

TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS KAZAKHSTAN  
IN THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TURKEY’S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS KAZAKHSTAN IN THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD**

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This thesis is concerned with the policies and strategies of Turkey as a regional power. In this context, the main purpose of the thesis is to locate Turkey’s role in the system of regional relations and to analyze its level of influence in Kazakhstan. This thesis starts with a discussion of the origins and the historical analysis of Turkey’s presence in Central Asia starting from the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and finishing with the end of the Cold War. A particular attention is paid to the bilateral relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet period, including all aspects of bilateral cooperation such as politics, military, economy and culture. Finally, this thesis briefly discusses how Turkey’s struggle for fulfilling the geopolitical vacuum in the region and especially in Kazakhstan is challenged by a number of major powers such as China, The United States and the Russian Federation.

**Keywords:** Pan-Turkism, Central Asia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Major Powers.

## ÖZ

### SOVYET SONRASI DÖNEMİNDE TÜRKİYE’NİN KAZAKİSTAN’A YÖNELİK DIŞ POLİTİKASI

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Bu tez bölgesel bir güç olarak Türkiye'nin politika ve stratejisi ile ilgilenmektedir. Bu bağlamda, tezin temel amacı bölgesel ilişkiler sisteminde Türkiye'nin rolünün yerini bulmak ve Kazakistan'daki nüfuz seviyesini analiz etmektir. Bu tez, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun dağılmasından başlayarak ve Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesi ile biten, Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'daki varlığının kökenleri ve tarihi analiz tartışması ile başlar. Tezin büyük bir kısmı Türkiye ve Kazakistan arasındaki ikili ilişkiler için ayrılmıştır. Bu kısım siyaset, askeri, ekonomi ve kültür gibi ikili işbirliğinin tüm yönlerini içermektedir. Son olarak, bu tez bölgede ve özellikle Kazakistan'da jeopolitik vakum'u doldurma çabası içinde olan Türkiye'nin Çin, ABD ve Rusya Federasyonu gibi Büyük Güçleri ile mücadelesini anlatmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Pan-Türkizm, Orta Asya, Türkiye, Kazakistan, Büyük Güçler.

To my dear mother



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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABF	Avrasya Borsalar Federasyonu
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline
CES	Common Economic Space
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNPC	China's National Petroleum Corporation
CPC	Caspian Pipeline Consortium
CST	Collective Security Treaty
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
CU	Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia
EC	European Community
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EurAsEc	Eurasian Economic Community
IPAP	Individual Plan of Action for the Partnership
JP	Justice Party
JDP	Justice and Development Party
KATEV	Kazak-Türk Eğitim Vakfı
NAP	Nationalist Action Party
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
QDR	Quadrennial Defence Review
RATS	Regional Antiterrorist Structure
RPNP	Republican Peasant National Party
RPP	Republican People's Party
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
TICA	Turkish International Cooperation Agency
TDV	Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı
TÖMER	Türkçe ve Yabancı Dil Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi
TÜRKPA	Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler Parlamenter Asamblesi
TÜRKSOY	Uluslararası Türk Kültürü Teşkilatı
UN	United Nations
US CENTCOM	United States Central Command

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Geopolitical vacuums are never left unoccupied. Major Powers compete to fulfill such vacuums over regions with rich natural resources and especially hydrocarbon reserves. Such a context creates specific conditions for the transformation of the existing political systems and triggers a major struggle among various powers for the control of the natural resources.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, such a geopolitical vacuum occurred in the former Soviet geography. Central Asia came to the forefront on the world politics agenda once again. Central Asia hosted a clash of interest between the Russian Empire and the British Empire for imperial supremacy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, in the same region we observe geopolitical situation that undergone qualitative changes. Since the end of the Cold War, the region has become a source of contention among the major geopolitical actors such as China, Russia, the European Union and the United States, as well as regional geopolitical actors such India, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, these actors directly or indirectly influenced the geopolitical situation in Central Asia. Among the major issues that influenced the post-Soviet geopolitics of the region have been the war in Afghanistan involving the United States and its allies, the fight against terrorism, OPEC oil policy, major oil transportation and communication projects like Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, the expansion of the NATO as well as the EU integration policies in the post-Soviet space. One may also add the process of elite change in a number of the former Soviet Union republics and the influence of external powers on this process and the Chinese recent economic expansion in the region.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Murat Laumulin, *Tsentral'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii: Tsentral'naia Aziia v Zarubezhnoi Politologii i Mirovoi Geopolitike* [Central Asia in the 21 Century: Central Asia in the Foreign Political Science and World Geopolitics], Vol. 5 (Almaty: Kazhastanskiĭ Institut Strategicheskikh Issledovaniĭ pri Prezidente Respubliki Kazahstan, 2009), 8.

Within this context, this study analyzes and focuses on the policies and strategies of Turkey as a regional power with a brief discussion of the role of the major powers in the struggle for fulfilling the geopolitical vacuum occurred in the post-Soviet period. Particular attention was paid to the bilateral relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan. While all aspects (political, economic, cultural and military) of bilateral cooperation were examined in this thesis, the main purpose of the thesis is to locate Turkey's role in the system of regional relations and to analyze its level of influence in Kazakhstan. While Turkey's relations and the origins of its presence in Central Asia goes back to a long time ago, the real activity of the Turkish Republic in the region and Kazakhstan started only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Despite the zeal associated with the initial euphoria, initially the Turkish leaders failed to comprehend the tendencies of the domestic politics of the regional countries. I argue that Turkey's role and presence in Kazakhstan has been growing constantly especially when compared to a similar role and activity in other Turkic countries. Kazakhstan has gradually become Turkey's main partner in the region despite falling short of Ankara's major integration initiatives. At the same time, Turkish politicians are leading a cautious and pragmatic policy towards Kazakhstan so as not to irritate global powers who also have long-term strategies and corresponding goals in the region.

Ankara is using a variety of tools in order to increase its influence in the region and in Kazakhstan. The idea of creating of a union or continuous multilateral dialogue among the Turkic republics is one such attempt. In addition to attempts of creating a Turkic union which is argued to be a significant tool of the mutual rapprochement the Turkish Republic gradually has been asserting its authority for the most part through intensive economic cooperation and investments, and through cultural and educational institutions founded by government efforts or by the religious communities.

In an attempt to locate Turkey's role and activity in Kazakhstan while comparing its role and activity with other international powers, a number of first handed sources were used. While conducting a field research is beyond the scope of this study, primary sources in different languages (English, Turkish, Russian and to some extent Kazakh) such as books, academic journals, newspaper archives, the memoirs of the US, Russian, Turkish leading bureaucrats and politicians, as well as reports prepared by trade



organizations and business councils were used throughout the thesis. In addition to this, I made use of a number of internet resources such as online journals and books, official governmental websites and those of private organizations, as well as websites of Turkish and Kazakh newspapers. As a part of research and data collection, I also conducted a couple of personal interviews with governmental officials.

This thesis is composed of 6 parts including the introduction and conclusion parts. The second chapter of the thesis aims to analyze the historical process marking the interaction of the Anatolian Turks with the Turkic people of the Transcaucasia and Central Asia. This chapter analyzes the roots of the interaction of Anatolian Turks with “Outside Turks” (the way they were called in Turkey). The second chapter includes a historical analysis of Turkey’s relations with the region, focusing on the period after the World War I when the Turkic nations became a part of the Soviet Union. To be more precise, this chapter covers the period from the early years of the Turkish Republic and continues with the development of relations under the Soviet Union until the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Following this historical analysis, the third chapter will briefly discuss Turkey’s activity in Central Asia in the immediate post-Soviet period. The chapter primarily aims to analyze internal political dynamics of the Turkish Republic crucial to understand Turkey’s presence in Central Asia, as well as concentrates on the motives of Turkey’s penetration in the region. This chapter describes Turkey’s involvement in the region after the Soviet Union’s demise, with Ankara’s initial euphoria and later disenchantment with the reaction of the local leaders. While emphasizing the first decade of Turkey’s relations with the region, this chapter also discusses the concept of the “Turkish model” and reasons of its failure.

The fourth chapter is the most extensive chapter of the thesis which focuses on Turkey’s role and influence in Kazakhstan only, and particularly in the last decade. In this chapter, Turkey’s presence in the region is narrowed down to the bilateral relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan on the following areas: diplomatic (bilateral and multilateral), military, economy and culture. This part of the thesis aims at analyzing the bilateral relations of the countries touching upon all areas of cooperation. This chapter will examine mainly the history of bilateral diplomatic relations while discussing the

cooperation of the two countries within multilateral frameworks such as the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Turkic Council. This chapter also discusses the bilateral cooperation emphasizing the areas where Turkish companies succeeded or rather failed to dominate. In more detail will be discussed the features of the trade between Turkey and Kazakhstan. This will also be followed by the discussion of the Turkish investments in Kazakhstan, bilateral cooperation in the construction and banking sectors, as well as Turkey's struggle for position in Kazakhstan's energy market. The bilateral cultural cooperation of this chapter discusses the government's activities in the country separately, while not losing sight of the non-governmental organizations, especially the role of the religious communities. To be more precise, it will be shown that official Ankara's cultural relations with Astana also flourished through governmental projects such as the "Great Student Exchange Program" soon becoming "Türkiye Scholarships", as well through establishing the Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Kazakh-Turkish International University. Besides discussing the Turkey's role in the recent Kazakhstan's Language Reform, this chapter will also mention other attempts of Turkey to cooperate in cultural domain under the framework of Turkish Religious Directorate and Yunus Emre Foundation. Particular attention will be paid to the non-governmental organization and especially to the activities and nature of Fethullah Gülen's educational institutions.

The fifth chapter briefly analyzes the role and activity of the international actors in Kazakhstan to locate Turkey's position and activities in a comparative perspective. This chapter will outline the foreign policy priorities of China, the United States and Russia in Kazakhstan, as major powers that have stakes in establishing dominance in the region. This analysis will particularly highlight the rising role of China in the region and especially in an energy supplier country such as Kazakhstan. The chapter then discusses the US support of Turkey and other third parties in the country, and argues that the real US interest in the country has been on energy sector. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to Russia. It gives particular attention to Russia arguing that although the country has lost grounds initially eventually Moscow reorganized its foreign policy toward the "Near Abroad". Especially under Putin Russia consolidated its position not

only in Kazakhstan but also in the region as a whole. Furthermore, Russia's geo-strategic goals concerning Kazakhstan will be discussed in this part of the chapter.

The last chapter of the thesis discusses all previous chapters of the thesis and restates its main assumptions. Concluding with an analysis of the roles and policies of the active powers in the region and in Kazakhstan, this part of the thesis offers future predictions and recommendation on Turkey's prospective policy in Kazakhstan.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### 2.1. Relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia under the Ottoman Empire

The first serious attempts to contact with the Caucasus and Central Asian region during the Ottoman period took place under the Committee of Union and Progress rule.<sup>2</sup> During this period, the relations developed heavily under the influence of the new waves of nationalism, and in particular, under the impact of Pan-Turkism,<sup>3</sup> which started to be active early in the twentieth century. The idea implied the implementation of the pan-Turkic ideal of uniting the scattered Turkic people sharing a relatively common culture, history, language and religion.<sup>4</sup>

The ideas of Pan-Turkism were developed both by the educated elite of the Ottoman Empire and by the Muslim intellectuals from the Tsarist Russia.<sup>5</sup> Pan-Turkism was frequently discussed (initially in private, then in public and in the press) among Ottoman intellectuals who concluded that a strong bond, mainly due to a common language and history, existed between the Turks of the Ottoman Empire and those living in the Caucasus and Turkestan. Among these Ottoman intellectuals the most famous

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<sup>2</sup> The Committee of Union and Progress, a political organization established during the period of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, which at the same time was informally in the power of the empire at the time.

<sup>3</sup> Pan-Turkism here will be referred to Turanism, Pan-Turanism and Turkism. According to Jacob Landau, while Turanism or also known as Pan-Turanism goes back to Turan, an unidentified area in the steppes of the Central Asia and is a broader concept than Pan-Turkism, Turkism at first being applied to the nationalism of the Ottoman Turks later started to be confused with Pan-Turkism and used interchangeably.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Hyman, "Turkestan and pan-Turkism revisited," *Central Asian Survey* 16, no. 3 (1997): 339.

<sup>5</sup> Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 29.

were Ömer Seyfeddin, Mehmet İzzet, and Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, well-known through their nationalist writings which, in turn, were stirring up patriotism and awakening the pride in the Turkic nation at the time. For example, the poem “Ey Türk Uyan!” (Wake Up, Oh Turk!) started with the words: “Oh, race of Turks! Oh, children of iron and of fire! Oh, the founders of a thousand homelands!”<sup>6</sup>

Another person worth mentioning is Ziya Gökalp.<sup>7</sup> His pan-Turkist sentiments could be traced in his influential poem “Turan” (1911):

The fatherland of Turks is not yet Turkey, not yet Turkestan,  
The fatherland is a vast and eternal land: Turan!<sup>8</sup>

Gökalp proved to be more cautious about the unification of all Turks, instead he emphasized that the immediate goal should be the cultural unity of the Oghuz or Turkmen people alone, namely those whose languages were closest to modern Ottoman Turkish, a formula which excluded Tatars along with Uzbeks, Kazakhs and other eastern Turks.<sup>9</sup>

Some Muslim intellectuals from the Tsarist Russia (Outside Turks)<sup>10</sup> were also very influential in the development of the Pan-Turkist ideology. They migrated to the Ottoman lands before the beginning of the World War I, from the Russian-ruled lands, the Volga region, the Crimea, Azerbaijan and to a lesser extent, Central Asia.<sup>11</sup> Among the most prominent of these were Ali Huseyinzade, whose poem “Turan” would become a manifesto for Pan-Turkists, along with Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Yusuf Akçuraoglu and Ismail Gasprali.<sup>12</sup>

The idea of Pan-Turkism also shaped the policy of the Committee of Union and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>7</sup> A sociologist, writer, poet, and politician Gökalp significantly affected the works and ideas of Turkism and Turkish nationalism. He was also a member of the First Turkish Parliament and later the Turkish Great National Assembly.

<sup>8</sup> Hyman, “Turkestan and pan-Turkism,” *Central Asian Survey*, 342.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Turkic peoples of Transcaucasia and Central Asia.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 36.

Progress to a certain extent. During the last years of Abdülhamid's reign Necib Asım, an influential Ottoman intellectual, translated Leon Cahun's book "*Introduction à l'histoire de l'Asie. Turcs et Mongols des origines à 1405*", which glorified Mongols and claimed that Turks were their descendants. This book inspired and had a strong effect on Nazım Bey, the then secretary-general of the Committee of Union and Progress. From that time on the idea of Pan-Turkism had a certain influence on the Committee's future policy.<sup>13</sup> The Committee of Union and Progress would later use the idea of Pan-Turkism in order to legitimize the Ottoman attempt to establish its dominance in Eurasia.<sup>14</sup>

With this goal in mind, the Committee of Union and Progress even passed several resolutions for promoting the use of the Turkish language to help with the assimilation of non-Turks in the Empire and to encourage the immigration of Turkic groups in the Caucasus and Turkestan to Turkey. At the same time, the Committee carried out a widespread propaganda and institutionalized its activities through establishing several branches in the Caucasus and Central Asia to spread Pan-Turkic sentiments and transported money and arms to undermine the Tsarist authority.<sup>15</sup>

However, the idea of uniting all Turks was never fulfilled due to the defeat of the Ottoman Army in the World War I, especially due to the losses on the Russian front. Moreover, the idea of rebuilding an empire inclusive of Eurasia would be later set aside for the simple reason that Enver Pasha<sup>16</sup> died in Uzbekistan while fighting against the Soviet army. These developments contributed to the Pan-Turkist ideology being left out of the agenda of real politics.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>14</sup> Hakan Fidan, "Turkish Foreign Policy towards Central Asia," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (2010): 111.

<sup>15</sup> Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 54.

<sup>16</sup> Being one of the founders and leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress Enver Pasha ensured CUP's coming to power after the "Sublime Porte Raid" (Babıali Baskını) military coup. During the World War I under his leadership as the Deputy Minister of War and Commander in Chief the Ottoman Empire entered the war. After the Ottoman defeat he went to Turkestan aimed at bringing together the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, but died during a clash against the Bolsheviks.

<sup>17</sup> Fidan, "Turkish Foreign Policy," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 112.

## **2.2. Relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia during the Early Years of the Turkish Republic**

After the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, earlier dominant ideologies like Pan-Turkism had lost their meaning. During the War of Independence<sup>18</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk made it clear that such ideologies would have no place in the new republic. As early as 1921, speaking at Eskişehir, he asserted: “Neither Islamic Union, nor Turanism may constitute a doctrine or legal policy for us. Henceforth, the Turkish government’s policy aimed living independently, relying on Turkey’s own sovereignty within her national frontiers.”<sup>19</sup>

While Pan-Turkism as a governing ideology had no place in the new republic, it was partly incorporated in the new Kemalist nationalist ideology. Also, some of the previous Pan-Turkists such as Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu and Tekin Alp became Kemalists themselves. Such intellectuals’ activities were mostly limited to literary and journalistic activities.<sup>20</sup>

Turkish government under the leadership of Atatürk chose not to interfere in the affairs of the “Outside Turks” and preserve good relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the first treaty with the Soviet Union reflects this realistic and pragmatic approach. In the eighth article of the Turkish-Soviet Treaty signed in Moscow on March 16, 1921 both countries pledged not to cooperate with and permit the formation of any organization (also not allowing residence and work permission) which had secessionist aims. The conditions of this treaty would also apply to the Caucasian Soviet republics. Turkey would not provide any shelter or aid to any political group in Azerbaijan, North Caucasus, the Volga-Ural or Turkestan. On the other hand, the Soviet Union would

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<sup>18</sup> Or “Kurtuluş Savaşı”, a war under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk waged against the Allies forces after Ottoman Empire’s defeat in the World War I. Ended with the declaration of the formation of the Republic of Turkey in October 1923.

<sup>19</sup> Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 74.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>21</sup> Idris Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics: the Rise and Fall of the 'Turkish model'* (Aldershot, Hampshire, Eng.: Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 77.

constrain the activities of the former Unionists<sup>22</sup> as well as not allowing the activities against the Turkish Republic in countries such as Georgia and Armenia.<sup>23</sup>

It is clear from the below quote by Atatürk that Turkey would not be politically interested in “Outside Turks”, such interest would only be limited to language, history and cultural realms:

Since the War of Independence, and even during this war, Turkish nation helped the oppressed nations in their struggles for freedom and independence. Thus, to act for the liberty and independence of our brethren is not something new to us. However, the nationality cause should not be considered as an indifferent and senseless matter...  
Indeed, we have been handling the idea of Turkishness in a moderate manner. We attach utmost importance to the great Turkish history, language as well as dialects and old Turkish literary masterpieces. We even do not neglect the languages and cultures of the Yakut Turks beyond Baykal.<sup>24</sup>

The First Turcology Conference was held in Baku in 1926. The event was organized by the Soviet Union. And, Ali Hüseyinzade and Fuad Köprülü from Turkey attended the conference. An important decision concerning the alphabet change was taken in this conference. The Turkic nations of the Caucasus and Central Asia started using the Latin alphabet. Turkey switched to the Latin alphabet in 1929. The result of this conference is said to speed up the Alphabet Revolution<sup>25</sup> already planned by Atatürk.<sup>26</sup>

Soviet leaders, however, were not pleased with the subsequent decision of Atatürk to switch to the Latin alphabet. The Soviet leadership who led the Turkic communities to adopt the Latin alphabet, once again, had made a decision to replace it with the Cyrillic

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<sup>22</sup> After the Ottoman defeat in the World War I the Unionists or the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress were persecuted by the sultan Mehmed VI and later by Atatürk. Some of them forming an opposition escaped and were hiding in the Soviet Union.

<sup>23</sup> Ahat A. Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze Türkiye ve Orta Asya* (İstanbul: Doğan Egmont Yayıncılık ve Yapımcılık Tic. A.Ş., 2009), 431.

<sup>24</sup> Utkan Kocatürk, *Atatürkün Fikir ve Düşünceleri* (Ankara, 1984), 185.

<sup>25</sup> Alphabet revolution here refers to the promotion of the Latin script instead of Arabic script used previously. With Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's endeavor, on January 1, 1929 upon *the Law on the Adoption and Implementation of the Turkish Alphabet* the new alphabet became compulsory in all public institutions.

<sup>26</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 437.



alphabet. As a result, by the beginning of the World War II all Turkic republics started using the Cyrillic alphabet. At the same time, another remarkable development occurred. The Soviets stopped using the name “Turkestan” (Türkistan) in the documents and tried not to cite these communities as “Turkic”. Instead they preferred terms such as “Soviet Central Asia” or “Soviet Central Asians.”<sup>27</sup> In addition to this, the Soviets started propagating against Turkey such as the following quote by Stalin appeared in the press of the time: “Kemalist Revolution, the product of the struggle of the military merchant bourgeois class against foreign imperialists, is a superficial revolution. This revolutionary act in the moment of self-development was turned against the interests of the workers and peasants.”<sup>28</sup> In such a manner the Soviets tried to distance the local Turkic population from Turkey.

The Soviets who suppressed any activities of the Pan-Turkists at home were also to a great extent dissatisfied by the actions of Turkic émigrés from the Soviet Union in the Turkish Republic. In the 1920’s the activities of the “Outside Turks” began to disturb the Soviet Union very seriously. During the Fourth Soviet Congress in the early 1925, the External Commissioner Chicherin raised the issue:

We should record, especially, the increased activities of the Compatriots (Müsavatchılar) in Turkey. We several times appealed to the Turkish government, and asked for a protest and taking an action to put an end to these intolerable intrigues against the Soviet government.<sup>29</sup>

The Soviet Communist Party leaders fearing that the cultural affinity might later turn into a political unity was appealing and at the same time warning the Turkish government that the support of the Pan-Turkists might lead to unpleasant repercussions in the Soviet-Turkey relations. Such complaints raised by the Soviet side resulted in the Turkish government suppressing the activities of the Pan-Turkist intellectuals so as to please the Soviet administration. Turkish foreign policy concerning the “Outside Turks” was heavily shaped by the concern as not to upset the Soviet government. For instance,

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<sup>27</sup> Charles Warren Hostler, *Turkism and the Soviets* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957, Chapter 2), 4-83.

<sup>28</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 454.

<sup>29</sup> Mirza Bala, *Milli Azerbaijan Hareketi* (Ankara: Azerbaijan Kültür Derneği Yayını, 1991), 175.

two days before the signing of “the Non-aggression, Friendship and Cooperation Agreement” Seyid Mehmet Tahir, an influential Pan-Turkist intellectual and the director of the “New Caucasus” (Yeni Kafkasya) periodical was arrested. The alleged reason for the arrest was his opposition to the Hat Act (Şapka Kanunu)<sup>30</sup> which was issued one month ago.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, in the early years of the Turkish republic, the popularity of the Pan-Turkism and the interest towards the “Outside Turks” declined. Pan-Turkism was considered as a problematic ideology in terms of both complicating the national idea of “Turkishness,”<sup>32</sup> and in terms of Turkey’s relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup> So, for the purpose of not upsetting the relations with the Soviet Union, during the early years of the Turkish Republic, the country had hardly any relations with the Turkic peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The fact that Turkey brought to a standstill relations with the Turkic nations of the Soviet Union provoked an impetuous reaction of the public. Once, even one medical student named Zeki at the meeting with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk inquired about the Turkic nations. Atatürk then privately replied to him:

Think over about what happened to the Ottoman Empire? What happened to the Austro-Hungarian Empire? What is left of the fearsome Germany today? It means that nothing is permanent. States and nations have to realize this. Today Soviet Russia is our neighbor, we are in need of this friendship; but nobody knows what is going to happen tomorrow. It can be partitioned just like Ottoman Empire or Austro-Hungarian Empire. Today the nations being held tightly may disengage later and the world will be at a new equilibrium. Then Turkey has to know what to do! There are brethren of common language and faith in the administration of our neighbor. We must be ready to help them. Being ready does not mean lying down and waiting for that

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<sup>30</sup> After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey the Turkish Grand National Assembly, in order to bring the population to the norms of western countries, issued two laws in 1925 and 1934 according to which citizens of the Turkish Republic had to wear “contemporary clothing” (çağdaş kıyafetler). According to these laws men had to wear a hat or cap (şapka) as a heading.

<sup>31</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 439.

<sup>32</sup> According to Turan, Turan and Bal (2004), the “Turkishness” defined by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk emphasized the centrality of being a Turkish citizen, and took no account of the origins of its constituent people.

<sup>33</sup> Gül Turan, İlder Turan and İdris Bal, “Turkey’s Relations with the Turkic Republics,” Chap. 14 in *Turkish Foreign Policy in Post Cold War Era*, ed. İdris Bal (Boca Raton, Florida: Brown Walker Press, 2004), 293.

day; we have to prepare. How nations are preparing for this? By keeping the spiritual roots intact; language is a bridge; faith is a bridge; history is a bridge... We cannot wait that they will approach to us; we have to move toward to them. Who will do this? Of course, we will. How are we going to do this? Look, language committees and history committees are being established... These cannot be made openly. These are deep thoughts of the states and nations.<sup>34</sup>

In this way the founder of the Turkish republic meant to say that at that time contacts with the Turkic nations of the Soviet Union were unfeasible. He also admitted that one day when the Soviet Union collapses the relations with the Turkic nations of the Soviet Union would be resumed.

### **2.3. Relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia in the Period from the World War II to 1960**

The general policy concerning the Turkic nations during the World War II was a mere continuation of the policies initiated under Atatürk. During the World War II, Turkey was in a position of neutrality, while the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia as a part of the Soviet Union took active part in it. Naturally, there were no contacts with the Central Asian people at the time.

But on the other hand, the World War II was a chance for the Pan-Turkist organizations to reassert themselves and their goals. As the war began and the victories of the German army started to prevail, several Pan-Turkists believed that the defeat and the subsequent dismemberment of the Soviet Union would materialize the dream of uniting of the Turkic peoples. Therefore, they considered that Turkey should come to the aid of the Turks of the Soviet Union and enter the war on the German side. They even appealed to İnönü for the intervening to the existing situation:” O İnönü, selected by history for this great day! We are ready to shed our blood for the sacred independence of Turkdom! All Turkdom is awaiting thy signal!”<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, Pan-Turkists, still being a small, elitist movement in Turkey attempted to establish contacts with the German Nazi Government. Some eminent Pan-

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<sup>34</sup> İsmet Bozdağ, "Bir İnsan Dinini, Dilini, Milletini Değiştirebilir, Ama Irkını Asla," *Dış Politika*, no. 9 (1990): 168-169.

<sup>35</sup> Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 112.

Turkist intellectuals like Müstecib Ülküsal, Veli Kajum Han and Mustafa Şokay were cooperating with the German Government by organizing military units out of captive Turkic peoples of the Caucasia and Central Asia to fight against the Soviet Union. During the war the Turkic captives formed four military legions: Azerbaijani, North Caucasian, Idyl-Uralian and Turkestani. The majority of the literature is about the Turkestani Legion, which at the end of 1944 numbered around 180,000 soldiers and mainly consisted of Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs, Tajiks, Turkmens and Uzbeks. By the end of the World War II the Germans even recognized the National Government of Turkestan, but since the German side lost the war the Turkic captives (according to the Yalta agreement) had to return to the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup>

The Turkish Government, for its part, did not give any support for the irredentist plans of Pan-Turkist groups, neither was it ready to commit itself to a patronage role for the Muslims of the Soviet Union. An evidence of this attitude can be found in a report prepared by G.L. Clutton, the then official of the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which he wrote:<sup>37</sup>

Turanism is widespread in Turkey and the supporters of it are making efforts to spread it to Iran and the Soviet Union. But this movement has been largely active underground and probably is not supported by the officials. But still there is an impression that the government is not putting all its efforts to suppress this movement.<sup>38</sup>

In fact, during the initial years of the World War II the Turkish government was sometimes banning and later permitting the activities of the Pan-Turkists which mostly included printing of periodicals and books. But in 1944, when the outcome of the war started to become obvious, the government believed that it was the time to put an end to all Pan-Turkist activities.<sup>39</sup> Thus, in response to Hüseyin Nihal Atsız's letters designated for Premier Minister Mehmet Şükrü Saraçoğlu, in which he denounced the subversive

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<sup>36</sup> Baymirza Hayit, *Sovyetlerde Türklüğün ve İslamın Bazı Meseleleri* (İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırma Vakfı, 2000), 190.

<sup>37</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 484.

<sup>38</sup> Selim Deringil, *Denge Oyunu: İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994), 181.

<sup>39</sup> Nizam Önen, *İki Turan: Macaristan ve Türkiyede Turancılık* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2005), 323.

activities of the Turkish Communists and demanded a more active Pan-Turkist policy, the government confiscated and closed an important publication of the Pan-Turkists, the “Orhun” periodical. This led to a mass demonstration in both Ankara and Istanbul, where demonstrators protested the penetration of Communism into the government’s bureaucracy. The reaction of the government was the arrest of more than thirty leading Pan-Turkists including Hüseyin Nihal Atsız, Reha Oğuz Türkkan, Ahmed Zeki Velidi Togan and Alparslan Türkeş.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the trials and arrests of the Pan-Turkists in Turkey, they were able to increase their activities after the World War II. Yet, under the new government of Menderes, they were still under pressure. In 1953 the officials within the Democrat Party closed down all branches of the Association of Turkish Nationalists with the fear that Pan-Turkists would reestablish Turkish Hearths (Türk Ocakları)<sup>41</sup> and even create a political party.<sup>42</sup> Simultaneously, they were afraid that the extraordinary activity of the Pan-Turkists would affect already deteriorated relations (due to the Turkish government’s preference of the US after the World War II) with the Soviet Union.

The relations between the Moscow and Ankara started to deteriorate after the World War II. The reason behind the souring relations was the question of the straits which the Soviets had a claim on. The Soviet threat pushed the Turkish government to seek Western support. Thereby, in the postwar rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, the Turkish government chose to be in the side of the former. This greater intimacy led to the Truman Doctrine<sup>43</sup> and the implementation of the Marshall Plan<sup>44</sup> at

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<sup>40</sup> Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 117.

<sup>41</sup> Cultural associations for the first time established in Istanbul in 1912. During the early years of the Republic contributed to the formation of the national state. In 1931 when the number of such associations reached 260 branches all over the Republic and they started to gain strength Mustafa Kemal Atatürk closed them and combined with the Republican Peoples Party.

<sup>42</sup> Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 134.

<sup>43</sup> Truman doctrine is a plan prepared against the Soviet Union threat by the President Harry Truman. The preparation of this plan meant that the international policy of the United States changed towards opposition to the Soviet Union. According to this plan the US government would contribute financial and military aid to the states under the “communism threat”.

<sup>44</sup> Marshall Plan is an economic aid package proposed by the US government after the World War II. In accordance with this plan 16 countries, including Turkey, received economic

first, and to the subsequent membership in NATO afterwards.<sup>45</sup> These developments resulted in Turkish relations with the Soviet Union being largely shaped by the US strategic plans during the Cold War.

#### **2.4. Relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia in the Period of 1960-1991**

The post World War II alliance that Turkey established with the US and the Western bloc increasingly got stronger. Turkey clearly sided with the Western bloc during the U-2 crisis<sup>46</sup> and Cuban missile crisis<sup>47</sup> which in turn further deteriorated the Turkish-Soviet Union relations.<sup>48</sup> However, due to the US position during the Cyprus problem Turkey started to have problems in its relations with the US. The Cyprus problem started when the then Cypriot president Archbishop Makarios' government attempted to change the constitution, a change that would in a large extent diminish the rights and the autonomy of the Turkish minority. This further led to the clashes between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots. The Turkish government reacted to the conflict by deciding to physically intervene in the island so as to protect the rights of the Turkish minority. After informing Washington of its intentions the then US president Lyndon Johnson replied via letter in which he wrote:

NATO allies have not had a chance to consider whether they have an obligation to protect Turkey against the Soviet Union if Turkey takes a step which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and

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development assistance from the US. The aim of this plan was to rebuild European economies and to prevent the spread of Communism.

<sup>45</sup> Feroz Ahmad, "The Historical Background of Turkey's Foreign Policy," Chap. 2 in *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*, ed. Lenore G. Martin and Dimitris Keridis (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004), 24.

<sup>46</sup> U-2 Crisis is the incident that happened after the American Lockheed U-2 spy plane was shot down on the Soviet territory. This intensified already souring relations between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Being a NATO member Turkey was also involved in the conflict since the plane that was shot down departed from its territory.

<sup>47</sup> A historical term that defines highly strained political, diplomatic and military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in October 1962. This crisis happened after the armed forces of the USSR secretly transferred military units, equipment and weapons, including nuclear weapons on the island of Cuba. The crisis could have led to a global nuclear war.

<sup>48</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 494-495.

understanding of its NATO allies.<sup>49</sup>

The relations between Turkey and the US worsened even farther when in another letter the United States stated that they would not allow Turkey to use any American-donated military equipment. Such harsh terms imposed by the US forced the Turkish government to consider developing more multilateral relations including the Soviet Union.<sup>50</sup>

The Soviets, in turn, were eager to improve relations with Turkey especially since the political situation started to change in the Soviet Union. With Khrushchev's coming to power, the country became more open and contacts with other nations started. Khrushchev's foreign policy of the time gave priority to be active in every part of the world as well as using various types of methods like diplomacy, propaganda, subversion, etc.<sup>51</sup> Under the Brezhnev rule; the Soviet Union continued Khrushchev's efforts to extend Soviet influence in the developing world. The principal object of interest in the late 1960s was the Middle East.<sup>52</sup> Thus for example, after the normalization of relation between two countries in January 1965, a Soviet parliamentary delegation paid an official visit to Turkey for the first time in more than twenty-five years.<sup>53</sup> The following year, the then Prime Minister Kosygin made another official visit to Turkey to prove that Turkish-Soviet relations were improving. The then Turkish Prime Minister, Süleyman Demirel, responded by visiting Moscow the next year. During the visit which was held on September 19 and 29, 1967 Süleyman Demirel went to Central Asia, had discussions with the local communist leaders of Uzbekistan and returned to Turkey via Baku. Being the first official contact, this was an important moment in Turkey's relations with the

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<sup>49</sup> Yasemin Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 49.

<sup>50</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 495.

<sup>51</sup> Ulysses, "The International Aims and Policies of the Soviet Union: the New Concepts and Strategy of Khrushchev," *Review of Politics* 24, no. 2 (April 1962): 210.

<sup>52</sup> William Tompson, *The Soviet Union under Brezhnev* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2003), 44.

<sup>53</sup> Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish*, 49.

Caucasus and Central Asia during the Soviet period.<sup>54</sup>

The improved relations of the Soviet Union and Turkey cooled down once again as early as 70's due to domestic political developments in Turkey. The left-right cleavages and conflicts, and the general political instability of the late 60's contributed to the souring of the relations marked Turkey's political and social life.<sup>55</sup> Along with this, in 1974 another Cyprus crisis took place. In July, 1974 the junta in Athens masterminded the coup d'état in Cyprus. The ultimate objective was to declare the "Hellenic Republic of Cyprus" and unite the island with Greece (enosis). These circumstances were unacceptable for Ankara. The then Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit demanded that the powers (Turkey, Great Britain and Greece) that had previously guaranteed the independence, territorial integrity and security of Cyprus should intervene. But when no answer came after, Ecevit ordered the Turkish army to land its troops in Cyprus and to occupy the northern part of the island. As the crisis ran low and the hostilities were ended about 40 percent of the island were under the Turkish control. This crisis was a public relations disaster for Turkey as both the United States and the Soviet Union started to turn away from Turkey. The United States suspended its military aid to Turkey, passed several resolutions for Turkish withdrawal from Cyprus and the unification of the island. As for the Soviet Union, Soviet economic assistance and aid for several projects in Turkey stopped.<sup>56</sup> The Soviets were opposed to the Cyprus operation. Besides, after the crisis the Soviet Union started to support Greece, as it left NATO.<sup>57</sup>

In 1960 the coup d'état by the Turkish Armed Forces turned upside down all political life in Turkey. The National Unity Committee (Milli Birlik Komitesi) formed after the coup seized the power in the State apparatus. The new government dissolved the Constitution and the Parliament and suspended all political activities.

These developments had an influence on the involvement of the Pan-Turkists in the Turkish politics. On January 13, 1961 military leaders partially lifted the ban on

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<sup>54</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 496.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 693.

<sup>56</sup> Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish*, 50-51.

<sup>57</sup> Andincan, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 496.



political activity. Some new political parties like the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi), the New Turkey Parti (Yeni Türkiye Partisi) and the Workers Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi) entered the political life for the first time, while two other parties of the time that were functioning prior to 1960 coup were Republican People's Party (CHP) and Republican Peasant National Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi).<sup>58</sup> After the coup Pan-Turkists groups paid much attention to the organizational aspects. These, in turn, gave fruits as the most outstanding one being the 1965 takeover of the Republican Peasant National Party later renamed as the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi). Being adopted as one of the party's official tenets, Pan-Turkism legitimately re-entered into the mainstream Turkish politics under the leadership of Alparslan Türkeş. Under the monopoly of the Nationalist Action Party, Pan-Turkist groups, or ülkücüler (idealists) as how they called themselves proliferated and were actively involved in the movement combating the leftists mentioned earlier.<sup>59</sup>

It should be noted here; although the NAP was the formal representative of the Pan-Turkist groups it did not enjoy success among the nationalists, due to the conflicting views within the party over the issues concerning program and organization. At the same time, until its closure due to the military intervention in 1980,<sup>60</sup> the Nationalist Action Party has never succeeded in becoming a mass party. After the military coup, the conditions in the party started to deteriorate and a great fragmentation occurred, as a result many important members of the party joined other party formations such as the Motherland Party of Turgut Özal.<sup>61</sup> In addition to this, the NAP could not significantly affect the official foreign policy towards the Turkic states because of its limited power in the government. The NAP managed to obtain only secondary ministries in the government, while the Democratic Leftist Party and the Motherland Party shared the

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<sup>58</sup> 27 Mayıs 1960 Darbesi Raporu, Special Issue (Ankara: Hürriyet Gazetesi), 104-105.

<sup>59</sup> Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 170.

<sup>60</sup> The coup d'état in 1980 was conducted by the head of the General Staff, General Kenan Evren. It became the third coup in the history of the Republic after the coups in 1960 and 1971. The next three years until the restoration of democracy the Turkish military ruled the country through the National Safety Council.

<sup>61</sup> Bülent Aras and Gökhan Bacik, "The Rise of Nationalist Action Party and Turkish Politics," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 6, no. 4 (2000): 50.

most important ministries of foreign and domestic affairs of the time.<sup>62</sup>

By 1980, after a period of détente<sup>63</sup> the hostilities between the United States and the Soviet Union resurfaced which negatively affected the Turkish relations with the Soviet Union as Turkey was in the NATO camp. The turning points of the time were the Iranian hostage crisis<sup>64</sup> and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979.<sup>65</sup> Such events motivated the US to improve its relations with Turkey. By 1981, American aid to Turkey quadrupled from the pre-1974 amount. But this once, despite the positive trends in the Turkish-American relations, the Turkish side was more persistent to yield to US constitutive offers. Hence, the Turkish government did not give unlimited access to bases in Turkey for American troops stationed in the Persian Gulf as well as the Turkish leaders were insisting on US' recognizing the independence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.<sup>66</sup> During the early 1980's Turkish-Soviet relations experienced another period of cooling off. The primary motive behind this besides reasons mentioned above was the reaction of the Turkish government to some leftist armed actions that Moscow was blamed for giving support. Thus, except for the Natural Gas Agreement signed in 1984<sup>67</sup> which restored the economic relations, the general political stance between Turkey and the Soviet Union remained the same (on a low level) in the early 1980's.

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<sup>62</sup> Aras and Bacik, "The Rise of Nationalist," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 60.

<sup>63</sup> Policy aimed at reducing aggressive opposition between the socialist and capitalist camps. Here refers to the political process in the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union from the early 1960's to the late 1970's.

<sup>64</sup> A diplomatic crisis began with the capture of the American embassy in Tehran by local students. They took hostage 52 employees of the embassy, which were released after 444 days in 1981. The hijackers demanded from the United States government to extradite the Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi who was being treated at New York Hospital.

<sup>65</sup> The war began after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. Being part of the Cold War, the war lasted nine years and was fought between the Soviet-led Afghan forces against multi-national insurgent groups called the mujahedeen, which in turn were supported by the United States and other US allies.

<sup>66</sup> Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish*, 61-62.

<sup>67</sup> Kemal Çiftçi, *Tarih, Kimlik ve Eleştirel Kuram Bağlamında Türk Dış Politikası* (Ankara: Siyasal Kitapevi, 2010), 296.

In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as the General Secretary of the Soviet Union which signaled a series of changes not only for the Soviet Union but also for the world. He took over the country which already had been in serious economic crisis and political in gridlock. The negative trends in the Soviet Union could only be solved through radical economic and political reforms. The main obstacles opposing these reforms were the party, the centrist bureaucracy and the communist ideology itself. Aware of this reality Gorbachev proposed a reform agenda. The first step of the reforms would be “Glasnost”<sup>68</sup> (openness) and the second one would be “Perestroika”<sup>69</sup> (restoration). But the greatest danger awaiting Gorbachev was in the sphere of “politics of nationalities”. The nationalist movements escalating in Eastern Europe in the late 1980’s would eventually spread throughout the Soviet Union and led to the process of disintegration. During this period Gorbachev signed important resolutions on delimiting of the short and long range missiles in a summit organized by the United States and later announced that the Soviet Union troops would withdraw from Afghanistan.<sup>70</sup> Despite these changes, Turkey’s relations with the Soviet Union remained the same low level and did not improve as much. Economic relations between two countries increased though, especially after 1985. Turkey started to import Soviet natural gas, and Turkish firms started to enter the Soviet market.<sup>71</sup>

As of 1990 despite being not fully independent, Central Asian Soviet republics started taking certain decisions over their domestic and foreign policy matters. In this environment, official relations between Turkey and Turkic republics started. The first official visit was conducted at the municipality level between the Istanbul and Tashkent municipalities. In November 1990 the Minister of Culture Namık Kemal Zeybek paid a

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<sup>68</sup> Glasnost is the political term for a policy of maximum transparency in government activities and freedom of information. Conducted by Mikhail Gorbachev in the second half of the 1980’s its main aim was to weaken the censorship and remove many informational barriers existed in the Soviet society at the time.

<sup>69</sup> Perestroika is the term used to designate the reform and new ideology of the Soviet party leadership. Initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev and often used together with the term “Glasnost” it is used to denote the restructuring of the economic and political structure of the Soviet Union in 1987-1991.

<sup>70</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 507-508.

<sup>71</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 79.

visit to Kazakhstan, where Ministers of Culture of Kazakhstan and Turkey signed cooperation agreements.<sup>72</sup> On March 11 and 16, 1991 Turgut Özal had made an official trip to the Soviet Union, including Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The aim of the visit was not only to increase trade relations but also to look for the ways to start relations with the Turkic countries of the Soviet Union. The March 1991 visit of Turgut Özal to Kazakhstan marked the first time of a Turkish president visiting a Turkic republic of Central Asia. During this visit, two countries signed protocols in the spheres of trade, economic cooperation and telecommunication.<sup>73</sup>

## **2.5. Conclusion**

“Realpolitik” is the best way to characterize the Turkish relations with the region during the Soviet Era. In the initial years of the Turkish republic Pan-Turkism and Turanism appeared to be an appealing idea only for a number of politicians and scholars; however there was no place for them on the official agenda of the newly established Turkish government. Cooperation with the region was limited to cultural sphere (if any) and did not include political realm.

In the early years of the Republic at the time when Atatürk was at the head of the country, the priority was given towards strengthening and consolidating the state around the notion of “Turkishness”. İnönü continued Atatürk’s tradition, so almost no contact between Turkey and the Turkic states before and during the World War II had taken place. At the same time, the activities and efforts of the Pan-Turkic groups were scanty and did not have influence on foreign policy. Even after the creation of the political party which was supposed to introduce Pan-Turkist ideas to the domestic politics, Pan-Turkists could not canvass and form a government coalition to change or affect the Republic’s policies. In fact, after the World War II Turkey’s foreign policy largely depended on the relationship between the Warsaw Pact and the NATO campus. As a result, the entire Cold War Turkey, a NATO member, with a few exceptions had souring relations with the Soviet Union.

Turkish foreign policy towards the Turkic states to the sunset of the Cold War,

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<sup>72</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 526.

<sup>73</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 79.

namely before the 1980's was labeled by some right-wing politicians as passive and reactionary.<sup>74</sup> The political analyst Deringil labeled the same period as "non-adventurist". He wrote:

It is only since the mid-1980's and early 1990's that foreign policy has moved away from the basic premises guiding it since 1923, and that occurred despite the best efforts of the professional diplomats of the Foreign Ministry, and was due to the direct intervention in foreign affairs by non-experts in various Motherland Party governments. Since, Turgut Özal and the Motherland party increasingly diverted from the traditional non-adventurist line of Turkish foreign policy.<sup>75</sup>

Turgut Özal who had become the prime-minister since the mid-1980's advocated and suggested that Turkey should be more active in the political arena. He had taken positive steps to develop relations the Soviet Union and with the Turkic countries even before the disintegration of the Soviet Union.<sup>76</sup> At first, cooperation continued mainly through the economic sphere, but closer to the end of the Soviet Union Turkish delegates started diplomatic relations as well.

It should also be noted here that despite the fact that Turkey was the first country that recognized the independence of the region countries and the fact that the public was enthusiastic about the disintegration of the Soviet Union the Turkish officials were careful not to tease Moscow and were hesitant of establishing closer ties with the newly independent countries. In addition to this, in the early 1990's Ankara still did not have sufficient information about the region and could not predict the breakup of the Soviet Union and continued its foreign policy like it was during the Cold War period based on the Moscow axis. Politicians in Turkey thought that Moscow would regain the control of the foreign policy of the region through CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), thus for instance the Turkish consulates that were open in the Central Asia in 1992 operated as branches accredited to the main embassy in Moscow. Later on however, Ankara initiated direct diplomatic relations and opened embassies in all Turkic republics.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 77.

<sup>75</sup> Deringil, *Denge Oyunu*, 5.

<sup>76</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 78.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA AND AZERBAIJAN WITHIN THE FIRST DECADE OF INDEPENDENCE

#### 3.1. Background

There were not any clear foreign policy orientation towards Central Asia and Azerbaijan almost until the final dissolution of the Soviet Union. This inactivity was to a large extent due to the security policies imposed by the Cold War circumstances of the time. The Kemalist establishment that adhered to the motto of Atatürk “peace at home, peace in the world” determined Turkey’s policy towards the region.<sup>78</sup> A passive foreign policy style and being largely an inactive player in international relations characterized Turkey’s political stance during the Cold War.

Some conservative politicians accused Turkey of turning its back on the Turkic world and of worsening of the country’s image in the world arena.<sup>79</sup> Among these were the Nationalist groups, discussed in the previous chapter, inspired by Pan-Turkist sentiments. This kind of Turkish nationalism went far beyond the Kemalist civic identity, favoring deeper cooperation and integration with the region, which they perceived to be the homeland of the Turks. In comparison to the official Turkish policy these Nationalist groups called for more assertive policy towards the Turkic countries instead of developing ties with the European Community.<sup>80</sup>

Another group that clamored for more solidarity with the former Soviet Muslim countries was the Islamic oriented groups such as the then Welfare party and similar organizations. Such groups have the tendency to see Turkey as the potential leader of the

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<sup>77</sup> Andican, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze*, 529.

<sup>78</sup> Bülent Aras, "Turkey's Policy in the Former Soviet South: Assets and Options," *Turkish Studies* 1, no. 1 (2000): 37.

<sup>79</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 77.

<sup>80</sup> Aras, "Turkey's Policy," *Turkish Studies*, 38.

Islamic world. Other Islamic oriented groups were the ones that aim to increase Islamic consciousness in the former Soviet world. They are mainly occupied with the opening up of Quranic schools, building mosques and establishing neighborhood centers.<sup>81</sup> Among these, the most influential one is Fethullah Gülen's Islamic community.

All these groups are crucial to understand Turkey's involvement in Central Asia and Azerbaijan after 1991, since along with the official Turkish policy such groups, nationalists and Islamists alike, have been active in the region. Throughout the last two decades these groups evolved; some have shrunk, others have become more influential. Again, some have bred other similar organizations, while sometimes the existing groups joined other groups with similar ideological discourse. After all however, the main trend in the division of these groups (as well as their ideological foundation and political interest) remained the same throughout the whole period of cooperation between Turkey and the regional countries since their independence. This ideological foundation and political interest, in turn, played (and will play in the future) an important role in the formulation of Turkish foreign policy towards Central Asia and Azerbaijan.

### **3.2. Motives behind Turkey's Activity in the Region**

The most active period for Turkey's relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus is perhaps Turgut Özal's era. After Özal's coming to power, Turkey started to import Soviet natural gas and Turkish firms started to enter the Soviet market. His visit to the Soviet Union in March 1991, the first presidential visit for twenty-two years, referred to an expansion of relations in almost all fields.<sup>82</sup> So, from an individual perspective, Turgut Özal's leadership was important in this changing style of Turkish foreign policy (towards the region).

Besides the Özal factor, who advocated a more aggressive policy towards the former Soviet countries, there were also some external reasons why Turkey's interest in the region increased. One was the rejection of Turkey's 1987 application for admission to the then European Community. This denial led to a feeling of exclusion among the Turkish public and the political elite. As a result, an argument at the time started that

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 79.

Turkey should be looking towards the east, that is to the Turkic republics.<sup>83</sup> Such an idea was attractive since Turkey's strategic importance after the Cold War was declining. This idea proved to be an interesting one for reclaiming Turkey's importance in global politics and the West.<sup>84</sup>

The "Turkish model" (which will be discussed in more detail below) concept started being used in this period in order to emphasize Turkey's still critical position in the world politics. In short, this model would allow Turkey to become an important player in the region through its ethnic and cultural ties. In this period, this model was not rejected by Russia or the West. Indeed, the latter, especially the US was pushing Ankara for more for more dynamic activities in the region. Again, in this period economically the region provided a fertile ground for Turkey and for its developing industry. In particular, the Turkish government strongly encouraged small businesses to explore the economic potential of the region.<sup>85</sup>

All these changes determined the new conditions for Turkey in the post-Cold War period. Ankara with enthusiasm welcomed the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of Turkic countries. Indeed, Turkey as a country that only recently began to lead an active foreign policy expected much from the given circumstances.

### **3.3. The Initial Euphoria Period**

As already mentioned, even before the independence of the countries of the former Soviet Union, since the mid-1980's, Ankara made attempts to develop contacts with the region. Along with this, the Turkish public watched the developments of affairs in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The Turkish public for example has been sensitive and reacted violently to events in the Soviet Union during the Zheltoksan tragedy<sup>86</sup> in

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<sup>83</sup> Philip Robins, "Between Sentiment and Self-Interest: Turkey's Policy toward Azerbaijan and the Central Asian States," *Middle East Journal* 47, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 595.

<sup>84</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 79.

<sup>85</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus," *Turkish Studies* 5, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 4.

<sup>86</sup> 1986 "December" riots started in Almaty, as a reaction to the dismissal of Dinmukhamed Konayev, the first Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan and an ethnic Kazakh, and



Kazakhstan in 1986, and the Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>87</sup> problem between Azerbaijan and Armenia between 1988 and 1994.<sup>88</sup>

Accordingly, when the Turkic states obtained independence, an excitement precipitated among the public and the various political fractions in Turkey. Turkey was the first country to recognize the newly independent Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan.<sup>89</sup> The then Turkish Minister Süleyman Demirel assertively proclaimed that with the disintegration of the Soviet Union a “gigantic Turkic world” was appearing and stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China.<sup>90</sup> This excitement was shared by the then president Özal who claimed that “the twenty first century will be the century of the Turks.”<sup>91</sup>

It was obvious that Turkish decision-makers were under the influence of the public opinion. They were excited during the initial period since they viewed the developments in the region as a possibility to have an advantage. Turkish leaders stressed the cultural, linguistic and religious ties with the regional countries. Through these links Ankara expected to have a more useful position in the region. Indeed, along with such nationalist and sentimental discourses Ankara also had pragmatic economic and foreign policy considerations.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, immediately after the recognition of regional countries, Turkish dignitaries

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the appointment of Gennady Kolbin, who had nothing in common with Kazakhstan and was Russian by ethnicity, by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. The protests began as a student demonstration, which in turn attracted thousands of other participants. As troops entered the city violence erupted and resulted in the deaths of more than 200 people and many more wounded.

<sup>87</sup> An armed conflict took place between ethnic Armenian of Nagorno-Karabakh region, the southwest of Azerbaijan, and the Republic of Azerbaijan. The latter had secessionist aims in Nagorno-Karabakh, while the former was backed by the Republic of Armenia.

<sup>88</sup> Fidan, “Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 112.

<sup>89</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 80.

<sup>90</sup> Gareth M. Winrow, “Turkey's Relations with the Transcaucasus and the Central Asian Republics,” *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, (March-May 1996): 136.

<sup>91</sup> Mustafa Şen, *Turkish Entrepreneurs in Central Asia: the Case of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*, PhD Thesis (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 2001), 15.

<sup>92</sup> Aydın, “Foucault's Pendulum,” *Turkish Studies*, 4.

started to pay visits to the area. In the period between February 28 and March 6, 1992 the then Turkish Minister of Education Köksal Toptan, the former Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin, the then State Minister Şerif Ercan and other officials from the Ministry of Education and Foreign Ministry as well as businessmen and members of the Turkish media visited Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Ukraine. The aim of this group of delegates was to find out the needs of the countries and to gather information about the future projects.<sup>93</sup> After this visit during which numerous agreements on cultural and educational relations were signed, the then Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin said that Turkey from then on would play an important and effective role in the region. In the same statement yet he also added that such a role does not imply a harsh competition with other countries. Hikmet Çetin emphasized the future role that Turkey might play for the newly independent countries:

These countries want to benefit from Turkey's experience while opening up to the outside world and they want a relationship that is based on equality.<sup>94</sup>

A little later, the then Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel visited the countries of the region, while allocating 1.2 billion dollars for their economic development. During his stay, Demirel also gave a solemn promise that Turkey would accept ten thousand students to the Turkish universities.<sup>95</sup> Another interesting fact was that Alparslan Türkeş, the leader of the Pan-Turkist Nationalist Action Party, and with whom Demirel formed a parliamentary alliance joined the prime minister's delegation. This implied the increased importance of the region for Ankara's intentions.<sup>96</sup> Altogether, for the entire first year more than 1,200 delegations visited the region.<sup>97</sup>

A rather warm response to Turkey was given by presidents of Turkic countries. In December 1991 Uzbek president Islam Karimov said that Uzbekistan and other newly independent countries have much to learn from Turkey, and, view Turkey as the "older

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<sup>93</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 80.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>95</sup> Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish*, 125.

<sup>96</sup> Philip Robins, "Turkey's Ostpolitik: Relations with the Central Asian States," in *Central Asia Meets the Middle East*, ed. David Menashri (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), 132.

<sup>97</sup> Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum," *Turkish Studies*, 4.

brother” (ağabey), urgently needed Turkey’s economic, political and cultural support.<sup>98</sup> His colleague from Kyrgyzstan was more sentimental explicitly stating that “Turkey is like a morning star which guides the paths of the Turkic republics.”<sup>99</sup>

This reciprocal affection led to a number of bilateral accords on variety of subjects between Turkey and the former Soviet republics. After establishing direct air connections and a satellite broadcast link with the region, the Turkish government set up the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA) in January 1992 in Ankara. The main duty of the Agency was to facilitate economic and cultural activities and to coordinate the flow of assistance to the area.<sup>100</sup> In addition to this, due to the political changes of the time the Turkish government reorganized the Foreign Ministry. The new directorate that was previously responsible for the USSR and Asia from then on started dealing with the newly created the Commonwealth of Independent States (excluding Caucasus). This directorate in turn was divided into two, one charged primarily with the Slavic countries while the other was accountable for the Turkic republics.<sup>101</sup> This division implied that ethnic background was the way how Turkey viewed the region. The fact that a separate directorate was formed for Turkic countries meant that Turkey harbored serious ambitions over the area.

In October 1992, the Ankara meeting took place where country leaders of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan convened. The Turkish side had great expectations from the meeting. For instance, Turkey intended and proposed establishing a Turkic Common Market and a Turkic Development and Investment Bank. In addition to this the Turkish side was hopeful that Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan would agree to build oil and gas pipelines to Europe via Turkey. However, the only important document that was signed at the summit was the Ankara Declaration. This was an agreement which discussed possibilities for cooperation in the field of culture, education, language, security and economics. The

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<sup>98</sup> Mustafa Aydın, “Türkiyenin Orta Asya-Kafkaslar Politikası,” Vol. 1, in *Küresel Politikada Orta Asya*, ed. Mustafa Aydın (Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, 2005), 109.

<sup>99</sup> Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish*, 121.

<sup>100</sup> Aydın, “Foucault's Pendulum,” *Turkish Studies*, 5.

<sup>101</sup> Robins, “Turkey's Ostpolitik,” 132-133.

agreement also marked the failure of Turkish ambitions in the region and frustrations due to the differing interests of the summit members.<sup>102</sup>

### **3.4. The Disenchantment Period**

Turkic summit was an important event because it was the first major meeting of Turkic countries. Not only government officials and diplomats showed a wide interest towards this summit, but also the public was intrigued by the organization of such a convention. The then Turkish president Turgut Özal for example was saying that it was a rare chance for the Turkic world to come together. He further added that the Turkic countries which already have a common history, culture and language must also have a common business and power. Above all Özal advocated that the countries of the summit should focus on cooperation in the field of economics.<sup>103</sup>

But, to his great regret Turkic countries were not ready for such intimacy. In particular, this course of affairs did not suit well with the presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. While the former was mostly concerned with the Russian minority, the latter worried that it could prevent Russia's participation aiming to end the Tajik war, a war which was a burden for Uzbekistan. Nazarbayev went further implying that he would not participate in any organization that would emphasize religious or ethnic affiliation. At the first summit it became apparent that the countries of the region were not ready to make serious decisions and radically change their political directions. For instance, Ankara's proposal to put an embargo on Armenia due to the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis caused dissonance in the meeting. The countries of the former Soviet Union did not want to prioritize Pan-Turkic cooperation over their relationship within the CIS.<sup>104</sup> Turkic republics had also rejected the idea of a Turkic Common Market and a Turkic Development and Investment Bank which implied no intention of transgressing further than cultural collaboration.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*, 125.

<sup>103</sup> Robins, "Turkey's Ostpolitik," 136.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 137-138.

<sup>105</sup> Winrow, "Turkey's Relations," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 136.

In fact, many experts compare Turkey's initial failure in Central Asia and Azerbaijan with the "Turkish model" proposed at the beginning of the 90's. It is worth looking in more detail to the model so passionately proposed by Ankara which was also supported by the West.

#### **3.4.1. Turkey as a Model**

After Soviet collapse, Iran had the prerequisites for becoming a new player in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It had historical, geographical and cultural proximity with the region. Historically, it had connections to the whole region. In terms of geopolitical factors, Iran is close to the region bordering Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. And in terms of cultural connections it is close to Tajikistan who speaks Persian language. As a result, Iran was pronounced as an influential actor during the period.

However, neither the Central Asian leaders nor the third parties, mainly because of the US stance, promoted the idea of the Iranian model. The former communists the leaders of the former Soviet countries did not want to bind Islam with politics. In addition to this Islam would not represent the religious convictions of the region populace of the time. The possibility of "Iranian Islamic model" which would make former Soviet governments anti-American and anti-Western was alarming for the Western world.<sup>106</sup> Accordingly, *ab origin* the idea of an "Iranian Islamic model" was rejected.

In its competition with Iran, Turkey seemed to have a better chance of playing an active role in the transition of the new republics. Turkey's common linguistic, historical, ethnic and religious bonds promoted the idea of its potential role. Azerbaijan and Central Asian countries (except for Tajikistan) spoke languages of the same family and people of these countries were mainly of Turkic origin. In addition to this, behind the promotion of the model, there was Turkey's secular and political structure as well as its successful experience in implementing a free market economy.<sup>107</sup> These conditions and achievements convinced many scholars and politicians of the time that former Soviet

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<sup>106</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 107-112.

<sup>107</sup> Bülent Aras, "Turkish Policy toward Central Asia," *SETA Policy Brief*, no. 12 (April 2008): 1-2.

Turkic countries should imitate Turkey's earlier successes in state building. As argued by a prominent Turkish scholar, Oral Sander a "Turkish model" would be a suitable example for the Turkic republics, in a way that it was far from fundamentalism promoted by Iran and that it would connect these countries with the West, as well as being good for their political and economic modernization.<sup>108</sup>

The most important reason in support of the view "Turkey as a model" was the fact that it was promoted by the Western allies of Turkey at the time. Now that the long-term "enemy" of the United States, the Soviet Union ceased to exist Washington had to form a new foreign policy position vis-à-vis the new states. As a result, after the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with these countries, the US gave Turkey, its NATO ally, the initiative to develop and to fulfill the political vacuum. According to the US policy makers Turkey would have become not only a political and economic leader in the region, but also a conductor of Western ideas and the distributor of pro-American sentiments as a model of a secular state with a Muslim population.<sup>109</sup> Such a policy orientation is clear in the words of the former president of the US George Bush who, on February 13, 1992 made it clear to the then Prime Minister of Turkey Süleyman Demirel that Turkey might be a "model of a democratic, secular state for the new Central Asia."<sup>110</sup> In the same year, Catherine Lalumiere, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in her visit to Central Asia stated that "... Turkey provided a valid model of development for many independent countries in Asia."<sup>111</sup>

The scholar Gareth Winrow put forward a similar argument in 1992:

The United States and other Western states have acknowledged that ideally the ex-Soviet Turkic republics should adopt to the Turkish model of development, namely, a reasonably well functioning liberal democracy supported by a free market economy in a secular Muslim populated state.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 6.

<sup>109</sup> M. Astahova, "'Turetskaia model' razvitiia" i prichiny ee nesostoiatel'nosti dlia possovetskih stran prikaskiskogo regiona (1992-1993 gody) " [The Turkish Model of Development and the Reasons of its Failure for the Post-Soviet Countries of the Caspian Region (1992-1993)], *Izvestiia Saratovskogo Universiteta: Ser. Istoriia. Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia* (Saratovskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet) 1, no. 11 (2011): 87-91.

<sup>110</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 5.

<sup>111</sup> Şen, *Turkish Entrepreneurs*, 36.

The US also supported that the newly established Turkic countries would follow the Turkish way of state building.<sup>113</sup> In 1992, during his meetings with the Central Asian leaders, the then US Secretary of State James Baker urged them to adopt the Turkish model of state building while emphasizing the US backing in this matter.<sup>114</sup>

The discourses of the Central Asian countries reveal that these countries were interested in “Turkish model”. During his visit to Ankara, in 1991, the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, and the President of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akayev during his visit in the same year openly proclaimed that they expect support from Turkey. On the other hand, President Nazarbayev during his visit to Turkey in September 1991 stated that the 21<sup>st</sup> century might be the “Century of the Turks,” referring to Turks as the people of both Turkey and other Turkic speaking countries.<sup>115</sup> In all cases, the newly independent Turkic countries were expecting that with the help of Turkey, they would strengthen their independence while establishing links with the rest of the world and safely carry out the transition. As a result, in such a way the leaders of the Turkic countries were not only supporting but also spurring Turkish activity in the region.

However, the idealistic dreams of becoming the model for “forgotten brothers” or becoming the supreme leader in the region were not destined to live long. The idea of the Turkish model started to lose its popularity. The model was challenged because of a series of Turkish domestic political problems such as the increase in Islamic fundamentalism and the Kurdish insurgency.<sup>116</sup> The idea that a country with grave ethnic problems could serve as a model for countries with more complicated ethnic structure did not sound rational for the newly independent countries.

As of 1993 it also became clear that the Russian Federation would have the desire to fulfill the vacuum left after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The war in Tajikistan

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<sup>112</sup> Gareth Winrow, "Turkey and Former Soviet Central Asia: National and Ethnic Identity," *Central Asian Survey* 11, no. 3 (1992): 107.

<sup>113</sup> Aydın, “Türkiyenin Orta Asya,” 102.

<sup>114</sup> Gülay Kılıç, *Turkey's Foreign Aid Policy towards Central Asia from a Comparative Perspective*, Master Thesis (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 2011), 47.

<sup>115</sup> Aydın, “Türkiyenin Orta Asya,” 107.

<sup>116</sup> Şen, *Turkish Entrepreneurs*, 39.

served as a converging factor, firstly in terms of military cooperation, and then as a premise for a formal defense agreement. Moreover, the initiative to come closer with the Russian Federation came from the regional countries, apparently due to the fear that their power might not stand against the domestic challenges.<sup>117</sup>

Another factor that adversely affected the relations between Turkey and former Soviet republics, as already mentioned above, was the death of the then President Turgut Özal. After the death of the President, the political and economic instability prevailed in the country since it was Özal who followed a different path of development and under his rule Turkey experienced an "economic miracle" - a sharp economic growth which seriously strengthened the international position of Ankara.<sup>118</sup> The increase in the level of domestic economic problems inside Turkey led to the realization that Turkey was not able to have a positive impact on the economic development of the Turkic countries.<sup>119</sup> Indeed, Turkey was economically weak at that time. Ankara failed to adequately assist its Turkic counterparts, in a sense that it neither could attract investors nor serve as an agent between the region and the West.

However, perhaps the most significant reason behind the failure of the "Turkish model" was the loss of the Western support. By the mid-90's the decision-makers in the West started to understand that Iranian influence in the region was insignificant. In addition to this, the Western initiators of the "Turkish model" started to fear that the idea of Pan-Turkism might exceed the boundaries,<sup>120</sup> which was unacceptable for them.

### **3.5. The Pragmatic Politics**

After the failure of the "Turkish model", the Turkish government quickly realized that the country was not destined to be a leader in the region. Along with the Russian Federation Ankara had to compete with such serious rivals such as the United States, the

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<sup>117</sup> Robins, "Turkey's Ostpolitik," 139-141.

<sup>118</sup> Astahova, "Turetskaia model'," 88.

<sup>119</sup> O. Zhigalina, "Tsentral'noaziatskii makroregion – perspektivy i al'ternativy politicheskogo i ekonomicheskogo sotrudnichestva" [The Central Asian Macro-region: Prospects and Alternative Political and Economic Cooperation], *Vostok*, no. 5 (1993): 171.

<sup>120</sup> Bal, *Turkey's Relations*, 116.



European Union, China, Japan, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>121</sup> Each of them had its own interests and particular strengths (in the fields such as economics, politics, military, and religious convictions) that Turkey had to compete with.

Once it became clear that Turkey was in a serious competition with other players with limited resources, Turkish foreign policy towards the region became more realistic and more pragmatic.<sup>122</sup> Turkish decision making circles started to consider a different that would bear more practical consequences and designed to gradually and firmly establish Ankara's strategic positions and interests in the region. In this case the region was still crucial for Turkey in terms of its political, economic and strategic gains; especially in bringing Caspian hydrocarbon resources through Turkey.

In this more realistic era, along with the official ways of establishing new agencies and organizations aiming to expand cooperation, a number of nongovernmental organizations and religious communities were active in the region.

At a diplomatic level Turkey was trying to develop closer political relations through organizing various official meetings. One such attempt of exploring new avenues for cooperation was the General Assembly of the Turkic States and Turkic People's Friendship and Cooperation Group. The first meeting that took place in March 1993 in Antalya focused on Turkic solidarity. Turkey gave great importance to this congress where many representatives of Turkic communities from the Russian Federation also participated while both President Turgut Özal and Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel attended it. The congress however raised harsh criticism by Moscow which was concerned about Pan-Turkic overtones such as the slogan of the meeting "Dilde birlik, işte birlik" (Unity in language and action). As a result, policymakers were more careful as not to antagonize Moscow in the future Turkic summits.<sup>123</sup> At the end of the congress, the parties signed a declaration in the fields of science, technology, language, education and culture. In addition to this, they decided to meet annually to promote cooperation in these fields and to establish the Parliamentary Working Group of

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<sup>121</sup> Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum," *Turkish Studies*, 10.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*, 127.

the Turkic States and Communities and the Supreme Council of Turkic States.<sup>124</sup>

The institutionalization of the ties between Turkey and the Turkic states would be the result of the second and the third Turkic Summits of Istanbul in October 1994 and Bishkek in August 1995 respectively. The environment surrounding the subsequent summits however was quite different from the first one. Turkey was not very excited about the summits as the previous ones. Moreover, Russia had already started expressing discontent with such meetings. During the Summit of the CIS in Ashgabat in December 1993, Yeltsin convinced Karimov not to participate in the planned summit in Baku. If it was not for the encouragement of the Turkish side, the meeting would probably not have taken place. Demirel's enormous efforts for this project led to the summit being convened. This, once again, confirmed the weakness of the Turkic solidarity vis-à-vis the Russian pressure.<sup>125</sup> In addition to this, during the summit in 1995, the Bishkek Declaration was signed with the goal to set in motion and expand the integration processes in Central Asia. However, this declaration was above all referring to the initial attempts for establishing cooperation in the economic and military spheres among Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and excluded Turkey.<sup>126</sup> Thus, by the end of the millennium the Turkish side failed to achieve considerable success in the political arena, Ankara had to content with modest agreements and relatively unimportant meetings.

Nonetheless, cooperation advancement in the economic and cultural spheres was giving hope to the Turkish leaders. By the end of the 1990's Ankara established formidable economic ties with the region. Economic activity was an important aspect of the Turgut Özal government's foreign policy. This strategy, started by Turgut Özal after the regional countries gained independence, continued throughout all 1990's. Indeed, economic means were often used by the decision makers in Ankara to reach political objectives in the region and vice versa. However, Turkish economic capacities as a part of the "Turkish model" were questioned and eventually doomed to failure. The financial crisis of 1994 in Turkey showed that Turkey's economy was uneven, immature and

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<sup>124</sup> Aydın, "Türkiyenin Orta Asya," 114.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>126</sup> Winrow, "Turkey's Relations," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 137.

itself depended on foreign assistance.<sup>127</sup> Despite these constraints however, Turkey managed to offer humanitarian aid valued 78 million dollars in 1994 and allotted about 2.4 billion in credits for the region by 1998. Turkey also considerably benefited from the increased trade with the region. Thus, if Turkey's trade with the Soviet Union in 1991 was about 1.7 billion dollars, the trade between the Turkey and the former Soviet republics in 1993 increased almost 2.5 times. Moreover, between 1992 and 1998 there was a six fold increase in the trade volume between Turkey and Central Asia.<sup>128</sup> Turkish policymakers were also hopeful that country's dependence on Middle Eastern oil will be counterbalanced and compensated with the increased oil supplies from Central Asia and Azerbaijan. An important consideration here was that the new oil and gas pipelines constructed had to bypass Russia. As a result, Turkish authorities were pressing that the new pipelines were built from Central Asia and the Caucasus to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. This would enable Turkey to benefit economically from royalties and transportation costs, plus Ankara could use up some of the oil and gas and lessen its dependence on Russia and Iran.<sup>129</sup> The West wholly supported this project, since it would diminish Russian influence in the region while Turkey, an ardent supporter of the Western ideas would subsequently become dominant in the region.

Coming to the cultural cooperation, it started to be an important aspect in the Turkish foreign policy towards the regional countries. For instance, Ministry of Culture participated in the projects of standardization of history and literary textbooks.<sup>130</sup> In addition to this, the Ministry of Education allocated educational scholarships, organized student exchange programs and academic conferences and opened several Turkish cultural centers. Some scholars argued that through these scholarships and grants Turkey was trying to supersede Russian cultural dominance.<sup>131</sup> A large number of these programs have been carried out under the auspices of the Turkish International

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<sup>127</sup> Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*, 135.

<sup>128</sup> Şen, *Turkish Entrepreneurs*, 22-23.

<sup>129</sup> Winrow, "Turkey's Relations," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 135.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>131</sup> Şen, *Turkish Entrepreneurs*, 19.

Cooperation and Development Agency (TICA). Some scholars argued that the establishment of such an organization meant that Turkey was apt to adapt to the new international order in the post-Cold War era and revealed the priority and importance it attributed to the Turkic countries.<sup>132</sup> In the cultural domain alongside with TICA, Ministers of Culture formed the Turkic Cultures and Arts Joint Administration (TÜRKSOY) in 1993 in Almaty. TÜRKSOY's<sup>133</sup> primary goals would be to support the cultural restructuring throughout the region and to establish friendly relations among the Turkish speaking peoples and nations, while exploring and protecting the common Turkic culture, language, history and etc.<sup>134</sup>

### 3.6. Conclusion

From 1991 to 2001 the newly independent Turkic countries became the most debated topic in the Turkish Grand National Assembly which signifies the importance that Ankara paid to these countries at the time.<sup>135</sup> In fact, in the first decade of official relations between Turkey and the regional states a certain pattern has emerged. This pattern above all shows that mutual relations between Turkey and the region have failed to reach equilibrium. The overoptimistic expectation of the early 1990's ended up with a great disappointment for Turkish politicians. Ankara's plan to become the main influence in the region has also ended in failure.<sup>136</sup>

In addition to this, the idea of the "Turkish Model" adopted in the early 1990's has shown to be ineffective. The model failed not only because the native leaders rejected it and due to the economic insolvency of the Turkish Republic, but also because the model was abandoned by the West, the main ally of Ankara in the region. Since there was not a

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<sup>132</sup> Aras, "Turkey's Policy," *Turkish Studies*, 44.

<sup>133</sup> The organization will be discussed in more detail in the 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter.

<sup>134</sup> "Hakkımızda: TÜRKSOY," *TÜRKSOY: Uluslararası Türk Kültürü Teşkilatı Web Sitesi*, 2008, <http://www.turksoy.org.tr/TR/belge/1-73883/hakkimizda.html> (accessed February 28, 2012).

<sup>135</sup> Cüneyt M. Yenigün, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrasında TBMM ve Dış Politika: Belgeler ve Yorumlar* (Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, 2004), 499.

<sup>136</sup> Shireen Hunter, "Turkey, Central Asia, and the Caucasus: Ten Years After Independence," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 1, no. 2 (2001): 14.

comprehensive and well-planned foreign policy orientation towards the newly independent republics, and because Turkish politicians at the time failed to thoroughly comprehend the internal dimensions of the situation in the Caucasus and Central Asia,<sup>137</sup> Turkey started to completely lose grounds to the major actors firstly in the face of Russia and secondly in the face of China. In particular Russia, expressing displeasure and being jealous at every Turkish initiative, redefined its foreign policy and gradually squeezed Turkey out of the region at the time, either politically, ideologically, economically and even culturally.

Since the mid-1990's Turkey started to act more realistically upon realization of her power capacities and the realities of the region. These realities have shown that Ankara could not exclude the Russian Federation and that she had to lead a more realistic, balanced and cooperation based politics in the region.<sup>138</sup>

Lastly, even though Turkey overestimated its ambitions and capabilities concerning the region, it succeeded in establishing and continuing the tradition of extensive political, military, economic and cultural ties with some of the Central Asian countries. Last but not least, arguing that Turkey has a considerable presence and is especially influential in Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan it should not be forgotten that the essential factor in Turkey's success for prominent Turkish role in this region has been Western support.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Aras, "Turkey's Policy," *Turkish Studies*, 36.

<sup>138</sup> Aydın, "Türkiyenin Orta Asya," 104.

<sup>139</sup> Hunter, "Turkey, Central Asia," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 14-15.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4. TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH KAZAKHSTAN SINCE KAZAKHSTAN'S INDEPENDENCE

#### 4.1. Kazakhstan since Independence

Geo-strategic, socioeconomic and demographic factors make Kazakhstan a unique country among the other countries of the region. First of all, Kazakhstan is the largest country in the region. With its 2.7 million square kilometers, it is the ninth largest country in the world, and as large as Western Europe and over twice the combined area of the countries such as Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>140</sup> Among other regional countries, except for Azerbaijan, it is the only country in the region to have direct borders with the Russian Federation, and accordingly is the key to the Central Asia.<sup>141</sup> Meanwhile, the country is landlocked and has limited renewable water resources. Secondly, Kazakhstan has a vast amount of untouched fossil-fuel resources and substantial precious metal deposits. In the post-communist world Kazakhstan is second only to Russia in the variety and abundance of its natural resources.<sup>142</sup>

In terms of demographics, Kazakhstan has the second largest population in Central Asia after Uzbekistan.<sup>143</sup> The country has a very precarious ethnic balance. At independence Kazakhs accounted only about 40 percent of the population of the country, while ethnic Russian constituted about 37 percent of the population. Nowadays, Kazakhs

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<sup>140</sup> Michael Fergus and Janar Jandosova, *Kazakhstan: Coming of Age* (London: Stacey International, 2003), 10.

<sup>141</sup> Gönül Küçükyörü, *Three Main Components of Turkey's Changing Policy Toward Central Asia After 1990: Energy, Economy, Culture*, Master Thesis (İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, 2009), 88.

<sup>142</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, *Kazakhstan: unfulfilled promise* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), 128.

<sup>143</sup> "Central Asia: Kazakhstan," *Central Intelligence Agency (CIA): The World Factbook*, July 13, 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html> (accessed July 25, 2013).

however, as the titular nation, comprises up to 63 percent, while there are about 23 percent of ethnic Russians.<sup>144</sup> This fact largely affects Kazakhstan's domestic and foreign policy.<sup>145</sup> It was also thought that after the disintegration of the Soviet Kazakhstan will be caught up with ethnic and religious conflicts, but the country leaders at the helm managed to integrate different religions and ethnicities within the idea of Kazakhstani citizenship.<sup>146</sup>

On the eve of Turkey's entering the country, Kazakhstan was the most unwilling country to separate from the Soviet Union, not making the decisions for independence until the last minute.<sup>147</sup> Kazakhstan was the most economically dependent on Russian among the Central Asian countries. This dependency is the result of the Soviet industrial system, where the transportation and the division of labor were closely bounded with each other.<sup>148</sup> In terms of the foreign policy Kazakhstan was the closest to the Russian strategic thinking, and the country's political overtures to Russia are noteworthy, especially since the Russian is accepted as the second official language in Kazakhstan and the country has compulsory Russian education.<sup>149</sup>

In addition, ethnically, Kazakh population is considered Turkic and the Kazakhs are Turcophones. And, the Kazakh is similar to the language used in Turkey, however compared to the other Turkic languages it is the one of the most distant one from the Anatolian Turkish. When the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, the majority of Kazakhs living in the cities and those living in the Northern and Eastern regions were predominantly Russophones and had strong Soviet cultural values.<sup>150</sup> The social structure of the Kazakh society like in other Turkic Republics in Central Asia maintains

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<sup>144</sup> "Central Asia: Kazakhstan," *Central Intelligence Agency*.

<sup>145</sup> Küçükyörü, *Three Main Components*, 88.

<sup>146</sup> Hasan Kanbolat, "Türk Dış Politikasında Kazakistanın Yeri ve Geleceği," *OrtadoğuAnaliz* (ORSAM) 3, no. 30 (Haziran 2011): 55.

<sup>147</sup> Kılıç, *Turkey's Foreign Aid*, 28.

<sup>148</sup> Esra Akgül, *Russian Foreign Policy and the Discourse of Eurasianism Rhetoric versus Reality*, Master Thesis (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 2005), 39.

<sup>149</sup> Kılıç, *Turkey's Foreign Aid*, 35.

<sup>150</sup> Bhavna Dave, *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 1.

tribal-like features. Yet, the Kazakhs were the last among the Turkic peoples who set up sedentary way of living, staying nomads up until the mid-20 century.<sup>151</sup>

In this atmosphere, it is seemed that political preference of Kazakhstan, the delicate mix and geo-strategic location of the republic (far away from Turkey, and between Russia and China) were the most compelling arguments to disperse Turkey's interest toward the country.<sup>152</sup> And, Kazakhstan seemed to be the most distant countries among the Central Asian countries, but the Turkish republic managed to some extent open up to the country, eventually leading this cooperation to a new level.

#### **4.2. Bilateral Diplomatic Relations in Historical Perspective**

Turkey has a special place in Kazakhstan's foreign policy. Ankara was the first country to recognize the sovereignty of Kazakhstan on December 16, 1991. In fact, Turkey's recognition of Kazakhstan's independence practically meant the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations. In March 1992, the Turkish government delegation headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Çetin paid a visit to Kazakhstan. Two countries adopted the Declaration of Principles and Objectives for the bilateral relationship. This agreement served as a foundation for further bilateral relations. This visit also led to the opening of the Turkish Embassy in Almaty on April 18, the same year. In the same manner on May 20, 1992 in Ankara Kanat Saudabayev, the first Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Turkey, took up his duties.<sup>153</sup> Another visit to independent Kazakhstan by the then Turkish Prime Minister, Süleyman Demirel, took place in April-May 1992. Being the first official visit by the Turkish Prime Minister, it laid the foundation for an active Kazakh-Turkish cooperation in virtually all areas of political, economic and cultural interaction. To be more precise, the visit gave impetus to the development of bilateral cooperation in various areas such as investment, trade, economic, transportation, construction, culture, training, development of small and

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<sup>151</sup> Gamze Güngörmüş Kona, "The Social, Political and Economic Problems Central Asian Republics Face and the Role of Turkey in the Central Asian Region," in *Turkish Review of Eurasian Studies* (Istanbul: Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies, 2003), 177.

<sup>152</sup> Robins, "Between Sentiment and Self-Interest," *Middle East Journal*, 598.

<sup>153</sup> Lale Ülker, "Kazakhstan - Turkey: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," *Kazahstanskaia Pravda*, March 2, 2012, <http://www.kazpravda.kz/c/1330679133> (accessed April 5, 2012).



medium-sized businesses, energy, oil, the creation of transport infrastructure in the Caspian Sea, and the transportation of Kazakhstani goods by sea.<sup>154</sup> Crucial for both bilateral and multilateral cooperation was the first official visit of the president of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to Turkey on October 28-31, 1992. The main purpose of the visit was to attend the first Summit of Heads of State of Turkic Language Speaking Countries. During the visit, Nazarbayev signed the Ankara Declaration and the two sides agreed on establishing an Embassy of Kazakhstan in Ankara. In addition to this, the two sides signed an agreement of establishing the International Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Kazakh-Turkish University in the city of Turkestan.<sup>155</sup> Nazarbayev's second visit to Turkey in 1994 was also of great importance for the development of bilateral relations. The two sides signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. The parties also signed agreements to stimulate cooperation in political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian fields.<sup>156</sup> In 1995, the then President Süleyman Demirel (June) and the then Prime Minister Tansu Çiller (August), both paid visits to Kazakhstan. Henceforth, a new factor has emerged in the Kazakh-Turkish relations, namely a project of the Caspian Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.<sup>157</sup> During the Welfare Party coalition government Turkey's interest towards the Central Asia declined. Necmettin Erbakan, the Welfare Party leader, seemed to be less interested in Turkic countries and preferred to visit Islamic countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran and Libya instead,<sup>158</sup> high level contacts between the two countries continued though. Further diplomatic contacts proceeded in the same form as the previous ones. Here, it should be highlighted however that the frequency of Turkish delegations coming to Kazakhstan decreased significantly until 2005. Until then, it was mostly the president of Kazakhstan unilaterally promoted

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<sup>154</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentrāl'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 214.

<sup>155</sup> S. K. Tüymebayev et al., *Kazakistan-Türkiye: Dostluk ile İşbirliğinin 20 Yılı* (Ankara: Kazakistan Cumhuriyeti Ankara Büyükelçiliği, 2012), 39.

<sup>156</sup> Tüymebayev et al., *Kazakistan-Türkiye*, 41.

<sup>157</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentrāl'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 215-216.

<sup>158</sup> Gareth Winrow, "Turkey and the Newly Independent States of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus" in *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, ed. Barry Rubin and Kemal Kırışçı (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 181.

further cooperation by visiting Turkey. President Nazarbayev became the first foreign guest of Abdullah Gül after his appointment as the president. Later when, Abdullah Gül became the president of Turkey, he visited Kazakhstan more frequently than any Turkish president ever did in the past.<sup>159</sup> The year 2009 was of great significance for Kazakhstan and Turkey in terms of political relations. The Treaty on Strategic Partnership signed in this year during President Nazarbayev's visit to Turkey is said to lead the interaction between the two countries to a new dimension in terms of political relations.<sup>160</sup>

Looking to the past twenty years one might conclude several tendencies in Kazakh-Turkish relations. Firstly, the foundation for the bilateral cooperation was mainly based on cultural and economic cooperation. During the two-sided visits the leaders of the countries were bringing a delegation of businessman with them. In this aspect, it should be added that in course of time Kazakhstan grew to become the most important economic partner in the region. Secondly, the cooperation was mostly promoted on an individual level. Here it should be noted that the involvement from the Turkish side was mostly on a presidential level, although the prime-minister politically is a more influential and an active figure in Turkey. This however may be explained due to the fact that Turkey did want to keep a low-key profile vis-à-vis the Russian Federation, so the frequency of the prime ministers' visits was less than those of the presidents of the Turkish Republic. In addition to this, the development of cooperation largely depended on the zeal of certain high-level politicians; by and large the initiators from the Turkish side were Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel in the 1990's and Abdullah Gül in the 2000's. A considerable share of endeavor behind development of the bilateral cooperation is also the merit of Nursultan Nazarbayev. Lastly, the high-level contacts between leaders of Kazakhstan and Turkey proceeded frequently and on a regular basis. Ankara and Astana established a tradition of not only bilateral diplomatic meetings, but also during the regular multilateral meetings such as the CICA, the SCO, the ECO, the OSCE and the Turkic Summits.

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<sup>159</sup> Tüymebayev et al., *Kazakistan-Türkiye*, 47-51.

<sup>160</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentral'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 216.

### 4.3. General Background of the Relations in Multilateral Framework

#### 4.3.1. Conference on Interaction and Conference-building Measures in Asia (CICA)

The Conference on Interaction and Conference-building Measures in Asia (CICA)<sup>161</sup> plays an important role in the diplomatic relations of Kazakhstan and Turkey. Turkey, being one of the most active members of the conference,<sup>162</sup> from the very beginning was supporting Kazakhstan's initiative of leading such a multi-national forum. In April, 1993 during Turgut Özal's visit in Kazakhstan Turkey for the first time expressed political support for Kazakhstan's initiative in convening the CICA.<sup>163</sup> Starting from the same year Kazakhstan initiated a process with the goal of laying foundation of an OSCE-like (the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) organization in Asia, which would have the similar objectives and institutions. In 2002 during the first CICA Summit the forum members elaborated the corporate structure and adopted the "Almaty Act" which draws the basic framework for future cooperation areas.<sup>164</sup> Kazakhstan as the initiator took up chairmanship duties of the CICA. On January 1, 2010 Astana after taking over the OSCE chairmanship announced that it wanted to hand over the CICA presidency to Turkey. According to Nazarbayev Turkey as the one of the most active members of CICA was an ideal candidate for the presidency.<sup>165</sup> At the same time, Turkey is one of the few member states that make

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<sup>161</sup> The Conference on Interaction and Conference-building Measure in Asia (CICA) is an inter-governmental forum the first time proposed by Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev during the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1992. Playing an important role in terms of Kazakhstan's political assertion, the aim of the forum is to enhance cooperation towards promoting peace, security and stability in Asia.

<sup>162</sup> "Asya'da İşbirliği ve Güven Arttırıcı Önlemler Konferansı (AİGK)," *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Başkanlığı Web Sitesi*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/asyada-isbirligi-ve-guven-arttirici-onlemler-konferansi.tr.mfa> (accessed July 26, 2013).

<sup>163</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentrāl'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 215.

<sup>164</sup> "About CICA," *Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia Web Site*, [http://www.s-cica.org/page.php?page\\_id=7&lang=1](http://www.s-cica.org/page.php?page_id=7&lang=1) (accessed July 26, 2013).

<sup>165</sup> Gülay Kılıç, "CICA (AİGK): Güvenlik Değil, 'Güven Arttırıcı Önlemler' Konferansı," *Review*

voluntary financial contributions to the administrative body of the Conference.<sup>166</sup> As a result, during the third CICA Summit in June 2010 in Istanbul, Kazakhstan passed on the CICA chairmanship to Turkey. Initially the tenure of Turkish chairmanship was in the 2010-2012 period, but later it was extended until 2014.<sup>167</sup>

#### 4.3.2. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)<sup>168</sup> as the domain of Kazakh-Turkish relations from a multilateral perspective was put on the agenda when Turkey was granted the “dialogue partner” status of the organization in 2012.<sup>169</sup> The current Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayip Erdoğan from time to time expressed the desire of Turkey being the full member of the SCO. The fact that Turkey’s request to become a full member of the European Union had repeatedly been rejected only strengthened this notion,<sup>170</sup> Kazakhstan for its part has always been backing Turkish participation in the

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*of International Law and Politics*, no. 21 (2010): 171.

<sup>166</sup> "Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia," *Asyada İşbirliği ve Güven Arttırıcı Önlemler Konferansı Türk Dönem Başkanlığı Web Sitesi*, <http://www.cicaistanbul.org/belgeler-4.tr.mfa> (accessed July 26, 2013).

<sup>167</sup> "Chairmanship," *Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia Web Site*, [http://www.s-cica.org/page.php?page\\_id=8&lang=1](http://www.s-cica.org/page.php?page_id=8&lang=1) (accessed July 26, 2013).

<sup>168</sup> The SCO is the outcome of the Shanghai Five, founded in 1996 by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. The reason behind convening the Shanghai Five was to settle down the border disputes between the former Soviet republics with China. After Uzbekistan’s inclusion in the organization the Shanghai Five was renamed into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The aim of the organization is to strengthen good-neighborly, friendly relations and mutual trust among the member states; to show common effort for the protection of regional peace, security and stability; to fight against terrorism, radicalism, separatism, organized crime and illegal migration; to reinforce cooperation in political, economic, scientific and technologic, energy, as well as environmental issue. It should be noted, the organization’s initial concentration was in the political and security spheres (considered NATO’s counterbalance in the region), yet under the Russian pressure (and backed by the Central Asian countries) the organization’s main area of cooperation became the economic field.

<sup>169</sup> "Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Web Site*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/shanghai-cooperation-organization.en.mfa> (accessed July 27, 2013).

<sup>170</sup> "Bizi de Şangay Beşlisi’ne alın!" *Milliyet Gazetesi*, July 26, 2012,

SCO.<sup>171</sup> In 2012, Kazakh foreign minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov said that Turkey as a partner would give more authority and political clout on the world arena, since Ankara has shown significant economic results and is also included in the G20 group.<sup>172</sup> Kazakhstan is interested in Turkey's admittance in the organization. Nazarbayev, who was one of the initiators of the organization, believed that the membership of Turkey in the SCO would help the country to lead a multi-directional foreign policy. Although, the current presence of two geopolitical giants like China and Russia allows Kazakhstan to resolve its national security problems and defend its national interests,<sup>173</sup> the membership of the Turkic counterparts to the SCO would not only increase the significance of the Central Asian region on the world arena and Kazakhstan accordingly, but it will also enhance Astana's positions in the organization giving more space in balancing between Ankara, Beijing and Moscow.

#### 4.3.3. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)

Turkey, together with Iran and Pakistan, is one of the founding members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).<sup>174</sup> Its main aim is to promote economic, technical and cultural cooperation among the members of the organization. Kazakhstan, along with Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and

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<http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/bizi-de-sangay-beslisi-ne-alin-/siyaset/siyasetdetay/26.07.2012/1571936/default.htm> (accessed July 27, 2013).

<sup>171</sup> Ali Başaran, *Türk-Rus İlişkileri Tarihinden Şanghay İşbirliği Örgütüne Bakış* (Ankara: Ankara Strateji Enstitüsü, October 1, 2012).

<sup>172</sup> D. Mukhtarov, *Turkey's Partnership Will Give SCO More Authority* (Baku: Trend News Agency, May 14, 2012).

<sup>173</sup> Kuralai I. Baizakova, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Role in Countering Threats and Challenges to Central Asian Regional Security," *Russian Politics and Law* 51, no. 1 (January-February 2013): 71-74.

<sup>174</sup> The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental organization consisting of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Being founded by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan in 1985, the organization's common objective is to establish a single market for goods and services, much like the European Union. The ECO is also an *ad hoc* organization under the United Nations Charter (Chap. VIII). The organization's secretariat and cultural department are located in Tehran, its economic bureau is in Turkey and its scientific bureau is situated in Pakistan.

Uzbekistan became a member of the organization in 1992, with the principal goal integrating into the international system in mind.<sup>175</sup> The organization members share common features; they have close cultural and historical ties and most members of the organization are both Muslim and Turkic.<sup>176</sup> It should be noted that at first Kazakhstan did not apply for full membership. Kazakhstan's bid for observer status during the second ECO Conference of Ministers was denied because there was no provision for such status. However, during the first ECO Summit right after the ministerial conference, Kazakhstan made a full request for joining the organization, and as a result was admitted in 1992.<sup>177</sup>

The ECO has also been an important multilateral framework for Turkey. Firstly, it enhanced economic cooperation within the member states. It also was giving privilege such as economic concessions when trading with Iran or other Central Asian countries having a high level of hydrocarbon reserves. It also offers not so pronounced political benefits, such as making the organization a tool of political influence in the region.<sup>178</sup> For the Central Asian countries and especially for Kazakhstan, ECO gives a wide range of economic opportunities, the most prominent of which is the opportunity to develop transit routes for trade, since Kazakhstan like other Central Asian countries is a landlocked country and the main rail road and pipeline links connect through either the north; Russia or the Caucasus.<sup>179</sup> Under the framework of the ECO Kazakhstan developed extensive economic cooperation with Turkey. Kazakhstan for instance is the second only after Iran in terms of bilateral trade volume with Turkey.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> "Who We Are," *Economic Cooperation Organization Web Site*, <http://www.ecosecretariat.org/> (accessed July 28, 2013).

<sup>176</sup> Alaattin Kızıltan and Ali Rıza Sandalcılar, "Türkiye'nin Dış Ticaretinde Ekonomik İşbirliği Teşkilatı'nın (ECO) Yeri ve Önemi," *Avrasya Etüdleri* 1, no. 39 (2011), 102.

<sup>177</sup> K. L. Afrasiabi and Yadolah Pour Jalali, "The Economic Cooperation Organization: Regionalization in a Competitive Context," *Mediterranean Quarterly*, October 2001, 67-68.

<sup>178</sup> Sercan Doğan, "Ekonomik İşbirliği Teşkilatı: 21. Yüzyılda Tarihi İpek Yolunu Canlandırma Çabaları," *Ortadoğu Analiz* 3, no. 26 (Şubat 2011): 66.

<sup>179</sup> Richard Pomfret, "The Economic Cooperation Organization: Current Status and Future Prospects," *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 4 (1997): 661.

<sup>180</sup> Kızıltan and Sandalcılar, "Türkiye'nin Dış," *Avrasya Etüdleri*, 108.

#### 4.3.4. The Turkic Council and the Turkic Summits

Turkey's initial political initiative towards the Central Asian region and Azerbaijan started under the "Turkic world" slogan. The excitement of the Turkish leaders and the support of the Western world led to the clearly expressed political activity of Ankara in the region. As a result, newly independent countries were invited to Ankara for the Summit of Heads of State of the Turkic Language Speaking Countries, or the Turkic Summit.<sup>181</sup> However, the first Turkic Summit ended with a major disappointment for Turkish officials. Ankara entered the summit with rather ambitious expectations while the first multilateral meeting of the presidents of the Turkic states ended with a vaguely worded declaration.<sup>182</sup> After the First Turkic Summit, Turkish officials followed a more cautious and pragmatic line towards the Turkic countries. This fact did not stop the convention of the summits however. Despite certain difficulties, the Turkic Summits continued eventually leading to a more concrete institutionalization. First, in 2008 the heads of parliaments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey established the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic speaking countries (TÜRKPA),<sup>183</sup> and one year later during the Ninth Turkic Language Speaking Countries Summit, country leaders of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey signed the Nakhcivan Agreement leading to the establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, or the Turkic Council.<sup>184</sup> While the former mainly aims to provide political assistance through parliamentary diplomacy,<sup>185</sup> the latter not only embraces multilateral cooperation in almost all areas of common interest, but it also promotes common

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<sup>181</sup> At first called the Turkic Summit, later by the request of some presidents of the Turkic countries of the former Soviet Union the name of the meetings were changed into the Turkic Language Speaking Countries Summits.

<sup>182</sup> Winrow, "Turkey's Relations," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 136.

<sup>183</sup> "About TÜRKPA," *TÜRKPA (The Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries) Web Site*, April 10, 2012, <http://www.turk-pa.org/cat.php?cat=2023&lang=en> (accessed July 30, 2013).

<sup>184</sup> "General Information," *Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States*, 2011, <http://www.turkkon.org/eng/icerik.php?no=31> (accessed July 30, 2013).

<sup>185</sup> "About TÜRKPA," *TÜRKPA*.

positions on foreign policy issues.<sup>186</sup> In fact, the Council also functions as a complementary umbrella organization not only for the TÜRKPAA, but also for the existing supplementary cooperation mechanisms such as, the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY) and the Turkic Business Council.<sup>187</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that according to the agreement under the framework of the Turkic Council, citizens of the country members of the council may use Turkey's embassy or consulate for diplomatic reasons if there is no consular authority for their country of origin.<sup>188</sup>

Having links with the Turkic countries through multilateral institutions such as the TÜRKSÖY, the TÜRKPAA or the Turkic Council means Pan-Turkic aspirations are still an important aspect in Turkey's foreign policy. In fact, Pan-Turkism is an element that makes it possible for Turkey to stay politically active in the region in the long term. The fact that five out of ten Turkic Summits were initiated and hosted by Turkey is an indicator of the Turkish willingness for a more cooperative framework. Nazarbayev, who at first treated Turkic Summits skeptically declaring that he would not participate in any undertakings that would bear ethnic character, later supported all Turkish initiatives in convening the Summits. In fact, he took part in all meetings without interruption, whereas for example Uzbekistan, one of the founding members, did not participate to any summit after 2006. The Turkmenistan side as well considers the summits relatively insignificant, attending the summits at a ministerial level and not being party to important summit agreements.<sup>189</sup> In addition to this, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan did not take part in the establishment of the Turkic Council, whereas Kazakhstan was the direct initiator of the organization. In fact, Astana stood behind almost all programs and institutions suggested by Turkey after 2000. Indeed, according to an official in the Turkic Council, recently Kazakhstan has in a way become the second center after Turkey in terms of supporting Pan-Turkic integration processes, while spreading and

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<sup>186</sup> "General Information," *Cooperation Council*.

<sup>187</sup> "Türk Konseyi (Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler İşbirliği Konseyi)," *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı Web Sitesi*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turk-konseyi.tr.mfa> (accessed July 30, 2013).

<sup>188</sup> Alim Bayaliyev, interview by Dastan Almen, *Personal Interview* Istanbul, (April 13, 2013).

<sup>189</sup> "History of Summits," *Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States Web Site*, 2011, <http://www.turkkon.org/eng/icerik.php?no=29> (accessed July 30, 2013).



protecting political ideas based on Pan-Turkic aspirations.<sup>190</sup> The establishment of the Turkic Academy in Astana in 2009 only strengthens this view. Turkic Academy is a research center, which explores the role and place of the Turkic Civilization. The academy is unique in a way that it is now the only place among Turkic countries that applies Turcology in social sciences and humanities in a systematic manner. The center also gives opportunities to the willing researchers to print materials (books, booklets, etc.) concerning the Turkic world.<sup>191</sup>

#### **4.4. Bilateral Relations within the Military Realm**

Military cooperation is the most low-key domain in the bilateral relations of Turkey and Kazakhstan. The main trend in military relationship is the training of Kazakhstani servicemen in Turkish military schools, training and equipping of Kazakh Special Forces and assisting in the reform of Kazakhstan's Armed Forces. In 2010, Kazakhstan's then Defense Minister Adylbek Jaksybekov stressed that Turkey is one of the priority partners of Kazakhstan in the field of defense, adding that this tendency received a new impetus after two countries signed the Agreement on Strategic Partnership in 2009.<sup>192</sup>

In 2010 in Astana Kazakhstan organized the First International Armament and Military-technical Equipment Exhibition (KADEX-2010).<sup>193</sup> Kazakhstan is a novice in conducting the military fairs, the purpose of which is to buy and sell new military equipment and attract investors. The country needed support from the partner countries so that the fair gained popularity. Turkey was one of the countries that contributed the most in the organization of the fair. Upon the invitation of the Minister of Defense of

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<sup>190</sup> Bayaliyev, *Personal Interview*.

<sup>191</sup> "Historical Background of Formation of the Turkic Academy," *Turkic Academy Web Site*, <http://www.turkacadem.kz/en/ab.php?set=2> (accessed August 1, 2013).

<sup>192</sup> "Turtsiia Iavliaetsia Odnim iz Prioritetnyh Partnërov Kazahstana v Sfere Oborony - A. Dzhaksybekov" [Turkey is Considered One of the Priority Partners of Kazakhstan in the Sphere of Defense - A.Dzhaksybekov], *Zakon.kz Novostnoi Portal*, October 13, 2010, <http://www.zakon.kz/186772-turcija-javljaetsja-odnim-iz.html> (accessed August 1, 2013).

<sup>193</sup> "Mezhdunarodnaia Vystavka Vooruzheniia i Voenno-Tehnicheskogo Imushchestva: Istoriia" [International Exhibition of Arms and Military Equipment: History], *Kadex 2014: Kazakhstan Defense Expo Web Site*, 2013, <http://kadex.kz/article/kadex-2012> (accessed August 1, 2013).

Kazakhstan, Turkey's President Abdullah Gül took part in the opening ceremony of the fair. Turkish representative was the only president on the fair, while all other countries participated either at a ministerial level or at a level below.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, Turkey as well as Russia presented the largest number of companies at the exhibition.<sup>195</sup> Ankara's support led to the fact that the trading of the military equipment has become the new direction in the bilateral military cooperation recently. In 2011 Aselsan, leading electronics and electronic systems company in Turkey signed a cooperation agreement with Eurocopter Kazakhstan Engineering on the integration of avionics equipment and systems in EC-145 helicopters.<sup>196</sup> In 2012 during the Second KADEX 2012 exhibition in Astana Turkey's Otokar and Kazakhstan Engineering signed an agreement on the joint production of the "Kobra" armored vehicles.<sup>197</sup>

Military sphere is an important factor in the cooperation between two countries. Until quite recently the collaboration within the scope of the Armed Forces of two countries was the only area of military cooperation. Since 2009 after the Strategic Partnership Agreement was signed, military cooperation reached a new level. From then on military equipment and joint military constructions has become a key field in terms of its contribution to the development and strengthening of bilateral military and military-technical cooperation. At the same time, the two sides are currently working on joint projects, the most prominent of which are the establishment of a venture for the production of wheeled armored vehicles together with "Otokar", the opening of an optical devices factory together with "Aselsan". The Kazakhstani side is currently having talks with the Turkish Defense Industry Committee on the construction of the

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<sup>194</sup> ""Kadex-2010" Exhibition Was Opened," *Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan Web Site*, May 26, 2010, <http://www.mod.gov.kz/mod-en/index.php/component/content/article/330-lkadex2010r-exhibition-was-opened-> (accessed August 2, 2013).

<sup>195</sup> "Defense Cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan," *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, July 2012: Supplemental Index.

<sup>196</sup> Aselsan, *Aselsan Faaliyet Raporu 2011*, Annual Report (Ankara: ASELSAN Elektronik Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş., 2012), 18.

<sup>197</sup> "Defense Cooperation," *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, Supplemental Index.

shipyard on the Caspian coast.<sup>198</sup>

#### **4.5. Bilateral Relations within the Economic Realm**

Kazakhstan's sovereignty coincided with Turkey of Özal's period. A high economic growth rate and a revolutionary structural change towards an industrialized country in the 1980's characterize political agenda of the time. Turgut Özal played a crucial role in the adoption of liberal economic policies when the Turkish economy grew at an annual rate of over 5 percent. The Turkish economy at the same time became dependent, and as a result interested in economic conditions in the surrounding regions, because in the 1980's Turkey attached great importance to export, tourism and the construction sectors. The markets of the former Soviet countries after the Cold War became vital for the Turkish businessmen and the dependent classes because it promised new opportunities for the growing Turkish economy. Economic realm, as a part of the "Turkey as a model" strategy, stood out among other cooperation fields and according to Özal had to play a crucial role in the relations with the newly emerged countries of the former Soviet Union.<sup>199</sup>

As for Kazakhstan, at the beginning of the 1990's its economic system was fragmenting at a high speed leading to the economic breakdown after the break of the Soviet Union. Accompanied by an unprecedented increase in the level of inflation, the destruction of the accumulated economic potential, mass unemployment and growing poverty, this period signifies the greatest economic downturn in Kazakhstan's modern history of development. Immediately after independence, Kazakhstani leaders started up economic reforms in order to provide healthy transition to the market economy and to catch up with the international community. Considering the timeline of Kazakhstan's economic development, the macroeconomic dynamics of the last two decades can be

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<sup>198</sup> "V Stambule Obsuzhdeny Napravleniia i Perspektivy Sotrudnicetva Kazahstana i Turtsii v Voennno-Tekhnicheskoi Sfere" [The Trends and Prospects of Cooperation Between Kazakhstan and Turkey in the Military-Technical Sphere Were Discussed in Istanbul], *KazInform Novostnoi Portal*, May 13, 2013, <http://www.inform.kz/rus/article/2557414> (accessed August 2, 2013).

<sup>199</sup> "Turgut Özal Period in Turkish Foreign Policy: Özalism," *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, September 2009: Supplemental Index.

divided into five basic steps.<sup>200</sup>

During the first period (1991-1995) the Kazakh government was busy with the implementation of the transition from a planned to a market economy. As of 1992, Kazakhstan followed radical price liberalization and early privatization reforms.<sup>201</sup> An important step in the restructuring of the economy was the beginning of the circulation of the national currency “Tenge” in 1993. It also became one of the initial efforts by the Kazakh government to move out of the Soviet economic system.<sup>202</sup> The decreasing trajectory of the dynamics of all the indicators was the economic peculiarities of the time. The economic growth from 1991 to 1995 was around -9 on the average.<sup>203</sup> Kazakhstan began a recovery growth in the second period (1996-1997).<sup>204</sup> In 1996 Kazakhstan agreed to currency convertibility and the lifting of discriminatory currency arrangements. It meant that the Kazakhstani government was decreasing its role in the economy, because market would now set the rate. This was stated to be one of the most important economic reforms that the country implemented.<sup>205</sup> Kazakhstan decided to move ahead with its privatization program, a voucher scheme was displaced by asset sales. The Kazakh government sold out many of the most valuable state enterprises between 1995 and 1996.<sup>206</sup> In the third period (1998-2000) the country's economic

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<sup>200</sup> Orazaly Sabden, "Uspehi Neosporimy. Èkonomicheskoe Razvitie Kazahstana za 20 Let Nezavisimosti" [The Successes are Undeniable. The Economic Development of Kazakhstan in the 20 Years of Independence], *Kazahstanskaia Pravda*, November 4, 2011, <http://www.kazpravda.kz/c/1320373069> (accessed May 30, 2013).

<sup>201</sup> Richard Pomfret, *The Economics of Central Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>202</sup> Esra Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye Kazakistan İlişkileri," in *Türkiyenin Avrasya Macerası*, ed. Mustafa Aydın (Ankara: Nobel Basımevi, 2007), 383.

<sup>203</sup> "GDP per Capita Growth (Annual %)," *The World Bank Web Site*, 2013, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?page=2> (accessed August 3, 2013).

<sup>204</sup> "GDP per Capita Growth (Annual %)," *The World Bank*.

<sup>205</sup> Pamela Blackmon, "Back to the USSR: Why the Past does Matter in Explaining Differences in the Economic Reform Processes of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan," *Central Asian Survey* 24, no. 4 (December 2005): 394.

<sup>206</sup> Richard Pomfret, "Kazakhstan's Economy since Independence: Does the Oil Boom offer a Second Chance for Sustainable Development?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 6 (2005): 859.

development was influenced by the global financial crisis of 1997-1998. Due to the correct and timely anti-crisis measures of the government, the impact of the recession was relatively small.<sup>207</sup> During the fourth period (2001-2007) Kazakhstan experienced a period of the strongest and the most sustained economic growth. The growth of the economy was around 9 to 10 percent in 2001-2007.<sup>208</sup> In 2002, Kazakhstan was the only country among the former Soviet countries that was given the “country with a market economy” status by the United States.<sup>209</sup> The fifth period (2008-present) is characterized with the beginning of the global economic crisis. The regulatory functions of the state had to interfere in the finance and economic sector to overcome the crisis.<sup>210</sup> It should be noted that despite the global economic crisis, the economic growth rate from 2008 to 2010 was 2.0, -1.4, and 5.8 percent respectively.<sup>211</sup> According to the preliminary estimates, the economic growth for the subsequent years should constitute 7 percent.<sup>212</sup>

It should be noted that Kazakhstan’s economy is vastly dependent on natural resources and especially on oil (proven reserves of crude oil are around 30 billion barrels).<sup>213</sup> Thus, the increase and decrease in the economic growth is to a large extent correlated with the prices of oil in the world. To transform country’s economy from being based only on the raw materials to the production of the modern technologies and also to create the domestic industry, the government adopted the “Industrial Innovation Development Strategy” in 2003.<sup>214</sup> By 2011 the volume of the industrial production other than the crude oil has increased noticeably, but the share of crude oil was still high

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<sup>207</sup> Sabden, "Uspehi Neosporimy."

<sup>208</sup> "GDP per Capita Growth (Annual %)," *The World Bank*.

<sup>209</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 383.

<sup>210</sup> Sabden, "Uspehi Neosporimy."

<sup>211</sup> "GDP per Capita Growth (Annual %)," *The World Bank*.

<sup>212</sup> "Rost Ėkonomiki Kazahstana do 2015 Goda Sostavit 7%" [The Economic Growth of Kazakhstan Will Be 7% by 2015], *Ofitsial'nyi Internet Resurs Ministerstva Ėkonomiki i Budzhethnogo Planirovaniia Respubliki Kazahstan*, December 01, 2011, <http://www.minplan.kz/pressservice/78/40169/> (accessed April 23, 2012).

<sup>213</sup> "Central Asia: Kazakhstan," *Central Intelligence Agency*.

<sup>214</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 383.

constituting 50 percent of all the volume of industrial production.<sup>215</sup>

In addition to this, among the former Soviet countries, Kazakhstan is the most dependent upon Russia in terms of its physical infrastructure such as pipeline, electrical power and industrial production.<sup>216</sup> Consequently, any changes in the industrial sphere in the Russian Federation affect the economic situation in Kazakhstan as well. This fact forces Nazarbayev to follow the developments in the Russian economic system closely while considering economic matters to a large extent in accordance with Moscow.<sup>217</sup> The fact that Kazakhstan is industrially attached to Russia did not mean however that the Kazakhstani government implemented the same economic reforms. On the contrary the economic course that the country started in the 1990's did not operate within the Russian integrated economic system.<sup>218</sup> And, the nature and timing of Kazakhstan's economic reforms of the time were distinguished as being the most ambitious among the former Soviet republics. Kazakhstan's implementation of the price liberalization, of the currency convertibility, and the privatization processes were an important progress in terms of integration in the global economy.

#### **4.5.1. Aspects of Bilateral Trade**

Kazakhstan's economic cooperation with Turkey sharply stands out against the economic relations of Turkey with the other former Soviet republics of Central Asia. In addition to the cooperation in the military sphere, two countries have developed serious economic relations since 1991. Turkey and Kazakhstan signed almost a hundred minor cooperation agreements and protocols in various fields for furthering economic and trade relations in 1992; only months after official relations had started.<sup>219</sup> Since then, bilateral

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<sup>215</sup> "Operativnye Dannye" [Operational Data], *Offitsial'nyi Saıt Agestva Respubliki Kazahstan po Statistike*, 2013, [http://www.stat.kz/digital/poromishlennost/Pages/arhiv\\_12.aspx](http://www.stat.kz/digital/poromishlennost/Pages/arhiv_12.aspx) (accessed August 3, 2013).

<sup>216</sup> Blackmon, "Back to the USSR," *Central Asian Survey*, 392.

<sup>217</sup> Pomfret, "Kazakhstan's Economy," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 859.

<sup>218</sup> Blackmon, "Back to the USSR," *Central Asian Survey*, 395.

<sup>219</sup> Nihat Batmaz, "Türkiye-Kazakistan Arasındaki Ticari-Ekonomik İlişkiler, Türk Müteşebbislerinin Bu Ülkede Yaptıkları Yatırımların Boyutu ve Karşılaştıkları Sorunlar," *Bilig*,

trade has come to the forefront and has become the major indicator of mutual economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Turkey.

During the early 1990's the most important partner for Turkey in Central Asia was Uzbekistan. At that time, the volume of trade between Kazakhstan and Turkey was only 30 million dollars. By 1995 as a result of continuous growth in bilateral trade with Turkey, Kazakhstan replaced Uzbekistan as the most important trade partner in Central Asia.<sup>220</sup> The trade volume between the two countries increased steadily until 1998. Due to the economic crisis in Turkey in the period of 1999-2001, the export from Turkey to Kazakhstan declined,<sup>221</sup> whereas export from Kazakhstan to Turkey experienced a continuous growth throughout the 1990's. The initial amount of Kazakhstan's exports to Turkey was trivial however, only by the end of the 1990's export volume increased considerably making the trade volume in favor of Kazakhstan.<sup>222</sup> In 1998 the bilateral trade volume was at the highest level compared to the 1990's. However, after 2000 the amount of bilateral trade declined; in 2001 the amount of trade constituted only 45 percent of the volume in 1998. The reasons for this decline can be stated as the economic crisis in Turkey as well as the fact that Turkish construction companies completed most of their contracts and did not undertake new ones.<sup>223</sup>

The "Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement" signed in August 1995 was crucial for the development of the bilateral economic relations as it prepared the ground for the agreements which would constitute the future economic cooperation.<sup>224</sup> Other fundamental agreements were the "Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement" signed in 1997 and the "Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments" signed in 1996. The latter is important because it gives significant economic privileges to the

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no. 29 (2004): 85.

<sup>220</sup> Şen, *Turkish Entrepreneurs*, 25.

<sup>221</sup> Kemal Kaya, "Turkey," in *The New Silk Roads: Transport and Trade in Greater Central Asia*, ed. Frederick S. Starr (Washington: Johns Hopkins University-SAIS, 2007), 431.

<sup>222</sup> Batmaz, "Türkiye-Kazakistan," *Bilgi*, 88.

<sup>223</sup> Batmaz, "Türkiye-Kazakistan," *Bilgi*, 89.

<sup>224</sup> Kanbolat, "Türk Dış," *Ortadoğu Analiz*, 55.

Turkish investors.<sup>225</sup> In 1998 Nazarbayev proposed the development of economic and trade programs with Turkey. As a result, the trade volume increased from around 450 million dollars in 1998 to around one billion by 2007.<sup>226</sup>

Table 1: Bilateral Trade between Turkey and Kazakhstan (million dollars), 2011

Years	Exports	Imports	Volume
2004	355.6	442.2	797.8
2005	460	558.9	1018.9
2006	696.8	993.7	1690.5
2007	1080	1284	2364
2008	890.6	1861.1	2751.7
2009	633.4	959.5	1592.9
2010	819	1392.5	2211.5
2011	948.3	1995.5	2943.8

**Source:** DEİK: *Kazakistan Ülke Bülteni*, Annual Report (İstanbul: Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu (DEİK), 2012).

As the table above indicates after 2004 the bilateral trade volume started to gain momentum as the effects of the economic crisis had been overcome. In 2004 the total trade volume between Turkey and Kazakhstan was around 800 million dollars. As early as 2005 the level of annual trade has reached one billion dollars. The volume of trade increased two and half times and reached 2.8 billion dollars in 2008. The global economic crisis of 2008-2009 affected the trade between the two as the volume of trade fell in the following years.

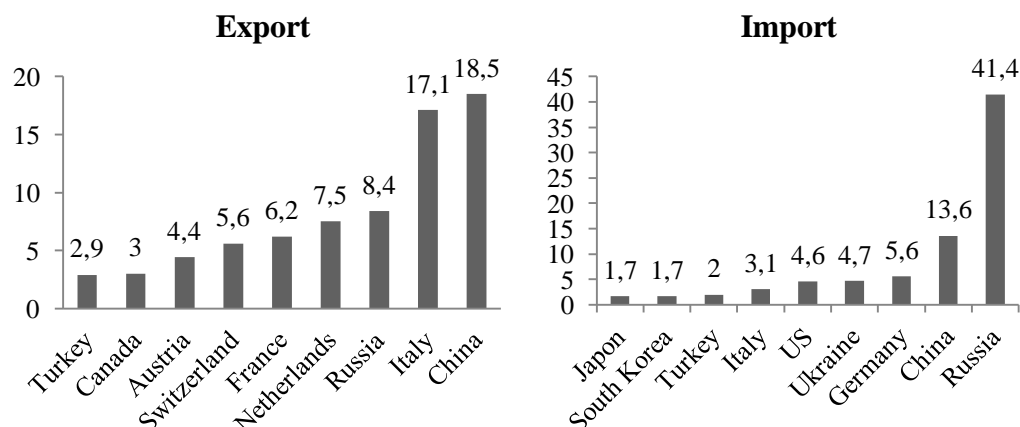
In 2011, the trade volume between the two countries was at its highest level and amounted to almost 3 billion dollars. According to the Kazakhstan's Statistical Yearbook for 2011, Kazakhstan's exports to Turkey in particular reached to 2.5 billion dollars in 2011 while the imports from Turkey to Kazakhstan were 729 million dollars in the same year, representing 2.9 and 2 percent respectively. The largest proportion of imports to Kazakhstan came from Russia (41.4 percent) and China (13.6 percent).

<sup>225</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 384.

<sup>226</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentral'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 217.



Table 2: Kazakhstan's structure of exports and imports by major trade partners in 2011 (in percent)



**Source:** A. A. Smailov, "Kazakhstan v 2011 Godu": *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik [Kazakhstan in 2011: Statistical Yearbook]*, Annual Report, (Astana: Aгенство Respubliki Kazakhstan po Statistike, 2012).

The main Kazakhstan's export targets were the economical giants of the European Union, their total amount of Kazakhstan's export share amounted to approximately 40 percent. Other major importers of the Kazakhstani goods are China (18.5 percent) and Russia (8.4 percent). The large shares of exports are allocated to these countries is because these countries are the main consumers of Kazakhstan's energy resources. Thus, the dimension of Turkey's role in Kazakhstan's exports and imports are still insignificant compared to other countries.<sup>227</sup> Yet, the leaders of both countries expressed their willingness to develop trade further, claiming that in the upcoming years two countries aim to increase trade volume to 10 billion dollars.<sup>228</sup> Kazakhstan's exports to Turkey mainly consists of copper, copper-made products, mineral fuels and oil, cereals, raw hides and leather, iron and steel, inorganic chemical products, lead and lead-made products and zinc and zinc-made products.<sup>229</sup> Turkish exports to Kazakhstan mostly include chemicals, construction materials, textiles and food products. Turkish firms are also active in establishing construction projects like hotels, airports, textile and leather

<sup>227</sup> Smailov, "Kazakhstan v 2011 Godu", 243-248.

<sup>228</sup> "Torgovlia Kazahstana i Turtsii Nabiraet Ob'emny" [The Trade of Kazakhstan and Turkey is Gaining in Volume], *Profinance.kz Novostnoi Portal*, March 16, 2012, <http://profinance.kz/31188-torgovlya-kazahstana-i-turcii-nabiraet-obemy.html> (accessed April 05, 2012).

<sup>229</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 385.

factories, glass-manufacturing plants and others.<sup>230</sup>

#### **4.5.2. Turkish Investments in Kazakhstan**

Foreign investments were crucial for the reconstruction of Kazakhstan's economy after the Soviet demise. Kazakhstan's government established investment committees and various regulation institutions, and set up certain priority sectors such as infrastructure (electricity and communication), light industry and social services (health, education, sports and tourism) to attract and accelerate foreign investment. The "Investment Law" of January 8, 2003 which invalidated the previous "Law on Foreign Investments" of 1994 and the "Law on State Support of Direct Investments" of 1997 has been regulating the activities of all foreign investors in Kazakhstan since then. According to the new regulations, the foreign investors operate on the same rights as the domestic investors, except for the sectors restrained by law.<sup>231</sup>

Since independence Kazakhstan has shown a considerable success attracting more than 80 percent of the total foreign direct investment in Central Asia. The increase in the investments was mostly on account of the development of the hydrocarbons deposits such as Kashagan oil field. Until 2011 the total volume of foreign investment in Kazakhstan was around 160 billion dollars of which 92 billion dollars were foreign direct investments. The countries with the largest foreign investments in Kazakhstan are Netherlands, France, China, the Russian Federation, the United States and the Great Britain. In 2011, the above mentioned countries' amount of investment constituted around 8945, 1546, 1061, 1059, 1039 and 920 million dollars respectively. Turkey's volume of investment in Kazakhstan for 2011 was around 120 million dollars. Turkey, with 155 million dollars average in the last five years is 14<sup>th</sup> country in terms of the average total amount of investments in Kazakhstan.<sup>232</sup>

The total amount of Turkish investments in Kazakhstan since its independence

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<sup>230</sup> Brent E. Sasley, "Turkey in Central Asia: Turkish Identity as Enabler or Impediment," in *New Central Asia: The Regional Impact of International Actors*, ed. Emilian Kavalski (River Edge, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010), 206.

<sup>231</sup> *DEİK: Kazakistan Ülke Bülteni*.

<sup>232</sup> Smailov, "Kazakhstan v 2011 Godu", 214-218.

accounts for around 2.5 billion dollars. Turkish companies to a large extent concentrate on trade, telecommunication, hotel management, supermarket management and food and petroleum products manufacturing. Turkey is the tenth largest investor in the mining sector. The Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) is Turkey's largest investor in the country. Having the majority of stakes of the jointly established Kazakturmunay Company (KTM), TPAO invested around 272 million dollars in the country between 1994 and 1997 and is currently producing five thousand barrels of oil per day. Other major companies are Okan Holding working in hotel management, food production, marketing and construction sectors; Turkcell Telecom partnering with Kcell; the Turkuaz Group in warehouse and distribution sectors, while Koç Group and Anadolu Group are also important actors working in the Kazakhstani market.<sup>233</sup>

#### **4.5.3. Bilateral Relations in the Construction Sector**

Turkish construction companies have always been very active in Kazakhstan. Since independence Turkish construction companies had earned over 3.2 billion dollars from the contracts of 147 major different projects.<sup>234</sup> Especially, after the proclamation of the new capital Astana in 1998, the city became the center for the rapidly increasing construction activities of the Turkish contractors who made the biggest contribution to fulfill today's skylines of the city.<sup>235</sup> It is reported that Turkish firms carried out the 70 percent of the total construction projects in the new capital of Kazakhstan.<sup>236</sup> Of the most prominent projects that the Turkish firms completed are the International Airport in Astana, the Statehouse, the President's Residence, Regent Ankara Hotel, Okan Intercontinental Astana Hotel, the National Museum, the State Guest House, Ahmet Yesevi University, Astana Twin Towers, infrastructure of the GSM Telecommunication and part of the Tengiz-Novorossiysk pipeline.<sup>237</sup> Up until now, the total cost of the

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<sup>233</sup> *DEİK: Kazakistan Ülke Bülteni.*

<sup>234</sup> Kaya, "Turkey," 435.

<sup>235</sup> Kanbolat, "Türk Dış," *OrtadoğuAnaliz*, 55.

<sup>236</sup> Kaya, "Turkey," 435.

<sup>237</sup> *DEİK: Kazakistan Ülke Bülteni.*

projects in which Turkish companies and joint ventures participated are claimed to value more than 2 billion dollars.<sup>238</sup> Currently, there are 3 thousand and 422 Turkish companies operating in Kazakhstan.<sup>239</sup>

#### **4.5.4. Bilateral Relations in the Banking Sector**

Many of the Turkish companies' investments and projects would not be possible without the financial support of the Turkish banks. The banking sector along with the oil, hotel management, telecommunication and education sectors constitute up to 90 percent of total Turkey's investments in Kazakhstan.<sup>240</sup> Since 1993, Turkey has opened approximately 1.1 billion dollar credit for the Turkic countries through the Eximbank. Together with the deferred payment, the amount of the credits opened for Kazakhstan has reached to 392 million dollars.<sup>241</sup> In 2005, Kazakhstan was still repaying its loans to the Eximbank.<sup>242</sup> The loans provided for the Turkish companies by the Eximbank in the early years were important in terms of the future increase of projects in the construction sector.<sup>243</sup> Currently, the Eximbank is supporting exports to Kazakhstan through export credit insurance programs.<sup>244</sup> And although Kazakhstan has not utilized new loans as of 2005, the Eximbank is still investing in new projects in the country.<sup>245</sup>

After the Kazakh side issued the new "Law on the Banks and the Banking Operations" regulating banking activities and aimed to attract foreign investment in

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<sup>238</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentrāl'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 217.

<sup>239</sup> "Torgovlia Kazahstana i Turtsii Nabiraet Ob"emy," *Profinance.kz*.

<sup>240</sup> Mehmet Dikkaya and Ali Bora, "Çağdaş Kazakistanın Ekonomi Politikası ve Türkiye'nin Yeri," *OAKA* 1, no. 2 (2006), 125.

<sup>241</sup> Emin Çarıkçı, "Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde Ekonomik Gelişmeler ve Türkiye'nin Rölü," *Bilgi*, no. 7 (Güz 1998): 4.

<sup>242</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 386.

<sup>243</sup> Çarıkçı, "Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde," *Bilgi*, 86.

<sup>244</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 386.

<sup>245</sup> "Projects Supported by Eximbank" *Türk EximBank Web Site*, <http://www.eximbank.gov.tr/TR/belge/1-792/destek-verilen-projeler.html?vurgu=kazakistan> (accessed April 24, 2012).

1995, the two countries established several joint banking enterprises. The parties established the united Turkey-Kazakhstan International Bank; 35 percent of the holder's share belonged to Emlakbank. Later Kentbank purchased 10 percent of the shares of the Kazakh partner. Another example of the activity of the Turkish banks in Kazakhstan is the Kazakhstan Ziraat International Bank established in 1993. The share in the project of Turkey's Ziraat Bank is 94 percent. In 1998, with a capital of 12 million dollars Demirbank led to the foundation of the Demir-Kazakhstan Bank,<sup>246</sup> its participating share constituted 99.97 percent.<sup>247</sup> In addition to the banking sector, in 1995 the Istanbul Stock Exchange assisted the establishment of the Eurasian Stock Exchanges Federation (ABF-Avrasya Borsalar Federasyonu). The primary aim of this federation which Kazakhstan is a member of is to represent the member states in international exchanges, to increase their cooperation within security markets and to ensure the international integration of the regional exchanges.<sup>248</sup>

Turkey also hosts many annual exchange and training programs organized under the framework of the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TICA), the Central Bank of Turkey, the Turkish Ministry of Finance and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). One of these programs is the Ankara Multilateral Centre training on taxing.<sup>249</sup> The Central Bank of Turkey has also launched exchange programs where the staff from the Central Bank of Kazakhstan along with the staff from the banks of Azerbaijan, Russia and Ukraine visited various educational and training programs. The aim of the program is to transfer the experience and to develop bilateral relations.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ayhan Gençler and Arif Akbaş, "Bağımsızlık Sonrası Kazakistan ve Türkiye Arasındaki Sosyo-Ekonomik İlişkiler (1990-2011)," *Trakya Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1, no. 2 (July 2011), 19.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 387.

#### **4.5.5. Kazakhstan's Energy Resources as an Important Dimension of the Relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan**

Energy, being vital for the Turkish economy, is an important component of the Turkish politics as well. The Turkish politicians realize that energy supplies affect the domestic economy. A healthy economy of the country is a guarantee (to a large extent) of strong internal politics and parliamentary majority. In turn, the consolidated position inside the country of the leading party is a key success to take advantageous position in the competition of the region. A way out of this vicious circle is to find and win over the potential energy suppliers in the region, because consuming a great deal of primary energy, the growing Turkish economy is largely dependent on the natural resources from abroad. For example, Turkey imported around 70 percent of its energy needs in 2008, and this amount increased to 90 percent in 2009.<sup>251</sup> In this context, given the fact that Turkey's geography ideally allows it to be a perfect transit country, the Turkish politician stress on the country's serving as a major energy hub between Europe and Middle East as well as between Europe and Central Asia.<sup>252</sup> Considering the growing demand of energy sources, the European Union also sees Turkey as an alternative route to relieve its overdependence on Russian exports.<sup>253</sup>

Among the countries of the Caspian Sea basin, which are crucial for Turkey's aspiration to become a major energy transit hub, Kazakhstan appears to be the most significant in the region. Kazakhstan is a crucial actor in terms of hydrocarbon reserves; in particular the country's newly discovered Kashagan field is world's fifth largest oil field in the world and the largest oil field outside the Middle East.<sup>254</sup> The British Petroleum Statistical Review estimated that Kazakhstan produced around 1.7 and 1.8

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<sup>251</sup> Gareth Winrow, "Turkey: An Emerging Energy Transit State and Possible Energy Hub," *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 46, no. 3 (2011): 79.

<sup>252</sup> Carol R. Saivetz, "Tangled Pipelines: Turkey's Role in Energy Export Plans," *Turkish Studies* 10, no. 1 (2009): 95.

<sup>253</sup> T. Umucu, M. Altunisik, and M. V. Kok, "Turkey as a Major Gas Transit Hub Country," *Energy Sources, Part A: Recovery, Utilization, and Environmental Effects* 34, no. 4 (2011), 377.

<sup>254</sup> Saivetz, "Tangled Pipelines," *Turkish Studies*, 96.

billion barrels of oil per day in 2009 and 2010.<sup>255</sup>

Since independence, Kazakhstan in parallel with its multi-vectoral foreign policy managed the transportation of its oil to the West on four main routes. Two of them pass through Russian oil distribution system, the first goes from Tengiz to the Russian port of Novorossiysk and the second goes from Atyrau to Samara. The third system exit route of Kazakhstan's oil starts from Atasu, in northwestern Kazakhstan, and eventually goes to Alashankou in China's northwestern Xinjiang region. The fourth alternative is the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, in which the oil from Aktau is being delivered to Baku via sub-sea trans-Caspian pipeline.<sup>256</sup>

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline is a major domain in energy cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan. It was 1995 when the Turkish policy makers tried to obtain the consent of Kazakh leaders to participate in the project for the first time. This became possible during the visits of the then President Süleyman Demirel and then later in the same year of the then Prime Minister Tansu Çiller.<sup>257</sup> In 1998, during his visit to Turkey, Nazarbayev confirmed his support for the BTC project<sup>258</sup> and in 2008 Kazakhstan's first oil was loaded to BTC pipeline.<sup>259</sup>

Kazakhstan supported the project with an emphasis on the viability of the project on the Turkish side and its likely costs.<sup>260</sup> The Kazakh side showed interest in the project because it offered options of diversifying energy export routes. At the same time, Kazakhstan's participation was crucial for the pipeline to work with full capacity. The capacity of the pipeline was estimated to be around 50 million tons and the oil provided only by Azerbaijan would not be enough to encounter all needs. In the initial stage

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<sup>255</sup> *Statistical Review of World Energy*, Annual Report, British Petroleum, 2012.

<sup>256</sup> Hayriye Kahveci, *The Political Economy of Oil in Kazakhstan*, PhD Thesis (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 2007), 178-182.

<sup>257</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentrāl'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 216.

<sup>258</sup> A. Demirbas, "The Role of Turkey within Petroleum between the Caspian Sea Basin and the Middle East," *Energy Sources, Part A: Recovery, Utilization, and Environmental Effects* 32, no. 15 (2010): 1452.

<sup>259</sup> Yıldırım Gündüç, *Energy Security and Central Asian Geopolitics*, Master Thesis (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 2012), 75.

<sup>260</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 392.

Kazakhstan was expected to provide 7.5 million tons of oil, and at later stages this number would rise to 20 million tons of oil. At the time, Nazarbayev called these pipelines, which carry energy resources from east to west as the “Silk Road of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”.<sup>261</sup>

For the Turkish side the BTC project is a substantial step in the development of long-term bilateral relations. This geo-strategically important project has great economic importance such as the provision of energy supplies to the domestic market. Throughout this pipeline Turkey establishes a direct connection with the region and this in effect helps with the problem of region’s geographical remoteness. The pipeline’s passing through it also allows Turkey to implement political pressure over Europe which may help with its future accession to the European Union.<sup>262</sup> Indeed, Turkey’s involvement in the BTC project is mainly as a result of the confrontation between the United States and Russia. The US does not want Russia to be an energy monopolist with its political ramifications in the region, so it supports the project despite its high cost.<sup>263</sup>

In order to counter the attempt by the US and Turkey, Russia puts pressure on Kazakhstan because of its participation in the project. Apparently, Russia did not want to lose Kazakhstan’s dependency on herself. President Putin several times had personally met with Nazarbayev and had discussions with him concerning the BTC project.<sup>264</sup> The Russian president pressed for the blockade of the possible expansion of the BTC project, threatening with economic and military measures which became more effective especially after the Georgian crisis in 2008. As a result, due to the Russia’s political pressure the Kazakhstani side rejected the idea of building the pipeline from Aktau to Baku.<sup>265</sup> And, Kazakhstan’s contribution has been limited to shipment only.<sup>266</sup> Another

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<sup>261</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 393.

<sup>262</sup> Dikkaya and Bora, "Çağdaş Kazakistanın," *OAKA*, 126-127.

<sup>263</sup> Gündüç, *Energy Security*, 70.

<sup>264</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 393.

<sup>265</sup> Initially, the project was supposed to be the Aktau-Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. But due to the Russian pressure Kazakhstan rejected the idea of the Aktau-Baku pipeline.

<sup>266</sup> Gündüç, *Energy Security*, 75-76.



development preventing the full realization of the project was the political rapprochement between Turkey and Russia, along with the guarantee given by the Kazakhstani side that most of its oil would pass through Russia.<sup>267</sup>

The economic cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan has been playing a significant role in the bilateral relations of the two countries. In fact, economic cooperation with the newly independent Kazakhstan has become a key element of the Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Kazakhstan has become a very important trade partner in the region for Turkey. While in general the trade volume between the two countries has steadily been increasing, one can distinguish periods when negative political and economic circumstances had an impact on the development of bilateral trade relations. The legacy of the Soviet Union after its demise was the first period when the country for a variety of reasons experienced a sharp decline in trade. The world crisis in 1998 had a major effect on Kazakhstan's economic conditions which scaled down the bilateral trade volume.<sup>268</sup> For Turkey, Özal's death and the subsequent crisis in the country in 1997 and 1998 deterred the trade capacities of the country and had an effect on country's all major investments in Kazakhstan. The last period when the volume of the mutual trade fell was the 2008-2009 world economic crises which hit both sides hard.

It should also not be forgotten that since the first years of independence the economy of Kazakhstan had been very dependent on Russia. Indeed, in the early 90's, Kazakhstan was trading by and large with Russia and with the other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This was mostly due to the structure of the production and foreign trade before independence that was centrally controlled within the Soviet Union which could not change significantly in a short period of time. If compared, the total share Kazakhstan's foreign trade with the CIS members accounted for around 88 percent in the early years.<sup>269</sup> The later share of the Commonwealth of Independent States was around 27 percent in 2007 and 24 percent in 2011. In this aspect,

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<sup>267</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentral'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 216.

<sup>268</sup> Roman Mogilevskii and Irina Tochitskaia, "Vneshneia Torgovlia Stran SNG" [The Foreign Trade of the CIS Countries], *Ekovest* 4, no. 4 (2004), 595.

<sup>269</sup> Batmaz, "Türkiye-Kazakistan," *Bilig*, 87.

although Turkey is considered among the main partner countries of Kazakhstan, its share in Kazakhstan's foreign trade still remains scanty. In this context, what best characterizes the Turkish presence in Kazakhstan, is the extensiveness of the Turkish companies in the Kazakhstani market. However, the value of the contracts the Turkish companies manage to seize is incomparable to the figures spinning between Astana and the Western companies. Turkey having the highest number of foreign-owned companies in Kazakhstan and being the fourth largest investor in terms of the amount of capital<sup>270</sup> still does not participate in the significant projects of hydrocarbon sphere, due to the presence of US and European oil companies. This, however, does not quench Ankara's desire to control over the export flows of the Caspian hydrocarbons to the world markets. Ankara was the main driving force behind the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project. To increase the attractiveness of this project, Turkey has undertaken a number of desperate measures restricting the passage of oil tankers through its straits. Legitimizing their actions in terms of ecological value of the straits, Ankara thus, appears to be trying to reduce the role of pipelines leading towards the Russian port of Novorossiysk.<sup>271</sup>

Turkey's presence in Kazakhstan has sometimes been very costly and difficult. A good example of this is the bank loans offered by the Turkish side even under uneasy economic conditions. The loan-giving was not everlasting however, due to Turkey's inability to continue to provide credit support, the positive process made during Özal era had been reversed in the later periods. Small and medium-sized Turkish companies had slowly begun to withdraw from the market since they did not have the chance to compete with the large Western and Far Eastern companies in terms of funding and investment.<sup>272</sup>

#### **4.6. Socio-cultural Cooperation**

The dissolution of the Soviet Union led to a new level of relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan. Bilateral relations flourished quickly not only through diplomatic and

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<sup>270</sup> Kanbolat, "Türk Dış," *Ortadoğu Analiz*, 55.

<sup>271</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentrāl'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 217.

<sup>272</sup> Batmaz, "Türkiye-Kazakistan," *Bilig*, 86.

economic ways but also in various areas such as culture, education and science. In these areas we could witness a number of official bilateral agreements like the opening of Turkish cultural centers, the initiation of student and teacher exchange programs, the advancement of cooperation in science and technology and the establishment of several educational institutions. Similar to the economic policies of the Turkish government, developing cooperation in the sphere of education became another domain in directing Turkish foreign policy towards Kazakhstan. It was thought that “educating today’s students (from the Turkic republics) means the creation of the elites who later would be in charge of the transformation towards a market economy and democracy in their countries.” As a result, the idea of establishing educational facilities in Kazakhstan was based on the purpose of creating a group of well-educated young people with a background in Turkish culture and language, who would later act as a bridge between two countries.<sup>273</sup>

Cooperation in the field of culture was carried out mainly within the framework of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Cooperation Agreement signed in May 1, 1992. Improved relations between the two countries led to the Cooperation Protocol in the fields of Education and Science signed in March 1997. Besides, in November 2004 the National Ministry of Education of the Turkish Republic and Education and Science Ministry of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed a bilateral Science and Education Cooperation Agreement.<sup>274</sup> In 2008, Kazakhstan and Turkey decided to further improve their cooperation in the field of education. The then Minister of Education of Kazakhstan, Zhanseyit Tuymebayev signed an agreement under which Kazakh citizens living in Turkey would be given an opportunity to pursue education in their own language. He has also called for the opening of the Kazak national schools for Kazakhs living in Turkey.<sup>275</sup>

There are two major mechanisms facilitating the further development of cultural

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<sup>273</sup> Pınar Akçalı and Cennet Engin-Demir, "Turkey's Educational Policies in Central Asia and Caucasus: Perceptions of Policymakers and Experts," *International Journal of Educational Development*, no. 32 (2010), 12.

<sup>274</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 395.

<sup>275</sup> "Türkiye-Kazakistan Eğitim İşbirliğini Derinleştiriyor," *Today's Zaman*, October 18, 2008, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=750625> (accessed May 3, 2012).

cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan. One such mechanism is through projects like the Great Student Exchange Project and through state institutions like the Directorate of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities. The second mechanism is through the educational facilities of various Turkey's foundations and through the Turkish religious missionary communities which have been active since Kazakhstan's independence.

#### **4.6.1. Cultural and Educational Cooperation through Governmental Organizations**

##### **4.6.1.1. The Great Student Exchange Project**

The first flow of student to Turkey started in the 1992-1993 academic year. Many of the students who came to study in Turkey came via the Great Student Exchange Project, an exchange program developed by the Turkish Ministry of Education. Designed to serve as a backbone for the Turkish educational policies the major aims of the projects were to increase the educational level of the population in Turkic republics, to create generations familiar and sympathetic to the Turkish culture, to provide trained manpower in these republics and to establish a bridge of friendship with the Turkic world.<sup>276</sup>

Students had to enter a special examination after which successful students were granted governmental scholarship. Initially students from the high schools were accepted along with the university level students, but this practice was later abandoned and the main target group became undergraduate and graduate level students.<sup>277</sup> The first memorandum of understanding of the Turkish Board of Higher Education granted 5095 quotas of higher education for students from Kazakhstan. While 3625 of these were used, 1049 students were able to successfully graduate in the period between 1992 and

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<sup>276</sup> Akçalı and Engin-Demir, "Turkey's," *International Journal of Educational Development*, 12.

<sup>277</sup> İsa Özkan, *Türk Cumhuriyetleri, Türk ve Akraba Topluluklardan Gelen Burslu Öğrencilerin Meseleleri ve Çözüm Teklifleri*, Vol. 4, in 21. *Yüzyılda Türk Dünyası Jeopolitiği*, ed. Muzaffer Özdağ (Ankara: Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları, 2003), 143.

2010.<sup>278</sup>

Table 3: Students from Kazakhstan who got scholarship to study in Turkey, 2000-2011

Years	Total	TÖMER	Vocational	Undergraduate	Master's	Doctoral
2000-2001	669	81	56	412	103	17
2001-2002	625	93	21	384	110	17
2002-2003	617	83	14	397	101	22
2003-2004	588	74	22	346	117	29
2004-2005	588	105	17	322	109	35
2005-2006	580	90	24	327	102	37
2006-2007	592	141	14	318	82	37
2007-2008	512	113	19	258	82	40
2008-2009	470	109	26	198	99	38
2009-2010	514	96	22	217	139	40
2010-2011	530	98	23	207	151	51
2011-2012	554	100	21	236	143	54
2012-2013	473	56	20	230	119	48

**Source:** "Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri: Türk Cumhuriyetleri ile Türk ve Akraba Topluluklarından Gelen ve Ülkemizde Burslu Öğrenim Gören Öğrenciler," *T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Web site*, <http://www.meb.gov.tr/duyurular/index.asp?TID=0&ID=13> (accessed May 3, 2012).

In the table above, what immediately calls attention is that the number of the students on scholarship from Kazakhstan has decreased over the years. The number of students who come to study Turkish language in Turkey remained almost at the same level throughout the past years. Indeed, among the Turkic countries, Kazakhstan along with Kyrgyzstan has had the highest number of students studying at TÖMER;<sup>279</sup> this is most probably due to the fact that a large number of students from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are Russophones. Also, Kazakh and Kyrgyz are the most distant from the Turkish language among the Turkic languages. Also students coming to study in the vocational schools are also mostly from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

<sup>278</sup> Gençler and Akbaş, "Bağımsızlık," *Trakya Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 11.

<sup>279</sup> Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Center

Table 4: Students of the Turkic countries who gained scholarship to study in Turkey, 2010-2012

Country	Total	TÖMER	Vocational	Undergraduate	Master's	Doctoral
<b>2010</b>						
Azerbaijan	634	27	8	317	81	201
Kazakhstan	530	98	23	207	151	51
Kyrgyzstan	686	82	37	328	165	74
Turkmenistan	686	14	-	654	12	6
Uzbekistan	94	30	-	56	7	1
<b>2011</b>						
Azerbaijan	660	54	12	365	52	177
Kazakhstan	554	100	21	236	143	54
Kyrgyzstan	669	54	36	357	146	76
Turkmenistan	670	30	-	621	14	5
Uzbekistan	109	22	4	71	11	1
<b>2012</b>						
Azerbaijan	624	50	9	342	47	176
Kazakhstan	473	56	20	230	119	48
Kyrgyzstan	598	35	30	332	131	70
Turkmenistan	566	18	-	530	13	5
Uzbekistan	100	16	3	67	11	3

**Source:** "Resmi İstatistikler," *T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı Web Sitesi*, July 8, 2013, <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/www/resmi-istatistikler/icerik/64> (accessed August 3, 2013).

As the table indicates, after Uzbekistan<sup>280</sup> Kazakhstan has the lowest number of undergraduates studying on scholarship in Turkey. The number of undergraduates from Kazakhstan has fallen almost half from 2000 to nowadays. For the number of students coming to Turkey with the goal of obtaining a master's degree, there is stability except for the low numbers in the period of 2006 and 2009. Indeed, students from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan form the highest number of students studying for a master's degree.

<sup>280</sup> Since 1996 there was a decrease in the number of students from Uzbekistan due to the political tensions between the two countries.

Given the fact the significance of graduate education is getting popularity in Kazakhstan; the number of PhD students from Kazakhstan has been increasing gradually while still being low compared to the number of doctoral students from Azerbaijan.

It should be noted however, that the table above is based on the official information by the Turkish Ministry of Education, which is conducted every year on a regular basis. Every year students from Kazakhstan come to Turkey not only through scholarship programs but also by their own means. For example, according to the Ministry of Education data there were 473 students studying in Turkey in 2012, whereas the official web site of the Kazakhstan's Embassy in Turkey indicates that in 2012 there were about 800 students receiving education in various cities of Turkey.<sup>281</sup> In fact, there is a tendency towards the number of students studying by their own means outgrowing the number of the students studying on a Turkish government scholarship. The reason for the drop in the number of students studying on scholarship is the limited range of prestigious departments allocated by the Turkish Ministry of Education that Kazakhstani students can study. The Turkish Ministry of Education selects the departments together with the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan, which in turn is based on Kazakhstan's market demands. Although, the Kazakhstani side chooses the departments based on the market demands of the country, the professions offered are mostly considered as not prestigious enough in Kazakhstan. This in turn lead to the fact that the scholarship quotas given for Kazakhstan is sometimes not filled completely.

Another reason for the drop of the number of Kazakhstani students studying on the Turkish Ministry of Education scholarship is because they face some problems while studying. The study made by Pınar Akçalı and Cennet Engin-Demir, despite concerning all Central Asian countries in general is also relevant for Kazakhstan. In their article, they argue that the amount of scholarship provided for the students was not enough to adequately cover all costs in the early years. Furthermore, it is argued that the Turkish authorities did not pay enough attention to the selection of students, while emphasis was put more on quantity rather than on quality. As a result, the combination of economic problems and a high-drop-out rate led to the diminishing number of students studying in

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<sup>281</sup> "Kazakistan ve Türkiye Arasında Kültürel Eğitim İlişkileri," *Türkiyedeki Kazakistan Cumhuriyeti Büyükelçiliği Web Sitesi*, 2012, [http://www.kazakhstan.org.tr/kulturel\\_egitim\\_iliskileri.html](http://www.kazakhstan.org.tr/kulturel_egitim_iliskileri.html) (accessed July 1, 2012).

Turkey on governmental scholarship.<sup>282</sup> Moreover, some religious communities fill the vacuum formed due to the lack of government's attention. The most influential and well-known religious community, the Fethullah Gülen's community, for example, takes care of the financial problems that the students may encounter. Beyond the support such as providing free food or giving extra money, this community provides an emotional support like socializing with the other members of the community.<sup>283</sup>

Despite the existence of many problems, Turkish and Kazakhstani governments have been trying take care of them. For example in 2007, the then Minister of Education of Kazakhstan Tuymebayev made a note of the problems of Kazakhstani students studying in Turkey and made some requests to the then Turkish Minister of Education Hüseyin Çelik. Among the student's appeals were the possible increase in the amount of the scholarship and provision of a plane ticket to visit their homeland once a year.<sup>284</sup> In 2010, the amount of scholarship was increased. Undergraduates started to receive 270 TL, and master students and PhD students were getting 340 TL and 400 TL respectively. The Ministry of Education also promised to raise the amount by 20 percent every year.<sup>285</sup> In 2012, Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ in a meeting held in the Ankara Trade Office declared that undergraduate and graduate foreign students would be able to make a roundtrip to their home. All expenditure of the ticket price would be met by the Turkish government and the date of travel could be determined by students themselves.<sup>286</sup>

One should also mention that Turkey has always been one of the preferable foreign countries for Kazakhstani student to study. Turkish schools such as the Middle East Technical University, Bilkent University, Bosphorus University or Marmara

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<sup>282</sup> Akçalı and Engin-Demir, "Turkey's," *International Journal of Educational Development*, 13.

<sup>283</sup> Akçalı and Engin-Demir, "Turkey's," *International Journal of Educational Development*, 16.

<sup>284</sup> Gençler and Akbaş, "Bağımsızlık," *Trakya Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 16.

<sup>285</sup> Gözde Ergin and Fahri Türk, "Türkiyede Öğrenim Gören Orta Asyalı Öğrenciler," *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (2010), 35-36.

<sup>286</sup> "Yabancı Öğrencilere 'Sıla Bileti' Geliyor," *Sabah Gazetesi*, February 19, 2012, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2012/02/19/yabanci-ogrencilere-sila-bileti-geliyor> (accessed May 4, 2012).



University, which are also considered as world universities, have constantly been the object of interest, since, mostly, the tuition fees and accommodation expenditures in Turkey are less than in an average university in Kazakhstan. Thus, by going to Turkey a student from Kazakhstan could study in a more prestigious and less expensive university. However, in 2005 Kazakhstan Ministry of Education's governmental scholarship "Bolashaq", which sponsors a student of any academic level to study in the best schools of the world, gained momentum. So, while in the period of 1994-2004, in total only 700 Kazakhstani fellows gained the right to study abroad (mostly USA and UK); in 2005 President Nazarbayev in his address to the Nation of Kazakhstan announced the need to provide three thousand young and talented student annually with the opportunity to study in the world's leading educational institutions.<sup>287</sup> This led to a decrease in the number of students choosing Turkey for their further educational purposes. This drop was especially high among undergraduate students. In 2011, Bolashaq quotas for the undergraduate students were closed. This happened because the government money used to train undergraduate students abroad was allocated to invest in Nazarbayev University in the city Astana. From then on, the Ministry of Education decided to educate undergraduate students in Nazarbayev University (devoting enormous efforts to make it a prestigious institution) instead of sending them abroad. Since 2011, the "Bolashaq" undergraduate fellows study in Nazarbayev University. Considering this option not the best option for continuing the higher education, many students still look for ways to study abroad. Given that studying in the prestigious Turkish universities is an optimal option, the number of Kazakhstani students coming to Turkey is expected to grow in the coming years.

#### **4.6.1.2. Turkish Scholarships and the Directorate of the Turks Abroad and Relative Communities**

The nature of the Great Student Exchange Project has changed since its initiation. Up to 2011, the Ministry of Education was in charge of the issuing of scholarships and other organizational activities, but from this time on the responsibility passed into the

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<sup>287</sup> ""Bolashaq" Stipendiasynyn Tarihy" [The History of Bolashaq Scholarship], *Halyqaralyq Baghdarlamalar Ortalyghy Web site*, 2012, <http://www.edu-cip.kz/grantMenu-kk-KZ/история-стипендии> (accessed May 3, 2012).

hands of a newly established branch of the Turkish government under the name of the Directorate of the Turks Abroad and Relative Communities. The directorate is an under secretariat level public institution directly attached to the Prime Ministry. Its aim is to further the ongoing relations with the Turkish citizens living in different countries, and contribute to the cooperation with relative communities with whom Turkey has common cultural and historical heritage. The four main cooperation areas of the directorate are the foreign citizens, the kin and relative communities, international students and non-governmental organizations.<sup>288</sup> Being involved in the international students section, the directorate took over the Great Exchange Student Project and the project's name has also changed becoming "Turkish Scholarships" (Türkiye Bursları).<sup>289</sup>

The officials responsible for the project in the Directorate of the Turks Abroad and Relative Communities states that everything will be more serious and organized compared to the Great Student Exchange Project which was considered to be ineffective.<sup>290</sup> The project promises it will be much easier for the Kazakh students to enter Turkish universities than it was before. For example, if previously, only a limited number of students could enter the examination, sometimes partly due to physical problems such as transportation difficulties to the examination centers, now, at least in theory, any Kazakh student who takes the Kazakhstan National University Entrance Examination can apply for a university in Turkey. Moreover, university application can be made online through internet, which was not available during the Great Student Exchange Program.<sup>291</sup> In addition to this, the amount of the scholarship has increased. The amount of scholarship for undergraduate students is now 500 Turkish Lira, for master degree and doctoral degree students it is 750 and 1000 Turkish Lira respectively. Besides covering the accommodation and medical expenses, the directorate undertakes to reimburse the first time travel costs of coming to Turkey and leaving Turkey

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<sup>288</sup> "Hakkımızda," *T.C. Başbakanlık Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Toplulukları Başkanlığı Web Sitesi*, 2013, <http://ytb.gov.tr/index.php/kurumsal/hakkimizda.html> (accessed August 4, 2013).

<sup>289</sup> "Türkiye Bursları," *T.C. Başbakanlık Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Toplulukları Başkanlığı Web Sitesi*, 2012, <http://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/> (accessed May 3, 2012).

<sup>290</sup> Ali Işık, interview by Dastan Almen, *Personal Interview* (May 8, 2013).

<sup>291</sup> "Türkiye Bursları," *T.C. Başbakanlık Yurtdışı Türkler*.

following graduation.<sup>292</sup> After the directorate took over the scholarship program, the student applications have reached the highest number in 20 years. In 2013, 55 thousand students applied for the scholarship, out of which 31 thousand applied for undergraduate programs and 21 thousand applied for the graduate program.<sup>293</sup>

#### **4.6.1.3. The Yunus Emre Foundation**

Yunus Emre Foundation (Yunus Emre Vakfı) is a public foundation established by the Turkish government in 2007 to introduce Turkey, Turkish language, history, culture and art to the world. Along with this, the foundation's aim is to increase Turkey's cultural exchange with other countries and to offer opportunities for those who seek to have education in the fields of the Turkish language, culture and art.<sup>294</sup> The foundation's main activity runs through the Yunus Emre Institute, which conducts training activities and engages in scientific research and practice. The institute's purpose is to make the Turkish culture widely known through conducting research in collaboration with different organizations and to convey the results to the public by publishing them through various publications. Besides this however, the institute has a greater mission. There is a number of Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers scattered throughout the world, which operate under the auspices of the Yunus Emre Institute. While there is a great deal of these cultural centers located in Europe and the Middle East, there is only one cultural centre in Central Asia, located in Astana, Kazakhstan. Opened in 2010 during President Gül's visit to Kazakhstan, Astana Yunus Emre Turkish Culture's mission became not only providing opportunities for scientific projects, organize cultural activities and the Turkish language courses for the local population, but also to increase

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<sup>292</sup> "Burs Olanakları," *Türkiye Bursları Web Sitesi*, 2013, <http://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/index.php/tr/turkiye-burslari/burs-olanaklari> (accessed August 5, 2013).

<sup>293</sup> "Türkiye Bursları'na Rekor Başvuru: 2013-2014 Öğretim Yılı İçin 55 Bin Başvuru Yapıldı," *T.C. Başbakanlık Yurt Dışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı Web Sitesi*, 2013, <http://www.ytb.gov.tr/index.php/uluslararasi-ogrenciler/915-2013061102.html> (accessed August 5, 2013).

<sup>294</sup> "Enstitü Başkanlığı," *Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Web Sitesi*, 2013, <http://yee.org.tr/turkiye/tr/kurumsal/enstitu-baskanligi> (accessed August 6, 2013).

cultural cooperation and to consolidate friendship between the two countries.<sup>295</sup> Gul emphasized the importance of the Yunus Emre Cultural Centers by stressing that only great powers have such entities. In his speech he continued: "the British have the British Council, the Spanish have the Cervantes Institute, the German have the Goethe Institute. Now, Turkey has its Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers through which we will introduce our culture by carrying out activities on a regular basis." He also added that the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers will facilitate further Turkey's activities in Kazakhstan.<sup>296</sup>

#### **4.6.1.4. The Turkish Religious Directorate**

Since Kazakhstan's independence religious cooperation has become another dimension through which Turkey is seeking political benefits in the country. Besides the ethnic proximity, Turkey has close religious links to Kazakhstan; the majority of the population in both countries is Sunni Muslim of Hanafi mazhab. Due to this reason, most of the bilateral religious cooperation on a formal level runs under the leadership of the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs and the Directorate of Religious Administration of Kazakhstan Muslims. These two institutions signed a number of cooperation protocols over the last 20 years. The most recent protocol that marks the current scope of bilateral religious cooperation was signed during Ali Bardakoğlu's (the Turkey's Head of Religious Affairs) visit to Kazakhstan in 2007. From the very inception of bilateral relations, the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs has been contributing by providing religious services and religious training by assisting in religious publications and organization of cultural activities. With the request of the Directorate of Religious Administration of Kazakhstan's Muslims, Turkey often provides religious services by sending religious officials on a permanent basis to work in the mosques and teach in Quranic courses. Up to this day the Turkish Directorate of

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<sup>295</sup> "Bizden Haberler: Astana Yunus Emre Türk Kültür Merkezi Üç Yaşında," *Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Web Sitesi*, 2013, <http://yee.org.tr/turkiye/tr/haberler/bizden-haberler/astana-yunus-emre-turk-kultur-merkezi-uc-yasinda-529> (accessed August 6, 2013).

<sup>296</sup> "Bizden Haberler: Astana Yunus Emre Türk Kültür Merkezi Açıldı," *Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Web Sitesi*, 2013, <http://yee.org.tr/turkiye/tr/haberler/bizden-haberler/astana-yunus-emre-turk-kultur-merkezi-acildi-15> (accessed August 6, 2013).

Religious Affairs has sent 55 religious officials to serve in Kazakhstan.<sup>297</sup> In this aspect it should be noted that Turkey has become a preferable place for Kazakhstan both in terms of hiring Turkish religious officials to work in Kazakhstan and in terms of sending Kazakhstani students to Turkey's religious vocational high-schools. Since after 9/11 the threat of Islamic radicalism has come to the agenda, the Kazakh government restrained or lessened the religious cooperation with the Arab countries of the Middle East and Iran.<sup>298</sup> From 1992 to 2010, the Directorate of Religious Administration of Kazakhstan's Muslims has sent around 1100 students to receive education in Turkey, in particularly sending students to study in Qur'anic courses (679), religious vocational high schools (49), undergraduate (255) and graduate (16) faculty of theology and other exchange programs. The Turkish side covered all the expenditures of these students. The Turkish directorate has also financially assisted in the establishment of the faculty of theology with the University of Foreign Languages and Professional Career opened in 2005 in Kazakhstan. Up to the present according to the local demand from Kazakhstan, the Turkish directorate has sent about one and a half million copies of religious publication; among them the most prominent ones are the Qur'an, the translation of the Qur'an in Kazakh, prayer learning booklets, books about Prophet Muhammad's life and concise manuals of Islamic faith, worship and ethics. The Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs is actively involved in the construction and renovation of mosques. So far, the Turkish directorate completed the construction of five mosques, engaged in the renovation projects of the Central Mosque of Almaty and the famous Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Mausoleum.<sup>299</sup>

#### **4.6.1.5. Interaction in the Scope of Kazakhstan's Language Reform**

Kazakh, being the most distant language to the Anatolian Turkish, had moved away even further from the language spoken in Turkey during the USSR's assimilation policies. These policies included the creation of distinct artificial written languages for

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<sup>297</sup> Kemal Hakkı Kılıç, "Kazakistan'la Dini Alanda İşbirliğimiz," *Diyanet Avrupa*, no. 134 (Haziran 2010): 11.

<sup>298</sup> Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum," *Turkish Studies*, 1.

<sup>299</sup> Kılıç, "Kazakistan'la Dini," *Diyanet Avrupa*, 11.

the Turkic language family. Trying to prevent the communication between Turkic populations, Moscow enforced every country to have different and distinct Cyrillic alphabet.<sup>300</sup> Therefore, after independence, the language realm became an important issue of concern and an essential tool for the consolidation of ties between Turkey and the Turkic republics. It should be noted that the summits convened by the Turkic states stress upon on the similarity and closeness of language not on the ethnic origin. It is worth recalling that the name “Turkic Summits” was changed later as the “Summits of Heads of State of Turkic Language Speaking Countries.”

Within the scope of relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey, Kazakhstan’s language reforms form an important aspect in bilateral cultural cooperation. The reform includes the transition of the Kazakh alphabet (Cyrillic) to the Latin alphabet. Nazarbayev emphasized that the forthcoming transition of the Kazakh language to the Latin alphabet will have a huge impact on the development of the national culture. Being inspired by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s language reforms, the Kazakh president claims that the transition to the Latin alphabet will help Kazakhstan to quickly integrate into the global community.<sup>301</sup> The idea behind the transition to the Latin script is the belief that this will allow making Kazakh language popular among the young generation. Also, new alphabet is believed to facilitate material exchange with the Kazakh Diasporas living in China, Turkey and Europe.<sup>302</sup> It is also believed that the transition of the alphabet will allow the Kazakhstani public better understand the Turkic speaking audience (almost 200 million people).<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Fidan, “Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 112.

<sup>301</sup> "N. Nazarbaev: Perehod na Latinitu Pomozhet Kazahstanu Bystree Integrirovat'sia v Mirovoe Soobshchestvo" [Nazarbayev: The Transition to the Latin Script Will Help Kazakhstan to Quickly Integrate into the Global Community], *Bnews.kz*, December 30, 2012, <http://wap.bnews.kz/ru/news/post/117722/> (accessed August 6, 2013).

<sup>302</sup> "Perehod Kazahskogo Izyka na Latinitu Pomozhet Ego Populiarizatsii" [Kazakh Transition to the Latin Alphabet Will Help its Popularization], *Tengrinews.kz*, December 25, 2012, [http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan\\_news/perehod-kazahskogo-yazyika-na-latinitu-pomojet-ego-populyarizatsii-225709/](http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/perehod-kazahskogo-yazyika-na-latinitu-pomojet-ego-populyarizatsii-225709/) (accessed August 5, 2013).

<sup>303</sup> "Ertysbaev: Perehod na Latinitu Usilit Kazahskiĭ Iazyk" [Ertysbaev: The Transition to the Latin Script Will Strengthen the Kazakh Language], *Tengrinews.kz*, June 3, 2011, [http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan\\_news/ertyisbaev-perehod-na-latinitu-usilit-kazahskiy-yazyik-189662/](http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/ertyisbaev-perehod-na-latinitu-usilit-kazahskiy-yazyik-189662/) (accessed August 5, 2013).

Yet, the transition of the Kazakh language to the Latin script has aroused a reaction among some countries. In this case, the Russian Federation is the most concerned party, because some 20-25 percent of Kazakhstan's population is ethnically Russian. Russia is worried that by changing the alphabet Kazakhstan is aiming to switch its geopolitical preferences towards the West.<sup>304</sup> The Kazakh president, in turn, reassured the concerned parties that Kazakhstan will not change its political stance, stressing that the Latin alphabet is a domestic need for the development and modernization of the Kazakh language. He also added that the Kazakh language had already used the Latin script from 1920's to 1940's and that three out of fifteen former Soviet republics had their national language in the Latin alphabet until the very collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>305</sup>

According to the newly formulated government policy "The Strategy of Kazakhstan for 2050: A New Political Course for an Established State," the Kazakh language has to accomplish the full transition to the Latin alphabet by 2025.<sup>306</sup> The Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan who is in charge of the alphabet transition examined the experience of other Turkic countries such as Azerbaijan and Turkey. The ministry prepared a transition plan after which the new alphabet will be official and will spread in all spheres of public life. Within the framework of this plan, all classics of Kazakh literature, folklore, scientific and cultural heritage will be translated to the Latin alphabet.<sup>307</sup>

Among the Turkic states the Istanbul Turkish can be understood relatively easily

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<sup>304</sup> Saken Zhunusov, "Perehod Kazahstana na Latinitu Kak Priznak Smeny Kolonial'noi Orientatsii s RF na SShA" [Kazakhstan's Transition to the Latin Alphabet as the Sign of a Change of Colonial Orientation from Russian Federation to the USA], *Zona.kz Internet Gazeta*, January 11, 2013, <http://www.zonakz.net/articles/61103> (accessed August 5, 2013).

<sup>305</sup> "Nazarbaev: Perehod na Latinitu ne Meniaet Geopoliticheskikh Predpochtenii Kazahstana" [Nazarbayev: The Move to the Latin Script Does Not Change the Geopolitical Preferences of Kazakhstan], *Tengrinews.kz*, January 9, 2013, [http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan\\_news/nazarbaev-perehod-latinitu-menyaet-geopoliticheskikh-predpochteniy-kazahstana-226407/](http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/nazarbaev-perehod-latinitu-menyaet-geopoliticheskikh-predpochteniy-kazahstana-226407/) (accessed August 5, 2013).

<sup>306</sup> "Perehod Kazahskogo Izyka na Latinitu Pomozhet Ego Populiarizatsii," *Tengrinew.kz*.

<sup>307</sup> "Tempora Mutantur: Latinita Pomozhet Nazarbaevu Modernizirovat' Kazahstan" [Tempora Mutantur: The Latin Script Will Help Nazarbayev to Modernize Kazakhstan], *Lenta.ru*, January 15, 2013, <http://lenta.ru/articles/2013/01/15/latin/> (accessed August 5, 2013).

only in Azerbaijan, while the Kazakh language's difference with Turkish is argued to be similar to the difference between German and Swedish.<sup>308</sup> The script alteration will definitely strengthen Turkey's position in Kazakhstan and the whole Central Asia as well. Kazakhstan's language reform is crucial for Turkey in terms of its long term ambitions in the country. The alphabet barrier and the prospective popularity of the Kazakh language will distance the country from the Russian influence and accordingly bring Kazakhstan and the whole Turkic world closer to Turkey.

#### **4.6.1.6. Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Kazakh-Turkish International University**

On October 31, 1992 during the Summit of the Turkish-Speaking Countries Süleyman Demirel and Nursultan Nazarbayev signed an "Agreement on the Establishment of the Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Kazakh-Turkish International University"<sup>309</sup>. Following the agreement on October 1, 1993 Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Turkish-Kazakh International University was established.<sup>310</sup> The university began its first academic year in 1994-1995 and the student composition included students from Turkey, Turkic-speaking countries and communities. Ahmet Yesevi University has 11 faculties, one college and 16 thousand students. In addition to this, university staff accounts for 1100 members from various countries such as the USA, China, Mongolia and Uzbekistan. As for the students from abroad, there are about 4000 students from Turkey and 750 students from other Turkic states and communities.<sup>311</sup>

Besides university education, in 1996, the Turkish Ministry of Education opened "Turkey's Turkish Education Center" in Almaty<sup>312</sup> and "Common Vocational Training Center" in Chimkent. The aim of these agencies was to provide the training of the

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<sup>308</sup> Robins, "Between Sentiment and Self-Interest," *Middle East Journal*, 607.

<sup>309</sup> "Tarihçe," *Ahmet Yesevi Üniversitesi Web Sitesi*, 2013, [http://www.yesevi.edu.tr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=](http://www.yesevi.edu.tr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=) (accessed August 6, 2013).

<sup>310</sup> Hatipoğlu, "Türkiye," 397.

<sup>311</sup> "Tarihçe," *Ahmet Yesevi Üniversitesi*.

<sup>312</sup> "Bakanlığımca Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde Açılan Okullar ve Türkiye Türkçesi Eğitim Öğretim Merkezi," *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Web Sitesi*, 2012, <http://www.meb.gov.tr/Stats/ist97/MYHTML46.htm> (accessed May 4, 2012).



interim staff that the country was in dire need. “Turkey’s Turkish Education Center” has given certificate of various levels to 2114 people (1842 female and 272 male) and currently, 26 staff members from Turkey are employed here while the center has 1280 active trainees. With respect to the vocational training center, up until 2010, 1893 people (737 female and 1156 male) have taken the “Course Achievement Certificate” of various levels.<sup>313</sup>

#### **4.6.1.7. TÜRKSÖY (International Organization of Turkic Culture)**

The Ministers of Culture of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan formed the Joint Administration of Turkic Culture and Art (TÜRKSÖY) during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the Turkic Speaking Countries in July 1993 in Almaty. The mission of the organization is the development, teaching, promotion and dissemination of the Turkic culture and art, and the development of Turkey’s cultural relations with other Turkic republics in a multilateral format. After the establishment of the TÜRKSÖY several autonomous Turkic republics namely the Republics of Altai, Bashkortostan, Gagauzia, Hakasia, Saha and Tiva took part in the organization in observer status. Both the full members and observer members have equal rights in the organization.<sup>314</sup> The official language of TÜRKSÖY is the Anatolian Turkish and its administrative center is in Ankara. Among the organization’s activities there are various programs and projects aiming to develop cultural and artistic relations between the Turkic languages speaking countries. The organization also organizes performances and festivities such as plays, operas, ballets, music and folk dances.<sup>315</sup> Publications are without doubt an important part of TÜRKSÖY’s activities. TÜRKSÖY continuously publishes a quarterly magazine “TÜRKSÖY” and the catalog of the painters’ gathering and photographers’ gathering called “the Dazzle of Months” and “the Runaways” respectively. TÜRKSÖY being the first organization of its kind that

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<sup>313</sup> Gençler and Akbaş, "Bağımsızlık," *Trakya Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 14.

<sup>314</sup> Ainur Yerbolayeva, *Türkiyede Orta Asya ile İlgili Araştırma Yapan Kurumlar*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2009), 45.

<sup>315</sup> "The Areas of Study," *International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY) Web Site*, 2012, <http://www.turksoy.org.tr/EN/belge/2-27275/the-areas-of-study.html> (accessed December 12, 2012).

promotes cultural integration via translation and publication of specific masterpieces of the Turkic world, the organization has printed 32 books and other publications. The TÜRKSÖY's first publications, being both in Turkish and titular languages, were the Kyrgyz's Manas epic, the Kazakh's Abay Kunanbayev's works, the Bashkurt's folk epics, the Tatar's Edigey epic and etc.<sup>316</sup>

TÜRKSÖY is an important organization in terms of the institutionalization of ties between Turkey and the Turkic republics. It contributed to a great number of social and cultural activities. It introduced a great number of literary works from other Turkic states and organized a great deal of conferences, festivals and exhibitions in an effort to make the Turkic culture known throughout the world. Yet, TÜRKSÖY's activities are not extensive and heavyweight enough. Being the cultural institute one might witness that organization's most activities has been limited to art. In addition to this, most of TÜRKSÖY's activities take part in Turkey the institute does not pay much attention to the activities in other countries.<sup>317</sup>

#### **4.6.2. Cultural and Educational Cooperation through Non-governmental Organizations**

##### **4.6.2.1. The Turkish World Research Foundation**

It is necessary to note that the non-governmental organizations have also been active in Kazakhstan. One such organization is called Turkish World Research Foundation, (Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, TDAV). It was established on the personal initiative of Prof. Dr. Turan Yazgan, who opened several educational institutions not only in Kazakhstan but also in other Turkic countries. Pan-Turkic ideas are observed in the foundation's activities and organization. On the official website of the organization one can often come across expressions such as "in order to save our Turkic brothers" or "the strengthening of the ties with Turkic communities started even before the disintegration of the Soviet Union."<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Yerbolayeva, *Türkiyede Orta Asya*, 46.

<sup>317</sup> "The Areas of Study," *International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY)*.

<sup>318</sup> *Türk Dünyası Araştırmalar Vakfı Web Sitesi*, 2013, <http://turan.org.tr/> (accessed August 7,

In Kazakhstan, the organization opened the Department of Turkish Language and Literature in the Korkut Ata State University, and Turkish World Korkut Ata High School, both in the city of Kyzylorda.<sup>319</sup> Previously, TDAV opened the Turkish World Atatürk High School in Kentau and a High School in Aktau. But, because of insufficient financial and moral support of the Turkish and Kazakh governments and administrative difficulties, such as not providing visa to the teaching staff, these schools had to be closed.<sup>320</sup>

#### **4.6.2.2. Fethullah Gülen's Religious Community**

Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union various religious communities from Turkey started to penetrate into Kazakhstan. The most prominent of these communities is Fethullah Gülen's movement. The presence of the movement in the country is everywhere: in economic life, in the media and in the educational network.<sup>321</sup> Yet mainly, it is the movement's educational activities that are highlighted the most here.

Kazakhstan has the largest number of community's educational facilities among the Central Asian states. The reason behind favoring the growth in the number of schools is that Kazakhstan is administratively less centralized than the other states. In Kazakhstan the administrator of a region (oblast') has the prerogative of reaching educational agreements with foreign companies.<sup>322</sup> The movement has an elementary school "Shahlan", 28 Kazakh-Turkish High Schools, three international schools "Nur Orda" in the cities of Astana, Almaty and Oskemen, "Zhambyl Economic College" in Taraz and a university "Süleyman Demirel University" in Almaty. All these facilities operate under the guidance of the Kazakh-Turkish Educational Foundation (Kazak-Türk

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<sup>319</sup> *Türk Dünyası Araştırmalar Vakfı*.

<sup>320</sup> Gençler and Akbaş, "Bağımsızlık," *Trakya Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 14.

<sup>321</sup> Bayram Balci, "Fethullah Gülen's Missionary Schools in Central Asia and their Role in the Spreading of Turkism and Islam," *Religion, State and Society* 31, no. 2 (2003): 153.

<sup>322</sup> Balci, "Fethullah Gülen's," *Religion, State and Society*, 157.

Eğitim Vakfı, KATEV). The foundation was established in 1997, based on a 1992 agreement between Kazakhstan and Turkey aiming to coordinate the work of educational institutions from Turkey.<sup>323</sup> According to their official site, the main goal of the organization is to bring up competitive professionals who would be able to compete at the international level with developed countries and to improve their abilities in the fields of education, technology, art and culture, as well as developing and preserving the national values of their people.<sup>324</sup> The schools are mainly sponsored by Turkish businessmen, charitable groups and by the Gülen community itself.<sup>325</sup> The community's schools provide education within the boundaries of formal state curricula and do not provide a special religious education. The teachers in the school pay more attention to ethics rather.<sup>326</sup>

Although, at first people were suspicious towards the schools, after a while, these schools have become legitimate and gained popularity. The increasing popularity of the schools among local people over the years led the Kazakhstani government to support the development of the community's activity in the country and the spreading of the schools.<sup>327</sup> In 2011, President Nazarbayev, during his visit to Astana's Nur Orda Kazakh-Turkish High School, where he was attending a ceremony of the inauguration of the school, stated: "The Turkish schools in the country have made an important contribution for the improvement of the qualified human capital in Kazakhstan."<sup>328</sup> President Nazarbayev explained that former Turkish President Turgut Özal greatly

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<sup>323</sup> "O Nas: KATEV" [About US: KATEV], *KATEV (Kazak-Türk Eğitim Vakfı) Web Site*, 2012, <http://www.katev.kz/ru/-html> (accessed May 1, 2012).

<sup>324</sup> "O Nas: Tsel" [About Us: The Aim], *KATEV (Kazak-Türk Eğitim Vakfı) Web Site*, 2012, <http://www.katev.kz/ru/-html> (accessed May 1, 2012).

<sup>325</sup> Valentina Chursinova, *Gulen Community's Schools in Central Asia*, Master Thesis (Ankara: METU, 2011), 61.

<sup>326</sup> Özlem Kocabaş, *Scientific Careers and Ideological Profiles of Science Olympiad Participants from Fethullah Gülen and Other Secondary Schools in Turkey*, Master Thesis (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 2006), 47.

<sup>327</sup> Chursinova, *Gulen Community's Schools*, 62.

<sup>328</sup> "Nazarbayev Hails Turkish Schools in His Country," *Today's Zaman*, September 1, 2011, [http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?load=detay&newsId=255479&link=255479](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&newsId=255479&link=255479) (accessed April 30, 2012).

encouraged the opening of these Turkish schools and that upon his advice he supports these schools. He also noted the fact that students of these schools have been successful in international science Olympics and added that more than half of the students on scholarship who entered the Nazarbayev University were graduates from these schools.<sup>329</sup> Another indicator of the increasing popularity of the Gülen schools in Kazakhstan is that 30,000 students applied for 1,400 spots in 2010, and people from different layers of society wanted their children to be enrolled in these schools.<sup>330</sup>

#### 4.7. Conclusion

Kazakhstan was the most remote to Turkey among the other Turkic countries especially in terms of geographical and cultural factor such as language remoteness. The other fact contributing to Kazakhstan's distancing from Turkey is the closeness of the country to Russia. This closeness is rooted in country's geographical (long land border), cultural (the large proportion of Russian living in Kazakhstan and most Kazakhs are Russophones) and economical (common industrial system) dependency. However, Turkey and Kazakhstan were successful in building close mutual relationship. The two countries have lively cooperation in terms of bilateral and multilateral frameworks. Turkey and Kazakhstan have shown mutual support under multilateral organization such the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building measures in Asia (CICA) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). It should be mentioned that two countries have also been cooperation within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).<sup>331332</sup> These organizations are another chance to promote

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<sup>329</sup> "Nazarbayev Hails Turkish Schools in His Country," *Today's Zaman*.

<sup>330</sup> Pelin Turgut, "The Turkish Imam and His Global Educational Mission," *Time Magazine*, April 22, 2010, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1969290,00.html> (accessed May 5, 2012).

<sup>331</sup> "Kazakhstan i Turtsiia Razrabotaiut Sovmestnyi Plan Pomoshchi Kirgizii" [Kazakhstan and Turkey Will Develop a Joint Plan of Aid to Kyrgyzstan], *Nur.Kz*, June 21, 2010, <http://news.nur.kz/155186.html> (accessed August 1, 2013).

<sup>332</sup> "Turtsiia Podderzhivaet Initsiativu Astany o Provedenie v Kazahstane v 2010g. Sammita OBSE - Prezident Gul'" [Turkey Supports the Initiative of Astana to Hold the OSCE Summit in Kazakhstan in 2010 - President Gul], *Gazeta.Kz*, May 25, 2010, <http://news.gazeta.kz/art.asp?aid=307994> (accessed August 1, 2013).

bilateral cooperation within the multilateral context. A particular attention deserves Kazakhstan's political initiative and contribution to the close integration of Turkic people. Kazakhstan being the main initiator of the Turkic Council is regarded the second important promoter (after Turkey) of Pan-Turkic ideas.

While military cooperation between the two countries is only starting to gain momentum, the bilateral economic cooperation has never been so lively. The economic sphere is an important tool of the convergence of the two countries, however Turkey's presence is still not major compared to the major international actors. Cultural cooperation is equally important aspect of bilateral relations. The bilateral cultural cooperation developed mainly through two mechanisms: the state sponsored educational and cultural projects and institutions and the educational facilities of Turkey's non-governmental organizations. A particular attention should be paid to the Directorate of the Turks Abroad and Relative Community's educational projects and the Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Kazakh-Turkish International University that have been a significant tool of Turkey's cultural expansion in the country. The role of the Fethullah Gülen religious community's schools is of equal importance in terms of contributing to the official Ankara's foreign policy in the country under the cultural context.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5. OTHER MAJOR POWERS IN KAZAKHSTAN**

In an attempt to find out the extent of Turkey's presence in Kazakhstan and in Central Asian geopolitics in general, it is important to consider the role of other major powers in the region. While in classic 19<sup>th</sup> century version of the Great Game a rivalry was primarily between the two major colonial powers, namely the British and Russian Empires, the present day circumstances tend to expand the number of key players in Central Asia. The Russian Empire eventually becoming the Russian Federation continues to be active in the region in a new guise. At the same time, while the role of the British Empire can now be attributed to the United States, the changing circumstances of the world politics created another key actor, China in the region. Kazakhstan has become an attractive target to compete for influence for these actors to establish their presence in Central Asia as a whole. Over the last decade, China, the United States and the Russian Federation have been retaining the major characteristic of the Great Game in Kazakhstan, namely struggling for a major position in the country.

#### **5.1. China**

Chinese foreign policy in the 1990's was shaped by two events. The first one is the internal unrest which culminated in the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, and second one is the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Soviet demise was a contradictory development for Beijing. The dissolution not only removed the long-feared Soviet threat for China's continental frontiers but it also removed a central plank of its strategic vision, namely balancing between the two superpowers. The Tiananmen incident played an important role in stressing the already developing China's perception of the US' rising position in world politics (a perception reinforced by the political and economic sanctions and pressures by the US on China due to the Tiananmen incident). These events contributed to a substantial transformation of how China perceived the

international environment and determined the evolution of China's foreign policy for the next decade.<sup>333</sup> The end of the Cold War resulted in the development of three guiding themes for China's post-Cold foreign policy, namely "preservation, prosperity, and power." The key for securing the trilogy of such national goals has been the development of a foreign policy "line" of "peaceful rise (*heping jueqi*)." These pre-eminent concerns have meant that from 1991 onward China has generally attempted to safely enter and engage with the existing international order in order to reap the benefits of the contemporary international political and economic system. "Cooperation", "multilateralism", "integration", and "regionalism" were the ways of Chinese diplomatic endeavors, especially with respect to relations with the Central Asian states. This tendency acted as a guide for China to develop its strategic and foreign policy goals since 1991, namely through expanding multiple regional and global relationships in order to balance against the perceived threat of the US predominance. China's grand strategy of "peaceful rise" has reflected these themes of establishing good relations with neighbors, integration in the international economy, and avoidance of conflict with the United States.<sup>334</sup>

Central Asia's importance in China's grand strategy is enhanced due to the fact that "Beijing is not seeking a place in the sun, but rather a protected place in the shade". China is seeking to orient its strategy of "peaceful rise" toward regions where there are fewer obstacles for the expansion of China's political, economic, strategic, and military influence. In this regard, an over-arching theme of "engaging the periphery" in China's post-1991 foreign policy, whereby China has sought to construct conducive relations with its immediate neighbors on the basis of shared economic and security interests. In this context, Central Asia has arguably emerged since 1991 to be a path of least resistance as it offered China a strategically "safe" axis for the expansion of its power, as the newly independent Central Asian states sought to diversify their foreign relations in

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<sup>333</sup> Michael E. Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia - A History* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 100.

<sup>334</sup> Michael Clarke, "China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: The Dynamics of "New Regionalism", "Vassalization", and the Geopolitics in Central Asia," in *New Central Asia: The Regional Impact of International Actors*, ed. Emilian Kavalski (River Edge, NJ, USA: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010), 120.



the wake of the Soviet collapse and the absence of a significant US presence.<sup>335</sup>

Chinese interests in Central Asia and its policy and strategy towards the region have been subject to changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Changes in the international situation and in Central Asia, together with the Chinese concerns about domestic security and its economic interests, have had an impact on its strategy and policy toward Central Asia.<sup>336</sup> With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence on its ruins of the newly independent states, the Chinese side attempted to use “the opportune moment” to resolve important questions of foreign policy, and get access to the region by using material, scientific, technical and intellectual resources of the region for the economic development of its frontier regions. From the mid-1990’s to 2000, there is a change in the tendency of the Chinese Central Asian policy. While immediately after the Soviet Union’s demise, there were illusions that China might possibly dominate Central Asia, by the end of the 1990’s the economic calculation and distinct geopolitical interests replaced these illusions. One could observe another shift in the Chinese policy towards the region within the second half of 2000 and the first half of 2005. In this period regional security came to the forefront. In addition to this, economic penetration became another element of China’s foreign policy in Central Asia through the establishment of enterprises with Chinese capital. The main feature of this period in Chinese Central Asian policy is the implementation of various infrastructural projects and provision of preferential credits to boost the trade volume with the region both through bilateral and multilateral (the SCO) frameworks. From the second half of 2005 to the present, the overall priorities of China’s policy in the region have not changed much. In this period China consolidated its activity in several energy suppliers of the region like Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in an effort to make them a raw material appendage to the Chinese economy. Thus, China actively joined to the oil and gas “game” waged between the geo-political players in the Central Asian scope and actively lent money to economy of the interested countries by implementing major projects in the

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<sup>335</sup> Clarke, "China," 121.

<sup>336</sup> Huasheng Zhao, Eugene Rumer and Dmitri Trenin, *Central Asia: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing* (Armonk, NY, USA: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2007), 127.

oil and gas industry and infrastructure sector.<sup>337</sup>

While the Chinese authorities may make a point of honor in establishing cordial relations with the five states of the region, Kazakhstan enjoys a particular status being the most important partner of China in Central Asia. Not only does it share a long border with China, from a Chinese perspective it is also pre-eminent power in Central Asia and plays a decisive role in the region's political and economic structures as well as in its international relations.<sup>338</sup> Indeed, the China-Kazakhstan partnership is termed "strategic," confirming Astana as a major political ally of Beijing in a post-Soviet climate in which the Kazakh government is displaying balance and diversified policies in the face of heavy-handed presence of Moscow and Washington.

China, being among one of the first countries to establish full-scale diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan, has kept a low profile in its diplomatic moves in the country however.<sup>339</sup> While the agreements signed by Beijing and Astana in the 1990's were primarily diplomatic (in a strategy of "Good Neighborliness" and settlement of border disputes), they have taken a distinctly more economic turn since then. In this aspect, Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to China in December 2006 led to the signing of a "Cooperation Strategy for the twenty-first century between China and Kazakhstan". After signing a "Plan for Economic Cooperation between Kazakhstan and China" in the same year,<sup>340</sup> an energy-oriented diplomacy between the two countries gained visibility, taking into account Chinese rapid industrial development and its dependency of imported oil to meet energy needs. In addition, China has been steadily building up conditions for multilateral cooperation (both in terms of economic and security

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<sup>337</sup> K. L. Syroezhkin, "Kitaï i Bezopasnost' v Tsentral'noi Azii" [China and Security in Central Asia], in *Tsentral'naia Aziia Segodnia: Vyzovy i Ugrozy* [Central Asia Today: Challenges and Threats], ed. K. L. Syroezhkin (Almaty: Kazhastanskiĭ Institut Strategicheskikh Issledovaniĭ pri Prezidente Respubliki Kazahstan, 2011), 292-294.

<sup>338</sup> Xing Guangcheng, "China's Foreign Policy Toward Kazakhstan," in *Thinking Strategically: The Major Powers, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian Nexus*, ed. Robert Legvold (Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2003), 108.

<sup>339</sup> Rouben Azizian and Elnara Bainazarova, "Eurasian Response to China's Rise: Russia and Kazakhstan in Search of Optimal China Policy," *Asian Politics and Policy* 4, no. 3 (2012), 387.

<sup>340</sup> Sebastien Peyrouse, "Chinese Economic Presence in Kazakhstan: China's Resolve and Central Asia's Apprehension," *China Perspectives*, no. 75 (2008): 35.

cooperation), mainly through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

First of all, the privileged China-Kazakhstan partnership is based on a multifaceted economic reality. China-Kazakhstan trade represents more than two-thirds of all China-Central Asia trade these days.<sup>341</sup> In 2011, the bilateral trade volume was 21 billion dollars. China is the second economic partner in Kazakhstan after Russia with its share in total Kazakhstan's trade being around 24 percent in 2011. In particular, having a share of 5 billion US dollars in Kazakhstan's imports in 2011 (13.6 percent) and situated between Russia (41.4 percent) and Germany (5.6 percent), China is actually has become the number one export destination for Kazakh goods constituting around 16 billion US dollars (18.5 percent) overtaking Italy (17.1 percent) and Russia (8.4 percent).<sup>342</sup> Being the second in terms of economic activity with Kazakhstan, China however is expected to overtake Russia in the near future. In this sense, in 2011 after China and Kazakhstan issued a joint declaration on the development of comprehensive strategic partnership, the two countries put forward a goal to further increase the volume of bilateral trade to 40 billion US dollars by 2015.<sup>343</sup> While China mainly supplies consumer goods (textiles, shoes, appliances, toys, electronics, spare parts, pharmaceutical products, foodstuffs) to Kazakhstan, oil and oil product accounted for 56.3 percent of Kazakhstan's exports to China in 2010. Other products exported by Kazakhstan to China are mining products (14 percent), copper and brassware (13.7 percent), chemical and isotopes (7.3 percent), iron and steel (5.8 percent) and zinc and aluminum (1.5 percent each).<sup>344</sup> This structuring of bilateral trade enjoys far from unanimous support: more and more Kazakh experts denounce the compartmentalization of the national economy into raw materials and the selling off of the country's last processing and agro-food industries. Konstantin Syroezhkin, the main China expert at the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies, asserts that China's economic successes are objectively running contrary to all the

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<sup>341</sup> Peyrouse, "Chinese Economic Presence," *China Perspectives*, 34.

<sup>342</sup> Smailov, "*Kazakhstan v 2011 Godu*", 244-248.

<sup>343</sup> Murzagul Sarsenbaeva, "Foreign Economic Cooperation Between Kazakhstan and China: Priorities," *Group-Global*, April 25, 2013, <http://www.group-global.org/publication/view/4483#> (accessed August 10, 2013).

<sup>344</sup> Kassymkhan Kapparov, Milena Ivanova-Venturini and Eka Gazadze, *China - Now Kazakhstan's Top Export Destination*, Equity Research (Almaty: Renaissance Capital, 2011).

economic interests of Central Asia in the sector of industrial processing and to a certain extent in agriculture. On the other hand, Alida Ashimbaeva, Director of the Institute of the World Market in Almaty, believes that this kind of economic cooperation furthers jeopardizing Kazakhstan's economic dependence on raw materials.<sup>345</sup>

In 2010, 17.4 billion US dollars were invested into Kazakhstan economy. In 2010, China was the third largest investor after the Netherlands and France (1.2 billion US dollars) before the Great Britain and the United States.<sup>346</sup> The imbalance of power between China and Kazakhstan remains glaringly obvious. In 2006, Kazakhstan represented only 0.49 percent of China's foreign trade (the whole of Central Asia representing 0.60 percent). This imbalance is also shifting to foreign investment. Thus for example, in 2005 China injected 1.2 billion US dollars into the Kazakh economy, whereas Kazakhstan invested only 7.6 million US dollars in China in the same year.<sup>347</sup>

In 2011, China calling for heavy investment in the development of its western region as a part of the Western Development Programme announced a 100 billion US dollars investment in infrastructure projects across the country's remote western provinces and regions. One of these regions is the Xinjiang autonomous region bordering Kazakhstan is expected to develop into a major base for oil and gas production, refining and chemicals manufacturing, oil storage, and engineering and technology services. Xinjiang is expected to become a strategic route for energy imports from Central Asia. Kazakhstan got exposure to the 100 billion US dollars Western China development plan, especially given the fact that the Kazakhstani side's share of Xinjiang's foreign trade is almost 50 percent.<sup>348</sup> In this context, China has been investing most of its money in the oil and gas sector with the aim to integrate Kazakhstan's resource potential with the rapidly industrializing region of Xinjiang region.<sup>349</sup>

Indeed, as in US-Kazakh relations, energy is a significant aspect of bilateral Sino-

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<sup>345</sup> Peyrouse, "Chinese Economic Presence," *China Perspectives*, 37.

<sup>346</sup> Sarsenbaeva, "Foreign Economic Cooperation Between Kazakhstan and China: Priorities."

<sup>347</sup> Peyrouse, "Chinese Economic Presence," *China Perspectives*, 36.

<sup>348</sup> Kapparov, Ivanova-Venturini and Gazadze, *China - Now Kazakhstan's*.

<sup>349</sup> S. E. Palkin, "An Energy Triangle: China, Russia, and Kazakhstan," *Problems of Economic Transition* 55, no. 1 (May 2012): 42.

Kazakh cooperation too. People's Republic of China has a strong appetite for raw materials, especially oil and gas. Today China is the world second largest economy after the United States with an approximate gross domestic product (GDP) of 4.93 trillion US dollars. China consumes 13 percent of world's oil output, about 400 million tons per year, again only second to the United States. Importing about 200 million tons of oil annually, China's dependence on imports of the Middle Eastern oil will increase to 70 percent by 2020 according to the forecasts.<sup>350</sup> With high prices in the international market, it is becoming increasingly difficult for China to import oil. China sees the creation of strategic oil reserves and delivery of energy resources through multiple channels as the way to guarantee its energy security in the future. These circumstances make China look for the alternatives and expand its energy cooperation. Conditioned by its geopolitical position and striving to become a privileged partner for the regional countries, such energy cooperation has become a part of China's geopolitical strategy with regard to the energy supplier countries of Central Asia.<sup>351</sup>

China acts in a very sophisticated way in its policy of getting into rich oil fields. For example, in 2005, a joint Chinese and Kazakhstan firm, Kazakhstan Oil Company (a subsidiary of China National Petroleum Corporation International) announced in Canada that it had received permission from a Canadian court to purchase a local business (the large oil company Petro Kazakhstan) for 4.18 billion dollars. At the time, this was the largest object of Chinese investments abroad. In essence, this was an expansion of China's National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) into the oil fields of western Kazakhstan. Such development of fields, creation of joint ventures, and concerted actions in the international market are successful only because of the real support for this process coming from Kazakhstan's leaders.<sup>352</sup> Kazakhstan put a joint oil pipeline with China into operation before Russia did. It exports its oil to China through the Kazakhstan-China pipeline that starts in the west Kazakhstan, at Atasu (on the Caspian

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<sup>350</sup> Galiia A. Movkebaeva, "Energy Cooperation among Kazakhstan, Russia and China within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Russian Politics and Law* 51, no. 1 (January-February 2013): 82.

<sup>351</sup> Palkin, "An Energy Triangle," *Problems of Economic Transition*, 36-37.

<sup>352</sup> Palkin, "An Energy Triangle," *Problems of Economic Transition*, 37.

shore), and ends at Dushanze in China's Xinjiang-Uighur autonomous region. Completed in December 2009, this pipeline is over 1,200 kilometers long and has transported up to 20 million tons of oil which constitute the 12 percent of the oil China imports every year.<sup>353</sup> Having the total investment of 700 million dollars, and divided into equal shares between Kazakhstan and China this project is very important for Chinese-Kazakh cooperation in the sphere of energy resources.<sup>354</sup> Besides oil and gas Kazakhstan is preparing to sign contracts with China in uranium production and electricity generation sphere. Kazakhstan, having substantial uranium reserves and the world's largest producer of uranium, plans to invite the Chinese energy company Datang International Co. Ltd. to build a power plant in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, Kazakhstan's national nuclear company announced in November 2009 that Kazakhstan and China had agreed on joint mining and processing of uranium for nuclear fuel.<sup>355</sup>

The military and security cooperation between China and Kazakhstan is mainly promoted through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The history of the organization goes to 1996 when during a meeting in Shanghai, heads of state of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan adopted the idea of establishing a forum of the Shanghai Five. The main background behind the forum was the border negotiations between China and the Soviet Union, the origins of which go back to 1964.<sup>356</sup> Later the forum turns into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001 in Shanghai when Uzbekistan also became a part of the organization. Among organization's aims are strengthening mutual confidence and good-neighborly relations among the member countries, making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region and promoting effective cooperation in almost all spheres of life such as politics, economy, science and culture.<sup>357</sup>

The organization has been variously described as "the world's least known and

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<sup>353</sup> Movkebaeva, "Energy Cooperation," *Russian Politics and Law*, 82-83.

<sup>354</sup> Movkebaeva, "Energy Cooperation," *Russian Politics and Law*, 84.

<sup>355</sup> Palkin, "An Energy Triangle," *Problems of Economic Transition*, 42.

<sup>356</sup> Baizakova, "The Shanghai Cooperation," *Russian Politics and Law*, 60.

<sup>357</sup> *Brief Introduction to The Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 2011, <http://www.sectSCO.org/EN/brief.asp> (accessed May 18, 2012).

least analyzed” multilateral group, an “OPEC with [nuclear] bombs”, and a prospective anti-American “Asian NATO”.<sup>358</sup> It was clear that the grouping was perceived by China as an important means through which not only to secure its western frontier but also to further its wider strategic interests. Indeed, a joint Sino-Russian statement regarding the establishment of a “strategic partnership” between China and Russia emphasized the need-to-counter “hegemonism” (US primacy) and the importance of achieving “regional and global stability, development, and prosperity” on the basis of “the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence”.<sup>359</sup> The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) plays an important role in the foreign, defense, and security policies of the Central Asian member-states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan). Since the transition from the Shanghai Five, the organization established a basis for further strengthening security cooperation by building organizational mechanisms and establishing its secretariat and the Regional Antiterrorist Structure (RATS), developing mechanisms to facilitate high-level meetings between member-states’ governments, signing its founding manifesto and related documents, and agreeing on regulations for observer states and dialogue partners.<sup>360</sup> From Kazakhstan’s perspective, the SCO has already made an important contribution by achieving weight in contemporary international affairs. The high level of regional integration within the SCO on matters of security, stability, and economic and humanitarian cooperation demonstrates the members’ ability to act together effectively to withstand external threats and challenges and find ways to tackle current and strategic issues based on their interests. Kazakhstan consistently supports constructive dialogue between NATO and the SCO and between NATO and the CSTO.<sup>361</sup> However, the security of Kazakhstan, like that of Central Asia as a whole, cannot be separated from

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<sup>358</sup> Clarke, “China,” 117.

<sup>359</sup> Clarke, “China,” 124.

<sup>360</sup> Roger N. McDermott, “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s Impact on Central Asian Security: A View from Kazakhstan,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 59, no. 4 (July-August 2012): 56.

<sup>361</sup> Baizakova, “The Shanghai Cooperation,” *Russian Politics and Law*, 74.

Russian security. Today the Russian Federation is the strongest state in the post-Soviet space in military and political terms. For Russia, too, participation in the SCO's work is a high-priority foreign policy task along with maintaining its authority in the world and preserving its influence in the region.<sup>362</sup>

Noteworthy is the fact that the SCO's agenda was initially focused on military and security issues, areas which Beijing had traditionally been loath to engage with on a multilateral basis.<sup>363</sup> Over the last few years, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has devoted increasing attention to joint economic projects. The existing system of pipelines in the SCO space, which unites Russia, the countries of Central Asia, and China, forms the basis for creating a single SCO energy market.<sup>364</sup> Kazakhstan appreciates China's increased influence in the SCO but is also wary of it. The recent debates in the SCO over the Common Fund or Energy Club represented Kazakhstan's and Russia's attempts to prevent China's economic domination in the organization. At the same time, Astana, like other Central Asian members of the SCO, balances between Moscow and Beijing and at times plays one off against the other.<sup>365</sup>

Through the SCO, Russia has succeeded in roping China into supplying resources to beef up security in Central Asia and in drawing China into military-political cooperation. This result corresponds to Russia's interest in predictability in Chinese military policy and to China's interest in strengthening its influence in Central Asia. So far, however, Russia has not managed to strengthen its own military cooperation with China within the SCO.<sup>366</sup>

China is also trying to deepen economic cooperation within the SCO, thereby turning the organization into a means of implementing China's economic strategy in Central Asia.<sup>367</sup> In long-term strategic terms, it matters to Kazakhstan to have links with

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<sup>362</sup> Baizakova, "The Shanghai Cooperation," *Russian Politics and Law*, 72.

<sup>363</sup> Clarke, "China," 122.

<sup>364</sup> Movkebaeva, "Energy Cooperation," *Russian Politics and Law*, 80.

<sup>365</sup> Azizian and Bainazarova, "Eurasian Response," *Asian Politics and Policy*, 393.

<sup>366</sup> Baizakova, "The Shanghai Cooperation," *Russian Politics and Law*, 72.

<sup>367</sup> Baizakova, "The Shanghai Cooperation," *Russian Politics and Law*, 73.



China via a series of agreements, including economic agreements. In particular, the development of infrastructure in the region and implementation of the project to revive the Great Silk Road benefit both Kazakhstan and China. This goal, however, depends not only on the development of bilateral relations but also on cooperation among all the SCO countries. The plan to build an oil pipeline from western Kazakhstan to China has significance, too. Kazakhstan regards the implementation of this plan as a priority of its foreign policy once peace takes root in the region.<sup>368</sup>

Nevertheless, these states do not agree on every issue. In particular, the Chinese worry about strengthening of the economic and military–political positions of the United States and NATO in Central Asia. In addition, the Chinese side sees Kazakhstan’s plan for the SCO as leaving an important aspect out of account: the possible enlargement of the organization to include such countries as India and Mongolia. As the struggle among the leading powers over Kazakhstan’s oil intensifies, the Chinese increasingly understand that the rising influence of the West—above all, the United States—in Central Asia clearly opposes the interests of China and Russia. This perception encourages the search for mutually acceptable forms of Russian–Chinese cooperation in Kazakhstan and throughout the region.<sup>369</sup>

The speed of the SCO’s development is also hampered by differing visions for the organization and lack of consensus between Beijing and Moscow, as well as historical differences among other members. Although the SCO summit in Tashkent in 2010 witnessed agreement on a formal mechanism for accepting new members, the issue of which countries may be granted SCO membership continues to divide the organization.<sup>370</sup>

In conclusion, while seeking the strategy of “peaceful rise” implying establishing good relations with neighbors and avoiding conflicts with major active actor, China’s conductive relations with Kazakhstan were based on its economic and security interests. Thus, China is the second largest economic partner of Kazakhstan, yet there is tendency that Beijing will overcome Moscow in terms the volume of bilateral trade. Taking into

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<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> McDermott, “The Shanghai Cooperation,” *Problems of Post-Communism*, 57.

account Chinese rapid industrial development and its dependency on oil to meet its needs, energy oriented diplomacy started to become visible since the mid-2000's. Military cooperation is another domain of Kazakh-Chinese relations. It was mainly promoted under the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). However, the heavy presence of Russia in the organization and also taking into account the historical presence of Moscow in the region made Beijing consider the organization as another tools o economic cooperation.

## **5.2. The United States**

The United States entered the post-Cold War period as the world's only remaining superpower. After Russia's economic collapse and political disturbances, many believed that a "unipolar moment" had arrived. The focus of the US foreign policy towards Central Asia during the Cold War has declined substantially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The US gave a major priority to Russia in the region and relegated Central Asia to the periphery of strategic thinking.<sup>371</sup> The United States was concerned about the potential revival of Russian imperialism and it was considered that close relations of the US allies with post-Soviet states would keep Russia constrained in its actions. As a result, Washington encouraged Turkish efforts to build strong ties with the Central Asian states rather than allocating the resources of its own. Turkey among other European partners had strong economic interests in the region, but this was not enough to drive the US policy to the region.<sup>372</sup>

This does not mean however that the United States has been totally disinterested in the region. Having more energy sources for global markets was certainly of US' interest. In this aspect, the US policy was clearly formulated in order to support "multiple pipelines" for Caspian oil and to guarantee that these exports not be controlled by Russia or Iran, and ensure that the US firms play a significant role in the development of the Caspian hydrocarbons. In the 90's the United States being concerned about the prospect

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<sup>371</sup> Matteo Fumagalli, "The United States and Central Asia," in *New Central Asia: The Regional Impact of International Actors*, ed. Emilian Kavalski (River Edge, NJ, USA: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010), 177-178.

<sup>372</sup> Olga Oliker and David Shlapak, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia: Policy Priorities and Military Roles* (Santa Monica, CA, USA: RAND Corporation, 2006), 7-8.

of instability in the region was mainly involved in global peacemaking efforts, seeking to promote democracy and economic reforms. At the same time, it looked for mechanisms to constrain the use of WMD proliferation, international terrorism and transnational crime. The United States provided economic and democratization assistance to the former Soviet republics to bolster US firms that are willing to invest in the region, and started to build low-level military contacts, both bilaterally and through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Partnership for Peace (PfP) program.<sup>373</sup>

Towards the latter part of the decade the US attitude towards the region has to a great extent changed toward gaining access to energy resources, in every other aspect the tendency has almost remained the same.<sup>374</sup> Washington provided aid for the development of "civil society" and assisted in the transition to the market economy. US interest in Central Asia at the end of the 1990's and the beginning of the 2000's is symbolized by Zbigniew Brzezinski, the former security adviser to the president, who in his *The Grand Chessboard* stated that Eurasia remained the chessboard where the combat for global primacy will unfold. To be more precise, it accentuated the geostrategic analyses into a "war of influence" with Russia (to lesser extent with China), and stressed the importance of political change by promoting democracy and thus trying to form a belt of friendly regimes containing Russia.<sup>375</sup>

Since September 11, 2001 (9/11), another vital interest captured the attention of US politicians, namely security concerns underpinning the "global war on terror" and the defense of the United States from Islamic terrorism personified by Osama Ben Laden.<sup>376</sup> The "9/11" constituted a watershed in the US-Central Asian relations and the region has suddenly been exposed to the center-stage. The region mattered because of the potential security threat coming from states and non-state radical organizations,

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<sup>373</sup> Olikier and Shlapak, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia*, 8.

<sup>374</sup> Fumagalli, "The United States," 177.

<sup>375</sup> Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, "The United States in Central Asia: Reassessing the Challenging Partnership," *Strategic Analysis* 35, no. 3 (2011), 428.

<sup>376</sup> Stephen J. Blank, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia and the Challenges to them* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007), 4.

besides this, the area is suitable for the US military because of the geopolitical location being close to Afghan border.<sup>377</sup> In addition to this, Putin's rising to power and Russia's subsequent assertive energy diplomacy, at a time of peak oil prices, has caused concern in Washington. Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) of 2006, identifying Central Asia as a "geostrategic crossroads", explained that "the US will seek to shape not only the choices of countries in those regions, but choices of countries outside them that have interests or ambitions within them." According to the QDR, energy represents an opportunity for the economic development of Central Asian states, but also could present a danger that outside powers (here it is Russia and to a lesser extent China) will seek to gain influence over them. The US interest in the diversification of the energy routes and lessening of Russian influence over Central Asian states is clear in an interview with Ekho Moskvyy, the then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who noted that the US policy in Central Asia proceeded from the belief that "energy should not be used in any way as a political tool."<sup>378</sup>

Despite these concerns Washington continues to lead a multi-dimensional relationship with the Central Asian states. As the then Deputy Secretary of the United States Evan Feigenbaum explained in:

. . . some people say we have a defense policy, we have a democracy policy, we have a trade policy. No. We have a foreign policy, and we want to do all of these things simultaneously. . . . Now I personally don't expect that the speed of progress will necessarily be the same in terms of our cooperation in every basket. It wouldn't be realistic. But we do think it's important to be moving forward in every basket. So I think with each government and with each country the pace has varied a little bit from country to countries.<sup>379</sup>

According to Feigenbaum, since early 90's Central Asia's role has not evolved much, and the region is still significant because it represents a variety of US foreign interests such as Russia's resurgence, China's regional and global footprint, the role of Iran, the future of Afghanistan, terrorism, challenges posed by Islam and the goal of

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<sup>377</sup> Fumagalli, "The United States," 179.

<sup>378</sup> Elizabeth Wishnick, *Russia, China and the United States in Central Asia: Prospect for Great Power Competition and Cooperation in the Shadow of the Georgian Crisis* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2009), 5-6.

<sup>379</sup> Wishnick, *Russia, China and the United States*, 6.

democracy.<sup>380</sup>

In this aspect, the US sometimes has difficulty conceptualizing and dealing with the diversity of the region in terms of their attitude towards the rule of law and political reform, natural resource endowment and even type of challenges faced. In the more recent American policy towards the region, one may observe an apparent dilemma between promotion of the democratic values and the pursuit of more material interests, in the security and energy field. Likewise, while security dominates the US ties with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, energy considerations are certain to drive Western policy toward countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.<sup>381</sup>

Energy cooperation comes to the forefront and it is actually the best way to characterize the US-Kazakh relations, but since independence Kazakhstan has been Washington's key partner in the region in other spheres as well. Astana has been leading an easily calculated, predictable and transparent foreign policy, and though Washington for a long time has considered Kazakhstan as being too close to Moscow, and the main driver of the Russian influence in the region, Astana is the only one in Central Asia that has managed to implement a multi-pronged foreign policy, has remained faithful to its multi-vectoral principles avoiding the geopolitical subterfuges and last-minute reversal that characterize its Uzbek neighbor.<sup>382</sup>

Building relations with the United States became one of the main priorities of the Kazakh government at the time, because the US, asserting itself as a unanimous global actor, had significant impact on global trends. Washington being one of the first countries to recognize the sovereignty of the Republic of Kazakhstan (on December 25, 1991) subsequently became one of the main foreign partners of the country. Apart from assisting the country in eliminating the weapons of mass destruction and related infrastructure, the US was eager to offer aid in military training, health care, export control, economic reform, regional stability and law enforcement.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

<sup>381</sup> Fumagalli, "The United States," 180.

<sup>382</sup> Laruelle and Peyrouse, "The United States," *Strategic Analysis*, 429.

<sup>383</sup> Olga Oliker, "Kazakhstan's Security Interests and Their Implications for the U.S. - Kazakh

Kazakhstan has also been the main trade partner of the United States in Central Asia so far. Astana has received a sum total of more than 14 billion dollars in foreign direct investment from Washington since 1993. It should be noted however that most of the United States trade is invested in oil and gas industry and related services. It should also be mentioned that overall trade volume has dropped in the middle of 2000's. In 2009 and 2010 the amount of US exports to Kazakhstan amounted around 600 million dollars each year, although there were times when it reached up to a billion dollar.<sup>384</sup>

Since the early 1990's US companies have been present above all in the mechanical auto, electricity, aviation, medical and optical instruments sectors. In addition to this, the United States has become Kazakhstan's main partner in providing agricultural machines and equipment, being ahead of Russia, Germany and Canada, and is planning to establish contacts in cutting edge sectors such as pharmaceutical products (vaccines, medication) and medical equipment (surgical, diagnostic, laboratory equipment, test kits, etc.), and also are attempting to enter the telecommunications domain (digitalization, internet-related technologies, etc.).<sup>385</sup>

Furthering diversification and the enlargement of the existing investment from the US side will not change the ratio of the US current investments in the oil, gas and similar areas of Kazakhstan's economy however. Recent statistical analyzes forecast that US investments in hydrocarbon and related transportation area of the republic in the near future will constitute the same ratio as the current one, namely 65 percent.<sup>386</sup> In the oil and gas sector, the United States offers progressive technology from deposit exploration, pipeline equipment, techniques of purification and upgrading to ecological norms, reviving exhausted fields, laboratory studies, refinery equipment and the sale of oil products. This also applies to the minerals sector, in which US companies supply

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Relationship," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (2007): 65.

<sup>384</sup> M. T. Laumulin, "Strategiia SShA v Tsentral'noi Azii" [The Strategy of USA in Central Asia], In *Tsentral'naia Aziia Segodnia: Vyzovy i Ugrozy* [Central Asia Today: Challenges and Threats], ed. K. L. Syroezhkin (Almaty: Kazhastanskiĭ Institut Strategicheskikh Issledovaniĭ pri Prezidente Republiki Kazahstan, 2011), 182.

<sup>385</sup> Laruelle and Peyrouse, "The United States," *Strategic Analysis*, 438.

<sup>386</sup> Laumulin, "Strategiia SShA," 182.

excavation and extraction material, as well as technologies for water decontamination.<sup>387</sup>

The prominent aspect of bilateral economic cooperation has naturally been energy. As already stated above, although the United States is interested and has made attempts to promote democratic reform assistance, the pursuit of more material goals puts democracy on the back burner and drives the US energy interests to the fore in the states like Kazakhstan.<sup>388</sup> The main interest of the US companies lies in the Caspian basin, where the most hydrocarbon reserves are located. During the Soviet era, all the oil and natural gas pipelines in the Caspian region were designed to link the Soviet Union internally and were thus routed through Russia. Prior to 1997, the only major pipeline available in the region was the Atyrau-Samara pipeline from Kazakhstan to Russia. In the early phases of oil production in the major fields of Kazakhstan, smaller amounts of oil were exported by barge and by rail through Russia. Kazakhstan needed new transportation routes to world markets, and as a result strategically shaped preferences towards the West in this case. Washington in turn comprehended that alternative pipelines were crucial to balance the Russian and Chinese influence in the region. Therefore, the role and influence of the United States have increased significantly in facilitating regional cooperation and the security of energy transit routes as well as providing insurance and credit for American investment in the region.<sup>389</sup> In this aspect, the US supported two main projects in the region, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline. Besides the United States, Turkey has strongly backed the project, which the parties managed to operationalize through joint efforts. And although this became possible due to the Azerbaijan's pro-Western policies, Kazakhstan's position in the projects remained modest.<sup>390</sup>

The securitization of US companies participating in international consortiums for the exploitation of Azerbaijani and Kazakhstani oil makes Washington consider the Caspian Sea a strategic sector. The proximity of Russia and Iran makes the region even

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<sup>387</sup> Laruelle and Peyrouse, "The United States," *Strategic Analysis*, 438.

<sup>388</sup> Fumagalli, "The United States," 180.

<sup>389</sup> Pinar Ipek, "Challenges for Democratization in Central Asia: What Can the United States Do?" *Middle East Policy* 14, no. 1 (2007): 97.

<sup>390</sup> Laruelle and Peyrouse, "The United States," *Strategic Analysis*, 437.

more prone to long-term instabilities. The Americans agree with the fact that the security of eastern Turkey and the export routes from the Caspian to the Caucasus to the Black Sea require Western supervision. In this case, The United States is zeroing in on Kazakhstan as its second most important Caspian partner after Azerbaijan. Despite Astana's commitment to NATO, it is thought in Washington that Kazakhstani state is less overtly opposed to Moscow than Baku. This however did not stop Kazakhstan from receiving financial, technical and training aid from the United States military. After 2004, the United States offered the Kazakhstani army a modernization programme along several axes: training officers in the military academies of NATO members, in particular in Turkey, Greece, Italy and Spain.<sup>391</sup>

In Central Asia, Kazakhstan has the highest tendency to military cooperation with the West. Astana is far ahead in the intensity of contacts and interactions of all of their closest geographical neighbors in Central Asia within the framework of participation the NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Kazakhstan unlike any other states in the region participates in the full spectrum of PfP programs.<sup>392</sup> A significant element in this process was the formation with US encouragement of the Central Asian Battalion in the middle 1990's. This unit, besides Kazakhstan also, comprised of Uzbek and Kyrgyz troops. Being established under NATO framework and with US CENTCOM support it has been exercising annually with NATO and US troops with a mandate in conflict management and peacekeeping.<sup>393</sup>

In the second half of 2000, Kazakhstan has also managed to increase its strategic weight in the eyes of the Americans by hosting the forum of the Euro-Atlantic Security Council in 2009 and by participating in its Individual Plan of Action for the Partnership (IPAP). The country is also a part of the Action Plan of the Partnership against Terrorism, which makes provision for the exchange of information with NATO members, and hosts the annual "Steppe Eagle" anti-terrorism exercises. Despite its

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<sup>391</sup> Laruelle and Peyrouse, "The United States," *Strategic Analysis*, 435.

<sup>392</sup> Simon J. Smith and Emilian Kavalski, "NATO's Partnership with Central Asia: Cooperation à la Carte," in *New Central Asia: The Regional Impact of International Actors*, ed. Emilian Kavalski (River Edge, NJ, USA: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010), 41-42.

<sup>393</sup> Neil S. Macfarlane, "The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia," *International Affairs* 80, no. 3 (2004): 452.



privileged partnership with Russia Kazakhstan hopes to obtain interoperability status with NATO in the coming years. As a result, Astana has created a peacekeeping force (the Kazbat battalion, upgraded to brigade Kazbrig) that has been collaborating with NATO under a UN mandate.<sup>394</sup> With Russia's prior consent, Kazakhstan also allows US planes to fly across its territory to supply forces in Afghanistan with weapons, which meant that Air Force cargo jets could fly from Alaska to Afghanistan through the North Pole without having to refuel.<sup>395</sup>

As Roger McDermott argues: "the relationship between Kazakhstan and NATO has deepened considerably as a result of 9/11, Kazakhstan's role in Peace Support Operations (PSO) in Iraq and Nazarbayev's capitalization on the rupture in NATO's relations with neighboring Uzbekistan." According to McDermott, Kazakhstan as NATO's "anchor in Central Asia" has been adept at extracting exactly what it wants from all the major actors (Russia, China and the United States) in the region while at the same time not upsetting any of them. McDermott adds that there is no reason to believe that the nature of the NATO-Kazakhstan relationship will alter drastically in the future. NATO is all too aware of the country's proximity to Russia and the relationship the two former Soviet actors retain.<sup>396</sup>

It can also be added that in overall Astana has been one of the most prominent US adherents in the region from the very beginning of the 1990's. The tendency of bilateral relations over the past two decades makes us believe that Astana will continue to support Washington in a friendly and constructive communication, and develop a strategic dialogue in all major areas of cooperation: political, economic, military, security.<sup>397</sup>

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that early on Kazakhstan had come to the realization that Russia's proximity guaranteed the country a role of some sort while the US interests were not sufficient for developing close ties. Good relations with Turkey, the United States, and a variety of Western states were a means of obtaining

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<sup>394</sup> Laruelle and Peyrouse, "The United States," *Strategic Analysis*, 433.

<sup>395</sup> Laruelle and Peyrouse, "The United States," *Strategic Analysis*, 433.

<sup>396</sup> Smith and Kavalski, "NATO's Partnership," 41-42.

<sup>397</sup> Laumulin, "Strategiia SShA," 185-186.

useful training, equipment, economic aid and significant investment, but good relations with Russia were also necessary. From Kazakhstan's perspective, the US support for multiple pipelines is aligned with its desire to ensure economic independence from Russia, but there is little reason to alienate Russia politically, given its immediate proximity and the large number of ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan.<sup>398</sup>

### 5.3. The Russian Federation

Having lost almost half of its lands the Russian Federation emerged out of the ashes of the Soviet Union. This meant that the new government would have to challenge the new political and geo-strategic realities. Politicians at the head had to adapt to the new circumstances and had to set completely new foreign policy course and objectives since absolutely new states appeared on the political map what previously used to be the Soviet Union. Almost half of the territories that were previously under the Moscow rule became sovereign states, or the "Near Abroad" (the term used for the former republics of the Soviet Union).<sup>399</sup>

At the same time, the situation in the Russian Federation was critical. At the beginning of the 1990's the political and economical systems in the country were dysfunctioning, there were not any clear policy priorities and above-all, there was fundamental cleavage and chronic decay within the society. People lacked collective self-confidence and sense of purpose.<sup>400</sup> The country that a few years ago could shake the whole world was now in a state of shock and despair. Boris Yeltsin's attempts to reformulate economic discourse and domestic policy and to revise Russian foreign policy ended with a failure. The country's hasty lurching towards a market economy led to even greater inflation, economic disarray and mass hardship.<sup>401</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>398</sup> Olikier and Shlapak, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia*, 10.

<sup>399</sup> Wynne Russell, "Russian Relations with the Near Abroad," in *Russian Foreign Policy since 1990*, ed. Peter Shearman (Boulder: West View Press, 1995), 53.

<sup>400</sup> Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003), 10.

<sup>401</sup> Vitaliy I. Korotkevich, *Istoriia Sovremennoï Rossii: 1991-2003* [The History of the Modern Russia: 1991-2003], (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'svo S. Peterburgskogo Universiteta, 2004), 30.

while the Russian Federation was engaged with consolidating internal politics, the political vacuum in the “Near Abroad” started to be fulfilled by the third parties (the US, the EU, China, Iran and Turkey) aiming to take the region under their own influence.<sup>402</sup> In turn, trying to catch on for the national rhetoric and adapt the national symbols, the former Soviet republics were also actively collaborating with the outer world (especially seeking economical and political assistance from the West).<sup>403</sup>

Understanding that due to inaction and passivity the space of the “Near Abroad” will be lost, Moscow under the growing influence of national wing started to be more assertive towards the region at the end of Yeltsin’s first term.<sup>404</sup> In the second Yeltsin’s term there already was to a large extent clarified Russian policy towards the “Near Abroad”, and especially towards Russia’s southern neighbors.<sup>405</sup> Since 1995, the region of Central Asia has been placed into the list of the Russian strategic doctrine. The subsequent appointment of Yevgenii Primakov, a known Orientalist, as the Russian new foreign minister coincided with the Russian more pragmatically minded foreign policy toward the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).<sup>406</sup> Consequently, under his supervision the Central Asian states were separated from the Baltic countries and started

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<sup>402</sup> Paul J. Marantz, "Neither Adversaries Nor Partners: Russia and the West Search for a New Relationship," in *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, ed. Roger E. Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1997), 84.

<sup>403</sup> Michael Rywkin, "Russia and the Near Abroad Under Putin," *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy* 25, no. 1 (2003): 5.

<sup>404</sup> Marantz, "Neither Adversaries," 84.

<sup>405</sup> Maria Raquel Freire, "Russian Policy in Central Asia: Supporting, Balancing, Coercing, or Imposing," *Asian Perspective* 33, no. 2 (2009): 127.

<sup>406</sup> The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (whose participating countries are the former Soviet Republics) was an attempt to keep the previous Soviet links with the “Near Abroad”. According to Lena Johnson, although the creation of the CIS during the breakup of the Soviet Union gave impression that Moscow would keep exercising the previous Soviet authority in the organization, the country’s national state-building did not allow Yeltsin to do so. Eventually, the organization did not manage to turn into a full-fledged integration structure and most of its initiatives remained unfulfilled, mainly due to the difference in the member states’ positions concerning economic development, national interests and the preference of social and political systems. As a result, the relations between the member states and Moscow continued mostly in a bilateral manner.

to be regarded as the separate domain of foreign policy strategy.<sup>407</sup>

The turning point in the Russian domestic and foreign policy happened to be after Vladimir Putin's accession to power in 2000. He noticeably marked a break with the legacy of his predecessor.<sup>408</sup> As president he has taken several steps to resolve the accumulated problems at home: he reallocated power from the mighty Council of the Federation in favor of a purely consultative State Council, initiated a reform of the federal districts initiated a reform of the federal districts aimed at regaining control over regional leaders, and prepared a package of reforms under the program prepared by the Center for Strategic Research.<sup>409</sup> Thus, he changed state organizations that were rather ineffective during Yeltsin. This was followed by the reforms in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the reforms in the military.<sup>410</sup> These reforms were designed in accordance with new Russian military doctrine approved by the Security Council. It implied readiness and necessary response (if needed) to the new threats in the face of eastward expansion of NATO and the military concept of NATO and, in particular, events in the North Caucasus.<sup>411</sup> At the same time, under his leadership, a new and important aspect of Russian foreign policy in the "Near Abroad" has become a decisive shift toward the specific actions and initiatives for the development of institutional cooperation. The essential emphasis was made on finding a compromise on new integration schemes and formats such as the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC)<sup>412</sup>, Collective Security

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<sup>407</sup> Lena Johnson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia: The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2004), 44.

<sup>408</sup> V. Paramonov, A. Stokov and O. Stolpovskiĭ, *Rossiia v Tsentral'noĭ Azii: Politika, Ekonomika i Bezopasnost'* [Russia in Central Asia: Politics, Economy and Security], Conference Report (Moscow: University of MGIMO, 2010), 2.

<sup>409</sup> Korotkevich, *Istoriia Sovremennoĭ Rossii*, 50.

<sup>410</sup> Freire, "Russian Policy," *Asian Perspective*, 127.

<sup>411</sup> Korotkevich, *Istoriia Sovremennoĭ Rossii*, 57-60.

<sup>412</sup> The community originated in 1996 from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) with the aim of implementing freedom of movement among the members (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan). It is important to note that previously the Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) formed Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO) as Central Asian Commonwealth. In 1994 the organization became Central Asian Economic Union (CAEU), and in 1998 already continued as the Central

Treaty Organization (CSTO)<sup>413</sup> and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), rather than reviving the old integration organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).<sup>414</sup>

The economy of the Russian Federation began to grow steadily after Putin's coming to power (not to forget the recent crisis of 1998). The budget of 2001 became the first balanced budget in the entire post-Soviet history of Russia. The government started to pay pension on regular base and there was no more chronic salary delays, the biggest concern of the Russian public. At the same time, Putin's government started a real combat against illegally obtained money capital by narrowing down the informal sector.<sup>415</sup> The economical success to a large extent depended on the price of the natural resources on the world market though.<sup>416</sup> The role of the raw materials in stabilizing the national economy was huge. The government still did not create a niche, and was not investing enough in the manufacturing industry or high technology that would fix Russian dependence on the oil and gas. In 2003, the profit from the entire Russian industry that was concentrated in the oil sector amounted 60 percent.<sup>417</sup>

The growing prices of energy resources not only helped to consolidate the national economy, it also allowed to use part of financial resources to implement the objectives of the new foreign policy.<sup>418</sup> Together with the large state and semi-state companies

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Asian Economic Cooperation (CAEC), which marked Turkmenistan's exit. After Russia joined the organization in 2004 the CACO merged into the EurAsEC. By 2010 the development of bilateral relations led to the formation of the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. Being the most remarkable output of the EurAsEC, the Customs Union is an attempt to form a broader European Union type economic alliance. Among the aims of the Customs Union is to continue with economic integration and to remove all customs borders between each other, and to become the Eurasian Union later, implying of the formation of the political union between the member states.

<sup>413</sup> The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is an intergovernmental military alliance of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan formed with signing of a charter in 2002 in Tashkent.

<sup>414</sup> Paramonov, Stokov and Stolpovskiĭ, *Rossiia v Tsentral'noi Azii*, 3.

<sup>415</sup> Korotkevich, *Istoriia Sovremennoi Rossii*, 64-65.

<sup>416</sup> Paramonov, Stokov and Stolpovskiĭ, *Rossiia v Tsentral'noi Azii*, 2.

<sup>417</sup> Korotkevich, *Istoriia Sovremennoi Rossii*, 65-67.

such as “Gazprom” which occupy an important part in his policy, oil and gas themselves started to play a significant role in the foreign policy of Putin’s Russia. In this context, Putin sees in Central Asia and particularly in the Caspian Sea an important strategic tool and a lever while conducting policy with European countries. It is obvious that without reserves of Central Asian oil and gas Putin would not be able to monopolize the European energy market.<sup>419</sup> This strengthened the notion that the restoration of the lost positions at the regional post-Soviet space is an inevitable step toward improving the Russian Federation's international role. This vision could be understood from the Putin’s speech at the plenary session of the Russian Federation Ambassadors:

The absence of an effective Russian policy in the CIS, or even an unjustified slowdown, inevitably leads to an active filling of this political space by other more active states.<sup>420</sup>

Central Asia constitutes the soft-belly of the Russian Empire, an area anchored within its sphere of influence. The idea of importance of Central Asia as a strategic asset allowing further moves southward has been on the agenda of the Russians for years. Another key geopolitical importance of its own was the fact that the region is rich in raw materials and a market for Russian goods (according to Lenin, “a raw material accessory of Russia”).<sup>421</sup> The disintegration of the Soviet Union did not alter this view, the newly formed Russian Federation and the countries of Central Asia are still economically dependent on each other. This interdependency is attributed to the industrial system of the Soviet Union, as well as the transportation and the division of labor which were closely bounded with each other.<sup>422</sup>

Among the Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has been relatively stable and

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<sup>418</sup> Paramonov, Stokov and Stolpovskiĭ, *Rossia v Tsentral'noi Azii*, 2.

<sup>419</sup> Roy Allison, "Strategic Reassertion in Russia's Central Asia Policy," *International Affairs* 80, no. 2 (2004): 282.

<sup>420</sup> Andrei P. Tsyngankov, "If Not by Tanks, then by Banks? The Role of Soft Power in Putin's Foreign Policy," *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no. 7 (November 2006): 1079.

<sup>421</sup> Michael Rywkin, "What is Central Asia to Us?" *American Foreign Policy Interests* 33, no. 5 (2011): 224.

<sup>422</sup> Esra Akgül, *Russian Foreign Policy and the Discourse of Eurasianism Rhetoric versus Reality*, Master Thesis (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 2005), 39.

indisputably Russia's principal partner in the region. The value of this partnership and the strategic nature of this bilateral relationship are determined by the geographical position of Kazakhstan which has the longest land border with Russia in the world. Kazakhstan also has a large number of Russian and other settlers of Slavic origin constituting a large proportion of the population of the country. Moreover, the Russian politicians understand that having major economic and resource potential, Kazakhstan is the key state to the attainment of the hydrocarbons in the heart of Central Asia. Kazakhstan, having unique cosmodrome "Baikonur" so valuable for Russia, is also an important state in terms of military and security spheres.<sup>423</sup> Astana is also one of the most loyal and reliable partner for Russia in the post-Soviet space and the permanent member of all integration processes.<sup>424</sup>

Geostrategic proximity makes Russia and Kazakhstan natural economic partners. Indeed, the partnership between Russia and Kazakhstan has been exceptionally solid and robust. In particular, trade cooperation between the two countries has been strong. The two countries have been maintaining a free trade regime, according to the bilateral agreement signed between the two sides in 1992. Another fundamental agreement<sup>425</sup> that classifies the economical aspect of both countries is the agreement on customs union the single economic area.<sup>426</sup> In Kazakhstan's overall export structure, accounting for 87.96 billion US dollars, Russia's share is equal to 14.3 percent following China 18.5 percent and Italy 17.1 percent in 2011. In 2011, Russia's share in Kazakhstan's import was the leading one, and it was equal to 41.4 percent, ahead of China (13.6 percent) and Germany (5.6 percent).<sup>427</sup> With regard to Kazakhstani exports into Russia, oil and oil products, chemicals and black metals are the most prominent. Whilst, concerning the import of Russian commodities into Kazakhstan oil and oil products, technical and,

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<sup>423</sup> Allison, "Strategic Reassertion," *International Affairs*, 284.

<sup>424</sup> Dmitry Trofimov, "Russia and the United States in Central Asia: Problems, Prospects and Interests," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 19, no. 1 (2003): 76.

<sup>425</sup> The agreement was signed between Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

<sup>426</sup> Yelena Zabortseva, *Kazakhstan's Bilateral Economic Relations with Russia: A Robust Partnership?* BASEES Annual Conference (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2010), 10.

<sup>427</sup> Smailov, "*Kazakhstan v 2011 Godu*", 244-248.

technical and mechanical equipment and transport have been the most prominent.<sup>428</sup>

The total share of Russian inflows into Kazakhstan's economy is not influential in a comparative perspective. Among Russian direct investment to the countries of the CIS Kazakhstan holds the 5<sup>th</sup> position only (4.3 percent of the total for the period 2000-2008), following another Caspian oil-reach Azerbaijan (54.3 percent), Belarus (10.3 percent), and Georgia (4.3 percent).<sup>429</sup> There are no Russian investments in the most "popular" sector among foreign investors: real estate business, although Russia does invest in Kazakhstan's construction. The top Russian investments were directed into wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, as well as some minor investments in manufacturing. In recent years, with regard to Kazakhstan's foreign direct investment (FDI) abroad Russia ranks second (15.4 percent of total for the period 2004-2008) after the Netherlands (30.7 percent) while investments in the CIS countries hold a relatively low position in the overall ranking. In addition, during the period 2000-2008, Kazakhstan was the second among CIS countries (with the share of 30.8 percent), after Belarus, and followed by Ukraine to invest into Russia's economy. Azerbaijan's investments are only 2.4 percent of total in Russian economy.<sup>430</sup>

Kazakhstan owns its success in trade with Russia to the large amount of hydrocarbon reserves. The steadily growing Russia's presence in the Kazakhstan's energy sector has boosted after Putin's ascension to power. The desire to regain control of the region's energy resources, particularly those in the Caspian Sea was a part of Putin's new foreign policy.<sup>431</sup> Of all Moscow's investments in the hydrocarbon sector of Central Asia the share of Kazakhstan constitute 80 percent. Russia is involved in numerous energy projects in Kazakhstan. It is undertaking the geological study and development of gas deposits in Karachaganak (western Kazakhstan) and Imashevskoe (Atyrau region), oil deposits in North Buzachi and in Karakuduk (Mangystau region),

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<sup>428</sup> Smailov, *"Kazakhstan v 2011 Godu"*, 249-257.

<sup>429</sup> Zabortseva, *Kazakhstan's Bilateral Economic Relations with Russia*, 8.

<sup>430</sup> Zabortseva, *Kazakhstan's Bilateral Economic Relations with Russia*, 9.

<sup>431</sup> Marlène Laruelle, "Russia and Central Asia," in *New Central Asia: The Regional Impact of International Actors*, ed. Emilian Kavalski (River Edge, NJ, USA: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010), 159.



both gas and oil deposits in North Kumkol (Kzyl-Orda region), Alibekmola, and Kozhasay (Aktobe region).<sup>432</sup>

In this aspect, the Russian government understands the significance of support to the oil and gas companies operating abroad. Moscow fully supports “Rosneft” and “Lukoil” the two busiest companies in the Kazakhstani oil market, and “Gazprom” who is being active in the gas sector.<sup>433</sup> Russian companies are involved in the construction of a gas refinery in Orenburg and in that of a gas chemical complex close to Khvalinskoe. In addition to this, Rosneft is part of a project to augment the Atyrau-Samara pipeline’s capacity, which is set to increase from 15 to 25 million tons annually. At the same time, the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), 24 percent of which is controlled by the Russian state and 20 percent by Russian private companies, is planning to increase capacity of the Tengiz-Novorossiisk site from 32 to 67 million tons annually.<sup>434</sup> Furthermore, the Russian gas giant “Gazprom” who is actively working in Central Asia in an effort to keep the main role of supplier of natural gas to Europe, by creating a joint venture with the Kazakh national company “KazMunayGaz” is now marketing the Kazakh gas to the external markets.<sup>435</sup>

The Kazakhstani side itself is interested in the participation of the Russian companies in the developing of its energy resources, because the participation of Russian firms guarantees access to the Russian pipeline system.<sup>436</sup> Kazakhstan has two main ways of getting its oil to world markets through the Russian lands. The first one, on which the Kazakhstani side has made considerable investments, is the “Caspian Pipeline Consortium” (CPC). It goes from Tengiz (West Kazakhstan) to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. The other pipeline is stretching out from Atyrau to the Russian city of

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<sup>432</sup> Laruelle, "Russia and Central Asia," 161.

<sup>433</sup> E. M. Kuzmina, *Ėkonomicheskie Interesy Rossii v Tsentral'noi Azii* [Economic Interests of Russia in Central Asia], Conference Report (Moscow: University of MGIMO, 2010), 5.

<sup>434</sup> Laruelle, "Russia and Central Asia," 162.

<sup>435</sup> A. Dundich, *Rossiiskii Vklad v Formirovanie Sistemy Energeticheskoi Stablnosti v Tsentral'noi Azii* [Russian Contribution to the Formation of a System of Energy Stability in Central Asia], Conference Report (Moscow: University of MGIMO, 2010), 3-4.

<sup>436</sup> Kuzmina, *Ėkonomicheskie Interesy Rossii*, 5.

Samara.<sup>437</sup> In addition to this, the Kazakh oil due to the high concentration of sulfur (except for the Tengiz oil) is practically not suitable for processing in the Kazakh oil refineries. The refineries in Kazakhstan (built in the Soviet time) are not designed to process crude oil that contains sulfur. Therefore, Kazakhstan supplies significant portion of its oil to the Russian refineries, and receives Russian oil suitable for processing in its factories in return.<sup>438</sup> This however does not mean that the decision-makers in Astana put up with the fact that Russia be the only producer and imposer of oil monopoly in Kazakhstan. The Kazakhstani authorities are seeking other ways to diversify the investment in the hydrocarbon sector, and as a result invited the interested parties in the face of the Western and Chinese oil and gas companies.<sup>439</sup> By now the Kazakhstani side fully participated into two pipeline projects. The first one, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, is backed by Turkey and its Western allies (the US), whereas the second one, the Atasu-Alashanku, is the product of the joint efforts of Kazakhstan and China.<sup>440</sup> (the two powers that previously kept out of area), Russia opposes Kazakhstan's participation in other project and tries to monopolize the transport of Kazakhstan's enormous oil and gas deposits.<sup>441</sup>

Kazakhstan also takes part in the economic integration organization under the leadership of Russia. The most prominent integration product in the post-Soviet space is the Customs Union of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus. The idea of creating a customs union in the post-Soviet period dates back to 24 September 1993, when the CIS countries signed the Economic Union Treaty that envisaged the launch of an economic

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<sup>437</sup> S. I. Cherniaevskiĭ, *Rossiĭskie Prioritety v Tsentral'noĭ Azii* [Russian Priorities in Central Asia], Conference Report (Moscow: University of MGIMO, 2012), 5.

<sup>438</sup> V. Paramonov and A. Stokov, "Torgovo-Ėkonomicheskie Otnosheniia Mezhdru Rossieĭ i Stranami Tsentral'noĭ Azii: Istoriia i Sovremennost'" [Trade and Economic Relations Between Russia and the States of Central Asia], *Tsentral'naia Evraziia: Avtorskiĭ Proekt Vladimira Paramonova*, September 21, 2010, <http://ceasia.ru/ekonomika/torgovo-ekonomicheskie-otnosheniya-mezhdru-rossiey-i-stranami-tsentralnoy-azii-istoriya-i-sovremennost.html> (accessed May 30, 2012).

<sup>439</sup> Kuzmina, *Ėkonomicheskie Interesy Rossii*, 5.

<sup>440</sup> Rywkin, "What is Central Asia," *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 226.

<sup>441</sup> Stephen Blank, "Infrastructural Policy and National Strategies in Central Asia: the Russian Example," *Central Asian Survey* 23, no. 3-4 (December 2004): 229.

union following the formation of a multilateral free trade association, a customs union, a common market, and a currency union. However, multilateral trade integration within the CIS framework has faced certain challenges. The main of which was the coming to agreement in a bilateral format, because the signatories failed to work out a common list of goods exempt from the multilateral regime.<sup>442</sup> On 10 October, 2000 Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan concluded in Astana a Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC). But, in practice the EurAsEC member states did not get beyond the level of a free trade area in which 60% of customs tariffs were unified and some anti-dumping procedures were applied. In 2003, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine, the most developed countries of the Commonwealth with close economic connections both in the raw materials and manufacturing sectors created the Organization of Regional Integration. Thus, the following countries formed the Common Economic Space, uniting the customs areas of its participating states, envisaged not only a free flow of goods, services, capital and labor on the principles of fair competition in a common market, but also the introduction of a single currency, coordinated trade, fiscal, monetary and credit systems, and exchange rate and financial policies. However, Kiev, having taken a course towards European integration did not intend to progress beyond a free trade area and to bind itself by any far-reaching obligations within the CES. As a result, the remaining participants (Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia) took a decision to form the legal basis of a new customs union in 2006.<sup>443</sup> Although, trade within the Customs Union constitutes only a marginal share, 7.7 percent in 2009, of Russia's external trade, it is of strategic importance to Russia. The Customs Union enhances the removal of internal trade barriers within the member countries forming a market of about 170 million. Russian investors will have better (if not preferential) access to Kazakhstan and Belarus. Yet, the most important implication of the Customs Union for Russia is the eventual single economic space similar to the European Union. This fact will allow increasing its economic and political influence in the "Near Abroad," and especially in the Belarus and

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<sup>442</sup> Sherzod Shadikhodjaev, "Russia and the Customs Union with Kazakhstan and Belarus," *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 87 (November 2010): 10.

<sup>443</sup> Simon Jr. György, "On the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia," *Economic Annals* LV, no. 184 (January-March 2010): 11-12.

Kazakhstan.<sup>444</sup>

The preservation of the key role of the Russian Federation in the former Soviet space is also directly related to the development of Russian cooperation with Central Asian states in the security and military fields. The military cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan has traditionally focused on the strategic interest of both countries in the security of the region. The bilateral military cooperation is based on the set of treaties and agreements. The fundamental agreement that classifies the military cooperation of Russia and Kazakhstan is the bilateral “Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance” of 1992. The military aspects of this treaty was that, in case of threat to either country, each side would provide the establishment of a common military-strategic space, the joint use of military bases, training grounds, and other military facilities.<sup>445</sup> This treaty beyond fixing the basis for the bilateral cooperation in the security and defense areas, has actually stipulated the establishment of military-political union between Kazakhstan and Russia. It is also important that according to the treaty the Russian side would assist in the development of the Kazakhstan’s armed forces.<sup>446</sup> Another fundamental bilateral document is the “Declaration of Eternal Friendship and Alliance, oriented towards the twenty-first century” of 1998. This agreement, which serves current fundamental cooperation between two countries, before all, stresses matters of peace and security. According to this agreement each country undertakes to protect and strengthen bilateral friendship, guarantee national security, political stability, ethnic harmony and prosperity of both countries. It is also noteworthy, that consistent with this agreement each side should respect independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and inviolability of national frontiers, as well as non-interference in internal

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<sup>444</sup> Shadikhodjaev, "Russia and the Customs Union," *Russian Analytical Digest*, 11.

<sup>445</sup> V. Paramonov and O. Stolpovskiĭ, "Dvustoronee Sotrudnichestvo Rossii i Kazakhstana v Voennoĭ Sfere" [Bilateral Cooperation of Russia and Kazakhstan in the Military Sphere], *Tsentral'naia Aziia*, July 8, 2010, <http://ceasia.ru/bezopasnost/dvustoronnee-sotrudnichestvo-rossii-i-kazakhstan-v-voennoy-sfere.html> (accessed May 16, 2012).

<sup>446</sup> M. Gubaĭdulina and B. Somjurek, *Voenno-politicheskoe Izmerenie Otnosheniĭ Mezhdū Respublikoĭ Kazahstan i Rossiĭskoĭ Federatsiei: Evolutsiia, Problemy i Resheniia* [Military-political Dimension of Relations between Kazakhstan and Russia: Evolution, Problems and Solutions], Conference Report (Moscow: University of MGIMO, 2010), 7.

affairs.<sup>447</sup>

Initially, managing most of the military and security issues through bilateral agreements,<sup>448</sup> the first involvement of the two countries in the common national security issues began in the context of the Collective Security Treaty (CST) signed on 15 May, 1992 between Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in Tashkent.<sup>449</sup> According to this treaty the parties undertook to consult "on all important international security issues having relation to their interests, and to coordinate political stances on these issues."<sup>450</sup> But, the CST, simultaneously, is a collective defense treaty whose collaborative strategy is also to respond to the "traditional" security threats, such as interstate conflict or large-scale war with conventional weapons.<sup>451</sup> The first years of existence of this treaty proved to be ineffective though. The treaty proved to be unpopular among the member states and its most actions only took place on paper. In fact, in 1999 some of its members (Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan) have withdrawn from the treaty.<sup>452</sup> Moreover, the enhanced action of international terrorism as a relatively new phenomenon for the region has unveiled the unreadiness of the treaty members to take effective measures to ensure regional security. After the terroristic acts in September, 2001 the struggle against the international terrorism was led by the US and US-led international coalition of states,

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<sup>447</sup> "Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimyh Gosudarstv: Deklaratsiia Mezhdru Rossiskoï Federatsiï i Respublikoï Kazahstan o Vechnoï Druzhbe i Soyuznichestve" [CIS: Declaration on Eternal Friendship and Alliance between Russia and Kazakhstan], *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, August 1998.

<sup>448</sup> Alexander Frost, "The Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and Russia's Strategic Goals in Central Asia," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (2009): 83.

<sup>449</sup> "Obshchie Svedeniia o Organizatsii Dogovora o Kollektivnoi Bezopasnosti" [General Information about the Collective Security Treaty Organization], *Ofitsial'nyi Saït Organizatsii Dogovora o Kollektivnoi Bezopasnosti*, <http://www.dkb.gov.ru/a/a.htm> (accessed May 16, 2012).

<sup>450</sup> Gubaïdulina and Somjurek, *Voенно-politicheskoe Izmerenie*, 6.

<sup>451</sup> Igor Yurgens et al., *ODKB: Otvenstvennaia Bezopasnost'* [CSTO: Responsible Security] (Moscow: ZAO "Ekon-inform", 2011), 8.

<sup>452</sup> "Obshchie Svedeniia o Organizatsii Dogovora o Kollektivnoi Bezopasnosti," *Ofitsial'nyi Saït Organizatsii Dogovora o Kollektivnoi Bezopasnosti*.

who had sent troops to Afghanistan to quell the radical Islamist groups. The activities of the CIS were limited in a way that its members had capacity only to support United States and its allies with an agreement to provide them with military bases on the territories of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, at the same time the treaty members had not taken or had failed to take any action on their own to ensure regional security.<sup>453</sup>

The highest activity and the most systematic nature of the organization were demonstrated after Vladimir Putin came to power. Putin has paid much attention to the military side of the CIS cooperation, especially with the countries mostly suitable for this matter like Kazakhstan.<sup>454</sup> In September 2003, the CST was given an “organization” status and the name of the existing alliance was changed to Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).<sup>455</sup> The reason behind this was to enhance the role of CST in providing national and regional security and to convert this treaty into an alliance with a much higher degree of military and political integration.<sup>456</sup> The mission of the organization is to combat terrorism and drug trafficking in the region.<sup>457</sup> In 2008, the CSTO has made a serious claim, when 107,000 troops and law enforcement officers took part in the annual regional “Kanal” (channel) drug interception operations.<sup>458</sup>

Despite the formal membership of Armenia and Belarus, the active membership of the CSTO has been Russia and its Central Asian allies, which demonstrates its regional purpose. While the CSTO facilitates Russian coordination of the responses of its members to terrorism and drug trafficking, the risk was that Russia’s control would extend to other issues as well. The plan was to establish a joint defense staff, a rapid

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<sup>453</sup> Genadii Chufrin, *Rossiia v Tsentral'noi Azii* [Russia in Central Asia] (Almaty: Kazhastanskiĭ Institut Strategicheskikh Issledovaniĭ, 2010), 37.

<sup>454</sup> Rywkin, "Russia and the Near," *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy*, 9.

<sup>455</sup> "Obshie Svedeniia o Organizatsii Dogovora o Kollektivnoi Bezopasnosti," *Ofitsial'niĭ Saĭt Organizatsii Dogovora o Kollektivnoi Bezopasnosti*.

<sup>456</sup> Chufrin, *Rossiia v Tsentral'noi Azii*, 37.

<sup>457</sup> Leszek Buszynski, "Russia's New Role in Central Asia," *Asian Survey* 45, no. 4 (July/August 2005): 552.

<sup>458</sup> Frost, "The Collective Security," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 84.

deployment force with bases in Tajikistan, and a supporting secretariat.<sup>459</sup> Kazakhstan showed great commitment in forming the rapid deployment force in Central Asian region. Initially, the structure of the forces originally included four battalions, one per Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In 2008, the Russian side increased their contingent to 5 battalions, whereas Kazakhstan's participation was increased to 2 battalions.<sup>460</sup> The member states of the organization are also united to form the Joint System of Air Defense Mechanism. Although, this system was firstly established on the basis of the defense mechanism of the CIS member states, only CSTO member have been actually involved in cooperation and joint exercises.<sup>461</sup> Russia, being the main coordinator of the organization<sup>462</sup> (with the secretariat responsible for all administration, organization, advisory and budgetary located in Moscow),<sup>463</sup> also intended to use the CSTO to gain access to regional military camps and bases, to expand the training of Kazakhstani (as well as other Central Asian states') officers in Russian military academies, and to supply weapons and military technology to local militaries at prices below those of Western arms.<sup>464</sup> Moscow also hopes that the organization will provide the basis for long-term military-technical cooperation with the Kazakhstani side, and revive defense industry with the country.<sup>465</sup> It should also be noted that the Russian side dispel concerns that the CSTO would clash with NATO in Kazakhstan (as well as Central Asia) by stressing both the need to collaborate with the West and shared anti-terrorist aims.<sup>466</sup> Putin prefer to cooperate and declared a strategic partnership with the US. For this reason, Russia would not only oppose Washington's wish to use Kazakhstan's airports and over flight rights for the post-Afghanistan security operations,

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<sup>459</sup> Buszynski, "Russia's New," *Asian Survey*, 552.

<sup>460</sup> Chufrin, *Rossii v Tsentral'noi Azii*, 38.

<sup>461</sup> Yurgens et al., *ODKB*, 9.

<sup>462</sup> Frost, "The Collective Security," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 87.

<sup>463</sup> Frost, "The Collective Security," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 88.

<sup>464</sup> Buszynski, "Russia's New," *Asian Survey*, 552.

<sup>465</sup> Allison, "Strategic Reassertion," *International Affairs*, 286.

<sup>466</sup> Buszynski, "Russia's New," *Asian Survey*, 552.

but it also would provide information to the US about terrorist bases and allow humanitarian flights in its airspace.<sup>467</sup>

In conclusion, the nature of economic and military relations between Russia and Kazakhstan indicates that the two have bilateral relations on a high level. The increase in economic and military ties is also the result of political rapprochement between the two countries in general. An important indicator of economic activity of the Russian Federation, the trade volume, has been growing and has being the leading one in the last years. The trade between the two countries is also determined by the interdependence of various sectors of national economies. At the same time, Moscow's economic interests in Kazakhstan have two dimensions. The first one is purely economic in nature and includes the bilateral import and export of traditional products, while the second one is closely linked to foreign policy and geopolitical interests of the Russian Federation. This includes energy, transportation, nuclear industry and the involvement of the Kazakhstani side in the economic integration processes initiated or led by Moscow. It seems that the Russian interest in the energy sector is much wider than its actual position. In this aspect, the politicians in Moscow understand the fact they have to make every effort for the struggle for oil and gas domination with the world powers, primarily the US and China. The Russian prestige in Kazakhstan is also depended on the integration organizations within the CIS. The Customs Union (CU) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is clearly the other Russian strategy to gain foothold in the country. And, if the Collective Security Treaty Organization's role was mainly to bind the security of Kazakhstan tightly with Russia, the role of the Customs Union is both political and economic. Its creation would not only restrain the activities of the third parties in the Kazakhstani market, but it also would be a lever of containment of recent Chinese economic expansion in the country.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

The great powers compete in a vigorous way to expand and strengthen their presence in Kazakhstan. As I discussed in the previous chapters, the growing Chinese presence in Central Asia especially in Kazakhstan is a reality. Especially noteworthy is

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<sup>467</sup> Buszynski, "Russia's New," *Asian Survey*, 550.



the fact that Kazakhstan is gradually becoming China's main trade partner in the region, and there is a possibility that in the following years the trade volume may exceed the amount of Russia's trade with Kazakhstan. Over the last decade China has also become active in the energy sector. Beijing is trying to achieve its influence in the energy sector by offering the Kazakhstani government large credit lines, building pipelines and signing long-term oil and gas delivery contracts. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has also become the political instrument of Chinese penetration in the country. However, the Chinese cannot compete with the Russian influence in the organization given the fact that the Central Asian states and especially Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan fear China's demographic expansion into their countries.

As for the United States' presence in Kazakhstan, its main objective not only in the country but also in the whole Central Asian region was to prevent Russia's imperial revival. While Washington's main interest in the region was Kazakhstan's hydrocarbon reserves, it tried to pull Kazakhstan of the Russian cultural and political influence by backing other regional powers such as Turkey. In this context, the US used Ankara to open transit routes for oil and gas shipments (the BTC pipeline). It should be noted that the US has a preferential treatment of Kazakhstan through not applying democratization and human rights standards in the republic. In return, Kazakhstan paves the way for the American oil and gas companies and participates into the military exercises under the NATO framework and provides its airports for post-Afghanistan security operations.

The Russian Federation perceives the Central Asian region as her historical area of influence. Among the Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has been Russia's leading partner. In this aspect, although the Soviet disintegration gave an impression that Russia was losing ground in the region, the fall of the Soviet Union did not change the geopolitical givens especially for Kazakhstan. Geographical and historical proximities were still important factors in bilateral relations. After Putin's arrival in Kremlin and the rise in the price of oil, Moscow did its best to reassert its influence. Putin understanding the importance of Kazakhstan revived Russia's activity not only in the energy sector but also in economic and military based integration processes such as the Customs Union (CU) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). It should be noted that Kazakhstan stood behind all Russian initiatives in the region. Other significant factor

that determines Russia's influence in Central Asia and especially in Kazakhstan is the presence of Russian minority. The role played by cultural factor is equally important given the fact that Russian language still remains the "lingua franca" of the whole area. In the countries like Kazakhstan with a large the Russian minority this factor is of even more importance, because the propaganda of the Russian culture emanates from Russian language TV programs, books, technical manuals, and other vehicles of communication.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

By the end of the first decade of the XXI century Central Asian region has undergone through many challenges. Simultaneously, geopolitical situation around the region has not remained static and there have been a lot of changes rooted in economical and political factors. Central Asia has been influenced by geo-economic factors such as financial crises of 1998 and of 2008 when influenced by the deterioration and volatility in international financial markets resulted in a massive economic crisis in the region and a following rise of the prices of basic commodities. Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation went through an economic breakdown as a result of the economic transition policies of Yeltsin period and followed by its subsequent rise in the beginning of the 2000's. In the same period, the Chinese economy gained momentum together with country's economic expansion resulting in the growing urgency of the problem of energy security.

In the last decade there have also been changes rooted in political factors concerning Central Asia. During this time there has been a shift of emphasis in the policy of some of the great powers, as well as the change in the format of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The "global war on terror" and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by the US military only heightened the interest of Washington and its Western allies towards the region. Additionally, the US and the Western countries have always been interested in the region due to the energy factor. At this juncture it is important to emphasize the deterioration of the relations between the West (the US and the European Union) and the Russian Federation. The growing tension started and caused by Putin's energy policies towards the European Union intensified with the 2008 Georgian crisis. Chinese political aspirations toward the region by the late 1990's are also worth mentioning here. China preferred to cooperate with Moscow (under the framework of the SCO) and lead an economy based foreign policy towards the region

due to the Russian all-embracing presences in the region. As a result, while China's foreign policy activity in the region has reduced during the last decade, the economic intervention of Beijing had never been so high and extensive primarily through investments on the energy field.

All these geopolitical developments and activities of the major powers have been affecting Turkey's role and influence in the region since 1991. Turkey's ties with the region go back to a long time ago and mainly have been shaped through the ideas and the influence of Pan-Turkism. At the time (dissolution of the Ottoman Empire), the idea implied that all Turkic people sharing common culture, history, language and religion should be united under one political entity. However, as shown in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, remaining as the official policy of the Ottoman Empire, the idea of Turkic political unification was later set aside. In the early republican period no such ideologies were allowed. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk chose to preserve good relations with the Soviet Union and suppressed all the activities of the Pan-Turkist intellectuals of the time. This was the first time when the official Turkish policy while preferring to build the state around the notion of Turkishness, leaned towards a realistic and pragmatic approach to the region. During the early Cold War period, except for some cultural cooperation, there were no contacts made with the Turkic nations of the Soviet Union, and due to the alliance that Turkey established with the US and the Western bloc, Ankara's relations with Moscow (and as a result its Turkic subordinates) had deteriorated.

As of 1960's, the political developments inside Turkey such as moving from a single party system to a multiparty system as well as the following coup d'état led to the emergence of new political actors such the National Action Party of Alparslan Türkeş. Pan-Turkism was eventually legitimated and reentered into the mainstream of Turkish politics under the leadership of Alparslan Türkeş. Being an important development in terms of Turkey's interest toward the region, this party however has never succeeded in becoming a political party of the masses and therefore had limited influence over Ankara's official stance toward the Turkic republics. But it should be noted that the Turkish public carefully watched and had been sensitive toward developments in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The real activity presence of Turkey in the newly independent Turkic states started

only with the final years of Cold War. From an individual perspective, Turgut Özal was the one who, since the mid-1980's, was behind the development of ties with the Turkic states of the Soviet Union. It should be noted that the main driver of the mutual cooperation during Turgut Özal's period was neither nationalistic nor religious (Islamic) sentiments, but trade and the agreements in the economic spheres.

Once the Soviet Union collapsed, Turkey became one of the first countries to recognize the independence of the former Soviet Union republics of Central Asia. Hereby, as already mentioned in the thesis, Turkey's interest in the region increased mainly due to three primary actors: the first one was the Nationalists (mainly in the face of Nationalist Action Party) inspired by the Pan-Turkist sentiments who always criticized the official Turkish policy of not being an active player in the region. Two other groups are the Islamic oriented groups, the first one coming from the Welfare party tradition and continued under the leadership of the current ruling Justice and Development Party, while the latter group whose aspirations are based on increasing Islamic consciousness in the former Soviet world is Fethullah Gülen's Islamic community. Here it should be noted that that Nationalist's zeal toward the region can be traced back to the beginning of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, whereas the latter two groups' real activities only started after early 1990's. Last but not the least, the main trend of the activities of these groups remaining the same throughout the whole period of Turkey's presence in the region also plays an important role in the formulation of the Turkish foreign policy towards Kazakhstan.

As in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter it was shown, throughout the early 1990's, Turkey with an aspiration to reclaim itself in the global politics, experienced several phases in its attempts to open up to the region. The first one is the initial excitement period when the Turkish politicians thought that Ankara could become a "big brother" for the newly independent Central Asian countries. This was followed by the disenchantment period and the formulation of Turkish foreign policy toward the region based on pragmatic calculations. In the meantime, politicians in Ankara offered the "Turkish model". The model implied that Turkey was the best one to emulate in terms of political and economic development based on the common historical, geographical and cultural ties. Although this model was enthusiastically backed up by the United States initially, the

leaders of the states of the region rejected the idea. And, it was this time when it became clear that the Russian Federation would return and regain its influence in the region. The failure of the “Turkish model” was followed by the realization of the Turkish side that it should act more realistically and in a more pragmatic way. In addition, the Turkish politicians, who failed to thoroughly comprehend the true dynamic in the region at first, understood that they would have to compete with other great powers such as Russia, China and the United States in the region.

In fourth 4<sup>th</sup> of the thesis I argued that despite the initial problems such as the non-cooperative attitude of the local elite, domestic political and economical problems in the Turkish Republic, the country managed to establish its long-term, stable presence. I also argued that despite the prediction of some experts that Uzbekistan will be Turkey’s main ally in the region, the country failed to become one. This was mainly due to Turkey’s support of the Uzbek opposition and also due to Uzbekistan’s preference to lead close and latent domestic and foreign policies. In this thesis I also showed that despite Kazakhstan’s proximity to the Russian Federation (considering also the demographic factor, cultural remoteness of the Kazakhs from other Turkic states, and the fact that the country was the last one that broke away from the Soviet Union), Kazakhstan was successful in building close relationship with Turkey in the last two decades. In the thesis I analyzed the two countries’ cooperation that became that most intense compared to Turkey’s cooperation with other Turkic nations including Azerbaijan in terms of both bilateral and multilateral frameworks. The fact that Turkey was the first country that recognized Kazakhstan’s sovereignty which was strongly acknowledged by the Kazakh side only strengthens this notion. Along with bilateral diplomatic relations which have been on a high level since early 1990’s, the two the two countries are also supporting each other under multilateral frameworks. This mutual support is especially noticeable in regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Economic Cooperation Organization, as well as Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The Turkish Republic has been supportive of Kazakhstan’s initiatives of cooperation in the region. In particular, Ankara supported Astana’s initiative of leading a multi-national forum on Integration and Confidence-building measures in Asia (CICA).

In order to analyze the factors contributing to such closeness between the two countries, I discussed Kazakhstan's political initiatives. The country was the main initiator of the Turkic Council under whose umbrella it collects supplementary cooperation mechanisms such as TÜRKSOY responsible for cultural cooperation between the Turkic countries and communities throughout the world, the Turkic Business Council responsible for economic cooperation among the Turkic states, the TÜRKPA or a parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic states, and the Turkic Academy, whose main goal is to study the history of the Turkic people as a whole rather than separately. The presence of such organizations is extremely important in terms of integration processes among the Turkic countries, as well as in the region as a whole. In this context, Turkey acknowledges Kazakhstan's role and support for the closer integration of the Turkic people, what's more, as well as being the main "promoter" of the Pan-Turkic ideas in the Turkic world after Turkey.

This thesis discussed a variety of cooperation fields under the following: diplomatic relations (bilateral and multilateral), as well as military, economic and cultural cooperation. The military cooperation between the two countries being underdeveloped started to gain momentum only recently. The main trend in the bilateral military relationship is the training of Kazakhstani servicemen in Turkish military schools, training and equipping of Kazakh Special Forces and assisting in the reform of Kazakhstan's Armed Forces.

As for the cooperation in the economical sphere, it has been developing gradually and comes to be one of the most important aspects of bilateral relations. Taking into account Kazakhstan's energy potential and Turkey's recent (since Turgut Özal and also during AKP government) lust to become an energy hub between the region and the European Union this field seems to be the most important. However, Turkish economic presence in the country is still not major especially when compared to the major international actors like the US, the EU, Russia and China especially in energy sector. In this context, what best characterizes the Turkish presence in Kazakhstan, is the extensiveness of the Turkish companies in the Kazakhstani market. However, the value of the contracts the Turkish companies manage to seize is incomparable to the figures spinning between Astana and the Western companies.

Culture, education and science are other aspects of bilateral cooperation that has flourished quickly and successfully. Cultural cooperation always considered as a strong point of the Turkish presence in the region, the same tendency is valid for its presence in Kazakhstan. In the early 1990's as soon as the region was opened to the Turkish presence, the Turkish government started education projects for the students from Turkic republics, believing that by educating them today would later lead to the creation of the elites who in turn will advocate the interests of Turkey in their countries. Under the framework of the "Great Student Exchange Program", Turkey hosted almost 2500 students from the Turkic countries. But Kazakhstan's involvement in the education projects remained humble compared to other Turkic countries. Other areas of cultural cooperation developed under the Turkish Religious Directorate and the TIKA. The Turkish government's most successful project in the country was the Ahmet Yesevi University, with its great scope and large investments. In addition, worth mentioning is the recently opened Yunus Emre Foundation whose aim is to introduce the Turkish language, history, culture and art to the Kazakhstan public. The two sides also cooperate within the scope of the approaching Kazakhstan's Language Reform. Kazakhstan's preference for cooperation with Turkey is on purpose since Kazakhstan's president Nursultan Nazarbayev is inspired by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk when considering the transition of the Kazakh language from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet.

In the last part of the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter what needs separated attention is the role of the Turkish non-governmental organizations, or simply the activities of the religious communities in Kazakhstan. The most prominent religious group in the republic is Fethullah Gülen's community. Its activity in Kazakhstan is extensive and widespread, involving a number of schools and a university which are considered among the most successful institutions in the country. It should be noted that Gülen's community is not only trying to indoctrinate Islamic concepts in peoples mind and increase awareness about Islam in Kazakhstan but also propagates the so-called "Turkish Islam". To be more precise, the community teaches the Islam as it is practiced in Turkey, it teaches Turkish language and culture, and promotes the values of the Turkish society. In the thesis it was argued that although community's activities are considered to be separate from the official Ankara, community's attempts to introduce Turkey to the Kazakhstani



public and revive common cultural values (which to some extent involve Pan-Turkic ideas) contributes to the consolidations of Turkey's positions in Kazakhstan on the whole.

In the last chapter I discussed that Turkey's presence in Kazakhstan is challenged by a number of international actors, namely the US, China and Russia. Among these, the US was one of the closest partners of Turkey in Kazakhstan. Being supportive of Turkey's major projects and initiatives, Washington encouraged the Turkish efforts to build strong ties not only with Kazakhstan but also with the other countries of the region. Before 9/11, except for the energy sources, the US was not very interested in the region. The energy field is an area where the US-Kazakh relations have most developed since the independence of the latter. Also after 9/11, due to the "war on terror" the US put the promotion of democratic reforms in Kazakhstan on the back burner. Kazakhstan in return, facilitated the activity of the US oil companies in the country and actively participated in the military cooperation under the framework of the NATO.

China is another actor that attempted to use the opportune moment after the Soviet Union's demise. However, like Turkey, as of mid-1990's China gave up the illusion of dominating Central Asia mainly due to the Russia's fast return to the region. Unwillingness of the newly independent states of the region to yield to Chinese colonial plans (taking into account the perception of threat of Chinese territorial expansion by the local population) was another factor preventing China's becoming dominant actor in Central Asia. China however managed to penetrate and settle in the region to some extent through mostly benefitting from an economic strategy of expansion. As a result, the bilateral trade between the two countries is the main area of cooperation now. The Chinese involvement in the energy sphere is also considerable, but the country is clearly staying behind the US and Russia in the oil and gas sector. China plans to expand its influence in these sectors in the near future by making direct investments, buying the shares of the Kazakhstani companies and building pipelines from Kazakhstan to China. The Chinese side was also relatively successful to collaborate with Kazakhstan with the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), but the Russian influence in the organization led Beijing to consider the SCO more from an economical perspective rather than a security one.

In the last part of the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter I analyzed the Russia remains the most influential country in Kazakhstan. Its presence is felt almost in all spheres of bilateral cooperation. Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was inactive in the region which allowed the third parties to penetrate and to establish presence in the region. Later with the strategy of “Near Abroad” Russia took active steps towards becoming the most influential actor in the region and especially in Kazakhstan. Afterwards, Russia was intolerant about the presence of third parties in the region and harshly reacted to any extensive activity of such actors. For Russia Kazakhstan is a strategically very important actor and her main ally in the region. This is because of certain cultural and historical factors due to the majority of Kazakhstan’s population are Russian-speakers and about 25 percent of ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan, as well as due to the experience of the recent common history. Geographical proximity (the two countries share the longest land border in the world) makes Russia and Kazakhstan natural partners in almost all essential spheres of cooperation such as economy, security and politics. The Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) and the Customs Union between the Belorussian Republic, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation established lately is only one of the several mechanisms to keep Kazakhstan under the Russian orbit.

Though it may seem that Kazakhstan does not have problematic relations with any of the international actors mentioned above, the country has to delicately balance between these powers. The country is making efforts to realize its national interests without disturbing the delicate balance among the US, Russia, China and even Turkey. In this aspect, Kazakhstan’s energy resources enable the country to achieve its own national goals by benefitting from the competition of external actors, and it proves a useful leverage in terms of sustaining its economic growth and political stability. In Kazakhstan, the officially used term characterizing the country’s success in the foreign policy over the past two decades is called the “multi-vectoral diplomacy”.<sup>468</sup>

Last but not the least, over the last decade the Justice and Development Party (AKP) ascended to power and have been in power since then. Although, it is considered that the Middle East was the primary objective of Ankara’s foreign policy, Central Asia and has also been on Ankara’s top priority list in the last decade. The Turkish

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<sup>468</sup> Laumulin, *Tsentrāl'naia Aziia v 21 Stoletii*, 358.

government is not overemphasizing and making aspects of its activity in the region public, since it may lead to the irritation of international actors active in the region and especially the Russian Federation. Future cooperation with Russia will also positively affect the relations with the region and especially with Kazakhstan. At this juncture, Kazakhstan has become the most important partner of Turkey in the region and AKP's current policy towards the country has reachable goals. In this context, the legacy of Turkey's role and presence in Kazakhstan may contribute to Ankara's furthering of cooperation with other countries of the region. But, while continuing its current policy of economical and cultural cooperation both on governmental and non-governmental level as well as cooperation in the energy sector, it is important that the domestic political situation in Turkey remain in peace and stable.

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### YAZARIN

Soyadı : Almen  
Adı : Dastan  
Bölümü : Orta Doğu Araştırmaları Programı

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce) : TURKEY’S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS KAZAKHSTAN  
IN THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD

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