

STATE CENTRIC RUSSIAN ENERGY POLICY AND RAPPROCHEMENT IN RUSSIA-TURKEY RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, first of all, Russian foreign policy makers have focused on adaptation of Russia to liberal economy, western institutions and rapprochement with western countries as well. However, this process has ended with the dismissal of Andrei Kozyrev, the minister of foreign affairs who was replaced by Yevgeni Primakov. Primakov became the pioneer of Eurasian idea on Russian politics in the mid 1990s.

Putin strengthened the state control over the energy sector in the early years of his presidency. He also has aimed to rectify the image of Russia in international politics by using the energy sector as an instrument and diversifying of export routes as well.

On the other hand, Russia has also emphasized rapprochement with Turkey on economic, social and political spheres by using the energy instrument after the mid 1990s. Turkey has answered the will of Russia positively, thus both countries have developed their relations also on other economic sectors.

Eventually, Turkey and Russia have become interdependent on the economic sphere and this has led to the emergence of multidimensional partnership between the countries.

Keywords: Eurasianism, Energy Policy, Blue Stream, Multi-Dimensional Partnership.

ÖZET

RUSYA'NIN DEVLET MERKEZLİ ENERJİ POLİTİKASI VE RUSYA-TÜRKİYE İLİŞKİLERİNDE YAKINLAŞMA

Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra, Rus dış politika yapıcıları ilk olarak liberal ekonomiye, batılı kurumlara adaptasyona ve batılı ülkelerle yakınlaşmaya odaklanmışlardır. Ancak, bu süreç Andrei Kozyrev'in dışişleri bakanlığı görevinden alınması ve yerine Yevgeni Primakov'un

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atanmasıyla son bulmuştur. Primakov 1990'lı yılların ortasında Rus siyasetinde Avrasyacı fikirlerin öncüsü olmuştur.

Öte yandan, Rusya 1990'lı yılların ortasından sonra Türkiye ile ekonomik, sosyal ve siyasal alanda yakınlaşmaya önem verirken enerjiyi bir araç olarak kullanmıştır. Türkiye de Rusya'nın bu isteğine olumlu yanıt vermiş ve iki ülke arasındaki ekonomik ilişkiler diğer sektörlerde de gelişmiştir.

Sonuç olarak, ekonomik alanda Rusya ve Türkiye karşılıklı bağımlılığa dayanan bir ilişkiye sahip olmuşlardır ve bu ilişki iki ülke arasında çok boyutlu bir ortaklığı ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Avrasyacılık, Enerji Politikası, Mavi Akım, Çok Boyutlu Ortaklık.*

Introduction

After the end of the Cold War period by dissolution of the Soviet Union, the world politics has witnessed dramatic changes, new problems, and challenges to international security. Regional conflicts and civil wars have become new trends on world politics. On the other hand, states, international organizations and non-state actors, such as civil society organizations and multinational corporations have oriented themselves towards increasing the level of corporation in economic and social spheres. Certainly, the characteristics of the cooperation have emerged according to the features of the geographies and peculiarities of the states as well.

After the mid 1990s, we have witnessed the changes on the foreign policy orientation of Russia and Turkey as well. Russia has become oriented towards the near abroad and post Soviet sphere. Furthermore, it has changed its energy policy by diversification of its energy export routes. On the other hand, Turkey has begun to follow a multilateral foreign policy and cooperate with Russia in energy sphere.

In this study, first of all, the constituents and theoretical bases of the Eurasian idea are going to be reviewed. The changes on the foreign policy orientation of Russia will be analyzed with both from the Eurasian perspective and Russian energy policy stand. Secondly, this study focuses on the impacts of these circumstances on Russia-Turkey relations, and on factors and changes in Turkish foreign policy.

Russia has begun to change its foreign policy orientation by the declaration of the first Russian military doctrine in 1993 and has drawn its foreign policy road map by the second Russian military doctrine in 2000. In the mid 1990s Russian policy makers showed the signs of the Eurasian perspective on Russian domestic and foreign policy issues. However, Russian policy makers began to strengthen and

implement the Eurasian perspective on Russian foreign policy in the beginning of 2000 under the presidency of Vladimir Putin. Eurasianism is a very old phenomenon (thinking methodology) in Russian academic and political history, originating from the late 19th century. N. S. Trubetskoi, Savitsky and Vernedsky had become the pioneers of this academic and political thought in the 19th century. These thinkers had pointed out the uniqueness of Eurasia geography and Russian state. For example, Vernadsky argued that “Russia did not have the characteristics of *nation-states* and the origins of Russian state power is coming from Byzantine and Mongol Empires.”¹ Here, Vernadsky pointed to the importance of the power of the state by referring to Byzantine and Mongol Empires whose historical backgrounds differed from western civilization. He also pointed out that the state created the Russian nation in a special sphere (world) and formed a historical-cultural organism which included the Turkic, Mongol and Finnish elements.²

On the other hand, Peter Savitsky had focused on geopolitical issues more and can be identified as one of the important pioneers of the geopolitical dimension of Eurasian perspective. He defined the Russian Empire as *a continental-land empire* due to the climate and geographical conditions of Russia.³ It is obvious that Russia could not be an overseas empire, so Russia had a unique character compared to western empires’ geopolitical priorities. As a result, the “near abroad” policy has been one of the priorities on Russian foreign policy agenda historically. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Savitsky’s analyses have been re-evaluated by neo-eurasianists, academicians, political intelligentsia and Russian politicians as well. Such analyses and the ideas may be interpreted as the signs of Empire culture and tradition on Russian foreign policy.

Gumilev became an important figure of Eurasian thought in the 20th century. His analyses are based on the interpretation of history and cultural characteristics of Eurasian peoples as well. He also tried to show the differences of Eurasian peoples (Rossiayani) from western civilization. According to him, Latin super ethno has begun to loose its power and domination, so now it is the time for the revival of

¹ Georgiy Vladimirovich Vernadski, *Nachetanie Ruskoj istorii*, Moskva: Airis Press, 2002, pp. 296-297. (First edition of this book has been published in 1927)

² *Ibid.*

³ See. Petr N. Savitsky, *Continent-ocean (Russia and the World market): Exodus to the East, forebodings and events: An affirmation of the Eurasians*, Translator: Ilya Vinkovetsky. Ilya Vinkovetsky and Charles Schlaks, JR. (eds.), California: Charles Schalars, Jr, Publisher, 1996, pp. 95-96. (first edition has been published in 1921 in Russian Language).

Russian ethnos which includes Slavs, Ural-Altai and Turkic elements.⁴ Gumilev indicates that there is an integrated cultural, economic and political structure which is called the Eurasia sphere.⁵ The works and thoughts of such thinkers could not be expressed to the public easily during the Soviet period due to the official-oppressive policies of Soviet regime.

Alexander Dugin and Yevgeny Primakov can be regarded as the theoretical fathers and policy makers of the Eurasian idea in the post Soviet era in Russia. Alexander Dugin is still drawing the theoretical framework of Eurasian perspective in Russia. He emphasizes the traditional perspective of geo-politics and justifies his realist political stance with traditional cultural elements, ideas and discourses. Although Dugin could not strength his political party and movement, his ideas are applied by the policy makers of Russia (United Russia Party) and followed by Communist Party of Russia as well. To take an example, after re-election for his third period of the presidency, Vladimir Putin pointed out on 24th April that Eurasian idea is very old tradition in Russian history and now. This idea is put into practice for this idea by forming custom unions and strengthening the integration process in post Soviet sphere.⁶ Putin also underlined that Eurasian perspective should be brought to the partners and neighborhood.⁷ Such expressions are a manifestation of the Eurasian idea being followed by the policy makers in Russia.

In addition, the geopolitical maps of the International Eurasian Movement (IEM) show the analogous notions of Putin and Dugin. According to the counter strategy of IEM on the maps, the world is divided into 4 poles and called a multi-polar world system. This map covers post Soviet geography, Turkey, Syria, Iran and India as well.⁸ This signifies an emphasis on integration process in post Soviet geography and cooperation-strategic partnership with near abroad countries (Turkey, Iran etc.).

Currently, Eurasianist perspective is a state centric idea in which the state has to be powerful and effective on economic-political sphere. On the other hand,

⁴ For more details, see. Muhittin T. Özsağlam, "Geçmişten Günümüze Avrasyacılık", *Kıbrıs Yazıları*, 3-4, Yaz-Güz 2006, pp. 114-122.

⁵ Özsağlam, *Geçmişten Günümüze Avrasyacılık*, p. 118.

⁶ Putin's meeting with United Russia Party on 24th April 2012, *Saita Predsedatelya Pravitelstva RF V.V. Putina, 2008-2012*, <http://premier.gov.ru/events/news/18763/>, accessed July 12, 2012.

⁷ Putin's meeting with United Russia Party on 24th April 2012...

⁸ *International Eurasian Movement*, <http://evrazia.info/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1886>, accessed July 14, 2012.

the Eurasianists emphasize protection of traditions and culture of the Russian society.

Russian Foreign Policy: From Euro Atlanticism to Eurasianism.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Andrey Kozyrev, the minister of foreign affairs had emphasized rapprochement with western countries. Therefore he spent his efforts on the liberalization of Russian politics and adaptation to the western institutions (OSCE Council of Europe by accepting their criteria etc.). Kozyrev had tried to establish close relations with European countries and also the USA, instead of focusing on “near abroad-post Soviet sphere”. At the end, Kozyrev has become the symbol of Euro-Atlantic perspective in Russian foreign policy. However, the Russian opposition criticized Kozyrev heavily due to his stance on both the Chechen War and Yugoslavian Civil War. Eventually, he was dismissed from his office in 1996 and Yevgeny Primakov became the minister of foreign affairs. Yevgeny Primakov is well known with his Eurasianist perspective.

Yevgeny Primakov had not only become the minister of foreign affairs, he also had become the leader of Eurasian perspective on Russian politics in 1996. Primakov emphasized increasing the effectiveness of Russia in post-Soviet Republics, called as near abroad (Blizhnee Zarubezhe). The aim of Primakov was to maximize the national interests of Russia in the relating geography and also to conduct relations with western countries on the basis of pragmatism and equality. On the other hand, Primakov wanted to have good relations with neighboring countries, such as Iran, Turkey, China etc.⁹

Later, Primakov became the prime minister of Russia in 1998. As the prime minister, he found the opportunity to implement the national economic program which aimed to increase the state control over economic activities especially over the foreign investments by imposing taxes and changing the conditions for multinational investments in Russia. Primakov also had a crucial bargaining with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) over the Russian Ruble crisis in 1998.¹⁰ In spite of the changes in the economic and foreign policy orientations of Russia during Primakov’s tenure as the minister of foreign affairs and prime minister, the energy sector was not taken under the control of the state

⁹ Primakov obviously wrote in his book that cooperation with Iran helps to the stability in the region such as in Tajikistan Civil War and Afghanistan issue. See Yevgeny Primakov, *Kapalı Kutu Rusya*, (Translator: Nuri Eyüpoğlu), İstanbul: Ring Reklamcılık A. Ş, 2002, pp. 266-267.

¹⁰ Yevgeny Primakov, *Kapalı Kutu Rusya*, pp. 262-263.

and the government institutions completely. The state and government institutions could only be thoroughly involved in the energy sector during Vladimir Putin's presidency.

State Centric Control over Russian Energy Sector

Vladimir Putin aimed to nationalize the strategic economic sectors immediately in the early years of his presidency. Due to this nationalization process and the second military doctrine of Russia, we can classify the political stance of Putin as a moderate Eurasianist. Indeed, one of the main characteristics of Eurasianism is to have a strong state authority and to control strategic economic sectors as mentioned before.

Putin has focused on the nationalization of the energy sector and adopted the new regulations on internal affairs of Russia. The document entitled "The Energy Strategy of Russia up to 2020" which was declared in 2003 made the objectives of Russia obvious. According to this strategy, energy is perceived as an instrument to strength on the economic and geopolitical position of Russia.¹¹

Russian ministry of energy moderated its approach in "The Energy Strategy of Russia up to 2030", which was published on 13 November 2009.¹² In this strategy paper, Russia's aims have become to maximize the use of Russian energy sources effectively and also to increase the life standards of Russian population by developing foreign economic relations.¹³ Such declarations have demonstrated the state centric perspectives which are related with geopolitics and the welfare state model, in accordance with the Eurasianist idea.

The results of "The Energy Strategy of Russia up to 2020" became apparent in 2003 with the nationalization of the energy sector and moreover the imprisonment of Michael Khodoravsky, the chief executive officer (CEO) of Yukos, due to the tax evasion in Russia. That incident can be deemed as the turning point

¹¹ "Energy Strategy of Russia up to 2020", *Ministry of Energy of Russia*, 2003, <http://www.minprom.gov.ru/docs/strateg/1>, accessed June 15 2012 ; Nina Poussenkova also underlined the importance of the paragraph which is related with strangthing of Russian geopolitical stance in the world., see. Nina Poussenkova, 'The Global Expansion of Russia's Energy Giants', *Journal of International Affairs*, 63:2, Spring/Summer, p. 103.

¹² "Energy Strategy of Russia up to 2030", *Ministry of Energy of Russia*, 2009, [http://www.energystrategy.ru/projects/docs/ES-2030_\(utv._N1715-p_13.11.09\).doc](http://www.energystrategy.ru/projects/docs/ES-2030_(utv._N1715-p_13.11.09).doc), p. 1, accessed June 15, 2012; Poussenkova, 'The Global Expansion of Russia's Energy Giants', p. 103

¹³ Energy Strategy of Russia up to 2030...

for the change of Russian energy policies. In Russia oligarchs had operated especially in the energy sector after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Following this event, it was clear that Putin administration saw the energy sector as a strategic instrument to organize the new foreign policy of Russia and its relations with western countries, near abroad, as well as Turkey and Iran.

The foreign policy orientation of Vladimir Putin embraced the Eurasian perspective in moderation and also established pragmatic stance for rapprochement with other countries on basis of equality-equal partnership (especially with western countries, Turkey and Iran as well). According to this policy, the major energy companies' administrative bodies have recruited government bureaucrats to pursue the foreign policy objectives of Russia with instrumentalization of the energy sector. For example, Dimitry Medvedev was appointed as the chairman of Gazprom's board of directors in 2000 and, afterwards, he was appointed as the First Deputy Prime Minister in 2005 by Putin. Following the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev, Victor Zubkov, first deputy prime minister of Russia, an ally of Putin was appointed as the new chairman of Gazprom's board of directors in June 2008. After his appointment, Zubkov said that "I will be consistently defending the state interests... It is important to have a balance between the state and the company's development..."¹⁴ On the other hand, Igor Sechin, (another ally of Putin) was appointed as the deputy prime minister of Russia and chairman of Rosneft's board of directors. Sechin worked both for the interests of Rosneft and the state. He has been accused of destroying the Yukos by Michael Khodorovsky and Rosneft was seen as the main beneficiary from the demise of Yukos.¹⁵ Moreover, Sechin has always played crucial role in the arrangements of new energy projects, by preparing the infrastructure of the agreement atmosphere with other countries by lobbying.

The positions of Medvedev, Zubkov and Sechin at the energy companies are the evidence which confirm that the energy policy in Russia can not be considered independently from government's foreign policy orientation. That is why currently the Russian state holds 75.16% shares of the Rosneft and 50.002% shares of the Gazprom, and therefore has the right to influence the management process of these

¹⁴ Polya Lesova, 'Gazprom appoints Victor Zubkov as chairman', *Market Watch*, 27 June 2008, <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/russias-gazprom-appoints-victor-zubkov-as-chairman>, accessed June 19, 2012.

¹⁵ <http://www.russiaprofile.org/resources/whoiswho/alphabet/s/sechin.wbp>, accessed June 19, 2012; These names also show us the dominance of St. Peterburg elites on energy sector and government bodies who have close and good relations with Vladimir Putin.

companies.¹⁶

Russia's new energy policy was implemented during Vladimir Putin's first presidential term strictly on the basis of state control. Vladimir Putin focused on increasing the benefits of Russia on the energy sector and rectifying image of Russia in Europe both economically and politically. Likewise, he aimed to use oil and gas resources strategically by controlling their routes to the world market.¹⁷

Indeed, Russia has concentrated in various alternative energy routes and also markets to secure its strategic position and economic interests. According to this strategy, Russia has emphasized the creation of new routes and markets for the export of Russian gas and oil. In addition to exporting the energy resources to Europe, Russia has also emphasized on energy investments and projects in not only East Asia, but also Far East and the Middle East. Nord Stream, Yamal-Europe, Blue Stream and South Stream energy pipelines-expected projects are the major ones of Russia in Eurasia. In regard to these pipelines and projects, Turkey has taken a pivotal (key) role as a good importer in the Blue Stream project and a corridor-hub for carrying the energy sources for Europe from the Middle East too on future projects.

Russia has been awarded for its efforts as it is seen in the economic data of the country. Thus in 2007 Russian economic output has been 70% larger than in 1999 and the state funds have been created by energy profits.¹⁸

The main aim of Russia is to avoid conflicts and disagreements with its neighborhood by creating interdependency on economic relations, especially on the energy sector. Although Russia has this aim in its general foreign policy framework, it has always had problems with Ukraine in the energy sector. This is due to political conflict with Ukrainian pro-western government under the prime ministry of Yuliya Timoshenko and the presidency of Viktor Yuschenko during the mid 2000s. Therefore, Russia has focused on developing its relations with other countries to

¹⁶ Rosneft official web page, <http://www.rosneft.com/about/history>, accessed June 20, 2012; Gazprom official web site, <http://www.gazpromquestions.ru/?id=40>, accessed June 20, 2012.

¹⁷ Sergey Sevastyanov also argued that Putin focused on effective control over oil-gas resources and also their routes. He also insisted long term contracts with foreigners as well. See., Sergey Sevastyanov, 'The More Assertive and Pragmatic New Energy Policy in Putin's Russia: Security Implications for Northeast Asia', *East Asia*, April, 25:1, 2008. p. 36.

¹⁸Angela E. Stent, 'Restoration and Revolution in Putin's Foreign Policy', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60:6, August 2008, pp. 1092-1093.

secure its energy export, creating new routes and markets. Turkey is one of these countries and it is the second biggest customer of Gazprom with blue stream project. This means that Turkey is also becoming a new candidate as one of the hubs for exporting Russian natural gas and crude oil to other markets. Russian State Energy Companies are managed by bureaucrats (new apparatchiks) and these bureaucrats initiate the energy projects with other countries as mentioned above. Under these circumstances, Igor Sechin has played a very important role in the operation of common projects with Turkey. Igor Sechin has always advocated and even lobbied for energy talks between Turkey and Russia and making lobby as well. Sechin generally underlines that they are open for cooperation in all spheres with Turkey.¹⁹

Russia-Turkey Relations: From Competition to Cooperation

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the economic and political affairs have begun to change in Eurasia immediately. Therefore, new opportunities and possibilities of partnerships have emerged as well. However, new rivalries and conflicts became possible too.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has been perceived by Turkey as the birth of new opportunities and formation of new partnerships. The reason of this perspective and motivation was not only the geopolitical and geo-economical importance of Turkey in Eurasia. Turkey's cultural links with the peoples of Caucasus and Central Asia were important as well.

Turkey aimed to improve the relations with Azerbaijan and other newly independent Turkic republics in Central Asia in the early 1990s.²⁰ According to this policy, Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) was established in 1992, linked to the ministry of foreign affairs of Turkey and later linked to prime ministry in 1999. The main aim of TIKA has been defined officially as following:

¹⁹ *Milliyet*, 5 August 2009, <http://ekonomi.milliyet.com.tr/rusya--turkiye-ile-her-alanda-ibirligine-acigiz/ekonomi/ekonomidetay/05.08.2009/1125224/default.htm>, accessed June 15, 2012; Sechin has been dismissed from his office in 2011 by Medvedev, but he was appointed by Putin in May as the CEO of Rosneft and involved in St.Petersburg Economic Forum as well in June 2012. See. Rosneft official web site, <http://www.rosneft.com/news/today/25062012.html>, accessed July 19, 2012.

²⁰ During the Cold War period, the relations were very limited between Turkey and Soviet Republics, due to the Soviet regime and also Turkey's alliance with the western countries and the organizations such as NATO.

“TIKA was formed on the basis of providing development assistance foremost to developing countries where Turkish is spoken and countries that border Turkey as well as improving cooperation through projects and programs in economic, commercial, technical, social, cultural and educational arenas.”²¹

The aim of TIKa shows the general perspective of Turkey i.e. Turkey would like to increase its involvement in post-Soviet geography.²² Subsequently, Turkish Eximbank encouraged the investors in the region by providing credits. Turkey’s presence in the region was perceived by Russia as increasing the influence of NATO and USA due to Turkey’s membership in NATO and alliance with the USA.

In fact, Turkish foreign policy has not traditionally adopted expansionist discourses and practices during the Republican period. But we can see some exceptional periods such as the prime ministry periods of Süleyman Demirel and Tansu Çiller, who articulated the Turkish expansionism and also tried to interfere in the internal affairs of some Turkic republics.²³ Russia was constrained by the Turkish governments’ attitudes in the Caspian Basin about the Chechen issue, and also some activities of Chechen separatists in Turkey during the 1990s.²⁴

Turkey has begun to propose energy projects and Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) has been involved in Central Asian Republics and South Caucasus. Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) project became one of the major projects, which has been in operation since 2006. Such projects have been perceived negatively by Russia, specifically where Russia was excluded from the energy projects and routes. Therefore, Russia always tried to block new pipeline projects and proposals of Turkey in the region during the mid-1990s. Russia insisted on being involved in the Caspian Basin and managing the energy corridors as it wished. The BTC was perceived as a challenge to Baku-Novorossiysk and the Georgian port of Supsa direction by Russia in the mid of 1990s.²⁵

²¹ *Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency*, <http://www.tika.gov.tr/EN/Icerik.ASP?ID=345>, accessed August 15, 2010.

²² TIKa also is involved in some Balkan, Middle East and African countries as well.

²³ Hatay and Cyprus issues also can be added to the exceptional periods in Turkish foreign policy.

²⁴ See. *Milliyet*, 24 February 1992, p. 10; Turkey and Russia had tensions especially during 1996 due to PKK and Chechen Issue which they tried to challenge each other by using such issues as the instruments. See for more details, *Milliyet*, 18 January 1996, p. 13.

²⁵ Turkey’s argument was related with environmental reasons in Bosphorus and on the other hand Russia’s argument was on the basis of Monreux argument which allows for the traffic of commercial tankers in Bosphorus., See also, Lema K. Yanik, ‘Allies or Partners? An Appraisal of Turkey’s Ties to Russia, 1991-2007’, *East European Quarterly*, XLI:3, 2007, p. 353.

Therefore, Russia saw Turkey as one of the threats to its security and economic interests in Eurasia during the mid 1990s. On the other hand, Turkey also saw Russia as its rival in ex-Soviet Eurasia. The so-called economic competition between Russia and Turkey led to the emergence of political tensions. Russian authorities and public opinion began to accuse Turkey for supporting “separatists-terrorists” in the Chechen Republic of Russia (generally instead of terrorists, a widely used term is Chechen Warriors in Turkish public opinion).²⁶ In contrast, Turkish authorities and public opinion in Turkey have accused Russia for supporting Kurdish “separatist-terrorists” in Turkey to destabilize the strategic places and obstruct BTC.²⁷

Russia and Turkey, however noticed within a short period of time that they would not benefit from this kind of rivalry and tension in the region. Clearly, the statistical data about trade relations between Russia and Turkey played a crucial role in the change of attitudes of the two countries to each other. Turkey was disappointed with trade relations and the activation of energy projects which were proceedings very slowly with Turkic Republics in the Caspian Basin. For example, Turkey’s export to all Turkic Republics comprised 3.6% of the total export of Turkey, but Turkey’s export to Russia accounted for 5% of the total exports in 1998.²⁸ Here, we should not ignore that majority of the exports to the Turkic Republics had been accomplished with the credits of Turkish Eximbank. On the other hand, Russia also has oriented itself towards economic cooperation and mutual understanding, avoiding problems for the rapprochement with Turkey. This new foreign orientation of Russia has contained the neo-Eurasian perspective which proposed involvement of Russia in the region economically and politically by having good relations on the basis of “equality” and “pragmatism”. At the same time, Turkey would be a good alternative for Ukraine’s transit position on the energy. In addition, Turkey itself became an important destination for Russian gas. Thus, Russia could increase its bargaining power by diversification of the market and energy routes. In respect to this argument, Turkey would play a key role in importing Russian energy sources and transferring to various markets. As for Turkey, it has also aimed to have this

²⁶ Russian vice minister of foreign affairs, Viktor Posuvalyuk visited Turkey in 1996 and expressed that some organizations in Turkey support the Chechen guerilla groups and also said that Russia explained the perspective of Russia on Kurdish Issue as dependend on Turkey’s will, *Milliyet*, 21 August 1996. p. 18.

²⁷ Bilgin Unan, ambassador of Turkey in Moscow, met with Russian vice minister of foreign affairs, Albert Chernisev, and warned about the position of Russia on PKK-Kurdish issue while “the Kurdish Parliament in Exile” was visiting Russia. *Milliyet*, 18 January 1995. p. 19.

²⁸ Mustafa Aydın, ‘Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler’, in Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, Volume II, Eleventh Edition, 2009, p. 430.

role: becoming an energy bridge and hub after the collapse of the Soviet Union.²⁹ Eventually, Russian foreign policy orientation during Primakov period was compatible with the interests and policies of Turkey.

Russia and Turkey have taken steps for cooperation on the energy sector by signing the Blue Stream Project agreement in 1997. That project began to be in operation in 2005. According to this project, Turkey would import 365 billion cubic meter of natural gas from Russia within 25 years.³⁰ The operation of the Blue Stream Project has obviously been a milestone for the rapprochement between Russia and Turkey. Russian government changed its strategy, so instead of cleavage with Turkey, it preferred to improve economic ties on energy sector as well as other economic sectors. Here we should not forget the role of Yevgeny Primakov, the ex-prime minister of Russia and the head of the chamber of commerce. Likewise, Turkish governments also have begun to take into account the vulnerabilities of Russia in its domestic and foreign affairs too. Russia, accordingly, has answered to this orientation of Turkey positively. For example, Bülent Ecevit visited Moscow as the prime minister in 1999 and expressed that the Chechen issue is the internal problem of Russia. Similarly, Russia followed this example on the Kurdish question of Turkey.³¹ That was a turning point in avoiding problems and focusing on cooperation and taking the steps towards the multi-dimensional partnership.

The energy cooperation made Turkey dependent on Russian energy resources. At the same time, Russia is dependent on energy import revenues of Turkey, which is the second biggest customer of Gazprom within the non-post Soviet countries. Turkey imports 46.21% of its total gas consumption from Russia and that equals to 9.95% of the total gas export of Russia according to the 2010 statistical data.³² Such statistical data can be interpreted as the emergence of complex interdependency between Turkey and Russia.

On the other hand, Turkey has increased its exporting of agricultural products

²⁹ See., "2009 Faaliyet Raporu", *The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey*, http://www.enerji.gov.tr/yayinlar/2009_faaliyet_raporu.pdf, accessed August 25, 2010, p. 27.

³⁰ Gazprom official web site, <http://www.gazprom.com/about/production/projects/pipelines/blue-stream>, accessed July 19, 2012.

³¹ Bülent Aras, 'Türkiye ve Rusya Federasyonu: Çok Boyutlu Ortaklık', *Seta Analiz, Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı*, August, 2009, p. 6.

³² *Energy Delta Institute*, <http://www.energydelta.org/mainmenu/edi-intelligence-2/our-services/interactive-world-gas-map/europe/turkey>, accessed July 20, 2012; *Energy Delta Institute*, <http://www.energydelta.org/mainmenu/edi-intelligence-2/our-services/interactive-world-gas-map/asia/russia>, accessed July 20, 2010.

to Russia and investments on various sectors in this country. Almost 3 million Russian tourists visit Turkey every year and, thus contribute significantly to Turkey's tourism revenues.³³ The economic picture has been getting better day by day in Russia-Turkey relations. This certainly has had an impact on political affairs as well and the Russian and Turkish diplomats, politicians and bureaucrats have begun to meet more often. First of all, Russian president Putin visited Turkey in 2004. Tayyip Erdoğan, the prime minister of Turkey and Putin have met 9 times between 2004-2009.³⁴ Medvedev kept this warm atmosphere by meeting with Turkish officials during his presidency. This illustrates us the rapprochement of both countries. At the same time, however, Turkey has modified and diversified its energy import and routes such as, NABUCCO and transporting of Turkmen natural gas to Turkey through Iran. Yet, even in these projects Turkey emphasizes it will not to exclude Russia and also it tries to show that Russian presence in such projects will make an important contribution for the stability and economic prosperity in the region.

Towards a Multi-Dimensional Partnership: 2009 and 2010 Summits

Turkey is still a member of NATO and also a candidate for full membership in the European Union. Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has introduced the doctrine of "zero problem with neighbors" under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs. That policy has influenced Russia-Turkey relations as well. First of all, cooperation has emerged in the energy sector and then in other economic sectors. There has been further cooperation to resolve regional problems and take steps towards multi-dimensional partnership.³⁵

Today, Russia and Turkey would like to strengthen their cooperation on the economic sphere, especially on the energy sector. This common endeavor comes up day by day, but its impact on political affairs is limited due to some prejudices and traditional habits of both sides as well as the membership of Turkey in NATO. However, at least both sides have succeeded in not increasing the tension when they disagree over an issue. For example, Russia-Georgia war in August 2008 did not

³³ Ertugrul Günay, Turkish Minister of Culture and Tourism, stated that "Turkey aims to attract 10 Million Russian tourists". See. *Dünya*, 18 June 2012. <http://www.dunya.com/-gunay-pledges-an-increase-in-number-of-russian-tourists-visiting-turkey-157366h.htm>, accessed July 19, 2012.

³⁴ Hilal Köylü and Tarık Işık, 'Başbakan Putin: Nükleer Santral İhalesini Rus-Türk Ortaklığı Kazandı', *Radikal*, 7 August 2009, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=948508&Date=07.08.2009&CategoryID=77>, accessed August 12, 2010.

³⁵ Although Turkey's NATO membership limits the cooperation on political and military spheres, nowadays, Turkey even is focusing to buy Russian weapons. Aras, *op.cit.* p. 9.

create significant problems between Russia and Turkey. Although both sides have different arguments and perspectives on this issue, they agreed to solve the problem by dialogue.³⁶ Turkey has obeyed the Montreux Convention allows passing of war the USA ships through Bosphorus. The conduct of Turkey prevented spreading of the conflicts in the region.³⁷ Turkey proposed the foundation of Caucasian Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) with the participation of Russia, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The aim of this platform was to provide dialogue between the disputing parties and to take some measures for building up the confidence.³⁸ The CSCP meetings appeared to have called forth dialogue between the regional countries. This platform is not only related with Russia-Georgia conflict, it is also interested in the normalization of the relations between Turkey and Armenia. Hence, normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations would also mean also end of the problems which limit the Russia-Turkey relations.

After the Russia-Georgian war in 2008, Russia and Turkey have begun to improve their cooperation towards a multi-dimensional partnership. Turkey was able to earn the confidence (trust) of Russia during the war by obeying the Montreux Convention and also by creating the CSCP, despite Turkey's exporting weapons to Georgia before the war in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

August 2009 Summit between the leaders of Russia and Turkey became a milestone on the road towards multi dimensional partnership. Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and Russian Prime Minister Putin met in Ankara on the 6th of August 2010, and the Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi also joined the meetings. He acted as a kind of mediator-contributor due to the role of the Italian energy company, ENI, on the new energy projects and the issue of transportation of natural gas to Italy. That summit was one of the important summits on energy cooperation between Russia and Turkey. Both sides put their arguments on the table and negotiated to functionalize the new projects which included constructing a nuclear plant in Turkey by Russian companies. At this summit, Russia agreed to supply the crude oil to Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline. This also means end of the conflict of interests on BTC between Russia and Turkey. Russia and Turkey also agreed on the

³⁶ Russia stopped the Turkish commercial trucks on the border and made a kind of retaliation for the treatment of Turkey on Georgian issue (Abkhazia and South Osetia), but this problem has been solved immediately by the attempts of both sides' leaderships.

³⁷ Aras, 'Türkiye ve Rusya Federasyonu: Çok Boyutlu Ortaklık'... p. 13.

³⁸ That platform also aimed to decrease the tension in the region and increase the economic cooperation between the regional countries for the peaceful settlement of disputes. *Turkish Press*, <http://www.turkishpress.com/news.asp?id=247000>, accessed August 15, 2010.

construction of Blue Stream II pipeline towards the Middle East, especially for supplying natural gas to Israel.³⁹ Erdoğan expressed the view that improving relations with Russia is one of the priorities of Turkish foreign policy,⁴⁰ and he also stated that Turkey will support the South Stream project of Russia by allowing the seismic research in Black Sea for the realization of the project.⁴¹ These declarations of Erdoğan showed the willingness of Turkey to participate in the Southern Stream project and implied that Russia can not be excluded from NABUCCO project either.

The South Stream Project can also be perceived as a form of moderate Eurasian orientation of Russian foreign policy, which aims to increase the influence of Russia in the region. This project has also been officially defined as part of the diversification policy of Russian energy routes by Gazprom.⁴² This project aims at exporting Russian natural gas to Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.⁴³ Turkey gave authorization (permission) to Russia for the South Stream pipeline construction via its economic exclusive zone on 28 December 2011.⁴⁴ Such activity on Russian energy policy and Turkey's positive-rational perceptions have improved the interdependency and contributed to the establishment of deeper relations between both countries.

At the August 2009 summit, the parties also agreed on the construction of a nuclear plant. Furthermore, the parties agreed to facilitate the conditions on trade issues and agreed on the opening of a joint Russian-Turkish college and university in Turkey for the rapprochement of the peoples.⁴⁵

In May 2010, there was another important summit, Dimitry Medvedev visited Ankara and signed historical treaties and agreed on the implementation of previous protocols which had been agreed by Putin and Erdoğan in August 2009. The treaties are interpreted as strategic cooperation on the energy sphere by Russian Ministry of Energy.⁴⁶ Both sides have also agreed to establish **High Level**

³⁹ Erdal Şen, 'Rusya ile Enerji Alanında 4 Dev İmza', *Zaman*, 7 August 2009. <http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=877872>, accessed August 15, 2010.

⁴⁰ Şen, 'Rusya ile Enerji Alanında...'

⁴¹ Köylü and Işık, 'Başbakan Putin: Nükleer Santral İhalesini...'

⁴² *Gazprom official web site*, <http://www.gazprom.com/about/production/projects/pipelines/south-stream>, accessed July 19, 2012.

⁴³ *Gazprom official web site*, <http://www.gazprom.com/about...>

⁴⁴ *Gazprom official web site*, <http://www.gazprom.com/about...>

⁴⁵ Köylü and Işık, 'Başbakan Putin: Nükleer Santral İhalesini...'

⁴⁶ Russian Federation Ministry of Energy, http://minergo.gov.ru/press/min_news/3703.html?sphrase_id=39972, accessed, August 15, 2010.

Cooperation Council to improve the relations.⁴⁷ Erdoğan said that “we would like to increase the volume of trade from 38 billion US dollar to 100 billion US dollar within 5 years between Russia and Turkey.”⁴⁸ On the other hand, Medvedev underlined that “Russia is really a strategic partner of Turkey not only in discourse (speech).”⁴⁹ At this summit, both countries also agreed on the abolition of visa requirement between them (hence, one month visit without visa). Otherwise, the parties also stated that they will continue to make contributions for the solution of regional problems such as the Azeri-Armenian conflict.⁵⁰

Conclusion

Russia and Turkey were rivals immediately in the post-Soviet Eurasia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, this process did not continue for a long time due to the globalization of the economics and the increasing interdependency of both countries on each other. Russia realized the importance of Turkey’s location in terms of geo-politics after the mid 1990s, while Russian elites were activating the Eurasian perspective on Russian foreign policy. Therefore, Russian policy makers have focused on the diversification of the energy export routes, taking into consideration foreign policy orientation. Turkey would be in this agenda as well. At the same time, Turkish policy makers have noticed the emergence of intensive economic relations between Russia and Turkey. Thus, Turkish policy makers have focused on creating deeper economic relations with Russia especially on the energy sector, which would cause the rapprochement with Russia as well. In the beginning, the investments of Turkish business materialized in the Russian market and then Turkey emphasized the operation of energy pipelines from Russia. Following these developments, Russian tourists have begun to be one of the tangible revenue sources of Turkish economy.

The intensive economic relations between the parties have made the political cooperation inevitable as well. Thus, both countries have emphasized on rapprochement in international political sphere and realized their vulnerabilities on their domestic politics (PKK-Kurdish Problem and Chechen issues).

⁴⁷ During the meetings Igor Sechin played crucial role.

⁴⁸ Süleyman Kurt and Erdal Şen, ‘Vizeler Kaldırıldı, Nükleer Santral Anlaşması Tamam: Rusya ile Tarihi Açılım’, *Zaman*, 13 Mayıs 2010. <http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=983502>, accessed August 15, 2010.

⁴⁹ Kurt and Şen, ‘Vizeler Kaldırıldı, Nükleer Santral Anlaşması Tamam...

⁵⁰ Kurt and Şen, ‘Vizeler Kaldırıldı, Nükleer Santral Anlaşması Tamam...

Eventually, Russia and Turkey have become partners on the economic sphere of Eurasia and have complex interdependency between themselves due to intensive economic-trade relations especially on the energy sector. On the other hand, both countries have begun to minimize the political problems between each other. In spite of such rapprochement and avoiding problems between both countries, they certainly have different perspectives on some issues such as the Azeri-Armenia Conflict, Abkhazia-Georgia Conflict, recently on Syria Issue, deployment of the NATO Radar Station in Malatya-Turkey etc.⁵¹

Turkey is the second biggest customer of Gazprom nowadays as a non-post Soviet country. On the other hand, new energy projects are proposed by Russia and Turkey together including Akkuyu nuclear plant in Mersin.⁵² We can refer to the multi-dimensional partnership of Russia and Turkey. Nevertheless, that partnership is limited due to the different perspectives and views of the parties. In particular, Turkey's membership to NATO and being an ally of the USA also limits Turkey's policies in the region and limits its rapprochement with Russia.

In spite of these limitations and the existence of different perspectives, Russia-Turkey energy cooperation and interdependency on the other economic sectors contribute to the stability in Eurasia.

⁵¹ Turkey always points that emphasizes on territorial integrity of Georgia, on the other hand Russia already recognized the independencies of Republic of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Malatya is a province of Turkey, which is located in the eastern part of Turkey.

⁵² Mersin is a province of Turkey which is located in the southern part of Turkey and Mediterranean Sea.

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