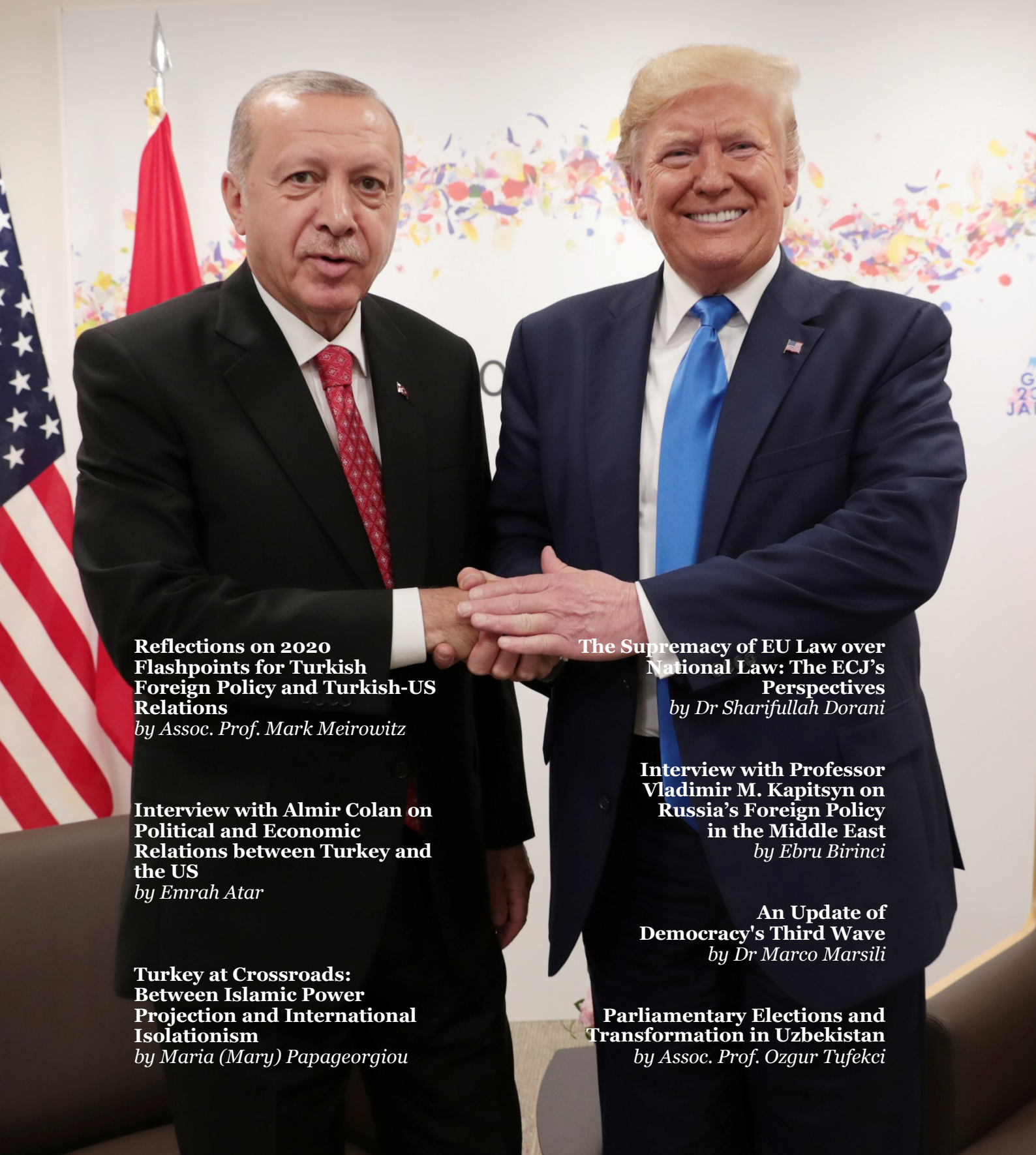


POLITICAL REFLECTION

January • February • March • 2020 • Issue 22



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Flashpoints for Turkish
Foreign Policy and Turkish-US
Relations**

by Assoc. Prof. Mark Meirowitz

**Interview with Almir Colan on
Political and Economic
Relations between Turkey and
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**Turkey at Crossroads:
Between Islamic Power
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**The Supremacy of EU Law over
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**Interview with Professor
Vladimir M. Kapitsyn on
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**An Update of
Democracy's Third Wave**

by Dr Marco Marsili

**Parliamentary Elections and
Transformation in Uzbekistan**

by Assoc. Prof. Ozgur Tufekci



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POLITICAL REFLECTION

“ADVANCING DIVERSITY”

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World News

By Furkan Sahin

A Bomb attack targeting Turkey's presence in Somalia?



A truck loaded with heavy bombs exploded at a busy security checkpoint in Somalia's capital in 28th of December, left at least 79 people dead and 125 wounded. Based on the death toll and wounded people, it has been one of the devastating bombings. As two Turkish citizens

were killed in the scene, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey, severely condemned the attack. Furthermore, while Al-Shabaab claiming responsibility for the attack, it is believed that a Turkish convoy and Somali military personnel escorting it was targeted but no direct evidence has been surfaced on the media. Whether it is related or not, Turkey's presence in Somalia challenges terrorist groups and other state's interests in Somalia and the region.

Impeachment Process for President Donald Trump is in progress

President Trump is accused of breaking the law by pressuring Ukraine's leader to dig up damaging information on a political rival.

In July, he urged his Ukrainian counterpart to investigate one of the frontrunners to take him on in next year's presidential election. This matters, opposition Democrats say, because it is illegal to ask foreign entities for help in winning a US election.



Impeachment charges are being filed that could lead to the president being removed. On 18 December, Trump became only the third US president to go through the impeachment process. But he says he has done nothing wrong. It seems that the process will be quite influential.

The Bill withdrawn but Hong Kong protests still continue



Hong Kong protest started in June 2019 against the allowance of extradition to China. It would have allowed for criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China under certain circumstances.

Opponents said this risked exposing people to unfair trials and violent treatment. They also argued the bill would give China greater influence over Hong Kong and could be used to target activists and journalists. After weeks of protests, leader Carrie Lam announced the bill's withdrawn, in September. But protesters say "too little, too late".

Protesters' 5 major demands are as follows:

1. Fully withdraw the extradition bill
2. Set up an independent inquiry to probe police brutality
3. Withdraw a characterization of early protests as "riots"
4. Release those arrested at protests
5. Implement universal suffrage in Hong Kong

The clashes between the police and the protestors have become violent. Two protestors have been shot with a live bullet. Over six thousands of people arrested and over two thousand injured (as of 9.12.2019) during the protests.

These protests are also considered as the rivalry space between the west (especially the US and UK) and China. As Hong Kong was given a special status by the UK and practically separated from the mainland (China). That is why the protests have attracted considerable attention from the world media and seems not to end soon.

Usual story of Israel targeting Hamas on Gaza



Israel has carried out new strikes on Gaza. Officials said the action was in retaliation for rockets fired to Israel. Unlike earlier operations, retaliation did not target the Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad, but Hamas, a military and political faction that rules Gaza.

The air attacks came shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened to “respond vigorously to any attack”.

The Israel-Palestine issue has been a century-long and the most complicated conflict in the modern world. As long as international order does not change, it is unlikely to have a fair and sustainable solution to the issue.

The US leaving from Paris climate agreement

The US President Donald Trump has formally announced his intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions enough to keep temperatures from rising to dangerous levels.



Nearly 200 countries signed on to the agreement in 2015 and made national pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Each country set its own goals, and many wealthy countries, including the US, also agreed to help poorer countries pay for the costs associated with climate change.

The withdrawal will be completed this time next year after a one-year waiting period has elapsed.

President Trump originally announced his intention to withdraw from the deal in the summer of 2017, shortly after he took office.

Reflections on 2020 Flashpoints for Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-US Relations

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As we enter 2020, we can project the following as likely flashpoints and areas of concern for Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-US Relations. It appears that 2020 will present very serious challenges to Turkey in the region and the world, including the possibility of deterioration in Turkish-US Relations.

US Congressional Actions Have Heightened and Will Heighten Tensions between Turkey and the US: Sanctions/Armenia/S-400; F-35/Cyprus

Year End 2019 House and Senate actions regarding sanctions and affirming the Armenian Genocide, as well as the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), resulted in ramping up the antipathy between NATO allies Turkey and the US. As for the House and Senate actions on sanctions against Turkey for acquiring the Russian S-400 system, such actions did not result in final legislation being passed into law because the Senate did not pass the sanctions bill approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee before year end. The upcoming second session of the 116th Congress in 2020 could produce sanctions legislation, depending on Turkey's actions and the state of Turkish-US relations. The House also passed a resolution at the end of 2019, by an overwhelming bipartisan majority, affirming the Armenian Genocide. The Senate followed suit by passing a unanimous Armenia resolution (President Trump tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent the passage of the Senate Armenia resolution by asking various Senators to block unanimous passage; this strategy ultimately failed, and the resolution passed). The fact that the House resolutions on sanctions against Turkey, and regarding Armenia, were passed on Turkish Republic Day was likely intended to send a message of Congressional disapproval of Turkey's acquisition of the Russian S-400 system, and of Turkey's actions in Syria.

As for the Russian S-400 air and missile defence system, the NDAA provides that it is the sense of Congress that Turkey's acquisition of the S-400 adversely affects the national security of Turkey, the US and NATO, and prohibits the use of funds to "transfer, facilitate the transfer, or authorise the transfer of, any F-35 aircraft or related support equipment or parts to Turkey". The NDAA does allow a waiver of this prohibition on the US providing the F-35 to Turkey, provided that Turkey gives up the S-400

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system and provides credible assurance that it won't take the S-400 (or any other equipment that would compromise the F-35) in the future. The NDAA leaves open the possibility of a deal to provide Turkey with the US Patriot system as a substitute for the S-400, by stating that it is the sense of Congress that "the United States offer of the Patriot air and missile defence system to Turkey constituted a viable alternative to Turkey's acquisition of the S-400 air and missile defence system".

In addition, the NDAA, by terminating the long-standing boycott on arms sales to the Republic of Cyprus, will undoubtedly make a resolution of the dispute between the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) infinitely more difficult. I note that the NDAA does provide that the US continues to support United Nations-facilitated efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the division of Cyprus. At the end of the day, however, there will not be a solution to the Cyprus conflict until the Republic of Cyprus and Greece agree to allow the people of the TRNC to share in the benefits of living on the island of Cyprus, including with respect to the exploitation of resources in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and unless the boycott on the TRNC is terminated. Allowing arms sales to the Republic of Cyprus will be a further fly in the ointment to make settling this complicated issue much more difficult.

In response to Congressional actions, Turkey has threatened to close the Incirlik airbase and the Kurecik radar base if the US imposes sanctions on Turkey. This would be disastrous. Incirlik was closed from 1975 to 1978 as a result of the US arms embargo against Turkey following Turkey's incursion into Northern Cyprus in 1974. After Congress lifted the arms embargo in 1978, Incirlik opened to the US again. The Incirlik base has been essential to the coalition battle against ISIS and remains a pivotal US defence asset in the region.

Turkey/Libya and the Eastern Mediterranean

Turkey, motivated by its increasing isolation, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UN-recognized Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA), regarding the delimitation of maritime boundaries in the Mediterranean. Turkey's Foreign Minister stated that "this means protecting Turkey's rights deriving from international law" and that accords could be reached with regional players provided that there would be "fair sharing" of resources. Turkey also entered into an MOU with Libya promising military support to the Libyan GNA. Turkish intervention in Libya could result in Turkey becoming bogged down in Libya, as Turkey has been in Syria. The problem for Turkey is that the opposition forces of General Khalifa Haftar, the head of the Libyan National Army (LNA) are supported by Russia. In Libya, as well as in Syria, Turkey has found Russia to be the main player it needs to placate in order to realise its foreign policy goals.

As a result of Turkey's agreements with Libya, and due to Turkey's vastly expanded claims in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey will find itself even more isolated from Egypt, Greece and Israel which have banded together with the Republic of Cyprus in an Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (excluding Turkey) and are planning an Eastern Mediterranean pipeline from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe. As reported in the press, "the pipeline will run across the Mediterranean from Israel's Levantine Basin offshore gas reserves, to the Greek Island of Crete and the Greek mainland, and to Italy" (Europost.eu). From Turkey's point of view, it needed to take a preemptive or proactive action to protect its strategic interests. Tension and conflict appear to be inevitable. Turkish ships, in December 2019, chased away an Israeli research ship from the Cyprus exclusive economic zone. In the past, Turkey sent military and drilling ships to search for energy resources in the area. This clearly will be a zone of conflict in 2020.

A comprehensive solution to the Cyprus issue would help to avoid further conflict. However, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus have not been willing to work out an amicable agreement with Turkey and the TRNC on the outstanding issues, including the fair sharing of resources. Perhaps the parties should submit the maritime dispute to a neutral tribunal for resolution.

Also, should the opposition forces of General Haftar prevail in Libya, the maritime accord between Libya and Turkey could be fully unwound. Military intervention in Libya is a very risky proposition for Turkey.

Istanbul Canal Project

This issue has the potential of being a Pandora's Box which will cause conflict in the region. At present, the Montreux Convention governs the passage of commercial and military vessels through the Bosphorus Straits. Under Montreux, "merchant vessels enjoy freedom of passage through the Turkish straits while passages of vessels of war are subject to some restrictions, which vary depending on whether or not these vessels belong to Black Sea riparian states. Vessels of war belonging to non-riparian states are subject to specific limits...Combat ships of non-Black Sea countries" are limited as to tonnage and the amount of time such ships can remain in the Black Sea. The plan is for the canal to connect the Black Sea in the north to the Sea of Marmara, which eventually runs into the Mediterranean (Reuters) in order to reduce the congestion in the Bosphorus and help avoid accidents. The question is whether the Montreux Convention would cover the Canal. Furthermore, one commentator stated that "Kanal Istanbul would possibly open the door to US warships in the Black Sea. That is the fear in Moscow" (Sinan Ulgen, Carnegie Europe, as quoted in Reuters). Russia will want to prevent warships from entering the canal. Interestingly, this is also of interest to China. According to Admiral Cem Gürdeniz, founding director of the Koç University Maritime Forum, "two fundamentally different visions are in play. China and Russia, two land powers, are keen to limit the rights of passage of ships in their territorial waters and by extension do not want to change the status of the Montreux Convention. On the other hand, maritime powers such as the US, UK and

NATO advocate strongly for freedom of navigation”. Said Admiral Gürdeniz, “[f]rom a political standpoint, it is important for Russia not to leave the Black sea to the maritime powers”. (Helene Franchineau, “How Istanbul’s man-made canal project could trigger an arms race in the Black Sea – and why China is watching closely”, SCMP.COM, 6/3/18). Once again, Turkey is being challenged by Russia in terms of Turkey’s plans for the Istanbul Canal project.

Turkey/Syria/YPG/PYD

Syrian regime forces supported by Russia have caused a humanitarian catastrophe in Idlib. Turkey is now ensconced in Syria. Further, Turkey has been unable to convince US decision-makers, the US Congress and the American media about the connection between the YPG and the PYD with the PKK, although this connection has previously been affirmed by high-level US officials. Although Turkey appears to have achieved its short-term goals to secure a safe zone in Syria, and to prevent the creation of a YPG/PYD statelet in Northern Syria, the future is unclear. How long will Turkey have to remain in Syria? Will Turkey be able to repatriate Syrian refugees who fled to Turkey back to Syria within the safe zone? What is the future of Syria and can a solution be found to the Syrian crisis? What is the future status of the Syrian Kurds? All of the above questions remain imponderable. It would seem that the Syrian regime, backed by Russia, has prevailed in the overall conflict. The presence of Iranian elements in Syria further complicates an impossible crisis. Related to this is how the refugee crisis will affect Europe. Turkey has indicated that it can no longer “bear the brunt of the” Syrian conflict in light of the new waves of refugees as a result of the crisis in Idlib” (DW.COM). Turkey already has taken in over 3.5 million Syrian refugees.

Turkey’s Naval Aspirations

Turkey has aspirations to build its naval capacity, by recently launching the *Piri Reis* submarine which will be the first of a fleet of submarines (one submarine is planned to be launched each year, commencing in 2020), and by commissioning an assault ship, the *Anadolu*, to begin operations in 2021. However, a commentator has opined that Turkey, having been expelled by the US from the F-35 program, may not be able to find an alternative to the F-35 stealth fighter which can operate from an assault ship. The Su-35 fighter offered by Russia cannot operate from an assault ship and Chinese fighters J-20 and FC-31 are not capable of operating from an assault ship. (David Axe, “Why Turkey’s New ‘Aircraft Carrier’ (Loaded with F-35s) Might Be Doomed”, National Interest.org, 9/30/19). By keeping the Russian S-400, and being terminated from the F-35 program, Turkey has placed itself in a position where its future military plans are in doubt. Turkey can presumably solve this problem by working out a deal with the US for the Patriots and give up the S-400 so Turkey can again possibly be eligible to acquire the F-35 stealth fighter as originally planned.

Overview –Status at New Year 2020

One commentator has described Turkey as a “real regional actor and a global actor...” which will “continue at full speed in its quest for further autonomy and diversification of its relations with global powers. While taking proactive steps to protect its national security against regional threats, Turkey will continue to play a constructive role in global politics” (Muhittin Ataman, Dailysabah.com, “Turkey in 2020: Regional power and global actor”, 1/1/20).

In essence, to achieve its goals, Turkey will have to choose between Russia and the United States. The more Turkey relies on Russia (having acquired the Russian S-400 system, already being heavily reliant on Russia for energy resources, and having Russia build Turkey’s Akkuyu nuclear power plant), the more Turkey becomes alienated from the United States. Further, keeping the Russian S-400, rather than finding an alternative with the US Patriot system, will increase the likelihood of US sanctions, which could then precipitate the US being booted by Turkey from Incirlik and Kurecik. This would be a vicious cycle which can only result in tremendous problems for Turkey and also for the US. Turkey, while understandably needing to protect its strategic and security interests, must avoid burning bridges with its major NATO ally, the United States. President Trump (and the NATO Secretary-General) have avoided sanctions on Turkey, but continued friction on issues such as the S-400 could cause a rift in relations with the US, which would be an utter catastrophe. In the meeting President Trump set up with President Erdoğan in the oval office to which President Trump invited five Senators, the Senators were very vocal in their opposition to Turkey’s acquisition of the S-400 (making it clear that the S-400 was incompatible with the F-35), and they also expressed disapproval of Turkey’s Syria policy vis-à-vis the Kurds.

Final Thoughts

Needless to say, 2020 will likely be a difficult year for Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-US Relations. It is hoped that Turkey will make decisions which will both satisfy Turkey’s strategic interests, but also strengthen ties with the United States, where Turkey’s long-range interests lie. Turkey must avoid becoming entangled with, and dependent on, Russia. At the same time, it is also hoped that US Congressional leaders will be very circumspect, act prudently and avoid precipitating a crisis in relations between Turkey and the United States, and allow the President some leeway in pursuing foreign affairs objectives with Turkey. Sanctions can only lead to reciprocal actions, which will not yield positive results. Given the impeachment by the House of Representatives of President Trump and his likely acquittal in the Senate trial in early 2020, as well as the upcoming November 2020 presidential election, the main focus in 2020 will be on the Presidential election rather than on foreign policy issues such as those concerning Turkey. Hopefully, Turkish-US relations can improve markedly. The person who is elected President in November 2020 will have a great deal of influence on the future course of Turkish-US Relations.

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**“America in Afghanistan:
Foreign Policy and Decision Making
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by Dr. Sharifullah Dorani

The Supremacy of EU Law over National Law: The ECJ's Perspectives

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Introduction: What has been the ECJ's response regarding the supremacy of EU law?

The notion of the supremacy of European Union (EU) law has been developed by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), formally known as the Court of Justice of the European Union. This essay deals with how and why the ECJ has done so and what reasoning has it put forward. However, to provide a detailed answer as to whether the EU law is superior to domestic law, I will dedicate a series of more essays (to be published in the future issues of *Political Reflection Magazine*) to concentrate on the Member States' responses to the notion of the superiority of EU law. The Member States studied are the United Kingdom (UK), Germany and France.

This and my future essays are relevant to both Law and International Relations (IR) Courses for similar reasons I explained in my previous article (Dorani, 2019b). Strictly speaking; however, the essays are relevant because more and more Europeans, especially a number of their political parties, are unhappy, to say the least, about the EU's 'power-grab' from national governments (Weiss, 2019). One of the main 'debate[s] about the exit from the European Union ("Brexit") has been dominated by a yearning for "restoring" U. K. sovereignty"' (Bryant, 2018). Nationalism is, therefore, on the rise in both the EU and beyond, and no surprise, individuals like Donald Trump has come to power (Dag, 2019; Dorani, 2019a).

This and my future essays in their totality will bring to light the *what*, *how* and *why* of the domestic courts and the ECJ's reasons and justifications for the superiority of EU law over the domestic law or vice versa. More than ever, these contrasting viewpoints are essential to be understood and analysed in the light of the increasingly heated 'arguments for and against the European Union'. In addition to the European and national courts' justifications, my essays will also focus on public opinion within the Member States 'on the role of the EU'. Again, the UK, Germany and France are the countries covered. My final essay, incidentally, will provide a comparison of the Member States' reactions towards the supremacy of EU law and analyse whether opposition to the (unity of) EU can prove to be healthy or counterproductive; that is, whether populism is the answer to the current challenges (such as terrorism, immigration, climate change) the EU faces (Mark, 2017).

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The ECJ's Landmark Rulings Regarding the Supremacy of EU Law

Although the doctrine of the supremacy of EU law is not spelled out in the Treaty,¹ the ECJ 'consistently held that [it] is implied into the Treaty' (Vincenzi and Fairhurst, 2002: 185).² The concept of EU supremacy has been mainly developed by the ECJ 'on the basis of its conception of how the new legal order should be developed' (Craig and De Burca, 2002).

In *Van Gend en Loos* (1936), Article 25 of the Treaty was in conflict with an earlier Dutch law and the main question was whether Article 25 was directly effective.³ The ECJ held that the Treaty is 'more than an agreement which merely creates mutual obligations between the contracting states' (Van Gend en Loos, 1936: 12), as the preamble to the Treaty not only referred to the governments of the States but also the people. Furthermore, it was 'confirmed more specifically by the establishment of institutions endowed with sovereign rights, the exercise of which affects the Member States and also their citizens' (Van Gend en Loos, 1936: 12). The ECJ made it clear that EU law was 'not just tools of international law but had direct effect' (Douglas, 2002: 55) since 'the Community constitutes a new legal order of international law for the benefit of which the States have limited their sovereign rights, albeit within limited fields, and the subjects of which compromise not the only Member States but also their nationals' (Van Gend en Loos, 1936: 12). However, the question of superiority of EU law was not directly raised (Steiner, 2003: 66), as under the Dutch Constitution, international law would take precedence over the Dutch law. This question was raised one year later in *Costa* (1964: 585).

Costa claimed that a subsequent Italian statute, 'lex posterior', breached Articles 37, 93, 95 and 102 of 'the EC Treaty' and the Giudice Conciliatore, Milan, referred the issue to the ECJ under Article 234 (ex 177). The ECJ this time firmly established the doctrine of EU supremacy, setting out series of arguments pertaining to the notion of EU supremacy, which can be divided into two categories: a) those regarding the nature of the Community (or Union); and (b) those regarding the purpose of the Community (or Union) (Steiner, 2003: 67). As far as the first category is concerned, the ECJ distinguished the Treaty from other international treaties since the EU 'created its own legal system which became an integral part of Member States and which their courts are bound to apply' (Costa, 1964: 586). It maintained:

'by creating a Community of unlimited duration, having its own institutions, its own personality, its own legal capacity of representation on the international plane and, more particularly, real powers stemming from limitation of sovereignty or a transfer of powers from the States to the Community, the Member States have limited their sovereign rights, albeit within limited fields, and have thus created a body of law which binds both their nationals and themselves' (Costa, 1964: 593).

This reasoning of the ECJ refers to the 'independent nature of the new Community legal order', which was voluntarily established by the Member States at the cost of 'permanent limitation of their sovereign rights' (Steiner, 2003: 67). To support this point, the ECJ referred to Article 249 (ex 189), which says that a Regulation 'shall be binding (and) directly applicable in all Member States' (Craig and De Burca, 2002: 278). (Although Craig and De Burca at page 278 call this the only genuinely textual argument, they claim it is still weak as the said Article only refers to Regulations, whereas the ECJ wanted to establish general supremacy of *all* EU law).

With regard to the purpose or aims of the Treaty, the ECJ held the 'executive force of Community law' (Costa, 1964: 594) would be undermined if it varied from one State to another in accordance to their constitutional problems, or if a subsequent domestic law was held superior to EU law. This is a purposive or 'teleological' argument rather than a textual one, which is always present in the case law of the ECJ (Craig and De Burca, 2002: 278); namely the uniform application and the effectiveness of EU law in all Member States.

Finally, the court concluded that 'the law stemming from the Treaty, an independent source of law, could not, because of its special and original nature, be overridden by domestic legal provisions, however, framed, without being deprived of its character as Community law' (Costa, 1964: 594). As far as the *lex posterior* was concerned, it was held by the ECJ to have not violated the EC articles, but the ECJ made it clear that any 'subsequent unilateral act incompatible with the concept of Community cannot prevail' (Costa, 1964: 594). At that stage, one would wonder what would be the outcome if a constitutional law of a Member State was in breach of EU law. This situation took place six years later in a German case of *Internationale Handelsgesellschaft* (1970).

The question for the German Administrative Court was if there was a conflict between an EU Regulation and a provision of the German Constitution, which law prevailed? Under the German Constitution, any ordinary law incompatible with the German Constitution was invalid since the Constitution is the highest source of law, as parliament is in Great Britain. This question was referred to the ECJ and the ECJ 'in the strongest terms held ... the legality of a Community act cannot be judged in the light of national law' (Steiner, 2003: 67). Moreover, the validity of EU law should only be judged in the light of EU law and its effect in the Member States cannot be affected by 'allegations that it runs counter to either fundamental rights as formulated by the constitution of that state or the principles of a national constitutional structure' (Craig and De Burca, 2002: 280). With reference to the rights protected by the German Constitution, the court added that the protection of such rights was the main aims of the Treaty (*Internationale Handelsgesellschaft*: 1970, 1125). For the ECJ, the absolute supremacy of EU law was vital in order to 'preserve the uniformity and efficacy of Community law in all the Member States' (Weatherill, 1993: 316).

Soon after the ECJ in another case held that 'no provision whatsoever of national law may be invoked to override Community law' (Commission v

Italy: 1972, 532). In *Internationale Handelsgesellschaft*, the Administrative Court, the highest supreme court, disregarded the German provision. The question was whether a lower court had such competence. This issue was addressed in Simmenthal (1978: 629).

The Italian Judge, Pretore di Susa, was asked by the Italian fiscal authority that the subsequent national law in breach of EU law should be held unconstitutional by the Italian Constitutional Court before it was disregarded, as an ordinary 'national court could not simply refuse to apply a national law which conflicted with Community law' (Craig and De Burca, 2002: 280). Usually, it is the highest court (i.e. the Italian Constitutional Court) that decided to disregard the incompatible national law. The issues for Pretore were whether a lower court could decide such an important question? Secondly, did the lower court have to wait for the incompatible national law to be set aside by a constitutional authority before they disregard it? It should be remembered that in the Member States with written constitutions (i.e. Germany/Italy) only the constitutional courts have the power to declare a national law invalid. However, in countries with unwritten constitutions (i.e. the UK),⁴ no court has the power to disregard or hold a statute invalid.

Thus Pretore sought ECJ's help to shine a light on these constitutional difficulties. Discussing again the nature of EU law, the ECJ emphasised that the relationship between EU law and national law was such that EU law 'not only by their entry into force render automatically inapplicable any conflicting provision of current national law but... *also preclude the valid adoption of new national legislative measures* to the extent to which they would be incompatible with Community provisions [emphasis added]' (Simmenthal, 1978: 632). The italic part of the quotation is very interesting as the Member States are prohibited from passing any law inconsistent with EU provisions. This could suggest that the ECJ constitutionalised the Treaty by declaring the supremacy of EU law, and by holding the legality of national law would be determined in accordance with ECJ's rulings (Craig and De Burca, 2002: 257).

To support the constitutional point, it is claimed that the ECJ adopted similar arguments to develop the doctrine of EU supremacy to those of US Supreme Court, which were both successful and effective 'in maintaining ultimate control over the federal and state legal systems in the early nineteenth century' (Douglas, 2002: 257).⁵ However, Karen Alter refuses to accept the notion of constitution of Europe by saying that 'European Union is still an international organisation, not a federal polity' (2000: 4).

However, as far as the constitutional problems of Member States were concerned as to whether a lower court had the power to disregard or set aside a domestic law, or in the case of the UK any court had the power to question the legality of a statute, the ECJ ruling was clear:

‘...a national court which is called upon...to apply provisions of Community law is under a duty to give full effect to those provisions, if necessary refusing...to apply any conflicting provision of national legislation, even if adopted subsequently, and it is not necessary for the court to request or await the prior setting aside of such provision by legislative or other constitutional means’ (Steiner, 2003: 69).

The immediate decision of holding the inconsistent national law invalid not only extended to national courts but also ‘administrative agencies’ (Steiner, 2003: 69-70).⁶ The ECJ reasoned, in addition to its arguments of ‘uniformity and effectiveness’, that if the national courts were given to apply their own constitutional rules, this would ‘weaken the effect of EU law, it would undermine solidarity among the Member States, and in the end threaten the Union itself’ (Steiner, 2003: 65).

The cases, above, were approved and followed in many of the ECJ’s later rulings and it repeatedly stressed the importance of EU law being superior to national law (Factortame, 1991: 603; Marleasing, 1990: 1).

Conclusion

The notion of EU supremacy has been developed by the ECJ. From the ECJ’s perspective, the Member States, in particular, national judges, faced with a conflict between national law of any nature and EU law, must immediately give precedence to EU law. On the other hand, the Member States were in the belief that the relationship between the EU law and national law was a matter of the constitutional rules of the State concerned, which in turn depended on whether the Member State was monist or dualist (explained in the future essays). Thus the national judges were caught on the horns of a dilemma of whether to obey the new legal order of EU developed by the ECJ, or their own national constitutional rules.

My future essays will examine how the Member States’, the judiciaries, in particular, responded to the notion of the primacy of EU law.

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¹ The European Economic Community (EEC) Treaty 1957. Also Known as the Treaty of Rome. It was changed to EC Treaty by the Treaty on European Union 1993.

² Further, Advocate General Karl Roemer in *Van Gend en Loos* at page 20 suggested that Article 10 (ex 5) implied supremacy. Article 10 (ex5) provides Member States are under a duty to fulfil their obligations arising out of the Treaty. The ECJ in *Costa* (below) at page 594 named Article 249 (ex 189) to justify the implication of EU supremacy in the Treaty.

³ If a provision of EU law is directly applicable, it gives rights to individuals to rely on them before their national courts.

⁴ In Great Britain it is because of the notion of Parliamentary sovereignty. This is now doubted. It is discussed in my essay on the UK.

⁵ Douglas at page 257 gives the argument based on the necessity of ensuring the uniformity and effectiveness of EU law as an example. Further, Douglas points out Advocate General Lagrange who stated in *Costa* at page 605 'it is certainly true to say that the EEC Treaty has, in a sense, the character of a genuine constitution, the constitution of the Community.'

⁶ Steiner at page 70 gives *Larsy* (Case C- 118/00) in which the ECJ held that the national social security should disregard the national law in conflict with the EC law.



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Interview with Almir Colan on Political and Economic Relations between Turkey and the US

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Emrah Atar: Let me start by asking a general question about relations between Turkey and the United States. How would you describe the US-Turkey relation in general? What do you think it is determining core of their relations, is it NATO, is it democracy, or what?

Almir Colan: The US-Turkey relationship today is taut and full of mistrust. The core of this mistrust is that Turkey wants to be a strong and independent nation, and that does not sit well with the US that got used to very subservient and obedient Turkey. In the US mind, Turkey should follow their instructions and be grateful to be part of the US-led world order, regardless of how tangible the benefits for Turkey are. US global strategy is therefore very much centred around what is the best for the US and that often clashes with what is best for the Turkish people and their neighbouring region.

Emrah Atar: Have the United States and Turkey been the perfect partners? If no, how did America's relationship with Turkey fall apart?

Almir Colan is a Director of Australian Centre for Islamic Finance (AUSCIF) and CEO at Olive Investments. Almir is also an adviser to number of institutions that provide Islamic finance and member of a working group at AAOIFI.

Previously, Almir was a consultant lecturer and board member for the Master of Islamic Banking and Finance Course at La Trobe University.

Almir Colan: This relationship seems to be tested by US unilateral interference in the region in a way that undermines Turkish interests. From helping overthrow democratically elected government in Egypt (and propping military regime against the wishes of the people) to arming regional terror groups YPG/PKK (which threatens Turkish sovereignty) and ambiguous stand towards 15 July 2016 internal military coup - it is very difficult to imagine a less perfect relationship. I think it all started falling apart when Turkey decided to focus more on its one future and the region, instead of one-sided partnership arrangement with increasing unpredictable US.

Emrah Atar: As it is known, the main problems between Turkey and the United States in recent years have been the extradition of Fethullah Gulen, the problem of Palestine, the Armenian genocide allegations. What kind of relationship do they have on these specific issues and what awaits these two countries in the future?

Almir Colan: These are just the symptoms of a deeper problem where Turkey probably feel that they can not trust the US to protect Turkish interest and behave as partner and ally. The right partner would seriously consider requests, concerns and sensibilities of another partner and would not engage in acts that promote anti-Turkish sentiments. If matters between two states are not dealt in a sensible way that will push Turkey to consider other partners in the region that will be more responsive to their concerns and mutual needs.

Emrah Atar: In connection with these problems, the tension between the two countries was rising without falling. On October 8, 2017, the United States indefinitely suspended visa applications from Turkey following the arrest of Metin Topuz, a consular employee in Turkey. Later, Washington imposed economic and political sanctions on Turkey because of Pastor Andrew Brunson, a U.S. citizen who was under house arrest in Turkey, then released in 2018. With these sanctions, the Turkish lira fell in a way not seen before. How do you see the implementation and the future of Turkish lira in the coming years? Asking the right questions about the Turkish economy; would the economy eventually recover?

Almir Colan: One of the critical conditions for the continuing growth of the Turkish economy and the stability of its currency is domestic (and regional) security and then global trade relationships. Unfortunately, U.S. economic sanctions can send a signal that may affect investors and market confidence in short to medium term. This is a political tool that is often used by Trump administration to secure U.S. global and domestic interests. Nevertheless, the latest economic data gives me confidence that Turkey is doing very well by opening new trade relationships, improving its infrastructure, lowering inflation, lowering debt levels and diversifying its economy.

Emrah Atar: Moving forward, the S-400 crisis has risen between Turkey and the United States. How do you evaluate Turkey's purchase of S-400 missile-defence system and removal from F-35 Aircraft Program? Furthermore, what would you like to say about CAATSA sanctions?

Almir Colan: Defence diversification is another realisation by Turkey that if they are to be an independent nation with its agenda, they cannot entirely outsource the protection of their sovereignty. For this reason, we see not only purchase of missile-defence systems but new aircraft, submarines as well as investment in the domestic defence industry. In terms of sanctions, that will be a matter of power dynamics and trade-offs between competing interests.

Emrah Atar: In recent months, everyone was talking that Turkey and the US are going to recover relations fully; however, the tension has risen again with Turkey's desire to establish a safe-zone region with the operation in the north of Syria. First, what

would you like to say about the existence of this operation? Could you please make an assessment of President Erdogan and President Trump during this process? Especially about the language that President Trump uses on Twitter and in the official letter.

Almir Colan: I think that personally President Erdogan and President Trump have a much better relationship than what is portrayed in the mainstream media. We should not forget that much of the what we consider mainstream is actually left-leaning media that considers both Presidents as authoritarian dictators who are not fit for office. In terms of Turkish military operation to secure safe-zone in Syria, this came about due to the two main reasons. First is Turkish insistence on securing against the formation of the terror state on its border, and second US failure to obtain any meaningful presence on the ground in Syria. The US tried with many groups and soon realised that they do not have nearly as much commitment and skin in the game as other power brokers - namely Russia and Turkey. In terms of how it all played out in the media and twitter, it was a typical Trump-like reality show that was design to score domestic points and save US face. Unfortunately, in the process, the whole thing (especially that infamous letter) came out as very offensive and insensitive towards Turkey and President Erdogan. Still, I think it was handled in a very mature and wise way by Turkish President.

Emrah Atar: Even though the US President Donald Trump was withdrawing his troops from the region to pave the path for the Turkish soldiers to carry out this operation, America has also announced that it will impose sanctions on Turkey due to its military operation in the northeast of Syria due to the criticism raised against President Trump. What does it mean to you that President Trump is engaging in this kind of rhetoric against a NATO ally?

Almir Colan: I think this was a possible trap for Turkey and it was designed to turn global attention and sanctions against the Turkish economy, rather than seeing it as the culmination of failures of US engagement in the region. While it was clear why Turkey had to act to secure its border, it was portrayed by anti-Turkish politicians and media as some sort of aggression that required global sanctions. Turkish restraint and engagement managed to deescalate tensions, but the whole idea that NATO allies will stick together and work for the benefit of each other was undermined. Furthermore, many other US partners in the region also felt that the situation could turn against them if US interests change. For this reason, it is not any more clear on which principle NATO alliance stands and what is it willing to sacrifice as an alliance to protect individual allies.

Emrah Atar: Democratic presidential candidates participated in a debate program emphasised that Turkey should be expelled from NATO. What do you think about this? Could Turkey be excluded from NATO?

Almir Colan: Excluding Turkey from NATO would be more harmful to NATO and Europe than Turkey. Turkish geography and the size of the military is what makes NATO very effective deterrent against other military threats. I see this as political pandering to growing anti-Turkish and also anti-Islamic sentiments in the US.

Emrah Atar: Do you think that the leaders of the world, on top of NATO countries, have understood Turkey's concerns about this operation?

Almir Colan: I think the operation was an excuse for those who are looking at ways to influence regime change in Turkey. There was very little that anyone fair-minded and informed could misunderstand after all this was the Turkish border, not European or the US. However, this willful misunderstanding showed that some wish to see less ambitious Ankara which takes its marching orders from western capitals.

Emrah Atar: The United States, Russia, and Others. What is your approach to establishing better relations with other countries on many issues? Is this possible? Moreover, where Turkey finds itself in the future?

Almir Colan: I think that at the end each country is looking at its interest. That is the one constant factor that defines state relationships and conflicts. New alliances and partnerships are currently being forged, and they are seeking to secure favourable place in the global power hierarchy. I am afraid that relationships will be based on calculations and hard power rather than the wishful thinking of how would could or should be. Therefore Turkey finds itself racing to secure that same hard power to ensures its survival.

Emrah Atar: Finally, what would you like to say if you wish to make a general assessment on these topics or any related issues?

Almir Colan: Power is the team sport, and unfortunately, Turkey has been alone for most of their recent journey. Some favourable treatment by Qatar is offset by Gulf countries unfavourable treatment. Russia is playing to divide NATO alliance further, but it would be an error to conclude that President Putin wants a powerful Turkey. In the final analysis, no regional power wants a powerful Turkey, and all would benefit from the weak one. For this reason, Turkey must balance relationships and play them off against each other so to secure the best outcome for itself. This will be a long game. Still, just as many political commentators ignored ordinary silent voters in US, UK and Australia - I think many are ignoring rising concerns and anger by ordinary silent Muslim voters who are looking for independent and strong leadership from their statesman.

For this reason, other countries should factor this in their calculation. If we want to establish genuine and lasting prosperity for all states, then negotiation has to be fair, principled and win/win for both sides. However, I would not count on reason to prevail.

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Interview with Professor Vladimir M. Kapitsyn on Russia's Foreign Policy in the Middle East

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Russia has been following an assertive foreign policy toward different regions around the globe for more than a decade. Russian Middle Eastern policy, among all, is of great interest for political scientist from all over the world consistently. However, notably, after the Russian involvement in the Syrian Civil War and active Russian policy in the military, diplomatic and economic spheres have raised new questions about Russian strategy and policy-goals in and beyond the region.

Ebru Birinci: *We are almost at the end of 2019. The Strategy of National Security of the Russian Federation has been in force for four years. How do you evaluate the security concept of Russia in the last years? Furthermore, if I put simply, to what extent are the requirements of the new concept being fulfilled?*

Vladimir Mikhailovich Kapitsyn is a professor in the Department of comparative politics in the Faculty of Political Science, Lomonosov Moscow State University. Member of dissertation councils and editorial boards of scientific journals ("European Ombudsman", "PolitBook" (Cheboksary), "Research Result. Social Studies and Humanities" (Belgorod State University), "Social and Humanitarian Knowledge", "Social Area" (ISEDT RAS - Vologda); "Law and Modern States" (Moscow). Author of more than 357 publications, including more than 65 monographs, textbooks and teaching aids (including those co-authored), 234 scientific articles.

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: The National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation (from now on referred to as the "Strategy") is an essential document of strategic planning that defines national interests and strategic national priorities of the state, goals, objectives and measures in the field of domestic and foreign policy. The strategy describes the old and new threats that come in detail, for example, from US hegemony policies and large-scale structural imbalances that lead to economic and financial crises. Such threats are caused by the activities of terrorist organisations, uncontrolled migration, epidemics, global climate change, "colour revolutions", etc.

Considering that the Strategy is aimed at strengthening national security and ensuring the country's sustainable development for the

long term, constant political monitoring is carried out to evaluate its implementation, both by state authorities and by various civil society institutions, including the scientific community. In particular, the Security Council of Russia regularly holds meetings at which the state of security is assessed, its compliance with the indicators defined in the Strategy. Besides, a variety of public councils, expert and analytical centres operate under the state authorities in our country [Russia].

Publicly available specific data about individual indicators of the state of national security in military, economic and demographic and other spheres established in the Strategy (section VI, paragraph 115) speak of the progressive strengthening of security in various sectors of public life, and the improvement of the equipment of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies and security agencies. All this is reflected, for example, in the constant reduction of the terrorism threat, although, of course, problems in this area, as in other areas, remain. So, in 2019, 54 acts of terrorism were prevented. However, this is already a completely different situation than, for example, as early as 10-15 years ago. Of course, the negative influence continues over the course of all four years of permanent anti-Russian sanctions.

Ebru Birinci: *Russia supports the multipolar world system and claims to be one of the poles of this new order, emerged after the Cold War. Let alone the problems of this concept, Russia is a global military power however falls back of the US, China, the EU in the economic level and the studies are not showing a significant change in the next decades. Do you think that Russia can afford such a key role in world politics without solving economic problems?*

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: I will begin the answer to this question by stating processes when economic factors, for all their importance, can temporarily fade into the background. I draw your attention to the status of modern Turkey and its leader - President R.T. Erdogan. The authority of the leader of the state and independent position are significant. In addition, a recently published rating of the power of states, in which Russia took second place. This, of course, is only one of the ratings, but together with the first example, it shows that the role of the state in the modern world can be determined by a combination of various factors, among which leadership, the leader of the state, military power, and geopolitics are not the least. As the processes in Syria show, Turkey has become an active actor in the formation and implementation of not only regional but also world politics. Moreover, indicators of the economic development of your republic [Turkey] are not determining factors in this case.

Returning to a specific situation, we acknowledge that there are objective preconditions for Russia to become one of the centres (poles) of power in the world order that has emerged over the past decade. First of all, this is the geopolitical weight of Russia, a Eurasian power, which has a significant territory through which important transport routes pass, the number of which is increasing while ensuring a safe and high-quality infrastructure.

Among them are the Trans-Siberian Railway, the Baikal-Amur Mainline, the Northern Sea Route (NSR), the North-South transport corridor connecting (via Russia and Azerbaijan) Europe, Iran, and India. The routes included in the megaproject “One belt, one way” have great potential. In conditions of depletion of natural resources, including one that is so commonplace, but also extremely necessary, like pure drinking water, significant reserves of Russian oil and gas including in the Arctic, are becoming the objective conditions, which are determining the role of the state in the world arena.

However, the peculiarities of the geographical location and natural resources can be productively used only while ensuring national security. The most crucial component of security is the development of the economy. Our National Security Strategy of 2015 draws attention to this, as we already spoke about. Here we quote paragraph 5 of the Document: “This Strategy is based on the inextricable interconnection and interdependence of national security and the socio-economic development of the country.” It is important to note that we have developed and approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated May 13, 2017 No. 208 the Strategy for the Economic Security of the Russian Federation for the period until 2030. It provides for economic growth, raising the level and improving the quality of life of the population, supporting scientific and the technical potential of economic development at the world level and increase its competitiveness by creating economic conditions for the development and implementation of modern technologies, stimulating innovative development, and also improving legal base in this area, developing human potential.

Strong economic policies should convert geopolitical and natural preconditions into real benefits. Moreover, natural resources can be depleted, but economic production should create a wide range of non-primary products and services necessary for the life of Russians and exports (machines, machines, devices, medicines, food). Concrete facts and figures again indicate the understanding of this. According to published data, in 2017 and 2018, Russia is at the sixth spot for rankings of GDP based on PPP. And although in terms of the US dollar the volume of GDP in Russia has not yet reached the level of the end of 2013, if you count it in the national currency, there has been steady growth. If we calculate GDP per capita, the results are more modest: 50th place according to the IMF and 57th according to the World Bank. Russia is actively increasing import substitution, increasing the share of non-oil exports, developing high-tech industries in nuclear energy, providing reliable and efficient methods of extraction and ways of delivering energy to Europe and Asia.

Starting from 2020, an increase in revenues from new industries is expected: at the end of 2019, the *Power of Siberia* pipeline was launched; in 2020, despite the sanctions, the *Turkish Stream* and *Nord Stream-2* pipelines should begin to operate. Benefits of more than 2,000 plants, including large ones, built over the past 5 years are expected. 22 extended bridges began to be operated. Russia's export positions in grain and other

agricultural products strengthened (Russia took the 1st place in grain export), as well as in the sale of weapons, non-military equipment, and nuclear engineering technologies. An important reserve also has opened up since the Russian government, despite the IMF's opposition, began to withdraw funds from the national welfare fund and invest them in projects in Russia. We stress, once again, that Russia is facing severe challenges from the United States, NATO and the EU, which do not miss the opportunity to undermine economic sovereignty using discriminatory measures - sanctions, unfair competition, the formation of coalitions and partnerships that are unfavourable for Russia, restrictions on access to foreign exchange reserves, etc. All this only confirms that both in the West and in Russia, it is clearly understood that without solving our economic problems, it is difficult to count on the role of a critical subject in world politics.

Ebru Birinci: *At the moment, Russia pursues an active policy in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, and it is the only power that has stable contacts with all legal actors in the region. This confirms the status of Russia as a global power. Do you think Russia can replace the United States as the dominant world power in the region? Is pragmatic Russian policy in the Middle East sustainable enough to maintain such a position?*

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: The foreign policy of Russia seeks not to dominate the Middle East, but to establish a balance of power in this region. With this in mind, our state strives to counteract the US and NATO policies aimed at the overthrow of sovereign states, as well as to ensure economic cooperation between Russia and traditional partners (Egypt, Syria, Libya, Sudan). Moreover, given the number of US military bases and allies in the Middle East (Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan), I believe that the United States continues to act as a dominant force, albeit gradually weakens.

At the same time, Russia, in cooperation with Turkey and Iran, has come closer to the establishment of a balance of power in this region. Above all, this is thanks to the defeat of ISIS (an organisation banned in our country) and a number of other terrorist organisations, once again, despite the noticeable opposition of the United States and its factions, as well as the inconsistent behaviour of Israel (and a number of other states). All this also influenced the establishment of the new balance of power. Thus, since the launch of the Russian military operation in Syria, the attitude towards Russia from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Qatar, the Libyan leadership has become more positive. Close military and diplomatic cooperation have been developed with Turkey and Iran. A significant strengthening of Russia in the Black Sea as a result of the return of Crimea to Russia indirectly affects the balance of power in the Middle East. At the same time, the United States lost a lot of workforce and resources in Afghanistan and Iraq, without solving there the main tasks in the fight against terrorism.

In my opinion, the progressive strengthening of Russia's position in the Middle East, the preservation and development of constructive interaction

with Turkey and Iran, as well as with Iraq, Syria, Egypt - all this will help establish a balance of powers in the region that will provide the necessary conditions for states to successfully engage in peacebuilding and sustainable development, to counter extremism and international terrorism. Russia is highly interested in this, as the state leadership has repeatedly stated. Thus, this policy is very pragmatic, which bodes well for its stability and consistency.

Ebru Birinci: *As you know, the centre of a rivalry between the great powers seems to be East Asia. It is said the Middle East will lose its central role in world politics and the United States is gradually changing its foreign policy orientation towards East Asia. Do you agree with this? How do you explain the growing role of Russia in the Middle East in this state of the world order?*

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: From my point of view, while the East Asian direction of American foreign policy is important, the military and trade confrontation with China is vital for the United States, the Middle East will not lose its central role in the next decade, both in US foreign policy and in the establishment of a new, more equitable world order. The premises of this are very diverse. We will name only a few.

In the Middle East, for example, there are important transport routes such as the Suez Canal, which has been reconstructed in recent years, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, as well as the richest energy resources of the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Syria, Iran. The proximity of developing industrial giants (India, Iran, Egypt), the Japanese, the EU, Chinese, Turkish and the booming Indonesia's interests in this region and the established cooperation of them - all this indicates that the Middle East states and their resources will remain on the agenda of many states, including the United States.

At the same time, in the current context another question arises reasonably: will the USA have enough resources (economic, diplomatic, etc.) to put pressure on some states to ensure the realisation of its foreign policy goals contrary to the interests of other countries? It is also important to take into account that the states of the Middle East, as well as Russia, Turkey, Iran, and Israel, want to see the United States more cooperating in the fight against international terrorism in the context of a balance of powers. I will say more - starting from the Middle East, a regional model of the balance of powers is being developed, which can be adopted in other regions and will affect the formation of the new world order.

Ebru Birinci: *In your article "Forms of Regulation of Violence in International Relations" in 2016, you argue that the World is faced with a deficit of normative world politics focused on long-term goals and this has resulted in the Syrian conflict. Russian foreign policy is sometimes criticised about its focus on the short-term benefit. Does Russia have a long-term plan for the region?*

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: In theoretical terms, the concept of “normative world politics” means that a balance of power is developing in the world and (or) in the region, which helps to build a hierarchy, when the agreements of great powers reduce the confrontation, contribute to the development of regulators of international law. Then, the regulators of world politics, with all their diversity and multi-directionality, will work in the normative space more predictably and more legitimately. Accordingly, world politics is becoming “normative”, closely related to the regulators of international law, more flexible, at the same time, more predictable and less dangerous, reducing the potential for conflict of certain countries.

The fight against terrorism, the maintenance of a balance of power and the sovereignty of states such as Syria and Egypt are important in military-political and geopolitical relations for Russia in the Middle East - all this cannot be of the nature of a short-term policy. As you know, Russia is creating military bases on the territory of Syria for aviation and the navy in order to secure a peaceful life, ensure mutually beneficial economic partnership with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and close cooperation with Turkey on many issues. This list is easy to continue, but the above fully reflects the long-term nature of Russia's foreign policy.

In many ways, this can be defined as a specification of the concept of “normative world politics.”

Ebru Birinci: *Considering energy is vital for the Russian economy, Russia seeks to develop relations with Saudi Arabia to control oil prices. On the other hand, it is hard to say that the situation in the Gulf is stable. How can any tension in the Persian Gulf affect the future of bilateral relations?*

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: The position of Saudi Arabia in recent years has been weakened by the war with Yemen, conflicts with Qatar. At the same time, despite mutual rejection policies of the Saudis and Israel, specific areas of cooperation between them are outlined.

Saudi Arabia, in general, tends to expand the vectors of cooperation, in particular, is steadily expanding relations with Russia: trade, humanitarian and military cooperation, tourism, and mutual understanding in OPEC are growing. Negotiations are ongoing for the purchase of the S-400 system from Russia. It seems that Russia would be able to contribute to mitigation the bilateral relations of Iran and Syria with Saudi Arabia, which would have a positive effect on the situation in the Persian Gulf, in Syria, as well as on bilateral relations. Russia and Saudi Arabia are interested in cooperation in the framework of OPEC. Russia attaches great importance to this in order to disavow possible attempts by the United States to use oil prices as an instrument of pressure on Russia, Venezuela, Iran, and the Arab countries. Cooperation is also developing in the Organization of the Islamic Conference and G – 20. Saudi Arabia is investing in the construction of Russian enterprises.

It seems that close economic cooperation is one of the incentives for stability and the further development of relations. It is symptomatic that

Russia and the Saudis were able to survive the aggravation of contradictions almost painlessly when in 2015 Russia took an active part in supporting B. Assad in Syria (the Saudis supported the opposition). All this is a guarantee that in the future, these countries will be able to overcome the inevitable contradictions in the interests of their peoples.

Ebru Birinci: *There has been another energy-oriented conflict zone in the Eastern Mediterranean. What is Russia's policy regarding the situation in there?*

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: Alongside Syria and Iraq, Libya, which has rich oil fields, including on the sea shelf, has become one of the conflict zones in the Eastern Mediterranean. There is a gas pipeline from Libya to Italy (deliveries amounted to 8 billion cubic meters of gas).

After the bombing of NATO, under the current chaos, a kind of territorial diarchy emerged. In the West, Tripoli is a force under the patronage of the United States, and NATO recognised as the Government of National Accord (GNA) of Fayed al-Sarraj (including the recognised UN). In the East, in Tobruk and Benghazi, a parliament (House of Representatives) is based, which in 2015 approved Khalifa Haftar the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the country. This force does not recognise the authority of the GNA, believing that the government is associated with Islamists, especially Muslim brothers. Other fronts have risen, too: in Sirte, there was a conflict against terrorists, in the south Tuareg and Toubou tribes, fought, who are sometimes also fighting with Sudanese militants. In March 2016, according to media reports, even the intervention of NATO forces was supposed to force deputies of the House of Representatives to recognise the GNA.

According to the statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the President of Russia, our state seeks to maintain relations with both parties. So, General Haftar was received in Moscow and on a Russian military ship. According to specific events in this country, NATO and the EU, as well as the USA, do not enjoy support in Tripoli because of their participation in the bombing of 2011. Turkey and Russia turned out to be the most authoritative in Libya, although they have serious disagreements regarding further development plans. Libya. For example, Turkey was negotiating with the GNA on the delimitation of sea spaces. She sought to use the situation to assert her rights to specific sections of the sea (which contradicted the interests of Cyprus and Greece). The media even wrote about the possible introduction of Turkish troops in Libya.

Russia, and its state-owned corporation Russian Railways, in particular, suffered heavy losses due to the bombing of Libya in 2011, as the construction of the railway coordinated by Libya and Russia was disrupted. Russia also lost the opportunity to participate in the production of Libyan oil. One can agree with the well-known and well-founded opinion that the war in Libya in 2011 was beneficial to the United States, which sought to remove Chinese and Russian companies from Libya.

In 2019, the dual power in Libya severely has been shaken, because General Haftar again attacked Tripoli and brought his troops into the city. Russia and Turkey held several talks on this issue. Apparently, much will be decided from the agreement of these two states, which will protect their proteges and, at the same time, seek the creation of a single government. Moreover, if Haftar takes Tripoli, and with its domination of the gas pipeline, then his position in the negotiations with the support of Russia will be very strong. Let me remind you that Turkey and Russia have experience in resolving complex conflicts. There is hope that it will be possible to avoid drawing these countries into a military confrontation. Negotiations can be affected by severe resistance from Greece, which NATO will support. It may be necessary to create a settlement institution similar to the Astana or Geneva processes in Syria. It is possible that Chinese companies will return to Libya and China will also become a significant player in this country.

Ebru Birinci: *Russian-Israeli relations developed under the Putin administration. What are Putin's motives for developing these relationships? Can Israel become a bridge between the West and Russia?*

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: Israel tried to play such a role. And for some part, it succeeded, although the Palestinian question seriously aggravated Israeli relations with Turkey and the Arab countries.

If we talk about Russian-Israeli relations in current conditions, then, as you know, V.V. Putin sought to neutralise a possible military clash between the Israeli Air Force and B. Assad's troops. At the same time, B. Netanyahu tried to defend the right of Israel to act decisively against the strengthening of Iran and Hezbollah in Syria. The actions of Israeli military aircraft dealt a significant blow to the relationship of trust between B. Netanyahu and V.V. Putin, as a result of which the Russian aircraft laboratory fell under the fire of Syrian air defense and pilots and engineers died. Russia and Syria responded to Israel, both by military and diplomatic means. Although after some time the contacts of the leadership of Russia and Israel resumed, they did not reach the previous level of trust. It is obvious that Israel remains one of the main players in the Middle East and Russia's policy will proceed from this, pursuing its national interests of Russia and its partners.

Ebru Birinci: *The Palestinian-Israeli peace process has come to a standstill, especially after Trump's decisions, while Russia criticises Trump's policies and continues to maintain contacts with the Palestinian side. Can we wait for a more active Russian policy on this issue?*

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: It seems that the peace process you named can be ensured only by collective efforts, by the efforts of all interested parties, the world community as a whole. If we talk about the latest processes, I would like to draw attention to the fact that, for example, the similar positions of Turkey and Russia at the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in November 2019 became indicative of the Palestinian issue.

Both states (Russia as a guest of the summit) actively substantiated during the meetings and official meetings, Palestine's right to statehood.

Obviously, the position of D. Trump worsened the situation with the resolution of the Palestine problem. As you know, in the past, Israel, sometimes formally, and sometimes at the diplomatic level, taking into account the position of the US, EU, Russia and Turkey, admitted the possibility of negotiations with Palestine (on the status of Jerusalem) and Syria (on the Golan Heights). However, after Trump initiated the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (2017) and the rights of Israel to the Golan Heights, Israel tightened its stance. With this in mind, it is unlikely that the policies of individual states can significantly change the situation. We have to admit that this requires consistent long-term work, including one related to changing the position of individual key states.

Ebru Birinci: *As concluding, could you please evaluate Russia's position in world politics?*

Vladimir M. Kapitsyn: If Russia manages to consolidate the emerging positive trends in the economy and international relations, successfully complete the reform of the armed forces, will be able to restore its status as a great power (along with China, the United States, and possibly also other states). This is evidenced by her successes in Syria, the successful rearmament of her army, navy and space forces, which by some indicators is unattainable, for example, for the United States and China in the coming years. This is also confirmed by the stable interaction of Russia with China. Their military-technical and economic cooperation can be a decisive factor in overcoming the hegemony of one superpower (USA). At the same time, the independent position of both Turkey and many other states is very important. An important factor is also the negotiations between Russia and the United States on the need to maintain at least part of the agreements on disarmament and limitation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. States, only by joint efforts, primarily the efforts of the United States, China, and Russia, will establish a balance of power and hierarchy that will ensure a transition to the world order with strong international law and normative world politics.

Ebru Birinci: Thank you very much for your insightful and sincere answers.



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Turkey at Crossroads: Between Islamic Power Projection and International Isolationism

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The recent Turkish assertiveness in Cypriot Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ), defied the United States (US) and the European Union's (EU) objections to mining in a region of Cyprus' sovereign rights, as defined by International Law, and threatens to initiate a conflict with more countries involved. The island of Cyprus is at the centre of the oil and trade routes in the Eastern Mediterranean, marking it of vital importance to the economic interests of multiple actors in the region for the exploitation of the energy reserves, whether discovered or not. The drilling issue has once again become a thorn between Turkey and Cyprus, which has severed their diplomatic ties since the 1974 war on the island and further complicates the regional security system. According to Walker "Turkey's overall approach to its neighbours was characterised by confrontation, mistrust, and the use of threats and force" (2011, p. 6).

The Turkish assertiveness in the region, except a direct threat to the sovereignty of Cyprus, once more creates tensions with Turkey's long-feuding neighbour and NATO ally Greece, creating instability in regional relations and a blow to trade and economic activities among countries through the Aegean Sea while posing strains to the strategic alliance fermentations between the neighbouring countries in the region geopolitically important for the US, the EU, China and Russia. The dispute over drilling poses several internal and external challenges to Erdogan's policies. The latest development with the agreement between Turkey and Libya, which demarcates an 18.6-nautical mile (35-kilometre) line as the maritime boundary between the two countries' respective exclusive economic zones, presents a clear political message. Turkey moves away from multilateralism to enhancing bilateral relations with similar regimes in an attempt to project its power in the region and its dominance in the contested waters that have risen concerns to Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Egypt.

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The energy resources, particularly natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean, have constituted a central issue in Turkish foreign policy, and along with the country's burgeoning economy makes President Erdogan's interest in natural resources in the Aegean more urgent. Turkey is highly dependent on fuel imports and certainly the ability to cover much of its needs would be a tremendous financial boost to its already crumbling

economy. Turkey is aware of the significant role of natural gas for the country from different aspects: such as its environmental friendliness compared to fossil fuels, but its economic advantages in supporting the rise of urbanisation, industrialisation and transportation throughout the country. However, Turkey's primary concern is to safeguard its position as a transit hub for the EU oil and gas supplies and not to be excluded from future agreements in the region.

Domestic Policy

2016 has been a critical year for Turkey's democratic orientation, mainly due to the resignation of "moderate" Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and the failed military coup against Erdogan, that led the country to a three-month state of emergency and a series of measures that restricted or suspended rights and freedoms. Upon Erdogan's return in the country, the "witch hunt" of his opponents was initiated by marginalising opposition forces, arresting and replacing officers in the army, police, educational institutions and the public service, which also resulted in violations against journalists. The new transformation of the domestic structure was built upon a subservient press and judicial system. The government also decided to suspend its adherence to the European Convention on Human Rights temporarily during the period of the "purge", causing outrage in the EU and national NGOs. More importantly, the shift from a parliamentary to a presidential system gave Erdogan full control in the executive system and legislature manoeuvres, resembling similarities with the theocratic regimes of Iran and bearing a stronger 'Islamicization' on his proclaims about the forms to be adopted. For some analysts and scholars, this turn was perceived as the "de-democratisation" (Somer, 2016) of Turkey and is also depicted in Freedom House annual report which moved Turkey from "partly free" to "not free" category in 2018.

The economy of the country during that period started facing a downturn mainly due to uncertainties caused by the Syrian civil war and the refugee crisis, the slowdown in tourism due to the coup, unsuccessful internal economic policies and tighter control of the economy. The devaluation of the lira and soaring inflation has discouraged investments in the country. Under this background and despite Erdogan's win in the presidential elections in June 2018, his appeal to the public seemed to be diminishing, especially after losing two big cities of Ankara and Istanbul in the local elections of March 2019. Despite using every possible means to support his preferred candidates and calling for a new election, the result remained the same. Still, the popularity of Erdogan remains high due to his past achievements in the economy but also in certain segments of Turkey's population that favour the presence of religion to politics. His rhetoric has strong nationalistic and religious discourse command, serving as an antidote to a beleaguered economy in a recession, high unemployment and as a cover-up to the steady turn in an increasingly authoritarian system.

New turn on foreign policy

Turkey's stands between two continents: the Middle East and Europe with different security environments, political systems and cultural traits (Kizner, 2001). Its geopolitical place established Turkey as a valuable ally not only due to controlling the maritime trade routes or being a major energy transit corridor but also for the security of Europe and the US's interests in the Middle East.

Erdogan's offensive foreign policy in Cyprus and interventionism in Syria are parts of a foreign policy agenda that has been formulated under the "neo-Ottoman dogma", and continuously evolving under the rapidly shifting geopolitical circumstances and signifies an apparent return to power politics in the international system (Haugom, 2019).

Therefore, this newly Turkish assertiveness has posed difficulties in key Western foreign policy plans. On the European front, Turkey has created tensions with European countries, such as Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. It escalated in 2017 because of Ankara's hawkish rhetoric and provocations, especially on the refugee crisis making the prospects of accession to the EU extremely difficult. Turkey has also created an estranged relationship with the US both due to its involvement in Syria and its pro-Russian stance that was made even worse with the possible buyout of S-400, leading to Turkey's latest international isolation and loss of the "favourite ally" position in the Mediterranean. US-Turkey relations have been strained significantly in the last year, particularly for contention points that include the extradition of Fethullah Gülen, the detainment of American Pastor Andrew Brunson in Turkey and delays in his release, the violation of American sanctions posed against Iran, US involvement in Syria, the ongoing US effort to weaponise the People's Protection Units (YPG) and the recognition of the Armenian genocide by US Congress. The US has threatened sanctions in many of the latest crises, but the geopolitical importance of Turkey has made it a reluctant choice. Thus, despite the longstanding and 'strategic' nature of Ankara and Washington bilateral relations, it can no longer be taken for granted as it does not adhere to Western values and core principles showing that it is moving away from the EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and further approaching absolutism—and Russia. Still, the tactical cooperation between Turkey and Russia is enriched with mistrust due to the downing of a Russian fighter plane in November 2015, the assassination of the Russian ambassador in Ankara in December 2016 and the clashing interests in Syria. Turkish-Russian "marriage of convenience" is, however, mostly an expression of Turkey's bargaining power vis-à-vis the West to gain concessions (Yegin, 2019; Demiryol, 2018) than a close alignment.

Despite considerations of Erdogan's unpredicted foreign policy by examining the transitioning international system and the emergence of new power politics, it is observable that he is wedded to a realist-based, independent foreign policy, perceiving national independence and national interests over cooperation (Taspinar, 2011). Turkey's foreign policy actions serve a double purpose: the so-call perceived hegemonic ambitions and

power projection of Turkey as both a regional power and "protector" of the Muslim minorities. However, this quest for more strategic autonomy and regional leadership makes the country an uncertain ally advancing its Western isolationism (Phillips, 2017).

Nonetheless, it is evident that Turkey is faced with a delicate balancing act as being trapped not between Moscow and Washington since its position does not coincide with either, but on what role to continue to play: the pro-Western faithful ally or an independent regional power in the making in the search for the "Blue Homeland".

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An Update of Democracy's Third Wave

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Almost 25 years have passed since Samuel Huntington published his seminal article *Democracy's Third Wave*, further expounded in his 1991 book *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Both interest and controversy arose in a time the world was changing, and the Western idea of democracy was soon to be challenged (and shattered) in unexpected ways. Since then, the world has considerably changed and while new technologies blur the boundaries of politics and geopolitics.

According to Huntington, by the mid-1970s, when the Helsinki Final Act was signed, the United States began to reformulate its foreign policy and committed itself in supporting the observance of human rights and democratisation at the international level. In the Helsinki Final Act was reaffirmed the fundamental principle of refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

The catch-phrase "the third wave" has come under criticism in the light of the post-Cold War world (Diamond, 2002). Countries undergoing or having undergone a transition to democracy during a wave are subject to democratic backsliding. Political scientists and theorists believe that the third wave has crested and will soon begin to ebb, just as its predecessors did in the first and second waves (Zagorski, 2003). Does Huntington's "third wave" theory hold on regarding the recent trends and events in world politics? In this brief article, I check if Western democracies – the US and its allies – are still committed to respecting the international principles they should be bound to, or if the democracy's third wave is over.

Challenges

Unconventional conflicts – a hybrid, asymmetric, and transnational conflict which involve state and non-state actors such as insurgents or terrorist organisations (Marsili, 2019) – are among the trend topics of defence and security, and they pose a threat to the stability of international order. States and intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), such as the UN and NATO are "uncomfortable" with democratic and legal constraints, and they try to escape from their obligations. This brief investigates how new technologies and new international actors blur the boundaries of law, democracy, politics and geopolitics.

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Since the UN Charter came into force,¹ wars have been termed as "armed conflicts", while "international" and "internal armed conflicts" have become terms of art in international law, without any legal meaning (House of Lords, 2006: § 10, 7-8). In modern liberal-democracies, the government or the head of state does not have the power to declare war unless it is authorised by the parliament. Not defining a military intervention as war allows governments to intervene without the explicit authorisation of the parliament. In this way, the parliamentary debate, which characterises modern democracies, is evaded. Therefore, the intervention of some countries in a conflict is characterised as a "police action", or as a counter-insurgency or counter-terrorism operation, even if sometimes, these interventions can be disguised under chapter VI and VII of the UN Charter (House of Lords, 2006 § 10, 7-8). Police actions are authorised specifically by the Security Council under Art. 53 (for regional action) or Art. 42 (for global action). In both cases, the term used in the Charter is "enforcement action".

Transnational, cross-border or extra-state armed conflicts (Corn 2009; Milanovic and Hadzi-Vidanovic, 2012) lead governments and IGOs to reshape their politics. Hybrid conflicts, such as the Gulf War (1990), the NATO bombing of Serbia (1999), the invasion of Afghanistan (2001), the Iraq War (2003) and the Syrian conflict (2011), threaten international stability. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the signatory parties of the Geneva Conventions often face threats from non-state actors. Unconventional conflicts have erupted in former Soviet Union republics: "frozen conflicts" in Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh or Artsakh), Georgia (South Ossetia and Abkhazia), Moldova (Transnistria), and Ukraine (Crimea and Donbas, i.e. Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic, 2014) (Marsili, 2016: 167-168). In some ways, all these conflicts are the legacy of the Cold War.

The NATO concludes that threats can come from state and non-state actors, including terrorism and other asymmetrical threats, cyber-attacks and hybrid warfare, where the lines between conventional and unconventional conflicts become blurred (NATO, 2016a). Technology is a key driver of warfare. Because of the application of high-tech solutions to military activities, it is now difficult to distinguish between conventional/unconventional, traditional/non-traditional, kinetic/non-kinetic, and lethal/non-lethal conflicts or wars. The debate does not concern only what weapons will be used in the twenty-first-century conflicts, but when and how they will be employed.

Some military operations carried out after the dissolution of the Soviet Union can be considered illegal wars of aggression against sovereign countries in violation of international law, without the support of UN Security Council resolutions: Yugoslavia 1999, Afghanistan 2001, Iraq 2003. As Samuel P. Huntington wrote in his 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs*

¹ Art. 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the threat or use of force in international relations.

magazine, which later expanded in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996): "Decisions made at the UN Security Council [...] reflect the interests of the West" and "the interests of the United States and other Western powers" (39).

When the US invaded and occupied Afghanistan in October 2001 (Operation Enduring Freedom), it breached provisions of Art. 2(4) of the UN Charter. Although the UNSC did not authorise the US-led military campaign, the intervention was presented by Washington as a legitimate form of self-defence under Art. 51. The US invoked Art. 5 of the North Atlantic treaty, which requires partners to come to the aid of any member state subject to an armed attack (NATO, 2001). For the first time in NATO's fifty-year history, Alliance assets were deployed in Afghanistan in support of "Article 5 operations" (NATO, 2017). The intervention of the Alliance in Afghanistan, acting as an 'authorised agent' of the UN, lies at the bounds of legality, and exceed the geographical limits set by Art. 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

A report of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (Shimkus, 2002: 3) stresses that "More than 50 years after its founding in the depths of the Cold War, NATO was at war – not with the Soviet Union or any other state, but against a terrorist organisation and the regime that gave it shelter". NATO is evolving in response to new strategic reality (Pellerin, 2017), and the Islamic State (ISIS) and terrorism are among the most pressing challenges the Alliance faces (Ferdinando, 2017). Article 4, which merely entails consultation among NATO members, was invoked by Turkey in 2012 over the Syrian civil war and in 2015 after threats by ISIS to Turkish territorial integrity (NATO, 2016b). Both Art. 4 and 5 were invoked in connection with hybrid conflicts involving state and non-state actors (Gilbert, 2003: 7-8).

Again, the US-led intervention in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom) in March 2003, not authorised by the UNSC, was presented as a legitimate form of self-defence under Art. 51. According to the International Commission of Jurists (2003), the invasion of Iraq was neither in self-defence against armed attack nor sanctioned by UN Security Council resolution authorising the use of force by member states and thus constituted the crime of a war of aggression. An independent commission of inquiry set up by the government of the Netherlands (Davids Commission, 2010), finds that the 2003 invasion of Iraq violated international law. The report concludes that UN Resolution 1441 could not reasonably be interpreted (as the Dutch government did) as authorising individual member states to use military force to compel Iraq to comply with the Security Council's resolutions.

Conclusion

A quarter-century later, the third wave of democracy seems to have exhausted its effects. In the period following the onset of the "War on Terror" after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, some democratic backsliding are evident. In tackling current threats, Western governments skip democratic rules and try to escape from their obligations. Maybe democratic rules and legal constraints are unsuitable for dealing

with current threats, but they should be applied since they are in force. The rule of law and the public debate that should be conducted in parliaments, still represent the essence of democracy and should be respected, even in time of emergency.

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Parliamentary Elections and Transformation in Uzbekistan

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Uzbekistan, Central Asia's most populous nation, gained independence in 1991 and since then pursued a policy of economic self-reliance and sought to balance its diplomatic ties with the West and Russia while having strained relations with its ex-Soviet neighbours because of disputes mainly over water and energy.

Uzbekistan's first presidential election since the death of Islam Karimov took place in 2016. Following the death of Islam Karimov, who died of a stroke in 2016, Shavkat Mirziyoyev assumed power and became Uzbekistan's new President. Islam Karimov had ruled the country for more than a quarter-century and during his era, Uzbekistan had been one of the most repressive societies on earth. Besides, Mirziyoyev was Karimov's prime minister for more than a decade and was widely seen as his right-hand man.

Since Karimov's death, his successor, President Mirziyoyev and his government have attempted to be more transparent and fair. To do so, the government has launched a string of reforms that have included the freeing of more than 50 high-profile political prisoners, reducing the powers of the much-feared state security service, launching a government campaign to eradicate forced labour, introducing the rule of law reform in order to enhance the transparency and accessibility of the allegedly corrupt courts, etc. He has also taken some concrete steps to improve the country's human rights record.

Currently, Uzbekistan is also transforming into an open economy. Mirziyoyev has liberalised its foreign exchange system and aiming to restructure its entire economy. Socio-economic changes can be observed in daily life particularly in the capital city, Tashkent. There are many construction-sites (houses and shopping centres) throughout the whole Tashkent. Along with new brands and franchising system, people may see lots of cafes, restaurants, and boutiques in the Tashkent streets. Most of them have been opened in the last two to three years. And, it seems that Uzbeks are quite happy with the new Uzbekistan except the rising inflation rate. While people I talked in Uzbekistan express their gladness of the reforms, they keep complaining about rising prices of gas, water, meat, etc.

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At the end of the day, all these reforms have been just one of the steps to improve Uzbekistan's image. Yet, the government has still a lot to do to prove its commitment to reform.

Background and Political Context

Another reform took place in the election code of Uzbekistan in February 2019. Yet, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR) has stated that the parliamentary election will not allow voters a genuine choice of candidates despite the fact that Uzbekistan adopted some changes to its election code.

Some of the changes in the code are as follows: "removing a provision for seats in parliament reserved for the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan, removal of restrictions on voter rights based on criminal proceedings or convictions and voters are also able to add their names to more than one of the signature lists that political parties are required to compile in order to register to run in the elections." (HRW, 2019)

On 20 September, the Central Election Commission (CEC) called the parliamentary elections to the lower (legislative) chamber of Oliy Majlis (parliament) for 22 December 2019. The elections, held under the slogan "New Uzbekistan – New Elections", constituted an important milestone in what the president has termed an irreversible modernisation and democratisation process.

Despite the registration of a new political party, the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan (EPU), the political party landscape is largely unchanged. Four other registered parties are all represented in the outgoing parliament. All five parties are supportive of the government and the president, and none have proposed policies that are at odds with theirs (OSCE/ODIHR, 2019).

Political Parties

There are five political parties in Uzbekistan:

- Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (LDPU) holds the centre-right in the political spectre and preaches liberal democratic values based on modern democracy, interpreted as a representative democracy, the essence of which rests in the competition among political groups for the voters' voices, while its major value is human rights and freedoms (UN, 2016).
- Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (DPU) *Milliy Tiklanish* may conventionally be classified as a moderate conservative movement. In the political spectre, it is a right-wing party. The party attaches special attention to the issue of national revival, which is understood as the awakening and strengthening of national identity. It comes out for preservation and development of the historically-shaped state and public life in compliance with the relevant national traditions (UN, 2016).
- People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (PDPU) holds a leftist position in the national political spectre. Provision for social

equality and social security, support for low-income families and vulnerable strata of population, preservation and consolidation of the role of the state in different spheres of life are this party's major ideas (UN, 2016).

- Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (SDPU) *Adolat* holds the left centrist position in the political spectre. *Adolat*'s electorate includes engineering-technical and research workers, pedagogues, doctors, employees of budgetary organisations and the services sector. The major ideas of SDPU include the provision of access to social and economic opportunities, justice and solidarity, commitment to a fair civil society and socially-oriented market economy (UN, 2016).
- Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan (EMU)'s main goal is to involve the general public in the complex issues of environmental protection and public health. The decision to create the Party was made on November 14, 2018 at a meeting of a group of citizens, including environmental experts, doctors, scientists, representatives of the education sector and various civil society institutions. On January 24, 2019, the party was registered by the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan (Infogram, 2019).

Parliamentary Elections

While all five political parties have a candidate in every constituency, there are no independent candidates. In Uzbekistan, the law seeks to make sure that each candidate is treated equally. In this sense, candidates have the same budget (10m UZS) which is given to them by the CEC. No other financing is allowed. Every candidate gets 30 minutes on regional TV to promote their message. This promotion usually takes the form of an interview.

On 15 November, the CEC registered 750 candidates; one for each party in every one of the 150 constituencies. Only about 30 per cent of sitting MPs were seeking re-election and the majority of candidates nominated by parties were running for the first time. All parties complied with the gender quota of 30 per cent of the total number of candidates nominated by each party. Collectively, parties nominated 310 women candidates (41 per cent).

More than 20 million voters in Uzbekistan casted their ballots on 22 December 2019 to elect a new parliament. Some 10,200 polling stations have been established across the country to facilitate the election of 150 deputies to the legislative chamber and local councils.

According to the Chairman of the Central election Commission Mirzo Ulugbek Abdusalomov, the results of the parliamentary elections as follows:

- 53 deputies from the UzLiDeP,
- 36 deputies from the DP “Milliy Tiklanish”,
- 24 deputies from SDP “Adolat”,
- 22 deputies from the NDPU,
- 15 deputies from the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan.

Among the deputies, 9 people or 6 percent are under the age of 30, 97 people or 65 percent are between the ages of 30 and 50, and 44 deputies or 29 percent are over 50 years old. The youngest deputy is 26 years old, while the oldest one is 71. 130 deputies or 87 percent are Uzbek, 20 deputies or 13 percent are representatives of other nationalities. 5 deputies represent Karakalpak and Russian nationalities, 3 deputies are Tajik and Kazakh, 2 deputies are Korean, by one representative from Kirgiz and Turkmen nationalities (CEC of Uzbekistan, 2020).

The elections were held under the slogan "New Uzbekistan, new elections" and the ordinary Uzbek citizens were quite happy about the elections. Even many of them I spoke during the election day and the day before call it as a “bayram (eid)”. Despite the irregularities¹ in the Uzbek parliamentary elections, it seems that ordinary people embrace and support the “(partly) free” elections.

For now, reforms on education, social and religious issues, tax policy and attracting FDI (foreign direct investment) have been relatively successful. Regarding the political reforms, the government has still a lot to do. Meanwhile, the international community should encourage and support President Mirziyoyev. Right as UN’s Fraser mentions that “The worst outcome would be that the government does everything that it has been encouraged to do for decades, whether it is on human rights, health systems, the rule of law, tax reforms, or gender violence, and we then walk away and say that we are not going to support it. (Pikulicka-Wilczewska, 2018)”

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¹ George Tsereteli, president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly said: “The elections took place under clearly improved legislation and greater tolerance of independent voices but did not yet demonstrate genuine and full respect for election-day procedures” (RFE/RL, 2019).

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