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A. Gündoğdu*

Ankara University
Ankara, 60000, Republic of Turkey
*e-mail: abdullahgundogdu@yahoo.com

TURKEY'S POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA: HISTORICAL FEATURES OF ITS FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT, AND REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

Abstract

This article examines the historical features of the formation and development of Turkey's policy in Central Asia, with particular emphasis on regional security issues. The study analyzes the historical, political, and geopolitical factors that have shaped Turkey's relations with the Central Asian states since their independence in 1991. Special attention is given to the evolution of Turkey's foreign policy priorities, the development of political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic cooperation, and the role of historical and linguistic ties in strengthening interstate relations. The article also explores Turkey's participation in regional integration processes, including cooperation within the Organization of Turkic States, and its approaches to addressing contemporary security challenges. The research considers the influence of major regional and international actors on Turkey's Central Asian strategy and examines the historical continuity and transformation of its foreign policy objectives. The study aims to identify the main stages, characteristics, and historical significance of Turkey's engagement in Central Asia within the broader context of regional security and international relations.

Key words: Turkey, Central Asia, foreign policy, historical development, regional security, geopolitical interests

Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent transformation of the international relations system marked a new stage in the geopolitical development of Central Asia. The emergence of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan as independent states fundamentally changed the political landscape of the region and created new opportunities for international cooperation. In this historical context, Central Asia became an important area of interaction among regional and global powers, while Turkey emerged as one of the countries seeking to establish political, economic, diplomatic, and cultural relations with the newly independent republics.

The historical foundations of Turkey's policy in Central Asia are closely associated with the political transformations of the early 1990s. Turkey was among the first countries to recognize the independence of the Central Asian republics and actively supported their integration into the international community. During this period, Ankara's foreign policy was largely influenced by historical, linguistic, and cultural ties with the Turkic-speaking peoples of the region. At the same time, Turkey sought to strengthen the sovereignty of the newly independent states, promote regional stability, and develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation. These principles subsequently became important components of Turkey's long-term Central Asian strategy [1].

The formation and development of Turkey's Central Asian policy can be examined through several historical stages. The first stage, covering the 1990s, was characterized by the establishment of diplomatic relations, the expansion of cultural and educational exchanges, and the creation of initial mechanisms of interstate cooperation. During the second stage, particularly in the 2000s, Turkish policy gradually acquired a more pragmatic character, with increasing attention to economic relations, trade, investment, energy resources, and transport infrastructure. The subsequent period, beginning in the 2010s, was marked by the institutionalization of cooperation among Turkic-speaking states and the growing importance of regional connectivity and security issues. This historical evolution demonstrates the gradual transformation of Turkey's Central Asian policy from an approach emphasizing common cultural and historical heritage toward a more diversified strategy based on political, economic, and strategic interests.

An important milestone in the institutional development of Turkey's regional policy was the establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States in 2009, based on the Nakhchivan Agreement. Its transformation into the Organization of Turkic States in November 2021 reflected the further development of multilateral cooperation among Turkic-speaking countries. The organization provides an institutional framework for strengthening political dialogue and expanding cooperation in economic, cultural, educational, transport, and other areas. Its development also illustrates the historical process through which earlier initiatives for cooperation among Turkic states gradually evolved into a more structured form of interstate

A further stage in the development of Turkey's regional strategy was associated with the announcement of the Asia Anew initiative in August 2019. This initiative reflected Ankara's intention to develop a more systematic approach to relations with Asian countries, including those in Central Asia. Within this framework, particular attention has been given to trade and investment, advanced technologies, energy, infrastructure, transport corridors, logistics, and the defense industry. From a historical perspective, this initiative can be considered part of the broader evolution of Turkey's foreign policy priorities, reflecting the growing significance of economic interdependence and strategic connectivity in its relations with Central Asian states.

The security dimension occupies a significant place in the historical development of Turkey's Central Asian policy. Since the early 1990s, the region has experienced political and security challenges associated with the transformation of post-Soviet state structures, regional conflicts, border disputes, international terrorism, and transnational organized crime. These developments have influenced both the security priorities of Central Asian countries and the approaches adopted by external partners, including Turkey. Over time, Ankara's engagement in regional security matters has expanded to include political consultations, military and technical cooperation, defense industry partnerships, and efforts to strengthen regional stability [2].

At the present stage, security cooperation is increasingly connected with the protection of transport and energy infrastructure, the development of transregional corridors, and the prevention of emerging threats. In particular, the Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and Kazakhstan, adopted on February 2, 2026, emphasized the importance of coordinated action against terrorism and transnational organized crime, as well as cooperation in energy security, defense, and regional connectivity. This demonstrates the continuing development of security cooperation as a component of bilateral relations and provides an opportunity to examine its historical evolution within Turkey's broader Central Asian policy.

The relevance of this research is determined by the need for a comprehensive historical analysis of Turkey's policy in Central Asia, taking into account the transformation of its foreign policy priorities, the development of institutional mechanisms of cooperation, and the growing significance of regional security issues. Examining these processes from a historical perspective makes it possible to identify the continuity and changes in Turkey's regional strategy, assess the influence of geopolitical transformations, and determine the place of Turkey in the evolving system of international relations in Central Asia.

The aim of the study is to examine the historical features of the formation and development of Turkey's policy toward Central Asian states from 1991 to 2026, identify the main stages of its evolution, and analyze the role of political, economic, and institutional cooperation in addressing regional security challenges.

To achieve this aim, the following research objectives have been established:

1. Examine the historical characteristics of the formation and development of the Turkish economy.

2. Analyze the historical aspects of the formation and development of the hotel industry and its role in the socio-economic ties between Turkey and the countries of Central Asia.

3. Consider the historical evolution of regional security issues and the role of the Turkic factor in Central Asia.

The chronological framework of the study covers the period from 1991 to 2026. The starting point is associated with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the establishment of independent Central Asian states, which created the historical conditions for the formation of Turkey's modern regional policy. The final chronological boundary encompasses contemporary developments in Turkey's relations with Central Asian countries, including the expansion of multilateral cooperation and the increasing importance of regional security issues.

The methodological basis of the research consists of the principles of historicism, objectivity, and systematic analysis. The study employs historical-genetic, historical-comparative, and historical-systemic methods, which make it possible to trace the formation and evolution of Turkey's Central Asian policy, compare its priorities at different historical stages, and examine the relationship between political, economic, institutional, and security developments. The research also applies elements of geopolitical analysis to assess the influence of regional and international factors on Turkey's foreign policy strategy.

Materials and methods of research

The actual basis of the study is made up of official documents related to the foreign policy of the Republic of Turkey, materials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey on relations with Central Asian states, program documents of the organization of Turkic states, statements adopted as a result of bilateral and multilateral meetings, materials of international organizations, as well as domestic and foreign scientific research on the topic.

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' findings on relations with the Central Asian republics, the principles of the "Asia Anew" initiative, and official materials on Turkey's security policy informed the official content of Turkey's regional policy. The Turkish security concept emphasizes that threats are not limited to military ones and require a comprehensive approach combining political, economic, social, and military means.

The study of multilateral cooperation considered materials related to the concept of the organization of Turkic States, "Turkish World Vision-2040," and the strategy for 2022-2026. The organization has held regular consultations on security issues, and cooperation has been established at the level of the national security Councils of the member States. This trend shows that the organization of Turkic States is developing not only as a platform for cultural and economic cooperation, but also as a political mechanism for discussing security issues.

The study used a historical and comparative method and compared the features of Turkey's policy towards Central Asia in the early 1990s and at the present stage. This method allows us to trace the transition from Turkey's first regional policy model, based on historical and cultural proximity, to a comprehensive policy that includes economic, transport, logistics, and security interests.

Using system analysis, Turkish-Central Asian relations were treated as an integral system of interrelated political, economic, cultural, and security spheres. At the same time, special attention was paid to the relationship between regional security and economic stability, energy and transport communications, and the activities of international organizations.

The content analysis method was used to identify the main concepts and priorities in official documents from Turkey and the Turkic states' organizations. In particular, the "sovereignty" and "territorial integrity", "regional stability", the "fight against terrorism", "connectivity", "corridors" and "cooperation in the sphere of security" reviewed the content of concepts.

Along with институционалдық тәсіл, Turkey's bilateral relations were examined using an institutional approach to study the impact of the activities of the Turkic States, the OSCE, and other international organizations on Central Asian security. The OSCE assesses security issues in Central Asian States using political-military, economic-environmental, and humanitarian criteria and participates in countering terrorism, organized crime, and cross-border threats; Turkey is also one of the States participating in security projects related to the region within this organization.

Results and its discussion

1. Historical Features of the Formation and Development of the Turkish State's Economy

The formation and development of the Turkish economy represent a complex historical process closely connected with the transformation of the country's political system, its geographical position, and the implementation of economic modernization policies throughout the twentieth century. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Turkey has historically occupied an important position in international trade, transport, and cultural exchange. This geographical advantage contributed to the development of commercial relations, industrial production, agriculture, and tourism. Nevertheless, the country's economic evolution was accompanied by significant structural difficulties, including regional disparities, inflation, financial instability, and uneven socio-economic development [3].

The historical foundations of the modern Turkish economy can be traced to the final period of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. During the late Ottoman period, economic development was influenced by agricultural production, traditional manufacturing, international trade, and the growing economic involvement of European powers. The political and economic consequences of the First World War, together with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, created serious challenges for the newly established Turkish state. Under these circumstances, the national movement led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk during 1919–1923 laid the political foundations for the creation of an independent republic and the subsequent implementation of economic reforms aimed at strengthening national sovereignty and developing domestic productive capacity.

Following the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, the Turkish government began implementing policies designed to establish the foundations of a national economy. Particular attention was given to agricultural modernization, infrastructure development, industrial production, and the creation of national financial institutions. The İzmir Economic Congress of 1923 played an important role in defining the country's early economic priorities. During the 1930s, the principle of étatism, which emphasized active state participation in economic development, became one of the principal elements of Turkey's modernization strategy. Through state-supported industrialization programs, the government promoted the establishment of enterprises in the textile, mining, metallurgy, chemical, and manufacturing sectors. These initiatives contributed to the gradual transformation of Turkey from a predominantly agricultural country into a state with an expanding industrial base [4].

A new stage of economic development of Turkey began after the Second World War. The expansion of political and economic relations with the United States of America and the countries of Western Europe, as well as the accession of Turkey to NATO in 1952, strengthened its position in the Western international system. Foreign economic aid, international investments and cooperation with Western institutions contributed to the development of infrastructure, mechanization of agriculture and modernization of industry. However, the expansion of foreign economic ties did not eliminate the structural limitations of the national economy, which still largely depended on state intervention, agricultural production, and imported industrial technologies.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Turkey pursued a policy of planned industrialization based primarily on import substitution. This strategy was aimed at reducing dependence on foreign industrial production and stimulating domestic production.

The economic difficulties of the 1970s became a turning point in the historical development of Turkey's economic policy. The international oil crisis of 1973 and 1979, the growth of foreign debt, the deficit of foreign currency and the increase in inflation revealed the limitations of the existing model of economic development. At the end of the decade, the country faced a serious economic crisis,

Economic liberalization reforms of the 1980s had a significant impact on the subsequent development of the Turkish economy. State intervention in the sphere of production and trade was gradually reduced, restrictions on the implementation of foreign economic activity were softened, and more favorable conditions were created for the development of private entrepreneurship and the

attraction of foreign investments. Stimulating exports became one of the central directions of the new economic strategy, contributing to the development of manufacturing industries capable of competing in international markets. These changes were closely related to the economic policy of Turgut Ozal, who played a significant role in the liberalization of the Turkish economy in the 1980s. The carried out reforms contributed to the expansion of foreign trade, diversification of industrial production and the increase of the role of private capital in the national economy [5].

During the 1990s, the economic transformation initiated in the previous decade continued under conditions of increasing integration into international markets. The development of the private sector, the expansion of foreign trade, and the growing importance of manufacturing and services contributed to structural changes in the national economy. A particularly significant event was the establishment of the Customs Union between Turkey and the European Union, which entered into force on January 1, 1996. This arrangement strengthened Turkey's economic relations with European markets and encouraged greater integration of its industrial production into international trade networks. At the same time, the country's economic development remained constrained by high inflation, public finance imbalances, banking sector vulnerabilities, bureaucratic obstacles, uneven privatization, and problems associated with corruption and organized crime.

In historical perspective, the development of the Turkish economy can be understood as a transition through several interconnected stages: the establishment of a national economic system following the foundation of the Republic in 1923, state-supported industrialization during the 1930s, planned and import-substitution industrial development during the 1960s and 1970s, economic liberalization beginning in 1980, and increasing integration into international markets during the 1990s. Each stage reflected the interaction of domestic political transformations, changing economic priorities, and external geopolitical circumstances [6].

Consequently, the formation and development of Turkey's modern economy were determined not only by its geographical advantages and natural resources but also by the historical evolution of state economic policy, industrial modernization, private entrepreneurship, and international economic integration. These processes established the foundations for Turkey's expanding role in regional economic relations and contributed to the development of its political and economic cooperation with Central Asian countries.

2. Historical Aspects of the Formation and Development of the Hotel Industry and Its Role in Socio-Economic Relations Between Turkey and Central Asian Countries

The formation and development of Turkey's hotel industry represent an important component of the country's historical economic modernization and its gradual integration into the international tourism system. The historical foundations of hospitality services in Anatolia can be traced to the medieval period, when caravanserais and other accommodation facilities provided shelter for merchants, travelers, and pilgrims moving along major trade routes. During the Seljuk and Ottoman periods, these establishments played an important role in facilitating commercial exchanges, cultural contacts, and communication between different regions. Although traditional accommodation facilities differed considerably from modern hotels, they contributed to the formation of a hospitality culture that later became an important element of Turkey's tourism identity [7].

The transition from traditional hospitality institutions to the modern hotel industry was closely associated with the political, social, and economic transformations of the late Ottoman period and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. The development of urban infrastructure, transport communications, international trade, and diplomatic relations created increasing demand for organized accommodation services. During the first decades of the republican period, the hotel industry remained concentrated primarily in major urban centers, especially Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Its subsequent expansion reflected the broader historical process of economic modernization and the growing importance of service industries within the national economy.

A significant stage in the institutional development of Turkish tourism began during the second half of the twentieth century. The adoption of tourism-related legislation in the 1950s and the

inclusion of tourism development in national economic planning during the 1960s created conditions for the expansion of accommodation facilities and recreational infrastructure. The implementation of five-year development plans encouraged investment in hotels, transport networks, and tourist services. The state initially played an important role in creating the necessary infrastructure, while private enterprises gradually became more actively involved in the development of the hotel industry. These processes reflected the transition from relatively limited tourism activity toward a more organized and economically significant sector.

The 1980s marked a turning point in the historical development of Turkey's hotel industry. Economic liberalization, the expansion of private entrepreneurship, and the introduction of measures to encourage tourism investment accelerated the construction of hotels and resort complexes. Particularly important was the adoption of the Law for the Encouragement of Tourism (Law No. 2634) on March 12, 1982, which established a legal framework for tourism development, investment incentives, and the regulation of tourist facilities. The implementation of this legislation contributed to the expansion of accommodation capacity, especially in the Mediterranean and Aegean coastal regions, and strengthened the participation of private and foreign capital in the tourism sector.

During the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century, Turkey's hotel industry entered a new stage characterized by the emergence and expansion of national and international hotel chains. The development of large hotel complexes in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya, Alanya, and other tourist destinations reflected the increasing diversification of the national tourism market. Coastal areas, particularly along the Mediterranean and Aegean seas, became important centers of resort tourism, while major cities developed accommodation facilities oriented toward business travel, international conferences, cultural tourism, and commercial activities. This geographical differentiation contributed to the formation of a more complex and diversified hotel industry [8].

The development of hotel chains such as WOW – World of Wonders, Rixos Hotels, and other national and international hospitality enterprises became an important characteristic of this period. The establishment of Rixos Hotels in 2000, followed by its expansion into international markets, illustrated the growing competitiveness of Turkish hospitality enterprises. The activities of large hotel chains encouraged the introduction of common service standards and the integration of accommodation, catering, conference facilities, recreational activities, and cultural entertainment within multifunctional tourist complexes. These developments strengthened the role of the hotel industry in Turkey's economic modernization and its participation in the international tourism market [9].

The development of socio-economic relations between Turkey and Central Asian countries entered a new historical stage following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The independence of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan created opportunities for the establishment of direct economic, cultural, and tourism-related cooperation. Historical and cultural connections, particularly between Turkey and the Turkic-speaking republics, facilitated the development of interpersonal contacts, business relations, and tourist exchanges. Within this process, the Turkish hotel industry gradually became an important area of practical cooperation between Turkey and Central Asian states.

During the 1990s and 2000s, the expansion of bilateral economic relations contributed to the increasing participation of Turkish enterprises in the service, construction, transport, and hospitality sectors of Central Asian economies. Turkish experience in the organization of hotel services, management of large tourist complexes, and development of international hospitality standards offered opportunities for the modernization of tourism infrastructure in the region. At the same time, the expansion of international air connections, commercial exchanges, and educational contacts encouraged tourist mobility between Turkey and Central Asian countries. These developments formed part of the broader historical process of economic cooperation that emerged after the establishment of diplomatic relations in the early 1990s.

The practical significance of the Turkish hotel industry for Central Asian countries is particularly evident in the development of integrated tourism infrastructure. Kazakhstan and other states of the region possess considerable historical, cultural, and natural tourism resources, including medieval cities, archaeological monuments, mountain landscapes, lakes, and traditional cultural heritage. The historical experience of Turkey demonstrates how the development of accommodation facilities, transport accessibility, recreational infrastructure, and professional service management can contribute to the economic use of tourism resources. In this context, Turkish hospitality practices provide a comparative model for examining the development of tourism services in Central Asia, while taking into account the geographical, climatic, and socio-economic characteristics of each country [10].

Particular attention should be given to the historical relationship between tourism development and the modernization of regional economies. In Turkey, the expansion of the hotel industry was accompanied by the growth of related economic activities, including construction, food production, agriculture, transportation, retail trade, and cultural services. Similar intersectoral relationships may be relevant to Central Asian states seeking to diversify their economies and strengthen regional tourism markets. However, the adaptation of Turkish experience requires consideration of differences in infrastructure, investment conditions, domestic demand, historical heritage, and tourism development priorities.

The development of the Turkish tourism sector also reflected broader structural transformations in the country's economy throughout the twentieth century. The transition from state-supported industrialization toward market liberalization and increasing integration into the international economy created favorable conditions for private investment in tourism and hospitality. Industrial production, energy, agriculture, transport, construction, and tourism became interconnected components of economic development. Nevertheless, regional differences between western and eastern Anatolia, unequal access to infrastructure, and socio-economic disparities remained important challenges. These historical circumstances demonstrate that the expansion of tourism infrastructure did not automatically eliminate regional inequality and that the effectiveness of tourism development depended on broader economic and social conditions.

From a historical perspective, the evolution of Turkey's hotel industry can be divided into several interconnected stages. The first stage was associated with traditional forms of hospitality and the development of modern accommodation facilities during the late Ottoman and early republican periods. The second stage, covering the 1950s–1970s, was characterized by the institutionalization of tourism policy and the gradual expansion of hotel infrastructure. The third stage began in the 1980s, when economic liberalization and state investment incentives accelerated the development of mass tourism and coastal resort complexes. The fourth stage, beginning in the 1990s and continuing into the twenty-first century, was marked by the internationalization of hotel enterprises, the expansion of tourism services, and the development of economic cooperation with Central Asian countries [11].

Thus, the formation and development of Turkey's hotel industry constitute an important part of the country's historical economic transformation. The growth of modern accommodation facilities, national and international hotel chains, diversified tourist services, and cultural tourism infrastructure reflected the transition from traditional forms of hospitality to an internationally integrated tourism economy. Following the independence of Central Asian states in 1991, the accumulated experience of the Turkish hotel industry acquired additional significance within the framework of bilateral economic cooperation. The historical experience of Turkey demonstrates the relationship between tourism development, economic modernization, international investment, and cultural exchange, while offering a basis for comparative analysis of tourism and hospitality development in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries.

3. Historical Evolution of Regional Security Issues and the Role of the Turkic Factor in Central Asia

The historical evolution of regional security in Central Asia is closely associated with the political and geopolitical transformations that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The emergence of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan as independent states fundamentally changed the regional security environment and created new challenges related to the protection of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, political stability, and economic independence. These developments also transformed Central Asia into an increasingly important area of international relations, where the strategic interests of Russia, China, the United States, Turkey, and other regional powers began to intersect.

The formation of national security systems in the newly independent Central Asian states represented one of the principal historical tasks of the post-Soviet period. During the early 1990s, governments in the region faced the necessity of establishing independent political institutions, national armed forces, border protection mechanisms, and foreign policy strategies. At the same time, the preservation of regional stability required the creation of new forms of interstate cooperation and the adaptation of existing security arrangements to the changing international environment. Consequently, security cooperation gradually became an essential component of the political development of Central Asian countries [12].

Kazakhstan's approach to regional security reflects this broader historical process. The Kazakhstan–2050 Strategy, announced in December 2012, identified the protection of national interests, the strengthening of statehood, and the development of a consistent foreign policy as important priorities of long-term national development. The strategy emphasized the relationship between political stability, sustainable economic growth, and participation in regional and global security processes. From a historical perspective, these priorities represented a continuation of the foreign policy principles established during the first decades of Kazakhstan's independence, particularly the pursuit of sovereignty, international cooperation, and a balanced approach to relations with major world powers [13].

During the mid-1990s, Central Asian countries also sought to establish independent mechanisms of military and peacekeeping cooperation. One significant initiative was the creation of the Central Asian Peacekeeping Battalion, commonly known as CENTRASBAT. On December 15, 1995, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan signed an agreement concerning the organization and formation of a collective peacekeeping battalion under the auspices of the United Nations. The establishment of this structure reflected the intention of the participating countries to develop practical cooperation in military training, peacekeeping operations, and regional security. Its development was also connected with NATO's Partnership for Peace program, which Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan joined in 1994. Although CENTRASBAT did not develop into a permanent regional military organization, its activities represented an important historical experiment in multilateral peacekeeping cooperation and contributed to the development of national peacekeeping capabilities [14].

At the same time, Turkey's role in Central Asia cannot be explained exclusively through the historical and cultural connections of Turkic peoples. Its regional engagement has increasingly involved cooperation in trade, infrastructure, international transport corridors, education, defense-related industries, and security dialogue. The development of these relations reflects the interaction between historical continuity and changing geopolitical circumstances. In this regard, the Turkic factor represents both a cultural-historical foundation of cooperation and an institutional mechanism through which participating states seek to pursue their contemporary national interests.

The internal political and economic development of Turkey also influences the historical evolution of its relations with Central Asian countries. Changes in governmental institutions, foreign policy priorities, economic capabilities, and security strategies have affected the scope and direction of Ankara's regional engagement. Consequently, the historical study of Turkey's Central Asian policy

requires consideration of both domestic political transformations and changes in the international environment. Such an approach makes it possible to examine Turkey's regional influence without reducing it to a single political or ideological model [15].

Thus, the historical evolution of regional security in Central Asia after 1991 has been characterized by the establishment of sovereign national security systems, the development of multilateral organizations, and the increasing significance of transnational threats. Within this process, the Turkic factor gradually developed from a foundation of historical, linguistic, and cultural cooperation into an additional institutional dimension of regional political dialogue. Turkey's engagement in Central Asia illustrates the interaction between historical relationships and contemporary security priorities, while the Organization of Turkic States represents an important platform for the further development of cooperation among its member countries.

Conclusion

The historical analysis of Turkey's policy in Central Asia demonstrates that its formation and development have been closely connected with the transformation of the international relations system, the modernization of the Turkish economy, and the evolution of regional security challenges. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the emergence of independent Central Asian states created new historical conditions for the expansion of Turkey's political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic relations with the region. During the subsequent decades, Ankara's Central Asian policy gradually evolved from an approach primarily based on historical, linguistic, and cultural ties toward a more comprehensive strategy encompassing economic cooperation, institutional integration, transport connectivity, and regional security.

The study of the historical development of the Turkish economy reveals several important stages of structural transformation. The establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the implementation of state-supported industrialization during the 1930s, the expansion of planned economic development in the 1960s and 1970s, and the liberalization reforms initiated in 1980 contributed to the formation of the country's modern economic system. The subsequent development of manufacturing, agriculture, energy, construction, transport, and international trade strengthened Turkey's economic capacity and created favorable conditions for its participation in regional economic cooperation. Following the independence of the Central Asian republics, these transformations facilitated the expansion of Turkish economic activity in Kazakhstan and other countries of the region.

An important result of Turkey's economic modernization was the development of the tourism and hotel industry, which gradually became a significant component of its international economic relations. The historical evolution of Turkish hospitality services, from traditional accommodation institutions to modern hotel complexes and international hotel chains, reflected broader changes in the country's economic structure and service sector. The expansion of tourism infrastructure, the development of diversified recreational services, and the increasing international competitiveness of Turkish hospitality enterprises created opportunities for cooperation with Central Asian countries. In this context, Turkey's historical experience provides a basis for examining the modernization of tourism infrastructure, the development of hotel services, and the strengthening of socio-economic ties between Turkey and the states of Central Asia.

The analysis of regional security issues demonstrates that the independence of the Central Asian republics marked the beginning of a new stage in the formation of regional security mechanisms. The establishment of the Collective Security Treaty in 1992, the development of the CENTRASBAT peacekeeping initiative in 1995, the Shanghai Five agreements of 1996–1997, and the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2001 reflected the efforts of regional states to respond to changing geopolitical circumstances. Over time, traditional concerns related to sovereignty and territorial integrity were supplemented by challenges associated with international terrorism, religious extremism, transnational organized crime, border security, and the protection of strategic infrastructure.

The historical and cultural connections between Turkey and the Turkic-speaking states of Central Asia acquired renewed political significance after 1991. The institutional development of cooperation, culminating in the establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States in 2009 and its transformation into the Organization of Turkic States in 2021, contributed to the expansion of multilateral relations. The Turkic factor consequently evolved from a predominantly cultural and historical foundation of cooperation into an additional mechanism of political dialogue, economic interaction, and security consultations. Nevertheless, the development of these relations has continued to depend on the sovereign interests and foreign policy priorities of the participating states.

The historical evolution of Turkey's security policy also demonstrates the relationship between national defense priorities, international alliances, and regional geopolitical transformations. Since joining NATO in 1952, Turkey has maintained collective defense as an important foundation of its national security system. At the same time, the changing international environment, particularly after the end of the Cold War, encouraged Ankara to strengthen its national defense capabilities and pursue greater strategic autonomy. The development of the domestic defense industry, the expansion of counterterrorism measures, and the increasing importance of security issues in the Black Sea, the Middle East, and the Eastern Mediterranean have contributed to the formation of a multidimensional security strategy.

These historical transformations have also influenced Turkey's relations with Central Asian countries. The expansion of political dialogue, economic cooperation, defense-related partnerships, and institutional contacts demonstrates the increasing significance of the region within Ankara's foreign policy priorities. At the same time, Turkey's engagement in Central Asia has developed within a complex geopolitical environment characterized by the interests of Russia, China, Western countries, and other regional actors. Consequently, Turkey's policy should be examined as one component of the broader system of international relations rather than as an independent or dominant factor determining regional developments.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the development of Turkey's relations with Central Asia has been influenced by the growing importance of regional transport corridors, energy cooperation, and international economic connectivity. The geographical position of Turkey between Europe and Asia has enabled it to participate in initiatives aimed at strengthening trade links and developing alternative transportation routes connecting Central Asian markets with European and Mediterranean economic centers. In particular, the increasing significance of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route reflects the broader historical tendency toward the diversification of economic partnerships and the expansion of interregional connectivity. These developments demonstrate that Turkey's engagement with Central Asia has gradually acquired greater economic and geopolitical significance, extending beyond the traditional framework of cultural and diplomatic cooperation.

Within the broader framework of Turkey's relations with Central Asia, Kazakhstan has played a particularly important role in the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, Turkish–Kazakh relations have gradually expanded from political recognition and cultural interaction to economic cooperation, educational exchanges, institutional partnerships, and strategic dialogue. Kazakhstan's geographical position, economic potential, and participation in regional integration initiatives have contributed to its significance in Turkey's Central Asian policy. At the same time, cooperation between the two countries has developed in accordance with their respective national interests and changing international circumstances. The historical experience of Turkish–Kazakh relations demonstrates that sustainable interstate cooperation is based not only on shared linguistic and cultural heritage but also on pragmatic economic interests, diplomatic continuity, and mutual recognition of sovereignty. In this respect, Kazakhstan represents an important example of the gradual institutionalization and diversification of Turkey's engagement with the Central Asian region.

Another important conclusion concerns the relationship between economic interdependence and regional stability. The historical experience of Turkey and the Central Asian republics suggests that the expansion of bilateral and multilateral cooperation can create additional opportunities for strengthening political dialogue, facilitating institutional interaction, and addressing common security challenges. However, the effectiveness of such cooperation depends on the ability of participating states to reconcile their national interests with broader regional priorities. In this regard, Turkey's evolving approach to Central Asia illustrates the importance of flexible diplomatic mechanisms, diversified economic relations, and sustained cooperation in responding to the changing international environment. The combination of historical continuity and pragmatic foreign policy considerations therefore remains a defining feature of Turkey's contemporary relations with Central Asian countries.

Thus, the research establishes that the historical formation and development of Turkey's Central Asian policy have been shaped by the interaction of economic modernization, historical and cultural connections, institutional cooperation, and changing security priorities. The main characteristic of this process is the gradual transition from the establishment of diplomatic and cultural relations in the early 1990s toward a diversified model of cooperation encompassing economic development, tourism, transport, political dialogue, and regional security. The historical experience of Turkey and the Central Asian states indicates that sustainable regional cooperation depends on the combination of mutually beneficial economic relations, respect for national sovereignty, institutional dialogue, and coordinated responses to common security challenges. These findings contribute to understanding the historical continuity and transformation of Turkey's regional policy and its place in the evolving political and security architecture of Central Asia.

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ТҮРКИЯНЫҢ ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯДАҒЫ САЯСАТЫ: ҚАЛЫПТАСУ МЕН ДАМУДЫҢ ТАРИХИ ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ, ӨҢІРЛІК ҚАУІПСІЗДІК МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ

Аңдатпа

Мақалада Түркияның Орталық Азиядағы саясатының қалыптасуы мен дамуының тарихи ерекшеліктері, әсіресе аймақтық қауіпсіздік мәселелері қарастырылады. Зерттеу барысында 1991 жылы Орталық Азия мемлекеттері тәуелсіздік алғаннан кейін Түркияның аталған елдермен қарым-қатынастарының сипатын айқындаған тарихи, саяси және геосаяси факторлар талданады. Түркияның сыртқы саяси басымдықтарының эволюциясына, саяси, экономикалық, мәдени және дипломатиялық ынтымақтастықтың дамуына, сондай-ақ мемлекетаралық қатынастарды нығайтудағы тарихи және тілдік байланыстардың рөліне ерекше назар аударылады. Сонымен қатар мақалада Түркияның аймақтық интеграциялық үдерістерге қатысуы, оның ішінде Түркі мемлекеттері ұйымы аясындағы ынтымақтастығы және қазіргі заманғы қауіпсіздік сын-қатерлерін шешуге бағытталған ұстанымдары қарастырылады. Түркияның Орталық Азиядағы стратегиясына жетекші аймақтық және халықаралық акторлардың ықпалы зерттеліп, оның сыртқы саяси мақсаттарының тарихи сабақтастығы мен өзгеру үдерістері талданады. Зерттеудің мақсаты – аймақтық қауіпсіздік пен халықаралық қатынастардың кең ауқымды контексінде Түркияның Орталық Азиядағы қызметінің негізгі кезеңдерін, өзіндік ерекшеліктерін және тарихи маңызын анықтау.

Кілт сөздер: Түркия, Орталық Азия, сыртқы саясат, тарихи даму, аймақтық қауіпсіздік, геосаяси мүдделер

«ПОЛИТИКА ТУРЦИИ В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ: ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ СТАНОВЛЕНИЯ И РАЗВИТИЯ, ПРОБЛЕМЫ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ»

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются исторические особенности становления и развития политики Турции в Центральной Азии с особым акцентом на вопросы региональной безопасности. В исследовании анализируются исторические, политические и геополитические факторы, определявшие характер взаимоотношений Турции с государствами Центральной Азии после обретения ими независимости в 1991 году. Особое внимание уделяется эволюции внешнеполитических приоритетов Турции, развитию политического, экономического, культурного и дипломатического сотрудничества, а также роли исторических и языковых связей в укреплении межгосударственных отношений. В статье также рассматриваются участие Турции в региональных интеграционных процессах, включая сотрудничество в рамках Организации тюркских государств, и её подходы к решению современных вызовов безопасности. Исследуется влияние ведущих региональных и международных акторов на центральноазиатскую стратегию Турции, анализируются историческая преемственность и трансформация её внешнеполитических целей. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении основных этапов, характерных особенностей и исторического значения деятельности Турции в Центральной Азии в более широком контексте региональной безопасности и международных отношений.

Ключевые слова: Турция, Центральная Азия, внешняя политика, историческое развитие, региональная безопасность, геополитические интересы

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Information about the author
Abdullah Gundogdu – **corresponding author,** professor, head of the Department of "General turkish history", Ankara University, Ankara, Republic of Türkiye
E-mail: abdullahgundogdu@yahoo.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9171-6965

Информация об авторе:
Абдуллах Гюндогду – **основной автор,** профессор, заведующий отделом «Общей турецкой истории», университет Анкара, г.Анкара, Турецкая Республика
E-mail: abdullahgundogdu@yahoo.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9171-6965

Автор туралы ақпарат:
Абдуллах Гюндогду – **негізгі автор,** профессор, «Жалпы түрік тарихы» бөлімінің меңгерушісі, Анкара университеті, Анкара қ., Түркия Республикасы
E-mail: abdullahgundogdu@yahoo.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9171-6965