The Role of Energy in Expansion of Russia-Turkey Relations

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INTRODUCTION

During recent years, Russian-Turkish ties have changed in various quantitative and qualitative aspects. As such that old rivals and even old enemies are now called strategic partners. Historically, Russia and Turkey had no such good ties and during 1990s, these countries experienced some tensions. However, higher levels of cooperation between these two countries during recent decade indicate that they have taken a long step toward mutual trust-making. In the last couple of years, both countries' leaders have met frequently and tried to forget the historical hostile relations. Therefore, political cooperation and commercial trade-offs between two countries have significantly increased as a result of the motivation for developing and reinforcing of strategic relations.

Undoubtedly, different turns and orientations in Russian and Turkish foreign policies have come from several significant factors. Present study aims at answering to this fundamental question: “which factor does play a determining role in Russian-Turkish relations during the past decade?” Based on the emphasis on the role of "orientations of ruling elite and governmental bureaucracy", "regional cooperations" and "international (western) agent", therefore, the hypothesis of present study is "due to energy's significant influence on Russian and Turkish foreign policy and national security, it plays an important role in development of both countries' relations during the past decade".

In the following sections, at first we will study the historical relations between Russia and Turkey during years after Soviet collapse and then we will examine two countries' relations before and after Putin in Russia, and Justice and Development Party in Turkey came to power. We will also contrast the available viewpoints in Russian and Turkish foreign policies. Then we will analyze the energy as the most effective factor in Russian-Turkish ties.

Russian-Turkish Historical Relations:

The Turkish and Slavic people have been in contact since long time ago and they lived together as neighbors. In addition to public communications, Czarist Empire and Ottoman dynasty established many contacts between the parties which were often defined as hostile relations. The history of official relations between Russia and Turkey could be traced back to five centuries ago. Many historians considered 30th August in 1492 as the beginning of official diplomatic relations between the two countries, when Ivan III had sent a trade delegate to Sultan Bayezid II in Ottoman dynasty. Although, the first Russian embassy was opened in
Istanbul in 1701, these two countries were regarded as enemies in different historical periods. Ottoman dynasty and Russia had fought with each other twelve times altogether and the last war dates back to World War I.

Although, after collapse of Ottoman dynasty, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was the first country which recognized Turkey's independence, by onset of World War II and bipolarity of international system, Ankara joined the western bloc during Cold War and became a member of NATO. Meanwhile, Russia was acting as the leader and center of USSR and eastern bloc. This double role darkened the Moscow-Ankara relations extensively and the two countries turned into enemies for another forty years. Based on this historical background, Russian-Turkish relations had experienced some ups and downs in post-Soviet years. Indeed, the collapse of USSR and emerging modern Russia led to the fact that for the first time in centuries Turks and Russians were did not benefit of better to say deprived from their proximity so that a new atmosphere was created in the countries relations. Therefore, the Russian-Turkish relations can be divided to two periods during post-Soviet years: before and after Putin in Russia and Islamists of Justice and Development Party in Turkey, came to power.

Strained Relations:

After the collapse of USSR, Russian and Turkish officials met frequently. The meetings were started by Hikmet Cetin, Turkey's then Minister of Foreign Affairs, who travelled to Moscow in late January in 1992 and about one month later, Andrey Kozyrev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia travelled to Ankara, too. The clarification guidelines treaty of Turkish and Russian federation relations was signed on 25 and 26th May in 1992 during Turkish Prime Minister's, Suleyman Demirel, visit from Moscow. Although the treaty was considered to be as the cornerstone of two countries' ties and a symbol of Moscow and Ankara resolution and determination for bilateral relations, there were still ups and downs in the two countries' relations. As a result, political tensions between Russia and Turkey significantly increased in 1995. In the same year, follow-up trips and visits of Turkish officials to Central Asian Republics and Caucasus and then holding the third Summit of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan Republics leaders, entitled “Summit of Turk States” in Kyrgyzstan, intensified the Moscow's sensitivities. Sharp statements and criticisms expressed by Turkish leaders against Russian government also added to the sensitivities and this Turkey's measure was translated as an attempt for dissemination of Pan-Turkism in Central Asia and Caucasus.

In a reaction to "Summit of Turk States" in Bishkek, Boris Yeltsin organized the Parliament-in-Exile of Turkish Kurds in Moscow. As a result, Russian ambassador was summoned to Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the two countries' relations got more stressful than before. What have been mentioned above in one hand also led the Russians to participate in western oil contracts with Azerbaijan Republic, to regulate and execute the constitution of commercial ships traffic from Bosporus Strait and Dardanelles and led Ankara to support Chechen rebels on the other hand, which eventually made Turks increase their pressures on the Russians for implementing nuclear arms reduction pact.

In general, throughout 1990, Russia and Turkey were in two opposite camps. In most of the years in this decade, Russians accused Turkey of supporting Chechen rebels and separatists, and Turks, in return, opposed the supports provided by the Russians for Kurds [1]. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Chechen issues due to Turkish religious relationship with Muslims of the region and also historical ties with Balkan and Caucasus, had practically put these countries against each other. Turkey's position in NATO and related issues to expansion of this treaty to east, Turkey's unanimity with USA, attempts for membership in EU and emergence of ethnic tendencies in central Asia and Caucasus darkened the relations between these countries [2]. Throughout 1990s, therefore, there was an intense competition between Turkey and Russia on remained areas from former Soviet Union, especially in Central Asia and Caucasus. The competitions which began through development of pan-Turkism in above-mentioned regions and also through the supports provided by Turkey for Azerbaijan during war with Armenia concerned Russia. Indeed, Russia continued to consider Turkey as the representative of the west in Central Asia and Caucasus and always expressed concerns about induction of Turkey's pattern to other countries in the region.

Improvement of Relations:

Fluctuated Turkey-Russia relations entered new phases since the beginning of the new millennium. Particularly, when Putin in Russia and also "Justice and Development Party (AKP)" in Turkey came to power, these countries relations improved. This improvement, to some extent, came from Moscow-Ankara bilateral needs and in part, resulted from some sort of Eurasianism agenda in both countries.

Vladimir Putin's visit to Ankara on the 5th and 6th December 2004 was the first Russian president's trip to Turkey after 32 years. In this unprecedented visit in years after collapse of Soviet Union, Putin talked with Turkish president, Ahmad Nejat Cesar, and Turkish prime minister, Rajab Tayeb Erdogan. At that time, Turkey was the second greatest trade partner of Russia after Germany and Moscow exported a good amount of its natural gas to this country. During the negotiations with Turkish leaders, Russian president, Vladimir Putin, asked them to dismantle the charity institutions which, according to Moscow, provided Chechen Muslim
Separatist militias with money and weapons. On the other hand, Turkey requested from Russia to recognize "Kurdistan Workers' Party of Turkey" as a terrorist organization [3].

The most important outcome from this meeting was the announcement of "increasing friendship and multilateral partnership" which indicated that there have been many common interests and growing mutual trust between the two countries. Since then, political authorities’ meetings between Turkey and Russia have significantly increased. In the middle of 2005, Russian president, Vladimir Putin, and Turkish Prime Minister, Erdogan, came to an agreement and compromised on each other's positions about Chechen and Kurds issues and they jointly expressed concerns about terrorism and separatism. In the same year, Russia by Turkey's support joined the Islamic Conference Organization as a supervisor member [1].

In 2008 Russian president, Dmitry Medvedev, stated that Turkey is going to be a strategic partner for Russia. During his visit to the Port of Sochi in Russia on May 16th 2009, Tayeb Rajeb Ardoughan talked about regional responsibilities of Moscow and Ankara and stated that measures for peacemaking in Nagorno-Karabakh, Middle East and resolving the problems related to Cyprus are among the effective steps by the two sides. At the same meeting Vladimir Putin also maintained that Russia and Turkey cooperate in finding a solution for ending the regional problems [4]. President Abdullah Gül's visit to Tatarstan, Turk region in Russia, in 2009 indicated the increase of mutual trust and could be considered as an important step toward the relations improvement. The visit was important because Russia previously used to keep on expressing its concerns over development of pan-Turkism by Turkey.

In May 12th 2010, Dmitry Medvedev as the head of a high-ranking delegation visited Turkey. During this visit, important agreements were made, including the travel without visa for the citizens of both countries, increasing of trade-offs and signing the contract of building the commercial power plant, developing bilateral investment particularly in the domain of nuclear power in Turkey. The countries also decided to establish a "High Level Cooperation Council" [5]. Moreover, in December 2010, Turkey revised its national security document, which is also called "White Book" and revised once in 5 years, eliminated Russia from the list of countries perceived as a threat for Ankara.

The authorities' visits of both countries continued in 2011. Development of political relation has been in parallel with enhancing the economic cooperation. In a meeting in November 2013, Putin and Erdogan in St. Petersburg found many of the positive side of the circumstances and expressed their readiness to coordinate efforts in regional politics, including the energy issue [6].

As such the economic cooperation between Russia and Turkey has currently become one of the most important axes in the existing relations. Commercial trade-offs between Russia and Turkey were not so flourished by the mid 1990s and the trade in both countries was in equilibrium, but by increasing economic relations of these countries, Russia is now the Turkey's greatest trade partner and Ankara is the seventh important partner of Moscow. In 2008, Russia became the first trade partner of Turkey. Trade volume was two billion dollars. Although it was expected that due to world economic crisis, the volume of bilateral foreign trade would decrease about 35 percent in 2008 and 40 percent in 2009, the volume of trade-offs between Russia and Turkey increased [7]. As a result, the volume of foreign trade between Moscow and Ankara in 2009 was 15.7 percent higher than the previous year and both countries hoped to increase the level of their commercial trade-offs to 100 billion dollars during next five years. Turkey's export to Russia was about 4.6 billion dollars in 2010 with a 44.7 percent growth rate. In the same year, Russia's export to Turkey also increased 11 percent and reached 21.5 billion dollars. The most recent figures show that the trade volume between these countries in 2011, compared to the previous year, has significantly increased. Turkey's export to Russia has experienced 69.3 percent growth and Russia's export to Turkey has experienced 13.9 percent growth [8].

In terms of merchandise trade, the Russian Federation ranked 6th among Turkey's most preferred exports destination in 2012, corresponding to $6.6 billion in 2012, with 11.5% increase from 2011 ($5.9 billion) and 500% increase from 2002 ($1.1 billion). The Russian Federation was Turkey's number one importer in 2012. Туркій imports from the Russian Federation amounted to $26.6 billion in 2012, with 11.2% increase from 2011 ($23.9 billion), and 600% increase from 2002 ($3.8 billions). The three largest exports categories in 2012 were: textile yarn, fabrics, manufactured articles ($ 1.2 billion), vegetables and fruits ($ 891 million) and road vehicles ($ 770 million). The top imports categories for 2012 were: natural gas ($12,2 billions), crude oil and fuel products ($ 5,06 billions) and iron and steel ($1,7 billions).Turkish foreign direct investment (FDI) stock in the Russian Federation was $ 9 billion in 2012. Russian FDI in Turkey (stock) was $ 2.7 billion by the end of 2012 [9].

A major part of this growth is related to the sale of energy by Russia to Turkey. In fact, the pipeline of natural gas transfer from Russia to Turkey has led to heaviness of trade equilibrium on the Russian part. In addition to oil and gas, manufactured and consumed products as well as metals and chemicals are on the top of the Russia's exportation list to Turkey. Turkey's export to Russia also includes vehicles, textiles, foods and chemical products [3]. Moreover, Russia seems to be interested in exporting weapons to Turkey, as in the past years, there have been talks on selling of military equipments including military helicopters, missile systems S300 and S400, medium-range missiles and installation of air defense system to Turkish army [10].
Turkey, on the other hand, has tried to compensate its negative trade balance by increasing direct investments during recent years. At present, about two thousands Turkish companies have their businesses in Russia and their total investment is estimated as 7 billion dollars [8]. Russian investments in Turkey is also estimated around 4 billion dollars. Moreover, these countries in December 2010 reached to agreements that it is expected mutual investment will increase to more than 25 billion dollars [1]. The value of signed contracts between Turkey and Russia has reached to 17 billion dollars during recent decade indicating development of economic relations [3].

In addition to what has been mentioned so far, tourism also plays an important role in developing economic relations of these countries. Turkey is the most favorite tourism destination for the Russians. In 2011, about 3.5 million Russian citizens traveled to Turkey [5]. High levels of travel and recreational visits not only increase economic transactions, but also these high levels seem to be considered as a sign of friendly relationship between these countries. Tourist visits, particularly led to cancellation of visa issuing for traveling between these countries and also added the suitcase trading to economic relations of two countries. The number of marriage between citizens of these two countries is also increasing as a result of high levels of tourist visits (Özdal, 2010) [11]. It can be become a positive factor in Russia-Turkey relations and even it can eliminate historical negative memories exiting among Russian and Turkish nations.

Exiting positions of Russia and Turkey about each other:

Since Russia and Turkey enjoy a long common history, in both countries, there are different and sometimes apposite positions to each other. Because each of these positions play a role in foreign policy making of Moscow and Ankara, their study will help to identify both countries foreign policies toward each other.

Russia Position to Turkey:

Among Russians, traditional picture of Turkey is always causing concerns. Russians always consider this country as the substitute of Ottoman dynasty, America's ally and NATO member. For the same reason, two opposite position concerning relations with Turkey have been shaped in Russia.

First position belonging to radical nationalists and communist left party continues to regard Turkey in West camp and considers establishing friendly relations with this country not so suitable. Cooperation and neighborhood with West, especially USA and membership in NATO, as well as being Turks as pro-Western during Cold War are among the factors which create this negative position among Russian nationalists and communists against Ankara.

For them, due to several important reasons, it is unlikely that Turkey disdains from the West. First, Turkey and Russia's purposes and wishes, particularly in Caucasus (a region where both countries have deep and long-history strategic benefits) are contradictory. Second, Turkey depends on western military equipments for its defensive programs and now almost total air forces of Turkey consist of American airplanes. Despite the fact that during past years some weapon transactions were signed between Ankara and Moscow, however, it is difficult for Turkey to have desire for weapons made by Turkey and it will decrease Turkey's effective operational capacity with its allies in NATO. Third factor that prevents Turkey to disdain from the West is that tendency to Russia contrasts with Turkey's westernization which is the foundation of this country policy from 1932 when Turkey Republic was founded by Ataturk. Indeed, it means that there is a deviation from Mustafa Kemal's fundamental principles and it probably will be opposed by the majority of Turks, particularly senior military officers who consider themselves as the guards of Ataturk's heritage [12].

Second position about Russia and Turkey relates to Eurasians. Some of the Eurasians believe that if Russia-Turkey relations develop consistently, chances are that Ankara will decrease its cooperation with NATO and will interested in regional security cooperation with Russia. According to this position, Turks are greatly sensitive to their national identity and national benefits and they have pessimistic views about western diplomats' intentions. Since this fact should not be forget that Turkey had suffered western policies for centuries and had finally missed major parts of Ottoman dynasty in Balkan, Middle East and Caucasus. Even modern government of Turkey was almost integrated by adverse European government, such as Greece after World War I and it was only saved because of its strong resistance led by Ataturk.

Russian Eurasians, therefore, believe that historical experiences created strong nationalist and anti-imperialist feelings in Turkish people and these feeling are partly moderated just because the country could regain its independence through expelling greedy western powers in 1921. However, from then up to now, there still some kind of doubt to real intentions of Europe and USA remained among Turkish people. Sometimes this doubt comes to surface and appears strongly, it is a common feature among all political parties in Turkey-including army, nationalists who are proponents of Ataturk, leftists and Islamists- and it can be seen even in the most westernized associations.

Despite the fact that Ataturkism policy guided seriously Turkey toward west in order to make a modern westernized government, however, by empowering Islamists a kind of orientalism is dominated in Ankara's foreign policy. Under such conditions, Moscow and Ankara should add to their cooperation and especially
increase their commercial trade-offs rather than compete for expanding their dominance in Caucasus region and Central Asia.

**Turks' Position to Russia:**

Generally, Turks also consider Russia as a hostile country due to historical wars between Ottomans and Czars as well as negative memories related to Cold War era. At present, however, there are various approaches about relations with Russia, among which three approaches are more important than others.

First approach considers Russia as an important strategic partner and believes that relations with Moscow should be reinforced. In general, it is suggested by proponents of Eurasian ideas who demand for complete separation of Turkey from the West and moving toward the Orient. For Eurasians, countries such as Russia, Iran, China and India as well as regions like Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus should be among the proprieties of Turkey's foreign policy.

Generally, during two past decades and with regard to collapse of USSR makes the strategic importance of Eurasia region in Turkey prominent. Particularly Eurasia region is considered by some Turks as a new domain for expanding dominance and reinforcing Ankara's strategic importance for the West. Therefore, Orientalists and Eurasians generally believe that Turkish foreign policy should be increasingly active in Central Asia and Caucasus as well as in the Middle East. In fact in the recent years, developing relations with the Middle East as well as with Central Asia and Caucasus is suggested as way for compensating Turkey's failure to gain EU membership [13]. According to this view, relations with Russia are certainly included interesting motivations and many benefits.

Second view sharply rejects any kind of Russia-Turkey relationship. Proponents of this view mainly emphasize on several historical reasons which led Russia does not possess an appropriate place among Turks. These reasons are:

1. Historically, there is a fairly bad picture of Russia among Turkish people. Public opinions in Turkey have still a deep hatred of Czars' hostile policies in the past centuries and Turkish people never forget Russians' crimes against their country. Russia has been a threat for Turkey's territorial integrity for more than 500 years and it played a key role in collapse of Ottoman dynasty. Later, Russia in the form of Soviet Union seriously threatened Turkey's independence and territorial integrity.
2. Due to its close ties with the West, Turkey cannot be a good ally for Moscow. Indeed, Ankara, due to its membership in NATO treaty, its deep friendship with Washington and its attempts for joining to EU can never be a good strategic partner for Russia.
3. Russia and Turkey benefits, particularly in the field of energy are contradictory. This contradiction is especially prominent in Central Asia and Caucasus.
4. Turkey proximity to Russia is ideologically and politically in contrast with Ataturk's westernized thoughts.

According to this view, Russia and Turkey can never succeed in establishing long-term and consistent friendly relations with each other. In fact, achieving sustainable development involves a different way of thinking and working. Such sustainable development (in agriculture, forestry, fisheries sectors) conserves land, water, plant, and animal resources, is environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable, and socially acceptable. Sustainable development is based on long-term considerations, being an integrative, not a sectoral approach [14].

Third view considers Russia as against the West. In other words, Russia should be considered as a country toward which Ankara will move only if its relations with the west seriously challenge [15]. According to the view prevailing among Conservative Kemalists in Turkey's army, Russia can be a better strategic substitute for their country than EU; because unlike EU, Russia has no demands concerning political rights of Kurds and unlike Americans, Moscow does not sympathize with Kurds [2].

**Energy, the Most Effective Factor in Russia-Turkey Relations:**

With respect to historical backgrounds and views presented about Russia-Turkey relations in both countries, it seems that several factors play effective role in establishing relations between these countries. In a general categorization, these factors can be divided to "ruling elite and governmental bureaucracy", "regional cooperations", "western or international factor" and "energy".

During past years, transactions related to energy have played a positive role in development of Russia-Turkey economic and political relations. Russia supplies two-third of Turkey's gas and energy consists 76 percent of Moscow's exportations to Ankara. In 1986, Turkey signed a contract for purchasing six billion cubic meters natural gas during 25 years. A similar contract was also signed for purchasing eight billion cubic meters natural gas in 1998. In addition to bilateral contract for energy sale and purchase, both countries have many plans for transfer of Russian energy from Turkey's lands to Europe. On the hand, cooperations between two countries in energy domain do not restricted to fossil energies. During past years, Moscow declared ready for selling nuclear reactors to Turkey and for supplying their fuel and Turkey also welcomed this declaration. So
that, unlike other factors which have had both positive and negative effects, energy has only positive impact on Russia-Turkey relations. It is quietly confirmed by the Russia and Turkey's strategies in energy domain and by the places that each assigned for the other in these strategies.

**Russia’s Energy Strategy and Turkey's Place in it:**

Having more than %33 natural gas, %1 crude oil, %20 coal, %14 uranium, Russia totally possesses nearly one-fifth of the world energy resource and for this reason it has a quiet prominent place [16]. As a result, for maintaining and controlling its relations with other parties, Russia takes energy also into account and considers special arrangements. Therefore, to keep monopoly and probably to expand European market can be considered as the most important Russian strategy on energy domain. For this end, in its energy strategy, Russia follows two approaches simultaneously:

- To provide security and to diversify paths of energy transfer: although interesting plan for Europe is to construct Nabucco's pipeline and to apply Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkmenistan gas resources, Russia claims that it can fulfill the purposes of "European policy of diversifying energy resources supply" by diversity in pipelines of gas transfer and diversity in paths of gas transfer to old continent. In order to improve the security of gas exportation to Europe and its optimization, Russia has conducted many measures to diversify paths of gas transfer to Europe. "North Stream" and "South Stream" paths are among the projects suggested by Russia. These paths can diversify Russian gas exportations to Europe and greatly prevent from the damages resulted by possible interruption of gas export by countries locating along the pipeline [17]. Following map shows Nabucco, North Stream and South Stream paths.

- To eliminate the possibility of gas exportation from any other resources to Europe: Russia tries to eliminate the possibility of gas exportation from any other resources to Europe. Therefore it seeks to transfer Turkmenistan's exported gas to its own land from north. Russian suggested prices for purchasing Turkmenistan's gas are higher than approximate prices for the region gas and also higher than the price paid by Iran to Turkmenistan. On the other hand, Russia tries to make Turkmenistan's gas resources accessible for China and to flow part of these gas resources to the eastern Asia rather than to Europe. As a result, Russia applies all its political capabilities and trade techniques in order to decrease Turkmenistan's gas exports to Iran. Russians believe that if Turkmenistan's gas exports to Iran decrease or interrupt, Islamic Republic of Iran has to supply domestic gas needs and as a result it will lose its gas export capacity. Moreover, despite all above arrangements, Russia prefers to act in such a way that if Iran has capacity for gas exportation, its exported energy goes to Pakistan rather than Europe. In this regard, Russia has encouraged Iran to continue its arrangements for “peace pipeline” plan and meanwhile it has proposed to invest for construction of this pipeline [14:18].

What have been said above indicate that in order to dominate on European energy markets, Russia is ready to decrease its domination in other markets. The importance of Europe in doctrine of Russian national security and foreign policy has led Moscow to see energy a significant tool for progressing of foreign policy purposes. In this regard, for some reasons, Turkey is of prime importance for Russia. First, Russia sees Turkey as a very important corridor for its energy transfer to European markets, the Middle East and North Africa and it proves to be interested in development of existing pipeline between two countries. Reaching to this purpose may allow Russia to supply its energy beyond the Mediterranean without passing from Bosphorus strait. Therefore, Turkey can act as a path of energy transfer to Europe for Russia. Second reason of Turkey's importance for Russia relates to this fact that Ankara can obstruct the construction process of pipelines which transfer oil and gas of Caspian Sea and Middle East to Europe. Indeed, since Europe is interested to diversify the resources and paths of oil and gas supplying, application of Turkey's path rather than other competitive pipelines such as Nabucco...
will help to improve Russian situation. It can be concluded that in terms of energy transfer, Turkey is of prime importance for Russia.

**Russia’s Place in Turkey’s Energy Strategy:**

In 2008, Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues national energy strategy. The focus of that document was to turn Turkey into the center of energy transfer from Central Asia, Caucasus, the Middle East, Balkan, and Russia to Europe. From then, in order to accomplish this purpose, Turkey’s foreign policy has made many efforts and it also intends to turn "Ceyhan" port into the energy terminal in the region as one of its long term political-economic programs. During recent years, therefore, Turkey has always been one of the parties attended in discussions related to energy transfer lines to Europe.

At present, there are many transfer lines for oil and gas in Turkey. The following map shows main oil transfer paths to Turkey.

**Map of the main oil transfer paths in Turkey**

1. "Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline" which was constructed in 1997 and 600-mile pipeline links northern Iraq with the Turkish port of Ceyhan. Two parallel lines have a combined capacity of roughly 1.6 million barrels a day, but a string of terrorist attacks since 2003 have repeatedly shut the pipeline down. Due to wear and tear, it has caused many problems; meanwhile because of Iraq’s insecurities it has experienced terrorist challenges such as explosion. During the past years, thus, Iraq oil export to Turkey through this pipeline has been interrupted many times.

On 20th March, 2014, Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani announced a KRG goodwill initiative to make a contribution to Iraq oil export to give the ongoing negotiations with Baghdad the maximum chance of success. The Prime Minister stated that the contribution to oil export from the KRG would be 100,000 barrels per day, effective from 1st April, 2014. Since the announcement, the KRG has been working in close cooperation with senior officials in the federal Ministry of Oil (MoO) in Baghdad and the North Oil Company (NOC) in Kirkuk to start the oil export process. As a result, practical measures are now agreed both to supply and receive the oil offered from the Kurdistan Region. However, due to ongoing repairs to the main Kirkuk-Ceyhan export pipeline, the KRG has been advised by NOC and MoO that they are not yet ready to receive any oil from the Kurdistan Region. It has been agreed that as soon as the repairs to the pipeline are finished, the KRG shall begin to export from the Region to honor in full the KRG Prime Minister’s commitment [18].

2. "Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline" constructed in 2005 and its capacity is one million barrels per day. This pipeline which also called as "century project" and intended to transfer Caspian Sea oil to the Mediterranean Sea is now faced with many challenges. As a result, Azerbaijan’s government has reduced oil pump from this pipeline since 2011 due to reduction in oil exploitation in "Azari-Cheragh" oil field located in Caspian Sea tanks. In fact, initially this project construction was not justified as economically but it was constructed by America’s supports who wanted to break Russian monopoly in energy and to avoid Iran's path.

3. “Samson-Ceyhan pipeline”: its construction has been began since 2010 and its maximum transfer capacity in 1.5 million barrels per day. This project is intended to transfer Russian oil to Turkey through Black Sea where it is transferred to Mediterranean shores. This pipeline decrease the traffic made by tankers to Bosporus Strait, hence it will decrease possible incidents and serious damages to environment.

4. "Haifa-Ceyhan pipeline" which is not completed.

5. "Bosporus Strait and Dardanelles path" which has capacity to transfer 3 million oil barrels per day.

The following map indicates the main paths of gas transfer to Turkey.
1. "Tabriz-Ankara pipeline" which has been exploited since 2001 and its gas transferring capacity is 7.5 billion cubic meters per year. Gas transfer from this pipeline has faced with some problems in the recent years. In addition to technical problems and several explosions in the path of pipeline, debates on Iran's gas exports to Turkey are always challenging.

2. "Water-Stream pipeline" which has been exploited since 2005 and its annual gas transferring capacity is 16 billion cubic meters. At present, a major part of Russia's gas exports to Turkey is transferred through this pipeline.

3. "Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline" which was constructed in 2006 and its maximum transferring capacity in 8 billion cubic meters annually. During past years, due to reduction in gas production of Azerbaijan Republic in "Shahdeniz" field, gas transfer from this pipeline has been interrupted for many times.

4. "Greece-Turkey natural gas pipeline" which was constructed in 2006 with 11.5 billion cubic meters capacity. Turkey can receive 10-14 million cubic meters gas from Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline per day, of which 250 thousand cubic meters is sent to Greece.

5. "Arabic gas pipeline" which was intended to exploit in 2011, but its construction process has not yet completed. The completion of this project is remained uncertain because of the present unrests in the Middle East and changes known as Arabic Spring.

6. "Nabucco's pipeline" which is expected to be completed in 2020 for transferring 31 billion cubic meters gas. This pipeline is intended to transfer a significant volume of Caspian Sea's gas through Turkey to Europe. Europe's main purpose to design and support this project is to put Russia aside and find new ways for supplying its energy. It seems that Turkey supports this project, at least for four reasons. First, Turkey participates in Nabucco's project in order to become the energy pole of the region in the future. Second, Nabucco's project can play an effective role in Ankara's cooperations with EU and pave the way for Turkey's joining to EU. Third, Turkey can increase its revenues gained by transit fees and pipeline passage from its lands. And fourth, Turkey's excessive dependence to Russia can be a challenging issue in the future, so that, Turkey is going to purchase gas from alternative suppliers and it considers variation of partners in energy domain as less vulnerability.

However, Nabucco's pipeline faces with several significant problems. First, participants in Nabucco's consortium have not succeeded to gain guaranty for gas supply from countries located in Caspian Sea shores. If they fail to do so, they will not be able to gain necessary capital for pipeline construction. Second problem relates to the contracts which signed between Moscow and countries of the region for purchasing and exporting their energy. It also seems that Russia will maintain its monopoly dominance on European energy domain through signing new contracts with countries such as Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. The third major challenge in the way of Nabucco accomplishment relates to particular relations between the west and Iran which deprive Europe from access to second major owner of world gas resources and most important gas resource in the Middle East. The main challenge for Nabucco, therefore, is insufficient gas resources; because at present, Turkmenistan transfers all of its gas exports to Russia and Azerbaijan, by itself, will not be able to provide gas necessary for this pipeline. Fourth challenge concerning Nabucco's pipeline is that this pipeline is parallel to South Stream pipeline designed by Russia. Thus, Russia and even many western countries expressed doubt about construction of Nabucco's pipeline. As a result, Ankara only 24 days after signing Nabucco's gas pipeline, signed South Stream pipeline with Russia.

7. "Turkey-Israel pipeline" which is stopped at negotiations process due to tense relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv.

8. "Iraq-Turkey pipeline": negotiations about this pipeline have not been yet concluded. Since this pipeline need to be passed from Kurdish regions, to reach an agreement about it, at least for the moment, is impossible.
9. "Asaluyeh-Bazargan pipeline": negotiations about which are now progressing, but with respect to growing international pressures and sanctions on Iran, agreement on its construction and execution, at least in the near future, is impossible.

10. Samsun-Ceyhan: A proposed bypass to the heavily traveled Bosphorus shipping lane, this 350-mile long line would transport oil from the Kashagan oil field in Kazakhstan's portion of the Caspian Sea. Turkish officials say the project is part of a broader effort to reduce Bosphorus traffic and protect Istanbul from a potentially devastating oil spill. The pipeline is expected to begin exporting oil by 2011. The planned Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline, to pump Russian oil from Turkey's Black Sea coast to the Mediterranean, is "economically not viable," Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak in 21 April 2013 told in the strongest acknowledgement yet from Moscow that the project will be delayed indefinitely. Another problem crippling the project is Ankara's recent ban of Italian firm Eni from projects in Turkey due to the company's involvement in energy exploration in Greek Cyprus, a government Turkey refuses to recognize [19].

In general, studies about most important Turkey's gas and oil pipelines indicate that Russia not only is Turkey's most important partner in energy domain, but also the plans where Moscow and Ankara participated jointly-unlike other plans-have been accomplished. At present, "Water Stream" pipeline pass from Russia to Turkey through passing from Black Sea bed and it is expected the new pipeline known as "Water Stream II" can also transfer 10 billion cubic meters gas annually [20]. This pipeline is intended to transfer Russian gas to the Middle East. Both countries also reached to an agreement concerning South Stream pipeline in December 2011. This pipeline is going to be exploited in 2015 and it will be able to transfer 63 billion cubic meters Russian gas through Black Sea (Turkish monopoly economic region) to center and south of Europe (Balkan region and other European countries including Bulgaria, Siberia, Hungary, Italy and Greece)[15].

Russia, therefore, is important for Turkey's energy strategy at least from three aspects. First, a major part of Turkey's energy is supplied by Russia. By growing industrial products in Turkey, its energy needs is also increasing. Under such conditions that turkey's demand for energy is growing, Russia as one of the greatest energy powers can play a significant role in supplying Turkey's needs for oil and gas. Specially, because of instabilities and unrests in the Middle East countries, they cannot be a stable resource for providing Turkey's energy needs.

Second reason relates to this fact that Turkey wants to act as a mediator for oil and gas exports of Russia and Caspian region to Europe. Ankara aims to become the main center of transit between gas and oil producer regions and European markets. When this purpose is accomplished, Turkey will be vital chain in energy channel which links Caspian Sea region to Europe. To this end, Turks have to confirm that Russia continues to be the most important and greatest supplier for EU energy [21].

Third reason for importance of Russia for Turkey in energy domain is Turkey's approach to nuclear energy. Turkey is going to construct five nuclear power plants in the future and although it tried hardly to attract America, Europe and some of Asian countries such as Japan and Korea to participate in its nuclear plans, none of the western nuclear companies declare their readiness for cooperation and transfer related technologies to this country. Russia, however, takes the lead for constructing first nuclear power plant in Turkey. Russia also agreed to pay much of construction costs and annual education costs for 150 Turkish experts (Bafı, 2011) [16]. Along the same line, in 2010 both countries signed a 20 billion dollars agreement according to which Russia needs to construct a nuclear power plant in Turkey's lands (РИА Новости, 2010)[17]. A consortium headed by "Atom Story Export", a Russian public company, is going to construct a 4.8 GW atomic power plant with value of 20 billion dollars in Akkuyu, a coastal city located in Turkey. Akkuyu power plant is Turkey's first atomic power plant which is intended to be the greatest power plant of the world. This Russian company is responsible for constructing this power plant, and it also will manage the power plant in the future [10:11]. Furthermore, Turkey is going to purchase its atomic power plant from Russia for the first time [22].

As a result, under such conditions that western countries do not participate in Turkey's nuclear projects, Russia has taken decisive steps for constructing turkey's first nuclear power plant. Not only did it add to Russia importance for Turkey, but also it led to deeper economic and political cooperation between these countries and influenced Turkish public opinions significantly.

Conclusion:

Since Putin in Russia and Ardoughan in Turkey came to power, commercial trade-off between these countries have greatly increased and despite consisting competitive conditions between these great powers of the region, political cooperation’s between Moscow and Ankara have expanded in many aspects. Due to Russia's territorial situation, population rate, geographical conditions and volume of its commercial trade-offs with Turkey, Russia puts too much importance on expanding its relations with Turkey. Moreover, with respect to current conditions and place of Turkey in the Middle East, expanding friendship with Ankara can be considered as a Middle Eastern benefit for Moscow. For Turkey, Russia is also a country possessing high military power and economic interests particularly in energy domain and with its membership in Security Council and Group 8 influences world changes significantly.
For Russia, Turkey’s special geopolitical situation which is the best way to accessing to Russian warm waters is always a concern relating to its proximity with Turkey. Turkey is also quietly aware that if Black Sea’s straits are closed, at least some of the Caspian energy transfer lines will be passed from Russia. Turkey, therefore, always mediates its policies concerning Russia and takes also Russian geopolitical importance seriously.

During past years, therefore, Russia and Turkey have redefined their policies and strategies concerning bilateral relations. Both countries are determined to change the negative and security view dominated their past relations into a compromising attitude. Ruling elite and governmental bureaucracy orientations in both countries, increasing of economic transactions, geopolitical requirements, regional coopertions and international or western agent are among the factors leading to such a compromising attitude. Furthermore, debates on energy and geopolitics of pipelines are very important for both countries and for this reason they have a special determining place in Russia-Turkey relations. In fact, a major part of expanding Russia-Turkey relations can be attributed to geopolitical requirements and cooperation in the energy domain. Since energy plays an increasingly significant role in both countries foreign policy and national security, energy transactions are greatly effective on Russia-Turkey relations. Mutually beneficial cooperation of both countries in the field of energy has influenced a board range of issues concerning bilateral relations which have ranged beyond the energy section. For example, energy security issue led Russia and Turkey to resolve their regional disputes. Accordingly, issues related to energy geopolitics decreased the impact of western agent on Russia-Turkey relations. Factors such as ruling elite and governmental bureaucracy orientations have played a positive role in development of Russia-Turkey relations. Both parties' cooperation prospects, thus, depend mostly on dynamics of political development, ruling elites and governmental bureaucracies of both countries. Under current conditions and with respect to energy-related issues, it seem that in long run, Russia and Turkey not only will maintain and develop their bilateral relations on higher levels, but also they will move toward creating interdependence based on common objectives.

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