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*THE EURASIANIST SURVIVAL OF TURKISH GEOPOLITICS : CHANGE OF  
HEARTLAND AND TURKEY'S POSITION IN THE NEW GEOPOLITICS*

*MASTER'S THESIS*

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I confirm that I am the author of submitted Master's thesis: *THE EURASIANIST SURVIVAL OF TURKISH GEOPOLITICS : CHANGE OF HEARTLAND AND TURKEY'S POSITION IN THE NEW GEOPOLITICS*, which has been prepared independently and has never been presented for any other course or used in another educational institution, neither in Lithuania, or abroad. I also provide a full bibliographical list which indicates all the sources that were used to prepare this assignment and contains no un used sources.

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## ABSTRACT

Throughout history, Turkey's geopolitical position in world politics has mostly been dynamic, even controversial. Despite its westernization period starting from 1923 and its strong economic, military and diplomatic relations with the West, it is not wise to say Turkey should not be considered either a western or eastern state. However, even though being a member of NATO and longtime candidate of the European Union, Turkey faced a Western-backed coup attempt on July 15, 2016, by FETO (Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü), led by a cleric who currently lives in the United States. Failed coup attempt and weak western support to Turkish government have created newer and deeper problems between the European Union, the United States and Turkey. As Davutoğlu's new alternative was on gradually active, coup attempt made this progress even faster because of increasing geopolitical risks. The coup attempt showed us that Turkey should create its own diversified foreign political agenda due to the security threats from the traditional strategic partners. The main question of the thesis is following: Considering that Turkey has been facing multi-proportional foreign threats after the failed coup attempt in 2016, Why an eastward shift, such as Turkish Eurasianism should be more influencing for the Turkish foreign policy to preserve its interests in the region after the attempt? This question is important because Turkish Eurasianist ideologies are mostly pragmatist so it is impossible to tell about long - term plans. In this thesis, Turkish Eurasianism will be defined by the meanings of modern geopolitics, which put international organizations in a priority and suggests creating a symmetrical organizational strength with the Eastern world, instead of quitting NATO and European Union. Since its geographical position is available to be considered East or West, Turkish people may need to ask themselves the critical question: What defines Turkey and what is more beneficial for Turkey's future?

Key words: Turkish Eurasianism, Atlanticism, modern geopolitics, strategic depth

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## 1- INTRODUCTION

Even though there were significant interactions, has Turkey ever been a Western State? Despite the fact it was the last caliphate of Islam, has Turkey ever fully been an Islamic State? As their main origins are emigre from Central Asia, can we say Turkey is an Eastern state? Answers of these questions might be “yes” and “no” in different eras due to the reason of the geopolitical position of Turkey. The thesis will reinforce Turkey’s “Eurasian alternative”, which has been previously noted by Huntington, in the Clash of Civilizations thesis. The thesis will focus on the current western geopolitical threats that counter Turkey’s interests in the region and try to find out how to create a “safe spot” for Turkish geopolitical existence even though there are multidimensional threats and opportunities from both sides of the bipolar/multipolar world order after the coup attempt. The main agenda of this thesis to discuss why Turkish sources in Eurasia might strengthen Turkish geopolitical power in the region.

The thesis will briefly discuss the geopolitical history of Turkish foreign policy agenda. The main critical thinking point will be Davutoğlu’ s Strategic Depth theory, which puts Turkey into an uncertain position in world politics. Even though it can be considered as a modern pragmatic doctrine for Turkish foreign policy, geopolitical risks have been ignored in this agenda, which put Turkey into a very risky geopolitical position between NATO and Russia. After this critical mistake that put Turkey on thin ice between the East and West, turning back to traditional balance politics between both sides might be complex due to the reason of bilateral agreements between Turkey and other parties. So, the idea of this thesis is to enlarge Turkish geopolitical influence on Eurasia to foster its dynamic foreign politics, which might help Turkey regain its unique position.

Turkey improved its relationship with NATO, and European Economic Community to secure the state against Communist threat with adopting the term Westernism, then named as “Atlanticism”. The westernization period might appear as a natural reflex against Soviet expansionism after Turkish - Soviet non-aggression pact extension and Armenian and Georgian SSR’s claims of Turkish soil between 1945-1952. Turkey benefited from the Marshall Plan, then becomes a NATO member in the 1950s, which put it into bordering position of the alliance. However, after the 1990s Cold War finished, so Turkish foreign policy has started to explore its new vibes and dynamics to keep its interests in the new geopolitical age. Generally, when we observe Turkish foreign politics since Ottoman Empire, as a result of the balance politics due to the “threat perception” of the West or the East has been one of the most significant varieties. Traditionally, the heartland was in the Eastern European soil, so Turkey rationally selected westerners as strategic partners. However, in today’s geopolitics, the centre of the world island is moving to the east and this fact makes Turkey stay between the confrontation zone between Russia, China and the United States. Since the geographical uniqueness is firstly told in “strategic depth” doctrine, which was implemented by Ahmet Davutoğlu’s, scholar, former foreign minister, and former prime minister. The strategic depth theory claims that Turkey has to be in a central and proactive position between the East and the West and should increase its sphere of influence to former Ottoman states in Afro-Eurasia. Even though the idea of Davutoğlu is respectable, the weak part of his doctrine is the uncalculated scale of risk of the approach and Neo - Ottomanist fantasies, which made neighbouring states, which are named as “Afro - Eurasia” (Davutoğlu, 2001)states, hostile because of Turkish “constructivist” imperialism.

The critical point that was ignored by Davutoğlu is; geopolitical theories are naturally realist as result of its natural aim is to be a dominant power in the region, even world domination and his constructivist approach in geopolitics can never be accepted as a theory. The thesis' main point is if Turkey plans to increase their geopolitical influence in the region along with its imperial history, it has to get well with its regional partners in contrast of Davutoğlu's "central state" thesis. To keep its interests, Turkey should turn to the East, where culturally more similar than the West and more beneficial by the meanings of economy and security. The thesis' timeline has started with the coup attempt because the failed coup attempt had forced Turkish foreign policy decision-making body to work fast and more defensive to survive in the political agenda.

Apart from the failed coup attempt, it is also important to look at other reasons to support this thesis to show up why Turkish Eurasianist centric geopolitical theories should be more influencing for Turkish foreign policy makers after the coup attempt. Turkish candidacy to the European Union has been blocked by the European States for decades. As a result of its geopolitical position near the current hotspots of Transcaucasus region and the Middle East put it in a position that is called bridge state and needs to secure itself, Turkey has to diversify its defence systems to protect itself from East and the West at the same time. One of the most important events that have permanently damaged Turkey and Western states relations can be considered as a failed coup attempt and this event showed Turkish intelligentsia to find strong alternatives against western hegemony in Turkey. Even today, the failed coup plotters are still in western states even though there are interstate extradition agreements with Turkey.(Kakışım and Erdoğan, 2017)

## 1.1-MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION:

The paper is mainly focusing on an aim to define what contemporary Eurasianism means for Turkish sources and how may the Neo- Eurasianist geopolitical theories expound Turkish foreign policy after 2016 coup attempt. The main question of this thesis is the following:

*Considering that Turkey has been facing multi-proportional foreign threats after the failed coup attempt in 2016, Why an eastward shift, such as Turkish Eurasianism should be more influencing for the Turkish foreign policy to preserve its interests in the region after the attempt?*

Additionally, to explain the Eurasianist agenda of Turkey, there will be more details needed to reach the main idea of Turkey's opportunities and complexities in its eastward shift to keep its geopolitical interests strong with key questions: As its main foreign policy agenda had to change radically after almost a century, how is Russia an inevitable subject for Turkey to reach its geopolitical goals? Geopolitically thinking, since the clash between "Soviet heartland and Atlantic rimland" have been collapsed after the Cold War, what obstacles Turkey is facing under the name of "western support"? Turkey let it be used as a "bridge" state by the East or Assuming Turkey is lacking secure zone due to being in between geopolitical dualism of Heartland and Rimland, integration to Neo- Eurasianist views might be reconsidered by Turkish intelligentsia. Even though the current Turkish mainland is surrounded by sea, historically and traditionally, Turkic states have been in the heartland of Eurasia.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Prof.Dr. Gömeç, Saadettin, 2015, Online Article Avrasya ve Avrasyadaki Türk Varlığı, <https://www.altayli.net/avrasya-ve-avrasyadaki-turk-varligi.html>



## 1.2-SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question aims to define the importance of Turkish use geopolitical advantage to preserve its interests with the Turkish Eurasianism in the region after the failed coup attempt.

### Case(s) and Data

-This work will focus on Turkish geopolitical tendencies and its correlations with neo-Eurasianism on the foreign agenda. The Thesis will be based on the scientific literature, journals, essays, statements and interviews of various political analysts, theorists, and politicians as well as on official documents.

-Empirical cases that will be mentioned in the work will be taken from the real current internal which affects on external politics e.g Davutoğlu's foreign politics methods, failed coup attempt and aftermath etc.. Thesis will deal with Turkey's issues with Atlanticism and Eurasianism after the Cold War.

-The thesis will mostly examine Davutoğlu's era because his doctrine named Strategic Depth have radically changed the view of the "West"

-The work will concentrate on Turkey's revisit to gain its imperial ambitions to become a regional power. The thesis will argue if Turkey's position with Russian Eurasianism more beneficial. The thesis will postulate the main possible scenarios of future development of Turkey's geopolitical shift. The chronological framework of the thesis will be taken from the after Cold War, when Turkish bordering position in the NATO becomes not even advantageous for either say and to this day, in order to trace the prospects for the further development of this interesting phenomenon.

Considering that Eurasianism gives strong geopolitical interests to the bordering states, nationalism grows increasingly as a new form that admires Turkey's unique geopolitical position as it was emerging in Eurasianism. As this idea might be perceived as a new and better successor of Neo-Ottomanism ideology of Davutoglu, which apparently failed and ended up with his resignation from the premiership in 2016. The term of Neo-eurasianism, which might be deemed as “ Russian way of Mackinder's heartland theory ”, which puts Turkey's geopolitical position one of the most important areas for Russia or the land “Eurasia” in Dugin's theory, has been loosely defined, as it was seen only as a political whim in some terms. Thus, a stricter analysis will define what is Neo-eurasianism and what does that mean for Turkey's foreseeable future.

Lastly, the result of the main question will be examined with the information gathered from previous chapters to show logical results of Turkish shift to the Eurasian concept. There are common misconceptions of the theory of Eurasianism which were the main motivations of this thesis. One of the most known problematic of Eurasianism has been evolved as a national theory of Russia, and Turkish eurasianism has a limited theoretical background and as thesis suggests; Turkish intelligentsia has to evolve its own “Eurasianist views” to emerge itself to this geopolitical theory<sup>2</sup>.

However, the Eurasianism is not only a political view, but it is imposing also a geopolitical fate for states those are countering interests of western-led “Atlanticism”. Turkish geopolitics, which is literally being a bridge state between the west and the east, could have an opportunity get a bigger pie with Eurasianist views because of the current situation ongoing in the Middle East and the Black Sea region as these regions are in Turkish sphere of influence. Since the United States and Europe were following different foreign policy agenda than Turkey after the Cold War era, Turkish shift from western - centric to eastward should be considered as

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<sup>2</sup> Yılmaz, Reha, 2013 “*Türk Avrasyası ve Avrasyacılığı Üzerine*” pp.4  
[http://www.tasam.org/Files/Icerik/File/turk\\_avrasyasi\\_ve\\_avrasyaciligi\\_uzerine\\_4c8cf535-6db9-4ab8-87ab-6e00f2f1e8ce.pdf](http://www.tasam.org/Files/Icerik/File/turk_avrasyasi_ve_avrasyaciligi_uzerine_4c8cf535-6db9-4ab8-87ab-6e00f2f1e8ce.pdf) (27.10.2018)

an inevitable result of ignoring the partner in the region. As a result from French revolutions' creation of nation-states, Turkish and Russian states are still polyethnic nation-states that they both have a "superior nationality identification" that counters the essential of belonging to be a western according to Panarin's Eurasianism.(Özdal, 2010)

### 1.3-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE - LITERATURE REVIEW

- Turkish geopolitics and Neo- Eurasianism are the main concepts that will be discussed in the Thesis. The main idea of Eurasianism is that Russia is a particular ethnic-geographical and cultural world, occupying a central position ("Heartland") between West and East, Europe and Asia that also covers Turkey geographically and ethnically.
- The major question of this concept is to research the fate of Turkish geopolitical power as well as regional and domestic policies and Russia's role at a global level for Turkish geopolitics. The thesis will touch important aspect of Turkey's geographical and geopolitical position that is stuck between Russian and Western conflict zone of the Middle East, as a result of being located in one of the hottest spots of the 21st century, the main issue of the foreign policy is ensuring the domestic safety. The coup attempt was one of the greatest breakthroughs in Turkish modern political history.
- After the attempt until now, Turkey lost a number of its geopolitical and geostrategic advantages all over Europe and the Middle East, Syrian issue might be a great example, thereby the internal and regional security issue of the country becomes a very important aspect of Turkish geopolitical position.

The thesis will include critic theories of the idea against Turkish pragmatism in geopolitics. Critical position in work will be presented with such geopolitical schools, as Westernism, Neo-Ottomanism(official name is Strategic Depth Doctrine), Atlanticism, Classical Geopolitics (Realism). The main task of the critical view is to show how complicated the choice of the main geopolitical aim of the country is without the current reality in the region, what are the main problems laying on the way of ideas of to keep the main geopolitical power in the region with these frameworks mentioned above? Why the concept of Eurasianism concept is suitable for Turkish geopolitics currently? Etc

The term “power” is one of the greatest tools of geopolitical theories for the ultimate goal: world domination. Morgenthau, one of the most important theorists of realism defines the power in political realism<sup>3</sup>:

*"Realism, believing as it does in the objectivity of the laws of politics, must also believe in the possibility of developing a rational theory that reflects, however imperfectly and one-sidedly, these objective laws. It believes also, then, in the possibility of distinguishing in politics between truth and opinion — between what is true objectively and rationally, supported by evidence and illuminated by reason, and what is only a subjective judgment, divorced from the facts as they are and informed by prejudice and wishful thinking."*

Another important theorist; George Modelski defines the power as a function of global reach ( being able to influence events across the globe).<sup>4</sup> As a modern successor of realism, the school of neorealism defends that the power is not an “aim” but a “tool”<sup>5</sup>. There are two different

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<sup>3</sup> Morgenthau, Hans J., 1978, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, Fifth Edition, Revised, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf) , pp. 4-15 <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/morg6.htm> (01.12.2018)

<sup>4</sup> Flint, Colin, 2016, Introduction to Geopolitics: " Power, for Modelski, is a function of global reach - the ability to influence events across the globe" 3rd edition, pp.220 , Routledge, New York <https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=h0QIDwAAQBAJ&lpq=PP1&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>5</sup> Arı, Tayyar, 1997, Uluslararası İlişkiler, pp.12, Alfa Basım Yayın Dağıtım, İstanbul

scenarios for neorealists: Being a too weak state might cause being dominated by stronger states, yet, being an overpowered state might cause other states to come together and overthrow the strong factor. Thus, the power is only a tool for this theory and statesmen should decide how much power state needs to secure the state from intruders, and it is not framed as “power”, but “security”<sup>6</sup>.

Fundamentally, to make itself keep existing the international arena, states create securitization theories to defend itself from outsiders. These theories can contain traditional homeland security to space security. According to Haushofer, states which feel they are “strong enough” to defend itself, they expand their living zone to keep their central existence with eliminating other threats.<sup>7</sup> In this context, these states are creating a theoretical outlook to expand their sphere of influence lining with their interests and potential threats against their existence in that zone.

Geopolitics might be explained after taking into account of its key facts and borders are taken account like this: The study of geographical unchangeable varieties (geographical character, location, territorial integrity to other hotspots) and changeable varieties (sociocultural structure, economic, political and military values) and their influences on power relationships in international politics. Geopolitical initiates have sought to establish the importance in the determination of foreign affairs of factors. (Sandıklı, 2001)

Successful geopolitical theories can monitor long term foreign policy agenda of states to dominate beyond their influence zones to be a superpower(İşcan, 2006). So, it can be logical to say that geopolitical theories are as old as the first state which attempted to command other(s). However, modern geopolitical theories start with Mahan’s “The Influence of Sea Power” thesis in 1890, which stressed out the importance of naval power to make the United States a

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<sup>6</sup> Arı, Tayyar, i.b.i.d, pp.239

<sup>7</sup> Öngör Sami, 1958, Siyasi Coğrafya ve Jeopolitik, Ankara University Magazine , pp 302  
<http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/42/397/4298.pdf>

Superpower<sup>8</sup>. In contrast with Mahan's theory, Mackinder's "Heartland" theory from his famous book "The Geographical Pivot of History" that was published in 1904. He summarizes his theory with the following quote in his book "Democratic Ideals and Reality" that was published in 1919:

*"Who rules Eastern Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world."*<sup>9</sup>

Influenced by Mahan's theory and to counter Mackinder's theory, Spykman had a "Rimland" theory which defends his theory with following political tongue twister<sup>10</sup>:

*"Who rules Rimland countries commands Eurasia, who rules Eurasia controls destiny of the world."*

Historical aspects of the idea of Eurasianism based upon Russian philosophers who were expelled/forced to leave the Soviet Union after October revolution, such as Nikolai Trubetskoi, Peter Savitskiyy, Georgy Florovskyy, Georgi Vernadsky etc. First works of Eurasianist thesis' were published in Sofia, Bulgaria<sup>11</sup>. In 1926, the first theory program named "Eurasianism: Systematic Ideology". In between 1926 and 1929, Eurasianists published theory books named

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<sup>8</sup>Lanning, Michael Lee , 1998, The Military 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Leaders of All Time , translated to Turkish by: Belkıs Çorakçı Dişbudak,, Show Kitap Tarih Dizisi, pp. 152- 154 , İstanbul

<sup>9</sup> Mackinder, John, 1919, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, NDU Press 1942 ed. pp. 150 , Washington [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/139619/1942\\_democratic\\_ideals\\_reality.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/139619/1942_democratic_ideals_reality.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>. Spykman, Nicolas, 1944, The Geography of the Peace,, Harcourt Brace and Company, p. 43. New York <https://mccarthy-c86b5.firebaseio.com/bs241/the-geography-of-the-peace-by-nicholas-john-spykman-b00178gkxk.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Sandıklı, Atilla , 2011, Jeopolitik ve Türkiye: Riskler ve Fırsatlar, BİLGESAM, pp:5 online article: <http://www.bilgesam.org/images/dokumanlar/0-81-201404088jeopolitikveturkiye.pdf> : [https://www.academia.edu/3512464/Jeopolitik\\_ve\\_T%C3%BCrkiye](https://www.academia.edu/3512464/Jeopolitik_ve_T%C3%BCrkiye)

“Eurasian Diary” and “Eurasia” in Paris. Lev Gumilev was one of the most important theorists for the Eurasianist intelligentsia. Gumilev believes that Turkish and Mongolian community are closer to Russian community, and in his theory Slavic, Turkic and Mongolian community are called “super ethnos”. Gumilev was against Eurocentrism, and believes that Europeans want to abolish others culture to create its own hegemony as a “universal culture”. Gumilev suggests that Russia should create its own Eurasian Union, instead of having a deep alliances with the Western states and, this suggested Eurasian Union is naturally against Catholic West, Vahhabi South, and China. Neo-Eurasianism is a geopolitical theory formulated by Aleksandr Dugin. Neorealist theory naturally adopts the Mackinder’s heartland in a first place after Siberia’s integration to Russia and secure its central power source as far as possible.<sup>12</sup> One of the most important facts of Dugin’s Neo- Eurasianism as a political theory is excluding Atlanticist states from this project i.e Turkey<sup>13</sup>. However, Turkish foreign politics after the 2016 failed coup attempt has radically changed. So, this event has put Turkey as a “potential Eurasian” to the first place for Eurasianist ideas. In his book “Russian Geopolitics and Eurasian Approach”, Dugin explained Turkey’s position for Eurasianism as<sup>14</sup> :

*“It is alleged that Turkey’s geopolitical roots has to be explored in Eurasian sources. This fact might form a significant basis to open a new page in Russia - Turkey relations. As a result of American - centric new world order ‘s threat must force us to transform as fast as possible”*

Neo-Eurasianism has made a respectable number of followers in Turkish domestic politics after the 1990s. The terminology of “Eurasianism” in Turkey was published in 1995 in a Labor parties’ political magazine “Teori” and accepted by the committee in 1996.<sup>15</sup> It can be said

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<sup>12</sup> Dugin, Aleksandr, 2004, Rus Jeopolitiği ve Avrasyacı Yaklaşım, translated by İmanov, Vügar, pp.1-2, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul, ISBN 9789756614129

<sup>13</sup> Yılmaz, Salih, 2015, “Yeni Avrasyacılık ve Rusya”, Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Researches, Spring 2015, Issue 34, pp.114, <http://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/452480>

<sup>14</sup> Dugin, Aleksandr, i.b.i.d pp.4

<sup>15</sup> Labor Party Essential Documents(İşçi Partisi Temel Belgeler), 1997, İşçi Partisi 15th edition: Sistem Ofset, pp:131

that first Neo-Eurasianist ideology of Turkey after the Cold War was owned by secular, secular and nationalist(ulusalcılar) groups' Labor Party (later the party name has changed to Vatan Partisi which means Homeland Party), run by Doğu Perinçek. Neo-Eurasianist ideas in Turkey has been separated into four main ideas according to Metin Gurcan, which are: Pro-Russian, Pan-Turkic, Pan-Islamist and Erdoganist Eurasianism ideas<sup>16</sup>.

Eurasia, a competitive sub-region where Turkey, Russia and Iran located, should cooperate against outsiders for the survival and for this cooperation can come from strong theoretical background, leadership and teamwork. For now, Turkey has fluctuating relations between Russia and Iran because of its deep relations with the Western world since the 1950s (NATO, European Union candidacy etc.). Logically, if Turkey and Russia want to cooperate, they have to find a common background, which excludes imperial histories because both states were historical and political rivals. Therefore, geopolitical Eurasianism might be a suitable common background for both states. As it has been seen in the 8 - year - old Syrian Civil War, the most profitable sides of Russian and Turkish conflicts were neither Russia nor Turkey, but the European Union and the United States.

Cooperation in the Eurasian region will benefit the whole states in this sub-region. Also, Turkey and Russia's leadership, because of their geographical position that puts both states as a bridge between Eastern and the Western world, will be the most beneficial option for the Eurasianism. Without Turkey's or Russia's support, the Eurasian ideology will never be fulfilled because of the security and cultural issues. Today, geopolitically saying, Eurasia and the Middle East is the heartland, which puts the United States, Russia and China into the conflict to dominate the world politics. Turkey, Iran and India are also joining this conflict from time to time as well. Anatolia, Caucasus and Central Asian regions are crucial regions because of its natural sources, raw minerals and energy transit hubs.

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<sup>16</sup> Gurcan, Metin, 2017.05.17, The rise of the Eurasianist vision in Turkey, Online source, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/05/turkey-rise-of-euroasianist-vision.html> (21.11.2018)



To support this thesis that strongly suggests Turkey change its geopolitical approach and establish geopolitical relations with Russia, Samuel Huntington's remarks about Turkey and Russia as "torn" states (including Mexico and Australia)<sup>17</sup>. According to Huntington, torn states' cultural identity, history and traditions are non-West, however, their leaders are bandwagoning these states to western values. So it is easy to point that these torn states like Turkey or Russia, can not be fully integrated into western homogeneity according to their identical and historical background. According to Huntington, these torn states must modernize themselves just like Japan did; integrating themselves to their pure culture.

## 2- THE EVOLUTION OF GEOPOLITICS IN THE REGION

Since the Cold War finished with the Soviet Union's collapse, the values of Eurasia have been reconsidering geopolitically and geostrategically and as a result of these approaches, new geopolitical and geostrategic positions have been approaching. Historically, the Middle East and Anatolia - regions, where Turkey exists today, are two of most significant positions of the political history, have been a centre of affection because of its geopolitical and geostrategic positioning attracted World's superpowers. Looking through the historical agenda, Alexander the Great invaded this region to compound Hellenism and Middle Eastern cultural society, and Genghis Khan invaded this region to reach his dream; old - world domination. More examples from history, including Napoleon to Churchill might be added to this list, but the fate of these

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<sup>17</sup> Huntington, Samuel, 1993, *Clash of Civilization?* Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993, pp. 22-49  
<https://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/Religion/Fac/Adler/Politics/Huntington-Clash.htm>

emperors and invaders were the same: These attempts have been ended up with disappointment for outsiders. In recent years especially after Soviet Union's collapse and Cold War has been finished, which naturally caused a geopolitical gap in this and neighbouring regions, states that wanted to fulfil this power gap created new drafts to dominate the region in favour of their interests.

Even though geopolitical theories are based on unfinished signs of progress and need to evolve by changing dynamics, the main norm of a target of geopolitics remains: dominating the region/world. The main aim of this chapter is to understand how Turkey has become one of the most important hotspots torn between Eastern versus Western geopolitical approaches historically. The significant part of this chapter that will add some value to this thesis is to find Turkey's geopolitical tendencies historically to understand how it is affecting on its geopolitical approaches to increase its influence in its political basin until 2016. Also, this chapter will include classical geopolitical theories focused on the heartland and their evolution. Despite the fact that geopolitical epicentres might be changeable, Turkey has always been in or bordering position of the Eurasian heartland because of its geographical position. This geographical location of Turkey in the region that makes its position very important, most theorists including Davutoğlu have made a significant error: being located between the East and West leaves Turkey not having "safe-spot". Turkey must stay in one political camp or diversify its crucial security tools to keep itself balancing both sides. However, Davutoğlu's approach is considered inconsistent by the meaning of today's geopolitical theories, because, power of international organizations are much more important in geopolitics instead of state power in today's agenda<sup>18</sup>. This chapter will examine the history of geopolitical theories in the region with Turkey's important position in geopolitics. This chapter will include geopolitical approaches of Turkey until 2016 failed coup attempt to examine Turkey's struggle in the region belonging to western camp after the cold war. This chapter is significant to understand why Turkish geopolitics should

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<sup>18</sup> Akter, Ahmet, 2016 April, *Orta Doğu Bağlamında Jeopolitik Teorilere Bir Katkı*, The Magazine: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı 221st ed. Pp 7  
[https://www.academia.edu/25604565/ORTA\\_DOĞU\\_BAĞLAMINDA\\_JEOPOLİTİK\\_TEOİRERE\\_BİR\\_KATKI](https://www.academia.edu/25604565/ORTA_DOĞU_BAĞLAMINDA_JEOPOLİTİK_TEOİRERE_BİR_KATKI)

be dynamic between both camps theoreticized by Davutoğlu's strategic depth theory. However, this thesis counters the idea of late imperial geopolitics of Davutoğlu's doctrine, that informally suggests Neo-ottomanism in the geographical basin that will make Turkey reach its geopolitical targets. Even though he refused he is Eurasianist, the discourse analysis of Davutoğlu proves that his strategic depth politics are actually influenced by classic Eurasianism, which named Turkey as a "central state". However, instead of one - state-centric, multi-headed options would work for this geopolitical approach.

This chapter will investigate where Turkey belongs to by essentials of geopolitics throughout history. The history part will reiterate the importance of Turkey's geopolitical and geostrategic positions for geopolitical theories. Also, Turkey's "forced" partnership with the West until the 9/11 twin towers will be examined as neorealism's key aspect: Survival. The need of the shift from Atlanticist camp to Neo-Eurasianist agenda's reason lies behind the United States' new Middle East agenda named The Greater Middle East Plan, which aims to create "moderate political Islam", which led to create Gulen movement (later on, it has been named as FETÖ, Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü/ Fethullahist Terrorist Organization) that is behind the failed coup attempt in Turkey in 2016 to keep and increase its regional and geopolitical interests in Middle East, which currently lies into the heartland of the World Island. Since Turkey shifted to the West and Westernization period started against Soviet threat in the 1940s as a nature of geopolitics and realism which puts nation's interests to the first side, the same reflex to the Neo-Eurasianist agenda should be used to preserve Turkey's domestic and regional integrity according to this thesis. On the other hand, Turkish geostrategic and political methods after the 9/11 terror attack are lacking in finding the roots of Turkey according to this thesis. These geopolitical approaches suggest the fact that possible geopolitical survival of Turkey but, risks that Turkey could be facing are underestimated or ignored by most authors and theorists. As a result of this chapter, how radical shift from Western to Eastern sources might help Turkey's geopolitical position preserved against the "moderate Islam trap" created by the United States.

## 2.1 TURKEY'S BRIEF HISTORY OF GEOPOLITICS UNTIL THE COLD WAR

After the age of discovery, geopolitical approaches have been separated into two main ideas; naval domination and heartland domination. Since we are advancing to the new age, there is air domination, and even space domination works in academia. However, this thesis concerns with classical approaches of geopolitics which are based on land and/or naval domination of states. In classical geopolitical approaches, pivotal positions are dynamic, and their owners might change by time. Throughout history, geopolitical epicentres were in Asia, the Middle East, and/or in Europe. However, after geographical explorations, epicentres of power have separated into two main dimensions as Adam Smith stated in 1776:<sup>19</sup>

*“ Discovery of America and the Cape of Good Hope are most important discoveries of the humankind. These two explorations have changed trade routes and balance of power forever.”*

Modelski's world leadership cycle approach also supports Adam Smith's statement. The era when the Ottoman Empire controlled over Arabian peninsula and Egypt and trade routes between the East and the West made the Empire having their Golden Age. However, as a result of the age of discovery, advancements throughout naval technology and Portuguese victory over the Indian ocean<sup>20</sup>, the new world leader became Portugal in 16th century<sup>21</sup>. According to this cycle worlds leaders were Portugal in 16th, the Netherlands in 17th, Great Britain in 18th and 19th and the United States in 20th century.<sup>22</sup> Modelski theorized his world leadership cycle after

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<sup>19</sup> Grygiel, Jakub, 2006, *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change*, The Johns Hopkins University Press pp.40, Baltimore

<sup>20</sup> Grygiel, i.b.i.d pp.41-43

<sup>21</sup> Akter, Ahmet, i.b.i.d pp 18

<sup>22</sup> Flint. I.b.i.d pp.37

the age of discovery. However, of course, there were leading powers before the discovery and most of these superpowers gained their leadership by keeping Anatolia and/or the Middle Eastern heartland, for example: Hittites, Persians, Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great, Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Umayyad Dynasty , Mongolian Empire of Genghis Khan, Seljuk Empire, Ottoman Empire etc. The common point of these empires is simple: All of them were terrestrial empires before Portuguese leadership in the 16th century, and after Portuguese leadership, World's superpowers were naval powers. Even though there were conflicts in the ocean to be a World's superpower, conflicts in the Eurasian steppes did not stop. In the late 19th century, the Ottoman Empire and Tsardom of Russia conflicts were ongoing to dominate the old world. Also, the Great Game between the British Empire and Tsardom Russia in Afghanistan made Mackinder to create "heartland" theory(Edwards, 2003). Despite the fact that the heartland theory is originated by British sources, Russia is credited from this theory to secure its soil to keep its pivotal position between the East and West.

During World War II, which were first signals of Soviet threat to the Western world, Spykman created the Rimland theory, which suggests surrounding heartland to dominate the world. Turkey, one of the bordering states of the Soviet Union and one of the biggest rivals of Russia historically, has benefited from the Western side of the multipolar world order between the United States and the Soviet Union. Even though Turkish and Western relations were tested in Cyprus peace op of Turkey in 1974, Turkey faced an embargo and left NATO's military wing until 1980.<sup>23</sup>

When the Soviet Union collapse, current geopolitical trends have become incoherent. The power gap due to Soviet collapse also forced traditional geopolitical theories to change or evolve. Mackinder's heartland is no longer unified, and Spykman's rimland theory which was formulated to counter the heartland theory to surround the Soviet Union, also collapsed<sup>24</sup>.The

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<sup>23</sup> Kasim, Kamer, 2007, *Soğuk Savaş Dönemi Sonrası Kıbrıs Sorunu Cyprus Question Following the Cold War Era* Akademik Bakış magazine c:1 s:1 pp:3 <http://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/74040> (12.12.2018)

<sup>24</sup> Akter, Ahmet, pp. 4

reason these theories collapsed was simple: These theories were built on a term “power” which should be used as a tool to secure the state, not as a target to reach according to neorealist school. To fulfil this geopolitical gap in the region left from the former Soviet Union, Dugin has formulated Neo- Eurasianism theory which is a successor term of Eurasianism, that adapts geopolitical theme into it, which originally was socio-political Euroscepticism based ideology that believes Russia belongs neither East nor West<sup>25</sup>. The United States crowned as an unchallenged superpower, and geopolitically, there were power gaps in former Soviet landmass. These power gaps as a result of new states and Chinese, Indian and Japanese independent foreign agendas have made rimland theory disintegrated as well.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, at the start of the 1990s, the scenarios and projects that we have already been stressing us out. Francis Fukuyama’s the End of History(1989), Samuel Huntington’s Clash of Civilization (1992), Zbigniew Brzezinski’s Great Chessboard(1997) etc were giving clues of conflicts and trends that will change or transform World Politics and economy in the 21st century. The new trend that was named “New World Order” stresses that not only nation-states but also media, international organizations and alliances will be active in modern worlds geopolitical agenda. Especially in the Eurasian heartland, the geopolitical and geostrategic gap that caused by USSR’s sub- geographic system, as Brzezinski calls this location “black hole”<sup>27</sup> was tried to be fulfilled by Anglosaxon-Atlanticist seapower, the United States. In this era the only superpower, the United States used its unchallenged power over United Nations in the first Gulf War, and over NATO in Bosnian crisis. These power game and proactive foreign policy approaches of the United States has put itself to the “supervising state” position of the international arena.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Dugin, Aleksandr, n.d, *Avrasyacılık İdeolojisinin Kısaca Açıklanması*, <http://www.4pt.su/ka/node/1094>

<sup>26</sup> Akter, Ahmet, i.b.i.d pp.22

<sup>27</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 1997 (ed.2005) , *Great Chessboard (Büyük Satranç Tahtası)*, Translated by: Yelda Türedi, İstanbul, İnkılap Kitabevi, pp. 127.

<sup>28</sup> Davutoğlu,Ahmet, i.b.i.d pp.110

## 2.2- TURKEY FACES “NEW WORLD ORDER” AFTER THE COLD WAR

The Soviet Union collapsed, as it is perceived by Charles Krauthammer in 1990; the world politics has become “unipolar” and the United States was left as an “unchallenged superpower”<sup>29</sup> after a victory against communism. Since Russia is focusing on domestic politics as a result of reconstruction after the Soviet Union collapsed, there was no competition between the United States and Russia in the World Island. (Emeklier, 2010) The new world order that was ruled by the United States decided to focus in regions they could not reach during the Cold War: Central Asia and the Middle East.<sup>30</sup> First Gulf War might be an example for the new world orders geopolitical transformation of the United States in the early 1990s. Even though Turkey was in the pro-US coalition and finished in the victorious side but, the cost of war hit Turkey harder than the United States because of increased oil prices, more than 500 000 refugees and increased ethnic terrorism in the southeastern region<sup>31</sup>.

After the Soviet Union collapse in the 1990s, Turkey has shown an interest in Eurasia. According to ethnocultural and religious mutualities, Turkish approach to Central Asia was also significant for the United States’ Central Asian policies in between 1990s-2000s. In fact, during The Greater Central Asia (GCA) project, the United States portrayed Turkey as the most important state for this project<sup>32</sup> and built its diplomatic relations with the Caucasus and Central Asian states via Turkey. Naturally, between 1990 and early 2000s due to the American - centric Eurasian politics, Turkey and the Russian Federation had hostile relations because of the regional rivalry between them. However, after 2002, when the AK Party (AKP, Justice and Development Party) took over the government, relations with Russia has turned from rivalry to cooperation. In

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<sup>29</sup> Krauthammer, Charles, 1990, “The Unipolar Moment” Foreign Affairs, Vol. 70, No. 1, America and the World 1990/91 (1990/1991), pp. 24, 1990

<sup>30</sup> *Dünya Jeopolitiği ve Türkiye*, i.b.i.d : pp.67-68

<sup>31</sup> Duman, Çağdaş, 2017 April 7, *1.Körfez Savaşı*, TASAM online articles [http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/40063/1\\_korfez\\_savasi](http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/40063/1_korfez_savasi) (11.11.2018)

<sup>32</sup> Tulepbergenova Gulsana , 2009

<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/v/the-greater-central-asia-project-present-state-and-evolution>

this era, Putin and Erdoğan' s close characters and friendship has paved the way for Turkish alternative foreign politics. In the era between 2002 and 2015, while Russia was trying to revive the Eurasian Economic Community, Turkey founded "Turkish Council" to reach the Central Asian Turkic States.

### 2.3-GEOPOLITICAL RIPTIDE OR OPPORTUNITY? TURKEY'S STRUGGLES AFTER 9/11

The first European and Turkish discrepancy at the end of the Cold War started in 1989. Turkey led by Turgut Ozal applied to full membership of the European Economic Community in 1987 and got "delayed" in the resolution 2290 (89(SEC), Brussels, December 20, 1989), that shortly says "Neither the EEC, nor Turkey is ready for this integration. This application must be stalled until the right time"<sup>33</sup> .

One of the most important topics that concern Turkey is this: NATO was established for collective defence against the Soviet Union<sup>34</sup> ,the Union collapsed, so there was no common enemy for the alliance, so who is going to be the next enemy? The answer just showed up after the 9/11 terror attack: Radical Islamism.The symbolic issue of turnabout of the multipolar world order was 9/11 terrorist attack to the twin towers. After this attack, the United States' geopolitical and geostrategic positions in the Middle East (Iraq, specifically) and Central Asia (Afghanistan, specifically) were questioned.<sup>35</sup> As a result of this turbulence of the United States in the region; Russia, China, India, Japan and the European Union had strategic expansions in

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<sup>33</sup> Birand, Mehmet Ali, 2003 September 18, Hürriyet newspaper "*AB 89'da Türkiye'yi Neden Reddetmişti*", <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ab-89-da-turkiye-yi-neden-reddetmisti-171843> (13.12.2018)

<sup>34</sup> Office of the Historian, United States archive, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato> 28.10.2018

<sup>35</sup> İlhan, Suat, 1997, "Jeopolitik Gelişmelerin Yönü (Türklerin Yörüngesindeki Dünya'da Yeni Unsurlar), Yeni Türk Dünyası özel sayısı, cilt 3, sayı: 15



this region right after a terrorist attack to twin towers. So naturally, these states became a global strategic opponent of the United States by this time. This turnabout of multipolar world order became even more complex when regional players including Turkey, Iran, Brazil, Venezuela etc. joined into this transformation. The new round of the “New-old world order” that has more actors, more epicentres and dynamical axis’ geopolitical, geoeconomic and geostrategic epicentre has shifted from Atlantic to Pacific (West to the East), and geopolitical power conflicts have shifted to Afro-Eurasia (Africa-Eurasia axis) as a result of the importance of energy source and routes<sup>36</sup>.

Concordantly, Russia, United States and China’s geopolitical conflicts in the Black Sea, Caucasus and Central Asian triangles’ epicentered Eurasian geography, is more meaningful because of the importance of the region of energy sources and routes. While these three states were having their “2nd Great Game” in this triangle, regional players of this triangle e.g Turkey, Iran, Ukraine, Georgia etc. create their own geopolitical and geostrategic theories to secure/expand their regional influence. In addition, Asian powers; India and China’s geopolitical conflicts against the United States in the African region might tell us the future’s global emperors key region to influence is Afro - Eurasian heartland.<sup>37</sup>

After the 9/11 and emerging powers’ geopolitical threats in the Afro-Eurasian heartland against United States’ interests due to the reason that mentioned above, the term “The Great Middle Eastern Plan” was implemented<sup>38</sup>. The simplification of this plan is to prevent global extremist terrorism from the Middle East by creating a “new type of Islam”. This plan first appeared from the RAND’s publication named; “Civil Democratic Islam; Partners, Resources,

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<sup>36</sup> Eslen, Nejat, 2008 , “Çok Kutuplu Düzen” , Cumhuriyet pp.3  
[www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/28434/Cok\\_kutuplu\\_duzen.html#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/28434/Cok_kutuplu_duzen.html#) (18.12.2018)

<sup>37</sup> Dugin, Aleksandr (translated by Vügar İmanov), i.b.i.d pp.17

<sup>38</sup> Günal, Altuğ, n.d, Büyük Ortadoğu Projesi ve Türkiye, pp.157  
<http://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/556861>

and Strategies” in 2003. According to this plan, the creation of “moderate political Islam” is the key to prevent terrorism that targets the Western world. By this motivation, the Gulen Movement which attempted and failed the coup d’etat in 2016, (the organization was named after FETÖ, Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü/ Fethullahist Terrorist Organization after 2015<sup>39</sup>) was embraced by Western Sources.

This revisitation can be considered as Turkish seek for diversification in three key aspects of politics: foreign politics, economy and security. This diversification seeking can be explained as a hostile Turkish - the United States and European Union relations through the Arab spring, especially through Syrian civil war. The critical thinking in this chapter is that because of the number of domestic actors in Turkish Eurasianism. In this work, the main focus will be Turkish Eurasianism in general and its relations with Russian Eurasianism after the given year. Since the work covers Eurasianism itself on Turkish sources, different fractures of the idea will not change the general data. As one of the As a result of the chapter, the question “What/who are the domestic drivers of Eurasianism in Turkey?” and roots of the Eurasianist Turkey will be examined to open the case. Even though the Eurasian approach has widely been adopted in Turkish political nature recently, the Turkish view on Eurasianism after the Soviet Union’s collapse, used to be mostly pragmatism related and has a weak theoretical background by the meaning of geopolitics(Danforth, 2008) until the failed coup attempt in 2016. Even though the Turkish approach on Western organizations are close (NATO, EU Membership, etc.), economic and security relations with Russia have ranked even higher than before. However, the EU is still the largest market for the Turkish economy.

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<sup>39</sup> Presidency of Turkey, pp.26 [https://www.tccb.gov.tr/assets/dosya/15Temmuz/onsorudafeto\\_tr\\_en.pdf](https://www.tccb.gov.tr/assets/dosya/15Temmuz/onsorudafeto_tr_en.pdf)

In the first chapter of the work, what Eurasianism term is and its evolution in Russian and Turkish societies after 1990s will be examined to understand the role of domestic actors to impose Eurasianism and search for its political “wing” in Turkish domestic policy agenda and its affiliations with Russia. This chapter could give clues about Turkish Russian relations over Eurasianism and how domestic drivers prepared the Eurasianist shift process until 2016. This chapter could help to understand how the Eurasianist ideas have taken action after the collapse of the Soviet Union in Turkey. T. The idea of Eurasianism was also not on the program of the Soviet Union. However, just before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the idea of Eurasianism has appeared once again on the political agenda of the Russian Federation and Turkey after the 1990s. During that time, Dugin’s idea of “Neo-Eurasianism” has been published, and he became a senior advisor of the Duma’s chairman Gennady Seleznev in 1998. This helped Dugin to spread his ideas and projects of Neo-Eurasianism.

As a result of the Western bloc got the “power” after the Cold War according to sources above, Turkish integration into the alliance is “useless” in practice according to its interests in the region. To add, since “the evil” was defeated, there was no common “enemy” to counter. Despite the fact that there are fluctuations in Turkish relations with the West, the failed coup attempt in July 2016, has made a breakthrough to change the perception of the “West” in Turkey’s foreign policy decision making bodies. Even though Oktay Tanrısever refers Turkish shift to Eurasianism are guided by the pragmatic/ tactical approach to get attention from its western partners (Tanrısever, 2018), the foreign policy decision-making dynamics of Turkey has permanently shifted itself to multipolar order and rapprochement talks with Russia have been accelerated.

## 2.4- “STRATEGIC DEPTH” THEORY: A CRITIC TO THE LATE IMPERIALIST GEOPOLITICAL APPROACH OF TURKEY

*Turkey either to create its own dynamic axis of civilization, accepting its risks, or following other civilizations' axis and lose its all character and prestige.*

This quotation of Davutoğlu from his book Strategic Depth might be reminding us of a famous proverb: “Deepest point sets us for higher jumps”. However, this can be inspiring for the literature or our personal lives. When the topic comes to diplomacy, falling to the deep might cause deadly results. Third world countries, which follow more static and stable foreign political agendas might be more advantageous because, the multidimensional diplomacy, which mostly it seemed like an advantageous phase in foreign politics, could be failed if dynamic politics e.g shuttle diplomatics’ “pleasing all sides” fantasy. In the end, the balance might be lost and “zero problems” might evolve to “full of problems”.

Neo-Ottomanism’s pre-ideological assumption indicates that there are an identity and a culture which are different from other cultures and identities of the heartland. This assumption is explained in the Strategy depth following<sup>40</sup>:

*-“Political culture of Turkey is strongly diversified than Western Europe and American societies.”*

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<sup>40</sup> Davutoğlu, i.b.i.d, pp 14

*-”The essential difference that makes Turkey lying on the different axis must be explored in two static variables: history and geography. These two static variables effect on the meaning of psychological and sociological factors of political nature and international relations dynamism.”*

*-”The most important historical factor that diversifies Turkey’s political culture is; being a successor of long living civilization that controls one of the most important intersections of the heartland.”*

*-”The crucial stipulation of having a rich strategic atmosphere of thoughts is; having a common sense of “belongingness” to the strong history and sociocultural essentials.*

According to Davutoğlu’s doctrine, there are two different scenarios for Turkey: Turkey either to create its own dynamic axis of civilization, accepting its risks, or following other civilizations’ axis and lose its all character and prestige. So, according to his theory, Turkey has to follow its geographical and historical depth to create its own proactive sphere of influence zone. Ultimately, as geopolitical theories are used as a “tool” to secure interests, Ahmet Davutoğlu’s foreign policy suggests Turkey increase its dynamism in the region to influence neighbouring states.<sup>41</sup>

The multi dimensional geopolitical theoretical concept of Turkish sources has found a place in the governing body of the state in the early 2000s. Evidently, Turkish foreign policy after AKP(Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, or Justice and Development Party) has reshaped since Ahmet Davutoğlu’s “Strategic Depth” theory was adopted<sup>42</sup>, which quotes Turkish foreign policy “refuses to be a bridge state”(Davutoglu,2001). In the light of these pieces of information from his doctrine and political agenda, even though he refuses, Davutoğlu’ s strategic depth doctrine was accepted as “local or regional Eurasianist” and/or “Neo - Ottomanist” by academia. This

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<sup>41</sup> Davutoğlu, Ahmet , i.b.i.d pp.117

<sup>42</sup> Akcan Mustafa, 2016, Report: “Değerlendirme Notu” , “Toplumcu Düşünce” Institute [toplumcudusunceenstitusu.org/pdf/mustafa-akcan-yazisi-230516-pdf-778.PDF](http://toplumcudusunceenstitusu.org/pdf/mustafa-akcan-yazisi-230516-pdf-778.PDF)

refusal might be refuted by his own words. Despite the fact that Davutoğlu's doctrine is considered as a "Neo-Ottomanist" by most authors because of the critic to former geopolitical theories of Kemalism and Panturkist geopolitical ideas, the notion "neo-Ottomanism" has never been officially recognized. As his famous book "Strategic depth" he points that a central state with optimal geopolitical importance cannot define itself in a defensive manner, which puts Turkey to the centre of the dynamic global agenda. This theory most important remark is putting Balkan states' as a heartland<sup>43</sup> to secure the Turkey and Turkish sphere of influence in the East. The doctrine Davutoğlu suggests might seem as Eurasianist, but he suggests to put Turkey to the centre of the heart and he believes that fluctuating relations between Eastern and Western bloc which theoretically opportunist, but practically impossible because it has a big risk that can leave Turkey in a position without safe spot. This issue happened between 2013 and 2016, uncertain and unstable foreign relations left Turkey in "precious loneliness" era<sup>44</sup> which left Turkey "friendless" and indirectly caused SU 24 crisis with Russia in 2015, and failed coup attempt in 2016. The term mentioned above "central state" was announced in a booklet named "Turkish Foreign Policy with responsibility and vision in 2014" in Davutoğlu's Foreign ministry era in 2014. This booklet refers that political, economic and geopolitical balancing powers are in radical change, and Turkey is in the middle of the chaos which is either opportunity or chaos. As it is understood in this citation, Turkey is presented as a "central state". However, answers of "how Turkey canalize other actors? Or how does Turkey set its own new central order?" are unknown and untold in this booklet.

"Zero problems with neighbours" policy which also was introduced by Davutoğlu, has actually been integrative neighbouring policy because of the old defensive idea which portrays "Turkey is surrounded by enemies". Fundamentally, Ahmet Davutoğlu tried this policy in his era however, domestic factors, lack of proactive diplomacy and misreading the foreign policy made this policy from "zero problems with neighbours" to "zero neighbours". To give a brief example; it is impossible to have zero problems policy between country A and country B separately while

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<sup>43</sup> Yeşiltaş Murat, n.d, "Stratejik Derinlik'in Jeopolitik Tahayyülü",

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/dis-politikada-degerli-yalnizlik-donemi-24553602>

country A and B has deep conflict or issues with each other. It is not wise to ignore Azerbaijan's concerns during "football diplomacy" era with Armenia because, it put relations with Azerbaijan to the risk zone, while relations with Armenia was uncertain. The risk factor in "central country" doctrine of Davutoğlu might be seen as "risky and non - rigid" and this foreign politics agenda made Turkey "untrusted neighbour" in the region.

## 2.5- EURASIANIST REMARKS IN DAVUTOĞLU'S SPEECH

Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu earned his fame in his book: "Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position" which firstly was published in 2001. This book impressed strong elites and public opinion and started to transform Turkish foreign political agenda. As mentioned, in the book Davutoğlu points out that economic and political stability might make Turkey as a central state, which would keep the Middle East stable with its historical and geopolitical leadership. Davutoğlu's strategic depth concept has two important aspects: Geopolitics and Cultural inheritance. According to Davutoğlu, these two aspects are one of the most important aspects that make Turkey different than its neighbours.<sup>45</sup> Even though he refuses, Davutoğlu's strategic depth agenda has been inspired by Eurasianism and Neo - Ottomanism and this doctrine are a mix of both ideologies. With his couple of speeches, the Strategic depth policy might be proven as a pragmatic mix of Eurasianism and Neo Ottomanism.

First Speech: On November 24 2009, Davutoğlu has a speech below:

"The United States Former President Clinton asked me why Turkey is actively dealing with the regional problems; I answered back, 'If we draw a circle with a diameter of 1000 km around Turkey and 20 states will fall into it. If we draw one with a diameter of 3000 km and 70 states will fall within. If we would draw a similar circle around the United States, how many

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<sup>45</sup> Davutoğlu Ahmet, Keynote Speech, Turkey's Foreign Policy in a Changing World: Old Alignments and New Neighbourhoods, International Conference, Oxford University, 30 April – 02 May 2010, s. 9

states would be into that? Of course, Turkey will continue dealing with the problems of our neighbours.”<sup>46</sup>

As this speech shows, Turkey is following a foreign politics that counters with European ethnic-based nationalism and suggests states care without Eurocentric ideas that separate people into religion, race, language, social status etc. So, Davutoğlu’s approach might seem like a Eurasianist in this phase. However, his expression “yes I am Neo-Ottoman as well” which was refused after the speech<sup>47</sup>, shows us that he refuses to name his doctrine for a reason.

Eurasianist discourse praises about Russia’ s geographical position a lot because of its location and uniqueness. According to Trubetskoy, the zone Russia has been located in a different continent and this continent is called “Eurasia”. In this sense, Eurasia is not only a geographical but also an anthropological zone.<sup>48</sup> The second discourse of Davutoğlu tells us about the geographical importance of Eurasia and in this speech tell us about Turkey’ s location and geographical uniqueness.

*“Among all these classifications, Turkey holds a special position. Turkey’s geography gives it a specific central country status, which differs from other central countries. For example, Germany is a central country in Central Europe, which is far from Asia and Africa. Russia is another central country in the lands of Europe and Asia, which is far from Africa. Iran is a central country in Asia, which is far from Europe and Africa. Taking a broader, global view, Turkey holds an optimal place in the sense that it is both an Asian and European country and is also close to Africa through the Eastern Mediterranean. A central country with such an optimal geographic location can not define itself in a defensive manner. It should be seen neither as a*

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<sup>46</sup> Speech: <https://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/yeni-osmanliyiz-26820h.htm>

<sup>47</sup> Davutoglu , Ahmet , 2009 Speech , Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey  
[http://www.mfa.gov.tr/h\\_-e\\_-ahmet-davutoglu-at-24-november-2009-in-tripoli.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/h_-e_-ahmet-davutoglu-at-24-november-2009-in-tripoli.en.mfa)

<sup>48</sup> Aktaran, Wiederkehr, 2007 , ‘Forging a Concept: ‘Eurasia’ in Classical Eurasianism’, Annual Soyuz Symposium at Princeton University, pp.1



*bridge country which only connects two points, nor a frontier country nor indeed as an ordinary country, which sits at the edge of the Muslim world or the West.”<sup>49</sup>*

Essentially, even though Davutoğlu does not put Turkey in one special position with a special name e.g “Eurasia” but, he praised Turkey’s geographical and geopolitical position, which was just like the 1920s and 1930’s classical Eurasianist theorists. Similar to classic Eurasianist intelligentsia created an important mission to Russia, Davutoğlu puts a crucial mission for Turkey because of its geographical position, which put Europe and Asia together. Even though Davutoğlu has some kind of similar version of Eurasianism, his foreign agenda was more into neo - Ottomanism, which tries to put Turkey to the “centre”, which also was criticized in this thesis.

Lastly, during a discourse on February 4, 2010, Davutoğlu had even an idea about creating a Union in the Eurasian region following :

*“Eurasia has been passing through a very critical threshold and a new vision is a must in evaluating the region. The very first step is that uncertainties must be removed and political dialogue should be improved. Secondly, the Eurasian region is a region where international economic politics takes shape; if it is neglected, the EU, Chinese or Indian economic bases cannot interact with one another. Ankara favours activating dialogue channels on the highest*

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<sup>49</sup> Davutoğlu Ahmet, 2007, Turkey’s Foreign Policy Vision ; an assessment of 2007 (online source) <http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/ahmet-davutoglu-turkeys-foreign-policy-vision-an-assessment-of-2007.pdf> 01.04.2019

*level and establishing permanent mechanisms as exemplified by recent Turkish-Russian plans to establish a high-level strategic council... We would like to see more political dialogue and more political cooperation. No country can live isolated. There is a need for more integration and more dialogue when there is a problem. We want to spread our policy of zero problems and maximum cooperation with neighbours to Eurasia... We need to remove the barriers between us. People should move freely. Currently, Turkey and Russia are working on lifting visa requirements for each other's citizens... We want such an approach in Eurasia based on self-confidence, political dialogue and economic interaction. We see the fate of this region as our fate and as the fate of humanity.* <sup>50</sup>

As it is clear to say that Davutoğlu has a similar approach with classic Eurasianist ideologues. However, the romantic approach of Davutoğlu's Neo- Ottomanist ideology is the biggest obstacle for creating the central state. Because the world system has no historical fantasies or romance but a realist and rational choices for national survival.

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<sup>50</sup> CIHAN News Agency, 4 February 2010 , "Davutoğlu Avrasya Birliği Önerdi"  
<https://www.haberler.com/davutoglu-avrasya-birligi-onerdi-haberi/>

### 3- FAILED COUP ATTEMPT : MOST IMPORTANT SIGNAL FOR THE TURKISH EASTWARD SHIFT

Turkey faced a failed coup attempt set by FETO (Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü) on July 15, 2016, and thousands of people resisted against the coup with the call of Erdoğan in that night. (Aslan, 2016) As a result of this heinous event, approximately 250 people lost their lives and more than 2000 people were wounded (Dalay, 2016). After the coup attempt, the first foreign support to Turkish government was Russia. However, the European Union, an organization Turkey is in negotiation for years, showing its support after the coup attempt was repressed, and this lack of support has started new problems between Turkey and the European Union (Alemdar 2016). For example, after the coup attempt, re-legalizing capital punishment was on Turkish domestic politics, and President Erdogan announced that he would approve this law if the parliament approves and send this law to him. (Cagatay, Jeffrey, 2016) In return of this speech, the EU body pointed out that the accession deal will be damaged if Turkey will approve capital punishment. For example; head of the European Commission, Jean Claude Juncker said that if Turkey will re-legalize capital punishment, Turkish membership talks will finish. Therewith, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu answered Juncker that the European Union's

concerns about the death penalty were unnecessary concerns and Turkey's efforts to be a full member of the union for years. Although Turkey's membership efforts are continuing for years, the Union has not taken a concrete step for this and as a result of this, two - out of - three of Turkish people support for cutting membership relations with the European Union (Euractiv, 2016). Next day of the coup attempt, in 16th of July, 2016, Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Vice President of the EU Commission, and Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations gave a speech about this failed coup attempt. The coup attempt has been strongly condemned by them and pointed out that the EU shows its support to the Turkish democratic body (Lecha, 2016). After this speech from the European Union, speaker of the Turkish presidency, İbrahim Kalın concerned about weak Western support, while Turkey was expecting more from their strategic partners (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2016).

### 3.1- EURASIAN REVIVAL FOR TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AFTER FAILED COUP ATTEMPT

“ It is now clear: NATO now is not a security but the main threat source for Turkey. Separatist, radical, Vehhabi groups and their terror are based on one main source. Turkey's membership in NATO is now a national sovereignty problem “<sup>51</sup>

As the problems with the European Union has been doubled after the failed coup attempt, Turkey was on a search of brand new geopolitical approach. Multinational Eurasianism which put Turkey, Russia and Iran, historical rivals but forced partners due to the Western (United

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<sup>51</sup> Yorunge Magazine, Interview with Aleksandr Dugin, December 2017 ed.1 pp.1  
,[https://www.academia.edu/35338962/Aleksandr\\_Duginle\\_S%C3%B6yle%C5%9Fi\\_%C3%87%C3%B6z%C3%BCm\\_Ankara-Moskova-Tahran\\_Ekseni\\_\(10.05.2019\)](https://www.academia.edu/35338962/Aleksandr_Duginle_S%C3%B6yle%C5%9Fi_%C3%87%C3%B6z%C3%BCm_Ankara-Moskova-Tahran_Ekseni_(10.05.2019))

States) and Eastern(China) threats, into same geopolitical leadership. Especially after the failed coup attempt in Turkey, there has been an opportunity for Russia to expand its sphere of influence in Turkey. With nuclear plant, Turkstream hub and S-400 deals, Russia started increasing its cooperation on Turkish soil. Logically for a strong cooperative Eurasianism in the region, there might be key factors;

With Russian premise on “ sharing the influence “ on the region, Turkey might be more willing for the strong Eurasianist partnership. In this case, Turkey must change its Syrian approach, and accept Assad’s legacy in the region. That would also help Turkey to keep its territorial integrity and secure its southern borders from international terrorism, because of Western support of terrorist organization PKK’ s Syrian branch.

For Moscow, closer Turkey means breaking the international coalition against Assad. Despite both states projects in Syria are fundamentally different, both states are trying to find a common point. Syrian Peace Process in Astana might be a great example for both states’ willingness to find mutual interests in Syrian peace.

Since both states (Russia and Turkey) have had problematic relations with Western states (the United States and Europe), stuck both states together, which created huge potential for the new Eurasian Partnership. Especially, open western support to the PKK’s Syrian Branch in the name of fighting against DAESH, which ends up terrorist attacks from Northern Syria to Turkish soil, made Turkish new position more pro - Russian.

Beyond business, economic and touristic relations, there are mega - projects between both states that might turn Turkish and Russian relations into strategic partnerships. Russian made nuclear plants, Turkstream and S400 deal, which is one of the most important aspects by the meaning of domestic and regional security, have made Turkish geopolitical approach into a more Eastern agenda. S 400 deal is one of the most important projects because of Turkish

membership of NATO. NATO has been strongly against all defensive approach except Patriot missile systems.

Russian - Turkish rapprochement might be considered as a defensive approach after July 15 coup attempt. However, this issue has a deeper and more strategic position for the world

geopolitics. Geopolitical heartland is moving to Asia, and in this case, Turkey would be stuck in between 3 conflicting powers - Russia, United States, China - to keep domestic security from outer states and their proxies, especially western funded terrorist organizations, Turkey must diversify and replace its security elements and get closer to its historical rival, and today's forced partner, Russia.

In Putin's era, Post - Soviet Russia has changed its pro- European agenda to Eurasianist (Asia - centric) and decided to regain its Asian positions in this new geopolitical game. Also, due to the change of the modern geopolitics, Turkey should not give up its European relations and must create new sources in Eurasia with Russia's partnership as its similar geographical and geopolitical position according to Huntington's theory.

Even though there are closer relations between Russia and Turkey in today's politics, it is impossible to say that Turkish foreign politics are based on the Eurasianist agenda. Because, Turkey is still a member of NATO, which fundamentally conflicts with the Eurasianist agenda because of Atlanticism. Essentially, building relations with Russia due to the periodical confrontations with the West might not make the Eurasianist agenda healthy for both sides. By the meaning of security, the west still sees Turkey as a strategic obligation. So, the most important issue for Turkish foreign policy making is creating its unique agenda which embraces Eurasianism and grow apart from the western bloc. Having strong deals with Russia while being a member of NATO would make Turkey fall into the same mistake that left the "precious

loneliness period” in Davutoğlu’s era. Turkey definitely needs a strong Eurasian doctrine, which would make its regional and domestic presence even stronger. Instead of Davutoğlu’s “hybrid-ish Eurasianist, Neo-Ottomanist” doctrine, Turkey needs to create its modern Eurasianist position based on realism.

### 3.2- HOW CAN EURASIANISM BE WORKABLE THEORY FOR TURKEY?

Davutoğlu has opened a crucial way for Turkish Eurasianism, however, the problem of Davutoğlu’s death was being “central” state, which ignores big factors in the Eurasian region e.g Russia, Iran... Also, creating an alternative route for Turkish foreign policy under the membership of NATO and candidacy of EU creates an interdependence with the Western world and this might logically stop Turkey finding its own foreign policy agenda. July 15 failed coup attempt has indicated that traditional foreign policy actors for Turkey have lost their political ground in Turkish geopolitics, and Turkey needs a new secure place for itself to defend and survive in between world power clash for the new heartland, Middle East. After the coup attempt, the need for defensive and diversified foreign politics tool became a really critical factor for independent Turkey. Eurasianism, which first was introduced by Davutoğlu, even it is still critical because of its imperial fantasies, undone and unnamed theory. As it is evident, quitting NATO and/or discarding the membership candidacy of the European Union is only impossible. Despite there are unresolvable disagreements between Turkey and West, both side still needs each other, especially for regional security and economy. Rationally, Turkey needs Russia to

keep its Eurasianist sides more than Western support because of current security threats and geopolitical risks in the region because Turkey relatively secured itself from Russia thanks to NATO defensive military tools. However, the failed coup attempt show that coup plotters were refuelling their jets in Incirlik military base, which is still used by the United States<sup>52</sup>, who can secure Turkish sovereignty from their strategic partners? The answer is simple: Another strategic partner, Russia. Previous relations or approaches with Russia and/or Eurasia did not work well because of the lack of balance of Turkey. To create great balance, Turkey should apply for Commonwealth of Independent States, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and even Eurasian Economic Union. Turkey and Turkish public opinion believe that Turkey will not be a member of the European Union but, candidacy is a strategic move for the foreign policy. If Turkey will apply other organizations as well, the symmetrical diplomacy, instead of Davutoğlu's shuttle diplomacy would work better because of its realist agenda. As it is understandably rational that Turkey had a successful S-400 deal with Russia due to the Western informal embargo (F-35 and so on) after the failed coup attempt, Turkey might be more offensive to fulfil its benefits from both sides. Instead of peacemaking mission of Davutoğlu, aggressive movements to keep the symmetrical relations between East and the West can put Turkey in a safe zone for national sovereignty. Eurasianism, which actually is Russian right-wing ideology, should be adapted to Turkish foreign policy agenda because of its unique geopolitical position as Davutoğlu points out. However, the method of this foreign political agenda must be harder than Davutoğlu's appreciation of Ottomanism which logically counters neighbouring states, which were previously belonging to the Ottoman Empire and gained independence from the Empire. Modern Turkish Eurasianism should create its path in today's realpolitik, which might provide new and alternative routes for Turkish foreign politics.

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<sup>52</sup> Turkish Presidency, unknown date, Coup attempt timeline 21:30 : Fuel supply was given from Incirlik Air Base <https://15temmuzsehitleri.com/US/yakit-destegi-incirlik-ussunden-verildi-17167> (01.04.2019)



#### 4- FINDINGS - RESULT

Turkish foreign politics have always been in demand for the alternative due to its geopolitical place throughout history. As Turkey is a crucial state in the world island, Turkish geopolitical location has been dynamic throughout history. For example, while Turkey has been considered as a European State, other sources point out that Turkey is in the Middle East or Asia. Due to this dynamism, Turkish alternative foreign political agendas have been changing from time to time because of the national security affairs. To give an example; at the end of the Ottoman Empire unto today's modern Turkey, Turanism, (Neo)Ottomanism, Westernism, Islamism and/or Kemalism shaped doctrines have been introduced for performing its alternative attitude to design a secure position for Turkish foreign politics. In today's Turkish government, Davutoğlu's Neo - Ottomanist -even though he refuses-<sup>53</sup>, the doctrine has been applied as a national foreign political agenda. Davutoğlu's discourses, neo- Ottomanism ideology has Classic Eurasianist influence. However, his Eurasianist - ish ideas had been too centralized and refusing

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<sup>53</sup> Aras, Bülent, 2009, "*Davutoğlu's Turkey*" Insight Turkey vol. 11 no.3 pp.131

the geographical position, which naturally puts Turkey into the bridge position between the East and the West.

Turkey has been facing several foreign threats against its national sovereignty, especially after the failed coup attempt in 2016. Eastward shift, such as Modern Turkish Eurasianism might keep Turkish hegemony in the region with other regional powers. In contrast to Davutoğlu's "strategic depth" doctrine which was inspired by Classic Eurasianism, Turkey should accept its imperial past but should also accept there are other powers in the region like Russia and Iran, and cooperate with them against western imperialism.

Even though there is a decent rapprochement process between Turkey and Russia, it is impossible to say Turkey is currently following the Eurasianist agenda because of its dependency on the Western world economically. One of the biggest problematics of Turkish alternative foreign policy decision making progress is the asymmetrical approach which also makes Turkey more dependent to the west because of Turkish membership of NATO and candidacy of the European Union. In this thesis, Turkey's candidacy and even membership for CIS, SCO and even EEU to keep balance with Western organizations. This organizational politics can make Turkish balance position even stronger because, even though there are significant works on Turkish Eurasianism recently, there is still a lack of structure organizationally.

As it is impossible to quit all western values in one night, Turkey firstly should apply for Eastern equivalent for balance itself, then have a radical decision. As Davutoğlu's shuttle

diplomacies' failure because of its romantic background and zero problems with neighbours policy becomes zero neighbours policy, realist option for Turkish Eurasianism should be even stronger organizational positioning. Historically, Turkey, Russia and Iran are rivals but, the affected geopolitical risks from outsiders forced this hostile troika to cooperate. Instead of Davutoğlu's central state thesis, Turkey should cooperate even more with regional rivals to keep its security zone. As the United States declared Russia as a competitor in NSS 2017<sup>54</sup>, it is wise to say that Ankara's rapprochement with Moscow will be the event for both parties. Closer relations would execute both nations could settle protected in the world island. If this plan will be applied with written and tangible agreements, Turkey's geopolitical influence might be improved because of the political diversification.

As political realism's prominent element; national security, western world failed to keep their vital allies security, even armed and supported the main terrorist factions in the region, e.g separatist and Marxist PKK's Syrian branch, named YPG and FETO, a terrorist organization that has been run by an Islamic cleric who lives in the United States. Since Turkish security threats are indirect effects on Russia because of their projects in Syria, the cooperation between both states might secure both sides' influence in the Middle East.

As a result, since after the end of the Cold War, Turkey was in search for the new geopolitical dimension to keep its interests in Eurasian region. As new geopolitical trends in the world politics, an eastward shift for Turkey would be the best option to keep its sovereignty. After the coup attempt, Turkey and western world had irrevocable problems, because of Turkish common idea that this coup attempt was backed by the western states. Turkish Eurasianism, which would be based on realism, with the partnership with Russia because of similar geographical positions between the East and the West, might benefit both parties. However, Turkish membership of NATO and candidacy of the European Union are biggest obstacles for the deeper relations, or change of the foreign policy agenda. To solve this problematic, Turkey

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<sup>54</sup> The White House, 2017, National Security Strategy 2017 pp.2  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

should consider applying to be a partner or member of Eastern equivalents such as SCO , EEC and even CIS. With the perfect balance, Turkey could protect itself from outsiders in the upcoming geopolitical confrontations between the East and the West, e.g Arab Spring-ish events. As Turkey is considered as a torn state by Huntington's theory, the perception of "belonging nowhere" can be "belonging everywhere" with the political moves of applying to "the Eastern NATO and EU". For the peace and enhanced hegemony in the geopolitical sphere of influence, Turkey should follow the modern geopolitical tools: international organizations.

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