

The Russo-Turkish Relationship



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Executive Summary

Main question:

What have been the main developments in the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union?

The objective of this thesis is to explain the diplomatic relations of Turkey and Russia after the Soviet collapse. Information was assembled about the economic ties of Turkey and Russia, including the regional conflicts between the two countries. Information was gathered from websites, books, journals and an interview. To secure quality, reliable websites have been used. Mr.

Mehmet Perinçek was interviewed; he is a historian and a researcher of Russian/ Soviet archives in Russia. Further, the Consulate General of Russia in Trabzon (Turkey) was visited.

Key findings

It is remarkable that the economic ties are strengthening. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the suitcase trade was developed and huge markets were created for Turkish goods in Russia. In 1995, the volume of suitcase trade reached 10 billion dollars. Russia became the main trading partner of Turkey among the CIS countries (Eder, Yakovlev, & Çarkoglu, 2003). The most important factor in the economic relationship of Turkey and Russia is obviously energy. Turkey is importing 46 per cent of natural gas and 26 per cent of petroleum from Russia. Besides importing Russian gas, Turkey is also a transit country for it.

On the other hand, Turkey and Russia are in opposition in many regional conflicts. This occurs because of ethnic reasons and because of the impacts of the past. Both countries were great empires and had fights against each other. Instances are the three South Caucasian (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) countries and the Balkan region. Internal problems, such as the Chechens in Russia and the PKK in Turkey, are causing tensions.

In the future, the relations between the two countries will improve. Both countries are cooperating in different areas and they have plans which are the basis of a good relationship in the future, such as the energy pipelines and the construction of nuclear power plants.

Conclusion

The diplomatic relations of Turkey and Russia are improving. The main developments are the suitcase trade after the Soviet collapse, the interdependency of both countries because of energy and the tensions caused by regional conflicts and ethnic minorities. Those developments bring the former rival empires closer together.

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Preface

This thesis explores the Turkish-Russian diplomatic relationship. Recent developments in the Turkish-Russian relations and the minor Russian Studies have further strengthened the main reason of this dissertation. This thesis is written in the scope of the graduation of the European Studies program at The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

My supervisor was initially Mr. Parlevliet, who, due to retirement, was replaced by Mr. van Munster. I would like to thank them both for their support and advices.

A second word of thanks goes to Mr. Perinçek for his time and interest. His answers during my interview gave me a deeper understanding of the issues.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, family and friends for their motivational and moral support.

Yasemin Aydin

Introduction

Turkey and the Russian Federation are no longer the empires of the past or enemies. The end of the Cold War became a turning point for Russia and Turkey, which was a possibility to discover new fields of cooperation. The rise of the interest of other actors as important players in international politics is the other point which helped to identify the fields for cooperation.

In recent years, bilateral meetings take place more often and at a top level between Russia and Turkey. Visa- free travelling commenced between both countries on 16 April 2011 and they are cooperating in many fields. The interaction between those countries is increasing, as well as the trade. Certainly the resources are the most important factor for the Russo-Turkish trade. It can also be stated that those countries are dependent on each other especially because of energy. The negotiations and relations between Russia and Turkey in the near future will be watched closely.

Furthermore, Russia is becoming more and more important for European countries as it is geographically the world's biggest country and because of its position as an energy supplying country. Turkey is also important for Europe because of, *inter alia*, its geographical position. Consequently the increasing cooperation between these two countries could affect the relations with the European Union, since Turkey is a candidate country for EU membership. For those reasons the next main- and sub questions are composed as follows in the next subchapter.

The main question that I would like to answer in this research report is the following:

What have been the main developments in the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union?

This thesis focuses specifically on the economic relations and regional conflicts because these are the highlights in the development of the Russian-Turkish relationship. However, other fields of cooperation also exist. Therefore, and in order to answer the main question, there are sub-questions which will be addressed. These are mentioned below:

1. Which historic events affect the Russo- Turkish relationship?
2. How did the economic relationship between the countries develop?
3. What are the regional conflicts which are affecting diplomatic relations?

Methodology

With this study I would like to find out how the diplomatic relations between Russia and Turkey really are and how it may develop in the future. The research method is based on a combination of desk research and field research, which consisted of interviewing a historian and a visit of the Consulate General of Russia in Trabzon (Turkey). This methodology is chosen because this research is based on existing researches and reports, which are the main sources for this thesis. The main report which is used for this dissertation is the report of the Centre of Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (ORSAM) which is called, *'From neighbours to strategic cooperation: Turkish-Russian relations.'* Books are also important for supplementary information. Besides that, the interview will support the existing information.

The interview is carefully composed and based on the sub-questions of the research report, which will finally result in answering the main question. In the interview open questions are formulated. The interview's aim is to get the main points of this research answered. The interview is held with a Turkish historian, named Mehmet Perinçek. He also researches Turkish-Russian relations in Russian/Soviet state archives (for more information see Appendix 1) in Russia.

Structure

The structure of this research report is divided in chapters. The introduction is followed by chapter one, which briefly describes the affects of the history on the relation of Turkey and Russia. The next chapter includes the economical relationship between the countries. In chapter three the regional conflicts are discussed. Chapter four contains the conclusion and finally the references and appendix are attached.

Chapter 1 Russo- Turkish Relationship in the History

1.1 Introduction

Contacts between Russian and Turkish peoples began approximately 1,000 years ago. Since the beginning of the Middle Ages the Russian and Turkish peoples came together in the South of the Urals and the Russian savannas. Both peoples lived side by side for years and they had to fight with each other in history. However, they have many similarities. If the Russians are compared with Europeans they are closer to Turks, since geographically both countries have lands in the West and in the East. Another similarity is that both countries built up the largest empires and that those empires collapsed in the same period (ORSAM, 2010, p. 6). Examples of wars between those countries are the Crimean War (1853- 1856) and the Russo-Turkish War (1877- 1878). Furthermore, Russia was supporting the Slavs in the Ottoman Empire for their independence. The right of transit for Russian warships from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean Sea via the Dardanelles seaway, which was Turkish- controlled, was denied by international treaties. This developed tensions. Further, during the World War I Russia and Turkey were on different sides and there were tensions because of the Russo-Turkish frontier in the Caucasus. The Balkans is another region which created tensions between both countries. Bulgaria was a part of the Ottoman Empire and with the support of Russia it got its complete independence in 1908 from the Ottoman Empire (Sharp, Westwell, & Westwood, 2002, p. 89).

1.1 Two New Countries

The Bolsheviks gained power with the October Revolution. By the Julian calendar it took place on 25-26 October 1917, but under the post-1918 calendar it was on 7-8 November therefore it is sometimes called the November Revolution. Vladimir Iljitsj Lenin had the most important role in the takeover (Thompson, 1996, p. 134). Soviet leaders went in motion to found a new state structure, namely the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). It was formed in December 1922 and ratified in January 1924 (Thompson, 1996, p. 205).

A crisis emerged in Turkey with resignation of the government on 25 October 1923. This was an opportunity for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to proclaim the republic on which he was waiting. On October 28 Mustafa Kemal explained his ideas to his colleagues told them that they will proclaim the republic the next day at the Çankaya Presidential Palace. That night he together with Ismet Pasha prepared a draft amending certain articles of the Constitution of 1921. After the speeches in the Parliament the republic was proclaimed at 29 October 1923 (Cumhuriyetin ilanı, n.d.).

The relationship between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Turkey (both newly developed countries instead of two empires) were good in the beginning. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had sent a letter to Vladimir Iljitsj Lenin at 26 April 1920. Turkey requested in this letter the establishment of diplomatic relations; whether the Soviet Union could help the country with its struggle for its independency and in return for that Turkey would support the fight of the Soviets against the imperialist powers. The Soviet administration was the first state in the world that recognized the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA)¹. The date of this letter is accepted as the start of the official relations between the two young countries. Furthermore, the Turkish Republic and the Soviet Union signed a Friendship and Fraternity Agreement on 16 March 1921 in Moscow. All other old agreements were declared to be invalid. The Turkish authorities called Russia “Our Great Northern Neighbour”, although, it did not last long and this relationship came to an end. Both countries were on different sides during the Cold War (ORSAM, 2010, p.6).

1.2 Collapse Soviet Union

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the relations between the Russian Federation and Turkey started again. In the nineties, a new form of (unofficial) trade began between Russia and Turkey, which is called the “suitcase economy” (Nachmani, 2003, p. 74). Traders filled their suitcases with goods in Turkey and sold them in Russia. Products such as textiles, leather, soap, vegetables and fruit were mainly exported. The suitcase trade became an important source for the trading volume of Turkey (Ergener, 2002, p.67).

In December 1997, Turkey and Russia signed an intergovernmental agreement, which stipulates that 365 billion cubic meters of gas would be delivered to Turkey via the Blue Stream gas pipeline for twenty-five years. This is an important project, which is designed to provide Russian natural gas to Turkey across the Black Sea by avoiding third countries. Blue Stream has noticeably improved the confidence of gas supply to Turkey. Furthermore, it encourages the gas market and infrastructure development in the country (Blue Stream, n.d.).

In 2010, both countries celebrated the 90th year of the Soviet/ Turk relationship and visa- free travelling was discussed (ORSAM, 2010, p.6), which was introduced on 16th of April 2011.

¹ The Turkish Parliament was established on 23 April 1920. According to the 7th Article of the Constitution, legislative power belongs to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) on behalf of the Turkish Nation. The TGNA is formed with 550 members of parliament who are elected with the general vote of the people (TBMM, 2009).

1.3 Cooperation after the Soviet Collapse

In the beginning of the nineties the Russian-Turkish relationship was not a good neighbourly relationship because of the geopolitical rivalry and military profits (Hovsepian, n.d.). Nevertheless, in May 1992 during the visit of Süleyman Demirel² a Treaty on Principles of Relations³ was signed by the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation (Turkey's Political Relations with Russian Federation, n.d.). In the second half of the 1990s, the good neighbour principle started; both countries determined their shared views and new components of cooperation especially in the energy sector and the anti-terrorism fight. They signed various cooperation agreements in 1996 and 1997. The changed opinions and the agreements forced the bilateral relationship from opposition to collaboration.

In 2001, the Joint Action Plan on Cooperation in Eurasia was signed by the two countries, which had a new meaning for the political relations. This plan defined the possibilities and determined the common interest of both countries in the area of cooperation (Hovsepian, n.d.). The increasing cooperation between Turkey and Russia is represented by a Commission for High-Level Cooperation and a Joint Strategic Planning Group (Hanson, 2011, p. 12).

Furthermore Medvedev's visit of 11-12 May 2010 to Turkey was probably the keystone in the introduction of a political and strategic dimension for the improving relationship. Both countries will initiate a high level cooperation council. Before his visit, Medvedev wrote an article for Today's Zaman. He wrote: "We can confidently say that Russian-Turkish relations have advanced to the level of a multidimensional strategic partnership," Medvedev wrote in an article he penned for Today's Zaman ahead of his visit. He defined the council as a new device for intergovernmental collaboration and said:

"The purpose of this council is to develop a strategy on basic ways to develop Russian-Turkish relations, coordinate the implementation of critical projects and provide incentives for businessmen in both countries to cooperate with each other. Moreover, it aims to create synergy between foreign policies to ensure international peace, stability and safety."

² Former Prime Minister of Turkey (Turkey's Political Relations with Russian Federation, n.d.).

³ The treaty, which is the foundation of the new era of Turkish-Russian relations, sets forth the principles that constitute the basis of the relations between the two countries, such as respect for political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, equality of rights and mutual interests, refraining from using force and threat to use force in solving problems and is a sign of the willingness on both sides to add new dimensions to their cooperation (Turkey's Political Relations with Russian Federation, n.d.).

In addition, Medvedev defined Turkey as one of their most important partners with respect to regional and international issues. However, the key axis in the Turkish-Russian collaboration is the energy sector. The discussed topics during Medvedev's visit will be the following: the planned South Stream and Blue Stream-2 natural gas pipelines, the construction of the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline and a nuclear power plant, which Russia will built in Turkey (Turkey, Russia eye strategic partnership in Medvedev visit, 2010).

1.3.1 Military- Technical Cooperation

Turkey has a close relationship with the US and other NATO-member states in the military-technical area. Turkey encouraged its relations with Israel in the 1990s. Currently it aims for a closer military-technical and military-industrial collaboration with Russia (Hovsepian, n.d.). The Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia and Turkey met bilaterally in 2002 and after that took couple of meetings place of high ranking Commanders (Turkey's Political Relations with Russian Federation, n.d.).

In fact, the military and technological cooperation between these two countries is not new. Previously, already in the nineties Turkey had bought Russian weapons and helicopters. In 2008, a Russian firm named "Rosoboronexport" won the tender for the sale of anti- tank systems and missiles to the Turkish Armed Forces. On the one hand, Russia is going to cooperate with Turkey in the field of military technology and on the other hand Russia will have an important trump in the US-Russia weapon market competition. The Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy, Vladimir Vysotsky, visited Turkey in June 2008 and he emphasized once more the importance of the development of military relations between the two countries. During the meetings, both parties agreed to coordinate the operations of Russian and Turkish mariners to improve the form and direction of the common activities in the Black Sea area and to develop a system of collective security in the region. The effort to develop the relations in the military field will carry the Russian-Turkish relations to a new size (Orsam, 2010, p. 9).

1.4 Conclusion

It is a coincidence that the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire were the largest empires and that they collapsed in the same period. Logically, this caused rivalry and tensions especially because both empires bordered each other they tried to expand their powers.

In my opinion, history had an important impact on the Russo-Turkish relationship after the Soviet Collapse. The former rivals had some problems with trusting each others because of the history. Although, we see that cooperation between Turkey and Russia is increasing. The next chapters of this thesis describes the further development.

Chapter 2 Turkish- Russian Economic Relations

2.1 Introduction

In 1937, Turkey and the Soviet Union signed a clearing agreement which provided the framework for commercial relations. According to Mr. Arik⁴, Turkey did not receive the needed technologies for materials such as iron, steel, aluminium and petroleum refinery for its industrialisation from Western countries during the Cold War period. In contrast, the approach to live together in peace during the Khrushchev period (1953- 1964) continued during the Brezhnev period and developed the basic economic relations with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union helped Turkey with delivering the products needed for the industrialisation of the country. Moreover, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, an Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation was signed on February 1991 (Arik, n.d. p.2).

The economic relations play an important role for the diplomatic relations between countries. Without any hesitation it can be said that the Russo-Turkish economic relations are improving. According to Figure 1 the total foreign trade volume between Turkey and the Russia amounted to a total of 26,224 million dollars in 2010 while this was 4,531 million dollars in 2000 (Rusya Federasyonu, 2010). The aim of Russia and Turkey is to increase the trade volume to 100 billion dollars in five years' time. This chapter describes the economic relations between Russia and Turkey.

Figure 1 Turkey- Russian Federation Foreign trade data (million dollars)

Year	Export	Exchange (%)	Import	Exchange (%)	Volume	Balance
2000	644	9.4	3887	63.7	4531	-3243
2001	924	43.5	3436	- 11.6	4360	-2512
2002	1172	26.8	3892	13.3	5064	-2720
2003	1368	16.7	5451	40.1	6819	-4083
2004	1859	35.9	9033	65.7	10892	-7174
2005	2377	27.9	12906	42.9	15283	-10529
2006	3238	36.2	17806	37.9	21044	-14568
2007	4727	46.0	23508	32.0	28235	-18781
2008	6483	37.2	31364	33.4	37847	-24881
2009	3202	- 50.6	19450	-38.0	22652	-16248
2010	4632	44.6	21592	11.0	26224	-16960

Source: Rusya Federasyonu, 2010, translated by Yasemin Aydin

⁴ Umut Arik is a former ambassador of Turkey and Foreign Relations Vice President.

2.2 Suitcase Trade

After the collapse of the communist regimes, the former Soviet republics entered the international economy and liberalisation of the economy took place. As a consequence, the so called ‘suitcase trade’ began between the former Soviet republics and Turkey. As Figure 2⁵ shows, Russia imported most from Turkey, between 1991 and 2002 among the countries in Figure 2 (Ergener, 2002, p. 67). Tourists and traders from those countries went to Turkey, mainly the cities Istanbul and Trabzon, to buy goods and sell it in their countries. This form of trade was logically unregulated and unregistered. Therefore, this is a relatively cheap kind of trading. The suitcase economy became very important for Turkey. The effects of this commerce were that huge markets were created for Turkish goods in Russia. Before the rouble crisis in 1998, the suitcase trade in Russia was approximately 4.5- 5 billion dollars per quarter and after the crisis it declined to 2- 2.5 billion dollars per quarter (Eder, Yakovlev, & Çarkoglu, 2003, p. 5).

Figure 2

<i>Which countries do you sell your goods?</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Russia	99	91
Romania	41	38
Bulgaria	33	30
Ukraine	27	25
Poland	24	22
Arabic countries	22	20
Yugoslavia	18	17
Hungary	15	14
Azerbaijan	14	13
Czech Republic	13	12
Tunisia	9	8
Israel	7	6
Macedonia	7	6
Turkic Republics	7	6
Moldavia	5	5
Albania	4	4
Serbia	4	4
Croatia	3	3
Georgia	3	3
Armenia	2	2

Source: Eder, Yakovlev, & Çarkoglu, 2003, p. 9.

⁵ Retrieved from a report which examined a microcosm of the new economic geography created through the “shuttle” trade between former Soviet republics and Turkey between 1991 and 2002. This report is composed during 2001- 2002 by 40 interviews with in total 120 shopkeepers in Laleli. Further interviews were held with 4 cargo companies, 4 big companies with sales and production, 3 shoe shops, 3 jewelry shops, 3 leather goods shops, 1 automotive parts shop, 1 office supply shop and 3 upholstery, 13 clothing shops (jeans, T-shirts, sleep wear, women and men clothing) in Laleli. On the Russian side, 24 interviews were held with chelnoki the major source of information concerning this type of business. Finally, 17 suitcase traders were interviewed (Eder, Yakovlev, & Çarkoglu, 2003, p. 7-8).

The goods which Turkey exported to Russia were mainly: textiles, leather, soap, vegetables, fruit, biscuits, detergents, jewellery and household accessories. Regular trips started for many Russians to the bazaars in the Black Sea coasts in Turkey, such as Trabzon, Samsun and Hopa and shifted to Istanbul. In 1995, the volume of suitcase trade reached its highest level with approximately 10 billion dollars. Since then the volume of suitcase trade began to decline (Eder, Yakovlev, & Çarkoglu, 2003, p.7). After the economic crisis of 1998 in Russia the trade was halved and in 1999 it was declined with sixty per cent (Ergener, 2002). The suitcase trade did not only consist of trading products, it developed services as well. For example travel, accommodation and transport were part of this trade form. Tourism is also a field that was developed by suitcase trade, which will be discussed in a sub-section of this chapter.

2.3 Trade

With 90%, Russia became the main trading partner of Turkey among the CIS countries⁶. The trade was two billion dollars in 1992. The purpose of the protocol of April 1994 was to increase the volume of the business with five billion dollars annually. Another agreed point in 1994 was that Russia would annually deliver 10.5 million cubic meters of natural gas to Turkey. Russia is Turkey's main gas provider (Peimani, 1998, p. 100). According to the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the energy issue is the most important element in the economic and commercial relations between Turkey and Russia. The cooperation in the field of natural gas is also spread to the field of crude oil and nuclear energy and this will further strengthen the partnership of Turkey and Russia. Furthermore, a 'Joint Declaration on Cooperation in Nuclear Power Plant' and an 'Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Plant Quarantine' in Turkey were signed between Turkey and Russia (Vize kaldırmaya hazırlanan Türkiye-Rusya nükleer santral için ilk imzayı attı, 2010). So, energy is also a remarkable trade factor for these countries, which will be explained further in this chapter, but other areas for trade are also developing. In the next paragraphs the developing trade areas will be explained.

Russia is an important country for the Turkish textile and fashion trade. In 2007, Turkey's export to Russia in ready wear and confection was 242 million dollars and the textile export was 690

⁶ Commonwealth of Independent States was created in December 1991. In the adopted Declaration the participants of the Commonwealth declared their interaction on the basis of sovereign equality. At present the CIS unites: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine (Commonwealth of Independent States , n.d.).

million dollars. In the same year, Russia became the third biggest market after the EU and the USA that imports clothing and confection. In 2007, Russian textiles is the largest market of Turkey with a share of 9.4 per cent (Yerdelen, 2008, p. 36). Leather and the leather products sector is the tenth largest sector in the Turkish industry. Russia is also the third largest leather importing country from Turkey (Kalender, 2008, p. 49). According to the statistics of the State Customs Committee of the Russian Federation, Russia imported for 33 million dollars leather and leather products, such as suitcases, bags, belts, gloves and clothes (Kapkaev, 2008, p. 57).

Furthermore, Russia is exporting 90 tons raw gold to Turkey per year and is importing 600 tons processed gold. This shows that there is a great market share for this sector but due to the direct taxes on export (43 per cent) from Turkey to Russia it is not possible to make a high rate profit. It is also difficult to enter this market. Consequently, the “tolling” system is a more advantageous system. With this system the taxes are decreasing with approximately nineteen per cent. Turkish firms do make agreements with Russian firms. This agreement means that Turkish firms are importing raw products from Russia and after processing it, they export it to Russia. Because the raw products are bought in Russia the taxes of processed products which are exported to Russia are two thirds lower (Ilisky, 2008, p.72).

In 2009, Turkey exported products to Russia worth 965 million dollars. The most exported products are fresh vegetables and fruit (for 633 million dollars). Other exported food products are: herbal products, dried fruit, hazelnuts, fruit and vegetable products (Yazici, 2011).

The demand for other products from Turkey is increasing. Examples of products are ceramic, marble and furniture (especially office furniture). The demand for ceramic and marble is significantly increasing in the Southern regions such as Krasnodar, Rostov and Stavropol because of the 2014 Winter Olympics (Ilisky, 2008, p.72- 73).

The economic relations between Russia and Turkey go beyond trade. Many Turkish companies are involved with different economic activities in Russia, such as building hotels and small factories. Both countries are also involved in joint ventures. To give an example of a joint venture: the first Russian-Turkish factory, which produced motorcycles, was opened in Turkey in 1995. Russia and Turkey negotiate an exchange contract. Turkey would buy Russian natural gas for a value of 125 million dollar and in return Russia would buy Turkish products (Peimani, 1998, p. 100). In 2007, the Turkish construction companies implemented fifty-nine projects in Russia with a value of 3.6 billion dollars. In 2008, this increased to 20 billion dollars (Aras, 2009). Over the years (1988-2009), the total amount of the Turkish projects in Russia rose to 30 billion dollars (Turkey, Russia and regional energy strategies, 2009, p. 21).

2.4 Energy

Energy is an important factor in the trade between Russia and Turkey. Turkey and Europe are the most important markets for Russia. Turkey is not only importing Russian energy but it is also a transit country for the Russian energy. Turkey is the third largest Russian natural gas importing country, 46 per cent of Russia's export to Turkey is natural gas and 26 per cent are petroleum and petroleum products. In 1984, an agreement was signed by the two countries. In 1987, Russia started gas exports to Turkey, via the pipeline from Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria. During this export, no problems occurred between both countries and Russia proved to be a trusted partner for Turkey (ORSAM, 2010, p. 8-9).

During the visit of the Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin to Turkey in 1997, the Blue Stream project was discussed. The main purpose of this visit was to sign a natural gas contract. The Blue Stream was a twenty-five- year project of 30 billion dollars. It was expected that the volume would increase to 21 billion cubic yards of gas yearly by 2010. According to some Turks, Turkey should decrease its reliance on Russia by developing more sources. According to others, this project can be seen as a significant step to evolve strategic corporation with Russia. The Russians feared that the Blue Stream (see Figure 3) could be judged by the Trans- Caspian line⁷ (see Figure 4) which is also supported by the United States (Rubin & Kirisci, 2001, p. 157-164).

Figure 3 The Blue Stream Pipeline



Source: Blue Stream gas pipeline and projected South Stream gas pipeline, n.d.

⁷ The Trans- Caspian Pipeline is a 1,999 kilometer long pipeline between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The EU would not be dependent on Russian energy transit corridors. Therefore, it is supporting the construction of this pipeline. In the meantime, Russia finds this project absurd because it will damage its energy monopoly (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

Figure 4 The Trans- Caspian Pipeline

Source: The Trans- Caspian Pipeline, 2007

Turkey claimed that both pipelines, the Blue Stream and the Trans-Caspian line, are not excluding each other. Turkey stated that it would be a partner of Russia instead of competing with Russia. Chernomyrdin stated: “If Turkey shakes the hand extended by Russia, we shall become strategic partners in the economy in the twenty- first century. We shall be able to do much together in third countries and contribute to the insurance of stability and tranquillity in the region” (Rubin & Kirisci, 2001, p. 157).

Despite the partnership of the Blue Stream project, the two countries were competing for bringing the energy resources of Central Asia on the international market. This was called the South Stream-Nabucco competition. During Putin’s visit to Turkey in 2009, different protocols and agreements were signed, which indicated that there will be a cooperation rather than a competition concerning the energy field (ORSAM, 2010, p. 9).

Furthermore, Russia saw the Samsun- Ceyhan oil pipeline (see Figure 5) as a rival for its own project, namely the Burgas- Dedeagaç oil pipeline (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 Samsun- Ceyhan (right) and Burgas-Dedeagaç oil pipelines (left)

Source: The New York Times, 2010

Nevertheless, Russia agreed to deliver petroleum to the Samsun- Ceyhan oil pipeline and Turkey accepted the route of the South Stream oil pipeline through Turkey as an alternative for the Nabucco project. By doing so, Russia would not be dependent on Ukraine and Belarus. Therefore, the South Stream pipeline is crucial for Russia and as a result of that Russia accepted to deliver petroleum to the Samsun- Ceyhan oil pipeline. In the meantime, during Putin's visit to Turkey, the countries came to an agreement to expand the Blue Stream one as a joint project: the Blue Stream two project (ORSAM, 2010, p. 8). The pipeline under the Black Sea to Turkey will continue to the Mediterranean coast. The Blue Stream two will bear gas to Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Cyprus (Socor, 2009). Furthermore, both sides agreed that after 2011, Turkey will buy gas from Russia for the West pipeline. Another point on which the two countries agreed is that the Russians will build a nuclear plant in Turkey. All those agreements prove that both countries are and will be dependent on each other (ORSAM, 2010, p. 8-9).

2.5 Energy Developments in the Future

Energy is a very important sector for the Russo-Turkish relationship, with the bases (pipelines) which are now placed making it the keystone in the relations and has strategic interests. As mentioned in the subsection 2.4, Russia and Turkey did not have any problems with each other concerning the energy. This strengthened the energy ties between the countries. This also became a reason to cooperate in the field of energy. Turkey is one of Russia's most energy importing countries. Besides this, Turkey is a transit country for Russian energy. Turkey is a good alternative for Russia to bypass Ukraine and Belarus to export its energy to Europe. In short, energy will be the sector which will bring Russia and Turkey closer than they currently are. The fact that Moscow agreed to deliver petroleum to the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline and that Turkey accepted the route of the South Stream oil pipeline through its lands shows the interdependence of Russia and Turkey. Russian gas will also stream from Turkey to Europe. By doing so, the importance of Turkey and Russia will increase for Europe. Furthermore, their desires to see the increase in their trade grow to 100 billion dollars also shows us that these countries wish to cooperate in the future.

In the meantime, energy is the sector, which could lead to problems in the future. Because of its strategic importance it is a potential source for militarily and political conflicts. However, the strategic importance of both countries for each other are increasing with the energy cooperation, the interdependency has also risks. Turkey and Russia are trustful partners but an obstacle between the countries could lead to the same problems between Russia and Ukraine or Belarus.

Russia has different plans such as building an oil refinery and gas liquefaction plant at Ceyhan, constructing gas storage in central Anatolia and obtaining stakes in the gas system of Turkey. In

the meantime the Turkish State Pipeline Cooperation (BOTAS) hopes to import Russian gas for a lower price (Sidar & Winrow, n.d. p. 51).

However some officials are arguing that the Russian and Turkish economies are completing each other instead of competing like before, according to Mr. Sinan Ogan, the Russian and Turkish economies are competing with each other. Russia has resources and defence industry, which are the needs of Turkey. On the other hand Turkey has food, textiles and the construction sector, which Russia needs. As a result, in the future the relations between those countries will develop in conformity with the fact that these countries complete with each other geographically and in their economic areas (Ogan, 2010).

2.6 Nuclear Program

A twenty billion dollar agreement to construct a nuclear power plant in Turkey was signed by Russia and Turkey. During a summit on May 2010 in Ankara the Turkish and Russian officials signed a cooperation contract on the building and operation of Akkuyu⁸ Nuclear Power Plant. The Russian enterprise Atomstroieksport will lead this project (Turkey, Russia sign nuclear, 2010). The nuclear power plant consists of four reactors; each of the reactors will have the capacity of 1,200 MW (Klementyev, 2010).

According to the Russian ambassador of Ankara Vladimir Ivanovsky, the construction of the nuclear power plant will begin in 2013 and it will cost approximately twenty billion dollars. The release of the first power unit of the plant will be in 2018, the other three will be released with intermissions of one year. The last power unit will be able to operate in 2021. The reactors are created to operate for sixty years (Guneev, 2010). Russian nuclear power constructor Atomstroieksport will develop a “new scheme of management” in constructing the first nuclear power plant of Turkey (Guneev, 2011).

2.7 Tourism

A remarkable development for both countries is that many Russian tourists are visiting Turkey. A quarter of the Russian tourists are visiting Turkey for their holidays and for shopping (Does, n.d.). According to Figure 6, Russian tourists are the second biggest group, after the Germans, who went

⁸ The Akkuyu area is near to the Mediterranean port of Mersin in Turkey (Guneev, 2010).

on holiday to Turkey during the period 2008 and 2010. In 2010, around eleven per cent of the tourists were from Russia, even in 2009, during the global economic crisis, the number of Russian tourists was approximately 2.7 million.

During the visit of Russia's president Dimitri Medvedev to Turkey in 2010, a Common Tourism Action Plan was signed for 2010-2011. On June 8 2010, both countries signed a common declaration in Istanbul to ensure the safety of the citizens of both countries in the guest country (Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Russian Federation, n.d.).

Besides this, Russia and Turkey are both members of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)⁹. Other member countries are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. One of the cooperation areas of this organisation is tourism; Russia is the country coordinator for this area for the period 1 January 2011- 31 December 2012.

Figure 6 The distribution by nationality of foreigners who came to Turkey between 2008-2010(*) in the period of January- December- the first ten countries

Countries	2010*	Nationality share (%)	2009	Nationality share (%)	2008	Nationality share (%)
Germany	4 385 263	15,32	4 488 350	16.58	4 415 525	16.77
Russian Federation	3 107 043	10,85	2 694 733	9.95	2 879 278	10.93
England	2 673 605	9,34	2 426 749	8.96	2 169 924	8.24
Iran	1 885 097	6,58	1 383 261	5.11	1 134 965	4.31
Bulgaria	1 433 970	5,01	1 406 604	5.19	1 255 343	4.77
Georgia	1 112 193	3,88	995 381	3.68	830 184	3.15
The Netherlands	1 073 064	3,75	1 127 150	4.16	1 141 580	4.33
France	928 376	3,24	932 809	3.45	885 006	3.36
Syria	899 494	3,14	509 679	1.88	406 935	1.55
Italy	671 000	2,34	634 886	2.34	600 261	2.28
Others	10 463 039	36,54	10 477 512	38.70	10 617 676	40.32
SUM TOTAL	28 632 204	100.00	27 077 114	100.00	26 336 677	100.00

(*): Provisional data

Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2008-2010, translated by Yasemin Aydin.

⁹ The organisation of BSEC was initiated as an informal intergovernmental meeting on Black Sea Economic Cooperation and later it was converted into an international economic organisation (Papadimitriou, 2010).

The main tasks (see Appendix 2 for all tasks) of the working group on the cooperation on tourism are as following:

First of all, looking for ways and methods of attracting investment to the tourism sector from within and outside the BSEC region. Furthermore, the promotion of technical cooperation and the promotion of cooperation in areas of training, joint ventures, management, marketing and consultancy in tourism between the BSEC member states and third countries (BSEC, n.d.).

2.8 Economic Cooperation Organisations

Russia and Turkey are partners in certain organisations that are cooperating, *inter alia*, in the economic field. This means that the economic cooperation and relations are developing in a good way. Some of those organisations are: UNIDO, UNECE and ESCAP. Two other main organisations are the BSEC and the Blackseafor. These are both operating in the Black Sea region and are effective for the relations between Russia and Turkey. The purpose of the Blackseafor is to improve the cooperation and interoperability of the maritime forces of the Member States (Pavliuk & Klympush- Tsintzadze, 2004). The most important organisation in the economic field will be explained in sub-chapter below.

2.8.1 BSEC

After the independence of Central Asian countries, their economic importance increased for Turkey. It brought hope for Turkey, because of its fear that the economic relations with its major partner (European Union) could not continue in sight of the opposition on the EU membership of Turkey. Turkey attempted to stop its economic impasse and established the BSEC (Peimani, 1998, p.95).

In 1992, eleven countries including Russia and Turkey signed the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) declaration in Istanbul. In 2004, Serbia and Montenegro joined the organisation. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation includes not only the Black Sea countries, but also countries from the Balkans and Caucasus (BSEC, n.d.). Nevertheless, there are uncertainties about the prospect of economic improvement in the area, due to important political and military problems between and within many member states (Peimani, 1998, p.95).

The BSEC is a model of multilateral political and economic initiatives. The aim is to encourage relations and solidarity between the Member States, but issues such as ensuring peace, stability and

prosperity, and encouraging friendly and good- neighbourly relations in the region play a central role. The Permanent International Secretariat of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation was established in 1994 in Istanbul. In 1999, BSEC was changed into a complete regional economic organisation, namely Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Moreover, BSEC obtained international legal identity, when the Charter came into force in 1999.

This organisation is important for its region. First of all, it stands for a region of approximately 350 million people, with foreign trade capacity of more than 300 billion dollars annually. Furthermore, it is the second- largest source of oil and natural gas, and it also has large reserves of minerals and metals. Finally, BSEC is becoming the major transport and energy transfer corridor of Europe.

In 1997, the ministers of Foreign Affairs and the ministers responsible for economic affairs from the BSEC Member States agreed on a statement of intent for the establishment of a free trade area for the BSEC countries. They agreed to set up the examination of the ways and means to start a BSEC Free Trade Area (BSEC, n.d.).

2.8.2 BSEC in the Future

According to Mr. Tanrisever, Turkey has to create a clear vision about the Black Sea region. Furthermore, Turkey has to renew the regional position of the BSEC as a multilateral framework. BSEC members could improve bilateral and multilateral relations via regional networks of cooperation in the region (Tanrisever, 2012, p. 3). The improving bilateral economic relationship of Turkey and Russia does not lead to an improvement in the cooperation on a multilateral level between the BSEC members. To some extent, this is caused by the negligence of the BSEC by Russia. Though Russia was also the founder of the BSEC, it is unwilling to take part in BSEC activities (Tanrisever, 2012, p. 7). Besides, Russia had differences with some member states, for instance Georgia (Tanrisever, 2012, p. 14).

Furthermore, Russia believes that sovereignty is important. Countries can decide independently and freely to give up their sovereignty, thereby Russia refers to the EU. Consequently, Russia will never show full enthusiasm for the BSEC and its activities which is seen by Russia as giving up its sovereignty. As a result, Russia will never take the BSEC seriously. However, this cooperation could be seen as a step forward and strengthen the economic cooperation between Russia and Turkey. It will never function on a multilateral level. Only the bilateral relations can strengthen in the future. On the other hand, complexities of Turkey with the US and complications with its entrance negotiation to the EU will stimulate Turkey to develop further relations with Russia in Eurasia (Winrow, 2009, p. 14).

2.9 Conclusion

To summarise, although some problems exist, the economic relations, especially trade, between Russia and Turkey are developing. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the relations were improving especially in the economic field. This developed the suitcase trade and huge markets were created for Turkish goods in Russia. In 1995, the volume of suitcase trade reached 10 billion dollars. Since then, the volume began to decline (Eder, Yakovlev, & Çarkoglu, 2003). Russia became the main trading partner of Turkey among the CIS countries.

Furthermore, Turkey is dependent on Russian energy, since it is importing 46 per cent of natural gas and 26 per cent petroleum from Russia. Now, Turkey is not only importing gas from Russia but it is also a transit country for the Russian gas. In the meantime, energy is causing competition between those countries, for instance the South Stream-Nabucco competition. In my opinion, this competition changed due to their dependences on each, it could be called ‘forced’ cooperation rather than competition. In 2009, different protocols and agreements were signed which indicated that there will be a cooperation rather than competition between both countries. Energy and the pipelines are sensitive issues. In the future it could lead to military and political conflicts.

Another growing field which is supporting the improvement of the economic relations is tourism. A quarter of the Russian tourists are visiting Turkey for holiday and shopping purposes (Does, n.d.). During president Medvedev’s visit to Turkey in 2010, a Common Tourism Action Plan was signed for 2010- 2011 (Turkey’s Commercial and Economic Relations with Russian Federation, n.d.).

Finally, Russia and Turkey are partners in certain organisations that are cooperating, *inter alia*, in the economic field. This means that the economic cooperation and relations are developing in a good way.

Chapter 3 Regional Conflicts

3.1 Introduction

One of the most important obstacles of the Turkish- Russian strategic partnership is the issue of insecurity of both sides. Turkey is a member of the NATO and it is still seen as the biggest ally of America in the region by Russia. On the other hand, Ankara believes that Russia is using energy as a trump card in foreign policy (Orsam, 2010, p.11).

In Chapter 2 we saw that the economic relations are developing but the tensions could not be eliminated. Those tensions are creating hindrances in the development of the diplomatic relations of Turkey and Russia. Therefore, it is important to mention the issues in the region which are causing tensions. In this chapter, the regional hindrances between Turkey and Russia will be discussed.

3.2 The Caucasus

The Caucasus is a mountain range, which is home to many different languages, ethnicities and both the Islamic and Christian religion. This region borders on Asia and Europe. The Caucasus region is split into two parts, namely the North Caucasus and South Caucasus. The North Caucasian region consists of the autonomous republics of the Russian Federation, such as Chechnya and North-Ossetia. The South Caucasus consists of the former republics of the Soviet Union, which became independent in 1991: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Caucasus is known as the crossing point of trade routes, for instance from the Baltic Sea to the Arab world. The Caucasus has a very important strategic position, which was often an object of territorial conflicts between the Ottoman, Persian and Russian Empires. Moreover, the area has many natural resources. The interests of different parties are increasing for this area, which is associated with the potential oil and natural gas reserves in the Caspian Sea.

After the independence of those countries violent conflicts developed and dormant ethnical sentiments were released. Consequently, weak state structures and the tension between the different ethnical groups lead to instability, economic decreases, political tensions and conflicts. Because of the political, economic and strategic importance of the South Caucasus, this region is of interest for different countries and organisations, which also includes Russia and Turkey (Haas, de, Tibold, Cillessen, 2006, p.6-7).

According to Mr. Perinçek peace in the region could be realised by adjusting foreign interventions and the cooperation of Russia and Turkey. History shows that the Turkish- Russian competition in the Caucasus has always unfavourable consequences for the relations of Russia and Turkey, while cooperation brings peace and tranquillity in the region. When both countries began a friendship and determined common policies, it provided stability in the region. In this regard, the establishment of good relations between Turkey and Russia will be in the interest of both states and the region (M. Perinçek, personal communication, June 9, 2011).

The commercial and political relations are quickly improving. Nevertheless, it is too early to speak about 'strategic partnership' according to the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan. According to the Russian Prime Minister Putin, they favour the development of the Turkish- Russian relationship. He also emphasizes that the relation with Turkey has to be raised to the level of the Russia-Germany and Russia- France relations. To realise this, great effort from both sides is needed and some tensions and obstacles have to be eliminated in the bilateral relations (Orsam, 2010, p.10-11).

3.2.1 Armenia

First of all, Armenia is Russia's only ally in the South Caucasus and attaches great importance to its relationship with Russia. Armenia has a very close economic and secure relationship with Russia. Further, Armenia is completely dependent on Russia's energy, and is obtaining gas for a relatively low price. At the same time, Armenia would like to reduce its dependency on Russia by looking for alternatives. On the other hand, Russia is completely controlling the gas providing network of Armenia and is supervising the construction of gas pipelines, which connects Armenia to the gas reserves of Iran. Iran is, after Russia, the second largest gas reserves disposing country, which creates fear for Russia (Haas, de, Tibold, Cillessen, 2006, p.25- 26).

Furthermore, Russia and Armenia do have a security pact. This pact provides Armenia with many weapons. Moreover, Armenia gets military support from Russia; approximately 3,500 Russian troops are deployed in Armenia. Those troops are guarding the borders of Armenia with Turkey and Iran (Haas, de, Tibold, Cillessen, 2006, p.25- 26). In 1995, Russia and Armenia signed an agreement. This agreement allowed the Russian troops to guard the Armenian border on the Turkish frontier until 2020. In 2010, this agreement was extended until 2044 ("Rus Askerleri 2044'e Kadar Ermenistan'da," 2010).

According to Mr. Perinçek the key point of the Russian-Armenian military relations is not the Armenia-Turkey/ Azerbaijan conflict, but Russia-USA rivalry. It is known that Central Asia is an important region for the United States. For this reason the Caucasus has an important role. The

only Russian military base in the region is in Armenia. In terms of policy-making Armenia is important for the USA. The USA supports the opening of the Armenian-Turkish borders, because it is in its favour that Armenia will be less dependent on Russia. Besides, because of the geographical position of Turkey, Armenia will through Turkey integrate in the Atlantic system. Russia tries to prevent this by extending its military relations and its military bases in Armenia (M. Perinçek, personal communication, June 9, 2011).

After the conflicts about the Nagorno- Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1993, Azerbaijan and Turkey closed their borders to Armenia. In the last couple of years, many negotiations took place between Armenia and Turkey to find a solution; this caused tensions between Turkey and its ally Azerbaijan. According to a report of the Centre of Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (ORSAM), the opening of the borders of Turkey and Armenia are not in Russia's favour. The opening of the borders means that Armenia will no longer be dependent on Russia and that it will integrate to the West. Because Russia realised that the improvement of the Armenian-Turkish relationship could no longer be prevented, Russia preferred that a solution would be found under its own leadership. In this way, the solution will develop in favour of Russia. For the same reason, Russia will not have Turkish interference with the Nagorno-Karabakh question, which will be discussed in the next sub-chapter. However, Turkey could not be omitted in this issue. Both, Russia and Turkey are essential actors for solving this problem, and it has advantages for its relationship (Orsam, 2010, p. 12). On the other hand it is stated that Russia does not wish to hinder the approach between Armenia and Turkey, because this would isolate Georgia. The removal of the blockade at the Turkish- Armenian border will have advantages for Russia. Through the opening of the borders Russia will get the possibility to reduce its important amount of subsidisation of the Armenian economy (Winrow, 2009, p. 10).

3.2.2 The Armenian Question

After Armenia the largest Armenian population is living in Russia. This means that the Armenian lobby in Russia is very strong. Their roles in the Russian economic and political life should not be underestimated. Armenians carried the question of the so- called genocide to the Duma. They ensured that in 1995 and 2000 decisions were adopted, which accepted this matter. However, the decisions taken in the Russian Parliament were rather soft when compared with the adopted proposals of European Parliaments. Due to the fact that Moscow attaches importance to its relations with Turkey, Russia does not bow the pressure of the Armenians and is trying to prevent that there will be different decisions taken on the issue (ORSAM, 2010, p. 13).

Turkey appears with its policy 'zero problems with neighbours' as a model in a continent which is plagued by chaos and terror. One of the points of this policy is the signed protocols between Turkey and Armenia. According to Amberin Zaman¹⁰ the rapprochement with Armenia even fits in the context of the improvement of the Turkish- American relations. She gives three reasons why America preferred a normalisation of the Turkish- Armenian relations. First of all, peace between those countries will protect Washington against the attempts of the Armenian- American Diaspora to express a draft law on the so-called genocide by the Congress. Secondly, it will make the enclosed former Soviet Republic independent from Russia. Finally, it will enable Turkey to convince Armenia to talk into a settlement with Azerbaijan about Nagorno- Karabakh (Rochtus, 2010, p. 25).

The Armenian president Serzh Sarkisian told in his speech that there have been important developments made towards the normalisation of the relations with Turkey without any precondition. According to him they consider the Armenia-Turkey relation in a broader and international context. He is assured that the period of ultimatums and closed borders is over. The chance for dialogue, cooperation and natural relations could be created and this will have advantages, not only for Armenia and Turkey but for the whole region and for Europe. Moreover, he believes that the normalisation of the Armenian-Turkish relationship can become the best contribution of the last decades in reaching stability and tranquillity (Sargsyan, 2010 p. 6-7).

In 2008 the Turkish president Abdullah Gül went to Armenia to support its soccer team in Yerevan, for the World Cup. He was the first Turkish leader who had visited Armenia. A year later, the Armenian president Sarkisian attended the soccer match Turkey-Armenia in Bursa. The process of rapprochement between the two countries has been attributed as soccer diplomacy (Rochtus, 2010, p. 25). In an interview with CNN Gül told that this match ensured a new beginning in the relations between the two countries (Watson, 2009).

3.2.3 Nagorno-Karabakh

Another tension between Russia and Turkey is the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. In 1989, a war between the two former Soviet Republics, Azerbaijan and Armenia, started in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan is supported by Turkey and Armenia by Russia. Hence, both countries oppose each

¹⁰ Amberin Zaman is the Istanbul-based Turkey correspondent of the UK weekly *The Economist*. Zaman is Turkish, she also writes a column twice a week for the Turkish daily Haberturk. Her fields of interest are minority rights, the Kurds, and Turkish Armenian reconciliation (Zaman, n.d.).

other. The conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh is called the frozen conflict (Haas, de, Tibold, Cillessen, 2006). This conflict is about territorial integrity and self-determination. Azerbaijan comprises Nagorno-Karabakh as it is recognized after its independency in 1991. Eighty per cent of the inhabitants of Nagorno- Karabakh are Armenian. They want to join Armenia or have independency and obviously Azerbaijan refuses this. Because of those reasons a conflict has developed between Azerbaijan and Armenia (Nagorno- Karabakh, n.d.). Currently, the Nagorno- Karabakh Defence Army is to a great extent dependent on Armenia. On the Azerbaijani side, this is seen as a danger for its security.

Other states, such as Iran, Russia, Turkey and the United States (US) are also dealing with the Nagorno- Karabakh conflict. During this conflict Armenia is supported by Iran and Russia. Iran is supporting Armenia, because of its significant Azeri minority. It would be fearful for Iran if Azerbaijan becomes more powerful, which will try to interfere in its internal affairs. Russia is on the Armenian side because of their good relations from the beginning of the Russian Empire. Another reason is that Armenia is a Christian country in an almost entirely Muslim region. In contrast, Azerbaijan is supported by its so called brother country, Turkey. Azerbaijan and Turkey have a close ethnic and cultural history. Later, the US became an ally of Azerbaijan as well. Azerbaijan is attractive for the West and especially for the US, not only because of its energy reserves and strategic situation, but it is also a significant ally of the US in its ‘war against terrorism’ (Haas, de, Tibold, Cillessen, 2006, p. 32).

Another issue is that Armenia and Azerbaijan are members in the Partnership for Peace programme, which is supported by NATO. Because Armenia is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)¹¹ led by Russia, it has a good military relationship with Russia and the developing military cooperation of Azerbaijan with the United States. Azerbaijan has advantages of a better relationship with NATO (Haas, de, Tibold, Cillessen, 2006, p. 32).

3.2.4 Georgia

The relationship between Georgia and Turkey is quite good (Haas, de, Tibold, Cillessen, 2006, p. 17). After the end of the Cold War, the strategic, political and economic interests led to the expansion of the ties of Turkey with Azerbaijan and Georgia (Winrow, 2009, p. 2). This cannot be

¹¹ The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), formed under the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, serves as a mutual defense alliance among Russia, Belarus, Armenia and the four Central Asian states except Turkmenistan (Collective Security Treaty Organization, n.d.).

said about Georgia's relationship with its other neighbour, Russia. The Georgian economy is supported by Turkey. Turkey is a member of NATO and Georgia wants to join NATO, which has unfavourable consequences for the relations with Russia. Frequently, command staff trainings are exercised by military officers from Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. Those trainings are to practice the protection of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. As a result, Turkey is developing its position as a bridge between the Caucasus and Europe, like Russia. However, Turkey should not forget its dependency on energy imports from Russia.

As mentioned before, the relations between Georgia and Russia are tense. First of all, because of Russia's support of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia. These two are unrecognized republics, however they are both recognized by Russia. Secondly, Georgia would like to be a member of NATO and is also member of GUAM¹², which is an 'anti-Russian' organisation. Furthermore, Georgia refused the Russian demand to use the Georgian Pankisi Valley to attack Chechnya in 1999. Russia reacted on this with a propaganda campaign. Russia warned Georgia, if Georgia did not support the neutralisation of the rebels, then Russia would have the pre-emptive right to take military action into the Pankisi Valley for the prevention of its territory of its region for the rebels by the Chechens. In 2002 Putin occupied this valley. As a result, Russia pressured Georgia on economic and political base (Haas, de, Tibold, Cillessen, 2006, p.17-19).

The conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 forced the Turkish decision-makers to renew their policies towards Russia and the Caucasus. Turkey had evolved its economic and political relationship with Russia and maintained close links with Georgia. This conflict developed the question whether Turkey would become the most important energy transportation country, because of the worse security circumstances in the South Caucasus. The relationship between Turkey and Russia was disputed, both had emphasized their common interests in maintaining regional stability (Winrow, 2009, p. 2).

The Russo- Georgian conflict of 2008 has had a dramatic consequence on developments in the region. In November 2008 it was proclaimed that Russia had the information that Georgia had hired mercenaries from different countries to struggle in South Ossetia and one of those countries was Turkey. This was imaginable because of the previously experience of volunteers who struggled together with the Chechens. Russian authorities saw Turkey also as a country that had delivered military devices to Georgia. It was clear that Russia was furious and it reshaped further restrictions on Turkish goods getting into Russia (Winrow, 2009, p. 6).

¹² GUAM is a regional Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development, which exists of four CIS states: Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. This organization was to decline the Russian influence in the region. Therefore it received support from the US (Haas, de, Tibold, Cillessen, 2006, p. 43-44).

The reaction of Turkey to this conflict was the idea of the creation of a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP). Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia to promote the CSCP within days. The Armenian government also showed its interest in it, because it cares for its economic disadvantages which were caused by the Russian blockade of Georgian ports during the conflict (Winrow, 2009, p. 7).

3.2.5 Abkhazia and South Ossetia

In 1996 Turkey annulled the maritime transport between the ports of Trabzon (Turkey) and Sukhum (the capital of Abkhazia). Officially the maritime connection between Turkey and Abkhazia is locked. Turkey is respecting the territorial integrity of Georgia. The business community of the Black Sea and the Abkhazian Diaspora in Turkey actively advocated the reopening of the maritime connection between Trabzon and Sukhum. On the other hand, efforts of Turkish businessmen from the Black Sea coast to break the sanctions brought relief for the Abkhazians (Gültekin-Punsman, Başkan, Tarba, 2009, p. 27).

In contrast, Russia has a very good relationship with Abkhazia. Russia entered a visa regime on Georgia, but not for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In 1991, South Ossetia fought for its independence against Georgia. South Ossetia was supported by Russia (Radu, 2003, p.108). Russia supports Abkhazia and was the first country which recognized Abkhazia. In August, 2008 Abkhazia was recognized by Russia, Venezuela and Nicaragua. It was expected that Turkey would also recognise Abkhazia, because Turkey prefers to improve its position in the Caucasus and because of its Abkhazian Diaspora. Above all, after 2000 the Russian government decided to give the Russian citizenship to Abkhazian people. By the end of June seventy per cent of the Abkhazian population became Russian citizens (Gültekin-Punsman, Başkan, Tarba, 2009, p. 17).

3.3 Kosovo

In 2008, Kosovo proclaimed its independence for the second time. In contrast with the first time in 1991, this time Kosovo was directly recognised by many states, including Turkey. On the other side, Russia joined Serbia and they opposed this independence. The independence of Kosovo has had an influence on the relationships between the regional actors such as the EU, NATO, Russia and Turkey. In Europe, it meant the end of the Cold War structures; it expressed importance to the human and minority rights in the international politics and re-established its aspects of security ties with NATO and the EU, EU and Russia and EU and Turkey.

Russia's and Turkey's policies, especially in relation to the Kosovo question, appear special interest in view of the shifting strategic backgrounds, security concerns and internal developments after the end of the Cold War. Another aspect which relates Turkey and Russia, and which requires particular concern, is the fact that the developments of this case will be compared with the Chechen, Cyprus and the Kurdish problems (Abazi, 2008, p.2).

According to Frank G. Wisner¹³ the independence proclamation of Kosovo will have 'positive and not so positive' consequences. A positive consequence is that it will end the cruel war, which was started by the Serbs, against the Albanian majority in Kosovo. The consequence which is not so positive is that Kosovo will not be recognised as independent by Serbia and Russia will oppose it as well (Gwertzman, 2008).

Russia had a dominant policy in the Balkans and was competing with the regional players. Traditionally, the Serbs were supported by the Russian motives in the Balkans. In return for their loyalty they received aid from the Russians. For the Russians this was a way to obtain superiority in the region. For Serbia it was a way to follow an independent position in its domestic affairs and foreign policy. In this view, a narrow bond with Serbia is crucial for the Russian policy in the Balkans. They developed a special relationship as well. Putin criticised the recognition of Kosovo's independence by the US and other Western states as a dangerous step. He defined the proclamation of the statehood by Kosovo as illegal, ill-conceived and immoral. He indicated that after such a decision Russia would be forced to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In the last few years, the Russian foreign policy has developed in a nationalistic and assertive way and, according to the report of the Kosovo issue, had contributed to this. Kosovo is a part of Russia's strategy to strengthen its position again in the international area.

Turkey sees the Balkans as an indivisible part of its history and culture. The former president of Turkey, Bülent Ecevit, noticed Kosovo with the following words "as a debt it owes to its own history." This is because of the very long coexistence of the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire. Presently, there is a significant Turkish minority living in the Balkans and especially in Kosovo. These Turks had been left behind during the Empire period and for that reason Turkey is very sensitive to them. Therefore, Turkey wishes to strengthen its position and influence on the internal matters of the region, in short for social and also for political reasons.

The post-Cold War foreign policy of Turkey had an 'observer status' instead of an assertive leadership. In the '90s under Turgut Özal (Prime Minister and President of Turkey), Turkey had

¹³ The U.S. representative to the Kosovo status, Vice Chairman, External Affairs, American International Group Inc (Gwertzman, 2008).

begun a 'Balkan offensive,' refreshing its Ottoman legacy in the post Ottoman territories. Due to the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo these policies were ended.

A concern about the Kosovo issue was emphasised by the former Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, namely the Serbian- Orthodox union. Further, the foreign policy based on the Serb-Orthodox alliance was seen as a concern, it was considered as a problem that could be more dangerous than the ideological polarisation for Turkey. Actually, this union could attract Greece, which leads to a powerful Greece- Serbia- Russia bloc (Abazi, 2008, p.3-4).

To conclude, Kosovo will maintain an essential position in the geopolitics of the region. The involvement of the EU, NATO, Russia and the US will create an affair of international security from the Kosovo problem. In the meantime, Turkey, Greece and Russia are concerned over regional issues meant to form a regional competition (Abazi, 2008, p.5).

3.4 Ethnical Minorities

Both Russia and Turkey are dealing with internal problems. The Russians have problems with the Chechens and Turkey with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan/ PKK). This creates tensions between both countries. This subchapter describes those two issues.

3.4.1 Chechnya

In relation to the North Caucasus, the empathy of Turkey for the Chechens effects controversies between Turkey and Russia (Winrow, 2009, p. 2). As described in Chapter 3.3, Russia has problems with Chechnya. Chechnya is a federal subject of Russia, which borders on Georgia on the south and on the three autonomous Russian republics, namely the Dagestan Republic, Ingushetia and North- Ossetia. The Chechens adopted Islam in the sixteenth century with the influence of the Ottomans. Sheikh Imam Shamil¹⁴ became an important person and he spread Islam through the entire North Caucasus (Marsh & Gvosdev, 2002, P. 142).

Chechens had the leadership of the Caucasian War against the Russian colonialism from 1817 to 1864. They fought against the Whites (anti-communists) and against the Reds (communists). Stalin deported the Chechens into Central Asia during the Second World War. Later, after Stalin's death,

¹⁴ Imam Shamil (1797 - 1871) was an Avar political and religious leader of the Muslim tribes of the Northern Caucasus. He was a leader of anti-Russian resistance in the Caucasian War and was the third Imam of Dagestan and Chechnya (Imam Shamil- A Great Warrior of Islam, n.d).

the Chechens began to ask for a return to their homeland. The Khrushchev administration accepted this demand. In 1991, Dzhokar Dudayev¹⁵ was elected president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and he declared their independence. After that he formed a Chechen army, which is called the Chechen National Guard. Furthermore, in 1994 Russia initiated a military invasion of Chechen territory (Bressler, 2009, p. 208-213). The former Russian president Yeltsin began the First Chechen War (1994- 1996). The Second Chechen War began under the leadership of Putin in 1999.

In contrast, Turkey has a good relationship with Chechnya, which causes controversy with Russia. Other difficulties for Turkey are caused by the Chechen refugee outflow to Turkey. On the other hand, Turkey is careful with its official policy towards Chechnya. Former Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit referred to Chechnya as a Russian 'internal affair' because Turkey has roughly the same problem with the Kurds (Khalilzad, Lesser, & Larrabee, n.d., p.24). Another concern for Turkey is the fact that, during the efforts of Russia to decline the conflicts in Chechnya, Russia will attempt to bring the whole Caucasus under its control (Khalilzad, Lesser, & Larrabee, n.d., p. 24).

In the late 1990s the Turkish officials began to oppress the movements in Turkey of the groups who had sympathy for the Chechens. This began with the radicalisation of the Chechens towards Russia. By doing so, Turkey in fact asked to stop the support of Russia for the Kurdish revolts. After 9/11 the cooperation against terrorism was intensified. The foreign ministers of both countries agreed to a 'plan of action' to coordinate their policies and work like partners in Eurasia (Winrow, 2009, p. 3).

3.4.2 PKK

The PKK was founded in 1974, mainly by Turkish Kurds. The main aim of the terrorist group is to establish a Kurdish state in the South East of Turkey. Since 1984 the group began with terrorist attacks (Griset & Mahan, 2003, p. 334).

Despite the fact that Turkey and Russia are cooperating in the field of combat against terrorism, the Kremlin does not place the PKK in its list of terrorist groups. This is because the PKK has not performed a terrorist attack in Russia itself. In 1997 the escape of Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, from Turkey to Russia created also a polemic. However, the release of Öcalan prevented the development of bad relations which may occur between those countries (Ezgin, 2010).

¹⁵ Dzhokar Dudayev was an ethnic Chechen. He had spent much of his Soviet military career serving in the Baltic States. He was inspired by the search of independence of the Baltic States. In 1990, he returned to Chechnya to lead his ethnic homeland to freedom (Bressler, 2009, p. 209).

There are many Kurds living in Moscow. They are politically organised in the framework of NGOs. Those organisations are established in compliance of the Russian Federation laws. In the meantime, according to Russian professionals, those organisations do have relations with the PKK. Presently, the PKK issue is no longer a very relevant issue which is obscuring the Turkish-Russian relations. Due to the fact that the Kurdish factor is becoming a more important element for the Near East policy, the Kremlin does not favour the worsening of its relations with the Kurds by banning those NGOs.

The reasons for Russia to not count the PKK in its lists for the terrorist groups is because it does not trust the promise of Turkey that it will not support the activities of the terrorists in the Caucasus (ORSAM, 2010, p. 11).

3.5 Conclusion

To summarise, the Caucasus has a very important strategic position. Moreover, the area has many natural resources. Therefore, the interest of Turkey, Russia and even other players is increasing for this region. Turkey and Russia have a rivalry position concerning this area. Consequently this interest causes tensions as well.

The Caucasian countries alone are also causing tensions, for instance, the relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan. The relationship with Armenia and Azerbaijan brings Turkey and Russia in an opponent position. Another Caucasian country that plays a role in the Turkish-Russian relations is Georgia. Turkish-Georgian relations are quite good, which cannot be said about the Russian-Georgian relations. Turkey supports Georgia economically. Turkey is a member of NATO and Georgia wants to join this organisation as well, however this is not encouraged by the Russian Federation. During the war of Russia against Georgia, this caused tensions between Turkey and Russia. In my opinion, they have to cooperate to solve the problems instead of being against each other.

Furthermore, Abkhazia and South Ossetia were the cause for unrest for the Turkish-Russian relations. In 2008, Russia recognised Abkhazia as a country and it was expected that Turkey would recognise it as well. However, Turkey did not recognise Abkhazia. In 1996, Turkey annulled the maritime transport between the ports of Trabzon and Sukhum.

Moreover, Chechnya is another issue for tense relations. Chechens are supported by Turkey, also because of their religion. On the other hand, Turkey is careful with its policy towards Chechnya because of its own internal problems with the PKK, which is not recognised as a terroristic group

in Russia. This is also creating a tension between the two countries. Another regional tension is the independence of Kosovo, which is recognised by Ankara and is seen as a danger by Moscow.

All of these regional conflicts are causing unrest or distrust between Turkey and Russia. Some of them are playing a less important role in the relation or some are becoming less important. For instance the PKK issue is not a shadow for the relationship as before. This explains the importance of a good relationship for both countries.

Both countries have to cooperate for regional stability and to solve regional problems, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. According to Mr. Perinçek, when the two countries establish friendship and set common policies, then there is stability in the region. In this regard, the establishment of good relations between Turkey and Russia is in the interest of both states and the region.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

In my opinion it is clear that the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Russia are improving after the Soviet collapse. However, there are different obstacles, but positive developments are also taking place. In general, positive developments occur between Turkey and Russia. I think that the best illustration of this is the introduction of visa-free travelling and the bilateral meetings which are now at a high level.

First of all, the economic ties are developing positively, which affects the diplomatic relationship in a good way. Hereby, it is important to mention that the aim of Russia and Turkey is to increase the trade volume to 100 billion dollars. Russia became a great market for Turkish goods in different sectors and the construction sector after the Soviet collapse. Another sector which brings the two countries closer to each other is tourism. President Medvedev signed a Common Tourism Action Plan in Turkey in 2010. In the same year, both countries signed a common declaration to ensure the safety of the citizens of both countries in the guest country (Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Russian Federation, n.d.).

Another example of the economic improvement is the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. However, this cooperation is not functioning on a high level and there is also uncertainty about its prospects for economic improvement in the area. From my point of view this indicates that there is a need to establish an organisation to cooperate, which may influence the relations.

The most important sector, which strengthens the ties of the countries is definitely energy. It is well known that Turkey is dependent on Russian energy. In the meantime, Russia is and will in the future be more dependent on Turkey as a transit country for its energy. I think this will definitely strengthen in the future. Russia's problems with Belarus and Ukraine are ensuring the fact that Russia is trying to bypass those countries. Thereby, transit in Turkey is a good opportunity to solve this and it is also the most obvious solution in my opinion. Since 1987, Russia is exporting gas to Turkey, no problems occurred and they became trustful partners. Energy is also causing tensions. The countries were in competition for bringing the energy resources of Central Asia on the international market, which is called the South Stream-Nabucco competition. However, Putin's visit to Turkey and different Turkish and Russian officials indicated that there will be cooperation rather than competition concerning this field. I believe that competition between those countries, which also comes from history, still exists. But this will be solved in the future by further cooperation between those countries and maybe there could be spoken about 'strategic

partnership.’ An important example of a field of cooperation is the construction of the Nuclear Power Plant in Turkey by Russia.

However, the economic ties are strengthening tensions because of regional conflicts and ethnic minorities exist. First of all, since Turkey is a member of the NATO, it is seen as the biggest ally of America in the region by Russia. Logically, this causes a sense of insecurity and distrust by Russia. In my opinion this also causes fear for Russia, because the country is surrounded by NATO-members.

Furthermore, the Caucasus is a region which causes many tensions between Russia and Turkey. Both, North and South Caucasus, bring Russia and Turkey against each other. Different regional conflicts are causing tensions; the Armenian invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh; the Armenian question; internal problems with ethnical minorities such as the Chechens in Russia and the PKK in Turkey have damaged the relationship; the issue of the independence of Kosovo lead also to the opposition of those countries and the war of Russia with Georgia.

Although those events had led to the opposition of Turkey and Russia and had also been an obstacle in their relationship in the past. Recently those tensions do not play a very important role. I think that Turkey and Russia have to develop a proposal together to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh issue because Turkey is the ‘brother’ country of Azerbaijan and Russia is the biggest and only ally of Armenia. Since Russia is Armenia’s only ally in the region, observers claims that Russia does not prefer the opening of Armenia’s borders with Turkey because the opening of the borders Armenia could be the first step to integrate in the Atlantic system. However, I believe that the opening of the borders has more advantages for Russia rather than disadvantages. The opening of the borders means a decline in an important amount of subsidy for Russia, because this means that Armenia could trade officially with Turkey. Furthermore, the Russian military bases, which will be in Armenia till 2044, can leave earlier.

Although, many tensions exist that are affecting the relationship negatively - some more than others -, the relationship will continue in the future. The interdependency emphasises this and it may develop projects in Eurasia.

To summarise, the main developments, which brought the former rival empires closer together, is as follows: first of all the suitcase trade after the Soviet collapse. Furthermore, the interdependency of both countries because of energy. Moreover, the increasing cooperation between the countries brings them closer to each other. On the other hand, tensions caused by regional conflicts and ethnic minorities are existing as well.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Thesis interview questions ‘Diplomatic Relations between Russia & Turkey’

1. Could you please introduce yourself?

Mehmet Perinçek was born on 19 September 1978 in Istanbul. He graduated from the Faik Resit Unat Cagaoglu elementary school and from the Anatolian high school. He received a scholarship and studied at high school no. 35 in Nizhny, Novgorod. He graduated from the Istanbul University, Faculty of Law. He began his career as a research functionary of Atatürk Principles and History at the Istanbul University. During the academic year of 2005-2006, he has worked as a guest research functionary at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University). During 2007-2008, he conducted research in the Russian archives in the framework of a project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic.

For more than ten years, he is doing research on the “Turkish-Soviet Relations” and the “Armenian Question” in the Russian-Soviet state archives. He wrote many articles on these topics. Four books of him were published, named: “Atatürk’s Soviet Talks/ with Soviet Archives,” “The Turkish-Armenian Conflict from Boryan’s eyes,” “The Armenian Question in 100 documents of the Russian state archives” and “Eurasianism/ its Theory and Practice in Turkey”. All the books are translated in Russian, German, Persian and Azeri Turkish. On the other hand, he is also working on the Turkish foreign policy.

He presented papers during different symposia and international conferences on these issues, he gave lectures in both Turkey and abroad. He participated in numerous programs at the TRT, private and foreign channels.

Translations from Russian to Turkish of his books and poetries are also available. He speaks Turkish, Russian, German and English.

Caucasus

2. Do the problems or the relations of Turkey or Russia with the Caucasian countries affect the relationship between Russia and Turkey?

Regional peace could only be realised by removing external interventions and with the cooperation of Turkey and Russia. Turkish-Russian rivalry in the Caucasus has always showed negative consequences, while cooperation brings peace in the region. Policy of friendship of these countries

has achieved success by providing national interests. When the two countries established friendship and set common policies, there has been stability in the region. In this regard, the establishment of good relations between Turkey and Russia is in the interest of both states and the entire region.

3. To what extent will the problems with the Caucasian countries be resolved which effect the relationship of Russia and Turkey, or are these problems already partly solved? For example the football diplomacy between Armenia and Turkey?

The Armenian-Turkish rapprochement is the reaction on foreign intervention rather than a solution. Please, see <http://www.mehmetperincek.com/makaleler/teo.pdf>

4. What is your opinion on the extension of the military contract between Armenia and Russia? Would it effect the Turkish/Russian relations?

Medvedev's visit to Armenia and the extension of the period of the bases in Gumru with this visit and the promise of Russia to Azerbaijan to sell Azerbaijan the Russian S-300 missiles, indicates the two-way policy of Moscow in the region. Russia does not want to give Armenia to the United States and in the meantime it does not want to damage its relations with Azerbaijan.

It is known that Central Asia is the main aim of the United States. To accomplish this, the US has to subdue Russia. For this reason, the colour revolutions in the Caucasus play an important role by encircling Russia. Armenia is important for the American policy, since Armenia is the only country in the region with a Russian military base. In this regard, the Armenian-Turkish rapprochement led by the United States tears Armenia from Russia. With the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border with an Armenian Protocol, which is produced by Washington, it wants to reduce Armenia's dependence on Russia. Armenia will integrate in the Atlantic system via Turkey. Russia tries to prevent this, the improvement of the Russian military relations and the extension of the period of the military bases is a part of this.

The main starting point of the Russian-Armenian military relations is not the Armenia-Turkey/Azerbaijan conflict, but the Russian-American competition.

Similarities

5. Do you think that Russia and Turkey share the same lot, concerning the view of the West on them?

At this point, I would like to highlight the historical link of Turkey and Russia during the process of liberation and enlightenment of these countries. The Russian revolution of 1905 was followed by the revolution of the Young Turks in 1908. In 1915, Turkey does not give permission to the

British and French fleets and the land forces to pass Gallipoli, this created conditions for the collapse of the Russian Tsardom. After the October Revolution of 1917, the British-French-Russian imperialist trio broke up, which had an agreement to break Turkey, and the revolutionary Russia of Lenin was established. Through this the Turkish Revolution gained a strong front. In these circumstances, Turkey succeeded the War of Independence and the Kemalist revolution took place. The Soviet Revolution and the Turkish Revolution joined hands. The collectivisation of Russia in 1929 accompanied Turkey's populist excretion.

The two fastest growing and planning countries of the 1930s were the Soviet Union and Atatürk's Turkey. After the Second World War, the process reversed. Turkey connected to the Atlantic alliance and the destruction of the Kemalist revolution began, in the Soviet Union Khrushchev and Brezhnev came on power and the repatriation process of the socialism took steam. The Turkish and Russian revolutions do have the same fates during the ascension and the demolition. This is natural. Because these two countries have the accumulation of old empires and the experience of revolutions. With their socio-economic structures they have never been among the leading countries of capitalism, but they own the dynamics to overcome capitalism. Our country's human resources, cultural heritage and Asian traditions are very similar. In the 21st century, Eurasia will be populist, public and enlightened.

Tensions

6. What is the main problem that could obstruct the relationship?

The basic factor that will facilitate the relations is the dominance of the Eurasian policies in both countries. If we look from the contrary, pro-American elements are the biggest obstacles for good relations. It is above highlighted that the foreign policy of the Turkish government is American made and it is one of the obstacles. We could also add the activities of the American marionette Fethullah Gülen in Russia and the neighbouring countries to this.

The Turkish government wants to give the control of the Turkish-Russian economic relations to the Fethullah organisations. From the last visit of Medvedev till now, the conducting sectors were disabled, US-led structures came in place.

Russia has to clearly understand Turkey's problems in Northern Iraq and Cyprus. In this fronts, the resistance of Turkey will be the resistance of Eurasia. Following another policy in Ossetia and another in Cyprus serves for the US. The support of Russia for Turkey in this area has a greater meaning than the developing relations of both countries.

Future

7. To which extent is it important that both countries are improving their relations with each other and why?

Russia is dependent on Turkey, Turkey is dependent on Russia. Russia is the critical country of prejudice in Eurasia and Russia is Turkey's most important ally in terms of the Turkey's Eurasia strategy. Threats for both countries come from the same direction and similar tools are used.

Russia and Turkey have to be in alliance against terrorism, separatism, aggressive nationalism and religious extremism in the Eurasian region.

On the other hand, the American imperialism is implementing a plan which is encompassing both, Russia and Turkey. Russia is encompassed over the Caucasus, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan and through the expansion of the NATO to the Baltic states. Turkey is encompassed by the military troops placed in South Cyprus, Crete, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia and surrounded by the occupation forces in Northern Iraq. The USA is doing the same as Great Britain did during Turkey's War of Independence, it is struggling to create a great Caucasian wall between Russia and Turkey. To destruct this wall, the alliance of Russia-Turkey-Iran is necessary.

However, the encompassing US is also facing an encompassment of itself. The US wall in the Caucasus is encompassed by Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkey. To make this encompassment active, cooperation in the military-technical field is needed.

The US occupation in Northern Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq is surrounded by the resistance forces. When we add Russia and China to the table, which are behind the front, the position of the US is not encouraging as the Washington officials are also mentioning.

Another common perception in terms of threat is the threat caused by the economic structures which are in touch with the mafia. Both in Turkey and in Russia the main sources of wealth and strategic institutions are delivered to foreign monopolies and especially to Jewish compradors. These conditions are showing that both countries have to set similar and common steps in the economic fields. The most important point is that both countries may be each other's main trade partners (M. Perinçek, personal communication, June 9, 2011).

Appendix 2

The tasks of BSEC on the cooperation on tourism:

1. To seek ways and means of promoting sustainable development of tourism in the Participating States through the expansion and diversification of the tourist product;
2. To establish conditions suitable for tourist movement among the BSEC Participating States;
3. To promote cooperation among the Participating States by attracting tourists to the BSEC basin through combined tours;
4. To seek ways and means of attracting investment to the tourism sector both from within and outside the BSEC region;
5. To promote technical cooperation, including the organisation of seminars, exchanging scholarships and know-how;
6. To promote cooperation among the Participating States in the fields of training, joint ventures, management, marketing and consultancy in tourism as well as the cooperation between the BSEC Participating States and third countries;
7. To plan joint action in securing the financial support of the international financial institutions for the realization of tourism projects undertaken within the framework of the BSEC;
8. To promote the development and protection of the natural, cultural and historical values in the BSEC area;
9. To encourage joint participation in specialised tourist fairs, exhibitions and other advertising activities