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THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY DURING THE AK PARTY**Chinara Gabil Safarova**

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Turkey's foreign policy during the period of the AK Party traditionally aimed at ensuring the country's security, protecting and developing national interests in a perspective that comes from history and extending into the future, and creating the necessary foreign resources for development and prosperity. The party aims to realize these goals by establishing good relations and establishing cooperation with all countries, especially neighbors, and contributing to international peace, stability, security and prosperity. The AK Party government, like other governments that came to power before it, focused on the importance of Georgia, which is Turkey's gateway to Central Asia and a 276-kilometer border neighbor. Therefore, relations between the two countries have begun to be reconsidered in accordance with socio-economic and political interests.

Keywords: Turkey, AK Party, Foreign policy, South Caucasus, Georgia

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INTRODUCTION

After the end of the Cold War, significant opportunities in Turkey's foreign policy were achieved after the AK Party came to power after 2002. These opportunities were enhanced by the achieved political stability and economic growth. In this way, Turkey was expected to realize the leap it could not make in the 1990s in foreign policy in the 2000s with new opportunities and a new vision. After coming to power, the Justice and Development Party has always tried to normalize relations with neighboring and regional states, as well as with powerful and interested countries. After coming to power, the Justice and Development Party has always tried to normalize relations with neighboring and regional states, as well as with powerful and interested countries. The Caucasus, which had little place in Turkey's foreign policy during the Cold War, became one of the important regions in terms of both energy and security after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Changes in Turkey's foreign policy have affected the existing relations with the South Caucasus and especially with Georgia. The leadership of the Justice and Development Party, which claims to have a different view on foreign policy than previous governments, managed to focus attention on Turkey with its active and sometimes ambitious foreign policy. Until the end of the last century, Turkey's foreign policy was shaped by apolitical bureaucratic elites and controlled by a constitutionally empowered military bureaucracy that limited the legislature [1, p. 53]. However, the radical changes experienced in the post-Cold War period also affected Turkey's foreign policy.

Especially, with the coming to power of the Party, the foreign policy activities of decision-making bodies without political responsibility were reorganized in accordance with the constitutional limits. The Justice and Development Party approached the processes taking place in the world with a more active policy concept, not only by demonstrating rhythmic diplomacy in foreign policy, but also shaped Turkey's security policy around a new foreign policy concept. The Party's 2007 Election Manifesto that freedom and security are not contradictory and the need to create a balance between the two concepts and the 2011 Election Manifesto emphasizing that freedom is indeed a means of living security proved this concept in domestic policy and new concepts in foreign policy [5, p. 134]. After



revealing the new concept of foreign policy, Turkey started new policy initiatives in the Caucasus and Central Asia within the framework of these perceptions, and was looking for ways to solve problems with the countries of the region. It can be said that Turkey, which strives for the stability of countries struggling with ethnic and political problems in the region, shapes its foreign and security policy around the perspective of "zero problems with neighbors" [6].

If we look at how Turkey's foreign policy was formed during the party's activity, the first noticeable feature was the effort to reflect the growth experienced in the economic and military fields to foreign policy. Especially, with the rapid development between 2003 and 2008, Turkey began to implement a more independent and active foreign policy. However, due to the World Economic Crisis in 2008-2009, the destabilization of the Middle East as a result of the Arab uprisings that started at the end of 2010, the Gezi Park Operations on May 28, 2013, the Turkey Bribery scandal on December 17-25, 2013, and the treacherous coup attempt organized on July 15, 2016, the scope of the party's activities in foreign policy was limited. But the Justice and Development party government moved to a more active foreign policy with the support of the nation standing behind these calls. The Georgian government also supported the Turkish government.

Thus, after the attempted coup on July 15, 2016, Georgian Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze met with the Turkish ambassador in Tbilisi and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlud Çavuşoğlu and showed their support to the Turkish government. Immediately after these meetings, Georgian President Giorgi Marvelashvili made a statement and stated that they support the democratically elected Turkish government. Prime Minister of Georgia Kvirikashvili stated that stability in Turkey, which is a strategic partner, is very important for them. After all these statements, immediately after the July 16 coup attempt, the Georgian side closed its land border and air borders with Turkey for security reasons. These steps of Georgia should not be evaluated only in terms of strategic partnership and border neighborhood. Important economic partnership with Ankara and great support from Turkey played an important role in Georgians taking such a step. Moreover, peace, stability and democracy in Turkey are vital for Georgia. All these are important factors in Georgia's relations with Turkey. It should also be noted that Georgia is another important ally of Turkey in the Caucasus as well as Azerbaijan.

MAIN PART

The internal situation in Georgia when the Justice and Development Party came to power

Shevardnadze was the president of Georgia when the party came to power. But against Shevardnadze's leadership criticisms were often voiced in the Georgian public. Demonstrations were held in the streets of Georgia. In November 2003, riots started due to the observation of bias in the general elections held in Georgia. As a result of this reaction of the Georgian people, President Shevardnadze was forced to leave the leadership due to the event known as the "Velvet Revolution". Also, uprisings have started to occur frequently in the separatist regions of the country. Even in such a situation, representatives of Turkish foreign policy advised Aslan Abashidze, the leader of the Ajara region, in order not to disturb the stability of the country by creating internal unrest.

The representatives of Turkish foreign policy did not ignore the current situation and made the following comment: "Turkey sincerely wishes that peace and unity prevail in friendly Georgia as soon as possible by continuing our relations that have developed after the elections at an excellent level. Turkey believes that difficulties will be overcome by ensuring political reconciliation and that Georgia will continue to advance on the road to democracy [9].

Saakashvili was elected president in the elections held in Georgia on January 4, 2004. Turkish MPs participated in the election process as observers. On May 20, 2004, and newly elected Georgian President M. Saakashvili visited Turkey. During his visit, Saakashvili spoke about the problems in the separatist regions while touching on the future of relations between Ankara and Tbilisi from the socio-economic



and political point of view. At the same time, Saakashvili expressed Turkey's position by preferring cooperation with the West in order to ensure independence and stability in Georgia. Ahmet Necdet Sezer, who was the president of Turkey at that time, expressed his desire to ensure stability in the Caucasus with the support of the Turkish leadership for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia.

The great importance of the military field in the relations between Turkey and Georgia

From the moment Georgia gained its independence, due to its existing relations with Russia, it has set itself the goal of strengthening relations with Western organizations. One of the most important international organizations for integration is NATO. Turkey, which is a member of NATO and aims to achieve stability in the South Caucasus together with the United States, supported Georgia's membership in international organizations and created democracy in its country. Another issue discussed in Turkey's military relations with Georgia is the war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 [4].

In this war, which attracted the attention of the world community, Turkey also intervened in the situation. In the August 2008 war, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan proposed meetings to the Russian and Georgian parties in order to establish a ceasefire and ensure stability in the South Caucasus [8].

For this purpose, R.T. Erdogan went to Moscow on August 13, and to Tbilisi on August 14. During these trips, Prime Minister Erdogan expressed Turkey's support for the territorial integrity of Georgia and expressed his support for the protection of Georgia's borders, which was also approved by the UN Security Council.

At the same time, with the aim of helping the Georgian people who are in a difficult situation after the conflicts Kizilay support said that it will be given. However, Prime Minister Erdogan's greatest statement was the creation of a platform for stability and cooperation in the Caucasus. In his talks in Tbilisi, Erdogan expressed that Russia is also interested in the issue, and stated that its goals are to establish peace in the Caucasus and create regional stability.

By proposing the Caucasus stability and cooperation platform, Turkey wants to provide an environment for solving both the Russia-Georgia crisis and other problems that may arise in the Caucasus. In fact, from the point of view of Turkey's Caucasus policy, the topic has many directions. On the other hand, Turkey, both in terms of general foreign policy, also defended the territorial integrity of Georgia due to its position in energy projects. Thus, in the Russia-Georgia war, Turkey remained neutral and used the soft power policy and published a short statement expressing only its concern in the face of this war. The Turkish government did this both to protect its security and because it did not want to turn its relations with Russia and Georgia into a crisis.

The foreign policy of the Republic of Turkey after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt

After preventing the July 15 coup attempt in the Republic of Turkey, a large cross-border operation such as the "Fərat Qalxanı" operation was carried out. This operation was announced by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey on August 24, 2016. The Turkish Armed Forces and the Coalition Air Force of the city of Jarablus in the Aleppo region of Syria it started with the aim of cleansing it from ISIS.

In addition to Turkey's economic and military capabilities, with the "Fərat Qalxanı" operation, which allowed increasing the national power of the army with the purges after the coup attempt, Ankara began to play the role of a regional power again and showed that it will not remain silent to the forces that threaten its security outside its borders. Let me also mention that Turkey should not remain silent on the events in Iraq as well as Syria and keep troops especially in Northern Iraq is one of the requirements of being a regional power [2, p. 4].

Although opening of Turkey's foreign policy to the Middle East and coming to the fore as an independent regional force is a topic of discussion, the Justice and Development Party government did not have any problems with its neighbors during the said period. Although the increasing interest of the EU and the US in the framework of their policy and regional mediation activities in the Middle East is welcomed, this picture has started to change since 2009 [7, p. 3]. After the establishment of



the Party government in 2002, there were many radical changes in Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey's image in the world was rebuilt. Especially, the presence of Ahmet Davutoglu in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs brought a systematic feature to these changes. With Davutoğlu's foreign policy, Turkey's voice was heard more in the international arena than during the previous periods of power. Of course, the reason for this new image of Turkey is not only Davutoğlu's policy, but there are many other factors as well. After the establishment of the Party government in 2002, there were many radical changes in Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey's image in the world was rebuilt.

In particular, the presence of Ahmet Davutoglu in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the prime ministership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan brought a systemic feature to these changes. Turkey's voice was heard more in the international arena with its foreign policy than during the previous periods of power. Of course, many other factors also influenced the formation of this new image of Turkey.

Another factor was the increased need for Muslim Turkey by Western countries in the post-September 11, 2001 period for cooperation in the fight against terrorism around the world, which was an advantage for the Party government. Turkey is a country of strategic importance for the solution of problems in the countries of the Middle East and Central Asia, which are culturally and geographically close to Turkey, and for the communication of the region with the West. Within the framework of the foreign policy restructured with the Justice and Development Party, the active policy was targeted in the near geographies. In this direction, new developments began in the relations with the South Caucasus, which is the main topic of the thesis, and more specifically with Georgia.

However, since Turkey's capabilities are limited, relations could not develop at any level for a long time. At the same time, thanks to the increased opportunities during the Party period, Turkey began to conduct active political experiments in nearby regions within the framework of the new foreign policy concept. The South Caucasus and Georgia, which is part of it, are in a very important position in terms of Turkey's interests within the framework of the near region policy. For Georgia, preserving its independence, developing the country and integrating into the West could be possible with good relations with Turkey. Turkey is trying to develop the current dialogue with the Georgian government within the framework of its political and economic interests in foreign policy.

CONCLUSION

As you can see, the AK Party government presented a foreign policy perspective based on the understanding of the historical, geographical and general culture, along with the understanding of foreign policy based on Turkey's strategic importance. The party reflected concepts such as "central country", "multi-dimensional, multi-directional policy", "not crisis-oriented, vision-oriented policy" into the concept of politics and created the concept of soft power in Turkey [3, p. 131]. The Party government, which presented a foreign policy in line with these innovations, also formed the country's security policy within the framework of this soft power. He has implemented global and regional policies within the framework of steps taken to ensure zero problems in politics with neighbors, international peace and stability. Turkey is not only a country that responds to crises by implementing policies that prioritize economic, historical, geographical and shared cultural identity, but also plays the role of a country that detects and intervenes before crises occur. The AK Party, which established a new foreign policy with a "zero problem with neighbors" approach as a requirement of M. Kamal Atatürk's policy of "peace at home, peace in the world", took its place in Turkey's foreign policy.

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AK PARTİYA HÖKUMƏTİ DÖVRÜNDƏ TÜRKiYƏ CÜMHURİYYƏTİNİN XARİCİ SİYASƏTİ

Ç.Q. Səfərova

Türkiyənin Ədalət və İnkişaf Partiyası hökuməti dövründə xarici siyasəti ənənəvi olaraq ölkə təhlükəsizliyinin təmin edilməsini, milli maraqların tarixdən gələn və gələcəyə uzanan bir perspektiv içində qorunub inkişaf etdirilməsini, inkişaf və rifah üçün lazımı xarici resursların yaradılmasını hədəfləmişdi. Partiya bu hədəfləri, başda qonşular olmaqla, bütün ölkələrlə yaxşı əlaqələr qurmaq və əməkdaşlığın təsisi, beynəlxalq sülh, sabitlik, təhlükəsizlik və rifaha töhfə göstərilməsi yolu ilə reallaşdırmağı qarşıya məqsəd qoymuşdur. AK Partiyası hökuməti özündən əvvəl iqtidara gələn digər rəhbərliklər kimi Türkiyənin Orta Asiyaya açılan qapısı olan və 276 kilometrlik sərhəd qonşusu olan Gürcüstanın əhəmiyyətini diqqət mərkəzində saxlayırdı. Ona görə də iki ölkə arasında sosial-iqtisadi və siyasi maraqlara uyğun olaraq əlaqələr yenidən nəzərdən keçirilməyə başlanmışdır.

Açar sözlər: *Türkiyə, AK Partiya, Xarici siyasət, Cənubi Qafqaz, Gürcüstan*

ВНЕШНЯЯ ПОЛИТИКА ТУРЕЦКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ В ПЕРИОД ПРАВЛЕНИЯ ПАРТИИ СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТИ И РАЗВИТИЯ

Ч.Г. Сафарова

Во время правления Партии справедливости и развития Турции внешняя политика традиционно была направлена на обеспечение безопасности страны, защиту и развитие национальных интересов в перспективе, исходящей из истории и простирающейся в будущее, и создание необходимых внешних ресурсов для развития и процветания. Партия стремится реализовать эти цели путем установления хороших отношений и налаживания сотрудничества со всеми странами, особенно соседними, и способствуя международному миру, стабильности, безопасности и процветанию. Правительство Партии справедливости и развития, как и другие правительства, пришедшие к власти до него, акцентировало внимание на важности Грузии, которая является воротами Турции в Среднюю Азию и соседней границей протяженностью 276 километров. Поэтому отношения между двумя странами начали пересматриваться в соответствии с социально-экономическими и политическими интересами.

Ключевые слова: *Турция, Партия, внешняя политика, Южный Кавказ, Грузия*