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An anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations

Suat Kiniklioğlu & Valeriy Morkva

Turkish–Russian relations have been long characterized by geopolitical rivalry. Yet, in recent years, the bilateral relationship between Turkey and Russian Federation has been widening and deepening across areas ranging from political relations to the economic and cultural issues. Turkish–Russian relations also have an impact on the Black Sea, the Caucasus, Central Asia and now, increasingly, the Middle East. This article assesses the different aspects of the Turkish–Russian relationship, particularly during the early years of the 21st century. It provides an account of what the most recent trends and developments are, from both domestic and foreign policy perspectives. Current dynamics of Turkish–Russian relations are examined, along with the impact these relations may have on the geopolitics at the crossroads of Europe and Asia.

Introduction

We are determined to upgrade relations to the highest level. (Vladimir Putin, during his official visit to Turkey, December 2004)

Traditionally, the history of Turkish–Russian relations has been long, complex and characterized by conflict. The hostility between the Russian and Ottoman Empires has a long history. The beginning of official political relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Grand Principedom of Muscovy began with a letter written by Ivan III to Sultan Beyazit in 1492 complaining about the harassment of Muscovite merchants.¹ Over the course of four centuries, the two empires fought each other 13 times: the first was in the period between 1676 and 1681, the last in the years 1914 to 1918. Thus, Turkish–Russian relations have been marked by a bloody and violent past.

The last confrontation between the Ottoman Empire and Tsarist Russia was during World War I, which also brought about the collapse of the Ottoman and Russian

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Empires. Republican Turkey and Bolshevik Russia replaced the old regimes. The Bolsheviks and new nationalist Turks cooperated closely during Turkey's War of Independence in the early 1920s.² The cordial relationship, which was conditioned by an understanding of mutual hostility toward the European powers, lasted until World War II, when Turkey remained neutral and did not join the war on the side of the Allies. Stalin, furious at Turkey's hesitance to enter the war on the side of the Soviet Union, attempted to squeeze the greatest concession out of Turkey, namely military control over the Straits. In 1945 the Soviets renounced the Neutrality and Nonaggression Treaty of 1925, accompanied by a propaganda campaign with territorial claims against Turkey.³ Turkey rejected Soviet demands and sought security assurances in London and Washington. Subsequently, Turkey was included into the Marshall Plan and became part of the Truman Doctrine that eventually resulted in the Turkish entry into NATO in 1953.

The Soviet Union and Turkey were part of opposing camps during the Cold War and relations were particularly strained during the Cuban Missile Crisis, when it became apparent that there were nuclear bases on Turkish territory aimed at the USSR. Turkish–Russian relations softened with *détente* and Soviet recognition that its aggressive policies had driven Turkey into the western camp.⁴ By the 1980s and the rise of Gorbachev, Turkish–Russian relations were at a cordial level. The disintegration of the Soviet Union was embraced in Turkey as it opened a new field for geopolitical competition, especially the Caucasus and Central Asia, where sizeable Turkic nations were present. The early 1990s were marked by geopolitical rivalry between Turkey and Russia for influence in the former Soviet republics. That said, by the end of the first decade after the dissolution of the Soviet Union it became apparent that the two sides would gain more from cooperation than competition.⁵

Since the turn of the 21st century, confrontational relations have given way to the development of an unprecedented bond between Russia and Turkey due to a number of regional factors and the increasing alienation from other influential actors on the world stage.

This article will provide an outline of the different aspects of this bilateral relationship and will argue that the Turkish–Russian partnership is inherently defensive in nature. It will underline that the recent deepening of relations constitutes a reaction of two status quo powers against the potential for further instability in their respective neighbourhoods. This article also argues that Turkish policies vis-à-vis the Russian Federation are conditioned by Turkey's new proactivism toward all of its neighbours. It notes that the relationship seeks to react to the shaping of a new Eurasian space that appears to exclude both Turkey and Russia. Should current external pressures stemming from Iraq and problems in Turkey's European Union (EU) accession negotiations continue, the Turkish–Russian partnership may grow into something of more consequence. Ultimately, what will determine the course of Turkish–Russian relations is the quality of their respective relationships with the West. Their sense of alienation from the West has brought them closer. Their respective relationships with the West will determine how they will fare together.

The Politics: Deepening Multidimensional Partnership

We do not have a policy toward Russia. We do the exact opposite of whatever Ambassador Ignatiev is saying. (Ottoman statesman on Turkish policy toward Russia in the 19th century)

Our views totally coincide with regard to the situation in the region, as well as to issues concerning to the preservation of stability in the world. (Turkish PM Erdoğan to President Putin, July 2005)

The deepening of political dialogue between Russia and Turkey dates back to the signing of the Eurasia Action Plan in 2001 between the then foreign ministers, Ismail Cem and Igor Ivanov. The plan called for increased dialogue on soft areas such as trade, culture and tourism, but also advocated regular political consultations. Since then, Turkey and Russia have expanded their cooperation in the fields of energy, trade, tourism, and defence. As illustrated below, bilateral trade has increased immensely and the energy relationship has diversified and deepened. The two sides have established regular political dialogue, which was described by a Turkish diplomat as the ‘most regular and substantial’ the Ministry has with any country.⁶ Undoubtedly, the Turkish Parliament’s refusal to allow US troops to invade Iraq from the north in March 2003 enhanced Turkish credentials as an independent actor in the eyes of the Russians, thus encouraging the latter to be more forthcoming.

The sharp increase in bilateral trade and the growing energy relationship naturally facilitated the deepening of political relations. Since 2001, political dialogue intensified and ascended the relationship to higher levels. From a bilateral political perspective, 2005 was an *annus mirabilis* as President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met four times, including a seven-hour private meeting on the Black Sea. The flurry of high-level contacts continued in 2006 through visits of the Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov (31 May to 1 June) to Turkey and visits to Russia of the Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer (28–30 June), Speaker of Parliament Bülent Arınç (10–13 July) and Defence Minister Vecdi Gönül (14–17 September), as well other numerous lower-level meetings.

President Putin’s visit in December 2004 marked a monumental event in itself, as he was the first Russian head of state to visit Turkey in 32 years.⁷ The visit was crowned by the signing of a Joint Declaration on the Deepening of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership between Turkey and the Russian Federation. The declaration refers to a wide range of common interests and specifically accentuates the increasing confidence and trust established between the two sides in recent years; it calls for the diversification of actors in the quest of deepening the relationship, and notes that both countries are Eurasian powers that value security and stability.⁸

Turkey and Russia are in full agreement in their views vis-à-vis their immediate regions. Ankara and Moscow share apprehension about US policy toward Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Moreover, Turkey’s recent emphasis on ‘normalization with the neighbourhood’, a concept developed by Turkish foreign policy ideologue Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu (an influential advisor to PM Erdoğan and FM Gül), significantly contributed to this convergence of positions. The concept is based on the premise that Turkey

was not making appropriate use of its 'hinterlands' and thus needed to normalize with its problematic neighbourhood.⁹ Davutoğlu's vision, which came to dominate much of Turkish attitude towards its immediate neighbourhood, departs radically from Turkey's traditionally conservative and pro-Western self-perception as a flank country of the Cold War years. By contrast, this vision views Turkey as a pivotal state at the centre of the Balkans, Black Sea, Caucasus, the Middle East and the Mediterranean regions.¹⁰ From a Turkish–Russian perspective, Davutoğlu's vision provided the Turkish government with the intellectual legitimacy to pursue the acceleration of the ongoing rapprochement and deepen the bilateral relationship.

In turn, the Turkish government's new strategic outlook perfectly converged with Russia's desire to co-opt Turkey into a yet-to-be-defined Eurasian geopolitical partnership where the two countries could cooperate in a variety of areas. Turkey's newly found activism with the 'strategic depth' vision also accentuates stability and the preservation of the status quo, an approach that is fully in tandem with Russia's emphasis on stability in a worryingly tumultuous neighbourhood.

The most apparent practical and political consequence of the deepening relationship was a convergence of their positions on events in regions of mutual concern. The two sides see eye-to-eye on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, on the need to preserve the territorial integrity and political unity of Iraq, on maintaining stability in the Caucasus, and on ensuring the Black Sea's security by littoral states. In a clear sign that the two sides attach special significance to the Black Sea/Caucasus region, Ankara and Moscow established a separate working group between the two foreign ministries that operates in parallel to the regular political consultations.¹¹ The primary aim of this working group is to facilitate regular consultations on this critical region, which will be examined in detail in the following sections. It is pertinent to note here that on all of these four issues, Turkish and Russian views differ, in varying degrees, from US policy.

The political relationship also owes much to the shared urgency of concern about terrorism.¹² Moscow had long been complaining about Turkey's support for the Chechen cause. In response to perceived Turkish support for the Caucasus Diaspora during the 1990s, Moscow allowed Kurdish organizations based in Russia to operate freely and be more vocal in their opposition. A particular thorn was the Kurdish House in Moscow, which operated as a de facto PKK representation. As relations improved, a mutual understanding came about which translated into stricter Turkish control over pro-Chechen activity in exchange for Moscow's closing or restricting of some pro-Kurdish organizations, including the Kurdish House. However, Russian intelligence is aware of the sympathy toward the PKK among Kurdish organizations in Russia (Reutov 2005). Therefore, Moscow is reluctant to completely lose its contact with the Kurds; particularly as President Putin has to play a delicate balancing role between his promises to PM Erdoğan and Russia's geopolitical calculations in the Middle East, where the Kurds are increasingly a force to be reckoned with.

The increasing dialogue also extended to the military/defence sector, which remains largely underdeveloped. Indeed, President Putin is on record expressing his displeasure in this regard (Zaman 2004). The inability of the Russian defence sector to penetrate the lucrative Turkish market stems primarily from the restrictions

placed upon NATO countries by too strict NATO standards. The two sides established a regular military/defence working group that allows them to exchange views on military and defence issues. The Joint Declaration on the Deepening of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership stipulates the special significance attached to more cooperation via the Intergovernmental Commission on Military, Technical and Defence Industry Cooperation.¹³

Turkey was the first NATO country to sign a defence cooperation agreement with Russia in 1994, through which Ankara acquired military hardware it had difficulty obtaining from western suppliers in its fight against the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). A commission on military cooperation between the two sides has been established since 2000, but key Russian expectations—such as winning tenders for the modernization of Turkey's military—have not been fulfilled. According to Russian defence officials, Ankara tends to use defence cooperation with Russia as a means to put indirect pressure on European and American companies to exact better conditions (Kandaurov 2002; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2003).

The deepening of Turkish–Russian relations also reflected upon the two countries' multilateral dealings on a variety of platforms. Turkey supports Russia's quest to join the World Trade Organization. Ankara also extended crucial support to Moscow's desire to obtain observer status at the Organization of the Islamic Conference.¹⁴ Turkey and Russia have also been key in instituting a Russia–Islamic World Strategic Vision Group in 2006, whose third and most recent meeting took place in Istanbul in February 2007.¹⁵ Russian support for Turkish initiatives in international platforms was less forthcoming; most notable is Moscow's reluctance to lift its veto in the UN Security Council over the Cyprus report submitted by Kofi Annan in 2004.

A higher level of political engagement is apparent on the Turkish side, particularly on the part of the Turkish government and the Eurosceptics in the Turkish political élite. Sceptical about the EU for its own reasons, the Turkish military is very much in favour of further deepening the relationship with Moscow. In 2002, General Tuncer Kılınç, then Secretary General of the National Security Council, declared that Turkey should cooperate with Russia and Iran against the EU.¹⁶ More recently, President Putin's renowned speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference, heavily criticizing the US, was posted on the Turkish General Staff's website.¹⁷ Although Turkey is increasingly seen by Russia as a friendly actor in the region, the Russians 'are not quite sure to what degree a NATO member country can be trusted'.¹⁸ This is also reflected in the domestic debate within Russia. Russian analysts underline that the strengthening of cooperation between Russia and Turkey adds significantly to Russia's international prestige (Torbakov 2005). Interestingly, domestic Russian discourse is much more critical towards Turkey than the equivalent Turkish debate, which is almost unanimously in favour of further relations.

Moscow is also quite wary of Turkey's EU drive. President Putin did not spare his words about potential difficulties between the two countries if Turkey were to join the EU (Zaman 2005). During his visit to Turkey, Putin noted that Turkey's EU membership would limit Turkish–Russian relations, a clear signal that Moscow was not necessarily enthusiastic about Turkey's EU ambitions (*Hürriyet* 2006). Russian diplomats

have been courting Turkey's Eurosceptics for years, and frequently emphasize the futility of Turkey's efforts to join the prestigious club.¹⁹ Moscow's insistent effort to divert Turkish attention away from the EU process provides clues to Russian motives. Ultimately, Moscow sees Turkey as an indispensable country on the edges of Europe which, like Russia, may be excluded from the EU.

Not surprisingly, the Kremlin welcomes the expansion of political dialogue with Turkey. Also, Russian commentators frequently draw attention to the sceptical attitudes of EU members towards Turkish accession. Vladimir Gutnik, of the Russian Academy of Sciences, contends that Turkish accession is highly unlikely and, even if feasible, would be a very long-term project.²⁰ Andrei Kokoshin, an influential parliamentarian of the Russian Duma, noted recently that 'against the background of the complicated relationship between Turkey and the European Union, the further development of Russian–Turkish relations becomes increasingly significant'. (*Krasnaia Zvezda* 2005). In tandem with the Russian political thinker and politician Alexander Dugin's Eurasian vision, Russian diplomats privately promote a Eurasian partnership that foresees a primary role for Russia and Turkey in the region.²¹ Political élites on both sides increasingly liken the current situation to that of the strategic cooperation between Turkey and Bolshevik Russia in the 1920s (Girgin 2006). In the early 1920s, Turkey and Russia were confronted by Western Europe, though for different reasons, and did manage to cooperate against what then was a common opponent: Europe. Regardless how distant such a comparison may now appear, it resonates on both sides, particularly in Turkey which feels increasingly threatened by the instability stemming from Iraq and the uncertainty surrounding its accession negotiations with the EU.

Cognizant of the deep suspicion about US motives in Iraq and Turkish displeasure with events in the Middle East, Sergey Mironov, the Speaker of the Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian Parliament, once again emphasized that the 'unipolar model of world order is unacceptable for Moscow' during his visit to Ankara on 26 March 2007.²² Mironov added that 'while the former dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein could guarantee certain stability, at present, the territory of Iraq is turned into the breeding ground for terrorism'.²³

Turkish–Russian relations are not developing in a void. US disapproval of the deepening relationship and its potential repercussions for the region has become more vocal. In February 2004, former Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke retorted that Russia was 'engaged in a little-noticed charm offensive to woo our all-important (but deeply alienated) ally Turkey into a new special relationship' (Holbrooke 2005). More recent analysis dealing with Turkish–American relations is more explicit, and underlines that a decades-long partnership has come to an end.²⁴ American criticism is particularly evident on issues pertaining to the Black Sea/Caucasus region, as well as democracy promotion in Turkey's immediate neighbourhood. Turkey and Russia have been wary of US democracy promotion efforts and so-called 'colour revolutions' for some time. That said, Eastern Europeans, particularly Romanians, Ukrainians, and Georgians, as well as Baltics, had difficulty in understanding what Turkish–Russian cooperation meant for them. As international attention to the deepening relationship

between Turkey and Russia has grown exponentially, gradual adaptation to this situation is slowly taking place.

The Economics: The Sky is the Limit

There are no longer blocs that limit Turkish-Russian relations similar to the Cold War years. Turkey and Russia can accomplish what Germany and France accomplished in the past. (Rifat Hisarcıkloğlu, TOBB Chairman)

Economic and commercial relations between our countries are similar to a locomotive heading the diverse, good neighbourly and friendly cars of a train. (Y. M. Primakov, President of Russian Chambers of Commerce & Industry)

The true engine behind the deepening of Turkish–Russian relations is the growing trade dimension. Bilateral trade started in 1984 through a natural gas deal. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union that followed, tens of thousands of Russians started to flock to Turkey’s large cities and began the illustrious ‘shuttle trade’. Over the years, the trade relationship developed steadily and is currently at an all-time high, reaching US\$11 billion in 2004 and US\$15 billion in 2005. The trade volume is expected to reach US\$25 billion in 2007. As a consequence, Russia has become Turkey’s second largest trading partner after Germany. However, much of the growth is due to Turkey’s growing energy imports from Russia. Trade is uneven. Last year, Turkey registered a trade deficit close to \$US7 billion with Russia, and Turkish authorities have underlined the need to address this imbalance.²⁵ In response, Moscow points to contracts awarded to Turkish construction companies over the years. Indeed, Turkish construction companies have completed over 700 projects worth US\$14 billion in Russia over the last 16 years.²⁶

Turkish investments in Russia are close to US\$2.5 billion and are concentrated in the construction, foodstuff, retail, glass, and electronics industries.²⁷ The recent trend among Turkish investors is to penetrate the regions of Russia as business opportunities in Moscow and St. Petersburg have saturated.²⁸

Russian investments in Turkey are also growing. The growth has been spurred by recent high-profile deals that saw the Russian Alfa Group buying a share of Turkey’s premier GSM operator, Turkcell.²⁹ Russian investments, which are concentrated in the energy, tourism and telecommunication sectors, approximate \$US4 billion. Turkish privatization tenders have also attracted considerable Russian interest. Russian energy giants are eager to buy Turkish energy infrastructure. However, Turkish analysts have drawn attention to the risks involved in awarding critical privatization tenders to Russian companies (Okur 2005).³⁰ Hence, many Russian investors prefer to operate through Turkish partners in unofficial joint ventures.³¹ Some of these ventures are concentrated in tourism and appear to have shady connections in Russia.

Lastly, as Hill and Taşpınar recently argued, ‘Russian-speaking Israelis have become an important cultural and political force in the country, and now facilitate an expanding trade relationship between Russia and Israel that could soon directly include Turkey’ (Hill & Taşpınar 2006a).

The Energy Dimension: Streaming Dreams

Turkey is Russia's fat gas customer. (Turkish media outlet commenting after the recent gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine)

Undoubtedly, the energy dimension constitutes the most significant aspect of the Turkish–Russian relationship. Turkey is a net energy consumer. Also, Turkey is an integral part of the global energy market and Russian energy schemes in Turkey have the potential to provide Moscow access to markets in Greece, Spain, Italy, and even North African countries. Turkey portrays itself as an energy transit country and an energy hub for Europe. Conscious of these Turkish aspirations, Russian officials are not afraid to make liberal use of language that would confirm Ankara's ambitions. Despite the growing and worrying level of dependency on Russian gas, some pro-Russian analysts do not hide their enthusiasm about more energy cooperation with Russia. For instance, Aydın Sezer, a known Russophile, complains about the new government's hesitation to pursue energy projects further:

Developing comprehensive projects with the Russians will be a safety insurance from every possible aspect for our country. In fact, should our political parties do their homework in this regard and 'study Russia' before they take over office rather than after we would not waste all this precious time. (Sezer 2006)

Turkish energy imports from Russia have increased exponentially, especially after the completion of the Blue Stream pipeline (Table 1).

Table 1 Turkish Natural Gas Imports from the Russian Federation (million cm³)

	Russian Federation (non-Blue Stream)	Blue Stream	Total
1987	432		
1988	1,136		
1989	2,986		
1990	3,246		
1991	4,031		
1992	4,430		
1993	4,952		
1994	4,957		
1995	5,560		
1996	5,524		
1997	6,574		
1998	6,539		
1999	8,693		
2000	10,079		
2001	10,931		
2002	11,603		
2003	11,422	1,252	12,674
2004	11,106	3,238	14,344
2005	12,857	4,969	17,826
2006	12,246	7,403	19,649

Source: [Online] Available at: http://www.botas.gov.tr/faliyetler/dg_ttt.asp

The Blue Stream natural gas pipeline project, which tunnels under the Black Sea and thus circumvents the ecologically risky Turkish Straits, is the pillar of the energy relationship.³² Turkey imports 65 per cent of its natural gas and 20 per cent of its oil from Russia.³³ Should current trends continue, Turkish dependence on Russian gas may reach up to 80 per cent in coming years.³⁴ Russia is interested in building a north–south pipeline from Samsun to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, parallel to Blue Stream, to export oil as well as electricity to Turkey via the Black Sea. Russia is also interested in providing Turkey with nuclear energy, as well as buying shares in Turkey’s gas distribution company. Turkey and Russia have agreed on the construction of an LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) terminal and oil refinery at Ceyhan where Russian, Azerbaijani and Iraqi oil and gas will end up before being shipped to international markets. Moscow also expressed interest in the construction of another undersea pipeline, this time under the Mediterranean, that would carry Russian gas from Turkey to Italy, Greece and Israel (Hill & Taşpınar 2006a). Turkey’s Energy Minister emphasized that Turkey will soon sign a protocol for improving energy cooperation with Russia, including natural gas pipelines, the construction of a natural gas reserve area under Lake Tuz, and the distribution of natural gas in Turkish cities (Energy Information Agency 2005).

Until the gas row between Russia and Ukraine in 2005, Turkish energy dependence on Russia was not a public issue. However, the disagreement between Russia and Ukraine over the price of gas was a rude awakening for Turkish decision-makers about their own vulnerability, and has precipitated a new debate on Turkish energy dependency (Berkan 2006; Kınıklıoğlu 2006a). Public jitters increased when Alexei Miller, Gazprom’s CEO, revealed the price Turkey pays for Russian gas. Turkish public opinion turned critical, angered to discover that Turkey is consuming the most expensive gas in Europe.³⁵ The disclosure of the high price also exposed the reason behind the secretive attitude of Turkish energy authorities, who until recently treated the price of gas as a state secret.

That said, there is also growing realism, particularly within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that it is in Turkey’s interest to transit non-Russian energy as well. This is particularly true for gas. The planned Samsun–Ceyhan oil pipeline is one such example. Turkish and Azerbaijani efforts to extend Azerbaijani, and possibly Turkmen and/or Kazakh, gas to Greece and Italy are other efforts that will substantiate Turkey’s role as a crucial link in Europe’s quest to diversify its sources of energy.

The Politics of Common Values

Scratch a Russian and you’ll find a Tatar. (Napoleon Bonaparte)

It may seem absurd to list common values as an element explaining the rapprochement between the Russian Federation and Turkey. After all, Turkey has been a member of NATO for more than half a century and is currently engaged in accession negotiations with the EU. Furthermore, Turkey is a member of all major western multilateral organizations, including the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Since 2004, Turkey has accomplished unprecedented democratic reforms that transformed

it into a more open and transparent country. In contrast, Russia has been undergoing strict centralization policies; the Russian media has lost its independence, and potential opposition to Putin has effectively been removed from politics. In 2005, Russia was downgraded by Freedom House from 'partly free' to 'not free'.

Nevertheless, there is an apparent convergence between Turkish and Russian decision-makers that eases their engagement. As one Turkish politician noted, when it comes to working with the Russians, they 'speak a very similar language'.³⁶ A common Turkish sentiment about Russian overtures is that 'the Russians treat the Turks with respect'—a clear reference to a distinct frustration with decades-long European criticism.

In both countries, the political culture assigns a central role to the state. Both sides dwell on the existence of a centuries-old statehood tradition (traced by historians to the Mongol heritage), and have long-standing identity issues between East and West. Politicians on both sides repeatedly underline that both deliver on their promises and are easy to work with.

Lastly, both countries have weak civil societies, although in recent years, Turkish civil society has made significant strides.

Strategic Considerations: The Black Sea/Caucasus Region

The Black Sea is an inner sea—an Ottoman lake. (17th-century Ottoman statesman)

We are going to deepen our relations with Russia on the Eurasian plan. (Ahmet Davutoğlu, Advisor to the Prime Minister³⁷)

Turkish–Russian competition in the Black Sea/Caucasus region dates back centuries. Traditionally, the region has been a battleground between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Following decades of imposed stability, the Caucasus once again became a region of competition after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Turkey and Russia became opponents in the struggle to project influence over the Caucasus. Turkey was supportive of the independence of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia and extended assistance to the Chechen independence struggle until the Second Chechen War. Ankara was particularly active in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Turkey extended military support to both countries and established military academies in Tbilisi and Baku. Turkey's Caucasus policy strongly favoured the consolidation of the new states' independence and territorial integrity. The United States and Turkey collaborated closely in Georgia's post-Soviet quest to consolidate its statehood.

Concrete cooperation between Turkey and Russia on regional affairs coincided with the rise of Vladimir Putin. In 2001, only one month after September 11, the two sides signed the Eurasia Action Plan.³⁸ Among other things, the Action Plan stipulated mutual willingness to cooperate in the fight against terrorism.

The next critical milestone was the US decision to launch their war in Iraq, in spite of strong Turkish objections. Turkey and Russia found themselves on the same side regarding Iraq. Turkish concerns about the emergence of a Kurdish state in Iraq, the instability the war would bring to its southeastern region, and an increase in PKK

violence gave rise to extreme distrust of US initiatives in Turkey's neighbourhood, including the Black Sea/Caucasus region. President Bush's emphasis on 'bringing democracy' to Iraq reflected negatively on the credibility of the administration's democracy agenda elsewhere. In Turkish eyes, democracy promotion became a suspicious pursuit and was viewed as a policy tool to further US influence in the world. The initiation and prolongation of the war in Iraq in the name of democratization, coupled with the US-sponsored Rose and Orange revolutions, created an atmosphere of encirclement in Turkey, very similar to that felt by Russia itself.

Political dialogue on the Black Sea/Caucasus region intensified when it became clear that the United States were pushing for a larger role for NATO in the region. However, Turkey had been alienated for some time from the West. This was largely due to the increasing fragility of its EU drive, as well as the US decision to invade Iraq despite strong Turkish opposition. Suspicion toward the United States has reached record high levels in recent years.³⁹ Also, Turkish strategic thinking always viewed the Black Sea as an exclusive domain. Hence, the revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine and the admission of Romania and Bulgaria to NATO in 2004 contributed to a strange Turkish sense of 'encirclement'. Troubled by the growing uncertainty concerning its European aspirations, Turkey saw benefits in responding to Russian overtures to collaborate in the region. Turkish opposition to extra-regional penetration of the region is mostly explained by two factors: first, there is no need for NATO to enter the region, as existing regional structures are adequate and in concert with NATO operations; second, any regional initiative must include Russia.

In spring 2007, a Turkish foreign ministry official noted that 'without Russia we cannot fulfill our objectives. Russia needs to be on board'.⁴⁰ Ankara strongly believes that antagonizing Moscow would only destabilize the region, and thus constantly refers to the need to involve 'all littoral states' in any regional scheme. Furthermore, Ankara argues that there are no significant threats emanating from the region.⁴¹ Turkey also considers that Russia is a key party to the resolution of the frozen conflicts in the region. In clear continuity with Turkey's traditional respect for its former adversary, Ankara sees Russia as an indispensable actor in the region.⁴² Such respect was amply demonstrated during a security address by Turkey's Chief of Staff, Hilmi Özkök, in 2005. General Özkök highlighted the Turkish General Staff's view that Russia's geography, energy resources and human capacity are likely to allow Russia to become a global power again.⁴³

One important, though rarely discussed, factor in the Black Sea/Caucasus debate is the significance attributed to the Montreux Convention by Turkey. In effect, since 1936, the Convention has governed the passage of ships from the Turkish Straits. In addition to the Lausanne Treaty, the Montreux Convention is one of the founding agreements that established the Turkish Republic and thus reverberates in the psyche of the Turkish establishment as something between a sacred cow and a Pandora's box. It is sacred because of its significance for the Straits, confirming them as Turkish. It constitutes a challenge because renegotiating the Convention could open a Pandora's box, as all littoral states have a myriad of interests that they wish to be addressed.⁴⁴ This road would inevitably lead to protracted negotiations, in which Ankara is unwilling to engage.

A combination of these concerns has brought about a willingness to reinvigorate the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), founded in 1992 under Turkish leadership. Over the years, BSEC has been neglected and become dilapidated. Nonetheless, BSEC has become a platform where there is clear agreement between Turkey and Russia.⁴⁵ Turkey and Russia also stress that BLACKSEAFOR, a multinational naval task force, obviates the need for any NATO presence in the Black Sea.⁴⁶ Turkish diplomats underline the cooperative and transparent operation of BLACKSEAFOR, which, according to a senior Turkish diplomat, regularly communicates its findings to NATO's Operation Active Endeavor HQ in the Mediterranean.⁴⁷ In the same vein, Turkey's Chief of Staff referred to Turkey's BLACKSEA HARMONY operation as 'complementing' NATO's ACTIVE ENDEAVOR operation.⁴⁸ Interestingly, Turkish officials note that they found relatively minimal threats during their maritime missions, and frequently stress that they cannot understand why NATO and the US want to penetrate the region.⁴⁹ A point in case is the US application to become an observer to BSEC in 2005. While Russia opposed the application, Turkey hesitated when a number of observer status applications were discussed at BSEC. The United States could be accepted as an observer only after the Russian demand to include Belarus was agreed upon.

Although Ankara wants to avoid taking sides in any Russia-versus-West struggle for influence, it continues to develop its own relations with Moscow. At the same time, there is growing discomfort in Ankara due to the increasing pressure felt on the Black Sea/Caucasus region. Not surprisingly, Ankara finds comfort in German and French reluctance to buy in the US strategy to integrate the region further into Euro-Atlantic structures.⁵⁰ Also, the Turkish proposition to separate the issue of maritime security from the larger strategic debate promises to open new opportunities for all parties involved. A recent agreement between the United States and Turkey on the issue of maritime security seems to have reduced prevalent tensions about the Black Sea region.⁵¹ Nonetheless, there appears to be less clarity about a common understanding regarding the future of what has come to be identified as the 'Wider Black Sea Region'. This is primarily due to the US perception that the current understanding is of a transitory nature and that the United States may once more intensify its efforts to penetrate the region at some time in the future. Turkey's approach to the region has long been dominated by stability rather than democracy. In this sense, Turkey is a status quo power whose interests overlap with those of Moscow. Turkey's distant approach to the Community of Democratic Choices, as well as to the Rose and Orange revolutions, was a lucid reflection of this preference. Ankara, however, would not wish to nurture a perception that Turkey does not care about democracy in the region. See, for instance, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' press announcement, critical of the Azerbaijani parliamentary election in November 2005.⁵² In addition, Ankara's decision to participate in the Black Sea Forum in Bucharest in June 2006—albeit at a lower level than desired by the Romanians—seemed to be a direct outcome of the Turkish-American understanding on the issue of maritime security.⁵³ In response to the Turkish gesture, which must be seen in light of the Turkish-American understanding, Romania indicated its interest in joining Operation BLACKSEA HARMONY.

The current situation in the Black Sea/Caucasus region points to a stalemate, as Turkey and Russia are opposed to extra-regional powers penetrating the region while the US, Romania, Ukraine and Georgia are in favour of a larger NATO role.⁵⁴ Also, Ankara counsels more patience for Georgian and Ukrainian membership of NATO, as it sees a potential challenge to its own problematic EU drive (Hill & Taşpınar 2006b). Nevertheless, US acceptance of Turkish predominance in Black Sea maritime security, as well as Romanian willingness to go along with this, will help to ease some of the tensions. Turkey seems to have bought time to rethink its own vision toward the Wider Black Sea. The separation of maritime security from the larger strategic debate about the region offers a promising opening for all parties involved. It will certainly help a more gradual approach to prevail, which will be welcomed by Turkey.

The Domestic Dimension

Putin is a Kemalist. (Turkish mass-circulation daily newspaper, *Hürriyet*)

The Turkish–Russian relationship is a rather new phenomenon in Turkey’s domestic scene. The key proponents of the relationship are the increasing numbers of Turkish companies who have invested in the Russian Federation or have established joint ventures with Russian companies in Turkey. These are organized under the Union of Russian–Turkish Businessmen (RTIB) based in Moscow and the Turkish–Russian Business Council, as well as the Turkish–Eurasian Business Council in Istanbul. Recently, a Russian–Turkish Research Center (RUTAM), which promotes a closer relationship with Turkey, has been added to the milieu of actors in Moscow. Interestingly, RUTAM is based in a building that belongs to the largest Turkish construction company (ENKA), which has close ties with Moscow’s influential mayor Yuri Luzhkov. Its co-chair is Albert Chernishev, the Soviet Union’s last ambassador to Turkey and later deputy foreign minister of Russia.

The Turkish media is also an actor in the growing bilateral relationship. The quality and content of news coverage about Russia changed considerably in recent years. Current news coverage about Russia never misses an opportunity to say that ‘Putin is a Kemalist’ or that he enjoys a ‘close personal relationship’ with PM Erdoğan (*Hürriyet* 2005). In other words, Turkish journalists and wire services based in Moscow play a key role in the rectification of Russia’s traditionally negative image in Turkey. Since 2004, the reporting of key journalists such as *Radikal*’s Suat Taşpınar, *Zaman*’s Mirza Çetinkaya and *Hürriyet*’s Nerdun Hacıoğlu are quite sympathetic toward Moscow and have been instrumental in the appropriate filtering of news on Russia in Turkey. Magazines such as *Perspektiva*, *Kompas-Pusula* and the more intellectual but pro-Fethullah Gülen journal *Diyalog Avrasya* are circulating with the aim to cement the emerging partnership. Also, Turkish columnists such as *Sabah*’s Muharrem Sarıkaya use every opportunity to contribute to the positive coverage of Russia in the Turkish press.⁵⁵

Bilingual websites help substantiate the content of the relationship and serve as effective communication media.⁵⁶ All of these publications thrive upon the current upsurge of business interests on both sides. On the other hand, journalists not adhering to the new stance have been exposed to nasty encounters with Russian authorities.

For instance, in January 2003 Remzi Öner Özkan, representative of Turkey's official Anatolian News Agency, was kidnapped by unidentified men and questioned for two hours because of his coverage of the war in Chechnya. Özkan is also the author of a book critical of Putin and Russia's handling of Chechnya. Özkan left his job shortly after the incident and returned to Ankara.⁵⁷

Many Turkish columnists are fully integrated with the pro-Russian lobby and have strong links both with officialdom and with companies that operate between the two countries. Pro-Russian news pieces are actively 'encouraged' by the Istanbul-based Turkish–Russian Business Council.⁵⁸ Furthermore, large sections of the Turkish media apply hidden censorship to op-eds critical of Russia and a number of other post-Soviet autocratic states.⁵⁹ Consequently, it has become more difficult to publish articles that question the Turkish-Russian relationship.⁶⁰ The Fethullah Group is particularly wary of political criticism of Russia and other post-Soviet states, due to its colleges in these countries.⁶¹

On both sides there is also a small group of intellectuals who proactively favour the deepening of relations. In Russia, the prominent Eurasianist writer and politician Alexander Dugin is the leading ideologue. As Eurasianism has a long philosophical tradition in Russia, the recent development of relations was intellectually easily adapted to the Russian debate. In Turkey, where historical perceptions of Russia are extremely negative, the building of a philosophical base has proven more problematic. This is also due to the less ideological nature of Turkish foreign policy thinking. Turkey's approach to the bilateral relationship is more practical than that of Russia. On the Turkish side, Alev Alatlı is a less political yet influential writer whose books accentuate the similarities in the mindsets of the two peoples.⁶² Lastly, on the cultural plane, it was decided to celebrate Turkey and Russia Years in 2007 and 2008, respectively (*Yeni Şafak* 2005).

Tourism: People-to-People Diplomacy

Russian tourists think that Antalya is Turkey's capital. (Russian deputy foreign minister)

Russian tourists are coming to Turkey as if they are on a pilgrimage. (Turkish tourism official)

One of the most frequently cited facts about the Turkish-Russian relationship is the growing number of Russian tourists visiting Turkey every year and the economic impact of this trend. Some analysts note humorously that the Russians finally succeeded in reaching the 'warm waters', not by force, as was envisioned by Peter the Great and his imperial successors, but via tourism. Indeed, Turkey has become the primary tourism destination for Russians; Russians are only second to Germans visiting Turkey. Helped by an easy visa regime, the number of Russian tourists grew from 1.2 million in 2003 to 1.5 million in 2004 and 1.9 million in 2005 (DEIK 2005). The Turkish tourism sector is particularly fond of Russians, as they spend generously by comparison with their European counterparts. While this is significant from an economic perspective, Turkey also attaches great value to the 'people-to-people diplomacy' dimension of tourism. The perceptual baggage carried over

from centuries-long confrontational history is slowly being revised by direct contact between Turks and Russians (*Turizm i Sport* 2005). There is also an exponential increase in marriages between Turks and Russians. In 2002 alone, over 50,000 Russians and Turks married, which also brought about vocal demand for Turkish schools in Russia and Russian schools in Turkey (*Hürriyet* 2003).

Problematic Areas

Russia Blocks UN Cyprus Resolution. (Associated Press, April 2004)

Turkish–Russian relations are not without problems, especially in the political arena. In April 2004, only days before the Cyprus referendum on the UN-sponsored Annan Plan, Russia used its veto to block a resolution that sought to alleviate Greek Cypriot security concerns. The resolution, a last-minute attempt to deal with the Greek Cypriots' feelings of insecurity, was brought forward to the Security Council to give effect under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to the provisions in the plan calling for international support for its implementation and enforcement. Moscow's veto, ostensibly based on 'procedural-technical' grounds, had a damaging effect on the outcome of the referendum as the resolution's adoption would have encouraged more Greek Cypriots to vote in favour of the plan.⁶³

Complications did not cease there. Moscow continues to veto the Secretary-General's report on the post-referendum situation in Cyprus. Urging the international community to lift the isolation of the northern part of the island, this is an important report for the Turkish government. The adoption of the report in the Security Council would be a diplomatic victory for Turkey, for it would acknowledge the continuing intransigence of the Greek Cypriots. In clear response to Turkish pressure, President Putin recently declared that the economic embargo on the north was unjust (*Radikal* 2005). Oscillating between the long tradition of positioning itself as a habitual protector of the Balkan Orthodox nations and the attempts to satisfy Turkish expectations, Moscow wants at least to give the impression that it is trying to do something about Turkish concerns on Cyprus. Still, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is sceptical about Russia's motives and privately complains about the lack of concrete steps in this regard.⁶⁴

Another problematic issue has been the Russian Duma's resolution on the Armenian 'genocide' in April 2005. Turkey deplored the resolution and underlined the irony of the passing of the resolution 'by the Parliament of a country that should know best what occurred in 1915'.⁶⁵ It was further noted that the resolution did not correspond to the level of bilateral relations that is progressing in all areas.

Frequent bans on the imports of Turkish products on health and safety grounds also strain relations, albeit at a lower level. In 2005 Russia banned the importation of Turkish poultry products, fruits, vegetables and flowers.

Last but not least is the situation concerning Russian history textbooks, particularly in Russian secondary schools. Though this is not a subject extensively discussed by Turkish officials, post-Soviet Russian history textbooks are full of xenophobic and stereotypical material about Turks,⁶⁶ which hardly encourages the younger generation in a friendly perception of their neighbours.

Conclusion

Should current trends continue, the Turkish–Russian relationship is likely to become a structural factor in the region. The relationship started out with modest trade, but quickly evolved with the addition of the energy dimension. External factors such as the EU’s reluctance to embrace Turkey, as well as frustration with the United States over the Iraq War, have helped the relationship to acquire a political and strategic dimension. Turkey’s deepening relationship with Russia should be understood within the context of a distinct sense of alienation. The Turkish self-perception that it belongs neither to Europe nor to the Middle East acquired a more ominous character through the rupture of the strong security link with the United States. The rise of the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi [The Justice and Development Party]) and the subsequent emergence of its foreign policy ideology converged with the secular Kemalist elite’s sense of frustration and produced a peculiar consensus to deepen the relationship with Russia.

Furthermore, Turkish foreign policy is traditionally very realist and unaccustomed to the rhetoric of democracy promotion. Seen from Ankara, the current US administration’s accent on ‘freedom on the march’ is seen in complete isolation from its moral underpinnings and viewed merely as a tool to extend US influence in the region. There is no doubt that the war in Iraq and the administration’s stress on the need to bring democracy to Iraq has taken a significant toll on how Ankara views US democracy promotion efforts in Eurasia. Turkey perceived itself as one of the primary victims of the Iraqi war because of its impact on the Kurdish conflict in Turkey. Thus, democracy promotion as a concept is viewed negatively by Ankara;⁶⁷ and this is where Turkish and Russian interests fully converge, as Moscow is equally wary of the penetration of US influence into the post-Soviet geopolitical space.

The United States and the EU must acknowledge that Turkey is an actor in its own right that is increasingly conscious of its potential role in neighbouring regions. Turkey’s current government has provided the theoretical infrastructure for a new foreign policy outlook. This new outlook advocates a closer relationship with Turkey’s neighbourhood, including a multidimensional partnership with Russia.

The Turkish–Russian partnership is inherently based on defensive motivations on the part of both sides. It is defensive against the potential for further instability in its immediate neighbourhood. It is also defensive regarding the shaping of a new Europe that appears to exclude the two regional powers. Should current pressures on Turkey because of Iraq and problems in the progression towards EU membership continue, the Turkish–Russian partnership may grow into something of more consequence. Ultimately, what will determine the course of Turkish–Russian relations is the quality of their relationships with the West; so far, their sense of alienation from the West has brought them closer.

Notes

- [1] The letter was written on 31 December 1492 in Moscow as a result of earlier expressions of Muscovite desire to establish formal relations with the Ottoman Turks and was forwarded to

the Porte via the Crimean Khan Mengligiray, a friend and ally of Ivan the Great. For a Turkish translation of the letter see Okçu 1953, pp. 19–20. Also useful is Kumkale 1966, pp. A1–A2. It is worth noting that the seniority situation between the two actors would not allow the Russian *knyaz* (prince) to contact the Ottoman Sultan direct, only via the Crimean Khan.

- [2] For more detail on this period, see Gökay 1997 and Yerasimos 2000.
- [3] For more detail about this period, see Erkin 1968; Lederer & Vucinich 1974; Burçak 1983; Golan 1990; Vassiliev 1993: 17; Pathania 1994.
- [4] For an account of Lavrenti Beria's role in Stalin's pressuring of Turkey, see Talbot 1974, pp. 295–296.
- [5] On the one hand, Turkey realized that it does not have the economic capacity to respond to the needs of its Turkic brethren, on the other hand the Russian Federation understood that Turkey's approach was not based on pan-Turkic ideals but was respectful to Russian territorial integrity.
- [6] Interview with senior Turkish Ministry of Affairs official in December 2005.
- [7] Moreover, the Russian media paid accentuated the fact that throughout history not a single Russian leader, neither Tsar nor General Secretary of the CPSU, ever visited Turkey. For a sample of such commentary, see *Nevskoe Vremia*, 7 December 2004.
- [8] *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Rusya Federasyonu Arasında Dostluğun ve Çokboyutlu Ortaklığın Derinleştirilmesine İlişkin Ortak Deklerasyon* [Joint Declaration on the Deepening of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation]. This text is only available in Turkish and Russian. A Turkish version of the declaration is available from the Russian Embassy in Ankara website at http://www.turkey.mid.ru/text_t73.html.
- [9] For the theoretical underpinnings of Turkey's 'normalization with the neighborhood' policy, see Davutoğlu 2002.
- [10] For an interesting analysis of Davutoğlu's foreign policy vision, see Murinson 2006.
- [11] Not much information is public on the exact composition and format of this working group, though it seems likely that it takes place at the director-general level between the two foreign ministries, with some participation from multilateral and economic departments.
- [12] The authors of this paper do not mean to imply that the war in Chechnya can be reduced simply to terrorism.
- [13] See the Joint Declaration on the Deepening of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership between the Turkish Republic and the Russian Federation.
- [14] See the Russian Federation embassy in Ankara's website for an expression of appreciation of Turkey's support within the ICO (Organization of the Islamic Conference) for Russia's observer status. Available from http://www.turkey.mid.ru/text_t70.html.
- [15] For the group's first communication, see <http://www.unaoc.org/repository/8817Strategic%20Vision%20-%20Russia-Islamic%20World%20-%20Moscow%2027-28%20March%202006;%20V.%20Naumkin.pdf>. A summary of their last meeting is available at: http://www.iras.ir/English/Default_view.asp?@=2484.
- [16] Speech by Tuncer Kılınç, then Secretary General of Turkey's National Security Council, at the War Academy in Istanbul on 7 March 2002.
- [17] The fact that the speech was posted on the General Staff's website attracted considerable attention in the Turkish media. For a sample news piece, see *Sabah* 2007.
- [18] Interview with senior Turkish diplomat in December 2005.
- [19] A sample effort was a conference held at Istanbul University on 3 September 2005, *Turkey's Relations with Russia, China and Iran at the Eurasian Axis*, which featured retired General Tuncer Kılınç, former Russian ambassador Albert Chernishev, the eccentric Labour Party leader Doğu Perinçek, and CHP Deputy Chairman Onur Öymen. Also, the Ankara-based Gazi University's *Eurasia Symposium* in December 2004 featured Alexander Dugin.
- [20] Gutnik lists three reasons obstructing Turkey's EU drive: (1) the absence of an EU budget reform that would allow Turkey to be accommodated; (2) Turkey's stance on the Cyprus issue; and (3) Turkey's Muslim identity. See also Pervushin 2006.

- [21] Dugin's book, *Rus Jeopolitiği: Avrasyacı Yaklaşım* [Russia's Geopolitics: A Eurasian Approach], was published by Küre Publishing, a printing house affiliated with the Istanbul-based Science & Arts Foundation.
- [22] Sergey Mironov, speech during his visit to Bilkent University, Ankara, 26 March 2007.
- [23] Ibid.
- [24] For a very thoughtful piece, see Menon & Wimbush 2007. Although less alarmist analyses are available, such as that of Ian Lesser, most Washington pundits point to a rupture between the United States and Turkey.
- [25] Some Turkish officials argue that Moscow must allow Turkey to pay for its energy imports with goods and services similar to the 1984 natural gas agreement.
- [26] Some of these projects include high-profile works such as the restoration of the Russian White House in Moscow and the 46,000 housing units for Russian soldiers returning from Eastern Germany.
- [27] For more detail, see DEİK (Dis Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulv [Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey]) 2005.
- [28] Interview with Turgut Gür, chairman of the Turkey-Eurasia Business Council, in December 2005.
- [29] The deal envisages the sale of 13.2 per cent of Turkcell to the Alfa Group for US\$3.3 billion. According to the Russian daily *Vedomosti*, the deal constitutes the highest Russian share purchase of a foreign company. Turkish investments are concentrated in construction, retail, beer, glass and electronics (Tsukanov 2005).
- [30] Okur argued in her column that 'what was not feasible to do politically is being done via privatization deals'—hence via the back door.
- [31] A key example for such unofficial partnerships is the prominent Rixos Hotels chain in southern Turkey. For more detail, see *Hürriyet* 2004.
- [32] For more detail, see Gavshina 2005.
- [33] Figures according to Turkey's Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAŞ).
- [34] PM Erdoğan speaking to European ambassadors on 21 January 2006 in Ankara.
- [35] While the average European price for 1000 square metres is US\$135, Turkey's natural gas rate has been announced as US\$260 by Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller on 4 January 2006. See 'Türkiye yağlı müşteri' [Russia's fat customer: Turkey], NTVMSNBC (News Agency, see <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com>), 5 January 2006.
- [36] Interview with a Turkish parliamentarian, December 2005.
- [37] Ahmet Davutoğlu on NTV's *Karşı Görüş* broadcast on 21 December 2005.
- [38] A Turkish version of the Eurasia Action Plan is available at: http://www.turkey.mid.ru/relat_2_t.html.
- [39] *Transatlantic Trends* surveys conducted by the US German Marshall Fund consistently show a significant rise in Turkish suspicion and distrust of the United States since 2004. More detail on these surveys is available at: <http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/TTSplash.cfm>.
- [40] Presentation by Turkish MFA official Osman Yavuzalp, *Harvard Black Sea Security Studies Seminar*, Bilkent University, Ankara, 2 April 2005.
- [41] Interview with Turkish diplomat responsible for NATO affairs, December 2005.
- [42] For a detailed analysis of Turkey's Black Sea policies, see Kiniklioğlu 2006b.
- [43] Speech by Turkish Chief of Staff, General Hilmi Özkök, on the occasion of his Annual Security Evaluation at the War Academy in Istanbul on 20 April 2005. Özkök added in his speech that Russia would be able to make a comeback to the degree that it can resolve its domestic problems.
- [44] Turkey has its own problems with the Convention. The fact that the Turkish Straits have become a de facto pipeline from which Turkey cannot extract income has been denounced by some Turkish officials.
- [45] PM Erdoğan's advisor Ahmet Davutoğlu recently indicated that Turkey aims to reinvigorate BSEC with Russian support. The Turkish MFA's Policy Planning Directorate invited a

- group of analysts and academics in January 2006 to discuss how the organization could be resuscitated.
- [46] Founded in 2001, BLACKSEAFOR is a Turkish initiative that includes Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia.
- [47] Interview with Turkish diplomat responsible for NATO affairs, December 2005.
- [48] Speech by Turkish Chief of Staff, General Hilmi Özkök, on the occasion of his Annual Security Evaluation at the War Academy in Istanbul on 20 April 2005. Russia joined BLACK SEA HARMONY on 27 December 2007 and Ukraine signed a protocol on information exchange on 17 January 2007.
- [49] Interview with senior admiral in the Turkish Navy, April 2005.
- [50] Germany and France are the two leading European countries that are opposing any moves to alienate Russia in the region. This attitude is most evident in NATO discussions on Georgia and the Ukraine.
- [51] For more detail, see *Turkish Daily News* 2006.
- [52] Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Release No. 170, 9 November 2006: 'On the November 6 elections in Azerbaijan'.
- [53] Romania, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan were represented by heads of states while Turkey—in a clear departure from earlier meetings of a similar nature—was represented by a state minister. Russia was represented by its ambassador in Bucharest with observer status.
- [54] For a more recent statement attesting to Turkish–Russian cooperation on Black Sea security, see the Russian Chief of Staff's opinion: Baluevskii 2007.
- [55] Sarıkaya's recent columns in relation to the visit of Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov are typical examples of such writing. For more detail, see *Sabah* 2006.
- [56] For instance, www.turkrus.com is run by *Radikal*'s Suat Taşpınar and is the most effective and professional website to provide daily news and commentary from Russia. The motto of the website is 'Two nations—One website'.
- [57] Interview with Remzi Öner Özkan in December 2005. Özkan's book was titled *Sadece Çocuklar Masum: SSCB Sonrası Rusya'da Kaosun Sürükleyici Güçleri, Putin İktidarı, Terör* [Only Children Are Innocent: The Drivers of post-Soviet Chaos in Russia, the Putin Administration and Terror].
- [58] Interview with a prominent Turkish writer and political thinker, November 2005.
- [59] Suat Kınıklıoğlu's piece, titled 'Türkiye ve Rusya Nereye?' [Turkey and Russia: Where to?], published in *Radikal* on 6 December 2005, the same day President Putin visited Turkey, constitutes a rare exception.
- [60] Interview with a group of think-tankers specializing in regional studies. A common complaint was the difficulties they encountered in publishing critical articles on Turkish–Russian as well as Turkish–Azerbaijani relations. Op-eds sympathetic toward the 'colour revolutions' in Georgia and Ukraine are also extremely difficult to be approved for publication.
- [61] Suat Kınıklıoğlu was asked to be 'kind' toward Heydar Aliyev when approached for an op-ed to the daily *Zaman* on Turkish–Azerbaijani relations in 2003. 'You know we have schools out there and we want to make sure that they continue to operate' was noted by the op-ed editor of *Zaman*.
- [62] Alatlı's most recent book, *World Duty* (2005), is described as an attempt to see Turkey via Russian lenses. The book is part of a series by Alatlı titled 'In the Footprints of Gogol'.
- [63] For an analysis of the Russian veto and the motivations behind it, see Torbakov 2004.
- [64] Interview with senior Turkish diplomat, December 2005.
- [65] Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Release No. 67, 26 April 2005, 'On the deploring of the statement by the Russian Federal Parliament about recognizing the so-called Armenian Genocide on April 22, 2005'. The authors of this paper do not define the unfortunate events of 1915 as 'genocide'.
- [66] For a detailed analysis on the subject-matter, see Kınıklıoğlu 2007.

- [67] For instance, Turkey's state television TRT has been broadcasting a documentary series called *Sınırlar Ötesi* [Beyond Borders], which ostensibly covers the situation of Turkic peoples in Eurasia. In reality, the programme is used to shape public opinion that favours stability over democracy in Eurasia.

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