



THE AKP PARTY’S FOREIGN POLICY: TURKISH SOMALIA RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Somalia which has been rule by the Ottoman Empire is part of the strategic depth strategy of Turkey initiated under AKP ruling party as an instrument of foreign policy tool. The geostrategic location of Somalia has given AKP unique position to benefit from establishing and being engaged in Somalia affair. Turkey under AKP leadership aim to gain a strategic foothold in Africa and Somalia gives best opportunities. In line with all of such efforts and through arranging of various conferences, Turkey objectives are to create the appropriate ground to impose its influence in this African region, and Somalia. On the other hand, through the restoration and management of various straits and ports in this region, Turkey is trying to obtain a geostrategic footing in the control of the movement and corridors of world trade, and next to establish the a military bases, through which to influence and control the changes that are happening in the region and in the future to maintain the course of changes and orientation in accordance with its strategic interests. In this region, Turkey is competing with Middle Eastern and North



African countries. Therefore, to address the research central objectives the research aims to respond the questions as such: to what Turkish military base in Somalia, under soft power mechanism, could influence the latter's security and stability?

I. INTRODUCTION

Formerly ruled by the Ottoman Empire, Somalia remains impacted by any change in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Somalia's history of war and destabilizing hostilities has in part been caused by internal dynamics such as political, economic, and military aspects associated with the post-Cold War era and a system change in the country. Such an environment has not only been capable of demolishing governmental institutions but has also weakened the position of governmental authority. This has led to external intervention, creating the opportunity for neighboring states and other external actors to seek influence within the changed structure of Somalian society.

Located in the Horn of Africa, Somalia is one of the nations that connects the Middle East and Africa, being located near the Bab-el-Mandeb Straight. Thus, the geographical location of Somalia is a particularly strategic one, and it attracts regional powers and superpowers. The country is located on one of the most important international maritime trade routes, along which nearly 10% of the world's oil is transported. Yet Somalia has emerged as a safe haven for radical groups such as Al-Qaeda, and the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea are plagued by pirates. Therefore, due to insecurity along the international maritime trade route as it passes the Somalian coastline, the international community has been forced to take action in safeguarding such a vitally geostrategic trade route.

In 2002 when the AK Parti (AKP) gained power in Turkey, it launched an "Opening Africa Policy" by providing economic and humanitarian support, and worked to construct a state structure and administration. The strong presence of



Turkish soft power in Somalia, has gained Turkey a special status within Somalian community (Tovrov, 2012).¹ Through the provision of humanitarian aid and the support of Turkish businesses and NGOs, Turkey has taken a goal-oriented approach to strengthening and protecting its regional and global strategic position. Of note, Turkey is also a member of the G20.

In this regard, part of Turkey's interests in Somalia, beside humanitarian aid projects, is related to finding new markets for business and industry production with the aim of increasing the amount of Turkish exports. Further, by investing in the AKP's political and diplomatic strategies, Turkey is in search of a new ally on the international level (Yükleyen & Zulkarnian, 2015).² This has resulted in Turkey's increasingly positive position in Africa. Security and empowerment are other policy areas in which Turkey is investing. The AKP's strategy to build military bases abroad, particularly in Somalia, presents a unique opportunity for Turkey to exert its influence beyond its borders. Somalia offers a strategic opportunity for the AKP to realize its goals. Nevertheless, regional competitors view such Turkish projects within the Arab region as evidence of the AKP's hegemonic foreign policy.

This research argues that Somalia has become an ideological battleground between hostile and competitive actors, and suggests that such circumstances reduce security and intensify proxy actors investing in Somalia in order to meet their political objectives. This article is split into two sections. The first analyses the AKP's African policy and strategic factors as part of Turkey's strategic push to strengthen its position in Somalia. The second section analyses the opportunities and regional challenges of the Turkish presence in Somalia, which we argue open a venue to regional actors' intervention and competition in Somalia, which results in instability in the region.

¹ Tovrov, 2012.

² Yükleyen, & Zulkarnian, 2015. [What are these footnotes, you are using APA, or Harvard in text citation, There should be one type or style of citation?!]

2. THE AKP'S FOREIGN POLICY DYNAMICS

In line with the AKP's objectives, the MENA region has become an arena for the party's foreign and security policies, and can be seen as a territory of defining national interests. In search of its goals, Turkey has moved into a constant skirmish with other states and actors, including the West, with which it has an ambiguous relationship defined by both a close working relationship and competition. Additionally, Ahmet Davutoğlu supports argues that Turkey should maintain close relations with the Islamic world, but the arguments has a hegemonic perspective. Also, Turkey is highly interested in the design and practice of a policy that is appropriate (in this regards, independent from Western domination) and takes its national interest consideration into account (Davutoğlu, 2009). Further by conceptualizing Turkey as a central actor ³ based on a realist paradigm, Davutoğlu attempts to re-defined the Turkish national security strategy. This has been framed as "Strategic Depth," which defines the core value of foreign and security policy (Davutoğlu, 2008).⁴ Associated with such a picture, there are four geopolitical territories mentioned below in which Turkey operates, with the aim to become a central actor. The related ideologies mean that Turkey grapples with its role within Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism, Europeanization, and Euroasianism, which interconnect and have been designed as key for the AKP's foreign policy. The main objectives of such picturing are Turkish national interests in broad terms (Aktürk, 2015, p. 54).⁵ In fact, one of the key factors that have had a tremendous impact on the AKP's foreign policy is domestic issues, such as Islamic and conservative constituency. Therefore, the AKP's focus on building strong relations with the Islamic world remains associated with the core values of the party's foreign policy (Donelli & Levaggi, 2016, p. 96).⁶ Also, Eurasianist orientation has arisen within Turkish politics that argues for Turkey's distance from the West, with the aim of being an independent actor (Colakoğlu, 2019).⁷ During former president Turgut Özal's

³ Davutoğlu, 2009.

⁴ Davutoğlu, 2008.

⁵ Aktürk, 2015,

⁶ Donelli, & Levaggi, 2016.

⁷ Colakoğlu, 2019.

leadership (1989-1993), such an approach became, to some extent, more visible. Yet also during 1990, when the Islamist Party Refah under Necmettin Erbakan came to power, a nearly identical approach to Turkish foreign policy was championed, as those supporters of Eurasianism (taking distance from West) with an Islamic version nearly clear to Özal's approach, focused on the Islamic world (Robins, 1997; Makovsky, 1996).⁸ Under the AKP, these issues have become much more visible within the context of Turkish foreign policy, and the USA and its allies' policy toward MENA has come to the forefront of the challenges to Turkish foreign policy. Thus, Turkey has sought to distance itself from the West in order to adopt a more independent policy. Yet this is not in itself new, as the western identity of Turkish foreign policy has been challenged from time to time by Islamic political parties and movements.

Since its rise to power in 2002, the AKP has transformed the structure of Turkish foreign policy, changing it from the versions practiced by previous governments. Also, the first parameters of such changes are related to the conceptualization of the Turkish position (in search of power) at both the regional and international levels. The second parameters are related to Turkey's ability to convert its geographical location into power. In order to redefine its national interests, the AKP's expression of foreign policy involves the transformation from status quo to activism (hegemonic with an Islamic outlook) so as to be engaged in regional and international politics, supported by the geographical position of Turkey. Thus, Turkey is constantly in search of both influence and power through its moderating behavior (Grigoriadis, 2010; Cohen, 2016; Aras, 2009).⁹

These changes aim to transform Turkey incrementally into a global actor, one that is located within a continuum of a cultural and historical network inherited from the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the geographical network is dominated by dense dynamic factors, which have probably forced the new Turkish administration since 2002 to adopt multicultural foreign and security policies. Therefore, the AKP clearly comprehends the value of those parameters and their influence on its empowerment.

⁸ Robins, 1997, Makovsky, 1996.
⁹ Grigoriadis, 2010, Cohen, 2016, Aras, 2009.

For instance, Ahmed Davutoğlu strongly emphasizes the aforementioned historical and cultural ties, as well as numerous tool of command that are able to create significant opportunities for Turkey in its quest to be re-positioned at both the regional and global levels (Altunışık, 2009; Davutoğlu, 2004; Donelli & Levaggi, 2016).¹⁰ Such AKP foreign policy perspectives were successfully implemented until the Arab Spring in the 2010s.

By interpreting the linked ideas of Davutoğlu’s intellectual approach, a real picture emerges with three layers of international paradigms. We argue that Davutoğlu first presents a realist paradigm with the objectives of making Turkey a central actor within the international political context, with hegemonic aspirations. Second, by emphasizing opening, Davutoğlu addresses the liberal approach as a tool of economic cooperation and increasing trade volume for Turkish production, which can be converted from economic power to material power. Third, by underscoring the historical and geographical territory, Davutoğlu interacts with constructivism by highlighting identity and social relations (values and beliefs) to structure a new meaning of relations between Turkey and the Islamic world. Therefore, by customizing a triangulation of those three factors, Davutoğlu adds new value to calculated decision making. As a result of such a multilayered perspective, Davutoğlu aims to provide Turkey with a positive position, by encouraging it to practice a multi-sided foreign policy with a goal to bringing the country back to its former position as a central actor. Related to the subject, hegemony is one of the central features that frame the current approach of the AKP’s foreign policy under Erdoğan’s leadership. To realize its objectives, the AKP’s policy designer has reached a conclusion: it is important to establish a distance from previous foreign policy.

But as domestic political progress, profit, and cost-effective opportunities are connected, those factors make it possible for Turkey to increase and put its power into operation as “active and influential policies in the neighboring regions and in distant geographies like Africa and Asia” (Aras, 2009:5).¹¹ For that reason, the AKP

¹⁰ Altunışık, 2009, Davutoğlu, 2004, Donelli, & Levaggi, 2016.
Aras, 2009.¹¹

designed a foreign policy that gave Turkey a real platform in accordance with regional change, helping the country to become an engaged actor within both the Middle East and the wider international realm. However, by not being able to transform the Arab Spring into a positive policy design, Turkey lost its image as the “bridging actor” within the Islamic and Arab world, as the outcomes of such policy indicate completely different parameters (Kuru, 2015, Stein, 2014).¹²

In sum, the AKP’s aim is to distance Turkey from western domination of foreign and security policies and move toward becoming an independent actor that designs its own such policies (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009).¹³ These objectives are located within such a paradigm, while Turkey uses its geographical position in international and regional political power competition to gain more.

2.1 STATE-NGO COOPERATION: ECONOMIC AND HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY

In March 2011, the Turkish Prime Minister, Erdoğan, visited Somalia with a large delegation including representatives from NGOs, business associations, and ministers. The visit resulted in the signing of 49 agreements with Somalia, particularly ones in education, investment, and trade sectors. Turkey’s objectives in Somalia are multifaceted, stretching away from cultural issues to the building of trade and industry relations, with a clear goal to discover a new market for Turkish producers. In addition to providing humanitarian aid, the initiation of numerous Turkish projects in Somalia has an estimated value of USD 1 billion (Bulur et al., 2017).¹⁴ On economic issues, despite acknowledging that Somalia is a poor country in terms of financial resources, the trade volume between Somalia and Turkey increased from USD 5 million in 2010 to USD 123 million in 2016. Additionally, the role played by Turkish NGOs, for instance the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), is significant, as it has provided an estimated USD 400 million in development and humanitarian aid (Westaway, 2013).¹⁵ Furthermore, as a spillover effect at the

Ahmet, 2015, Stein, 2014.¹²

¹³ Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009.

Bulur, *et al.* 2017.¹⁴

¹⁵ Westaway, 2013.

regional level, this has influenced Turkish trade volume (Share) within the African continent, increasing it to 8.7% in 2015. To institutionalize economic and trade relations and also economic diplomacy, Turkey has signed different share agreements with African states with a focus on energy, investment, and free trade, with Turkish business stakeholder organizations such as TÜSİAD¹⁶ playing a significant role (Turkish Ministry of Trade, Sep.04, 2018, 2018).¹⁷

As well as Turkish public diplomacy, soft power tools have been crucial. Numerous Turkish NGOs (e.g., TİKA, AFAD, Diyanet, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), Cansuyu, Hudayi Foundation, Kimse Yok Mu, and Deniz Feneri) have played an impressive role in strengthening Turkish-Somalian relations. Most of these organizations have provided and continue to provide education, culture, and religious programs to Somalia. Since 1996, the IHH has been active in Africa and has subsequently extended its activity to more than 35 African states (Özkan, 2014).¹⁸ Another NGO, Kimse Yok Mu, has provided humanitarian aid since 1999, and between 2006-2013 the organization allocated USD 65.4 million to 45 African states. But such involvement has had an effect on Turkish domestic political issues. For instance, organizations close to Fethullah Gülen and his movement, known as Hizmet, have been well represented in Somalia and Africa (HizmetNews).¹⁹ During the 2016 coup d'état against Erdoğan, the relationship between the President and Gülen became much more complex. As a result, the AKP government has taken new measures against the aforementioned organizations, meaning Turkey has requested that projects related to Gülen in Somalia and other African states should be closed and transferred to other Turkish institutions. For instance, seven schools associated with the Gülen Movement were closed and their rights transferred to the Maarif Foundation, which is close to Erdoğan (TRT World, 2018).²⁰ On the other hand, the

¹⁶ Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği

¹⁷ Turkey-Africa Trade And Economic Relations. *Turkish Ministry of Trade*, Sep.04, 2018.

¹⁸ Özkan, 2014.

Hizmet Movements news archeive.¹⁹

TRT world, 2018.²⁰

importance of Africa for Turkey has led to the openings of numerous African research centers at universities in Turkey (Shinn, 2015).²¹

At the international and regional level, Turkey attempts to make its humanitarian aid to Somalia a priority of its foreign policy agenda compared to western and UN just to pictures differences.²² Strategically, Turkey is well positioned in proximity to Africa unlike other global actors such as China, India, Russia, and the USA. The Turkish model, which is structured on providing humanitarian aid, trade, and investment in Somalia, has also served to pressure other regional states (e.g., Qatar, Ethiopia, Kenya, and the UAE) and, to some extent, EU states, in following Turkey's footsteps in Somalia (Dahir, 2017).²³ Compared with other organizations that provide humanitarian aid, from the Somali perspective there is little trust given to western organizations and those that operate under the UN umbrella. For instance, the economic support collected between 1991 and 2011 is estimated to be USD 55 billion, this practice has influenced Somalia's negative approach toward western NGOs. Instead, Somalia views Muslim organizations as more respectful of Somali culture than western NGOs (Osman, 2018).²⁴ In sum, investing in a country with a geostrategic location for Turkey will place it in a favorable position in both regional and global politics.

On the African continent, Turkey has gained special status in four significant African organizations: the African Union, the African Development Bank, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the Economic Community of West Africa (Yükleyen & Zulkarnian, 2015, Shafiq, 2018).²⁵ Acknowledging Somalia's ability in terms of economic and political power, its weakness to provide security, and its authority internally and externally, Somalia possess a strategic location, which makes it attractive to outside actors seeking domination and influence. This is one of the serious factors behind Turkey's interest and investment in Somalia. Therefore,

Shinn, 2015.²¹

²² Westaway, 2013.

²³ Dahir, 2017.

Osman, 2018.²⁴

Yükleyen & Zulkarnian, 2015, Shafiq, 2018.²⁵



Somalia is the place that can best serve and preserve Turkish geostrategic interests and position for its future policy in Africa (Arman, 2015).²⁶

2.2 MILITARY BASE AND INFLUENCE ON REGIONAL ACTORS

In July 2017, Turkey officially opened its military base in Somalia at a cost of USD 50 million. According to Turkish military officials, the Mogadishu base is one of the largest military training bases established outside of Turkey. Also, it is essential to keep in mind the domestic dynamics of Somalia, which might be attractive for external actors to focus on Somalia and its geopolitical position. Turkey has worked to become one of Somalia's most important allies due to its special relations and the interests of re-building Somalia (Aljazeera.net).²⁷

Also, part of the reason behind the establishment of the Turkish military base is related to its position in regional political issues. The second reason is a shared Turkish-Somalian perspective that sees importance in Somalia's expansion of its military capacity with the aim of restructuring the nation's military capability (Paksoy, 2018).²⁸ It is worth mentioning that the UAE has also provided 12 military fighter helicopters – Hawker Hunter aircrafts – to strengthen Somalia's air force capacity (Khalidi, 2018).²⁹ In sum, the Mogadishu military base will provide a different kind of military education to Somalian military personnel, including preparing the nation's coastal, naval, and air defense institutions. The Turkish military presence in Somalia not only presents a significant position of Turkey's future position in the region, but also sheds light on an actor that is looking beyond its own borders by having a geopolitical perspective and hegemonic appetite.

Somalia desperately needs to reduce its current war and conflict and prevent future ones from occurring. These issues have weakened Somalia's sovereignty, both domestically and regionally. At the regional level, several actors have been supported by Ethiopia and Eritrea to challenge Somalia's central government. Such intervention

2015, Jan., 21. ← Arman²⁶

Aljazeera.net, Oct.1, 2017.²⁷

²⁸ Paksoy, 2018.

Khalidi, 2018.²⁹

in the country's domestic issues has created organizations such as the North Somalia Union Movement (NSUM), which since 1998 has been fighting the Somalian government. Another key factor that pushes regional actors to intervene in Somalian domestic issues is the concept of "Great Somalia," an idea for which the NSUM fights. Therefore, such political objectives warrant regional state intervention, since the Great Somalia territory, for instance, includes part of Ethiopia. On a regional level, states such as Kenya and Djibouti seemingly are much more interested in keeping the territorial integrity of Somalia in contrast to Ethiopia and Eritrea (Bulur et al., 2017).³⁰ Additionally, the Islamic Courts Union, which is supported by regional states, appreciates the support provided by Eritrea. This competitive environment sheds light on the changing balance of power between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Further, the Al-Shabaab terror organization is a real threat to Somalia, as the latter is unable to defeat the organization. On the other hand, the African Union Mission (AU) is reducing its troops in Somalia. Brundni which is part of AU mission in Somalia has decided to withdraw 1000 of its Amisom contingent from Somalia. The message was delivered to Somalian president Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (Farmajo) during a meeting with Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza on 19 February 2019, an action not well received by criticized by Somalia president as such an environment fashions great opportunities for Al-Shabaab to intensify its activity in the country (Fabricius, 2019).³¹

The above picture presents a clear view of the political and military challenges faced by Somalia's central government in its attempt to provide internal and external security. From another point of view, Somalia needs to curb the creation of radical and outlawed organizations such as Al-Shabaab and NSUM. Keeping the above picture in mind, as well as regional conflicting interests, Turkey's military involvement in Somalia and its aim to provide training to Somalian military forces is a positive signal in the right direction. This will strengthen Somalia's military capacity in the future, and might also send a negative signal to other regional states in the Horn of

³⁰ Bulur, *et. Al.*, 2017.

Fabricius, 2019.³¹



Africa and the Middle East (Sheikh, 2010, Stanford University, 2015).³² But that is far from the strategic strategy that Turkey is working to implement in the MENA region under the AKP by building military bases. Also, it invites other regional actors to increase their military presence, which could pose a direct challenge to Turkey. As an alternative to direct confrontation, regional states will support proxy actors if their national interests are threatened by the Turkish military presence.

In this case, the presence of Turkish military in Somalia gives the former nation a unique environment to monitor the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa. Therefore, such a situation not only concerns Saudi Arabia but also its ally Egypt, as well as Israel, which is now moving closer to Saudi Arabia. One of the key factors in these actors' sensitivity toward Turkey is Erdoğan's behavior, which has not been neutral in the conflicts that have arisen and are ongoing in the Arabic territory, particularly since the Arab Spring. Secondly, there is also another argument that Turkey widely relies on Qatar's economic support for security and foreign policy activity in the MENA region (Gurbuz, 2018).³³

Therefore, keeping in mind the conflicts in Yemen, Syria, and Qatar, regional actors' competition in the region is heavier than comprehended. Therefore, the presence of Turkish military in the geo-strategically located nations of Qatar and Somalia provides additional power to Turkish value. The conflicts in Syria, Libya, and Yemen have pushed Muslim states in the MENA region to challenge indirectly each other's position, through the provision of support to different proxy actors in order to preserve their own national interests. As a consequence, such competition not only has a negative impact on the regional and domestic security of a state such as Somalia, but it further destabilizes domestic subjects of Somali matters (Shafiq, 2018)³⁴. In sum, radical groups and jihadis have taken advantage of the disintegrated Somali military and state institution, and developed their network in the country. The main concerns for regional states regarding the Turkish military presence, besides

³² Sheikh, 2010, Stanford university .2015, May 12, 2015.

³³ Gurbuz, 2018.

Shafiq ,2018³⁴

the activities of radical Islamic groups, are its support of the Muslim Brotherhood. This circumstance creates opportunities for Saudi Arabia and its allies to offer a counter strategy regarding the Turkish presence in Somalia. This kind of organization has influenced regional state behaviors on both sides of the Red Sea (Felter et al., 2019).³⁵ Supporting such a state of affairs has forced the United States to take necessary steps to limit the influence of such organizations in the region (US Treasury, 2013; Blair & Spencer, 2014, Khalidi, 2018).³⁶

3. REGIONAL COMPLEXITY

Within the Horn of Africa, Somalia is one of the nations that has been most affected by domestic conflict and is defined as a failed state (Venugopalan, 2017).³⁷As both a cause and a consequence, numerous regional actors (e.g., Iran, Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt) and also global superpowers are engaged in Somalia. Due to such complexity and diversified interests, there are numerous issues that threaten security in the region. There is also the possibility of increasing Iranian influence in the region, for instance through the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement, a Sunni organization strongly supported by Iran ([Lefebvre](#), 2012)³⁸ with the aim to spread Shiism in the region. It is important to mention that in 2007 the Eritrean foreign minister participated in a conference arranged by Iran. Additionally, in 2008 the Eritrean President visited Iran and signed four agreement in trade, industry, energy, and political and diplomatic relations (Ahmad, 2017; Farrar-Wellman, 2009; Rabasa et al., 2006; [Lefebvre](#), 2012).³⁹ These have provided Iran with a significant venue to become much more involved in the Horn of Africa, and to provide aid and economic support to Somalia.

[Felter](#), *et.al.*, 2019, and Horton, 2018.³⁵

³⁶ Treasury Designates Al-Qa'ida Supporters in Qatar and Yemen. And, Blair & Spencer, 2014, and Khalidi, 2018.

³⁷ Venugopalan, 2017.

³⁸ [Lefebvre](#), 2012.

³⁹ Ahmad, 2017., and Farrar-Wellman, 2009, Jan. 17. Rabasa, & Chalk, et al. 2006., and [Lefebvre](#), 2012.

Figure 1 The Horn of Africa with notable Turkish projects in dashed red and selected port deals and military bases of other powers in blue.

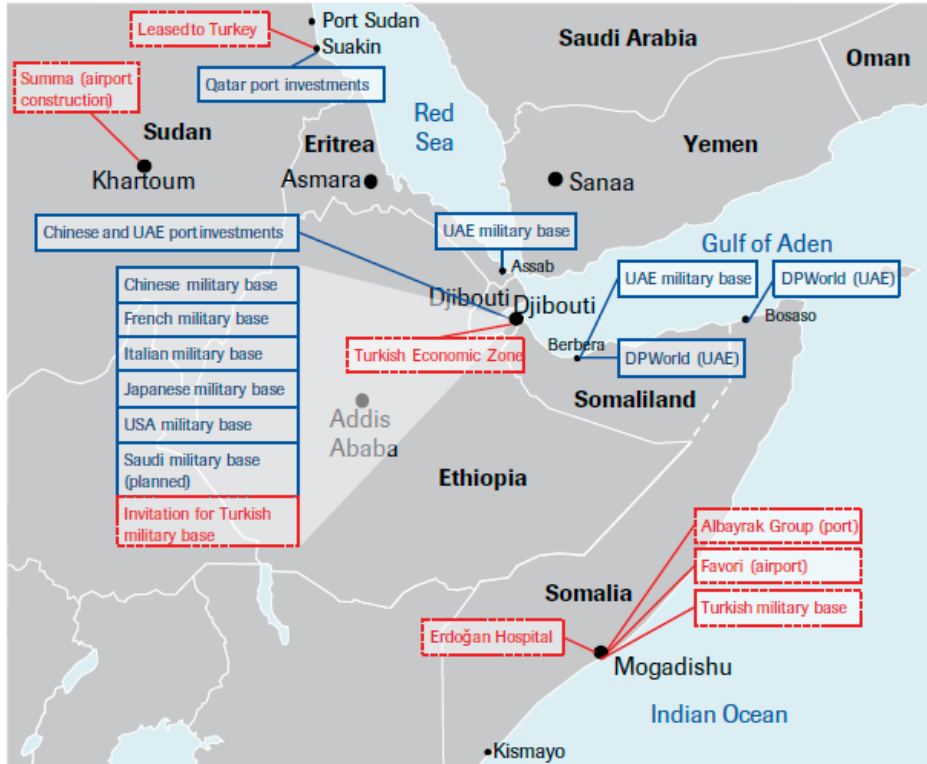


Figure 1. Van den Berg, W., & Meester, J., 2019. Turkey in the Horn of Africa Between the Ankara Consensus and the Gulf Crisis. *CRU Policy Brief*. May 2019, Clingendael – the Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

Within the MENA context, relations between Saudi Arabia and Turkey are tense, in part because the latter supports Qatar in the inter-Arab conflict known as the Qatar Crisis. Further, after Turkey shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 attack aircraft in 2015 and the subsequent economic sanctions imposed (Gurbuz, 2017).⁴⁰ Qatar Turkey’s strategic ally in the region, especially after the Qatar Crisis, Turkey and Qatar relations has strengthen. On a regional level, Saudi Arabia and Turkey also

Gurbuz, 2017.⁴⁰

support different groups in Syria and Libya, and also in Post-Bashir Sudan. These different approaches to regional conflicts have also influenced their relations with Somalia. For example, Saudi Arabia is convinced that Turkey supports the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization recognized by Saudi Arabia and numerous Gulf Security council members, including Egypt, as a terrorist group (Hedges & Cafiero, 2017).⁴¹ For that reason, the presence of the Turkish military in both Somalia and Qatar has had a negative impact on Turkey's relationship with both Saudi Arabia and Egypt and contributed to insecurity.

In contrast, in recent years the relationship between Iran, Turkey, and Qatar has improved, although this needs to develop in order to be sustainable. Additionally, one important and central subject is that the above-mentioned actors do not share the same objectives, neither in the Middle East nor in Somalia. For instance, Turkey and Qatar follow Sunni Islam and support the Muslim Brotherhood, while Iran follows Shia Islam and supports Shia movements in the region. Iran, Qatar, and Turkey pursue different agendas in Syria also, with the latter two backing radical Sunni groups and Iran supporting the Assad regime; Turkey and Qatar have demanded that Assad step down from power. Additionally, on the international level, Turkey, Iran, and Qatar have mixed relationships with the USA, which has its largest military base in the Middle East located in Qatar, and a strategic base with tactical nuclear bombs located at the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey. Those two states' policies might become constraints in any future war if the United States decides to attack Iran (DeLozier, 2019; Zayat, 2018).⁴²

Additionally, the question of Turkish activity in the Red Sea region and Somalia has created tense relations between Egypt and Turkey on the one side, and Saudi Arabia and Turkey on the other side. Part of the reason for hostilities is the presence of a Turkish military base in Somalia and also the way Saudi Arabia and Egypt view the Muslim Brotherhood and Turkish ambitions in the region (Karasik & Cafiero, 2018).⁴³

Hedges & Cafiero, 2017⁴¹

DeLozier, 2019, *Zayat*, 20018.⁴²

Karasik & Cafiero, 2018.⁴³

In addition, Turkey is working with Qatar toward the establishment of an alliance between Sudan, Somalia, Turkey, and Qatar. Therefore, such a move has forced Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt to station their military forces in Eritrea at a UAE military base (Gurbuz, 2018).⁴⁴ Furthermore, Egypt has positioned its military at its border with Eritrea and Sudan. Thus, Somalia's geostrategic position is one of great importance within the wider region and globally, in part because of its 3300 km coastline. This long stretch of bordering water not only attracts superpowers but has become a political, military, and economic battleground for regional actors (Maruf, 2018).⁴⁵

3.1 TURKISH-ARAB RIVALRY

The Turkish presence in Somalia has given it another important position; specially that Turkey and Sudan also have signed modernization agreement about Suakin Iceland. This gives Turkey significant advantages to monitor the Red Sea. However, Sudan's position has changed due to the recent domestic power transformation and removal of the Sudanese president from power. The Military Council that now governs Sudan has asked Turkey to remove its personnel from the Sudanese port city of Suakin. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia and Egypt have signaled to provide economic and diplomatic support to the new Sudanese authorities, with the aim of distancing the country from Turkish hegemony (Oruç, 2019).⁴⁶ Such a move from Egypt in particular might work to reduce the Turkish position in the region, which could become a game changer if Sudan were to cancel its treaties and agreements with Turkey and build an alliance with Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Additionally such an alliance will reduce the position of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan, a blow to Turkey and Qatar's ambitions regarding the establishment of an alliance in the region (Tastekin, 2019; Tremblay, 2019).⁴⁷

Gurbuz, 2018.⁴⁴

⁴⁵ Maruf, 2018.

⁴⁶ Oruç, 2019.

Tastekin, 2019, and Tremblay, 2019..⁴⁷



Saudi Arabia has taken the initiative to establish the so-called “Red Sea Alliance,” with the central objective to defend its own interests and those of its neighbors. The alliance requires the Saudis to gather together all states in the region to agree on a shared strategy regarding security in the Red Sea region. This includes being able to accommodate economic, political, cultural, and military interests of Red Sea states (Wilson & England, 2019).⁴⁸ It is also obvious that Somalia and the other Horn of Africa nations are witnessing both progress and militarization. However, Somalia lacks both a unified government and a unified foreign policy, since Somaliland has unilaterally declared its independence from Somalia, and Puntland declared autonomy and does not support the nation’s central authority. This picture fashions the best options for external actors such as Turkey and the Gulf States (e.g., Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia) to intervene and have a say in Somalian domestic and foreign affairs, as the nation is dependent on the aforementioned actors’ economic and military aid. For instance, the Qatar crisis is the best diplomatic test for Somalia, which decided to remain neutral. As a result of this decision, Saudi Arabia and the UAE decided to cut the budgetary support to the Somalian government and strengthen their relations with Somaliland and Puntland ([Alastair Sloan](#), 2018, Mahmood, S.O.).⁴⁹ Furthermore, Somalia seemingly has become a battleground to hash out the conflicting interests of the Saudi Arabia-UAE alliance and the Turkey-Qatar alliance. For instance, the British P&O cruise company signed a USD \$336 million contract with the UAE to modernize and expand the Port of Bosaso. Further, the UAE has taken control of the administration of the Berbera Port of Somaliland, with a predicted cost for renovation of almost USD \$440 million ([Kennard & Einashe](#), 2019, *Garowe Online*, April, 06, 2017).⁵⁰ Similarly, Turkey has maintained the management and modernization of Mogadishu Port since 2014. Tensions between Saudi Arabia and Turkey were further complicated in 2018. Further, to challenge the Turkish president, Saudi Arabia has adopted a “strategic

Wilson, & England, 2019.⁴⁸

⁴⁹ Alastair Sloan, 2018 and, Mahmood, O.S.

Kennard, & Einashe, 2019., and, *Garowe Online*, April, 06, 2017. Somalia: Puntland signs deal ⁵⁰ to develop Bosaso port with Dubai’s P&O prots.

plan” (Hearst & Soylu, 2019).⁵¹ Accordingly, Saudi Arabia will employ “all possible tools to pressure Erdoğan’s government” on two fronts (Hearst & Soylu, 2019). First, to make the president busy with Turkish internal subjects the strategy aims to smash up the Turkish president. Second, on a regional level, the goal of Saudi Arabia is to restrict Turkish power. The tools the former has to achieve this include economic means, with the aim to reduce its investment in Turkey and decrease the number of Saudi tourists. Further, Saudi Arabia aims to restrict further the import of Turkish products while ostracizing Turkey from Islamic issues that are crucial for the Middle East (Hearst & Soylu, 2019).⁵²

3.2 SOMALIA’S NATURAL RESOURCES: A SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

Data provided by a Norwegian seismic company, Spectrum Geo, according to Hannah Kearns, Spectrum geoscientist show a promising future for Somalia in the oil and gas sector. The company underscores that there is a large amount of gas in the East African region, particularly Somalia.⁵³ Currently, much of the oil and gas in the Somalian territory is offshore in the seabed, and so the country requires economic and financial resources to access it. If Somalia succeeds in extracting its oil and gas, then this will probably reduce the country’s issues if its decision-makers can comprehend that such discoveries are benefits and not irritations. The discoveries might also make the nation much more attractive to international and regional actors, and even encourage them to invest in Somalia.

But the presence of natural resources is not without its challenges or constraints. For example, the south block of oil found in the region is located within Kenya’s territory, and so there is conflict regarding how best to manage the discovery of the oil. Kenya has taken serious action to reduce its diplomatic relations with Somalia by calling its ambassador home and ejecting Somalia’s ambassador. Both states have now brought the case to the International Court of Justice. According to

Hearst, & Soylu, 2019.⁵¹

Hearst, & Soylu, 2019.⁵²

⁵³ Explorer's Guide to offshore Somalia. *Youtube*, 11. sep. 2018, and, *Spectrum Geo*, Somalia Awakens As East Africa's Oil Province. [Online] Available at, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=ZJKwvKZFHjY.



ISS researcher Timothy Walker Senior, in Fabricius, (2019) “a verdict in favor of Somalia will result in a substantial adjustment and loss of Kenya’s Economic Exclusion Zone which it proclaimed in 1979” (Fabricius, 2019).⁵⁴

Yet the relationship between Somalia and Kenya is further complicated due to missionary work. The AU mission in Somalia known as African union mission to Somalia (Amison), benefits from aid from Kenya, which is one of the largest contributors of manpower, with nearly 3,600 soldiers. As pointed out before, by withdrawing the Bruni military personnel from Somalia and starting a new conflict over oil and gas, Kenya might be able to pressurize the Somalian government into concession by withdrawing its missionary troops (Fabricius, 2019).⁵⁵ Thus, the presence of oil and gas in Somalia might develop into a domestic political conflict. Opponents of the government, such as Abdirahman Abdishakur Warsame, have called for the Somalian government to be transparent with its negotiations, first with international companies regarding licensing and rights, and second on economic terms such as how revenue is going to be shared with other regional governments. Additionally, there is a lack of juridical subjects, with some politicians arguing that law should be agreed between the federal and regional governments of Somalia. Accordingly, Article 44 of the constitutions of 2012, which is an interim article and awaiting adoption as a permanent institution, highlights the power-sharing dispute between federal and regional administrations which Senator Ilyas Ali Hassan, the chairperson of the national resource, infrastructure and transport committee shed lights on (Sperber, 2019).⁵⁶ Much of Somalia’s oil and gas are bordered by those two regions. The question is how the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States/Region (FMS) will agree on the rights of oil and gas found, and how this will affect the international oil companies working in Somalia. Therefore, despite a promising future, Somalia government has run into strong opposition when attempting to deal with its oil and gas resources, as there are different objectives both

Fabricius, 2019.⁵⁴

Fabricius, 2019.⁵⁵

Sperber, 2019.⁵⁶

internally and externally. Somalia’s decision makers have been accused of being corrupt and paying no attention to social contracts. Hence, the action of the Somalian government is seen as “selling illegally acquired properties at an auction” (Sperber, 2019).⁵⁷ Additionally, three subjects are not present: clarity, expert assessment, and “checks and balances” and the lack of these subjects might generate domestic conflict and result in violence (Sperber, 2019).⁵⁸

The first step in the right direction is the Petroleum Act, presented in 2019 to be modified and ready for implementation. For instance, Range Resources have sided with Puntland instead of the FGS (Major et al., 2019). In contrast, Abdirizak Omar Mohamed, who served as Somalia’s petroleum minister, argues that every single agreement regarding oil and gas that the FGS signs has to have the consent of regional governments, an action that will enhance the status of Somalia internationally (Maruf, 2019).⁵⁹

For instance, after deciding to leave Puntland, Canada’s Africa Energy Corp expressed that institutional disagreements between the Puntland region and the FGS was central to this decision. On the other hand, both Puntland and Somaliland also disagree over who owns the oil rich regions, such as Sool and Sanaag. So, this kind of conflict between regional governments from one point of view and the FGS from another point of view will reduce the chances for international companies to operate in Somalia. To overcome and manage such crucial conflict and enhance the economic situation of Somalia, the country must invest heavily on re-establishing a governmental institution to provide services to citizens and stabilize the country (Osman, 2019).⁶⁰ In sum, the disintegrated nature of Somalia since 1991, particularly Puntland and Somaliland that are separately active in attracting and signing contracts with foreign investors, will open new conflicts between the FGS and regional

Sperber, 2019.⁵⁷

Sperber, 2019.⁵⁸

Maruf, 2019.⁵⁹

Osman, 2019.⁶⁰

governments on oil and gas issues. Such conflicts will probably make it hard for international companies to do business in the Somalian oil and gas sector.

4. CONCLUSION

Since the end of the Cold War, the changes and outcomes that have taken place in Somalia resulted in the collapse of the nation's state structure. The loss of a central authority and the disintegration of the country's social structure weakened Somalia's ability to function normally. In addition to creating internal insecurity, the situation might also affect the Horn of Africa security and stability, which has previously suffered due to conflicts such as those in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Since 1991, the Somalian conflict has further destabilized the region and opened up access for international and regional actors' intervention.

By taking the geostrategic location of Somalia, specifically the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea regions, into consideration, Turkish foreign and security policy under the AKP's leadership in the MENA region has become considerably clearer. Having a military base in Somalia will re-position Turkey with the MENA nations and challenge regional actors. By using soft power tools such as humanitarian aid in broad terms, Turkey has been able to achieve its main objectives in Somalia. It is viewed favorably by the majority of Somalians and also the FGS in Mogadishu. While Turkish interests in Somalia are multi-purposed and comprehensive, the larger perspective is that Turkey uses its position in Somalia as a door through which to exert its influence throughout the Horn of Africa and beyond. While trade and economic relations have become focal factors in Turkish foreign policy and it has succeeded in developing robust relations with Somalia, on the other hand the above-mentioned factors have paved the way to empower Turkey's military and diplomatic expansion on an international scale.

Related to economic relations, Turkey has initiated a policy to make Somalia a partner not only within the area of trade and the economy, but also within military cooperation and training subjects. Turkish strategic interests within the Red Sea area are not only economic, since having taken over the administration of Mogadishu port



and military base, its hegemonic ambitions seemingly threaten regional actors. One of Turkey's largest military bases is located in Somalia, which provides the former with a substantial position from which to engage in global geopolitics, complemented by its NATO member status. Therefore, from a strategic perspective Somalia remains essential for Turkey both in its relations within the MENA region and the Horn of Africa. During the AKP's control, Turkey has become one of the FGS's most trusted partners, thanks to the humanitarian policy provided by Turkish NGOs and supported by the Turkish government. Thus, the Turkish entrance into Somalia has been a successful venture, one that puts Turkey in a significant position compared with its regional competitors such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE.

Geostrategically, Turkish long term strategy is to build an alliance between Somalia, Sudan, and also Qatar, one that will make it more challenging for Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt to dominate regional matters which also have ideological dimensions. Such an alliance will also put pressure on Eritrea and Ethiopia to decide either to become allies of Turkey or Saudi Arabia and their respective blocks. For that reason, a balance of power structure is required in the region if stability is to be gained. But Turkey's ambitions are clear: to become a hegemonic actor in regional affairs. This means that one of the focal subjects of Turkish policy in Somalia is to weaken its competitors, particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia. But this might not last forever, and shifts in regional policy and alliance might occur as state structures in the Horn of Africa and Somalia are weak, and domestic dynamics might support the change of balance in the future.

Transportation of nearly 10% of international oil and gas occurs via the Red Sea, which requires an understanding of the geopolitical position of Somalia. The instability created by pirate groups mostly occurs in the Puntland region, and this environment has enabled superpowers and regional actors to become involved in Somalia in order to secure this route.

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كورتە

ل ژیر ریڤهیری و سهر کردایهتییا ئاکپارتی و نارمانجین مهههستدار، ژ وان ژی پهیدا کرنا پینگهههک جیوستراتیژی ل ئافریقیا و سومالیا، ئەف دهفەر باشتترین دهرفهتان پینشکیش دکهت. هاوتهریب دگهل ههمی قان خهباتان و ب ریکا ریکهستنا کونفرانسین جیاواز، نارمانجا تورکیا نهوه بنههمایهک گونجاو دروست بکهت کو ریکهخوشکهر بیت ژ بوی کاریگهیرییا وئ ل ئهفریقیا و سومالیا. ل ئالیی دی، ب ریکا نوژمنکرن و ریڤهیرییا کومهک ژ کهنداڤ و بهندهرین جیاواز ل دهفهرین، تورکیا ههولدهت پینگهههک بهیز ل دهفهرهئ دهستههر بکهت

كو بهشك ژ وئ كۆنترۆلكرنا هاتوچۆيا بازارگانيا جيهانی بيت. ل رمخه ژى ئافاكرنا بنكهيهك لهشكهرى، ب شيوهيهكى كو كاريگهرى و كۆنترۆلا گۆرانكارين كو تننه ئارا ل دهقهرهئ بكهت و هسروهه ژى ل داهاتوودا خاوهن توانا بيت د دياركرنا ريرهوئ گۆرانكاريان و خوهگونجاندن دگهل رهوتا ههريمى، هاوتهريب دگهل بهرژ هوهنديين وئ بين سترانتيژيك. ل فى ههريمى توركيا كنيهركى دگهل نهكتهرين روژ ههلاتا ناڤين و باكوروى ئافريقا دكهت. لهورا ژ بوئ بهرسفدانا پرسا سههرمكى يا فهكۆلينئى و ئارمانجين وئ، فهكۆلين ههول ددهت بهرسفا پرسيارا؛ ههتا چ رادهيهكى ههبوونا بنكهيا لهشكهرى يا توركيا ل ژير ميكانيزمين "هيزا نهرموك"، دئ كاريگهرى ل سهه ناسايش و سهقامگيريا سوماليا ههيبهت؟

(السياسة الخارجية لحزب العدالة والتنمية: العلاقات الصومالية التركية)

ملخص

الصومال الذي كان يحكمه الإمبراطورية العثمانية، أصبح الان جزء من العمق الاستراتيجي لتركيا الحالية في ظل حزب العدالة والتنمية الحاكم ، تستعملها كأداة من ادواتها في السياسة الخارجية . لقد أعطى الموقع الجغرافي الإستراتيجي للصومال، حزب العدالة والتنمية، مكانة فريدة للاستفادة من إقامة علاقة صومالية والانخراط فيها. تهدف تركيا بقيادة حزب العدالة والتنمية، الحصول على موطن قدم استراتيجي في إفريقيا، والصومال يمنح لها أفضل الفرص. وتماشيا مع كل هذه الجهود، ومن خلال تنظيم مؤتمرات مختلفة ، تتمثل أهداف تركيا في خلق أرضية مناسبة لفرض نفوذها في هذه المنطقة الأفريقية عبر الصومال. من ناحية أخرى ، ومن خلال ترميم وإدارة مختلف المضائق والموانئ في هذه المنطقة الافريقية، تحاول تركيا الحصول على قاعدة جغرافية استراتيجية للسيطرة على حركة وممرات التجارة العالمية ، إلى جانب إنشاء قواعد عسكرية لها ، والتي من خلالها ستمكن من التأثير والتحكم بالتغييرات التي تحدث في المنطقة حاليا وفي المستقبل أيضا، وذلك لضمان الحفاظ على مجرى التغييرات وتوجيهها وفقاً لمصالحها الاستراتيجية. وفي هذه المنطقة تتنافس تركيا مع دول الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا. لذلك يهدف البحث في معالجته للموضوع المتعلق بالبحث المركزي، الإجابة على الأسئلة على هذا النحو: إلى أي قاعدة عسكرية تركية في الصومال ، بموجب آلية القوة الناعمة ، يمكن أن تؤثر على أمن واستقرار الأخير؟