

Analysis of Studies on the Genesis, Evolution of the Ideological Policy of the Republic of Turkey and the Concept of “Soft Power”



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ABSTRACT: The article describes the relationship between ideology and religion in Turkey and their mixed aspects. The influence of Islam in Turkish society is very large. After all, a very large part of the Turkish population consists of Muslims. When the Justice and Development Party came to power, it took the path of hybrid governance, in which Islam and democracy were closely intertwined. In foreign policy, it claims regional superiority. In doing so, it offers its own solutions to increase its influence on the countries of the region, which are historically, culturally, linguistically, religiously and territorially close to it. These include Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism, New Ottomanism, and Turkish Eurasianism. With the help of these ideologies, it intends to achieve its geopolitical goals and revive its cultural values. The question of which ideology is more important still remains open. Because among the Turkish elite, there are still debates about which one is more universal. All ideologies complement each other. But none of them has been announced as an official ideology. It is precisely these ideologies that have been divided.

KEYWORDS: “Arab Spring”, pan-Turkism, pan-Islamism, Turkish Eurasianism, new Ottomanism, integration corridors, Kemalism, geopolitical power, geographical location, “Grey Wolves”, Strategic depth.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, the issue of ideology in the implementation of the domestic and foreign policy of states is gaining its place as a complex phenomenon. It can be said that with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the conflict between two ideologies: communism and capitalism, the world entered a new era. As expressed in the optimistic views of the American researcher F. Fukuyama, the “End of History” has occurred.

As a result, the processes of ideological change in the world began, during this period, which cannot claim to be the ideology of the 20th century, but which has a strong influence on modern political reality, mainly in the modern political system of individual countries, took its place in the world. Various “ideas” began to appear, creating an imagination. Ideas began to emerge both at the regional level and at the level of individual countries, which was reflected in the revision of foreign and domestic policy directions by the leaders of these countries. This trend has led to the emergence of new centers of power that offer qualitatively new ideas at the regional level. The Republic of Turkey has become such a power center in the Middle East region.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

Turkey is watched with great interest by many countries of the world. As an important element of its means of influence, the place of ideology and religion is very important. Scientists who have extensively researched this field include the following. Turkish scientists such as A. Avatkov, Guzayerov R.I., Akhmetkarimov B.G, Shlikov P.V, Tellal Erel, etc. are important.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

According to Russian researcher A. Avatkov, neo-Ottomanism is a desire to reject significant influence and pressure on other countries. This influence is carried out mainly through humanitarian programs, programs in the field of education, science and culture. This network structure allows Turkey to influence the development of future elites, imbuing them with a Turkocentric view of the world, which will benefit Turkey in the future. This was the transition to “soft power”.

“Neo-Ottomanism” is a strategic course aimed at returning the “Ottoman past” taking into account modern realities. It is based on four principles: blood, Ottoman thought, soil and language. The principle of blood, first of all, refers to the Turkic peoples. The principle of soil links the concept to the Ottoman past, which is promoted by Turkey’s new leaders (unlike Ataturk, who tried

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to sever ties with it). These principles, in turn, are the ideological basis for the formation of a new Ottoman mindset and the development of a non-Turkish identity through the use of humanitarian and economic influence methods, in which the Turks should become leaders over the region [1].

The events of the “Arab Spring” became a litmus test for the manifestation of the entire essence of neo-Ottoman politics. The Arab Spring, which changed the modern face of the Middle East, also changed Turkey’s approach to foreign policy. Focusing on soft power is a long-term project. In the protests in the region, Turkey saw a historic opportunity to change the image of the Middle East, to become a mediator in conflicts, to strengthen its influence on countries facing serious internal problems, and to obtain the status of a state outside the region.

We can confidently say that the “Arab Spring” introduced new amendments to Turkey’s foreign policy. Officially, Ankara’s desire to establish a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, as well as to transform this geographical area into a stable and prosperous region, is a common desire and goal of the international community. Indeed, it is important and primarily necessary to ensure the security of all countries in the region. In this context, Turkey’s vision for the future with the Arab countries is to develop social, economic and cultural cooperation in a politically stable environment and based on the principle of win-win. Based on this vision, Turkey wants and works to increase the prosperity and well-being of not only the Turkish people, but also the people of the countries in the region. But all this is just a game of words, and Turkey’s real efforts to “stabilize” the region have led it to a serious crisis with its main allies and neighbors, which has seriously damaged Turkey’s position in the region, but Ankara is trying to get out of the crisis. . According to their understanding, Turkey has become one of the few countries that have developed a clear ideology the ideology of returning to the former imperial power, taking into account all modern conditions [2].

Today, researchers have formed different opinions about the foundations of neo-Ottomanism and its fundamental directions. It is noted that they have three postulates:

1. Reaching a common agreement within the country and with the Muslim world (Middle East, Balkans, North Africa); not to oppose the countries of these regions from imperialist positions; Bringing the former countries that were part of the Ottoman Empire into the neo-Ottoman arena through “soft” and balanced policies.

2. Conducting the most active diplomatic and economic policy for Turkey to become one of the main countries of the region.

3. Neo-Ottoman policies allow Turkey to “wrest” Western Muslim Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo, and even predominantly Christian Macedonia and Bulgaria (given the presence of Muslim populations in these countries).

According to some analysts, the leadership of Ankara uses the integration corridors as a tool to implement the policy of “neo-Ottomanism” based on the “soft power” of Turkey.

Three such corridors are known:

1. Turkey-Syria-Lebanon-Egypt, later covering Israel and Palestine (first corridor).

2. Iraq and the Persian Gulf (second corridor).

3. Iran and Pakistan (third corridor).

In particular, the third corridor, which connects the postulates of Pan-Turkism and Eurasianism, deserves attention. On the one hand, Turkey tries to attract Iran and Pakistan, as well as Afghanistan, and on the other hand, the post-Soviet Turkic world - Central Asia and Azerbaijan - into its sphere of influence.

According to Sinan Ogan, director of the Center for International Relations and Strategic Analysis, Turkey is the only country that can claim the role of a modernizer of the Middle East and “reconcile” this region with the West. It is clear that Turkey is not only trying to restore the former borders of the Ottoman Empire, but also to acquire the region’s energy reserves and infrastructure, transportation centers, banking and telecommunications networks, which will turn the country into a geopolitical powerhouse.

A. Davutoğlu’s ambitions to become a geopolitical power are evident in his speech at the meeting with the Turkish diplomatic corps (January 8, 2010). He said, in particular, that the main task of Turkey is to become a global state, not a regional one: its geographical location, history and diplomatic experience provide this opportunity.

Of course, this ideology is sharply criticized by representatives of Kemalism ideology. The Kemalist-leaning military, together with the opposition Republican People’s Party, consider this initiative unacceptable. In their opinion, the current administration is implementing a huge, unrealistic project that will distance Turkey from Atatürk’s republican principles. At the same time, another factor that worries consumers is the “Kurdish question”, because if the ideology of neo-Ottomanism is implemented in real life, the Kurds will have a wide cultural independence like all Muslims [3]. But in recent years, Turkey’s three major operations against the Kurds did not allow the government of R. T. Erdogan, created on the basis of neo-Ottomanism, to make such a conclusion.

Pan-Turkism ideology. The next ideology experiencing revival is pan-Turkism, in a new interpretation - neo-pan-Turkism. Pan-Turkism was a powerful weapon for the US against the Soviet Union. However, as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey’s efforts to unite the Turkic-speaking peoples became more active, which caused concern in the United States. At the same

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time, American political circles are still using the pan-Turkic (Uyghur) factor, directing it mainly against China, which today competes with the United States.

The main goal of the pan-Turkists is to attract the Turkic-speaking peoples into a single common state, regardless of their geographical distribution limits and cultural differences.

In order to implement this ideology, it is a priority to unify the Turkic ethnic group from China to the Adriatic Sea. The importance of the economic factor also puts more emphasis on consolidation, since the oil reserves of Central Asia (Turan oil) are the way to solve Turkey’s energy problems.

There are huge differences between neo-Ottomans and neo-pan-Turkists, because the main goal for the latter is not a religious factor, but an ethnic factor that unites Turkic-speaking peoples. Even in this disagreement, neo-Ottomans see pan-Turkism as an alternative, complementary path to post-Ottomanism, with the ultimate goal of Turkish Eurasianism.

Therefore, Turkishness as an ideology has never experienced regression and can be used in unpredictable regional changes. The carriers of the Pan-Turkist ideology are the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP), the ultra-nationalist wing of the army, and the paramilitary nationalist-radical group “Grey Wolves”.

Today, the establishment of the Turkish Council in 2009, and later its transformation into the Turkish Council of Turkish States at the summit of the Council of Turkic-speaking countries held in Istanbul on November 12, 2021, shows Turkey’s pan-Turkism policy.

The ideology of Turkish Eurasianism (Evrusyacılık). This ideology is not strongly rooted in Turkish society, but it is found in views in the foreign political sphere. Eurasian ideology and interest in it at the state level is a relatively new phenomenon. In general, it differs from Russian Eurasianism, in the development of its concept N.S. Trubetskoi, P.N. Savitsky, G.V. Florovsky play a major role. They believed that Russia, with its historical and cultural identity, could become the core of Eurasia, emphasized the unity of the Turko-Asian world, and promoted the ownership of an independent Eurasian space as the successors of Genghis Khan and A. Temur. Logically, in this concept, Russia was considered neither a continuation of Europe nor a part of Asia, but an independent geopolitical space, which, in turn, had to oppose the West. Currently, this ideology was developed by A. Dugin. However, today Turkish Eurasianism has different directions.

According to the Russian researcher, P.V. Shlikov, for Turkey, as in Russia, the geographical component of the concepts of “Eurasia” and “Eurasianism” has never been a dominant feature of this concept. In addition, the epithet “Eurasian country” itself is rarely used in relation to Turkey [4].

This ideology was not compatible with K. Ataturk’s direction of development after Turkey was declared a Republic in 1923. K. Ataturk implemented the policy of “Choosing the West and Europe instead of the East and Asia”[5]. After 1990, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the independence of the new Turkic states allowed the revival of this ideology.

Turkish-American researcher Sener Akturk, while studying the Turkish Eurasian phenomenon, believes that its purpose is to reconcile the former empires - Turkey and Russia. In his opinion, Turkish Eurasianism, together with pan-Turkism and neo-Ottomanism, has become one of the self-conscious components of the modern Turkish intellectual landscape. According to Sh. Akturk, the main structural feature of Turkish Eurasianism is the struggle of Russia and Turkey against the West. As a result of this struggle, a Eurasian conglomerate of Slavic and Turkic peoples should emerge. It turns out that Turkish Eurasianism is a project against Western domination [6].

Turkey has actively promoted Eurasianism and Eurasian ideals, which former Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel described as “a region inhabited mainly by Turks and stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China” [7]. President Turgut Özal announced the 21st century as the “century of the Turks” and thereby expressed Turkey’s hope for the Turkic republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus [8].

It was A. Davutoglu, the architect of modern Turkish foreign policy, who paid special attention to the issue of “centrality” of Turkey in his research. It pays great attention to becoming a “center” as a leading power, rather than a bridge connecting Asia and Europe, West and East. He emphasized that Turkey is located in the very center of Afro-Eurasia. Its central position is surrounded by obvious risks of instability and enormous advantages: the continuity of the geographical space allows access to many regions. This is what I call “strategic depth”[9].

On the Eurasian path of the Turkish version, A. Davutoglu proposed the creation of a Eurasian union capable of forming a powerful economic space. In his opinion, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway should become a link connecting Central and East Asia. The railway from Islamabad to Istanbul provides new communication opportunities for economic cooperation in the region.

According to Turkish analysts, the “creation” of the Eurasian Union is an alternative to the European Union and creates complications in relation to it. It is still unknown what changes will happen in this direction, because there is no clear attitude of the Asian countries to the creation of the Eurasian Union. A. Davutoğlu’s statement may have another meaning: coming up with such a proposal can be evaluated as an attempt to form an alternative structure of the European Union against the backdrop of Turkey’s failure in European integration. The Turkish political elite also does not have unanimous views on this matter:

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- Nationalist forces. Ultranationalist and center-right political and military forces believe that the main goal of Eurasianism should be to establish close relations with the Turkic states of Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia. This, in turn, is the basis for the political and civilizational development of Turkey in relation to these regions. In other words, the initial rules of Turkish Eurasianism within the nationalist forces are based on the idea of pan-Turkism and do not offer anything new. Of course, we are talking about the Turkic union, not the Eurasian (economic, etc.) union.

- Liberal forces. According to liberal political forces, the core of the ideology is to turn Turkey into a bridge between Europe and Asia, which will lead to the creation of a common economic area.

- Perfectionist forces. Kemalists have very interesting formulas, as a result of which a new sub-current appeared in this ideology - Kemalistic Eurasianism. Kemalist Eurasianism is already making a sharp turn away from Kemal Atatürk's postulates and Eastern-oriented Western values.

Representatives of this movement believe it is important to create a “Greater Eurasian space” that could include China, Russia, Turkey and Iran, and this could contribute to the creation of a new military alliance in the future, which, of course, will be directed against the United States. . It can be said that this direction has no prospects in the near future. Because R.T.Erdoğan's administration is accused of pan-Islamism and neo-Ottomanism in its foreign policy, it is promoting a pragmatic foreign policy. He did not turn away from the West at the expense of the East.

At the same time, as it is written in Russian literature, Turkey's Eurasianism policy has become a unique ideology that includes Pan-Turkism, Pan-Islamism, and economic interests, which is not directed against the West. Today, for Turkey, Eurasia and Eurasian policy are no longer only the Turkic republics that were part of the Soviet Union, but a model of peace with Turkey as the “central state” of the Afro-Eurasian macro-region [10].

CONCLUSION

In short, the formation and development of the ideological policy of Turkey dates back to the middle of the 19th century and has the following characteristics:

1. Today, in Turkish society, internal and foreign policy, components of various ideologies can be found. Logically, ideologies in Turkish society are dualistic: ideologies of religion and secularism, ideologies of nationalism and regionalism.

2. Kemalism (perfectionism, paternalism) and neo-Ottomanism (new Ottomanism) can be cited as the ideologies with the greatest impact on Turkish society today. These ideologies have unique features in the field of building the state system, systematizing public values, highlighting the priorities of foreign policy, and the role of various political elites in the internal political life of the state.

3. The influence of Kemalism ideology in the Turkish society and political elite for almost a century led to the limitation of intermediate ideologies: Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. In K. Atatürk's domestic and foreign policy, while renouncing the Islamic and Turkish states, Western direction was given priority, but their influence remained in the society. As a result, the doctrine of “Turkish-Islamic synthesis” emerged as a result of the rapprochement between religious leaders and nationalists in the following years.

4. It can be said that neo-Ottoman ideology, which includes national-ethnic and civilizational components, aims to restore the heritage of the past Ottomans, which had a priority position during the rule of the Justice and Development Party, has not yet been fully formed, it is happening in the world. is changing under the influence of political realities. It is wrong to see this ideology as a justification for Turkish expansion, which aims to increase Turkey's role as an independent “power center” and is based on pragmatism as well as conservatism in foreign policy. The fact that Turkey's domestic and foreign policy has not turned its back on the West as an argument contrary to the ideology of perfectionism is a proof of this.

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