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The Allure of Geopolitics and Quest of a Pivot State

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Abstract- The states, owning key resources that receive the attention of great powers are named as the pivot state which stems from the study of Mackinder Heartland (pivot) theory in his article Geographical Pivot of History in the early twentieth century which is also known as the tradition of classical geopolitics. After the demise of Russia and the unification of Germany, it is concluded that civilization came to an end in "end of history" equivalence which was an announcement of the victory of liberal ideology against closed societies and communism. The forms of power based on which states are positioned has changed to cultural, shared values and institutions of liberal order such as democracy, human rights, which were seen as identical importance as military or economic sources. Consequently, the classical geopolitics weighting spatial context of geopolitics was considered as idle. However, Russia aggression in Ukraine, China South, and East China see activities Iran proxy wars in the Middle East brought on the idea that the geopolitics has survived. In this complex and uncertain security environment, as a NATO member pivot state Turkey, having a significant geographic location, credible military size and economic power has gained importance, whereas its recent behaviors such as buying S-400 air missiles from Russia and Syria Operation confused the scholars regarding where it pivots to. In this sense, this paper addresses where Turkey is pivoting to and whether these movements entail security concerns regionally and globally.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Mackinder, Pivot, Pivot state, Great powers, Global order, Security, Syria, Turkey

1. Introduction

The term geopolitics, first invented by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén in 1899, referred to the "exploiting of geographical knowledge for further aims of a specific national state" (Agnew & Muscarà, 2012) and as "the theory of the state as a geographical organism or phenomenon in space (Cohen, 2003)." Geopolitics flourished among the rival colonial empires-Great Britain, Germany, Russia, and the USA in the late nineteenth century. The nature of the era, paradigms, and perception of elites was that the colonialism/conquer was a way of prosperity and it was essential to gain superiority among other rival empires to both survive and maintain "power" which was the main tool rather than diplomacy that was widely accepted in international arena at that time.

In this context, the geopolitics and geopolitical theories were flourished by scholars within the academic environment, institute and elites of the society of age (Tuathail & Toal 1996). In this sense, WW II, scholars in imperial states - Alfred Mahan and Nicholas Spykman in the United States, Friedrich Ratzel and Karl Haushofer in Germany, Rudolf Kjellen in Sweden, and

Halford Mackinder in Great Britain- set a methodologic approach for analyzing international affairs. That methodology and analyses, in the framework of World War II, would originate a "geopolitical tradition" which would be named as classical geopolitics (Tuathail & Toal 1996). Accordingly, in the course of events, a set of implemented strategies of states over supremacy yielded to hegemonic or geopolitical theories, such as Spykman Rimland Theory, Alfred Mahan Sea Power Theory, and Mackinder Heartland Theory.

Spykman asserted that the Rimland region, Eurasia - including Middle East, India, South East Asia, and China, were strategic regions to dominate the world due to their valuable economic resources of the given era (Cohen, 2003). He asserted that "who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world (Spykman & Nicholl 1944)." Alfred Mahan Sea Power Theory was stating that the key region to rule the world island lays in Indian and Pacific oceans (Kaplan, 2013). He saw crucial for the US to increase its sea power as well as naval force to govern the world (Mahan, 2011).

The term pivot was for the first time coined by Mackinder in his Heartland Theory which referred a pivot of geography that he believed vital to rule World Island in the land power perspective. This region was occupied mainly by Russia -including North Anatolia and part of the Middle East. He would name the region Heartland (pivot) and state that "who rule Heartland will command the world (Mackinder, 1904)." He explained the importance of geographical locations of some regions across the world that has changed international order. In this regard, he established the relevance between the significance of geography and the history of states. These relatively significant regions later would be conceptualized as pivotal states.

The success of "containment strategy" which was inspired by Spykman, resulted in the dissolve of the Soviet Union and the world balance change in favor of the US, as unrivaled unique power, in the 1990s. Moreover, advances in communication, command, and control, and transportation systems brought "globalization". This environment depended on the fact that the "liberal capitalist democracy" defeated the idea of communism brought great delusion of the assumption that the most ambiguous geopolitical difficulties had been resolved (Mead, 2014). Consequently, classical geopolitics has been considered obsolete since then. However, for a while, admittedly, it is observed that geopolitics returned to the international field.

China and Russia started off challenging the existing US-lead world order along with Iran. Russia and China, has been scrutinized studying the "classical geopolitics" (Bassin, & Aksenov, 2006). On the one hand, Russian Georgia conflict in 2008, Ukraine Crisis in 2014 and annexation of Crimea, on the other hand, aggression of China in "island-building and base-construction activities" in the South and East China Sea (SCS), made this geopolitical considerations prominent which paved way to be labeled as revisionist powers as well (O'Rourke, 2018; Guzzini, 2012). Besides, Iran leveraged its ideational thought utilizing proxies across the Middle East to dominate the region (Mead, 2014). Hence, it is observed that the US-led monopoly shifted to a new phase where multi powers' spheres of interests collided and US power is waning (O'Rourke, 2018).

In this sense, it is understood that in multipolar system pivot states become crucial in terms of balancing power. The pivot state is defined as having "military, economic or ideational strategic assets that are coveted by great powers (Sweijts, et al., 2014)". They leverage their assets

to have relations with multiple great powers (sometimes set one great power against another) to preserve their interests. Historically the pivotal states have been accepted to be key-stable states particularly those who gender stability in their region. However, any deformation in these characteristics may cause regional and global upheavals. Besides, it is also revealed that conflicts have been witnessed where multiple spheres of interest of Great powers collided and when a shift of power has occurred.

Turkey, as having crucial assets and geographic location, has been accepted as a pivot state since it was founded in 1923. Although it has positioned its identity in the international arena as Western, recently, it has been observed pivoting to Russia and China. In this sense, this paper analyzes whether a NATO member pivot state may cause mayhem for its allies in its region and across the globe if it pivots from one great power (US/EU) to another (Russia/China) in case of Turkey. In this regard, the second section of the paper illustrates the survival of geopolitics among the revisionist powers across the globe. In the third section, the pivot state and their behaviors are explained in the case of Turkey engagements with great powers with a special focus on analyzing its policies in the comparative research methodology. The fourth section concludes the study stressing possible security risks in their pivoting activities.

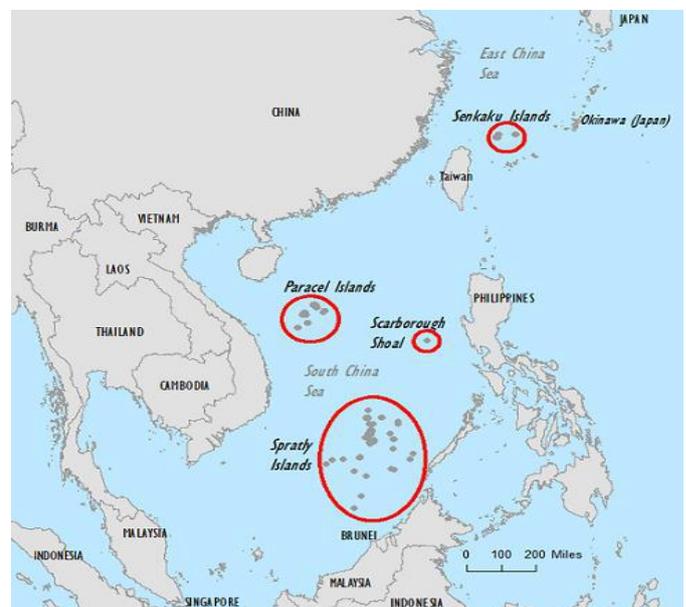


Fig.1. East and the South China Sea and Disputable Islands (O'Rourke, 2018).

2.Survival of Geopolitics Among Revisionist Powers

2.1 Return of Geopolitics

The dissolution of Russia caused so deep trauma across the society and elites in Russia that they started to question their position and identity in international structure. Hence, an objective, tested and easily mobilized discipline of science was needed as a remedy to regain its 'superpower' identity and its nation solidarity, thus, geopolitics was considered by scholars and statesmen (Guzzini, 2012). The geopolitics was recognized as a legitimate scientific discipline in the 1980s and its real improvement started in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Bassin, & Aksenov, 2006). From the 1990s on, geopolitics became a core discipline appealed to, ranging from education to military, economy, and politics in Russia. Universities launched courses, key geopolitical sources and documents ranging from Marx to Mackinder, were translated to Russia, even an Academy of Problems of Geopolitics and in Duma, a "Committee for Geopolitical Analysis" was founded (Guzzini, 2012; Bassin, & Aksenov, 2006). Although current prevailing geopolitics tradition is ambiguous, the documents referred has been seen dating back to classical geopolitics of the early twentieth century (Guzzini, 2012). Finally, a most powerful and conspicuous indicator of survival of geopolitics in Russia would come from Vladimir Putin, during his annual speech in Federal Assembly in 2005 that he would describe the demise of Soviet Union as 'the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the century' (Guzzini, 2012). In this sense, it is observed that mainly three waves of geopolitical thought have flourished in the post-Soviet era in Russia (Bassin, & Aksenov, 2006).

The first is Eurasianism which was initially invented in the 1920s claiming that it was "a special type of culture", embedded to "Eurasia state Russia" that had come fore throughout history rather than geographic or geopolitical consideration (Kerr, 1995). This wave is embraced mostly by nationalists and became popular after 1991 (Guzzini, 2012; Bassin, & Aksenov, 2006). The national interest of Russia is emphasized in the "composition of historical, cultural, socio-economic, geographic demographic indicators, the combination of which also makes up the political phenomenon of Russia as a single multi-national state" at the heart of Eurasia (Bogaturov, et al., 1992). Presumably, today, Alexander Dugin is a widely known face of this tradition though accepted also as 'fascist' (Guzzini, 2012). He served as an advisor to Duma in 1998 and taught in the Academy of the General Staff and at the Institute for Strategic Research. Lately,

he played a vital role between Turkey and Russia to defuse tension after Turkish air force fighter shot down the Russian aircraft on 24 November 2015 particularly through the announcements he did in Russian and Turkish mainstream media after the coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016 in the support of Turkish authorities. The second geopolitical movement is the German realpolitik of Karl Haushofer who served as major general during WWI in the German army. Karl Haushofer's idea was mainly to react against the Treaty of Versailles and to survive the German Empire. He served Hitler, and his ideas were the basis of the Nazi Party of Hitler during WWII. He saw the geopolitics of a state as an endless struggle of organisms over "living pace" which refers to regain the territory of the Soviet Union ((Tuathail & Toal 1996). The third is Mackinder Heartland Theory. Heartland was mainly occupied by Russia and he saw this region as the pivot of geography to rule the world. Ironically, his main proclamation was that this region shouldn't be left under control of one great power-Russia which would yield Russian superiority in the globe. However, Russians' scholars examined the theory to reverse his arguments to regain supremacy in the global order (Bassin, & Aksenov, 2006).

Throughout history, China has been one of the most influential countries with both economic and ideational sources, particularly in thought Confucius. Today, China is one of the two biggest economic power and is expected to be top shortly, though its military might is observed to be far behind US military capabilities. Today presumably one of the most researched topics is China and its rise in the world, as it entails a historic strategic shift in international structure in terms of the distribution of power and resources (Beeson, & Li, 2015). The 'Chinese model' known also as 'Beijing consensus' is portrayed as "a ruthless willingness to innovate and experience, by a lively defense of national borders and interests, and by the increasingly thoughtful accumulation of tools of asymmetric power projection" (Cooper, 2004). However, whether China possesses the ability to propose a system that can substitute current order is still under discussion and it is hard to address patterns of a geopolitical tradition that China could apply.

On the other hand, China's set of implemented policies such as South and East China events, transformed prehistoric Silk Road strategy into 'One Belt, One Road' policy, specifies its geopolitical paradigms. In 2013 China announced the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and

"21st Century Maritime Silk Road" strategy which connects China to the outer world with the line of land and maritime communications to develop economic and political relations (Sidaway & Woon, 2017). In this sense, China has signed bilateral treaties with many countries across the world which forms 'One Belt, One Road' initiative. Fig.2 shows 'One Belt, One Road' of China strategy. These sets of actions are perceived as the survival of geopolitics though Chinese officials deny. For example, China's activities in South China Sea to secure Indian Ocean are accepted to resemble US activities in Caribbean basin to free Pacific Ocean as Spykman proposed, similarly "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" brings the Alfred Mahan in mind as he asserted that future of the world island lies in the sea power (Kaplan, 2013). Furthermore, these efforts are also seen as attempts to control the Heartland of Mackinder –Eurasia as well.



Fig. 2. China's 'On One Belt, One Road' Belt Strategy (Sidaway & Woon, 2017)

As hosting Persian culture with Shia belief and rich natural resources, controlling the Persian Gulf, Iran is another key state in the international system. Its geopolitical consideration is merged with ideational motives aiming at leading Islamic states in the Middle East. Recently, US withdrawal from the Middle East particularly Iraq in a faded prestige gave a historic opportunity to increase and excavate its influence in the region (Mead, 2014). Furthermore, Iran armed proxies such as Hezbollah in Beirut and Iraq which kept the Assad regime still in charge, though Turkey and the US firmly opposed. Moreover, Arab Spring weakened the influence of Sunni belief against Iranian Shia which fueled its respect across the Middle East on particularly separatist groups (Mead, 2014). The expansionist policies of Iran beyond its borders caused Iran titled as revisionist power as well as an actor of the hegemonic geopolitical tradition of the classical era.

3. Where is Turkey Pivoting to?

3.1. Historical Background

Balkan Wars which started with nationalist movements demanding their independence was a turning point in the Ottoman Empire which paved the way a big trauma in Turkish history. In six months, the Ottoman Empire lost approximately three out of four of its territory. With this ruin in WWI, it joins the alliance of Germany and Austria Empire which resulted in the occupation of Allied forces capital Istanbul (Uçarol, 1982). Subsequently, the Turkish independence War started under the leadership of ex-Ottoman Army Staff officer Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1919. He succeeded to defeat Allied forces and founded the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

New state Turkey, identified itself as a democratic constitutional and secular republic. Turkey's pivoting, under the leadership of Ataturk with his principles and reforms, through West was achieved. The unexpected and quick collapse of the Ottoman empire caused deep mistrust and resentment in society particularly among elites. In this regard, he asserted a new form of relationship in his famous motto "peace at home peace at the world" which was cemented by the time in Turkey's foreign and domestic affairs. From 1923 on, it has positioned itself in Western-style democracy and way of life. However, as Ataturk was a former soldier in the Ottoman Empire Army, the guarantee of regime was the army while western countries deepened its democratic institutions within civil society.

In this context, Turkey joined NATO in 1952, applied for EU membership in 1963 and custom union in 1995. Finally, it was declared as a candidate for full membership in the EU 1999. In 2004 the European Council announced that Turkey had achieved enough progress to proceed which yielded a significant change to compromise with EU criteria in state governmental institutions in 2005 (Morelli, 2011).

3.2. Turkey's Role in the Framework of the Pivot State Concept

The term pivot was first coined by Mackinder in his study widely known Heartland (pivot) theory in his article Geographical Pivot of History at the early beginning of the twentieth century. He is acknowledged

as one of the forerunners in "classical geopolitics" and his ideas have affected many academics and politicians.

The pivot state is defined as those who "possess military, economic or ideational strategic assets that are coveted by great powers (Sweijts et al., 2014)." Hence, they are exposed to the challenges of converging great powers' interest at the spheres of interest of great powers. However, by using their key resources, they can influence one great power against another. On the other hand, great powers use coercive and supportive diplomatic means to pivot them in their sphere of interest (Sweijts et al., 2014). Besides, because of multipolar global order and the pivot state's capacity of pursuing independent policies to a certain extent, have brought on their importance in the international system (Bekkers et al., 2013). As today elements of soft power such as relations, culture, religion have equal influence as military might, the outcomes of engagements are categorized such as alliance system (NATO) or trade system (EU) and short-term relations such as economic agreements, arms sale (Sweijts et al., 2014). These paradigms determine a state position in terms of the direction it pivots to. On the other hand, the volume of these associations has been seen intensified and diverged as ever.

Throughout history, these states played pivotal roles with different names in the great powers hegemonic structure. As denotation of the pivot state is out of this paper scope, the most recent and broad terminology referring to the pivot state has been "regional heavyweight." In this regard, Turkey, being Muslim yet secular, having strategic geographical location, shared democratic values, and its membership to NATO has been instrumental in playing a pivotal role for the great power it pivoted which is the US and EU. For example, being at the Southeastern flank of NATO, Turkey's commitment to the US containment strategy against Soviet Russian expansionism was one of the key developments that brought the success of US policy. On an economic basis, the EU is the top trade partner for Turkey and Turkey is in the top five largest import provider for EU ("Turkey", 2019). The total volume of trade in goods amounted to €153.4 billion in 2018 ("Turkey", 2019). In terms of foreign direct investments (FDI) on a country-by-country basis, the US has the biggest portion, together with EU countries it makes almost 80 percent of Turkey's total FDI (Kayaoğlu et al., 2017).

Turkey played a vital role with regards to its military power, military base as well as its airspace. The US conducted many operations intending to provide democracy in the Middle East. In 1990 during the Iraq invasion of Kuwait "Operation Desert Storm", in 2001 when trade towers were hit by al-Qaeda "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan, in 2003 second Gulf War "Operation Iraqi Freedom" was run by the US and US-led coalition forces. Today, the Incirlik Military base provides %68 of air logistical support of current Iraq and Afghanistan missions ("Incirlik Air Base History," 2015). It is assessed that Turkey allowance of Turkish airspace and usage of base yields the US sparing approximately \$210 million per year comparing alternative route charges ("Incirlik Air Base History," 2015). Besides, currently, it plays a significant role regarding the fight against ISIS in Syria. Furthermore, Turkey, implemented many peacekeeping operations from Somali to Kosovo, from East Timur to Afghanistan along with UN monitoring missions such as in Georgia and Palestinian border ("Türkiye'nin Barışta Destekleme Harekâtına Katkıları", n.d). Fig.3 shows the great powers influence on Turkey. Although the influence of the EU and the US on Turkey is far beyond China and Russia, their influence is seen increasing gradually. It is valuable to mention that particularly after the coup attempt in 2016, the influence of revisionist powers Russia and China have been observed as dramatically increasing.

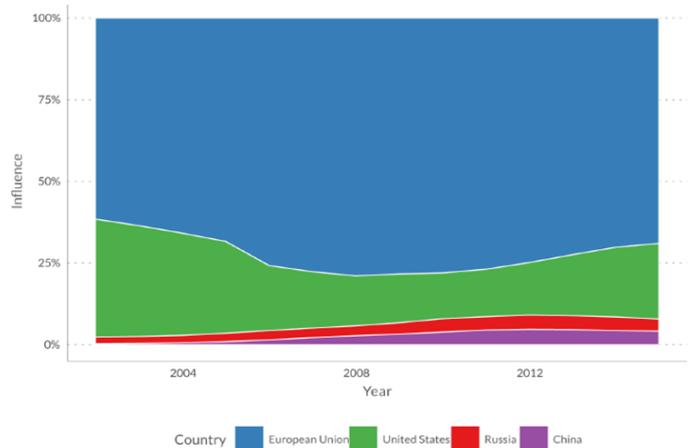


Fig.3. EU, U.S., Chinese and Russian influence exerted vis-à-vis Turkey, 2002-2015 (Kayaoğlu et al., 2017)

Politically, Turkey established good relations with its' neighbors in a set of alignments in the MENA region as well. Its series, music, and movies have become very popular across the region which yielded Turkey to be seen as a role model in the region. Consequently, having

been elected US president Barack Obama set up his first official visit to Turkey. He announced that "We are not solely strategic partners, we are also model partners" referring this impression in April 2009 (Han, 2010). On the other hand, Turkey signed the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement on 18 March 2016 to control the mass flow of migration from Syria to Europe though, EU-Turkey relations have gently deteriorated.

Turkey's relation with the EU and the US has not been so smooth. Although the first application of Turkey for the customs union was in 1963 with the Ankara agreement, the EU recognized Turkey formally as a candidate at the 1999 Helsinki Council summit pending on its success in the EU's political and economic criteria before accession talks could begin (Morelli, 2011). Whereas in its largest enlargement EU accepted Cyprus in 2004, one year later in 2005 Turkey was granted as only full candidate membership. This caused deep mistrust and offense against the EU across the society in Turkey. Since then, relations ordinarily have had its ups and downs (Guzzini, 2012). For the US, its support to Kurdish forces Yekîneyên Parastina Gel YPG (affiliated with PKK) in the ongoing war in Syria since 2014 brought to ties to a breakpoint. Besides Turkish Army operations in Syria particularly the last one which is known Operation Fountain of Peace (Barış Pınarı Harekatı) caused a mini diplomatic crisis between both sides. Finally, Turkey accused the US and EU that Turkey couldn't get enough support from them after the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016 contrary to its expectations. Rather Turkey blamed the EU and the US for protecting those groups that were supposed to be behind the coup attempt according to Turkey (Georgy & Ozkan, 2016).

Turkey pivoting to Russia resulted in a complicated arms sale of the S-400 missile system which threatens the NATO defense system. As a quick response, the Pentagon announced that the delivery of F-35 jet fighters to Turkey was suspended (Mehta, 2019). Moreover, The American Senate Committee approved more sanctions in response, while writing this paper. Notably, for the first time in US history, US senates ratified the resolution that recognizes the killing of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923 as genocide, which was signed by President Donald Trump, on 12 December 2019 (Pamuk, 2019). Furthermore, for the first time, against Turkey's demand to get YPG recognized as a terrorist organization by NATO, clashed with strong opposition from French President Macron as well. On the last NATO summit on 03 December 2019,

he accused Turkey of sometimes working with proxies who have affiliation with ISIS (Wintour, 2019). In the wake of continuous crises, justifiably scholars have come up with the question of which direction will Turkey pivot to? What is the most likely option?

3.3. Analysis of Pivot State Associations of in Case of Turkey

It has been observed that there are a couple of choices for Turkey to pivot, such as pivoting to Russia-Iran-China or Islamic world in the Middle East, remaining in the Western alliance, or pursuing independent foreign policies while at the same time preserving current position in West alliance system (Kayaoğlu et al., 2017). It has been concluded that the most likely case is some sort of hybrid. Turkey will keep its' West alliance, but it will leverage his position to spheres of interest of Russia and China but at the same time to the Muslim World (Kayaoğlu et al., 2017). The policies of Turkey up to now in this perspective prove this analysis to be true.

On the other hand, from the geopolitical point of view, there are a couple of issues making Turkey's position exclusive in its region. Turkey has a significant location but at the same time, it is the only country that doesn't have a key natural resource. Turkey has neither oil like Saudi Arabia nor gas like Russia or Iran. Rather it heavily depends on Russia and Iran in terms of her energy needs. Concerning economy Turkey depends on the EU and the US as mentioned, and military wise, it heavily depends on the NATO alliance system which is dominated by the US.

In this sense, as the most distinguishing characteristic of a pivot state has been the being assurance of stability in their region, Turkey has been supported by West throughout history aiming at keeping her stable. For instance, during the Cold War supplied with military equipment and financial aid through "Marshall aid" and supported through IMF as well.

The hybrid pivoting pattern of Turkey's concept, while following independent policies keeping its position in the West, possesses a couple of drawbacks. First, Turkey hasn't experienced playing in one sphere of great powers off another. During the Georgia Conflict with Russia, Georgia couldn't get enough support of the West as expected, the same can be applied to the case of Turkey as well.

Second, Turkey has implemented a balanced foreign policy while remaining in the West alliance system which has been inherently accepted by related great powers whose spheres of interest overlaps upon Turkey. Therefore, this pattern will be experienced through bilateral agreements. As these agreements haven't tested before, this could fuel uncertainty of security since the possible perception of gaining influence of any great power against another, could be interpreted as a loss of prestige. As the prestige is one of the key factors a great power owns, decay in prestige may cause a great power to take severe actions (Ikenberry, 2014).

Third, when the great powers spheres of interest converge, to what extent the pivot states will be tolerated to pursue independent policies are flue as well. Hence this uncertainty potentially might pave the way to firm policies on both sides such as Turkey and US dispute over US support to YPG in Syria.

Fourth, Turkey pivot to the Muslim world is not welcomed, not only because of the Arab Spring turn out to be a failure, but also because these Middle Eastern countries are not in favor of the idea of Turkey's establishment of power in the region. As they consider it to a threat to their sovereignty referring to the domination of the Ottoman Empire in the region (Kayaoğlu et al., 2017).

Fifth, as Turkey`s foreign and domestic policies, have always had many associations than Western states. These independent policies are likely to undermine democratic intuitions that bind Turkey to the West. Hence, one can say that that is not a sustainable situation for all sides, rather it could shake the Turkey-West relations which have been recently experiencing a tough period.

The coup attempt in 2016, deteriorated Turkey`s economic, military and democratic institutions. While on the one hand a great number of officials have been fired from governmental posts, on the other hand, economic production was decreased ("Too many kooks," 2017). Besides, As of February 2019, the US dollar gained %81 since the coup attempt. Accordingly, international credit rating agencies increased risk assessment of Turkey as well. Turkey has been struggling with both the mentioned domestic problems and international challenges due to the Syrian Civil War as well. All these problems resulted in mass migration waves particularly to the EU. Turkish asylum seekers in the EU hit the record in October 2018 with a number of

17300 applications (Kostaki, 2018). In this regard, these developments could be interpreted as a very high profile to cause unrest for regional and global security, which requires a careful approach.

The US has been following to some extent an isolationist policy as a part of the strategy they presented in 2011 as "Pivot to Asia." This policy was explained by Hillary Clinton as such "One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will, therefore, be to lock in a substantially increased investment - diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise - in the Asia-Pacific region (Clinton, 2011)." This indicates that its commitment in the Middle East is expected to relatively decrease, whereas revisionist powers, China with Silk Road Belt and Russia in support of the Assad regime, could yield to gain influence in the region. Besides all these developments could bring on the superiority of Iran with its proxies against Turkey in the Middle East.

Given the fact that Turkey has many ties and associations with the EU, the EU has a unique position in terms of their interactions. The policies of the EU against Turkey are relatively reflecting softer power than the US which could yield it to pivot Turkey. However, the EU has been struggling with lacking a common policy and besides, among the others, Brexit consumes most of its' efforts.

4. Conclusion

Turkey has been a key pivot state because of its military and economic power as well as its strategic position that controls two key straits. Turkey has been in the alliance system of the West. As the global order has been shifting from West to East, it gains more importance than ever. Turkey has established good relations with its neighbors, sometimes played a key role to contribute stability in the region. Recently, this role has been replaced by uncertainty and risks.

The engagements have been observed diverged and highly accelerated. Besides security order has been noticed as more complex and fuzzier. The world is seen so interconnected that any conflict could easily spill all over the world that hasn't ever been experienced. Moreover, for two decades the revisionist powers have been monitored as more involved in classical geopolitics of the twentieth century. Namely, Russia, China, and Iran have been considered to push back the US-led order.

In this regard, it might be argued that Turkey's behaviors should be analyzed in the pivot state concept referring to changes of behaviors in the pivot state interaction with multi great powers at the spheres of interest of great powers rather than an 'independent policy.' Since neither current economic power and military might of Turkey nor its soft power is sufficient to follow an independent policy. Rather this might be assessed as increased size and density of relations while pivoting from one great power to another and the outcome of accumulative policies of the pivot states through pitting one to another, to get the most profitable result. However, it is vital to remark that Turkey has been successfully following the independent policies in her capacity to the extent of not damaging any convergence of great powers' interest.

During isolationist policies of US after WWI, Spykman warned US by stating that "it would be cheaper in the long run to remain a working member of the European power zone than to withdraw for short intermissions to our insular domain only to be forced to apply later the whole of our national strength to redress a balance that might have needed but a slight weight at the beginning". However, missing this advice caused catastrophic losses across the world.

Recently, the global order has witnessed the Ukraine crises and Georgia conflict. Both cases resulted in the loss of territory and chaos. With the same analogy, Turkey's interactions and policies might be argued in the characteristics of the pivot state under existing conditions is prone to produce mayhem. Recent shocks could trigger greater uncertainty and fueled additional security risks not only for Turkey but also for great powers like the US and EU for China as well, as Istanbul is a hub in One Belt Road initiative of China.

In this sense, Turkey is a strong country in the region that could implement independent policies and is capable to leverage its key assets against great powers. In terms of great powers, the context of the pivot states interactions might be decisive to materialize their interests without letting any security risks. In this framework, their interactions with each other should have a rational basis.

If one thing is certain, it is that when necessary lessons are not learned, history repeats itself.

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