

## The role of public diplomacy in the strategy of development between Kazakhstan and Turkey

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### ABSTRACT

The relevance of the problem under investigation is caused by the fact that the Turkish-Kazakhstan relations, finally, have reached the level of strategic partnership due to the cooperation at various levels as a result of the 20-years-long term of diplomatic relations between Turkey and the Republic of Kazakhstan. The same idea was voiced in the joint statement on the bilateral friendship, partnership and cooperation during the third official visit of the president of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev, to Turkey. The diplomacy of the Turkish President, T. Ozal, has positively influenced the development of bilateral relations between the two countries. This political course was outlined in the foreign policy of Turkey in the region of Central Asia.

### KEYWORDS

Republic of Kazakhstan, Turkey, public diplomacy, political negotiations

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### Introduction

The both countries follow a peaceful policy worldwide. At the same time, the bases and methods of the approach of the two states to world and territorial issues coincide. For example, Turkey welcomed with enthusiasm the decision of Kazakhstan to abandon its nuclear weapons. Also, Turkey supported Kazakhstan in joining to the treaty of nonproliferation of nuclear weapon (TNNW) and provides considerable assistance in overcoming of harmful effects of nuclear tests on the Semipalatinsk nuclear test-field.

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Moreover, Kazakhstan established the Council of Interaction and Confidence-Building-Measures in Asia (CICBMA) to render services in solution of problems of security and stability, whereas Turkey became a permanent member of this council. The two states actively participate in the struggle against international terrorism and in rehabilitation measures in Afghanistan. This is an indicator of the coincidence of interests of the two states. Our states cooperate in other international organizations as well. It is necessary to emphasize the cooperation within the framework of NATO. Economic cooperation takes a special place in the bilateral relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan. At present, Turkey is considered to be the largest and leading donor-state for Kazakhstan in trade and construction. Thus, in this respect, Kazakhstan ranks first between the Turkic countries of Central Asia and Transcaucasia. In the present period, projects of technical cooperation cost about 40 million US dollars, and projects in humanitarian area - 34 million US dollars. The sums of the long-term credits lent by Turkey to Kazakhstan under contracts with discounts comprise about 550 million US dollars.

Concerning economic relations between the two states, during the first 6 months of 2011, the trade volume reached 2.8 billion US dollars, and this indicator can reach the value of 10 billion US dollars ([www.trtkazakh.com/kz/](http://www.trtkazakh.com/kz/)). Profitability has also increased as a result of a steady trade turnover of Turkey. Qualitative improvement of the structure of trade was observed as well. It is necessary to notice that in the foreign trade turnover of Turkey, Kazakhstan ranks 3rd among the CIS countries after the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Bilateral cultural and humanitarian relations between the two states have also developed favorably. This is an obvious proof of public diplomacy. For example, Kazakhstan actors took part in a number of concert programs. At the same time, Turkish films are shown on Kazakhstan television by local TV channels. In the same way, journalists and actors from Kazakhstan visited Turkey, where they gave interviews, shot different documentaries and feature films, and organized various exhibitions. Thus, the accumulation of various and reliable results of mutual relationship is observed in different spheres between Turkey and Kazakhstan. According to intensity and efficiency of relations, Turkey occupies one of the main positions among the foreign partners of Kazakhstan. This shows reliability of the strategy of Kazakhstan-Turkish relations (Yembekova).

Turkey provides constant technical assistance to Kazakhstan in realization of political, economic, including financial, and various large-scale projects on a way of development of the Kazakhstan's market economy. Apart from that, there are big prospects in the sphere of investments, science and technologies. Moreover, if Turkey supports positions of the government of Kazakhstan in existing geopolitical conditions of exacerbation of former and

occurrence of new problems and security challenges (under which it is necessary to modernize the current system of international relations and to use the idea of action within the framework of the Council of Interaction and Confidence-Building-Measures in Asia). In its turn, Kazakhstan's diplomacy supports the role of Turkey in NATO and its policy of joining EU as well as its intentions to take the place of a large economy in the modern world (Turkish-Kazakh Military Relations on Track: Turkey to Donate Coast Guard Boat to Kazakhstan).

Turkey and Kazakhstan take identical positions on some international issues. These include: the problems of Central Asian region and the problem of general integration of post-Soviet countries, the issues of regional and common-Asian security, and the solution of the problem of the Middle East. The economic relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan have a very high potential, because Kazakhstan possesses rich mineral resources and sufficient human capital. With regard to Turkey, it has sufficient financial resources, and its economic situation is one of the strongest in the world. Therefore, the two nations complement each other. If to speak further about economic conditions of the two countries, it is necessary to give general view of economic relations in comparison, because Turkey is the biggest donor of investments for Kazakhstan. Only in 1991, Turkey has provided Central Asia with various types of assistance: under the initiatives of Turkey, the committee on provision of support of development and organisation of economic assistance and development has included Central Asian countries into its recipient list for the official help in development. That included: financial aid, rendered for the development of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1998, which has comprised 95.2 million US dollars, and in 2001 - 43,9 million US dollars (it is related to the stable position of Kazakhstan in comparison with other Central Asian countries) (Danialov, 2002). Main objectives of the provision of assistance to the countries of Central Asia and Kazakhstan included:

- professional training and support of the system of transition to democracy and market economy;
- development of infrastructure, especially, automobile transport and communications;
- support of healthcare and education;
- environmental protection.

Based on that, Turkey has provided loans to Kazakhstan for modernisation of its network of railways (especially, for the railway station DOSTYK on the border with China), for the construction in Atyrau, for the reconstruction of the airports in Almaty and Astana, highways in the western Kazakhstan and provision of free manuals to Kazakhstan's universities, and necessary



equipment to hospitals and theatres. Alongside with that, Turkey often organizes professional internship for Kazakhstan's officials, businessman and students. At the same time, within the frameworks of the above-mentioned programs, research is conducted on prerequisites for economic development (for example, to open up new natural and water resources for development) (Panarin, 2000). Moreover, Turkey renders its financial aid to all international organizations which provide economic assistance to Kazakhstan.

Among the countries of Central Asia in the sphere of trade, the Republic of Kazakhstan is the most important strategic partner of Turkey. All big Turkish trading companies opened their commercial representations only in Almaty in the first half of 1990. Since 1994, joint sessions of the Turkish-Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan-Turkish committees on economic cooperation with the participation of Japanese businessmen have been held annually. If in 2002, the volume of export from Turkey comprised 92 million US dollars, then the import from Kazakhstan made 98 million US dollars. However, for Turkey as a whole, these figures do not make a big volume, because they comprise only a small part of its external trade turnover, but it is of big advantage and benefit for Kazakhstan (Turkey, Kazakhstan Planning Organization to Strengthen Cooperation).

Turkey, as a European state, gives consideration to three prominent aspects of democracy.

Firstly, the consideration is given to the balance of power between the branches of government, i.e., executive, legislative and judicial. Sometimes, as the fourth branch, mass-media is added to them. All these branches, control each other on the basis of lawful checks and counterbalances. Secondly, democracy implies that the basic and supreme power belongs to people. And popular will is expressed during elections. Therefore, elections should be transparent and fair. During elections, there is a possibility of definition of popular will. And at last, thirdly, democracy means the respect of conscience and honour of a person. In Turkey, during Ataturk leadership, these three aspects of democracy were introduced into the constitution, and, since then, have maintained the principles of democracy. Turkish politicians and officials often say that it is impossible to define democracy from outside without freedom of action. Therefore, each state has the right to its own model of democracy (World countries. Reference book, 1996). It is particularly important, in the first place to stabilize national economy, and to introduce democracy gradually. Therefore, though at the basis of its strategic policy Turkey adheres to the principles of democracy, first of all it assists in regulation of economic processes in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, and pays attention to security issues in the region.

Several Turkish and Kazakhstan companies work under joint projects of strategic partnership at business level, and not only at the level of the state. At the present moment, in the world, the diversification of energy sector takes place and the world financial crisis plays an important role in these processes. In these conditions, it is very important for above-mentioned Turkish companies to enter into cooperation with such country, as Kazakhstan, which is rich in mineral resources. It should be noticed that consecutive and effective development of the given projects depends on the level of bilateral cooperation and ties of Turkey with Kazakhstan. In 2001, during the session of the intergovernmental committee on bilateral economic cooperation, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, K. Tokayev, mentioned the greatest closeness of ties between Kazakhstan and Turkey among the countries of Central Asia and Transcaucasia and, in turn, the same opinion is held in Turkey ([www.fpc.org.uk](http://www.fpc.org.uk)).

Despite some drawbacks in the relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey, which occurred recently, Turkey is interested in restoration of historical ties which have existed with Kazakhstan and which date back to the period of the Great Silk Way. Therefore, there is a confidence that strategic relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey, based on mutually beneficial cooperation, will lead to many achievements in the XXI century.

The policy of Turkey in Central Asian region at the present moment. In the foreign policy of Turkey in Central Asia, economic aims rank first whereas political targets come second. Regarding economic cooperation with former Central Asian Soviet republics, they are pursued in three areas: economic assistance, trade and investments. Though Turkey has no special program on Central Asia, its cooperation is considered as a support in transition to market economy and cooperation within the world economy, because the stability in Central Asia is linked to the general stability in Turkey and in other countries of the world. Therefore, according to Turkey, the rendering of assistance to Central Asia in its transition period is beneficial for Turkey. This means that all actions taken within the framework of the official assistance to development in Central Asia are equal to the support of prosperity of the Turkish nation. Therefore, Turkey ranks first among the donor-states of Central Asia. The level of bilateral cooperation between Turkey and Central Asia is mainly characterized by projects which are carried out within the framework of programs on economic reforms in the CIS. Since 2001, Turkey has started to follow a new foreign policy within the framework of its strategy. Its foreign policy comprises three components: first, mutual trust and political negotiations for the purpose of strengthening of mutual trust and understanding; second, economic cooperation on the development of natural resources in the region for the purpose of prosperity and development, third, peace keeping in the region through preservation of stability within the framework of NATO (Kazakhstan in figures, 1997).



Moreover, as factors of regional cooperation, the development of natural resources of Central Asia and the maintenance of the system of organization of transport, communications and energy production, should generate an active growth of mutual cooperation with Turkey.

### **Results and discussion**

According to this vector of foreign policy, Turkey has joined the following programs: "Diplomacy of the Silk Way" and "Big Central Asia". These programs are intended for rendering assistance from Turkey to Central Asia for transition to market economy and extension of economic cooperation.

The program "Diplomacy of the Silk Way" was conducted in three main directions: power production, transcontinental transport system and telecommunications. At the core of the project is the development of natural resources, especially oil and gas. The project will bring dynamism into the local economy through development of natural resources, whereas large importers will benefit from uninterrupted supply of raw materials. In its turn, the program is an integration stimulus for the region and it also creates integration opportunities in the areas of transport and informational communications worldwide (Turkey Donates Military Equipment to Kazakhstan, 2006).

All aforesaid is very important for the course of the foreign policy of Turkey in Central Asia. But after the events of September 11th, 2001 followed by strategic changes, Turkey also began to reconsider its foreign policy in the region. In this connection, there were new outcomes:

Deepening and extension of mutual relations between the states of Central Asia;

Related to the aforementioned statement, development and expansion of political negotiating process and cooperation with all Central Asia.

In this light, Turkey, together with the USA, has started bilateral relations with Central Asian countries on a new level. That is, the two above-mentioned principles are used in the special political course of Turkey in a new century and in new conditions. That has led, in turn, to negotiations on the new program of development "Big Central Asia and Turkey". The program describes new structure of foreign policy of Turkey in Central Asia. The importance of this policy is further emphasized. It also includes the creation of principles of Turkish foreign policy in the region and it touches on deepening and expansion of mutual relations with the states of Central Asia via political contacts, and also on the development of cooperation and political dialogue with Central Asia in general. Alongside with that, the Prime Minister of Turkey mentioned that regional mutual cooperation between Central Asian countries is necessary and important for transition to

market economy and democratic way of development in the region (Cull, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is necessary to notice that Turkey is always willing to assist in actions of the following character: first, if the countries of Central Asia cannot solve themselves unresolved till now problems of drugs, water and power resources, obstacles to trade, and problems of ecology and other issues; second, Turkey will support undertakings of overall coordination of intra-regional cooperation with the purpose of maintenance of dynamic growth and prosperity accompanied by steady unification of the region in the future; third, it will also support collective actions directed at internal regional cooperation, for the purpose of the solution of the above-mentioned problems.

The position of Turkey is that mutual cooperation between Central Asia and Turkey should develop according to three main principles: respect of national differences and tolerance; coordination and ability to compete freely; and open cooperation.

First is the principle of tolerance, i.e. respect for culture and system of government of another state. Second is the principle of competitiveness and coordination which implies free competition underlying the market economy, and creation of conditions for mutual competition under the market economy created through association and coordination of efforts of the five Central Asian states. Third is the principle of open cooperation which implies intra-regional cooperation when effective interaction is only possible in the absence of any special case of passivity of individual countries of Central Asian region. It goes without saying that for Turkey relations with individual countries of the region are important. However, in some cases, the issue pertaining to one country cannot be solved within its national borders. This is especially true of the countries of Central Asia which tend to solve their national issues by themselves. A simple example to illustrate the case would be the establishment of water and energy consortium which was planned for a long time but has not yet been put into operation successfully. This means that it is necessary to invite another partner for negotiations. That is why Turkey, together with the countries of Central Asia, is willing to render its assistance because it has acquired a rich experience within EU and NATO in solution of economic and political issues. For the foreign policy of Turkey, the region of Central Asia is important and many delegations of Turkish businessmen visit the region on business trips. In most cases, on the one hand, the aim of these delegations is economic and technical cooperation and, on the other hand, it is further development of cultural ties with the countries of Central Asian region. Moreover, it is evident that the Turkish side attaches a special political importance and



meaning to such business trips. Also, Turkey plans to focus as much as possible the efforts of these business delegations onto real-life economic programs and also prefers that such actions are covered by mass media and are noticed by common people. The Turkish government sets the aim to strengthen further technical cooperation by using local energy sources in Central Asia. Finally, in relations between Turkey and the countries of Central Asia, it is possible to notice five areas: first - economic; second - tourism; third - political dialogue and intra-regional cooperation; fourth - business support; fifth - intellectual dialogue.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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