



Turkey Position Paper

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I/ Background Information on Turkey

The Republic of Turkey is a unitary presidential constitutional republic located in the South-East of Europe and the South-West of Asia. The current president is Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Turkey was a part of the Ottoman Empire before it became an independent state, which is its current status. The official declaration of the Republic of Turkey was made in 1923. Before that many different peoples had lived in the area that is now Turkey, ranging from the ancient Greek to the Armenians. Many of them still live in Turkey, causing numerous conflicts between different peoples. The largest part of the population of Turkey is Turk (70-80%), and the second largest part is Kurd (12-25%). The most common language is Turkish, and the second most common language is Kurdish. The dominant religion is by far the Islam, 99.8% of the inhabitants of Turkey follows it. The largest city is Istanbul, and Ankara is the capital. The most recent and relevant conflict in which Turkey is involved in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. This conflict is between the Turkish government and a Kurdish separatist movement, that seeks an independent Kurdistan and greater political and cultural rights for the Kurds in Turkey.



Figure 1: The orange parts of the map represent a majority of Kurdish inhabitants

II/ Past Achievements and Attempts of Turkey on the Issues

- A. The Question of the Caucasus:** Turkey claims no involvement in the region of the Northern Caucasus. Furthermore, Turkey does not recognize either Abkhazia or South Ossetia as an independent region. It has shown and will continue to show support towards Azerbaijan and finds territorial integrity to be more important than the right to self-determination in this situation, also taking into regard that Armenia has no legitimate claim over Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkey does not recognize the Republic of Artsakh as an independent state. Good relations have been established with both Azerbaijan and Georgia, no such relations are in place between Turkey and Armenia because of the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia's negative attitude towards Turkey. To illustrate the quality of the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan and Georgia: there are High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSC) mechanisms in place between these countries and mutual high-level visits are regularly in place. Turkey values regional cooperation and development projects, in relation to establishing a common area in the South Caucasus region. To



accomplish this the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipeline and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) Railway and Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) have become operational. Turkey seeks to establish peace, security, and stability in the Southern Caucasus region, through peaceful means, while leaving the territorial integrity and sovereignty of both Azerbaijan and Georgia intact. Turkey also wishes to normalize its relations with Armenia, however, because of the very negative attitude that Armenia continues to have towards Turkey, this has not yet been possible. Turkey has not been involved in the Northern Caucasian conflict, nor does it wish to be.

- B. The Question of the Caspian Sea and Surrounding Territories:** Turkey's interest is in making as much profit from the resources in the Caspian Sea and surrounding territories as possible. Its main ally remains Azerbaijan, though they are very keen to cooperate with Russia as well. Turkey greatly values its cooperation with Russia, seeing as they are very important economic allies and Russia is Turkey's main energy supplier, though there are some tensions concerning other diplomatic issues. Turkey recognizes the fact that it is economically and politically highly dependent on Russia. Turkey's policy towards the oil-transport through the Caspian region is dominated by environmental concerns. To illustrate: Turkey actively promotes the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project, which will avoid transportation through the Black Sea and the Turkish Straits, seeing as accidents would be catastrophic for Istanbul, Turkey's largest city and business center. The oil that is transported through the BTC originates from the Caspian Sea and is brought to the Mediterranean region.
- C. The Question of the Shift of Trade Routes in Eurasia:** Turkey and China, despite the great geographical distance separating the two countries, have had good economic and cultural cooperation for hundreds of years. The two countries are committed to further improving those ties. Therefore, Turkey is a great supporter of the One Belt, One Road Initiative (or "The New Silk Road"). This is why both the president and minister of Foreign Affairs were present at the OBOR summit in Beijing. The establishment of this project could help enhance Turkey's regional influence and be of enormous economic benefit for Turkey, as it would make it a lot easier to transport Turkish goods towards the East. Seeing as Turkey has a position of crucial importance in its region due to the construction of the TANAP pipeline and the Turk Stream gas pipeline, it could play a very important role in supplying the West with energy from the East. This is an example of how Turkey is indispensable in this project, as the heart of the BRI.

III/ Objectives, Aims and Possible Solutions Proposed by Turkey on the Issues

- A. The Question of the Caucasus:** As mentioned previously, Turkey prioritizes leaving the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and Azerbaijan intact. It, therefore, does not recognize Abkhazia or South Ossetia as independent regions, nor does it recognize Armenia's claim on the region of



Nagorno-Karabakh. It, therefore, does not recognize the Republic of Artsakh as an independent state. However, seeing the casualty numbers of the Southern Caucasus conflicts, Turkey does feel the urgency of the matter and urges for acute measures to be taken. Those measures should ensure that Armenian troops leave the region of Nagorno-Karabakh. As for the conflicts between Georgia and the separatist movements; Turkey urges the Russian Federation to withdraw their recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. Regarding the conflicts in the Northern Caucasus region; Turkey does not wish to be involved, as it believes that it is the responsibility of the Russian Federation to decide on measures.

B. The Question of the Caspian Sea and Surrounding Territories: Turkey wishes for a peaceful and safe milieu in the Caspian region to be established. For this to be realized, the stability and maintenance of independence and territorial integrity and sovereignty in this region are of utmost importance. Turkey seeks cooperation with Western countries as well as Russia, in order to develop a web of multiple pipelines, and encourages Azerbaijan and Georgia to cooperate with said states as well. It recognizes the fact that Russia is and will remain a crucial factor in this situation, and seeks to establish equal, constructive and cooperative arrangements. The main concern while seeking solutions to the current disputes is the environment and the thriving of the Turkish economy. To conclude: equal, clear and productive arrangements between Turkey, Western countries and Russia must be made, in order to develop an extensive web of pipelines to assure the safe transportation of the resources won in the Caspian region. Furthermore, Turkey believes that the littoral states of the Caspian Sea should agree on the matter of whether the Caspian Sea is a sea or a lake as soon as possible, in order to reach a consensus on further matters concerning the region. It does suggest that international involvement will remain possible, seeing as this would prevent possible domination by the more influential littoral states. This would mean the Caspian Sea would be granted the status of a sea.

C. The Question of the Shift of Trade Routes in Eurasia: Turkey fully supports the BRI and wishes to be part of the initiative. To ensure the project goes smoothly and fulfills its purpose, Turkey will work on stabilizing its ties to neighboring countries, which will ease the passage of goods through the borders. Furthermore, Turkey will work on diversifying its export base, to be able to offer more goods to the East as well as to the West and increase trade possibilities. Moreover, Turkey will invest due time and effort in finishing the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railroad as soon as possible, to further increase the transport possibilities between Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey.



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