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## *Turkey's Increasing Role in Afghanistan*

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This paper is briefly dealing with the current situation in Afghanistan within the context of Turkey's increasing role in Afghanistan. Turkish-Afghani relations are examined in terms of politics and economy while Turkish foreign policies towards Afghanistan and the Turkish-Pakistani-Afghani triple summit attempts are analyzed. Additionally, Turkey's security and socio-economic contributions in Afghanistan are emphasized. Turkey's unwillingness to send troops to Afghanistan for operational purposes that is frequently debated in national and international circles has been evaluated by stating the advantages and disadvantages of such decision. Turkey's quiet approach between 2001 and 2004 towards Afghanistan, which have been energizing since 2005 and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's visit to Afghanistan on June 2009 have been dealt as well. By considering Davutoglu's policies, aiming to introduce Turkey as a global actor and as the term President of the UNSC (the UN Security Council), it seems that Turkey is preparing to play a more active role in Afghanistan.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan, Turkey-Afghanistan Relations, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkey-Pakistan-Afghanistan Triple Summit.

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# Turkey's Increasing Role in Afghanistan

## Introduction

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's four-day visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan reawoke debates dealing with Turkey's increasing role in Afghanistan once again. Intensifying mutual visits since 2005 also designate Turkey's increasing role and influence in Afghanistan. Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to Afghanistan on 20-21 April 2005 and Afghan President Hamid Karzai's visit to Ankara on 4-7 January 2006 expedited mutual contacts. Later, President Abdullah Gül held a visit to Afghanistan on 26-27 February 2007 which clearly emphasized Afghanistan's priority for Turkey, was followed by several visits on different levels. Those visits are significant as they are the most effective tools of foreign policy and give clues about the foreign policy which is pursued at the time. In this context, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's visits are indicating that Turkey is planning to play a proactive role in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the near future. Moreover, Davutoğlu's visit is a sign that Turkey is playing the global actor and consolidating her role as the term President of the UNSC (the UN Security Council).

This way, Turkey who is pursuing a multi-dimensional and proactive foreign policy since 2003, is becoming a global actor and consulting authority whose expertise in Afghanistani and Pakistani issues -such as global terrorism- which occupy the global agenda since 2001, is widely used. While the instability in Afghanistan is shifting to Pakistan, Turkey's attempt to hold a Turkish-Pakistani-Afghani triple summit is of vital importance. Turkey became a consulting authority in the region for her deep historical and cultural connections with both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moreover, Turkey's attempts to solve Afghanistan's issues by activating socio-economic mechanisms next to military means, seems to have been recognized by NATO and the UN.

## The Current Situation in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a buffer zone among the greater powers such as the USA, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and Iran. The politically and militarily active arena in Afghanistan is destabilizing the region, particularly Pakistan. When it comes to energy, Afghanistan forms a critical bridge as a transport route between Euro-Asia and North-South. For these reasons, Afghanistan stands out as a country of great geopolitical importance. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the US launched an anti-terror struggle in Afghanistan through NATO but after 8 years, stability and security is not maintained in the country yet. In reality, the issue seems to have exceeded beyond both the limits of terrorism and borders of Afghanistan. Moreover, attempts to deal with Afghanistan's non-



military but structural issues -such as the socio-economical bottlenecks- by military means, caused further security and stability deficiencies. Since Afghanistan is located close to rising powers of the Asia-Pacific and on the cross-routes, the country became the battle ground for such interests. Although there was cooperation between the US and Russia against terror in the region, it was merely a short honeymoon<sup>1</sup>.

In fact, the US increased its powers in Afghanistan as the global super-power and deployed in military quarters of neighboring states such as the Hanabad Base in Uzbekistan and Manas Base in Kyrgyzstan<sup>2</sup>. Such move caused suspicion among the regional powers; Russia and China. US existence and activity in the region even paved the way for a Russian-Chinese solidarity and strategic co-operations. As a result, both states issued a resolution through the SCO (Shangai Cooperation Organization) to make the US withdraw from the region<sup>3</sup>. However, the US's fading influence in the region and the tension of 22 February 2009 between Russia and China which occurred due to a problem in the Pacific Ocean and resulted in delivery of a diplomatic note, indicates that the Russian-Chinese cooperation is subject to turn into rivalry<sup>4</sup> soon.

What is more, SCO can be considered as the NATO of Asia. At least Russia is seeing it that way. But SCO is not as developed as NATO and there are distinctive contrasts between the two organizations. Still we can say that SCO is developing into a power-source just like NATO. PM Erdoğan's initiatives indicate that Turkey is willing to develop relations with SCO. But we cannot speak of a clear SCO policy yet.

Today, the US that is in a vicious cycle in Afghanistan in terms of security and stability, had to abandon the neighboring country's bases due to Russia's counter-moves. The most recent example occurred in February this year when Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev declared his decision to close the US Manas Base in Kyrgyzstan<sup>5</sup>. The base was closed immediately at the end of the same month. Thus, the US had to evacuate its last base in the region within 180 days. Similarly, NATO's operations in Afghanistan have also turned into a struggle of existence. Such developments prove that the Afghanistan-centered NATO and the US military operations have failed. However, US decision to withdraw from regional bases in different countries, particularly from those in Afghanistan, serves the interests of Russia China, Iran and even India. But when we take a closer look, we see that the relation between those states (great powers) is not as clear as it seems; in fact it is based on complex policies. For instance, India pursues balance policies with USA against China, while China wants USA to completely withdraw from the region. In the meanwhile, USA is the greatest commercial partner

- 1 Kuniharu Kakihara, "The Post-9/11 Paradigm Shift and Its Effects on East Asia", IIPS Policy Paper 292E, The Institute for International Policy Studies, pp. 1-15, p. 9-10, January 2003. [ <http://www.iips.org/bp292e.pdf>]. Accessed on June 18, 2009.
- 2 Lionel Beehner, "ASIA: U.S. Military Bases in Central Asia", Backgrounder, The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), July 26, 2005. [ <http://www.cfr.org/publication/8440/>]. Accessed on June 18, 2009.
- 3 [http://www.sectsc.org/news\\_detail.asp?id=1753&LanguageID=2](http://www.sectsc.org/news_detail.asp?id=1753&LanguageID=2), [http://www.sectsc.org/news\\_detail.asp?id=1848&LanguageID=3](http://www.sectsc.org/news_detail.asp?id=1848&LanguageID=3). Accessed on June 18, 2009.
- 4 Marcel de Haas, "Russia-China Security Cooperation", 27 Kasim 2006, PINR, Accessed on June 18, 2009. [ [http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view\\_report&report\\_id=588&language\\_id=1](http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=588&language_id=1)].
- 5 David Trilling and Deirdre Tynan, "Kyrgyzstan: President Bakiyev Wants to Close US Military Base Outside Bishkek", Eurasia Insight, EurasiaNet, February 2009. [ <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav020309b.shtml>]. Accessed on June 18, 2009.



of China. China and Russia established common strategies as a part of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) but the medium and long term policies of the two states are controversial as both China and Russia want to establish their own hegemony in the region. Especially the Central Asia energy-economy centered expansion of China is considered as a move to break Russian cartel in the region. On the other hand, all of these states are trying to become influential on Afghanistan for their own interests. Russia supports Tajik groups and Iran supports the Shiite Hazaras for this purpose. Therefore regional states are disturbed of US existence and military actions in the region. To them, Pakistan is drifting into instability because of US policies.

But on the other hand, the US<sup>6</sup> and NATO are pushed to develop new strategies, which can be regarded as a positive development. In fact, NATO's decision to develop new civilian-military strategies in its December 2008 Summit <sup>7</sup> and Obama's search for similar strategies can be evaluated within the same context. Obama's decision to send additional military troops according to the suggestions of Pentagon indicates that he still relies on military strategies. When compared with his predecessor Bush's unilateral policies, the Obama Administration seems to follow a more collaborative policy in International Relations in general and in Afghanistan in specific. Lastly, Afghanistan is the primary issue of the agenda for both the US and NATO. Similar to those of 2001, it is expected that instead of a zero-sum game, relative gains and mutual interests based on the regional state's co-operations will be regarded in Afghanistan policies from now on. In this manner, the US and Russia and NATO and CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) are expected to enter a process of convergence. In such circumstances, Russia and Turkey's contributions are expected as well as those of NATO and the US. Afghanistan increasingly needs Turkey's contribution. Turkey's decisions will affect not only her internal and foreign policies but also the relations of NATO, the US, Russia and Afghanistan. Players such as the US, NATO and Russia want to pull Turkey to the region. Therefore, Turkey's interest for the region will increase in the near future. The question is; what will Turkey's status be within the context of these Afghanistan-centered developments?

One of the major issues of the global agenda became clear when Obama declared in his election campaign that Afghanistan is the major subject of his agenda. In fact, he made the decision to sent 17 to the US and additional troops to Afghanistan as a first act which was not surprising at all<sup>8</sup>. When super power the US stated Afghanistan as its primal issue, the power policies in the region gained momentum instantly<sup>9</sup>. Afghanistan-centered US-Russian, NATO-CSTO, Turkish-US and Turkish-Russian relations showed signs of improvement. This paper is questioning Turkey's position within these Afghanistan-centered developments. Turkey is expected to face internal issues and external decision making processes regarding her relations with

6 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/03/27/A-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/>. Accessed on June 18, 2009.

7 <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-153e.html>. Accessed on June 18, 2009.

8 Helene Cooper, "Putting Stamp on Afghan War, Obama Will Send 17,000 Troops", New York Times, February 17, 2009. [<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/18/washington/18web-troops.html>]. Accessed on June 18, 2009.

9 "Heading Into NATO Summit, Obama Pushes Afghanistan Agenda", PBS, 3 April 2009. [[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/europe/jan-june09/obama\\_04-03.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/europe/jan-june09/obama_04-03.html)]. Accessed on June 18, 2009.



the US, NATO, SCO and Russia because of Afghanistan. Therefore, it was considered to be necessary to make a pre-evaluation regarding Turkey's approach towards the developments in Afghanistan.

### Turkey-Afghanistan Relations: Political Relations

Relations between Turkey and Afghanistan go back to Ottoman Empire Period. As for the state of the Republic of Turkey, the official foundations of the relations between two states were laid with signing of the Turkey-Afghanistan Treaty in Moscow in 1921. The most important aspect of this treaty is Afghanistan's being the first state, which recognized Turkey and its national struggle in the international arena and also for being the first international treaty of the Ankara government. After that, the relations between the two states gained a strategic depth with Turkish-Afghani Treaty of Eternal Amity, which was signed in Ankara on 25 May 1928. The USSR occupied Afghanistan in 1979. During the 1980s, Turkey chose to stay away from Afghanistan. During the Cold War Era, Afghanistan became a battle field between the USSR and USA. In the 1990s Turkey restored its Afghanistan policy due to changing interests when General Dostum formed an autonomous government in North Afghanistan between 1992 and 1997. Energy policies became matter of struggle during these years.

Turkey, which began her supports for formation and development of Afghanistan's government agencies, continues them until today and this situation has become traditional. Today, at this point intensive efforts are made at NATO level in the first place and also in all international platforms in order to save Turkey out of the situation, which Afghanistan currently experiences. In this context, former foreign minister and president of Turkish Assembly Hikmet Çetin's assignment as NATO's Afghanistan Senior Civilian Representative<sup>10</sup> for two consequent terms upon intensive demands, is proving that NATO needs Turkey's expertise in Afghanistan where she has deep historical and cultural boundaries.

### Turkey's Afghanistan Policy

Turkey builds her Afghanistan policy on parameters such as the protection of country's independence and its territorial integrity, procurement of security and stability while saving the country from being the source of radical and fundamentalist trends, terrorism and drug smuggling<sup>11</sup>. Turkey's amicable approach, through which she embraces all groups of the country without any discrimination, makes Turkey a role model to be adopted for her political approach by other regional players in resolution of Afghanistan's issues. It was observed that military means fall short in Afghanistan and the theses, which enable the reconstruction of the country have been lately adopted in NATO-Bucharest summit dated April 2008, which was actually too late. It is striking that in spite of NATO's declaration<sup>12</sup> to apply a civil-military approach, which

10 <http://www.nato.int/cv/scr/cetin-e.htm>. Accessed on June 18, 2009.

11 "Turkey's Political Relations with Afghanistan", Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [[http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-afghanistan.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-afghanistan.en.mfa)]. Accessed on February 03, 2009.

12 "Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008"  
[<http://www.otan.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html>]. Accessed on March 16, 2009.



failed later, Turkey already managed to initiate such approach with the formation of Vardak Provincial Construction Team on November 2006<sup>13</sup>. In this way, by focusing on the reconstruction of Afghanistan, Turkey put diversified projects worth of 77 million dollars into effect. Besides, she has increased her contribution to the reconstruction of Afghanistan up to 200 million Dollars after the June 2008 Paris Conference<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, since 2001 the overall value of Turkey's contributions in the military field (training of the Afghan army and police forces etc.) has reached 100 million U.S. dollars already.

As an effect of its rising military existence in the region, Turkey's relation with these countries can shift from economy-energy to military-security axis. For instance, Turkish-Russian relations based on the fields of economy-energy are leading both countries towards a strategic partnership. Turkey is focused on developing commercial and energy based relations also with China. These relations may shift to a military-security axis and can cause controversies in the future. On the other hand, Turkey's expanding military influence in Afghanistan and its developing profile as a UNSC temporary member indicates to potential gains for Turkey as a security producer. In fact, we see that Turkey's influence on Afghanistan and Pakistan is increasing since 2001. When it comes to security issues, Turkey also stands out as one of the most frequently mentioned states by the international media.

### The Triple Summit Initiative of Turkey-Pakistan-Afghanistan

Turkey-Pakistan-Afghanistan Triple Summit conference (by realizing that the US had failed in gathering Afghanistan and Pakistan before) and Ankara process constitutes the regional dimension of Turkey's policy, which she carries out on socio-economic and security level. At the end of Ankara process, which was initiated among three countries on April 2007, Turkey began to employ the regional approach in the resolution of problems in the region by gathering Afghanistan and Pakistan together. Thus, it was decided that among three countries a joint working group should be established by making Pakistan, which is one of the important sources of the problem in Afghanistan, undertake a constructive role for the solution of the problem. The development of cooperation was aimed by organizing the very first conference of joint working group on July 2007. On October 2007, the constitutional structure of the cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan was formed under the leadership of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB). As for December 2008, by arranging the second triple summit conference in Istanbul, a consensus in bringing security into being in struggle in the fields of military cooperation, terror and drug smuggling was reached between the parties. Intelligence cooperation was determined to be made in third and the last summit realized on April 2009. Summit's procurement of cooperation in a field such as intelligence proves strikingly the distance covered thanks to conferences. Moreover, the fact that the US, Russia and Iran's efforts to

13 "Turkey To Open 27th Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan", The U.S. Department of Defense, November 5, 2006. [<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=2026>]. Accessed on April 23, 2009.

14 "Security Council, 5930th Meeting", [<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9392.doc.htm>]. Accessed on May 03, 2009.



implement the triple summit conferences, which were initiated under the leadership of Turkey, shows not only that these countries follow in Turkey's wake but also that Turkey pursues a leader policy in the region. On the other hand, shifting of terrorism and violence from Afghanistan to Pakistan make triple summit and joint working group more functional and vitally important. The facts that Taliban attacks in Afghanistan arise from Pakistan and the augmentation of the US's NATO losses have started to increase the constraints on Pakistan. In shifting of instability from Afghanistan to Pakistan, the cases of not bringing the boundary of 2430 km. between Afghanistan and Pakistan under control and terror groups' meeting their safe region needs, which are their sine qua non (prerequisite) on this boundary. As a result of the US's pressures, Pakistan army's launching operations in the region augments the existing instability and terror activities paradoxically in the country. Because of the risk that the nuclear weapons in possession of Pakistan, which has become a failed and weak state, could pass into the hands of Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorist organization, the US's following Pakistan-oriented nuclear disarmament policy increases instability in the region. Therefore, nuclear weapons factor attracts attention as another reason in this shifting of instability to Pakistan. In spite of these, the importance of cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan increases and Turkey's role in these issues has an importance, which would influence/determine the regional policy and the fate of Pakistan.

Most importantly, Turkey's Afghanistan-Pakistan common project, its military existence in the region and policies focusing also on the socio-economic aspects besides the military issues, is affecting USA's Afghanistan policy deeply. We also see that Turkey's views on the re-structure process and establishment of a functional economic and political system in Afghanistan are influential in changing USA's related policies. President Obama's new Afghanistan strategy contains issues previously expressed by Turkey, (especially about the handling of Afghanistan and Pakistan issues from a common perspective) which shows Turkey's influence clearly.

### Turkey's contributions in the field of security

The constructive activities, which Turkey carries out in Afghanistan under the leadership of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) provide enhancement of visits between Afghanistan and Turkey and they also form the fundamental basis of Turkey's increasing role and efficiency. Her contributions in Afghanistan in the framework of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) are not only highly appreciated<sup>15</sup> by Afghanistan, the US and NATO but also by the international community. It is expected that the fact that TAF, which has taken over ISAF's Kabul Regional Command twice, is taking over this mission for third time in the following term (August-November 2009), will increase Turkey's importance in the region. In a sense, it can be asserted that primarily local community and then Afghanistan administration, NATO and the US also expect that Turkey's taking over the command. As for the reason of this expectation, it is the belief that TAF, which accomplished all international peace and assistance activities in which it took part, will augment the security and stability in the country by this takeover of command. The fact that the NATO forces hoisted the Turkish flag on their convoys while launching an

15 "Turkey contribution in Afghanistan important: US", ReliefWeb, 01 July 2008, [<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/KKAA-7G55LL?OpenDocument>]. Accessed on June 02, 2009.





operation and returning from the operation in order not to be attacked although it is forbidden, shows the respectability and importance of TAF in Afghanistan. For this reason, TAF's taking over ISAF command has become the expectation of all the players in the region. TAF's this respectability results from the years of the War of Independence and the importance attributed to Afghanistan by Atatürk. It is understood that this importance will increasingly continue in Davutoğlu's period.

## Turkey's Contributions in Socio-economic Field and Economic Relations

Turkey's contributions<sup>16</sup> in Afghanistan, which have become traditional, are enforced in military, security, economic and social fields. In military field, Turkey not only plays a role to provide security and stability in ISAF with approximately 700-800 military and civil personnel in average under the leadership of TAF, but also works intensively for the education of Afghan National Army and Police Forces. The number of trained Afghan policemen and soldiers has reached up to 6.289. In the field of socio-economic development, Turkey carried out construction, repair and furnishing activities with 41 schools, dormitories, 4 hospitals which enable 1 million patients to be treated, 7 clinics, 2 mobile clinics, water tanks, cold storages, sport complexes, children parks. Turkey spent 200 million dollars voluntarily to carry out those activities<sup>17</sup>. By this way Turkey, contributes to establish a socio-economic order in Afghanistan where there isn't a working economy, but smuggling and drugs dominate the economy.

On the other hand, while today in the schools that Turkey founded in Afghanistan 56 to the US and students have education, thanks to the exchange students programs, Afghan students are enabled to receive education in big cities such as Ankara and Istanbul. Together with these long term investments for the development of Afghanistan, studies are carried out simultaneously in a number of fields from education to health, agriculture and employment projects. It can be expressed that Turkey accepts these studies as historical responsibilities<sup>18</sup>. Turkey is appreciated by international society due to her activities in the issue of women, one of the important points of invisible side of Afghanistan that coalition powers aren't interested in and the whole world is not aware of. Turkey is organizing literary, carpet weaving and nutrition courses for the rehabilitation of Afghan women and trying to lay a foundation for a healthy society by performing briefing and awareness-raising studies about the forgotten women rights in Afghanistan.

Lastly, the trade volume between Turkey and Afghanistan reached to 145 million dollars by 2008 and also Turkey became the biggest investor in Afghanistan with her 200 million dollars investment. Apart from these, 63 Turkish companies invested 1.6

16 "Turkish Contributions to Security and Development in Afghanistan", The UN, 22 March 2007, [<http://www.un.int/turkey/page167.html>]. Accessed on June 05, 2009.

17 "Turkish Contributions to Security and Development in Afghanistan", [[http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/IMG/pdf/Turkish\\_contributions.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/IMG/pdf/Turkish_contributions.pdf)]. Accessed on January 15, 2009.

18 Altay Atli, "Afghanistan Looks to Turkey for Development Assistance", A EurasiaNet Commentary, January 24, 2006. [<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav012406.shtml>]. Accessed on June 17, 2009.



billion dollars by undertaking 157 projects in the field of Afghan private sector<sup>19</sup>. On the other hand, the corporate basis was laid to develop economy between two countries with the foundation of Mixed Economy Commission (the first period meeting was held on 26-27 of April 2005 in Ankara). Otherwise, economic field was included in the process of triple summit and economic cooperation platform that the chamber of commerce and industry representatives of these three countries could participate in, was formed.

### The Issue of Turkey's not sending operational soldiers to Afghanistan

The possible benefits of Turkey's sending soldier to Afghanistan can be listed as follows:

- Increase of Turkey's prestige in the international policy,
- Increase of Turkey's Army's prestige, the emerge of the reality that even a global power like the US and a global security power such as NATO need the power of Turkey's army,
- Reinforcement of the US-Turkey alliance,
- Reinforcement of Turkey's situation in NATO,
- Easing of Turkey's return to Central Asia
- Attendance of Turkey to the Central Asia energy game as an active player,
- Increase of the possibility that the relations between Turkey and Turkish Republics can be developed in strategic level;
- The US's minimize of the policies in Iraq strategy that are contrary to the benefits of Turkey and Turkey's gaining an active role in the reconstruction forces of Iraq,
- Increase of the US support in Cyprus and EU membership issues.

Turkey's sending troops to Afghanistan operational purposes can provide benefits as stated above, but it must be expressed that this may result in vital risks. In this sense, the risks can be listed as follows:

- Martial loses and domestic public pressure,
- The reaction of Turkish public against soldier transfer to Afghanistan while in fight with PKK,
- The risk of becoming an enemy for the Afghan people to whom we have been loyal since the war of independence,
- The danger of being the direct target of Al Qaeda,
- Getting worse of the relationship between Russia and Turkey, Russia's energy intimidation against Turkey, the possibility that Turkish Republics may decline relationships with Turkey and their policy of closing the region to Turkey

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19 "Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Afghanistan", Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [[http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-afghanistan.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-afghanistan.en.mfa)]. Accessed on June 19, 2009.



- In the international policy, Turkey's being perceived as stalking horse of the US and Turkey's loss of prestige,

Possible negative and positive results of soldier reinforcement of Turkey to Afghanistan should be considered thoroughly before making decision. However, if the aim is really to solve the Afghan problem, the 7 year period after 2001 has put the case clearly that the solution can't be ensured with military tools. There are both external (geopolitical, global and regional) and internal (Afghanistan's structural problems) sides of the issue. It is clear that a security problem exists in the country, but this is a socio-economic security problem, not military.

Namely, it is essential to reconstruct socio-economic life in the first place instead of drug production, the most important source of income in the country, to solidify political power and improve safety. However this is not a simple problem to be resolved by raising number of soldiers. It is not difficult to perceive the presence of some structural issues such as poverty, unemployment in Afghanistan. In the long term, settling of matters requires enhancing education opportunities and increasing investments in economy. Shortly, since Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan-for 30 years now- efforts to normalize Afghanistan has failed, conversely it has to deal with domestic and foreign affairs. In this sense, it is foreseen that it would be useful to involve life in Afghanistan in normalization process in the first place and notably involvement of Russia and China along with the US, NATO and other regional countries to the process should contribute to the internationally common request.

## Conclusion

Turkey's Afghanistan policy is established on an approach which is based on fellow neighbor concept, although Turkey and Afghanistan do not share common borders. Turkey's establishment of a state in Afghanistan and increasing role of ensuring security and stability was approved, as the US Special delegate of Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke pointed out by saying: "Turkey is an important factor in Afghanistan." Since the very first years of the Republic, Turkey has supported to build governmental institutions and public buildings. Turkey, having a privileged status in her relations with local Afghans based on trust and love, gained influence in the region through its cultural and historical ties with Afghanistan. Therefore, it can be claimed that, NATO and especially the US are pursuing policies to utilize Turkey's position. Though as seen in her Afghanistan policies, Turkey is pursuing a unique policy towards regional issues apart from policies of the US and NATO. Thus, inviting especially Turkey for the first time to the Afghanistan meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization which was held in Moscow, in spite of not being a member, can be evaluated as the outcome of the policies. In conclusion; as a term president of UN Security Council, Turkey's role that is based on problem-solving and reconstruction in Afghanistan, occupying an international security agenda for a long time, is considered to make Turkey a global actor.

Until today, as a term president of UN Security Council and a member of NATO, Turkey has played a crucial role in solving problems and contributing Afghanistan. She should



endeavor to be a leader in such a way that increases her global role. What is more, with international organizations, global and regional actors, Turkey should pay a special attention to assure political stability in Pakistan. Therefore, Muslim theological schools are required to be amended and the leaders of different fractions should be gathered for reaching an agreement. In addition, as a country which knows the region perfectly and has both cultural and historical depth, Turkey should strengthen her pioneering and guiding role in using especially socio-economic mechanisms efficiently besides military means on the face of Afghanistan problem. However, as a member of NATO and term president of UN Security Council, it should be ensured that neighbor countries platform is established as in Iraq case by the expertise of Turkey and these countries undertake constructive role and responsibilities in their Pakistan and Afghanistan issues. Triple summit platform which Turkey initiated by its private enterprise should focus on a solution for border issue which is non-controllable. It is necessary to constitute an active economic order which involves getting rid of drugs, playing a crucial role in resolving problems in Afghanistan. Accordingly for realizing, what Turkey has done in Vardak, in overall country, as a term president of UN Security Council and member of NATO, international organizations should be canalized into this field. United Nations and NATO should be included to Turkey's efforts for normalization of life in Afghanistan. Coalition powers should follow Turkey's relationship with the local people based on trust and love to win Afghans' heart. Thus, wining hearts and mind as a Public Diplomacy strategy is needed in Afghanistan.

In a nutshell, Turkey should keep following a proactive policy rather than being a silent actor (2001-2005) in finding solutions to Afghanistan and Pakistan issues and Turkey should increasingly go on its assistance and contributions until Afghanistan reach a level to be self-sufficient. Through her contributions, Turkey should call out OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference) to disseminate its efforts to form a basis for peace and development in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's presidential elections in August 2009 might be a critical milestone. Up till today, distribution of all groups to political process was neglected in Afghanistan. Thus, with Turkey's leadership, many efforts should be made to involve Afghanistan's different fractions in political process and especially Taliban's moderate elements.



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