Ideology as the Cause of a Foreign Policy Failure: Assessing Turkey's AKP Party's Foreign Policy

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Foreign policy failures break out as one of the foreign policy variables achieves to subjugate the other variables to itself with the result of distorting the foreign policy priorities of a state. A foreign policy under the monopoly of an ideology variable forms new priorities of its own as adverse to the foreign policy maxims of a state. By this, it bears the risk of jeopardizing the nation's basic foreign and security priorities. In the case of Turkey's AKP party, as its ideology is based on foreign-domestic policy harmony, it had to alter the Turkish foreign policy's traditional path based on East-West optimum, because the party ideology was adverse to raison d'état notion essential for a successful foreign policy. The party became much more open to ideological enticements when the Middle East political geography favored its ideological basis by encouraging it to pursue more adventurist goals. With the ideology variable unchecked by any other foreign policy variable, the AKP party has neglected Turkey's strategic priorities. Besides, an ideological foreign policy approach excluding raison d'état has also cost Turkey the Western as well as the Eastern component in her foreign policy to be damaged essential for her foreign policy realities.

While every foreign policy aims at reaching its goals at the lowest cost possible, some foreign polices achieve to accomplish their goals while others fail to do so. Foreign policies fail because they are open to deviations that derive as a result of the fluctuations in the foreign policy variables. Certainly, no one can expect a foreign policy to pursue a total a single path. A foreign policy deviates, because it is exposed to the influence a number of foreign policy variables that impel that foreign policy to alter its path thereby causing a foreign policy failure.

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Understanding Foreign Policy Failures

Foreign policy failures is a phenomenon that states sooner or later are likely to confront in their foreign relations. In foreign policy, an incorrect foreign policy action that makes negative impact on a state's interests is called a failure. What makes a foreign policy a failed one is the cost that it imposes on the position of that particular state in the international order. A foreign policy failure may cause a state to lose her influence on the international stage or even her sovereignty. In this sense, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was a failure, because just after the liberation of Kuwait, Iraq lost her sovereignty and Saddam Hussein became the personal target of the Middle East policies of the United States. Foreign policy failures erupt due to misestimating the foreign policy action of other states. In the path towards the Crimean War disaster, Czar Nicholas I of Russia made this mistake by neglecting the balance of power concerns of Britain and France. Both states felt compelled to join the war against Russia, otherwise Nicholas I could make Russia a threatening naval power in the Eastern Mediterranean having struck a fatal blow to the Ottoman Empire.

Foreign policy of an administration or a party in power faces failure if there is no logic of sustaining such a foreign policy on behalf of keeping or furthering that particular state's foreign policy interests. For, that particular state has already depleted her all resources and alternatives on behalf of achieving her presumed foreign policy goal. She feels her international position weak on behalf of maintaining the foreign policy path that she had adopted. The state has almost no allies or has lost the confidence of the significant members of the international community since her moves are no longer evaluated credible. The case of failure rises to climax...
especially when a foreign policy enters into a phase of self-depletion by the decline of its foreign policy alternatives to minimum.

I believe that in analyzing foreign policy failures what is supposed to occupy a foreign policy analyst’s mind is what makes it easier on behalf of a state to be tempted by an incorrect action in its foreign policy since every foreign policy decision maker or machinery acts according to a certain rationality. In this sense, Kaiser Wilhelm’s foreign policy was remarkable in drifting Germany to a confrontation with Great Britain as she could not avoid being exposed to the neo-realist pressures of the international system. In this quest, I believe that understanding these incorrect actions through fluctuations in foreign policy variables will be quite illuminating as foreign policy variables are the main determinants in the course of a foreign policy.

As obvious to everyone, the foreign policy variables that play determinative role in foreign policy behavior of states are size, individual, geography, the international order, ideology/regime, decision-making machinery, social-cultural values indicators and economic dynamics (mostly industrial-technological power). Since each of the foreign policy variables has the potential to impel a state to an incorrect foreign policy behavior, foreign policy failures arise as a result of dramatic fluctuations in the foreign policy variables of the states. If one or more of the variables achieve to become dominant over the others, it may lead to foreign policy failures. In a certain phase of a foreign policy of a state, there can be fluctuations in at least in one of the foreign policy variables of a state. These fluctuations may be effective in impelling states to make incorrect behavior in their foreign policy decisions. A vacuum in the international order may encourage expansionist tendencies on behalf states. An idiosyncrasy of a leader may be determinative enough for the worsening of a crisis. Economic dynamics of a country may cause
enticing motives in encouraging adventurist and expansionist moves. Domestic dynamics like the rise of national sentiments may be strong enough to reduce a decision maker to an adaption behavior. Size matters in pushing states into incorrect foreign policy decisions since size difference among states signifies different objectives and expectations in foreign policy. Great power actors will be more confident to pursue a hegemonic foreign policy vis-à-vis the medium and the small actors. The decision making machinery on its own may drift a foreign policy to an incorrect path. In his memoirs, Mikhail Gorbachev attributes the deployment of SS-20 missiles to the pressure of the military-industry complex on the Brezhnev leadership. He admits that as a result of this incorrect decision, the United States deployed Pershing II missiles on Western German soil which had the capacity of hitting the densely populated parts of the Soviet Union maximum in five minutes. The fluctuations in one of the variables increase their impact in so far as other variables such as size, the individual or the geography are encouraged to exert more pressure on the foreign policy path or at least go in harmony with it and this will suffice to make failure in foreign policy an inevitability.

A good foreign policy simply is foreign policy that is strong and flexible enough to maximize interests of a state while demonstrating the best adaptive ability it can. In this sense, ideological pressures on the foreign policy path of a state may damage it by ushering in rigidity. Such pressures may cause more serious consequences especially if it achieves to subdue the other variables to itself. It can cause much more negative impact on foreign policy if it does not allow any variable to make balancing effect on itself. In that case, a foreign policy path gets into the guidance of an ideology. On the other hand, if it is encouraged by other foreign variables such as geography or the size, it renders an ideology much easier to create its own rationality.
in impelling a foreign policy to a failure. We see the perfect example of an ideological foreign policy in the foreign policy of Nazi Germany’s which neglected the nation’s strategic objectives. Such a negligence bears the risk of narrowing the area of manoeuvre and minimize opportunities for any strategic cooperation or alliance. In addition to this, it is quite usual for an ideological foreign policies to neglect the harmony between means and ends which is essential in a foreign policy rationality. Especially, doctrinal states seeking to reshape a political geography may disregard the costs that they will be exposed to pay. As the doctrinal founder of fascism, Mussolini Italy launched an expansionist foreign policy despite the fact that it was far from possessing the sufficient economic and military means. The nation was badly dependent upon imported oil, coal, iron and raw materials, which risked Italy’s maintaining a total war. Without sufficient resources, Mussolini threw his country into another great power war which was impossible to win without the support of Germany.

Ideological foreign policies signify invitation to rigidity in so far as they become complementary element of a radical domestic political project. Since accomplishing its ideological goals in foreign policy is considered as an inseparable component of, say, forming a nationalistic generation, the party will persist in reaching these goals. Therefore, the real risk for a nation emerges how significance foreign policy occupies in the political project of a party. In so far as the new foreign policy or the new external environment nourishesthe party ideology and the masses behind it, foreign policy will lose its flexibility. However, more serious problems are likely to emerge if an ideology finds a rationality for itself to identify foreign policy with that particular state’s regime and basic values. In the eyes of many doctrinal parties in power, foreign policy is seen as realm that they will foster the ideals of the
party. Furthermore, ideological fervent regimes will be quite sympathetic to pursue an offensive foreign policy in order to demonstrate their ideological appeal. Iranian supreme leader Khomeini demonstrated one of the best examples of this by making the anti-American rhetoric one of the linchpins of the fervent Islamic revolution. Thus, *primäts der ausßenpolitik* occupies a significant place in ideological foreign policies since success in foreign policy is regarded as something that is assumed to boost the confidence of the masses towards the party in power. As a result of this, ideological foreign policy creates its own rationality to the extent that it creates an appealing external environment for the masses. The party under the guidance of an ideological foreign policy regard itself as a political actor who has a historical responsibility in accomplishing a mission. This missionary approach invites negative consequences such as loss of the flexibility as tight as they feel allegiance to the mission. That is one of the reasons why parties that exert ideological pressure on the usual foreign policy path of that state cannot help setting expansionist goals in foreign policy.

What is striking in most of the ideological foreign policies is that there has to exist almost a foe to be challenged or defeated. This might be ‘the imperialist’, ‘the uncivilized world’, ‘the Zionists’ or ‘the evil axis.’ It is very common to make reference to a “golden age,” that state or nation enjoyed long years of a hegemonic position. “Great again”, “a new age” slogans refer to this fact.

Ideology as a variable can well expose a foreign policy to an adventurous path as ideological fervent parties are inclined to pick an issue in order to use it as a leverage. One of the best examples of this fact was Mussolini’s picking Ethiopia in his expansionist foreign policy. Yet, as opposed to Mussolini’s expectations, the costs of the Ethiopian adventure were much more than he had assumed beforehand which
played a significant role in the decline of Italian military power during the Second World War. Likewise, Nasser’s Six-Day War campaign against Israel and the Bush administration’s war against the Saddam regime are the examples that can shed light to this fact. Nasser tied the success of his pan-Arab ideology to the victory in a new Arab-Israeli war which would make a ripple effect on the appeal of Nasserism in the whole Arab world. Yet, Nasser’s defeat in the Six-Day War led to his fall and demise of pan-Arab ideology. In the Bush administration’s invasion of Iraq, it is not hard to see that, the neo-conservatist ideology dominated American foreign policy not to give any chance to any other check in American foreign policy. In the eyes of neo-conservatives, the United States would only be safe if “anti-freedom forces” were preempted posing a threat to the basic values of the United States. Following the 9/11 attacks, the neo-conservative foreign policy team focused their attention on Iraq and set the stage to persuade the American public for the rationality of such an invasion. Within the week of the attacks, the war cabinet determined Iraq among the first round of military targets. Earlier, one of the prominent neo-conservatives, Daniel Bell had admitted correctly that ‘being ideological you have prefabricated ideas.’ In the eyes of the neo-conservatives, Iraq would be the arena to demonstrate the tenets of the neo-conservative doctrine of military preemption, regime change, the merits of exporting democracy and a vision of American power that is fully engaged and never apologetic. Indeed, neo-conservatives regarded Iraq as a strategic asset that they would regard as symbol for the protection of the values that they had believed in. It would take its place in the American foreign relations history heralding the emergence of ‘The New American Century.’ With the counterproductive impact of the Iraqi invasion, the American public has lost confidence in the utility of use of force which might devoid any future U.S. administration of such an alternative even if
strategic rationality involves it.

By saying all these, it is essential to admit that not every ideological foreign policy pursue adventurist or expansionist goals. It may not be adequate on behalf of the ideology variable to impel a foreign policy to adventurist goals since size or international order variables may exert a balancing effect in hindering such a deviation. Yet, in the Bush administration’s invasion of Iraq, nearly unipolar position of the U.S., i.e. the size variable, has rendered any check on its foreign policy impossible. The individual variable was in total harmony with the ideological variable. The international order was not so tense to encourage an invasion, however it could not hinder slipping of a superpower towards an adventurist foreign policy.

**The AKP Revisionism vs. Turkish Foreign Policy**

States that are most likely to face failures in their foreign policies are the ones whose foreign policy variables are more inclined to get into the state of flux. In this context, we need to admit that Turkish foreign policy is one of the hardest foreign policies in terms of maintaining a stable and coherent path. Given the foreign policy variables of Turkey, it obvious that the foreign policy path is inclined to be exposed to deviations. Especially, following the dissolution of bipolar international system, foreign policy variables of Turkey have been exposed to serious fluctuations and as result of this, interactions among each other have strengthened. The variables have reached to a position of much more indifference and this has exerted an unprecedented pressure on Turkish foreign policy.

In assessing the weight of the foreign policy variables, before everything it is obvious to see that Turkish foreign policy is one of the preeminent states that is exposed to the impact of the international systemic shifts since Turkey is situated in
one of the preeminent geographies that is directly affected by the change in the international system. It is not possible to observe such a dynamic political geography in any other political geography in the world. The political geography that Turkey is located renders it much easier to deviate from its usual path. We know very well that economic growth is one of the preeminent factors that cause deviations in foreign policy paths. In this sense, Turkey has increased her economic strength which has exerted pressure on its usual foreign policy path. Turkey has risen to the eighteenth largest economy in the world reaping the benefits of globalization on her benefit. Furthermore, she has gained self-esteem by transforming her global economic position into a foreign aid donor country from an aid recipient one. What is also remarkable in Turkish foreign policy that social/cultural variable plays a very crucial role which is one of the major factors that puts Turkish foreign policy in a continuous state of flux. Just because of this, there is no doubt that Turkish foreign policy is one of the foreign policies that merits distinct emphasis since it rests on a delicate balance between the traditional Western oriented path and the cultural and geographical elements influencing it. Political Islam has been an indispensable part of Turkish politics since the early nineties. The political culture in Turkey has a nature of paving the way for the rise of charismatic political figures. Also, in the Turkish society, nationalistic sentiments have always been high and the society as whole is not satisfied with Turkey's traditional position of being a U.S. ally and a NATO member. There is a high expectation within the society to see Turkey as an independent power alleging rivalry to the great powers. Although Turkish foreign policy has pursued a Western oriented path since the end of the Second World War, it has always been open to the pressures of the Islamist movements which have always strove to create an alternative to Western democratic
Having benefited from the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and the subsequent Bosnia, Chechen conflicts nationalist and Islamic political powers have increased their power. No one can deny that a considerable part of Turkish society regarded the Chechen conflict as the just cause of the Chechen people. Therefore, especially among the conservative population, religious/cultural sentiments outweighed to realpolitik even at the expense of jeopardizing relations with Russia. The state that Turkish foreign policy has got into has underlined the vulnerability of the basic values of the Turkish republic against identity politics that the regional dynamics have set the stage. The traditional foreign policy path confronted hardship in assimilating these religious/cultural challenges. These religious/cultural challenges have created to a strong base for the rise of Islamic parties. Consequently, reinforcement of the domestic-foreign policy connection has caused serious nuisances on behalf of adapting to the circumstances of post-Cold War international order. This connection has consolidated the tendencies of the Islamists or the emerging moderate Islamists to tailor a new role model for Turkey in the international order.

It is obvious to see that the dynamic character of the foreign policy variables Turkey has is tempting enough to encourage adventurist tendencies and upset the macro stability in her foreign relations. By macro stability, I mean the general political and economic and communitarian well-being of a state in the international order. In other words, macro stability in foreign relations is simply the harmonization of political, economic and communitarian interests for a stable foreign policy. In order to keep this macro stability, that particular state must not take steps that would jeopardize her position in the international order. This includes her relations that she owes her current position, her vital international engagements, economic factors such as
energy and other raw materials procurement, foreign trade, tourism revenues and also her responsibilities as a member of the international community.

Having got into the pressure of its foreign policy variables, beginning from the mid-nineties, we observe an actor that cannot be easily kept within the parameters of her traditional foreign policy path. When the international system has lost its control on the regional actors as a consequence of the end of bipolarity, the emerging geography in the post-Cold War era that Turkey belongs to, has struck the greatest blow to the Western oriented path of Turkish foreign policy by allowing Turkey to demonstrate her potential to act independently and manifest herself as a rising power as in the Eurasia. As a result of this, Turkish foreign policy has entered new phase that would face the costs incrementalism.

Any ideological challenge against the mainstream political paths - the Kemalist left of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) or Menderes-Demirel conservative path which have never questioned Turkey’s Western oriented foreign policy absolutely had to target the Western orientation of Turkish foreign policy. Therefore, it was impossible to imagine that an ideological challenge to Kemalism could do without challenging the traditional path of Turkish foreign policy especially in absence of a bipolar control. It is a fact that Islamic and moderate Islamic parties have always envisioned a renaissance for the Islamic world that Turkey would play a leading role. Islamic parties based their argument on the unsustainability of the traditional Turkish foreign policy since they have regarded her Western oriented foreign policy no more than implementing the geopolitical task by the Western world or civilization. That is why Kemalist thinking has always remained vulnerable to the pressures of the Ottoman past and the attacks of the Islamic movements. The traditional path of
Turkish foreign policy has been identified with serving to the interests of U.S.-Israel partnership in the region.

Neo-Ottomanism as external the reflection of the Islamic conservatism has become the name of the revisionist challenge against the traditional path of Turkish foreign policy which has implied designing a costume for a new foreign policy identity. The neo-Ottomanist tendencies has begun to exert pressure on Turkish foreign policy just after the end of the Cold War. Turgut Özal, president of Turkey in the early 1990s, visualized a new foreign alternative by declaring that a new gate has been opened to Turkey with the emergence of the independent Turkic republics in Central Asia, ex-Soviet the Black Sea states and Azerbaijan which Turkey has regarded as a natural ally. The British journalist David Barchard, in his work ‘Turkey and the West’ published in 1985 suggested neo-Ottomanism as one of the possible avenues in the future of Turkish foreign policy. In this work, Barchard stated: ‘Consciousness of the imperial Ottoman past is a much more politically potent force in Turkey than Islam and, as Turkey regains economic strength, it will be increasingly tempted to assert itself in the Middle East as a leader.’ We have to admit that the emerging geography has set the stage for impelling Turkey to a missionary goal. This missionary goal has signified a sense of responsibility in order to bring wealth, peace and stability to the region in a paxOttomanica sense.

While the variables of Turkish foreign policy were in a state of flux, with its coming to power in 2002, AKP party’s revisionism has been the most remarkable challenge against the traditional Western oriented foreign policy of the Turkish republic since 1923. I believe that the main problem on behalf of Turkey’s foreign policy path is that Turkey could not finalize her own thinking revolution similar to an American or French one, therefore the civilization question has continued to
occupy the agenda of the Turkish politics. The Kemalist political thinking could not achieve to make Western democracy model as the basic value of the nation and its failure to fend off Islamic movements as its anti-thesis. It is a fact that Islamic and moderate Islamic parties have always envisioned a renaissance for the Islamic world that Turkey would play a leading role. Islamic parties based their argument on the unsustainability of the traditional Turkish foreign policy since they have regarded her Western oriented foreign policy no more than implementing the geopolitical task by the Western world or civilization. Therefore, I regard AKP revisionism in Turkish politics as something that would sooner or later emerge as a result of the failure of the mainstream conservative parties. When politics cannot achieve to overcome civilizational questions, it ushers in a radical shifts in foreign policy. Neo-Ottomanism has been the name of the revisionist challenge against the traditional path of Turkish foreign policy which has implied designing a costume for a new foreign policy identity. This missionary goal has signified a sense of responsibility in order to bring wealth, peace and stability to the region in a paxOttomanica sense. AKP party regarded neo-Ottomanism as a missionary goal to bring an alternative to Western oriented path of Turkish foreign policy.

On behalf of AKP party, the revision of the Turkish foreign policy cannot be held apart from ideological transformation of Turkey’s basic political values. AKP is one of the political parties that its values can only exist and consolidate itself provided that domestic and foreign policy mutually keeps nurturing each other. It is essential to admit that AKP does not resemble to any other political actor in the Turkish political life. AKP does not resemble to any traditional conservative party such as Justice Party of Menderes, True Path Party of Demirel or Motherland Party of Özal not does it resemble to Islamic Welfare Party of Erbakan. I believe that, we can regard AKP
as the spokesperson of the ‘Turkish-Islamic Synthesis’ which was the main thesis of ‘AydınlarOcağı’, a conservative public policy research organization founded in the 1970s, which regarded Turkish nationalism and Islam as an inseparable value from each other. In constructing its ideology, AKP party was realistic to see that it could not exclude Turkish nationalism on behalf of generating a strong conservative power base.

In AKP ideology, foreign policy-domestic policy connection plays a crucial role. AKP ideology owes a remarkable portion of its essence to the global role that Turkey is assumed to play, because it would signify a reference to Turkey’s greatness, i.e. the Ottoman past. Therefore, AKP regards itself as a political party that can consolidate its power with a strong foreign and domestic politics connection. Due to this fact, in the eyes of AKP foreign policy is an indispensable component in the achievement of its goals. If its goals are achieved, the party would gain a brand new appeal for especially in the eyes of the new generation. It would make a strong emphasis on the birth of the ‘New Turkey’. As the young generation witnesses the increasing role of Turkey in the international order as well as in the region, it would gain a new self-esteem in this emerging ‘New Turkey’. In other words, this revisionist foreign policy would be a aspiration and driving force in the creation of the “New Turkey” in the eyes of the young generation. When it comes to political philosophy, in so far as AKP could create a new democracy model for the Islamic world, Turkey would consolidate her position in the international order which was the main strategy of the AKP party in order to raise Turkey to ascendancy. If AKP can achieving to make a synthesis of democracy and Islam so that the country will be called democratic and at the same time become an appealing political model for the

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Islamic world. That’s why, AKP regards the Muslim Brotherhood as one of the building blocks of the model that it seeks to be the pioneer of. In this direction, it was quite remarkable that the Muslim Brotherhood founded a party in Libya in March 2012 and chose the name ‘Justice and Development Party’ for itself.\(^8\)

AKP party had a vision of creating Turkey’s own political geography in the region, because it has sought a strong alternative to the traditionally Western orientation of Turkey. In other words, it has been seeking a political sphere that Turkey will have more freedom to shape and thereby demonstrating to the Western world it could form a strong alternative to the usual path of Turkish foreign policy. In this vision, the primary goal of AKP was to raise Turkey as a new power center by revitalizing her position in the Islamic geography with the boost of neo-Ottomanism. By doing this AKP has this would strengthen her global position since it would involve a new definition of her relations with United States, Russia and the EU. Nevertheless, by saying all these, it is an undeniable fact that the disappointment of Turkey on behalf of her membership to EU has played a considerable role in the emergence of this foreign policy vision.

AKP has sought to achieve this strategy with the vision, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davudoğlu had developed. Davudoğlu is one of the most significant foreign policy revisionists the Kemalist republic has ever seen. He perceives international politics with a strong notion of geopolitics. In this perception, it is understood that he is inspired by \textit{lebensraum}\textsuperscript{1} concept of Friedrich Ratzel which implies a dynamic way of life on behalf of nations. In his book, \textit{Stratejik Derinlik}\textsuperscript{2}, it is quite remarkable that the main references are made to the most familiar concepts of geopolitics terminology like pivotal region, boundaries, culture, influence, basin

\textsuperscript{1}Strategic Depth
etc.\textsuperscript{9} He believes in the reactivation of Turkey’s geopolitics as a strategic asset so that Turkey rescues herself from the dictates of her Cold War past thereby rising as anew actor in the world politics. He states his views as: ‘Geopolitical positon must no longer be regarded as a means of status quo keeping strategy tended by the motive of defending the borders. Adversely, this geopolitical position must be regarded as a means of a gradual opening up to the world and converting regional influence to a global one.’\textsuperscript{10}

With an Islamic background and strong notion of geopolitics, Davudoğlu was a tailored-made figure in the eyes of the AKP party in order to formulate and deepen the party’s foreign policy vision. He has been regarded just like a foreign policy engineer who would achieve the most courageous transition in Turkish foreign policy. In this context, the remarks of Davudoğlu are quite significant in illuminating how the party has place Turkey’s position in the international order. In a speech he gave in Sarajevo on October 16, 1999, Davudoğlu said: ‘Just as the Ottoman Balkans was the center of world politics in sixteenth century, we will make, Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus the center of world politics. This is the goal of Turkish foreign policy and we will achieve this.’\textsuperscript{11} In another occasion, while commenting on the Israeli assault on Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in November 2014, Davudoğlu said:’ The last era of liberty Jerusalem had lived, was in our era. Jerusalem is the trust left by the last Ottoman soldier to us. Even if everyone forgets, Jerusalem is our cause and will continue to be so forever.’\textsuperscript{12} We find the most courageous challenge of Davudoğlu’s revisionism as adverse to the Kemalist foundations of the Turkish republic in these following remarks: ‘In political aspect, Turkey has to meet the Ottoman history at some place. Even if it does not meet, the incidents will dictate it to do so. Every society finds its identity in the last civilization that it had founded. It was
the Ottomans that we have embodied as the final of our civilization. In this regard, it is hard to cherish an identity that excludes the Ottoman identity.” Davudoğlu cannot imagine a Turkish foreign policy without a mission that cares about the well-being of the peoples from Balkans to Afghanistan. When a governor in Mazar-i Sharif complained that they did not have school and hospital, Davudoğlu then the Turkish Foreign Minister, instructed TİKA, that is, Turkish Agency for Development and Cooperation, to meet the necessities of the governor as if he were the governor of any province in Turkey. Likewise, Davudoğlu has stated in his book that he has not seen the destinations of Turkish Airlines as the sole destinations of an airline but as the countries and their weight that will play a role in Turkey’s strategic vision for the future.” These remarks were in full harmony with the views of Mr. Erdoğan as the mentor of AKP philosophy, Mr. Erdoğan as prime minister while addressing to the public just after his election victory in 2011 stated that, “Today as much as Istanbul, Sarajevo has won; as much as Izmir, Beirut has won, as much as Ankara, Damascus has won; as much as Diyarbakır, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, West Bank, Jerusalem and Gazza have won. This foreign policy vision has made Davudoğlu the most prominent figure in advocating neo-Ottoman oriented Turkish foreign policy. In Davudoğlu’s vision, a new Turkish foreign policy who can achieve to adapt the Ottoman past to the Turkish foreign policy realities would be the correct response to Turkey’s quests for her future foreign policy.

All these courageous challenges have evoked questions that the AKP party had to find coherent responses on behalf of the sustainability of Turkish foreign policy: Could Turkey’s macro balance endure such a radical shift without a failure or even a crisis? How would Turkey be able to subdue her traditional Western engagements with this foreign policy new vision?
In this revisionism, AKP initiated to bring a real alternative to the Western oriented Turkish foreign policy path by making the Islamic world an attraction of its own for Turkish foreign policy. AKP increased Turkey’s prestige in the Islamic world by furthering the political and economic relations. AKP government achieved to make a Turkish general secretary to head the Islamic Cooperation Organization. TİKA intensified its efforts in the Islamic world rather than the Turkic world which should have been its main focus. But AKP’s quest to construct a new foreign policy identity was so vivid not to be confined to the Islamic world. First, by intensifying its activities through TİKA in Africa, Balkans and Caucasus, Turkish foreign policy has sought to gain a soft power identity. Furthermore, Turkish foreign policy was giving the signals of the willingness to marginalize the Western element in Turkish foreign policy. At the beginning of 2013, Mr. Erdoğan expressed the willingness of Turkey to become full member to Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In September 2013 AKP government agreed to make a deal with a Chinese firm CPMIEC in order to construct the Turkey’s first long-range air and anti-missile defense system. Such a bold move has called Turkey’s position within the Transatlantic security system into question. There is no doubt that the Eastern alternative, mainly getting closer to the Islamic world has brought a strategic alternative to Turkish foreign policy, but it was a fact that it has also set the stage to make adventurous moves on behalf of Turkish foreign policy. It was obvious that especially Middle Eastern geography was enticing enough to deviate Turkish foreign policy from its usual path.

In this revisionism, it was obvious from the beginning that the party would make the anti-Israeli posture one of the linchpins of its foreign policy. Using Palestine issue as a leverage was assumed to provide Turkey a stronger base in the region and gain her a soft power capability. Therefore, it was not astonishing that Turkish-
Israeli relations experienced its severest crises in the history of the bilateral relations when ‘İHH’ that is, ‘The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief’ which is a Muslim Brotherhood affiliate decided to send humanitarian aid to Gaza which was under Israeli embargo by the ‘Freedom to Gaza’ fleet. Yet Israel did not allow such an in order to prevent a possible arms transfer to Gaza and raided the’ Mavi Marmara’boat which led to the death of nine Turkish citizens on May 31, 2010. ‘Freedom to Gaza’ mission was regarded as an act of provocation in the eyes of Israel in order to get the backing of the world public opinion. By making Turkey part of Palestine Issue, AKP party aspired to lead the anti-Israel opposition in the region. Therefore, it was no surprise that that Israel would to be the scapegoat for the achievement of this foreign policy vision. Such an anti-Israeli posture has gained Turkey a public support in the region while at the same time nourishing adventurist tendencies. The ‘Mavi Marmara’ incident was significant in heralding how AKP philosophy was inclined to narrow the scope of Turkish diplomacy.

I believe that the most striking handicap of AKP foreign policy on behalf of furthering the goals of Turkish foreign policy the party ideology was not apt act in a raison d’état logic to keep the interests of Turkish foreign policy. With its neo-Ottomanist position, the party was poised to use every opportunity to deviate course of Turkish foreign policy form its traditional path and the so called Arab Spring has granted the party this opportunity. This has made Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates a reality of Turkish foreign policy. AKP government took a position in harmony with Muslim Brotherhood affiliates such as el-Nahda Movement in Tunisia, Hamas in Palestine, National Transition Council in Libya. The party’s regarding

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almost every major issue in the Middle East as an issue of Turkish foreign policy that Turkey has direct interest has drifted Turkey’s foreign policy to adventurism and eroded its foreign policy. As a reaction to Erdoğan, Syrian President Bashar Assad stated that Mr. Erdoğan’s motive to aid and defend the interests of Muslim Brotherhood had been one of the linchpins of AKP’s Syria policy. He added that Mr. Erdoğan had not shown the same reaction when Israel attacked the Shiites in Lebanon. While Mohammed Morsi was in power in Egypt, Turkey and Egypt were in full harmony in supporting anti-Assad forces in Syria. On July 2-3, 2012, Egypt hosted a conference aimed at backing the Syrian Opposition. AKP and the Morsi regime regarded Syria as a model country just as the neo-conservatives regarded Iraq. Having achieved the fall of Assad regime, Syria would make a rippling effect in the region. That is why one of the greatest frustrations for the AKP government was the downfall of Mohammed Morsi in Egypt and AKP party regarded the Sisi regime as illegitimate. Furthermore, Turkey asked the U.N. Security Council to impose sanctions against the Sisi regime. Following this, Turkey’s ambassador to Cairo Hüseyin Avni Botsalı was declared as persona non grata by the Sisi administration in November 2013. In Libya, AKP government has refused to recognize the officially recognized Tobruk government and has sent arms to Tripoli based National Transition Council factions. In her policy against in Iraq, following the March 2010 parliamentary elections Ankara supported the Sunni leader Ayyad Allawi to form the new government in Iraq. Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki accused Turkey of interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq following the remarks of Mr. Erdoğan’s criticizing the treatment of Hashemi. Iraqi Vice President has been given an asylum by Ankara against the death penalty given by the Maliki government. All these demonstrate obviously that Turkish foreign policy was drifted to Sunni centered foreign policy since
it made much easier on behalf of AKP party to increase its influence in the Middle East. Polarizing with “the Shiite axis” has given the party much greater opportunity to clinch itself in the Middle East. Certainly, the rivalry with Iran has made the Sunni political forces an inevitable asset to use as a leverage, but it was a fact that the party would sooner or later regard them as a strategic asset. But adversely this has nourished the chaos in the region. It is quite remarkable that Turkey’s traditional ally, the United States had to make severe criticism to Turkey on that. U.S. Vice President Joe Biden in a speech at Harvard Kennedy School on October 2, 2014 expressed the consequences of AKP’s involvement in the Middle East as ‘Our allies in the region were our largest problem in Syria’, explaining that Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were ‘so determined to take down Assad,’ that in a sense they started a ‘proxy Sunni-Shia war’ by pouring ‘hundreds of millions of dollars and tens of thousands of tons of weapons’ towards anyone who would fight against Assad.

**Conclusion**

Whether it should be called as the revenge of Ottoman Empire or not, AKP party has sought to create a sphere of its own that would raise Turkey to the leadership position in an international system evolving towards a sub-system dominant one. Yet such a foreign policy guided by the ideology of neo-Ottomanism has drifted Turkish foreign policy to an unprecedented impasse. AKP party has risked Turkish foreign policy by ascribing the success of neo-Ottomanism to the triumph of Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates in the region, Egypt, Syria in particular, but it has been a blowback for the party. This policy was a total blindness omitting the macro balance and Turkey’s strategic priorities. It has reduced flexibility to a minimum while maximizing rigidity in foreign policy. I believe that this has been the greatest trap that Turkish foreign policy had fallen in the history of her foreign
relations. In other words, the desire for benefiting from the dynamics of the region has upset the macro stability in Turkish foreign policy. Because AKP party foreign policy was not in a position to use the upheavals in the Arab world as a leverage without upsetting the macro stability of Turkish foreign policy. Therefore, Turkish foreign policy was in no position of achieving such an adaptation since macro balance of Turkish foreign policy could not bear such an extent of revisionism. Instead of leading a new center, the result of the AKP foreign policy has been divisive rather than forming a center that regional actors would adapt their foreign policy. It has also been clarified that it was not possible to adapt the strategic vision of Davudoğlu to the realities of Turkish foreign policy. It was no surprise that just as Turkey declared that she had accepted the NATO missile shield project in September 2011, Iran threatened to strike the shield site.

Not having taken the political dynamics in the Middle East following the Arab Spring, AKP party violated the cardinal rules of foreign policy. It must have kept in mind that pursuing an influence policy in the Middle East is one of the toughest challenges for the state actors especially for the ones in quest for increasing their market share. The actors in the region, both state and non-state, demonstrate a great variety and surpass any other political region on behalf permitting a foreign policy to make rational estimations. Therefore, any state intending to penetrate into the Middle East in order to consolidate her position, has to give its diplomacy the maximum flexibility since the region is extremely open to obscurities. In such a region, Turkey has committed a strategic error by breaking off relations with the Assad regime. Besides, for a regional power like Turkey it was a must to get the backing of at least one of the great powers influential in the region, namely the United States and Russia. Under these circumstances, what a rational
foreign policy would involve is to keep the area of maneuver as large as possible in order to give diplomacy the maximum flexibility. This adventurous move of Turkish foreign policy has demonstrated that Turkey is far from playing as an independent actor in the Middle East without the strategic support of a great power.

The cost of all these was the beginning a self-depletion process on behalf of Turkish foreign policy in the sense of losing the confidence of the international community as well as in the sense of resources. Turkish diplomacy has lost its influence and reputation within the international community. AKP government has been accused by the prestigious members of the international community of condoning strengthening of ISIS. Turkey’s influence in the region has considerably fallen and Turkish diplomacy has lost the capability to make diplomatic moves in the region. Furthermore, the Obama administration came to the point of regarding Russia as indispensable actor for the resolution of the Syrian conflict which was enough to marginalize the Turkish-American strategic cooperation or vision in the region. Therefore, it is possible to understand this self-depletion process similar to a market sense, because in their foreign policies states just like companies aim at enlarging their market share in regional or world politics just as Bismarck achieved it by building his system of alliance in Europe. As adverse to this, the foreign policy of AKP has equaled to the shrinking of the market share Turkish diplomacy held in the political geography it has focused on. The downing of Russian jet Su-24 was just one of the consequences of self-depletion of the AKP foreign policy. Therefore it was not coincidence that incorrect moves followed each other like a chain reaction effect from breaking off relations with Israel and Assad, worsening relations with NATO, worsening relations with EU, and the United States and polarizing relations with Russia. North Atlantic alliance was remembered by AKP government just in order to
fix the negative consequences of this foreign policy. With the downing of the Russian jet, Russia has gained a greater leverage in the Middle East which enabled her to expand her area of maneuver. In the end Turkey’s security problems have soared enormously. Turkey has become much more open to terrorist actions, tourism revenues have fallen, energy concerns have soared and deteriorating relations with Russia has hit her economy enormously. Moreover, ‘the Syrian Pandora Box’ has caused to relapse her territorial integrity obsessions. The blank check given to anti-Assad forces has led to security concerns regarding her territorial integrity on behalf of Turkey which has been the obvious indicator of a failed foreign policy. Having realized that its macro balance was upset, AKP party has initiated a rapprochement with Israel due to the rising energy concerns since Turkey is nearly 75 percent externally energy dependent country.

The AKP experience in Turkish foreign policy has been useful in understanding how fluctuations in foreign policy variables drift a nation’s foreign policy to a failure when one of the variables, the ideological one, has encouraged the others to get into tighter interaction and thereby deviating the routine path of the foreign policy. Briefly, the introduction of the ideological element to the Turkish foreign policy has foreign failure much easier since there were enough variables setting the stage for that.
Notes
2 Paul Kennedy, Rise and Fall of Great Powers, p. 294.

10 Ibid., p. 117.
11 Baskın Oran, Türk Dış Politikası Cilt 3 (2001-2012) (Turkish Foreign Policy), p. 199.
12 http://www.trt.net.tr/haber/herkes-unutsa-kudus-bizim-davamizdir-90130.html
14 The government agency whose mission is to tighten Turkey’s economic and cultural relations with the Turkic world.
15 Baskın, p. 199.
16 Ahmet Davutoğlu, Teoriden Pratiğe, (From Theory to Practice), p. 137.
17 Oran, p. 197.
18 Oran, p. 224.
19 Ibid.
21 11-12 January 2012 Cumhuriyet