turks are trying to achieve the goal of Turkey in leading the Middle East (The term that has been used several times by Turk leaders in the past year), and also trying to increase Turkey's position in the region and place this country among the great powers or to achieve trans-regional privileges. Meanwhile, if we look at the three patterns of the claimant in the Middle East, the traditional Islamist model of Saudi Arabia, the revolutionary Islamist model of Iran, and the Islamist liberalism pattern of Turkey, we will see that Turkey has shown the most effort to implement and apply its pattern in the region in the last year (HaghPanah, 1393: 154). Inviting Hamas and Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood leaders to participate in Turkey and attempts to make the Justice and Development Party as a model to them can be seen in this regard.

Last but not least, Turks in the past few years have continued to demonstrate themselves as the serious supporter of the starting major reforms in the Middle East and North Africa, and to expand their influence in the region by considering their national interests. In addition to using the country's soft power in the media and culture, Ankara tried to remind its Ottoman history by linking its leadership and its historical mission as a Sunni Muslim leader. In this context, the wider use of Turkish leaders in the Ottoman history and their nationalist symbols to some extent caused to strengthen this view that the AKP has strengthened its wider

relations with Muslim countries as well as Turkic-speaking countries in the form of the Cooperation Council of Turkic and Turkmen minorities in countries like Iraq (www.chathamhouse.org).

And the new Turkey over the past few years with a 180-degree turn has become one of the most important regional oppositions of Assad. And it has borne the most expensive military, security and economic costs in the Syrian crisis. As now, many consider Syria as the Achilles heels of foreign policy of the Justice Development Party. Namely, Turkey has been seriously caused wider tensions with Syria, as well as Syria's global and regional allies by authorizing to declare war on Syria, abandoning its soft strategy, and using military containment. In this regard, Turkey's foreign policy by "putting all the eggs in the Syrian opposition basket" and adopting an approach to support the majority of Sunnis and opponents in Syria, on the one hand, made its relations difficult with other minorities in Syria, and on the other hand, this kind of approach has a negative impact on Turkey's relations with the countries supporting the Syrian minorities. For example, today, the Vatican and many governments, Christian parties and groups in the West, as well as regional and international supporters of the Kurds or Armani, after any massacre or major threat of the minority groups posed by the Salafist fundamentalists inside Syria, they blame Turkey to some extent too (HaghPanah, 1393: 154).

And Turkey's leadership in the Middle East has raised concerns at the regional and international levels. In particular, Olegu's speech in April 2012, which stated that "the land we lost and retreated from the years 1911 to 1923, will regain from 2011 to 2023, and will meet with our brothers in those territories. This is a necessary historical mission" (www.rusi.org). This speech greatly increased the regional and international authority's concerns, and showed what goals Turkey has in its foreign policy. The AKP wanted to isolate the economic field from the politics and easily interfere in the Syrian issue and maintain its relations with the countries of Russia and Iran as usual. Apart from this, Turkey has faced new challenges in its relations with its neighbors in the past few years. Not only, the resolution of disputes and the policy of zeroing problems with neighbors did not happen, but also apart from the Republic of Azerbaijan, new challenges in relations with Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Cyprus and even Greece as its neighbors have taken place.

In the context of Turkey's relations with the West, Turkey along with Israel has been the most important US alliance in the Middle East during the past few years. Volunteering to deploy a missile shield and then patriot systems, increasing Syrian pressure and threat have been evaluated to a much greater extent in line with Western goals. But sometimes later, differences of opinion about the kind of look into Syria between Turkey and Western leaders arose, to the extent that the Turkish leaders have publicly criticized this Western approach. Apart from this, although joining the European Union has been one of the main goals of Turkish foreign policy over the past year, but the negative attitude of some of the most effective members of the European Union, including France toward Turkey and the stalemate in the Cyprus negotiations, the prospect of Turkey's membership to The European Union is not positive. In the same vein, types of policymaking of Turkey's macro-policy in the region and the creation of new suspicions about Turkey's objectives and the economic crisis in the European Union have made it even more difficult for Turkey to join the union (www.rusi.org).

4- An analysis of the causes of the failure of Turkey's policies in the region during the Justice and Development Party

Most analysts believed that Turkey, as a Muslim country in the Middle East, was the only option to model the countries of the region. But with the developments that began in 2010 in the Middle East and Turkey's hasty positions on Arab movements with regional and powerful countries in the world, cause the look of experts changed toward Turkey. Because the AKP, which was known for the democratic, secular, and Westernized structure, instead of strengthening its parameters, suddenly has changed its relatively favorable condition by its hasty domestic and foreign policies.

At the domestic level, Erdogan has put foreign policy as a means of applying his populist domestic policies, and instead of adopting a long-term planned policy in his foreign policy, made the foreign policy as a tool for gaining more popularity within domestic public opinion and victory in different elections.

In May 2011, Erdogan announced that he would not remain indifferent to the Syrian events, which would have made the Syrian opposition hopeful that Turkey will intervene if necessary to protect them, and failure to do so would frustrate the Syrian oppositions ([www. Alef.com](http://www.Alef.com)). After the June 2013 Egyptian

coup'd'eta, Erdoğan did nothing else than raising the symbol of Rabaa. In return its relations with Syria and Egypt has become aggravated and has even led to the expulsion of Turkish ambassadors from these countries.

The conditions that Turkey had in Egypt did not have such a benefit for the Muslim Brotherhood. It has, however, aggravated the relations between Turkish leaders and Egyptian politicians, to which the relations between the two countries have not yet reached the desired level.

The developments in Iraq and the formation of ISIS was a turning point in the contradictions of Turkey's foreign policy, because the Justice and Development Party initially tried to establish ties with this terrorist group, even after taking hostage its consular forces in Mosul and Turkish drivers, to use them as a leverage of pressure against the Maliki government, but the actions of ISIL were not so defensible.

With regard to the issue of Kurds in Iraq, the AKP, with an urgent remark to recognize the Kurdish government in northern Iraq, was trying to expand its influence in northern Iraq, but he emphasized by correcting its policy to preserve the totality and integrity of Iraq (HaghPanah, 1393: 159). In fact, Turkey is not in a condition to present itself as a major regulating power in the Middle East, since it is neither capable of creating such an order in terms of diplomacy and military terms. According to reports from a total of 135 Turkish diplomats in 2012 in more than 20 countries, only 6 of them are able to speak Arabic. This means that Turkey still has distance from its ideals in its head.

An undeniable fact is that the AKP did not pay attention to the lack of a suitable background for intervention in the region before changing its foreign policy toward its neighbors. It only has been the follower of their theorists'ideals. However, Turkey has shown that still does not have the possible power to intervene in the Middle East such as Palestine and Iraq issues.

With regard to the Syrian issue, with the outbreak of protests in Turkey, there were three different options: supporting the civilian opposition (opponents who did not fight), supporting military opponents and helping them, attacking Syria through coordinated actions by NATO. Erdogan's mistake was to finish the first phase very soon, believing that the next options would come to an end very soon, so he entered the second and third phase.

Turkey was not only unable to intervene in Syria, but also could not maintain its military fighters, and he recourse to the NATO missile defense system to counter any firing of possible missiles from the Syrian border.

The governing party of Turkey, with its own tactics, revealed the weaknesses of Turkey.

At the level of international relations, Turkey's foreign policy has hit the most strikes from two rival factions in Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Iranian faction in the region includes Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Saudi Arabia is at the head of countries like the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan, which supported the Egyptian coup. (<http://www.turkishweekly.net>)

Turkey was not in any of these factions, and the only option left for Turkey was the alliance with the West and the Western countries, but in this regard also Erdoğan's government was in trouble and showed more tendency to the countries of the region.

The lack of correct positioning of Erdogan against regional crises, such as the Libyan and Syrian issues towards the central forces and the regional countries, and for being strangers to the mechanisms of the Middle East regions, he has failed to succeed in foreign policy (especially in the Middle East region). And he caused the failure of the AKP in the programs, especially in its foreign policy.

Conclusion

Turkey's foreign policy is heavily influenced by the leaders of the AKP and the ideals of the organization. In order to achieve its goals, it has extended its foot from the slogan through thinking about the Islamic caliphate and returning to the Ottomanism Empire. For this reason, Turkey has taken two processes of democratization and economic growth, and to some extent succeeded, but the dream of its leaders was bigger than a normal democratization and economic growth. Turkey, in pursuit of these goals, has been trying to play a role in the security of the region and in creating peace, which influence Turkish economy and was a great step towards demonstrating regional power and the peaceful and democratic nation. Turkey, with its modern structure comparing to Middle East countries, present itself as a model for the regional countries. Because it as a country with Western-European style and structure and being an Islamic state, referring to itself as having modern Islamic structure.

During these years, Turkey used the soft power and zeroing problems with its neighbors and diplomatic solutions, but did not reject hard power, and was present in the crisis or the war in Syria. Turkey, with its rapid change in position, both in the Syrian crisis and in the Libyan and Egyptian cases, showed that Turkey's foreign policy was not long-term policy. And its leaders pursued a hasty policy, although it was logical to leave its conservative politics.

Turkey has faced many problems by presence in Balkans, Europe, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Because America and Europe did not want to develop the Ottomanism process and Turkey to become a great power. And they see it as a deterrence to their interests in these areas.

A question arises, what are the deficiencies and solutions of Turkey's foreign policy during the AKP era?

The Turkish government revealed its policies and goals in foreign policy, which prompted positioning against its rivals' programs in the region. The absence of the long-term and planned programs for its own purposes, led Turkey to experience a 180-degree shift in its foreign policy and contrary to its soft policies which resulted in Turkish interests in penetration, security, peace, diplomacy and economic growth, this shift caused Turkey to put its benefits in risk and get diverted from its 2023 development plans, namely making a powerful Turkey. One of the other shortcomings is in the policymaking; the foreign policy of Turkey is made only by some leaders of one party, and the lack of role clarity of other parties and oppositions are the cause of the slippage and turbulence of Turkey in its policies in the region and the world.

The solutions to the crisis in the current situation can be seen in maintaining its positions in the areas under its influence in Syria, creating lasting peace in the country and helping to develop it. Under these circumstances, Turkey could keep the track of its ideals at least. Because on the one hand, it guarantees security in the borders of its country and extends its influence and economy beyond its borders and on the other hand, preserves the spirit of nationalism among the nation.

Because, Turkey still has not reached its acceptable economic growth to the limit of its ideals and must be self-sufficient in some areas too. Turkey's foreign policy is slow return to its previous position that is, zero- problems with its neighbors.

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