

REGIONAL POWERS' APPROACH TO POST-HEGEMONIC INTERNATIONAL
SYSTEM: THE CASE OF TURKEY

A Thesis submitted to the faculty of
San Francisco State University

In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree

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2018
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Master of Arts

In

International Relations

by

Serkan Cinal

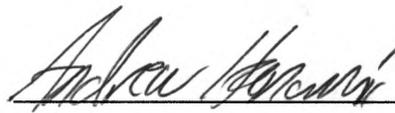
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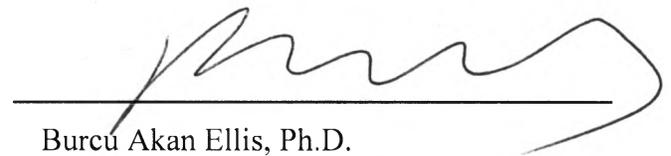
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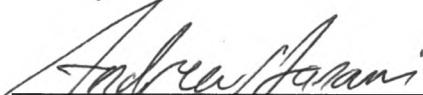
REGIONAL POWERS' APPROACH TO POST-HEGEMONIC INTERNATIONAL
SYSTEM: THE CASE OF TURKEY

Serkan Cinal
San Francisco, California
2018

Abstract

This thesis aims to analyze the regional powers' policy strategies in the unpredictable international structure of the current post-hegemonic period. The analysis in this regard has been evaluated via the scope of hedging, which promotes minimizing the risks caused by turbulence and unpredictability. In accordance with this, the main hypothesis of this research promotes the viability of hedging to maneuver and retain autonomy for the regional actors. The hypothesis has been tested by applying case study method based on Turkey, supported with relevant data retrieved via media statements of state officials, and public opinion polls. In conclusion, Turkish case proved the viability for regional actors to cope with uncertainties of post-hegemonic international system.

I certify that the abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis.



Chair, Thesis Committee



Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before proceeding with the thesis, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to people who has supported me during the thesis, and in broader scope, throughout the master's process. Firstly, I would like to thank my father Tahir Taner Cinal, and my mother Zuhul Cinal. Without their moral and financial support to my endeavors, I would not be able to reach the current position in my academic life. Secondly, I wish to state my sincere thanks to the thesis committee, Professor Andrew K. Hanami, and Professor Burcu Akan Ellis. Without their insightful, and constructive tutelage throughout this process, this study would not be a decent academic work. Lastly, I would like to thank Mr. Cenk Tuncay, who is a valued family friend. He inspired me to pursue graduate studies in the US.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	vii
1.Introduction.....	1
2.Literature Review.....	7
2.1 Balancing in International Relations.....	7
2.1.1 Internal Balancing.....	8
2.1.2 External Balancing.....	11
2.1.3 Soft Balancing.....	13
2.2 Hedging Approach in International Relations	15
2.3 Unipolarity and Multipolarity in International Relations	19
2.3.1 Unipolarity	22
2.3.2 Multipolarity	23
2.4 Regional Power Concept.....	25
3.Historical Background	27
3.1 Rise and Relative Withdrawal of the US Hegemony in International System	27
3.2 Turkey’s Joining to the US led Alliance System	31
3.3 Post-Cold War Turkish Foreign Policy.....	34
4.Turkey’s Ties with Diverging Actors	39
4.1 The US/NATO.....	40
4.2 Russia.....	48

4.3 Iran	53
4.4 China.....	59
5.Hedging in Current Turkish Foreign Policy	64
5.1 Reasoning of Turkey’s choice of Hedging	67
5.2 Application of Hedging in Turkish Foreign Policy	73
5.3 Hedging’s Apparent Benefits to Turkey	87
Bibliography	96

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1. Largest Defense Budgets in 2015	11
2. Silk Road Economic Belt	61
3. Turkish Public Regard on Turkish Foreign Policy.....	91
4. Turkish Public Regard on Turkey’s Middle East Policy	92

1. INTRODUCTION

With the end of Cold War due to the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, the US emerged as the sole superpower of the international system. However, during the 2000s, the US's position as a hegemon and the unipolar structure of international system became more unstable in the aftermath of the pricy operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, which led to an imperial overstretch, and a catastrophic economic crisis, eventually weakened the US's economic strength.¹

In addition to this, possible rising challengers such as, China, Russia, India, and the EU has emerged to assert their influences and to compete with the US as well. As a result of the abovementioned losses of early the 2000s, the US has adapted a less active policy approach in global affairs. This less US engagement policy has been related with the Obama Administration. Throughout his tenure, Barack Obama and his administration the US concentrated on the internal reflections of costly foreign policy, such as, restoring the economy, and while concentrating on the internal matters, the administration refrained from interfering the world affairs.²

The abovementioned less American involvement in international relations has crafted an unstable structure, which is prone to competition. This competition has become visible in several parts of the world. For instance, in Eastern Europe, former Soviet

¹ Christopher Layne. "The Waning of U.S. Hegemony—Myth or Reality? : A Review Essay", *International Security*, volume: 34/1, (2009)

² Andreas Krieg. "Externalizing the burden of war: the Obama Doctrine and US foreign policy in the Middle East", *International Affairs*, volume: 92/1, (2016)

sphere of influence, Russia has rebounded. In this context, it has increased the pressure on Eastern European states, which are either the members of European Union (EU), or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or aspiring to join them. In this context, as a sign of resurrected Russian power, Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine, an aspiring pro-Western country.³

As another example to the less American involvement's reflection on international system, Asia can be illustrated as a supportive case. The Obama Administration sought a relatively active approach in Asia, which aimed to buttress the South-East Asian states by offering lucrative economic opportunities and security guarantees. Nonetheless, this approach has failed due to misinterpretation of Chinese response.⁴ China has countered to the burgeoning American presence by adapting an offensive view, and eventually that particular part of world has become one of the competition grounds of world.⁵

Therefore, the question arises on what should the other state actors do, in order to fulfill their security requirement, when the hegemon loses its influence and system plunges into a quandary situation? In this thesis, the question above will be answered and analyzed from the perspective of an emerging regional state actor: Turkey.

³ Stephen M. Walt. "Barack Obama Was a Foreign-Policy Failure", *Foreign Policy*, published: January 18, 2017, accessed: May 1, 2018, available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/18/barack-obama-was-a-foreign-policy-failure/>

⁴ Harry Seavey. "The Short-sightedness of America's Pivot to Asia", *The Yale Review of International Studies*, (2016), accessed: May 1, 2018, available at: <http://yris.yira.org/comments/1679>

⁵ John Ford. "The Pivot to Asia Was Obama's Biggest Mistake", *The Diplomat*, published: January 21, 2017, accessed: April 30, 2018, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/01/the-pivot-to-asia-was-obamas-biggest-mistake/>

The main argument of this study posits that, when the international system has evolved into an ambiguous form, classical balancing methods such as internal and external balancing might be insufficient for regional actors to enhance their influence and achieve security. Internal balancing, which mainly consists of enhancing coercive capabilities⁶, cannot be applied properly by regional actors and the smaller powers, due to their relative weakness and lack of means (know-how, strong economic structure to back the improvement, etc.)⁷

Additionally, relying solely on external methods such as bandwagoning, which can be basically described as aligning to a superior power and/or a hegemon⁸, and forming alliances⁹ with other state actors can be insufficient as well, due to ambiguity and lack of an explicit rivalry (such as the US-Soviet rivalry during the Cold-War). To pass this conundrum and have an alternative option, I propose a different approach, hedging strategy, which incorporates both of the internal and external balancing methods to achieve security in such ambiguous, and unpredictable international system for regional actors and the rest of states (medium, small). To illustrate the efficiency of my approach, I will evaluate the application of this strategy, by correlating it with recent Turkish Foreign Policy, specifically on Turkish approach on Syrian Civil War.

⁶ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro. "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State", *Security Studies*, volume: 15/3, (2006), accessed: January 4, 2018, available at: DOI: 10.1080/09636410601028370

⁷ Joseph M. Parent and Sebastian Rosato. "Balancing in Neorealism", *International Security*, volume:40/2, (2015)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Independent variables of my research as follows

- Relatively decreased US involvement in international system,
- Turkey's increasing power capabilities,
- Changing attitudes between Turkey and its traditional allies.

Dependent variables of this thesis are

- A hedging strategy that leads to Turkey's growing ties with possible challenger actors, such as China, Russia, and Iran.

As stated above, hedging strategy from the Realist IR terminology, complements with the theoretical approach I propose for this thesis. Hedging approach can be basically described as a viable option for the states to cope with the uncertain nature of the international system¹⁰. While assessing hedging's viability for Turkey, comparative historical method will be used as the methodological approach of this research. Comparative historical method, as a methodological tool, fuses in-case, and comparative approaches, and thus it has similarities within case and comparative approaches.¹¹ Additionally, comparative historical method also shares resemblance with historical methods, in terms of analyzing causes and characteristics of specific developments.¹²

¹⁰ Van Jackson. "Power, trust, and network complexity: three logics of hedging in Asian security", *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, volume: 14, (2014)

¹¹ Matthew Lange. "Comparative-historical methods", Sage, (2012)

¹² Ibid.

Comparative historical method concentrates on social, political, and economic developments, within an extended time period.¹³ In accordance with comparative historical research method, I will analyze the developments, that has influenced Turkey to apply hedging in its foreign policy in this thesis. In this context, I will be focusing on the impact of international and regional turn of events, which buttress the ambiguity in international system, as I have stated when explaining my hypothesis, and throughout this introduction chapter. Comparative historical method's data collection and analysis mainly relies on secondary sources.¹⁴ In this context, as for the data of this research, I will be presenting relevant secondary data retrieved from press statements of state officials (Turkish, American, etc.), and public opinion poll regarding the Turkish perception on Turkey's Foreign Policy, conducted by Kadir Has University in Istanbul, Turkey.

In the first section of this research, I will be presenting the review of IR literature from mainly Realist IR terminology such as balancing (internal, external and soft), unipolarity, multipolarity, concepts of middle power and regional power, and lastly a detailed theoretical explanation on hedging approach, which will also include the difference of hedging from the balance of power concept.

The second section of the thesis will explain the historical background of the emergence of US led hegemonic structure and its relative decline, Turkey's inclusion to the hegemonic actor's alliance system during the Cold War and its former position within

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

this system, and lastly, Turkey's position in the international system and its policy shift, during the late 1990s and 2000s.

The next chapter of thesis will be explaining Turkey's relations with major great and regional actors, such as NATO, Iran, Russia and China. Each sub-chapter will be formed as, brief explanation on the history between Turkey and regarding actor, present situation of the relations between both actors, possible converging and diverging points. This chapter's aim is to give a background on hedging's application with multiple state actors.

The final chapter of the thesis will be assessing the hypothesis, via analyzing hedging's impact on Turkish Foreign Policy since 2010. Firstly, the section will be concentrating on Iranian Nuclear case and Turkey, but the main analysis will be focusing on a particular case; Syrian Civil War, to better illustrate the efficiency of hedging on Turkish influence in the Middle East region.

This chapter will be divided into three sub-chapters, first sub-chapter will explain why Turkey applies hedging.

The second sub-chapter will present the analysis on the application of hedging in Turkish Foreign Policy. The last sub-chapter of this study will explain the current and possible future benefits of hedging strategy for Turkey.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Balancing in International Relations

Balance of power has been an omnipresent notion in IR academic literature for theoretical debates, and additionally, also has emerged as a viable strategy on the application of diplomacy. The past of application of balance of power concept can be traced back to the ancient times. According to Thucydides, who is an ancient Greek philosopher, the balance of power concept's first application occurred during the Athens-Spartan rivalry¹⁵. In terms of IR field, balance of power has been mostly advocated by the realists. According to the classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau, politics are intertwined with human nature, which are at the roots of governance, and balance of power concept is among the rooted laws of governance.¹⁶

On the other hand, although the neorealist view on balance of power agrees with classical realism on the balance of power concept's main tenets, neorealism has a different approach on the application of the concept. Kenneth Waltz, who is the champion of neorealist view, defines balance of power as a necessity to achieve relative stability in an unstable international structure.¹⁷

¹⁵ Michael Sheehan. "Balance of Power History and theory", Routledge, (1996)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz. "International Structure, National Force, and the Balance of World Power", Journal of International Affairs, volume:21/2, (1967)

Waltz argues that, the balance of power concept works best under a bipolar international system, due to the leading actors' wishes to retain the current status-quo of the system. Since the hegemon powers of the system own the superior means, they have the ability to develop strategies to keep bipolar stability intact, such as keeping the allies and satellites in check by various ways (economic sanctions, arms embargoes, etc.)¹⁸

In the proceeding sections, two main variations of the act of balancing, internal and external balancing will be introduced, along with soft balancing, a relatively new approach to balancing, which has been discussed as a tool to balance the US hegemony by IR scholars.¹⁹

2.1.1 Internal Balancing

The internal approach to balancing has been defined in the simplest way to achieve balancing by military build-up of states.²⁰ Additionally, a broader definition of internal balancing includes emulation of other states' military strategies and hardware, promoting innovation in defense industry, and retaining the extant approach on political strategies related with military matters.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ T.V. Paul. "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy", *International Security*, volume:30/1, (2005)

²⁰ John J. Marsheimer. "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War", *International Security*, volume: 15/1, (1990)

²¹ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro. "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State", *Security Studies*, volume: 15/3, (2006), accessed: January 4, 2018, available at: DOI: 10.1080/09636410601028370

Neo-realist argument on the reasoning of internal balancing might be the best explanation in this aspect. According to this approach, since the international system is built on an anarchic structure, relying on the other states for achieving security in such environment has been classified as a least desired option for states.²² Hence, the states in international system tend to rely their own capabilities, which complements the “self-help” notion, to achieve security.²³ However, it should also be realized that, due to the possession of broad material capabilities is not an ubiquitous fact for everyone, internal balancing as a sole method of balancing act, is only available for a limited amount of states (great powers).²⁴

Based on the broader definition of internal balancing above, I would like to focus on emulation, which is also preferred by weaker powers of international system along with the more powerful actors, to boost their coercive capacities.

Emulation as a term has been described as “conscious, purposeful imitation, in full or in part, by one state of any institution, technology, or governing practice of another state.”²⁵ As explained above, internal balancing methods mostly fit with great powers of international system, due to their material capabilities. But this has not been always the case. Joao Resende-Santos provides examples from Latin American countries such as

²² Joseph M. Parent and Sebastian Rosato. “Balancing in Neorealism”, *International Security*, volume:40/2, (2015)

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Joao Resende-Santos. “Anarchy and the Emulation of Military Systems: Military Organization and Technology in South America, 1870–1930”, *Realism: Restatement and Renewal*, ed. Benjamin Frankel (London: Frank Cass, 1996)

Brazil and Argentina. These two nations applied internal balancing through emulation of superior powers' military strategies Great Britain for the navy, Germany and Japan for the land forces.²⁶

Throughout the history, additionally to weaker (smaller) powers of international system, great powers also revised their militaries by emulating other great powers' military structures as well. For instance, in late 19th century, France and Russia imitated Prussia's military tactics, in order to modernize military and be able to balance Prussia effectively, in terms of coercive means.²⁷

As another example, during the World War 2, German Blitzkrieg strategy was emulated by Soviet Union and the US, which contributed their efforts to gain initiative against Germany.²⁸ The aftermath of World War 2, The Soviets hastened their own nuclear program and adopted the US's strategic bombing doctrine, to restrain the US's effectiveness.²⁹

Along with emulation approach as a way of internal balancing, considerable budgets for defense spending is also a tool for some of the weaker actors of the international system.

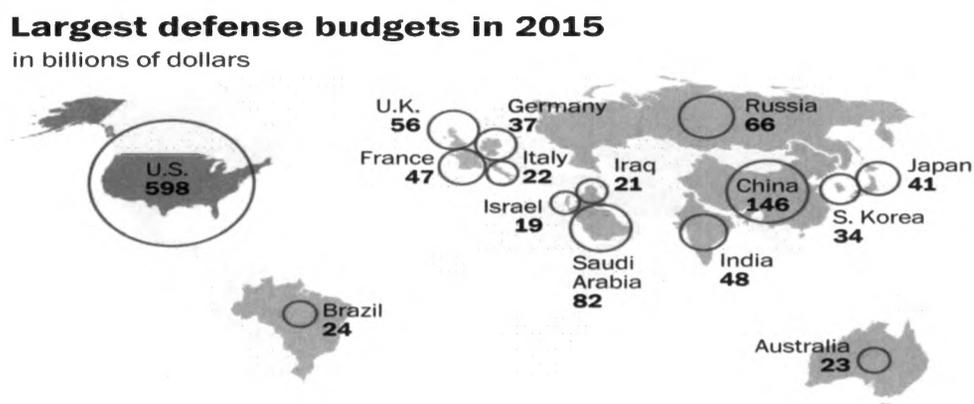
²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Joseph M. Parent and Sebastian Rosato. "Balancing in Neorealism", *International Security*, volume:40/2, (2015)

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Figure 1: Largest Defense Budgets in 2015



Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies
LARIS KARKLIS/THE WASHINGTON POST

(Adam Taylor and Laris Karklis. Washington Post, 2016)

As illustrated in the data above, weaker actors of international system such as Brazil, Iraq, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and Italy may allocate substantial financial resources for their defense means in order to achieve internal balancing.

2.1.2 External Balancing

As it can be inferred from the word of “external”, external balancing has been described as a way to provide security by forming alliances and security.³⁰ External

³⁰ John J. Marsheimer. “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War”, *International Security*, volume: 15/1, (1990)

balancing also encompasses the terms of bandwagoning a weaker state's alignment to a great power and buck-passing, passing the cost of conflict to another ally. According to neo-realist view, external balancing is the least desirable option, when compared with internal balancing.³¹ Neo-realist view reasons this lack of desire with its regard on "self-help" as the main anchor to achieve security in an anarchic international structure, and due to this "self-help" nature, the other state actors cannot be trusted in achieving the vital security to survive.³²

However, "self-help" might not be an alternative for every state actor of the international system. Weaker actors of the international system, or even "Great Powers" of the international system might need to fulfill security requirement by applying external measures. In this context, alliances can be labeled as the most common practice of external balancing.

An alliance can simply be described as a way to increase security and aggregate defense capabilities against a threat by cooperating with other states.³³ James D. Morrow, a political science professor at University of Michigan, bifurcates alliances as symmetric and asymmetric. According to his definition, symmetric alliances occur between states

³¹ Joseph M. Parent and Sebastian Rosato. "Balancing in Neorealism", *International Security*, volume:40/2, (2015)

³² Ibid.

³³ James D. Morrow. "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances", *American Journal of Political Science*, volume: 35/4, (1991)

that share equal capabilities and he posits the examples of alliances from 19th century, such as the Concert of Europe.³⁴

Conversely, asymmetric alliances have been basically explained as, alliances between states with a gap of power in terms of material capabilities.³⁵ Best example for asymmetric alliances is NATO, which includes states that have various power capabilities. Asymmetric alliances can be related with bandwagoning approach. Bandwagoning occurs when a weaker state threatened by a great power, by aligning itself to other great power in order to achieve security.³⁶ In his work, Stephen M. Walt has illustrated this phenomenon by providing case examples of Norway and Turkey's joining to the US's alliance system of NATO against the Soviets' threat to their sovereignty.³⁷ In unipolar system, weaker states tend to ally with the hegemon, to achieve security and to prevent being threatened by the hegemon.³⁸

2.1.3 Soft Balancing

Soft Balancing is a relatively new term in IR discipline, when compared with the classical internal and external balancing methods. As it can be inferred from its name,

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Stephen M. Walt. "The Origins of Alliances", Cornell University Press, (1987)

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Stephen M. Walt. "Alliances in a Unipolar World", *World Politics*, volume: 61/1, (2009)

soft balancing is a way of balancing by applying non-militarily means to constrain a great power and/or hegemon.³⁹

Since the US became the sole hegemon of international system after the end of Cold War in 1991, the other state actors have not been able to balance the US for two reasons firstly, the US retains enormous coercive power capabilities, which exceed the possible challengers' capabilities by far (such as Russia and China).⁴⁰ Secondly, in addition to the classic power definition above, liberal IR theory posits that the US is a liberal state, which respects sovereignty and rule of law, it does not cause a threat to other liberal states such as France and Germany, eliminating the need to conduct a hard balancing (internal/external) act.⁴¹

So, if the US cannot be balanced with conventional means by the other state actors, then how come this soft-balancing approach offers a way to restrain US preponderance? The term of soft-balancing does not provide an effective approach to balance the US but paves a way to increase the costs of US interventions by depriving them of international support.⁴² In order to form soft-balancing to delay or undermine the

³⁹ Max Paul Friedman and Tom Long. "Soft Balancing in the Americas: Latin American Opposition to U.S. Intervention, 1898–1936", *International Security*, volume: 40/1, (2005), accessed: January 8, 2018, available at: doi:10.1162/ISEC_a_00212

⁴⁰ T.V. Paul. "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy", *International Security*, volume:30/1, (2005)

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Robert A. Pape. "Soft Balancing against the United States", *International Security*, volume:30/1, (2005)

US efforts, states use multilateral institutions, economic means, and diplomatic arrangements.⁴³

The most common example, which complements with the soft balancing definitions above, is some of the US allies' approach towards the US during 2003 invasion of Iraq. Turkey applied soft balancing against the US, to raise possible security concerns against its national interests in the wake of invasion.⁴⁴ In this context, Turkey tried to stop the US invasion of Iraq along with other five neighboring countries of Iraq, namely Iran, Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.⁴⁵ Additionally, Germany, Russia, and France formed soft balancing against the US, by utilizing the UN structure to prevent the US' use of force against Iraq in 2002.⁴⁶

2.2 Hedging Approach in International Relations

As explained in previous sections, realist school of thought regards the international system as an unstable one. Classical realists explained the present instability with reference to human nature. Based on this approach, humanity is greedy and power-maximizing, thus states ruled by humans create instability.⁴⁷ Different from classical

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Murat Yesiltas. "Soft Balancing in Turkish Foreign Policy: The Case of the 2003 Iraq War", *Perceptions*, volume: 14, (2009)

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ T.V. Paul. "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy", *International Security*, volume:30/1, (2005)

⁴⁷ Michael Sheehan. "Balance of Power History and theory", Routledge, (1996)

view, Waltzian approach (neo-realism) correlates the instability of system with anarchy, rather than the individual actors' deliberate acts.⁴⁸

In this context, to achieve survival in such unstable structure,⁴⁹ states may need to adapt various strategies. Hedging can be considered as an alternative to balance of power concept, as a tool to cope with ambiguity with the international system.⁵⁰

Another description of hedging, which encompasses the reasoning of approach is, retaining more than one strategic option against possible security threats.⁵¹

A state's application of hedging can be evaluated within several tactics:

- Enhancing military capabilities without provoking the other state actors,
- Increased participation in multilateral/bilateral cooperation organizations without solid commitment,
- Improving diplomatic ties with at least two great powers simultaneously.⁵²

Despite hedging's definition as a way to navigate in an unstable international structure, one might ask the difference between hedging and classic concept of balance of power. The main divergence between those two approaches are the requirement of

⁴⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz. "International Structure, National Force, and the Balance of World Power", *Journal of International Affairs*, volume:21/2, (1967)

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Van Jackson. "Power, trust, and network complexity: three logics of hedging in Asian security", *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, volume:14, (2014)

⁵¹ Denny Roy. "Southeast Asia and China: Balancing and Bandwagoning", *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International Affairs*, volume: 27/2, (2005)

⁵² Van Jackson. "Power, trust, and network complexity: three logics of hedging in Asian security", *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, volume:14, (2014)

clarity. When balancing, internally or externally, states rely on a clear option against a threat, thus they can improve their military without worrying about provoking others, form alliances, or opt with bandwagoning with ease.⁵³ However, without a security guarantee, or clarity in international system, such as unipolar and bipolar structures, classic balance of power concept is not the best option.⁵⁴

In contrast to classic balance of power concept, hedging approach offers room for maneuver, which is a beneficial option for states facing lack of security guarantees, due to the fluidity it offers.⁵⁵ Additionally, hedging should not be confused with soft balancing. The main differences between hedging and soft balancing. The latter reflects a short-term strategy against a leading actor, based on a specific goal (for instance, 2003 Iraq War). However, hedging strategy is a longer-term approach, which allows weaker states to build up their capacities against the hegemon without alienating it.⁵⁶ Also, hedging approach paves the way for multidimensional ties with various states, which enables the hedging state to limit its dependency to the hegemon.⁵⁷

Application of hedging strategy has been studied in Asia-Pacific region, involving numerous actors. Malaysia and Singapore conducted hedging to counter possible Chinese

⁵³ Evelyn Goh. "Understanding "hedging" in Asia-Pacific security", *PacNet* 43, (2006)

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Van Jackson. "Power, trust, and network complexity: three logics of hedging in Asian security", *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, volume:14, (2014)

⁵⁶ Brock F. Tesson. "System Structure and State Strategy: Adding Hedging to the Menu", *Security Studies*, vol:21/2, (2012)

⁵⁷ Ibid.

threat by enhancing relations with the US without provoking China.⁵⁸ But also both countries have been seeking decent relations with China as well.⁵⁹ Hedging strategy has also been applied by other smaller states of Asia-Pacific region (such as, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, and Cambodia) to fulfill their security.⁶⁰

But hedging strategy's application is not only limited with smaller powers of Asia-Pacific region. For instance, China applied hedging approach by pursuing multidimensional approach with its Asia-Pacific neighbors and the US, to buy time for building up its material capabilities.⁶¹

Hedging strategy has also been applied in the Middle East as well. An example of hedging in the Middle East is the Gulf States' approach against Iran. Gulf countries established the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), developing security cooperation with the United Kingdom and United States, while avoiding antagonizing Iran, and seeking close economic relations with it.⁶²

⁵⁸ Kuik Cheng-Chwee. "The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore's Response to a Rising China", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol:30/2, (2008)

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Van Jackson. "Power, trust, and network complexity: three logics of hedging in Asian security", *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, volume:14, (2014)

⁶¹ Rosemary Foot. "Chinese Strategies in a US-Hegemonic Global Order: Accommodating and Hedging", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, vol:82/1, (2006)

⁶² Yoel Guzansky. "The Foreign-Policy Tools of Small Powers: Strategic Hedging in the Persian Gulf", *Middle East Policy*, volume: 22/1, (2015)

2.3 Unipolarity and Multipolarity in International Relations

When the Cold-War ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the US has emerged as the most prominent actor, the hegemon of the international system.

Subsequent with this event, the international system reverted into a unipolar structure. the debate on the endurance of post-Cold War's unipolar international system was ignited among the IR and political science circles.⁶³ The main tenet of realist IR scholars' criticism on the unipolarity (especially Kenneth Waltz and the neo-realists) was that, due to the anarchic nature of international system, the US hegemony and the novel unipolar structure will not be a durable and sustainable and thus, the other states will form a balance to stem the US influence to achieve security.⁶⁴

In contrast to realist IR, one of the main arguments of liberal IR scholars on this debate can be described as, the US hegemony and the unipolar international structure will endure due to the dominance of US values (liberal democracy, market economy, etc.) in the aftermath of Cold-War and fall of Communism with the Soviet Union.⁶⁵

Complementary with the argument above, another liberal view explicitly contrasts the balancing approach of the realists. According to this view, the US has emerged as a "benevolent hegemon" due to its liberal principles and commitment to rule based

⁶³ G. John Ikenberry, Michael Mastanduno, and William C. Wohlforth. "Introduction: Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences", *World Politics*, volume: 61/1, (2009)

⁶⁴ Robert Jervis. "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective", *World Politics*, volume: 61/1, (2009)

⁶⁵ Francis Fukuyama. "The End of History?", *The National Interest*, no: 16, (1989)

institutions, and thus, the US will not be threat to the other state actors to force them to balance.⁶⁶

However, during the 2000s, the debate on US's position as a hegemon and the unipolar structure of international system became more controversial in the aftermath of the costly interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which led to an imperial overstretch, and a disastrous economic crisis, eventually hampered the US's economic power to some extent.⁶⁷ Additionally, another supporting argument for the diminishing US position in the international system is the rise of other actors of the system, such as Russia, China, India, and the EU, in terms of economic, military and sociocultural dimensions and due to their relative rise, they can challenge the US preponderance.⁶⁸

In this context, the proponents of the waning US hegemony posit that, the relative weakening of US's political preponderance as a hegemon power caused a power vacuum in the international system and rising new actors have been competing to fill this vacuum.

Conversely to the advocates of weakening US hegemony and fading the unipolar system, scholars who defend the enduring unipolar structure and durable US hegemony posit that, the US still retains its preponderance. For instance, according to Michael Beckley, an assistant professor at Tufts University, the US still has superior material capabilities, when compared with other rising actors (especially China), despite the

⁶⁶ Christopher Layne. "The Unipolar Illusion Revisited" *International Security*, volume:31/2, (2006)

⁶⁷ Christopher Layne. "The Waning of U.S. Hegemony—Myth or Reality?: A Review Essay", *International Security*, volume: 34/1, (2009)

⁶⁸ Fareed Zakaria. "The Rise of the Rest", Fareed Zakaria's personal website, (2008), accessed: February 11, 2018, available at: <https://fareedzakaria.com/2008/05/12/the-rise-of-the-rest/>

relative throwbacks it has experienced during the 2000s (Afghanistan, Iraq, and 2008 economic crisis).⁶⁹ In addition with this, Beckley also claims that, the rise of China and the others (Russia, India, etc.) are rather conjectural, not a sustainable rise, which will be insufficient to effectively challenge the US hegemony⁷⁰.

In contrast to aforementioned realist perspective in 1990s towards the US hegemony, David Fiammenghi, who is a research fellow at University of Bologna, posits that, since the US has already passed the absolute balancing threshold, conducting a balancing act against the US will be largely ineffective, due to an immense power gap between the US and the other possible challengers.⁷¹ Since the debate on the sustainability of unipolar order and the US's hegemony has been resuming within the academic circles, one should also investigate the impact of the post-hegemonic, multipolar structure's impact on other states.

The debate on unipolarity-multipolarity explained above highlights contradicting arguments regarding the current unpredictable situation of international system, which was mentioned at introduction chapter of this thesis. To have a solid understanding on the unipolarity-multipolarity debate, one should also be familiarized with those concepts and their implications on stability. In the following sections I will be explaining the definitions of unipolarity and multipolarity, along with their interpretations on stability.

⁶⁹ Michael Beckley. "China's Century? Why America's Edge will Endure", *International Security*, volume: 36/3, (2011)

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Davide Fiammenghi. "The Security Curve and International Politics", *International Security*, volume: 35/4, (2011)

2.3.1 Unipolarity

Within IR literature, there are numerous definitions for the term of unipolarity, based on different perspectives such as political and security approaches. The most common explanation of unipolarity is that, one state actor has emerged too powerful, which will not be counter-balanced by other states.⁷² In terms of security aspect, the unipolar hegemonic actor's security cannot be threatened even if the other states in the world unite against that unipolar actor.⁷³

As briefly explained above, there are various ongoing debates on the stability of unipolarity and its offshoot hegemonic stability. In this context, Kenneth Waltz and neo-realists claim that, the unipolar structure led by the US, which emerged in the aftermath of Cold War will not last long, due to the other state actors who will unite and balance the unipolar hegemon, reverting the system back to a multipolar structure.⁷⁴

In contrast to neo-realists on the sustainability of unipolar system, proponents of unipolarity argue that, the post-Cold War unipolar system and hegemonic stability will continue to exist, due to the US led unipolar structure of the current international system.

Advocates of US led unipolarity posit several assumptions:

⁷² William C. Wohlforth. "The Stability of a Unipolar World", *International Security*, volume:24/1, (1999)

⁷³ Robert Jervis. "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective", *World Politics*, volume:61/1, (2009)

⁷⁴ Christopher Layne. "The Unipolar Illusion Revisited" *International Security*, volume:31/2, (2006)

- Firstly, the current unipolar hegemon, the US has already widened the gap between itself and possible challengers in terms of material capabilities (economic, and militarily),
- Secondly, The US maintains serious geographical advantage surrounded with Atlantic and Pacific oceans, coupled with loyal allies next to US land borders Canada and Mexico.⁷⁵
- Lastly, the US has been considered as a “benevolent hegemon” due to its liberal principles and thus, will not be a threat to the other state actors, which forces them to form a balancing.⁷⁶

2.3.2 Multipolarity

The debates on whether the international system reverted back to a multipolar structure from a unipolar one is not a novel phenomenon. In this context, having a concrete understanding on how the multipolarity will fit on today’s international security environment, requires knowing the structure of multipolar international system and its stability model. Thus, in this section, I will briefly present a scholar explanation from the IR literature on multipolar international system.

Multipolar international system has been explained as, the system, which consists of multiple challenging actors to compete for achieving the hegemony.⁷⁷ In this system,

⁷⁵ William C. Wohlforth. “The Stability of a Unipolar World”, *International Security*, volume:24/1, (1999)

⁷⁶ Christopher Layne. “The Unipolar Illusion Revisited” *International Security*, volume:31/2, (2006)

⁷⁷ Brian Healy, and Arthur Stein. “The Balance of Power in International History Theory and Reality”, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, volume:17/1 (1973)

due to the amount of challenging actors, security is scarce, and usually this lack security leads these state actors tend to form an alliance to restrain a rising state actor.⁷⁸ Thus, the obvious structure of multipolar international system has paved the way to the emergence of balance of power approach, and buttressed realist IR claim on the anarchic structure of international system.⁷⁹

Although neo-realist IR view, tend to be skeptical of multipolar international system in terms of stability and promotes bipolar system as the most stable variation of international system⁸⁰ multipolar international system has its own stability approach as well. Pro-multilateral system argument explains that, in multipolar system, stability is a stronger probability, due to the relative flexibility it offers.⁸¹

Flexibility can be explained as an availability of multiple options. In bipolarity and unipolarity, only viable option is to do external balancing (alliances, bandwagoning), and stability will be based on the leading actor of the pole or the hegemon.⁸² On the contrary, under multipolar system, states might form external balancing via alliances and

⁷⁸ Manus I. Midlarsky, and Ted Hopf. "Polarity and International Stability", *The American Political Science Review*, volume:87/1, (1993)

⁷⁹ Brian Healy, and Arthur Stein. "The Balance of Power in International History Theory and Reality", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, volume:17/1 (1973)

⁸⁰ John J. Marsheimer. "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War", *International Security*, volume: 15/1, (1990)

⁸¹ Manus I. Midlarsky, and Ted Hopf. "Polarity and International Stability", *The American Political Science Review*, volume:87/1, (1993)

⁸² Ibid.

also will be able to improve their military capabilities by applying internal balancing methods.⁸³

2.4 Regional Power Concept

Regional powers in IR discipline have been described as, states that retain a significant population, considerably high GDP, and possess capable conventional army, additionally in some cases, possession of nuclear weapons.⁸⁴ Also, regional powers tend to be able to exert a level of influence in international system, particularly in their regions, and generally have enough material resources (economy, military power, etc.) to retain a level of autonomy.⁸⁵

Regional power and Middle power concepts are being erroneously defined as same concepts from time to time, due to the similar attributes they retain. Analogous to regional powers, medium powers have been delineated as, states which have sufficient capabilities to be able to rely on themselves without the aid of other states.⁸⁶ In this context, similar to regional powers, middle powers also retain a significant population, a dynamic economy, and a reliable and effective military power⁸⁷, which allows them to stand alone to some extent in international system, as the definition above posits.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Detlef Nolte. "How to compare regional powers: analytical concepts and research topics", *Review of International Studies*, volume: 36, (2010), accessed: February 9,2018, available at: doi:10.1017/S026021051000135X

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Hasan Basri Yalcin. "The Concept of "Middle Power" and the Recent Turkish Foreign Policy Activism", *Afro-Eurasian Studies*, volume:1/1, (2012)

⁸⁷ Ibid.

However, despite the similarities shared between two concepts, regional and middle powers are not completely same, and there are some important differences exist between them. Despite their relative material capabilities, middle powers tend to act under multilateral structures, such as, the UN, and NATO, rather than relying on their very own power capacities.⁸⁸ Secondly, in contrast to regional powers, middle powers usually do not have clear goals in regard to their regions, thus, pursuit of power and influence cannot be counted as a major objective for middle powers.⁸⁹

Middle powers tend to act as status-quo powers, which are content with the existing structure of the international system.⁹⁰ On the contrary, regional powers tend to revise the international system, at least to their advantage in their respected regions. In the IR literature, the rise of several regional actors such as, India, Russia, and China have been interpreted in this way.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Bernard Wood. "Middle Powers in the International System: A Preliminary Assessment of Potential", *Wider Working Papers*, no:11, (1987)

⁸⁹ Eduard Jordaan. "The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing Between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers", *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, vol:30/1, (2003)

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Detlef Nolte. "How to compare regional powers: analytical concepts and research topics", *Review of International Studies*, volume: 36, (2010), accessed: February 9,2018, available at: doi:10.1017/S026021051000135X

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Rise and Relative Withdrawal of the US Hegemony in International System

The US was emerged as the sole hegemon of the international system in the aftermath of Cold War, which ended with the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991. However, despite the aforementioned fact, the US's quest for hegemony has its roots back at the end of World War II, which paved the way for the US to emerge as a super power along with the Soviet Union, replacing the battered European powers, namely; The UK, France, and Germany.⁹²

The US aimed to solidify its post-World War II status, by constructing institutions, which would help to solidify the US hegemony. With the US's material superiority accompanied with an institutionalized structure Main tenet of the US led order can be explained as follows:

- Open Markets,
- Economic Security and Social Bargain,
- Multilateral Institutional Cooperation,
- Security Binding,
- Western Democratic Solidarity,

⁹² Francis Shor. "War in the Era of Declining U.S. Global Hegemony", *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*, issue: 2, (2010)

- American Hegemonic Leadership.⁹³

With the end of Cold-War, bipolar international system, which includes two super powers dominating the system, was ended and the US arose as the sole hegemon of new unipolar system. Following the transformation of international system from a bipolar to a unipolar one, an inflammatory debate was started in academia and political circles on the durability of this new structure.⁹⁴ Some of the scholars (mainly, the advocates of liberal IR theory) presented claims such as;

- Liberal International System has prevailed, and there is not any rival paradigm left to challenge this new structure.⁹⁵ In this context, although various issues will occur in several regions (i.e the Middle East), there will not be any major polarization for the hegemony.⁹⁶
- The US led hegemony will not threaten the interests of other state actors, since the US is “benevolent hegemon” and will create a win-win environment for the others.⁹⁷

However, the sustainability of unipolar hegemonic system was contradicted by some of the realists such as; Kenneth Waltz. According to the opposing view of US led

⁹³ G. John Ikenberry. “Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order”, Princeton University Press, (2011)

⁹⁴ Christopher Layne. “The Waning of U.S. Hegemony—Myth or Reality?: A Review Essay”, *International Security*, volume: 34/1, (2009)

⁹⁵ Francis Fukuyama. “The End of History?”, *The National Interest*, number:16, (1989)

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Christopher Layne. “The Waning of U.S. Hegemony—Myth or Reality?: A Review Essay”, *International Security*, volume: 34/1, (2009)

unipolarity, the other state actors will soon form a balance, to restrain the US influence, which will be detrimental to their interests in the long run.⁹⁸ Hence, the realists have claimed that the post-Cold War international system would soon evolve into a multipolar structure.⁹⁹

Throughout the 1990s, the US revised its strategy to strengthen the position it achieved in the aftermath of Cold War. The new US strategy will be based on two tenets;

- Majority of the important state actors must be democratic states,
- In order to prevent possible threats and challenges, the US should implement preemptive approach, to retain the current US led liberal international system.¹⁰⁰

Throughout the 1990s, the US hegemony was mostly unchallenged. The US's former rival, Russia was experiencing breakdown, with the disintegration of Soviet Union. The US led Liberal international order, which had been accompanied with the efficiency of international institutions and the US military preponderance, had boasted its influence and began to integrate former Soviet states in Eastern Europe to its fold.¹⁰¹ Based on the abovementioned developments, during the 1990s, aforementioned liberal IR argument on the durability of US hegemony seemed to prevail.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Jervis. "The Remaking of a Unipolar World", *The Washington Quarterly*, volume: 29/3, (2006)

¹⁰¹ Christopher Layne. "The Waning of U.S. Hegemony—Myth or Reality?: A Review Essay", *International Security*, volume: 34/1, (2009)

Nevertheless, in the 2000s, several events such as; interventions to Iraq and Afghanistan, and 2008 financial crisis, caused detrimental impact on the US power.¹⁰² Eventually, the US's position as the sole hegemon of international system and liberal international order became questionable. In this context, the debate on whether the US is still the leading power, or a former hegemon evolved into a tangible academic discussion. Proponents of the collapsing US supremacy have underscored several important points;

- The other state actors' capabilities (military, economy, and political) have been improved during the post-Cold War era (1990s and 2000s), thus the US is no longer unchallenged, as it was in 1990s.¹⁰³
- The US suffered from imperial overstretch, due to the costly interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, hence, it is no longer capable enough to exert its influence worldwide.¹⁰⁴
- Liberal IR critics claim that, due to the US's relative withdrawal from international system, (less American involvement in global affairs) liberal international order has faded (ex; rise of authoritarianism, weakening of value-based alliances).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Fareed Zakaria. "The Rise of the Rest", Fareed Zakaria's personal website, (2008), accessed: February 11, 2018, available at: <https://fareedzakaria.com/2008/05/12/the-rise-of-the-rest/>

¹⁰⁴ Dennis Florig. "Hegemonic overreach vs. imperial overstretch", *Review of International Studies*, volume: 36, (2010), accessed: March 23, 2018, available at: doi:10.1017/S0260210510000197

¹⁰⁵ Richard N.Haas. "Liberal World Order, R.I.P", *Project Syndicate*, published on: March 21, 2018, accessed: March 24, 2018, available at: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/end-of-liberal-world-order-by-richard-n--haass-2018-03>

In contrast to advocates of the weakening US hegemony, several IR scholars argued in favor of the enduring US preponderance. These arguments can be basically described as;

- The US material capabilities still exceeds the capabilities of the possible challengers.¹⁰⁶
- Despite the relative weakening, the US led international order and its institutions are still intact, and the possible challengers (namely, China) are still dependent to the US led system.¹⁰⁷

In conclusion, the question on whether the US has lost its influence or not is still an inflammatory debate. Nonetheless, it can be argued that, the US's less involvement in world affairs further embellishes abovementioned arguments regarding the US's withdrawal from the international system as a hegemon.

3.2 Turkey's Joining to the US led Alliance System

In the end of the World War II, both Turkish-Soviet and American-Soviet relations were reshaped. In this context, Soviet Union informed Turkey that it will renounce 1925 Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship Treaty and demanded Kars and Ardahan, which have been located in the Eastern Turkey and control of the passages

¹⁰⁶ Davide Fiammenghi. "The Security Curve and International Politics", *International Security*, volume: 35/4, (2011)

¹⁰⁷ Michael Beckley. "China's Century? Why America's Edge will Endure", *International Security*, volume: 36/3, (2011)

throughout Turkish Straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) in 1945.¹⁰⁸ As a result of the ongoing Soviet threat to its sovereignty, Turkey sought to influence the US and other major Western states, by utilizing the importance of Turkey's geographic position and expressing the possible hazards of the Soviet takeover of Turkey to the US and Western interests.¹⁰⁹ Abovementioned Turkish strategy seemingly worked. The US decision makers realized the significance of geostrategic position of the Turkish Straits and if the Soviets were allowed to invade Turkey, it would have severe consequences on the US interests in Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.¹¹⁰

Turkey was admitted into the Western Security Network, and several important developments occurred in the aftermath of this decision. Turkey benefitted from the US aids through Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, Turkish participation of Korean War increased the collaboration between Turkey and the US, and also demonstrated the prowess of Turkish Army, Turkey's join to NATO alliance in 1952, which was the main structure of Turkey-the US alliance, and lastly Turkey-the US the Military Facilities Agreement signed in 1954 and in this context, significant amount of the US military personal and defense systems were deployed in Turkey.¹¹¹

As a result of these developments in terms of economy, Turkey experienced a considerable growth during 1950s. In terms of defense, NATO membership and the US

¹⁰⁸ Aylin Guney. "An Anatomy of the Transformation of the US-Turkish Alliance: From "Cold War" to "War on Iraq", *Turkish Studies*, volume:6/3, (2005), accessed: March 28,2018, available at: DOI: 10.1080/14683840500235449

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

presence in Turkey provided protection against the Soviets and lastly, the alliance with the US also fulfilled Turkey's Westernization goal, which has been the designated goal of the Turkish state since its foundation.¹¹²

Nonetheless, the tide of relations between Turkey and the US was not a smooth one. The Cuban Missile Crisis was the first major dispute of Turkey-the US alliance, and eventually influenced Turkish authorities to not just rely on the US guarantees. deployment of the missiles did not happen before 1961 and one year later, one of the most important crises of the Cold War emerged between the US and Soviet Union¹¹³. The Soviets demanded to removal of missiles from Turkey in exchange of removal the Soviet missiles from Cuba, and for its national security, the US removed the missiles without consulting Turkey¹¹⁴.

In the 1960s another major issue would affect the relations between two NATO allies; the Cyprus Dispute. In 1963-64, tensions in Cyprus were increased, due to fierce clashes between Turkish and Greek Cypriots with the aim of Greek Cypriots' ethnic cleansing in Cyprus, and thus, in order to protect Turkish population in Cyprus, Turkey planned to military intervention to Cyprus based on its guarantor rights in 1960 Treaty,

¹¹² Tarik Oguzlu and Mustafa Kibaroglu. "Is the Westernization Process Losing Pace in Turkey: Who's to Blame?", *Turkish Studies*, volume:10/4, (2009), accessed: March 23,2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14683840903384836>

¹¹³ Barton J. Bernstein. "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Trading the Jupiters in Turkey?", *Political Science Quarterly*, volume: 95/1, (1980)

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

which documented the independence of Republic of Cyprus, and defined Turkey, the UK and Greece as the guarantor states¹¹⁵.

When Turkey informed the US and other NATO allies for its military intervention to Cyprus, it was shocked with the harsh letter of Lyndon B. Johnson to Turkish Prime Minister Ismet Inonu, which stated that if Turkey sends its military forces to Cyprus, the US will not protect Turkey, if Turkish intervention provokes the Soviet Union¹¹⁶. This letter played a crucial part in deteriorating Turkish-American ties and strengthened those (the leftists in Turkey), who were questioning the validity of Turkish-American alliance. Cyprus Dispute continued to be an important matter for the direction of Turkey-the US relations in the 1970s. In 1974, Turkey sends its forces to Cyprus, the US imposed arms embargo on Turkey, which was the most important sanction imposed on Turkey due to its intervention to Cyprus, made the relations between the two countries much more complicated¹¹⁷.

3.3 Post-Cold War Turkish Foreign Policy

After the end of Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the future of NATO and in this context, the relations between Turkey and the US were being questioned. Among the Turkish officials, there were doubts on the durability of the US

¹¹⁵ Fiona B. Adamson. "Democratization and the Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy: Turkey in the 1974 Cyprus Crisis", *Political Science Quarterly*, volume:116/2, (2001)

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis. "Friends No More ?: The Rise of Anti-American Nationalism in Turkey", *The Middle East Journal*, volume:64/1, (2010):p.53, accessed: March 31, 2018, available at: DOI: 10.3751/64.1.13

and NATO commitment to Turkey in the aftermath of Soviet threat. In this context, Ankara and Washington sought for new ground for the alliance, but NATO's evolution from Transatlantic/Western security alliance to semi political and semi military global alliance complicated Turkey's definition as a Western state.¹¹⁸

Since NATO, and its most important actor, the US, defined Turkey as a "Middle Eastern" country, which helps in application and realization of NATO goals in the Middle East region.¹¹⁹ While Turkey and the US were trying to redefine their relations in accordance with the facts of post-Cold War environment of the international system, new challenges emerged. First challenge for the Post-Cold War Era relations between Turkey and the US was the Gulf Crisis in 1991. The crisis was started with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and due to this fact, the US realized the importance of Turkey for its interests in the Middle East, and this approach dismissed the worries of some circles in Turkey that the US will abandon Turkey in the post-Cold War international system.¹²⁰

However, Turkey did not join the Gulf War, despite the President Turgut Ozal (the President of Turkey in early 1990s) willingness to join, due to the opposition of the security institutions, which are defined as mostly pro-western, that claims, foreign army's using Turkish bases for its operations in a war is a violation of Turkish sovereignty and

¹¹⁸ Tarik Oguzlu and Mustafa Kibaroglu. "Is the Westernization Process Losing Pace in Turkey: Who's to Blame?", *Turkish Studies*, volume:10/4, (2009), accessed: March 23,2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14683840903384836>

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Meliha Benli Altunisik. "The Middle East in Turkey–USA Relations: Managing the Alliance", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, volume: 15/2, (2013), accessed: March 29, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2013.775036>

their distrust to Ozal's relations with Gulf monarchies, interpreted it as a religious shift in Turkish foreign policy.¹²¹

Nevertheless, although Turkey did not participate in the Gulf War, it actively supported the US effort by providing logistic support and deploying troops to Iraqi border to divert Iraqi forces.¹²² Another important case for Turkish-American relations in 1990s is Turkey and Greece's (two fellow NATO members) disputes over the Aegean and Cyprus during 1990s. To better illustrate this issue, I would like to explain NATO's post-Cold War situation. After the end of Cold War, the EU members within NATO, planned to pursue autonomous security structure within NATO. Western European Union (WEU) was the mediator institution between NATO and the EU in European Pillar of NATO until the formation of European Security and Defense Policy.¹²³

Despite the statements of cooperation with NATO structure both in the process of the creation of European Security and Defense Policy and the Cologne European Council, the ESDP's cooperation with NATO was ambiguous and loss of WEU roles of non-EU allies in the new ESDP structure caused skepticism in non-EU NATO states (Turkey).¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ian O.Lesser. "Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West after the Cold War", *RAND*, report no: R-4204-AF/A, (1992)

¹²² Meliha Benli Altunisik. "The Middle East in Turkey–USA Relations: Managing the Alliance", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, volume: 15/2, (2013), accessed: March 29, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2013.775036>

¹²³ Munevver Cebeci. "NATO-EU Cooperation and Turkey", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, volume:10/3, (2011)

¹²⁴ Ibid.

In addition to the EU member NATO states' aim to create Euro-centric autonomous security structure within NATO, the US's role in Turkish-Greek disputes during 1990s was unclear. The US's need for Turkey as a partner in the 1990s increased (Gulf Crisis), and due to this need, the US was not in the position to act as a mediator actor in Turkish-Greek disputes.¹²⁵

During the 1990s, Turkey also attempted to conduct multidimensional foreign policy, to increase its maneuver, and obtain autonomy in international system. Hence, Turkey restructured novel ties with former foes in Cold-War such as; Russia, Central Asian states (Turkic countries).¹²⁶

¹²⁵ H.Tarik Oguzlu. "The Promise of NATO in the Construction of Cooperative Turkish-Greek Relations" *The Review of International Affairs*, volume:3/3, (2004)

¹²⁶ Sabri Sayari. "Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era: The Challenges of Multi-Regionalism", *Journal of International Affairs*, volume:54/1, (2000)

However, Turkish attempts to craft a multilateral approach was largely remained as a miniscule effort, due to the dominant unipolar structure of international system by that time period. In this context, Turkey mainly conducted bandwagoning policy with the US and NATO throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.

4. TURKEY'S TIES WITH DIVERGING ACTORS

This section of the thesis aims to explain Turkey's relations with diverse state actors and/or alliances. Traditional Turkish Foreign Policy throughout the late Ottoman era and Turkish Republic has been defined as a "balancing policy", which is basically based on developing positive ties with numerous great powers.¹²⁷ As it can be inferred from the statement above, the logic behind the classical Turkish approach in foreign policy is to prevent isolation/or partition of the country. Correlated with the aforementioned goal of traditional Turkish Foreign Policy approach, Modern Turkey's foreign policy strategy has been crafted to prevent of disintegration, a paranoia has been explained with Sevres Syndrome.¹²⁸ Which can be given a credible example to depict the fear of disintegration's effect on Turkey and its foreign policy.

Sevres Syndrome refers to the Treaty of Sevres, which has been signed by the Ottoman Empire and Allies in the aftermath of WWI.¹²⁹ According to Treaty of Sevres, Turkey would be carved up between the victors of World War I and Turkish state would be consisted of only Ankara and its surrounding regions and thus, once mighty Ottoman Empire would be reduced into a tiny state.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Mustafa Aydin. "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs", *Middle Eastern Studies*, volume: 35/4, (1999)

¹²⁸ Michelangelo Guida. "The Sevres Syndrome and "Komplo" Theories in the Islamist and Secular Press", *Turkish Studies*, volume: 9/1, (2008)

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Luis Durani. "Turkey has the Sevres Syndrome", *Modern Diplomacy*, published: December 18, 2015, accessed: March 26, 2018, available at: http://moderndiplomacy.eu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1143:turkey-has-the-sevres-syndrome&Itemid=566

As a result of Turkish War of Independence, the Treaty of Sevres had never been implemented.¹³¹ However, it crafted indelible points to the new Turkish state's national physique and foreign policy decisions. before going through with hedging and Turkish Foreign Policy, I will explain Turkey's relations with credible great and regional powers. This chapter will be beneficial prior to last chapter, since it aims to give a background Turkey's experience with applying multi-vectoral foreign policy approach with different actors, which will be assessed in the last chapter.

4.1 THE US-NATO

As explained at the previous chapter, Turkey's membership to NATO and subsequent alliance with the US has been focal point of the Turkish Foreign Policy during the Cold-War period and beyond. In this sub-chapter, Turkey's present ties with the US and NATO alliance in the post-Cold War process will be assessed. The assessment will be made via three major geopolitical events; 1991 Gulf Crisis, 2003 Iraq War, and Syrian Civil War.

After the end of the Cold War, some circles in Turkey thought that NATO no longer needs Turkey as an important member. This view further developed within the Turkish state apparatus and eventually led to a fear of abandonment by the US and NATO.¹³² In this context, European NATO states' approach toward Turkey during Gulf

¹³¹ Michelangelo Guida. "The Sevres Syndrome and "Komplo" Theories in the Islamist and Secular Press", *Turkish Studies*, volume: 9/1, (2008)

¹³² Serhat Guvenc and Soli Ozel. "NATO and Turkey in the post-Cold War world: between abandonment and entrapment", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, volume: 12/4, (2012)

Crisis in 1991 reinforced Turkish concerns regarding the abandonment argument. Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Turkey requested NATO support to help its defense against the unstable and unpredictable Iraq's possible hostile actions.¹³³ Some European members (i.e Germany) of NATO delayed Turkish request due to their claim that, Turkey's southern borders and neighbor states there cannot be interpreted within NATO's article five, because those regions are "Out of Area" for NATO.¹³⁴

However, this delay resolved with Turkey's diplomatic pressure and in the end, the Netherlands deployed two Patriot air defense systems and in addition to this, Italy, Belgium and Germany deployed 42 aircrafts to Erhac Airbase in Eastern Turkey.¹³⁵ European NATO members' approach to Turkey during a first major disagreement after the Cold War, regarded as a sign of unwillingness of some NATO members to come to Turkey's aid by Turkey and allowed questioning of NATO's reliability as a security guarantee for Turkey in the post-Cold War international system.

European NATO members' approach to Turkey during the Gulf Crisis can be explained with their goal to improve the EU's stance in the international system. After the end of Cold War, the EU members within NATO, planned to pursue autonomous security structure within NATO. Western European Union (WEU) was the mediator

¹³³ Mustafa Kibaroglu. "Turkiye-NATO Iliskileri", SETA, report no: 191, (2017), accessed: March 31, 2018, available at: https://setav.org/assets/uploads/2017/03/Analiz_191.pdf

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

institution between NATO and the EU in European Pillar of NATO until the formation of European Security and Defense Policy.¹³⁶

Despite the statements of cooperation with NATO structure both in the process of the creation of European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), and the Cologne European Council, the ESDP's cooperation with NATO was ambiguous and loss of WEU roles of non-EU allies (which includes Turkey) in the new ESDP structure caused skepticism in Turkey.¹³⁷ In addition to this, some of the ESDP operations were going to be conducted on Turkey's proximity or regions where Turkey has national interests and this fact increased Turkey's suspicions further.¹³⁸

To better illustrate the European reluctance towards Turkey in Gulf Crisis in 1991, I present a part from an interview of Turgut Ozal, Turkish Prime Minister in 1991:

“For weeks, politicians in Bonn have been arguing over whether the jets should be sent into action if Turkey is attacked. The fact that such doubts have been raised, and that Mr. Kohl has not unequivocally accepted Germany's NATO obligation to defend Turkey, has exasperated many NATO officials. The Turkish Prime Minister, Turgut Ozal, said in an interview broadcast over German television on Thursday that Germany "should come and help us." "I think Germany has become

¹³⁶ Munevver Cebeci. "NATO-EU Cooperation and Turkey", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, volume:10/3, (2011)

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

so rich that it has completely lost its fighting spirit," Mr. Ozal said" (Source: Stephen Kinzer, New York Times, 1991).

Despite the differences between European NATO allies and Turkey during the 1991 Gulf Crisis, Turkey retained its alignment to the US and NATO, as a gravity point of its foreign policy.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 attacks in New York, Turkey's position within the Western alliance framework evolved into a prominent position.¹³⁹ One of the main reasons of Turkey's elevation to prominence is explained with Turkey's sociocultural situation. Due to the only Muslim majority country with a working democratic system in the Middle East region, Turkey's role as an ally would be beneficial for the US and NATO to mediate between the West and Muslim World.¹⁴⁰ Additionally to this, Turkey can be presented as an alternative model to the Muslim World instead of Al-Qaeda's radical Islam view.¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, the abovementioned positive developments between Turkey and the US/NATO did not last long. Another major difference emerged between Turkey and the US and several NATO allies. Turkey's relations with Iraq was not in good terms, but the main issue for Turkey in Iraq case was the possible outcome of the US invasion. Turkey had three concerns:

¹³⁹ H.Burc Aka. "Paradigm Change in Turkish Foreign Policy after Post-Cold War", *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, volume: 13/3, (2014)

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

- Possible power-vacuum after the US invasion will allow Iraqi Kurds to form an autonomous or perhaps an independent state, which would influence Turkish Kurds, in addition the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) would exploit this power vacuum as it did in 1991 war, and establish a foothold in Iraq,
- In the aftermath of Gulf War in 1991, Turkish economy suffered \$50 billion dollars and thus, Turkish authorities feared possible economic losses after the second US invasion,
- Thirdly, as another issue for Turkey, if it chooses to align with the US in Iraq War, Turkish relations with the Middle Eastern countries would be deteriorated, which Turkey aims to develop relations to boost its position in the Middle East.¹⁴²

Turkey started to conduct soft balancing method to prevent the war by seeking regional support from Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, the Turkish aim to balance the US's pressure on the Turkish government and persuade the US government to seek solution under the UN umbrella.¹⁴³ However, this policy failed and the MP's voted the US's use of Turkish soil for Iraq war. The majority of the MP's in Turkish Grand National

¹⁴² Murat Yesiltas. "Soft Balancing in Turkish Foreign Policy: The Case of the 2003 Iraq War", *Perceptions*, volume:14, (2009)

¹⁴³ Ibid.

Assembly voted against to allow the US army to use Turkish soil to move in to Iraq on March 1, 2003.¹⁴⁴

The Turkish Parliament's decision of the Turkish authorities created a crisis between Turkey and the US relations. A following important event happened in 2003 depicted how severe the crisis was. The US army arrested the elements from Turkish Special Forces on July 4, 2003 in Suleymaniye, Iraq due to the US accusation of the Turkish troops with assassination of the Kurdish Mayor of Kirkuk.¹⁴⁵ Turkish soldiers were released in a couple of days, as a result of diplomatic and public pressure of the Turkish Government.¹⁴⁶

In the 2000s ties between Turkey, the US and other NATO members remained tense but cooperation between Turkey and the US/NATO was mainly intact. There were less vital differences occurred during this period. Firstly, NATO's appointment of Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who was the former Danish Prime Minister, and controversial figure in the Muslim World, due to his comments regarding the prophet's cartoons on a Danish newspaper, as NATO Secretary General.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Meliha Benli Altunisik. "The Middle East in Turkey–USA Relations: Managing the Alliance", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, volume: 15/2, (2013), accessed: March 29, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2013.775036>

¹⁴⁵ Edward J. Erikson. "Turkey as Regional Hegemon—2014: Strategic Implications for the United States" *Turkish Studies*, volume:5/3, (2004), accessed: March 30,2018, available at: DOI: 10.1080/1468384042000270317

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Tarik Oguzlu. "Making Sense of Turkey's Rising PowerStatus: What Does Turkey's Approach Within NATO Tell Us?", *Turkish Studies*, volume: 14/4, (2013), accessed: March 23, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2013.863420>

The other important issue was the NATO intervention to Libya. Turkey opposed to NATO led intervention to Libya to topple Muammar Ghaddafi's regime. According to Turkish view, NATO should not be used as a tool for expansionist agendas.¹⁴⁸ Also, in Turkey's perspective, NATO's operation to Libya would erode Turkey's image in the Muslim World, since it's the Muslim majority member of the organization.¹⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the major difference between Turkey and the US/NATO has occurred with Syrian Civil War, and the interests of both parties seriously converged and the reason of the retaining the alliance has been questioned by the both circles in Turkey and rest of NATO countries.

Before proceeding with the Syrian Civil War and its impact on Turkey-NATO ties, it will be beneficial to provide a brief explanation on Arab Spring. The Arab Spring sparked, when a Tunisian vegetable seller, Mohammed Bouazizi, burned himself alive on December 17, 2010 and this act was followed by street protests.¹⁵⁰ Protests turned into riots and as a result, in less than 2 months, the two of the strongest Middle Eastern autocrats, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Tunisia's Zine el-Abidin Ben Ali were overthrown by the street riots in those countries.¹⁵¹ In Syrian theater of the Arab Spring, clashes

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Tarik Oguzlu. "Turkey's Eroding Commitment to NATO: From Identity to Interests", *The Washington Quarterly*, volume: 35/3, (2012), accessed: 25 March, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2012.706578>

¹⁵⁰ Stephan Rosiny. "The Arab Spring: Triggers, Dynamics and Prospects", *GIGA Focus*, No:1, (2012)

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

began with protests on January 26, 2011 and turned into a civil war between the Syrian Government and its dissidents on March 15, 2011.¹⁵²

In the initial phases of the Syrian Civil War, both Turkey and its NATO allies were agreeing on Assad administration's overthrow in Syria, and both sides supported the opposition groups.¹⁵³ However, as the Civil War continues and rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Turkey and NATO's priorities began to differ.¹⁵⁴ As the priorities (Turkey's priority was the Assad regime, NATO's priority was ISIS) differ in Syrian Civil War, the US and significant number of the members of NATO supported the PKK affiliated group, Democratic Union Party (PYD) against ISIS.¹⁵⁵

Despite the Western allies (NATO) of Turkey recognize Turkey's sensitivities about the possible spillover of empowered PKK's actions in Syria to Turkey, NATO allies ignored this fact and continued their support to the PKK in Syria to defeat ISIS.¹⁵⁶ The data, I will provide from the speeches of French President Francois Hollande after the Turkish Military Intervention to Syria in August 2016, will depict the differences between Turkey and its major NATO allies on Syrian Case.

¹⁵² Maya Bhardwaj. "Development of Conflict in Arab Spring Libya and Syria: From Revolution to Civil War", *The Washington University International Review*, Volume:1, (2012)

¹⁵³ Ertan Efeğil. "The Ak Party's Middle East Policy and Reviews of the American Administration and Western Scholars on the Policy", *Gazi Akademik Bakis*, volume: 9/18, (2016)

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Bill Park. "Turkey's isolated stance: an ally no more, or just the unusual turbulence?", *International Affairs*, volume:91/3, (2015)

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

“French President Francois Hollande has criticized Turkey's "contradictory" military operation in Syria and warned Russia not to become a "protagonist" in the war. In a speech on Aug. 30, Hollande said "multiple, contradictory interventions carry the risk of a general inflammation" of the fighting that has devastated the country. He said he could understand Turkey's concern about protecting its borders and fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group, but criticized Ankara's actions against the Syrian Kurdish militia allied with the U.S.-led coalition who are fighting the extremists. France is part of that coalition” (Source: The Associated Press, 2016).

4.2 Russia

Russia is the most powerful country in Turkey's immediate region by far.¹⁵⁷ Relations between the dyad usually has been on a negative tide. In this context, the most common assumption regarding the status of Turkish-Russian ties has been regarded as tenuous. Relevant argument based on the abovementioned presumption can be basically summarized as; Turkey and Russia are rivals, and throughout the history, there is only a scarce amount of cooperation between the two states, and thus rare possibility of alignment between Turkey and Russia would occur.¹⁵⁸ In addition to the hostile past and continuous conflicts between Turkey and Russia's predecessors, accompanied with

¹⁵⁷ Sener Akturk. “Toward a Turkish-Russian Axis? Conflicts in Georgia, Syria, and Ukraine, and Cooperation over Nuclear Energy”, *Insight Turkey*, volume: 16/4, (2014)

¹⁵⁸ David Erkomaishvili. “Issues in Turkey's Post-Soviet Policy”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, volume:15/1, (2016)

converging interests in their regions, causes a miniscule chance for long term cooperation between Turkey and Russia.¹⁵⁹

With the end of Cold War, the relations between Turkey and Russia remained fragile if not openly hostile. In the early 1990s, subsequent to the fall of Soviet Union, Turkey sought to exert its influence in former Soviet Republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia.¹⁶⁰ One explanation to relatively active Turkish stance towards Russia's former spheres of influence by that time is, the balance of power in terms of militarily and economically moved towards Turkey's side, in the aftermath of the dissolution of Soviet Union.¹⁶¹

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Turkey and Russia began to enhance their diplomatic ties. The reason behind this relative détente between two former rivals elucidated on their relative exclusion from the Western World. Russia had concerns about NATO and the EU expansion towards its former satellite states in Eastern Europe, similarly, Turkey was having problems with the EU, which was reluctant to accept Turkey as a member state.¹⁶² In this context, initially Turkey and Russia decided to

¹⁵⁹ Pavel K.Baev, and Kemal Kirisci. "An ambiguous partnership: The serpentine trajectory of Turkish-Russian relations in the era of Erdoğan and Putin", Brookings, *Turkey Project Policy Paper*, no: 13, (2017)

¹⁶⁰ Sener Akturk. "Turkish-Russian Relations after the Cold War (1992-2002)", *Turkish Studies*, volume: 7/3, (2006), accessed: March 24, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14683840600891034>

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Pavel K.Baev, and Kemal Kirisci. "An ambiguous partnership: The serpentine trajectory of Turkish-Russian relations in the era of Erdoğan and Putin", Brookings, *Turkey Project Policy Paper*, no: 13, (2017)

respect their territorial integrity. Russia dropped its support to the PKK, a separatist terrorist organization in Turkey, and expelled the PKK's leader.¹⁶³

In response to Russian move as a sign of respect to Turkish territorial integrity, Turkey withdrew its support from the Chechen secessionist groups and helped Russian government to catch important figures of the abovementioned separatists.¹⁶⁴ With the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) accession to power in 2002, Turkey-Russia relations evolved into a cooperation in economy and to some extent, regional matters.

During the AKP's tenure in early 2000s, Turkish-Russian economic ties were intensified and economic interdependence developed.¹⁶⁵ In 2008, Russia emerged as the major trade partner of Turkey, and Turkey became Russia's fourth trade partner.¹⁶⁶ For several Turkish business fields (tourism, construction, agriculture), Russian market was retaining a central part, and as for Russian energy sector, growing Turkish demands on energy (mainly natural gas) was also equally lucrative.¹⁶⁷ Also, Russia has been interested in Turkish nuclear power plant projects since the mid-2000s. Recently the Russian construction of first Turkish nuclear power plant in Akkuyu has started. In terms of energy, the cooperation also increased. Specifically, when Russia announced its

¹⁶³ Sener Akturk. "Toward a Turkish-Russian Axis? Conflicts in Georgia, Syria, and Ukraine, and Cooperation over Nuclear Energy", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 16/4, (2014)

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ziya Onis, and Suhnaz Yilmaz. "Turkey and Russia in a shifting global order: cooperation, conflict and asymmetric interdependence in a turbulent region", *Third World Quarterly*, volume: 37/1, (2016), accessed: March 21, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1086638>

¹⁶⁶ Adam Balcer. "THE FUTURE OF TURKISH - RUSSIAN RELATIONS: A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, volume: 8/1, (2009)

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

withdrawal from South Stream project, due to its existing tensions with Ukraine, an alternative pipeline for European markets, which has been the major consumer of Russian natural gas sources, through Turkish soil has emerged as a prominent alternative to South Stream.¹⁶⁸

In terms of defense industry, Turkey also has developed interests towards Russian military hardware. Recently, Turkish purchase of S-400 surface to air missile defense system has been announced.¹⁶⁹ The procurement of Russian equipment has been regarded as a disturbing development by Turkey's NATO allies, due to the ongoing nadir status of relations between Russian Federation and NATO nations, which is arguably defined as a newest low, since the end of Cold War.¹⁷⁰

Politically, Turkey and Russia have managed to cooperate, despite the fragile state of their ties. As the first example of post-Cold War political cooperation between two countries, Since the mid-1990s, Black Sea Cooperation Organization has been the main tenet in Turkish-Russian Relations.¹⁷¹ Additionally, Turkey and Russia have been cooperating in Syria since mid-2016. Turkey conducted Euphrates Shield and Olive

¹⁶⁸ Sener Akturk. "Toward a Turkish-Russian Axis? Conflicts in Georgia, Syria, and Ukraine, and Cooperation over Nuclear Energy", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 16/4, (2014)

¹⁶⁹ Carlotta Gall, and Andrew Higgins. "Turkey Signs Russian Missile Deal, Pivoting From NATO", *The New York Times*, published: September 12, 2017, accessed: April 2, 2018, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/world/europe/turkey-russia-missile-deal.html>

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Sener Akturk. "Turkish-Russian Relations after the Cold War (1992-2002)", *Turkish Studies*, volume: 7/3, (2006), accessed: March 24, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14683840600891034>

Branch operations in Northern Syria against ISIS and PYD, the Syrian branch of PKK, with Russia's sanction.¹⁷²

Nonetheless, there are also important differences between Turkish and Russian goals towards their immediate regions. First and foremost, despite the ongoing cooperation in Syria, Turkey and Russia have been supporting different sides at ongoing conflict. Turkey is against Bashar al-Assad's stance as the president of Syria. Whereas, Russia has been actively supporting al-Assad's government since 2015 in perilous Syrian Civil War, and due to Russian support, al-Assad's tides have been changed positively. Since the Russian involvement began in late 2015, Syrian regime managed to recapture many major cities from the opposition groups.¹⁷³ In fact, the differences in Syria were brought the both countries to the brink of war in late 2015, when Turkish Air Force shot down a Russian SU-24.¹⁷⁴

Secondly, Turkey is also concerned about Russia's belligerent approach in Ukraine. Annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a perturbing event for Turkey, which would further strengthen Russian position in Black Sea and would pave the way for strong NATO presence in Black Sea, just as during the Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008.¹⁷⁵ In

¹⁷² Aaron Stein. "Turkey's Transactional Engagement With Russia", *Atlantic Council MENASource*, published: April 13, 2018, accessed: April 17, 2018, available at: <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/turkey-s-transactional-engagement-with-russia>

¹⁷³ William McHenry, and Gabriel White. "How Russia Plans to Influence Syria's Future", *The National Interest*, published: February 7, 2018, accessed: March 12, 2018, available at: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-russia-plans-influence-syrias-future-24394?page=2>

¹⁷⁴ Pavel K.Baev, and Kemal Kirisci. "An ambiguous partnership: The serpentine trajectory of Turkish-Russian relations in the era of Erdoğan and Putin", *Brookings*, Turkey Project Policy Paper, no: 13, (2017)

¹⁷⁵ Ziya Onis, and Sunnaz Yilmaz. "Turkey and Russia in a shifting global order: cooperation,

addition to the geopolitical risks, Turkey is also apprehensive on the status of Crimean Tatars, an indigenous Turkic group of Crimea.¹⁷⁶

Lastly, there is still deficit of trust between Turkey and Russia, which would hinder an emergence of long-term strategic partnership between the two countries. Aside from the abovementioned main geopolitical differences, the present deficit of trust posits the delicacy of Turkey-Russia relations. This trust deficit can be illustrated with Russia's keeping of several implemented economic restrictions, which are the relics of the abovementioned plane crisis towards Turkish agricultural products.¹⁷⁷

4.3 Iran

Iran has been one of the regional rivals of Turkey as well. Turkish and Iranian ambitions for the hegemony in Middle East region has its roots back at their predecessors, Ottoman Empire and Safavid empires.¹⁷⁸ Both entities fought lengthy wars for the control of Middle East region, accompanied with religious differences as well.

conflict and asymmetric interdependence in a turbulent region”, *Third World Quarterly*, volume: 37/1, (2016), accessed: March 21, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1086638>

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Mehul Srivastava. “Turkey-Russia tensions resurface after border killing”, *Financial Times*, published: March 21, 2017, accessed: March 19, 2018, available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/d2ec209a-0fbf-11e7-a88c-50ba212dce4d>

¹⁷⁸ Radosław Fiedler. “Turkey and the Iranian Nuclear Program Challenges and Opportunities”, *Przegląd Strategiczny*, volume: 14, (2014), accessed: April 2, 2018, available at: DOI 10.14746/ps.2014.1.21

The Ottomans were the protectors of Sunni branch of Islam.¹⁷⁹ On the other hand, Safavid dynasty in Iran was defining itself as the guardian of Shia sect of Islam.¹⁸⁰

Despite the prolonged war of attrition between the two empires, which cause a stalemate between two sides, ended with Treaty of Zuhab in 1639 signed by The Ottoman and Safavid empires.¹⁸¹ Since Treaty of Zuhab, Ottomans and Safavids, and their successors never went to an active conventional war. Hence, it is possible to claim that, the current borders of Turkey and Iran, which was defined by the Treaty of Zuhab, has been the most stable border of Middle East region.¹⁸²

Turkish-Iranian relations have been on a stable track for the centuries to come. Especially with the establishment of Turkish Republic, the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran admired and aimed to emulate the reforms made by the Kemalists in Turkey.¹⁸³ During the early Cold War period, there is also a growing cooperation between Turkey and Iran, along with several Arab countries (i.e Kingdom of Iraq) against Soviet influence under NATO guidance.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Stephen J. Flanagan. "The Turkey-Russia-Iran Nexus: Eurasian Power Dynamics", *The Washington Quarterly*, volume:36/1, (2013), accessed: March 24, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2013.751656>

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Radoslaw Fiedler. "Turkey and the Iranian Nuclear Program Challenges and Opportunities", *Przegląd Strategiczny*, volume: 14, (2014), accessed: April 2, 2018, available at: DOI 10.14746/ps.2014.1.21

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Mansoureh Ebrahimi, Kamaruzaman Yusoff, and Mir Mohamadali Seyed Jalili. "Economic, Political, and Strategic Issues in Iran-Turkey Relations, 2002-2015", *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, volume: 4/1, (2017), accessed: March 30, 2018, available at: DOI: 10.1177/2347798916681336

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

Relations between Turkey and Iran experienced the nadir point, in the aftermath of 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. The post-Revolution Islamic government adapted an expansionist approach in the Middle East region, coupled with religious zealot via exporting its model.¹⁸⁵ Turkey was among the most dangerous countries according to the new regime, due to its secular structure and close ties with the Western countries, particularly the US, and thus, have been regarded as one of the main obstacles towards Iranian hegemonic goals towards the Middle East.¹⁸⁶

Akin to post-1979 Iran, Turkey regarded Islamic Republic of Iran as the chief threat for its stability. Since the foundation of Turkish Republic, the new elite distanced itself from the Middle East politics and defined the Middle East as a dangerous neighborhood riddled with instability.¹⁸⁷ Based on the aforementioned approach towards the Middle East and strict secularist view, The Turkish elite feared from an Islamic regime export from Iran.¹⁸⁸ Throughout 1980s to early 2000s, both states tried to undermine each other's stance. Turkey developed close ties with Israel to balance Iranian

¹⁸⁵ Radoslaw Fiedler. "Turkey and the Iranian Nuclear Program Challenges and Opportunities", *Przegląd Strategiczny*, volume: 14, (2014), accessed: April 2, 2018, available at: DOI 10.14746/ps.2014.1.21

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Cengiz Dinc and Mustafa Yetim. "Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East: From Non-Involvement to a Leading Role", *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, volume: 11/1, (2012)

¹⁸⁸ Moritz Pieper. "Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Iranian Nuclear Programme: In Search of a New Middle East Order after the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War", *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, volume: 12/3, (2013)

presence in the Middle East, and in contrast to this, Iran supported the separatist PKK group against Turkey.¹⁸⁹

Economy has been the most inclusive section of the ties between Turkey and Iran. Despite the power rivalry and important political differences between the two states, economic relations are remained relatively strong and paved way to moderate restoration of positive ties between Turkey and Iran in 2000s.¹⁹⁰ The economic relations of Turkey and Iran is mainly focused on the energy sector, which Iran has a comparative advantage due to its vast natural gas and oil resources, coupled with Turkey's growing energy requirement.¹⁹¹

Arguably, the most vital reason for booming Turkish-Iranian trade ties has been the US –led sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran, due to its nuclear ambitions. As a result of these economic sanctions, Iran has been excluded from the most of world markets. Turkey emerged as a reliable economic partner for Iran during this time. Turkish companies began to be awarded with lucrative construction contracts in Iran, and in addition to already strong energy sector, and growing construction sector in economic ties, tourism sector is also risen to prominence, especially on behalf of

¹⁸⁹ Nader Habibi. "Turkey and Iran: Growing Economic Relations Despite Western Sanctions", *Brandeis University Crown Center for Middle East Studies*, no: 62, (2012)

¹⁹⁰ Mansoureh Ebrahimi, Kamaruzaman Yusoff, and Mir Mohamadali Seyed Jalili. "Economic, Political, and Strategic Issues in Iran–Turkey Relations, 2002–2015", *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, volume: 4/1, (2017), accessed: March 30, 2018, available at: DOI: 10.1177/2347798916681336

¹⁹¹ Shahram Akbarzadeh, and James Barry. "Iran and Turkey: not quite enemies but less than Friends", *Third World Quarterly*, (2016), accessed: April 15, 2018, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1241139>

Turkey.¹⁹² Turkey has been hosting a steadily increasing Iranian tourists since the mid-2000s.¹⁹³

As briefly mentioned above, Turkey and Iran began to experience a political détente as well. Apart from the economic impact, the new political elite in Turkey has also contributed to this constructive change in Turkey-Iran relations. The new AKP (Justice and Development Party) government initiated a new foreign policy approach, which differed from the traditional Turkish Foreign Policy approach.

Based on this new foreign policy strategy Turkey, abandoned its staunch pro-Western goal and began to pursue a multidimensional approach in foreign policy, and in this context, instead of the skeptical approach towards the Middle East, Turkey adapted more inclusive attitude towards the region and its states.¹⁹⁴

Iran and Turkey currently have been cooperating on several issues in the Middle East;

- Kurdish Issue,
- Syria via Astana process along with Russia,

¹⁹² Nader Habibi. "Turkey and Iran: Growing Economic Relations Despite Western Sanctions", *Brandeis University Crown Center for Middle East Studies*, no: 62, (2012)

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Cengiz Dinc and Mustafa Yetim. "Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East: From Non-Involvement to a Leading Role", *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, volume:11/1, (2012)

Despite the Iranian support to PKK in 1990s, Iran's view has changed towards the Kurdish separatism, in the aftermath of Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK), the PKK's Iranian branch, began to its campaign in Iran. Turkey and Iran reached an understanding in the Middle East against Kurdish secessionism. The recent example in this regard is, the duo's cooperation along with Iraq against Kurdish independence referendum in last September.¹⁹⁵ Both Turkey and Iran applied financial sanctions to Kurdish enclave of Northern Iraq.¹⁹⁶

However, despite the positive tide of relations there are still major contrasting points between Turkey and Iran, which hinders a durable long-term cooperation. Firstly, Turkey is against Iran's expansionist policy in the Middle East, which also includes utilizing of pro-Iranian governments, and pro-Iranian militia groups.

Secondly, although relatively related with the first reason, despite tacit cooperation in Syria, the two countries are still supporting the opposing sides on the ongoing Syrian Civil War. Hence, the current cooperation has been mostly defined as tenuous and brief clashes between Turkish Army and its supported FSA (Free Syrian

¹⁹⁵ Mehul Srivastava and Najmeh Bozorgmehr. "Turkey, Iran and Iraq pledge to act jointly against Kurdistan", *Financial Times*, published: October 7, 2017, accessed: April 5, 2018, available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/7f1be06e-a9b6-11e7-ab55-27219df83c97>

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Army groups) with Iranian backed militias in Northern Syria illustrates the delicacy of cooperation.¹⁹⁷

Lastly, Turkey is also against Iran's nuclear ambitions. Despite its anti-sanction stance against Iran in UN in 2010, a year later, Turkey also agreed with the US on deployment of radar system as a deterrence.¹⁹⁸

4.4 China

Although Turkey-China relations has never been a common subject in international politics and are not directly related with the proceeding chapter's analysis, I would like to briefly explain recent developments on Turkey-China relations. The reasoning for this is, as explained in literature review chapter, China has emerged as a great power, and even for some scholars, China has risen as the new hegemon of international system.¹⁹⁹ Thus, a brief explanation regarding Turkish-Chinese relations would be an insightful sub-chapter for the study.

¹⁹⁷ France 24. "Pro-Assad forces in Afrin targeted by Turkey", *France 24*, published: February 20, 2018, accessed: March 23, 2018, available at: <http://www.france24.com/en/20180220-syria-pro-assad-fighters-enter-kurdish-afrin-turkey>

¹⁹⁸ Moritz Pieper. "Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Iranian Nuclear Programme: In Search of a New Middle East Order after the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War", *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, volume: 12/3, (2013)

¹⁹⁹ Michael Beckley. "China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure", *International Security*, volume: 36/3, (2011)

Republic of Turkey and People's Republic of China initiated their diplomatic ties in 1971.²⁰⁰ Since then, the ties between two state actors have experienced a steadily improvement. The first considerable diplomatic approach occurred in 1980s, and this positive trend has been followed in 2000s, via high-level bilateral visits.²⁰¹ However despite the abovementioned positive tide, akin to Russian fears in 1990s towards Turkey's Central Asia approach, China worried from the same Turkish foreign policy approach as well.²⁰² Another political conundrum in Turkey-China relations has been the situation of Uighurs, which is an ethnically Turkic group, in Xinjiang autonomous region.²⁰³

The diplomatic rapprochement in Sino-Turkish relations is mainly based on economic matters. Despite the abovementioned political problems, in terms of economic and trade dimensions, the ties between Turkey and China have developed in a constructive way. In this context, Turkey-China trade volume has been steadily grown. In 1990s, the trade volume between Turkey and China was 283 million dollars.²⁰⁴ In 2000s, the trade volume increased from 283 million dollars to 1.441 billion dollars, and in 2012, trade between two nations reached the volume of 24.118 billion dollars.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ Selcuk Colakoglu. "Turkey-China Relations: Rising Partnership", *Ortadogu Analiz*, volume: 5/52, (2013)

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

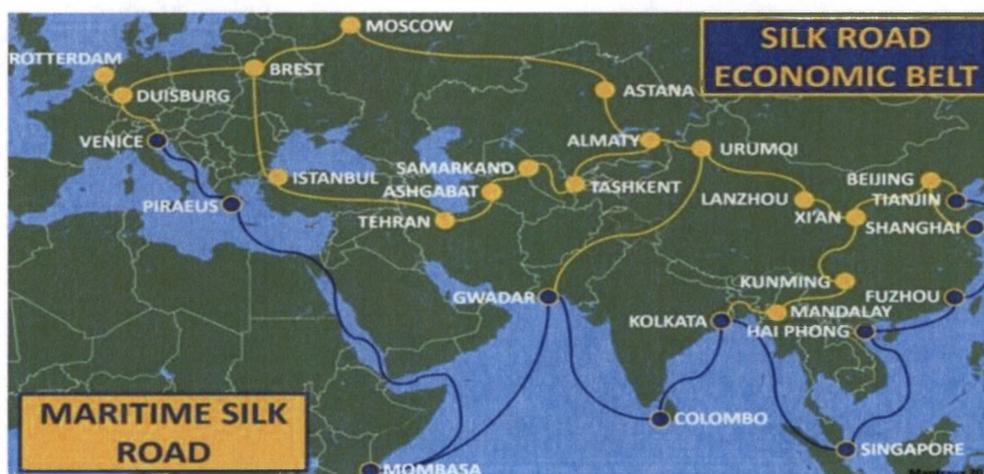
²⁰³ Altay Atli. "Questioning Turkey's China Trade", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, volume: 10/2, (2011)

²⁰⁴ Selcuk Colakoglu. "Turkey's East Asian Policy: From Security Concerns to Trade Partnerships", *Perceptions*, volume: 17/4, (2012)

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

In addition to the strong trade ties between two countries, China's "One Belt One Road" initiative will buttress the Sino-Turkish economic cooperation. This initiative has been announced by Chinese President, Xi Jinping, in 2013, can be basically described as a resurrection of the ancient *Silk Road*.²⁰⁶ In this context, Chinese government has been financially underwriting the immense infrastructure projects in road-map countries with generous funds, and so far, Chinese government has been spending the budget it allocated, which is 150 billion dollars per year, in 68 road-map countries.²⁰⁷

Figure 2: Silk Road Economic Belt



(Source: Eurasia Review, 2016)

As it can be seen from the map above, Turkey is among the road-map countries of One Belt One Road initiative.

²⁰⁶ The Economist. "What is China's belt and road initiative?", *The Economist*, published: May 15, 2017, accessed: April 22, 2018, available at: <https://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2017/05/economist-explains-11>

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

In terms of defense cooperation, Turkey has also interested in Chinese built missile defense systems. However, due to diplomatic pressure from NATO countries, chiefly the US, Turkey had to cancel 3.4 billion dollar worth contract for Chinese missile defense weapons.²⁰⁸

Turkey has also interested in to join a Chinese (along with Russians) led alliance, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). It was accepted as a dialogue partner of the alliance in 2012, which is described as an unusual act for a NATO member state.²⁰⁹ In 2016, Turkish ambitions towards SCO membership became more obvious. In this regard, I would like to present a section from an interview with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan:

“Turkey should first of all feel relaxed about the EU and not be fixated about joining it, Erdoğan told reporters on the presidential plane returning from Uzbekistan, daily Hürriyet reported. Some may criticize me but I express my opinion. For example, I have said ‘why shouldn’t Turkey be in the Shanghai 5?’ he said.” (Source: Hurriyet Daily News, 2016)

Additionally, Chinese Ambassador to Turkey, Yu Hongyang, made a supportive statement towards possible Turkish SCO membership:

²⁰⁸ Reuters. “Turkey confirms cancellation of \$3.4 billion missile defence project awarded to China”, *Reuters*, published: November 18, 2015, accessed: April 21, 2018, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-china-missile/turkey-confirms-cancellation-of-3-4-billion-missile-defence-project-awarded-to-china-idUSKCN0T61OV20151118>

²⁰⁹ Lina Wang. “Will Turkey Join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Instead of the EU?”, *The Diplomat*, published: November 24, 2016, accessed : April 21, 2018, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/11/will-turkey-join-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization-instead-of-the-eu/>

“Turkey has reached the position of being a dialogue partner of the organization by attending the activities of the SCO in recent years. China, which understands Turkey's intention of becoming a member of the SCO, is ready for Turkey's membership... in consultation with other member countries.” (Source: Daily Sabah, 2016)

Nonetheless, despite the positive statements regarding the Turkish accession to SCO, both sides have not made a concrete step towards Turkish membership to SCO. This is mainly explained with Turkey's membership to NATO, which makes Turkey's joining to Sino-Russian led alliance impractical, and unless Turkey leaves NATO, SCO membership will likely to remain as an unreachable goal for Turkey.²¹⁰

As explained above, despite the endeavors in political and defense sphere, Sino-Turkish ties have mostly remained within the economic sphere. Unless China develops further interests, and increases its stance in Turkey's neighborhood, or Turkey manages to rise as a great power/regional hegemon, the tide of Sino-Turkish ties will likely to be restricted within economic sphere.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

5. HEDGING IN CURRENT TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

As stated in the previous chapter, traditional Turkish Foreign Policy strategy has been relying on balancing by using the differences among the great powers.²¹¹ The current Turkish Foreign policy approach tends to be evaluated within this schema as well. Analyses that assess current Turkish Foreign Policy in the Western world are mainly based on this aforementioned classical schema. In this context, the main argument of such analyses can be summarized as, Turkey is now shifting its allegiance by leaving the US-led Western alliance structure (NATO) and developing close ties with alternative actors such as Russia, to replace its former allies.²¹² The same views are also labeling Turkey as an unpredictable and unreliable actor.²¹³

Additionally, the recent trend in Turkish Foreign Policy tends to be explained with Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan's behavior. This view basically describes the present Turkish Foreign Policy via Recep Tayyip Erdogan's increasing authoritarian tendency.²¹⁴ According to this seemingly liberal-leaning approach, instead of geopolitical developments regarding Turkey's region and in a broader scope of the world, Turkey has

²¹¹ Mustafa Aydin. "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs", *Middle Eastern Studies*, volume: 35/4, (1999)

²¹² Doug Bandow. "Donald Trump Should Not Be Fooled By Turkey: Today Ankara Is More Foe Than Friend", *Forbes*, published: November 28, 2016, accessed: May 3, 2018, available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dougbandow/2016/11/28/donald-trump-should-not-be-fooled-by-turkey-today-ankara-is-more-foe-than-friend/#33b049b85912>

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Elliot Ackerman. "Turkey Is a Dictatorship Masquerading as a NATO Democracy", *Foreign Policy*, published: March 29, 2017, accessed: May 2, 2018, available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/29/the-dictatorship-in-natos-clubhouse-erdogan-kurds-turkey/>

distanced itself from the Western alliance system (NATO) because of Erdogan's increasing irrational authoritarian tendency.²¹⁵

In addition to Western perspective, in Turkish point of view, there are numerous definitions regarding Turkey's new foreign policy, which does not completely explain the ongoing foreign policy strategy. One argument regarding the new Turkish Foreign Policy has been described as "moral realism".²¹⁶ According to this view, Turkey shifted its soft power centered approach, which has been applied since the early 2000s, to a more coercive oriented view, and retained pro-active foreign policy with the mantra of "regaining friends" and humanitarian approaches, such as sending aid to conflict-ridden and/or poor parts of the world.²¹⁷ Another Turkish analysis regarding the new Turkish Foreign Policy approach uses an analogy between the current Turkish Foreign Policy approach with Charles De Gaulle's policy in France, which sought to achieve autonomy for France in international system during the 1960s.²¹⁸ Based on this approach, Turkey is following the same way as France did in the 1960s for autonomy in international system.²¹⁹

In contrast to arguments on recent Turkish Foreign Policy depicted above, neither Turkey is switching its existing alliance choices in favor of other actors, nor its foreign

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ E. Fuat Keyman. "A New Turkish Foreign Policy: Towards Proactive "Moral Realism"", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 19/1, (2017)

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Omer Taspinar. "The Rise of Turkish Gaullism: Getting Turkish-American Relations Right", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 13/1, (2011)

²¹⁹ Ibid.

policy choices are mainly based on its president's mindset as the Western point of view puts it. Also, Turkish explanations on current Turkish Foreign Policy missing several points on defining the new policy approach. Firstly, although the claims in current Turkish Foreign Policy strategy, both coercive and humanitarian methods have become visible.

Nevertheless, instead of a policy definition that seeks to "regaining friends", labeling the current Turkish Foreign Policy as a short-term, transactional leaning would be more appropriate.²²⁰ The reasoning for such transactional approach can be explained with Secondly, though the analogy regarding Turkish goal for autonomy and French policy in the 1960s seems plausible, due to the quest for autonomy, Turkey has never taken a radical step, such as withdrawing from NATO's military wing as the French did in 1960s.²²¹ Instead of withdrawing from NATO, Turkey has aimed to utilize its NATO membership as a tool to maneuver in its Foreign Policy. Turkey's status in NATO increases its stance and allows Turkey to act independently vis-à-vis the other actors, such as Russia and Iran.

My argument regarding the current Turkish Foreign Policy is that Turkey seeks to minimize the risks of the current unpredictability of international system, which is coupled with regional instability in Turkey's neighborhood, by pursuing multi-vectoral,

²²⁰ H. Tarık Oğuzlu. "Turkish foreign policy at the nexus of changing international and regional dynamics", *Turkish Studies*, volume: 17/1, (2016), accessed: April 30, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2015.1136088>

²²¹ Edward Cody. "After 43 Years, France to Rejoin NATO as Full Member", *Washington Post*, published: March 12, 2009, accessed: May 1, 2018, available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/11/AR2009031100547.html>

and compartmentalized policy. This approach complements with hedging, which promotes multilateral approaches with various states in numerous subjects (i.e from economy to defense).

Hedging is not a unique approach, and thus, its execution is not only limited to Turkey. As explained in the literature review chapter, hedging has been executed by several countries, (mainly by South-East Asia states) to diminish the possible risks of instability and unpredictability.²²² In this context, this chapter's goal is to analyze the recent Turkish Foreign Policy via hedging and correlate Turkish hedging approach with the use of hedging by other regional powers. As for cases, this chapter's main focal point of analysis is Syrian Civil War, along with that, also several cases such as UN Sanctions against Iran in 2010 and Turkey's role will be examined within the scope of hedging as well. Additionally, hedging's apparent benefits to Turkey will be explained and supported with relevant data. However, before going through the analysis, the chapter will be concentrating on the question of why Turkey applies hedging and provide possible explanations on this question.

5.1 Reasoning of Turkey's choice of Hedging

Before proceeding to the application of hedging in Turkish Foreign Policy, it will be a viable option to be familiarized with the reasons that explain the choice of hedging for Turkey instead of classic internal and external balance of power approaches. Turkey's

²²² Van Jackson. "Power, trust, and network complexity: three logics of hedging in Asian security", *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, volume:14/3, (2014)

reasoning to execute hedging as its foreign policy tool correlates with numerous cases such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Oman Sultanate. This common reason, which led to the application of hedging, can be described as, increasing unpredictability, emerging of a multipolar leaning, post-hegemonic international structure, and accompanied with the abovementioned developments, less effective position of the ongoing alliance systems (i.e NATO) if not completely ineffective.

Current ambiguity in international system has been explained with the US's withdrawal or its less involvement in global affairs.²²³ This less US involvement approach has its roots in the Obama Administration and its policies. During President Obama's tenure, the US prioritized the domestic matters (mainly economic problems occurred due to 2008 Crisis) and avoided conducting expansionist policies in the world.²²⁴

This international unpredictability has also paved way for the power vacuum in several regions, such as Middle East, Eastern Europe, South East Asia. Lack of active hegemonic involvement and fragile state structure in these regions have turned them into a fertile ground for instability and possible challengers. In Eastern Europe, Russia has sought to reassert its influence, due to US non-interventionism. Ukraine case is the most viable example in this regard. To prevent Ukraine's switch to NATO, Russia intervened

²²³ Nikolas Gvosdev. "American Withdrawal from the World?", *Ethics & International Affairs*, published: December 3, 2017, accessed: May 1, 2018, available at:

<https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2017/american-withdrawal-world/>

²²⁴ Andreas Krieg. "Externalizing the burden of war: the Obama Doctrine and US foreign policy in the Middle East", *International Affairs*, volume: 92/1, (2016)

and annexed Crimea in 2014.²²⁵ Additionally, as a result of the US's reluctant policy, Russia has also increased its pressure towards the Baltic states, which were the part of former the Soviet Union, and current members of NATO and the EU.²²⁶

During President Obama's tenure, the US-directed its attention to Asia. This new approach defined as "Pivot to Asia" by officials and president himself.²²⁷ The main goal of this reorientation is to contain Chinese influence in Asia by providing lucrative trade deals and security guarantees to peripheral Asian states. However, this approach has seemingly failed. This failure has been explained with the miscalculation of Chinese respond to the increasing US presence and its aim to contain China's influence.²²⁸ As a result of this miscalculation, China adopted an aggressive stance in the South China Sea, akin to Russia's approach in Eastern Europe, that has further increased instability and unpredictability in Asia.²²⁹

In the Middle East, which is more vital for Turkey, due to its geographical and cultural proximity to this region, lack of hegemonic power coupled with fragile state apparatus has further increased instability. The post-Syces Picot state structure in the

²²⁵ Stephen M. Walt. "Barack Obama Was a Foreign-Policy Failure", *Foreign Policy*, published: January 18, 2017, accessed: May 1, 2018, available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/18/barack-obama-was-a-foreign-policy-failure/>

²²⁶ John Ford. "The Pivot to Asia Was Obama's Biggest Mistake", *The Diplomat*, published: January 21, 2017, accessed: April 30, 2018, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/01/the-pivot-to-asia-was-obamas-biggest-mistake/>

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Harry Seavey. "The Short-sightedness of America's Pivot to Asia", *The Yale Review of International Studies*, (2016), accessed: May 1, 2018, available at: <http://yris.yira.org/comments/1679>

²²⁹ John Ford. "The Pivot to Asia Was Obama's Biggest Mistake", *The Diplomat*, published: January 21, 2017, accessed: April 30, 2018, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/01/the-pivot-to-asia-was-obamas-biggest-mistake/>

Middle East, which crafted during the World War I, to shape the post-war Middle East, has been eroded due to the reflections of Arab Spring.²³⁰ The Obama administration has opted for the less involvement in Middle East affairs, as a result of its predecessor's costly intervention to Iraq, which cultivated the unstable environment.²³¹ Erosion of the state apparatus and power vacuum paved the way for already fragile the Middle East turning into a competition field for respective regional and great actors such as, Russia, Iran, Israel, and the Gulf States.²³²

Due to the present turbulence in international system, application of classical internal and external balancing methods, which require predictability in international system (i.e bipolar structure of Cold-War, or unipolar structure led by the US), will not be the best option for Turkey to achieve security and retain its development in this fragile and unstable international structure.

Another reason for applying hedging in Turkish foreign policy can be explained with Turkey's growing material capabilities. With its growing economy, dynamic population and powerful army, Turkey can definitely be considered as an emerging regional power.²³³ In this context, similar to Chinese hedging case in the early 2000s,

²³⁰ Itamar Rabinovich. "The End of Sykes-Picot? Reflections on the Prospects of the Arab State System", *Brookings*, report no: 32, (2014)

²³¹ Marc Lynch. "The Middle East Power Vacuum", *Foreign Policy*, published: October 25, 2013, accessed: May 2, 2018, available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/10/25/the-middle-east-power-vacuum/>

²³² Ian McCredie. "The Long War of Ottoman Succession", *Fair Observer*, published: February 20, 2018, accessed: May 1, 2018, available at: <https://www.fairobserver.com/region/middle-east-north-africa/iran-israel-saudi-arabia-ottoman-succession-middle-east-wars-61421/>

²³³ Hasan Basri Yalcin. "The Concept of "Middle Power" and the Recent Turkish Foreign Policy Activism", *Afro-Eurasian Studies*, volume:1/1, (2012)

which was explained in literature review chapter, Turkey also aims to avoid provoking the important great and regional actors, while improving its capabilities. Thus, Turkey seeks to depict itself as an innocuous actor, which does not threaten the security and/or interests of important regional and great powers but also can cooperate with them in various subjects (economy, security, etc.) and will be able to compartmentalize the differences.

Hedging's application as a Turkish Foreign Policy strategy can also be explained with the realizing its ambition, which can be described as, to rise as an autonomous actor in the international system. Turkish quest for autonomy is not a novel phenomenon. As explained in historical background chapter, Turkey sought for an autonomy in the international system, by expanding its influence towards the post-Soviet Turkic countries in Central Asia.²³⁴ However, Turkey's quest for autonomy failed due to its lack of material capabilities (mainly economy) to support such move, and most importantly, the rigidity of the post-Cold War unipolar structure in the 1990s. Thus, Turkey continued to bandwagoning with the US and NATO.²³⁵

In the 2000s, Turkey retained its ambition toward autonomy via increasing its influence in its neighborhood. The new Turkish elite regards Turkey as more than a regional power, but as a prospective central power, which will emerge as a more

²³⁴ Sabri Sayari. "Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era: The Challenges of Multi-Regionalism", *Journal of International Affairs*, volume:54/1, (2000)

²³⁵ Ibid.

autonomous actor in Turkey's region and has the economic means to support its foreign policy goals.²³⁶

Ahmet Davutoglu, who is an IR professor and the major foreign policy theorist of ruling Justice and Development Party's foreign policy strategy, and also served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and as a Prime Minister, crafted five elements of the new Turkish foreign policy paradigm, which applied in the early 2000s:

- There should be a balance between democracy and security in Turkey, and if Turkey fails to provide this balance, Turkish regime might lose the legitimacy, and this would seriously diminish Turkey's influence in its region,
- Turkey should have a "zero problems with its neighbors" policy and thus, it should not have any major dispute or conflict with its neighbor states,
- Relations with neighbor states and the other state actors should be developed,
- Turkey should conduct a multi-dimensional foreign policy, and, in this context, it should have not competitive but constructive relations with the global actors such as; the US, the EU, NATO, Russia, and China,
- Turkey should implement a coherent diplomacy, which should be always active, serious and sustained.²³⁷

²³⁶ Hasan Basri Yalcin. "The Concept of "Middle Power" and the Recent Turkish Foreign Policy Activism", *Afro-Eurasian Studies*, volume:1/1, (2012)

²³⁷ Cengiz Dinc and Mustafa Yetim. "Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East: From Non-Involvement to a Leading Role", *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, volume:11/1, (2012)

Although the aforementioned new Turkish Foreign Policy paradigm had complementing points with hedging, especially in terms of the emphasize on multidimensional policy approach, this new foreign policy model mainly relied on soft power methods, coupled with idealist views based on the Ottoman past of Turkey.²³⁸ In addition to this, the new paradigm also depended on the predictability of international system, which can be inferred from the aforementioned main tenets of the new Turkish Foreign Policy, basically its claim on cooperation rather than competition.

In this context, conducting soft power methods, and polish Turkey as a "trading state" would be a practical method to enhance Turkey's influence in its region and beyond.²³⁹ Nonetheless, the turbulence of international system coupled with a power vacuum in various regions, especially the Middle East, as stated above, have made achieving autonomy by utilizing soft power methods impractical. Turkey's fluctuations during the Arab Spring, which is going to be explained in the next sub-chapter, proves this unfeasibility.

5.2 Application of Hedging in Turkish Foreign Policy

Turkish Foreign Policy has been designed for greater autonomy for Turkey in international system during the 2000s. However, as explained in the previous chapter, the main tool for this autonomy was mainly a soft power leaning approach, which was consisting of trade, multilateral institutionalism, and reference to Turkey's Ottoman

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ E. Fuat Keyman. "A New Turkish Foreign Policy: Towards Proactive "Moral Realism"", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 19/1, (2017)

heritage.²⁴⁰ This soft power method for greater influence for Turkey failed due to occurred turbulence and the power vacuum in the international system, and its reflection to Turkey's region, the Middle East.²⁴¹

Although the aforementioned soft power leaning approach has retained its significance on Turkish Foreign Policy until the escalation of Syrian Civil War²⁴², there are examples of multi-vectoral policy approaches, which complements with hedging, during this soft power leaning period of Turkish Foreign Policy. The most credible one among them is Turkey's policy during the UN sanctions against Iran in 2010.

Iran has nuclear ambitions since 1983, in order to obtain deterrence against possible security threats, such as the US's increasing presence in the Persian Gulf and hostile Iraq under Saddam Hussein by then.²⁴³ Iranian Nuclear Crisis erupted in the early 2000s, due to discovery by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which was against the development of nuclear capacity for peaceful purposes.²⁴⁴ During the 2000s, the international community divided into two camps regarding the Iranian nuclear ambitions. One camp (The US and some Western European Countries) supported sanctions against Iran, and the other camp (Russia, China), which backs the diplomatic

²⁴⁰ Cengiz Dinc and Mustafa Yetim. "Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East: From Non-Involvement to a Leading Role", *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, volume: 11/1, (2012)

²⁴¹ E. Fuat Keyman. "A New Turkish Foreign Policy: Towards Proactive "Moral Realism"", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 19/1, (2017)

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Radoslaw Fiedler. "Turkey and the Iranian Nuclear Program Challenges and Opportunities", *Przegląd Strategiczny*, volume: 14, (2014), accessed: April 2, 2018, available at: DOI 10.14746/ps.2014.1.21

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

negotiations with Iran.²⁴⁵ Escalation of the diplomatic relations between the US and Iran in the aftermath of US President, George W. Bush's labeling of Iran as a part of "axis of evil" has further strained the possibility of a diplomatic resolution to this issue by pursuing diplomatic negotiations.²⁴⁶

In order to deter Iran from procuring nuclear armament, the United Nations (UN) imposed three rounds of sanctions in the 2000s. The first round was, Resolution 1737 in 2006, the second round was Resolution 1747 in 2007, and the last round was Resolution 1803 in 2008.²⁴⁷ In October 2009, Turkey and Brazil crafted a swap deal for enriched Iranian uranium, which Iran accepted reluctantly, due to the information on Russia, and China's, countries which have close ties with Iran, accordance with the UN sanctions.²⁴⁸

Turkish decision makers of that period were against the implementation of economic sanctions against Iran. The chief reason for such opposition was the economic sanctions' detrimental impact on regional stability, which Turkey experienced with Iraq during the 1990s.²⁴⁹

Furthermore, as explained in the Iran chapter, Turkey also developed close trade relations with Iran during the early 2000s. In this regard, the quotation from an interview

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Kadir Ustun. "Turkey's Iran Policy: Between Diplomacy and Sanctions", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 12/3, (2010)

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Aylin Gurzel. "Turkey's Role in Defusing the Iranian Nuclear Issue", *The Washington Quarterly*, volume: 35/3, (2012), accessed: May 2, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2012.706576>

²⁴⁹ Kadir Ustun. "Turkey's Iran Policy: Between Diplomacy and Sanctions", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 12/3, (2010)

with Ahmet Davutoglu, who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs by 2010, depicts the Turkish concerns regarding the trade with Iran, and possible impact regarding the sanctions:

““Nobody can ask us to stop our economic ties with Iran,” Davutoglu told Turtle Bay Wednesday on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly debate. “We will continue to have these ties because it is in our national interest.” (Source: Colum Lynch, Foreign Policy, 2010)

In addition to the statement above, sanctions’ negative reflection on regional stability, which was mentioned above, also stated by Davutoglu:

“Davutoglu urged Iran, the United States, and other key powers to re-start negotiations over the nuclear standoff. He pointed to recent U.S. and Iranian calls for a resumption of nuclear talks as a new opening. “If you implement sanctions and there is no diplomatic channel, we have the experience of Iraq in the past.” That period, he said, was defined by a vicious cycle of “sanctions, tensions, conflicts and this is not a good example.” (Source: Colum Lynch, Foreign Policy, 2010)

When the UN Security Council voted for Resolution 1929 on June 9, 2010, 12 members, including P5+1 (the US, the UK, France, China, Russia, and Germany), and some interim members of UN Security Council voted in favor of sanctions against

Iran.²⁵⁰ Whereas other interim members of Security Council, Turkey, and Brazil voted against the imposition of sanctions on Iran, and Lebanon, another interim member, voted for abstention.²⁵¹

In the aftermath of Turkish vote against the sanctions on Iran, the perception of Turkey has shifted to a negative side. Policy circles in the US regarded Turkey's stance as another indication of growing Anti-Americanism in Turkey.²⁵² In fact, some groups among the policy circles even sought to punish Turkey for supporting Iran.²⁵³

Nonetheless, application of multi-vectoral approach, which complements with hedging evolves here. As stated above, the political opinion of Turkey in the US labeled as a pro-Iranian country after its against vote for imposition of sanctions on Iran. However, despite Turkey's quest for establishing better economic relations with Iran, and its concerns regarding the detrimental impacts of economic sanctions to the regional stability, as experienced by Turkey in Iraq case, Turkey had also apprehension towards the Iranian ambitions in the Middle East. A nuclear-armed Iran would further hinder the stability of Middle East, and such move would threaten Turkey's security as well.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ The UN Press Report. "Security Council Imposes Additional Sanctions on Iran, Voting 12 in Favour to 2 Against, with 1 Abstention", *The UN*, published: June 9, 2010, accessed: April 29, 2018, available at: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sc9948.doc.htm>

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Kadir Ustun. "Turkey's Iran Policy: Between Diplomacy and Sanctions", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 12/3, (2010)

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

In this context, with the agreement signed between Turkey and the US on September 15, 2011, Turkey approves the deployment of a missile-defense radar system to Kurecik, a town located at 700 kilometers west of the Turkish-Iranian border.²⁵⁵ As it can be seen from the Iranian case explained above, compartmentalization of relations and maneuver with autonomy is an achievable goal, with hedging's flexible, and multi-vectoral component. In this context, despite Turkey was against the sanctions against Iran, due to its concerns regarding the impact of sanctions to regional stability, and ongoing trade ties with Iran, Turkey also managed to act to prevent possible threats against Iran by cooperating with the US, and establishing radar systems, adjacent to Turkish-Iranian border.

Syrian Civil War emerged as the real test for the new soft-power leaning Turkish Foreign Policy, which was described in previous parts of this chapter. Due to Turkey's growing influence via its advancing economy, and soft-power capabilities since the early 2000s, Turkish decision makers regarded the Arab Spring as an opportunity to strengthen Turkish position, and perhaps obtaining the regional leadership in Middle East.²⁵⁶ The early stages of Arab Spring went well, authoritarian regimes in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya were being ousted by the people, Turkey was being introduced to these post-Arab Spring

²⁵⁵ Aylin Gurzel. "Turkey's Role in Defusing the Iranian Nuclear Issue", *The Washington Quarterly*, volume: 35/3, (2012), accessed: May 2, 2018, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2012.706576>

²⁵⁶ Ziya Onis, and Mustafa Kutlay. "The Dynamics of Emerging Middle Power Influence in Regional and Global Governance: The Paradoxical Case of Turkey", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, volume: 71/2, (2017)

states as a role model, due to its unique structure, which incorporates democracy and Islam.²⁵⁷

In accordance with its soft-power leaning policy, and retaining amicable relations with Syria by that time, Turkish officials urged Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to implement reforms in the country, when the demonstrations against the Syrian administration began.²⁵⁸ Bashar al-Assad did not accept the Turkish calls on reforms and continued his brutal actions against the opposition. As a result of Assad's actions, Turkey realized that in Syria the ruling government did not want to solve the issues by reforming but brutally oppressing the opposition and thus, Turkey gradually shifted its policy against Syria.²⁵⁹ In addition to Assad's oppressive actions against the opposition, Turkish ambitions to be a regional leader also played an important role in Turkey's policy shift in Syrian issue thus, it was not in interests of Turkey to be diplomatically isolated in the new situation in Syria by supporting Assad and also risking the relations with post-Arab Spring countries like Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia.²⁶⁰

Due to changed orientation toward Syria, Turkey has shifted its policy towards the al-Assad administration, and in this context, Prime Minister Erdogan (now the

²⁵⁷ Sener Akturk. "Turkey's role in the Arab Spring and the Syrian Conflict", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, volume: 15/4, (2017)

²⁵⁸ Thowhidul Islam. "Turkey's AKP Foreign Policy Toward Syria: Shifting Policy During the Arab Spring", *International Journal on World Peace*, volume: 33/1, (2016)

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

President of Turkey) called on Bashar al Assad to step down.²⁶¹ In fact, the Turkish Government allowed the Syrian Opposition to host several meetings and the second meeting of “Friends of Syrian People” summit in April 2012 in Turkey.²⁶²

In this context, at the initial period of Syrian Civil War, Turkey’s aim was the overthrow of Bashar-al Assad and in order to achieve this goal, Turkish strategy was concentrated on actively supporting of the opposition and trying to establish a no-flight zone in Syria.²⁶³ The Syrian opposition however, lacked a disciplined military organization, and thus they failed to evolve from guerrilla fighters to a capable army and they lacked a central command thus, the actions of the opposition proved that they are not capable to take down the Assad Regime in Syria.²⁶⁴ Internationally, Turkey counted on its Western allies’, mainly the US’s, intervention to Syria. However, the reluctant approach of the Western, and the US policymakers towards Syrian Crisis has further isolated Turkey on its aim to topple al-Assad administration.²⁶⁵

As Syrian Civil War escalates, Turkish goals in the country has become more difficult to achieve. First, and foremost setback for Turkey is, Bashar al-Assad’s

²⁶¹ Omer Taspinar. “Turkey’s Strategic Vision and Syria”, *The Washington Quarterly*, volume: 35/3, (2012)

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ertan Efeğil. “The Ak Party’s Middle East Policy and Reviews of the American Administration and Western Scholars on the Policy”, *Gazi Akademik Bakis*, volume:9/18, (2016)

²⁶⁴ Brian Michael Jenkins. “The Dynamics of Syria’s Civil War”, *RAND Corporation*, PE-115-RC, (2014), accessed: April 18, 2018, available at:

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE115/RAND_PE115.pdf

²⁶⁵ Ziya Onis, and Mustafa Kutlay. “The Dynamics of Emerging Middle Power Influence in Regional and Global Governance: The Paradoxical Case of Turkey”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, volume: 71/2, (2017)

continuous rule in Syria.²⁶⁶ Furthermore, with Russia's active involvement in Syria, Al-Assad's administration has gradually enhanced its stance, and recapture the regions it lost to the opposition.²⁶⁷ However, either side's lack of capability to achieve a decisive victory in the ongoing conflict has further emboldened instability in Syria, and its reflection to the broader Middle East region.

The ongoing instability and lack of governance allowed several groups to infiltrate Syria and conduct their activities with impunity and as a result, the situation in Syria turned into a chaos.²⁶⁸ In this quagmire, additional security risks emerged for Turkey. Syrian Government left the control of the towns of Afrin, Kobani and Rasulayn to the PKK offshoot in Syria, the PYD, and these towns are located in the key positions of Northern Syria and caused a serious threat to Turkey's security.²⁶⁹ Along with the growing power of the PKK offshoots in Syria, rise of ISIS had further increased security risks to Turkish security.

Idealist, and soft-power leaning Turkish Foreign Policy began to experience its fluctuations, due to its failure to craft a credible strategy towards the immediate threats, and long-term goals in Syria. As previously explained, al-Assad regime has retained its position, and even gone into offensive. Kurdish groups linked with the PKK have been

²⁶⁶ Henri J. Barkey. "Turkey's Syria Predicament", *Survival*, volume:56/6, (2014)

²⁶⁷ William McHenry, and Gabriel White. "How Russia Plans to Influence Syria's Future", *The National Interest*, published: February 7, 2018, accessed: March 12, 2018, available at: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-russia-plans-influence-syrias-future-24394?page=2>

²⁶⁸ Andrew K. Hanami. "The Rise of ISIS and the American Strategy", Cognella, (2015)

²⁶⁹ Thowhidul Islam. "Turkey's AKP Foreign Policy Toward Syria: Shifting Policy During the Arab Spring", *International Journal on World Peace*, volume: 33/1, (2016)

gradually enhancing their position in Syria, especially after having received the US support against ISIS.²⁷⁰ ISIS and the other radical jihadist groups in Syria have emerged as dangerous actors as well, and initiated terror attacks in Turkey.²⁷¹ Lastly, Turkey's shooting of Russian SU-24 in late November 2015 further limited Turkey's ability to maneuver in Syria, and deteriorated its relations with Russia, which is the strongest actor in Turkey's region.²⁷²

Additionally, Turkey had to align itself with NATO, and the US, to stand against a possible Russian threat.²⁷³ In this context, this alignment further eroded Turkey's stance as an autonomous actor in the Middle East. In the aftermath of such dramatic failures in Turkish Foreign Policy, some groups from the Turkish political and public circles began to question the viability of the Turkish Foreign Policy in Syria.²⁷⁴

By mid-2016, Turkey shifted the foreign policy approach it applied throughout the 2000s and, the early 2010s, and the replacement of Ahmet Davutoglu, who was the creator of idealist soft-power leaning foreign policy approach, with Binali Yildirim as

²⁷⁰ Bill Park. "Turkey's isolated stance: an ally no more, or just the unusual turbulence?", *International Affairs*, volume:91/3, (2015)

²⁷¹ Hurriyet Daily News. "Turkey to welcome New Year under tight security", *Hurriyet Daily News*, published: December 29, 2017, accessed: May 6, 2018, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/75-detained-over-suspected-isil-links-in-turkey-124927>

²⁷² Pavel K.Baev, and Kemal Kirisci. "An ambiguous partnership: The serpentine trajectory of Turkish-Russian relations in the era of Erdoğan and Putin", *Brookings*, Turkey Project Policy Paper, no: 13, (2017)

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ William Hale. "Turkey's domestic politics, public opinion and Middle East policy", *Palgrave Communications*, (2016), accessed: May 2, 2018, available at: DOI: 10.1057/palcomms.2016.81

Prime Minister has been regarded as a sign of this change.²⁷⁵ In order to compensate the failures of previous foreign policy approach, and to increase Turkey's ability to maneuver in Syria, and in a broader view, in the Middle East, Turkey had to reset its foreign policy and adapt a more flexible approach. First step in this direction was to reconciliation between Turkey and Russia, which occurred in the aftermath of Turkey's apology for the shooting of SU-24 in late 2015.²⁷⁶

The diplomatic step with Russia, followed by a coercive move in Syria. Turkish Armed Forces initiated the operation Euphrates Shield, which aims to clear Turkish border from ISIS, and prevent the PKK linked Kurdish groups' possible full control throughout the border.²⁷⁷ In the aftermath of operation, Turkish security forces cleared the Turkish border from ISIS, and prevented the unification of the Kurdish enclaves, which is being controlled by the PKK affiliated groups in Syria.²⁷⁸

In early 2017, the officials of Turkey, Russia, and Iran met at Astana, the capital city of Kazakhstan, to discuss the future of Syria. This first meeting in Astana and proceeding meetings between the trio have aimed to achieve ceasefire and establishing

²⁷⁵ E. Fuat Keyman. "A New Turkish Foreign Policy: Towards Proactive "Moral Realism"", *Insight Turkey*, volume: 19/1, (2017)

²⁷⁶ Pavel K.Baev, and Kemal Kirisci. "An ambiguous partnership: The serpentine trajectory of Turkish-Russian relations in the era of Erdoğan and Putin", *Brookings*, Turkey Project Policy Paper, no: 13, (2017)

²⁷⁷ Aaron Stein. "Turkey's Transactional Engagement With Russia", *Atlantic Council MENASource*, published: April 13, 2018, accessed: April 17, 2018, available at: <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/turkey-s-transactional-engagement-with-russia>

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

de-escalation zones.²⁷⁹ Some regarded Astana process as partition of Syria into sphere of influences between Russia, Turkey, and Iran, and hence designation Syria's post-Civil War order by the aforementioned trio as a long-term goal.²⁸⁰

As another phase of coercive Turkish approach in Syria, Turkish Armed Forces initiated Operation of Olive Branch, which aimed to clear Afrin enclave held by the PKK linked Kurdish Groups. Russia offered tacit support to this Turkish endeavor by opening Syrian airspace to Turkish military aircraft.²⁸¹

Widely agreed argument regarding the aforementioned developments in Syria between Turkey, Russia, and Iran, that Turkey is shifting its allegiance from NATO and the US, to Russian orbit.²⁸² And parallel with the assumption above, Russian support to recent Turkish policies in Syria regarded within this perspective as well, in terms of exploiting the current problematic ties between Turkey and the US.²⁸³ However, Turkey has not severed its ties with it's the US and NATO allies in Syria as such arguments put it. In fact, since the beginning of Syrian Civil War, Turkey has been seeking cooperation

²⁷⁹ Andrew Osborn, and Orhan Coskun. "Russia, Turkey, Iran eye dicing Syria into zones of influence", *Reuters*, published: December 28, 2016, accessed: May 4, 2018, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-deal/russia-turkey-iran-eye-dicing-syria-into-zones-of-influence-idUSKBN14H12V>

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Leonid Issaev. "Why is Russia helping Turkey in Afrin?", *Al Jazeera*, published: January 29, 2018, accessed: May 3, 2018, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/russia-helping-turkey-afrin-180125122718953.html>

²⁸² Gonul Tol. "Turkey Is Trying to Turn Russia and Iran Against America in Syria" *The National Interest*, published: February, 13, 2018, accessed: April 28, 2018, available at: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/turkey-trying-turn-russia-iran-against-america-syria-24489>

²⁸³ Umut Uras, and Tamilia Varshalomidze. "What is Russia's end game in Afrin?", *Al Jazeera*, published: January 23, 2018, accessed: April 30, 2018, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/russia-green-light-turkeys-afrin-offensive-180123064315810.html>

with the US, and NATO allies in broader view, which complements with hedging, in terms of multidimensional approach. I am presenting a section from press interview with Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan regarding Turkish endeavors in this regard:

“Despite everything, we believe we have joint interests with the United States in the region and hope we can act together, because this is the time to qualify the strategic cooperation among us and support Turkey... I hope that meanwhile, our allies will not make the mistake of being in the same ranks with the terrorist organization during the Afrin operation,” said Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan on Jan. 14.” (Source: Murat Yetkin. Hurriyet Daily News, 2018)

To offer further examples on the Turkish hedging approach via its attempts to cooperate with the US in Syria, I would like to explain Manbij negotiations. Manbij, a town near Turkish border, and located at the western bank of river Euphrates, has become one of the important topics between Turkey and the US. In 2016, when the town was captured by the PKK linked Kurdish groups in Syria.²⁸⁴ Initially, the Obama administration promised the Kurdish groups’ departure from Manbij to the Eastern banks of Euphrates.²⁸⁵ However, the PKK affiliated groups has continued to remain in Manbij,

²⁸⁴ Bulent Ali Riza, and Zeynep Yekeler. “U.S.-Turkish Tensions in Syria: The Manbij Conundrum”, *CSIS*, published: April 5, 2018, accessed: April 28, 2018, available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-turkish-tensions-syria-manbij-conundrum>

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

which further alienates Turkey, due to its red-line in Northern Syria, no PKK linked groups in the west of Euphrates river.²⁸⁶

The situation regarding the Manbij has further escalated in the aftermath of Turkish military operations in Syria. In early 2017, when Turkish Army captured al-Bab, a town in Northern Syria, from ISIS, it directed its forces along with Turkey-backed Syrian opposition groups for Manbij and both the US and Russia interfered to this situation by deploying troops to Manbij and its surrounding areas to deter further Turkish offensive towards the town.²⁸⁷ Turkish offensive in Afrin region has further escalated the situation in Manbij. Throughout the Afrin operation, and after its completion, Turkey has directed its attention to Manbij once again, and, addition to possible Turkish move towards the town, presence of US troops in the town has made the issue more complicated.²⁸⁸

In order to pass this conundrum, which might cause an unprecedented armed conflict with two NATO allies, and achieve a solution in Manbij, Turkey and the US initiated the negotiations regarding the situation of Manbij.²⁸⁹ Although there is no clear agreement regarding the Manbij problem between Turkey and the US yet, ongoing track

²⁸⁶ Hurriyet Daily News. "Syrian regime forces to take over Manbij, says Russia", *Hurriyet Daily News*, published: March 3, 2017, accessed: April 26, 2018, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/syrian-regime-forces-to-take-over-manbij-says-russia--110434>

²⁸⁷ Reuters. "U.S. military deploys forces in Syria's Manbij in new effort", *Reuters*, published: March 6, 2017, accessed: May 2, 2018, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/u-s-military-deploys-forces-in-syrias-manbij-in-new-effort-idUSKBN16D29G>

²⁸⁸ Bulent Ali Riza, and Zeynep Yekeler. "U.S.-Turkish Tensions in Syria: The Manbij Conundrum", *CSIS*, published: April 5, 2018, accessed: April 28, 2018, available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-turkish-tensions-syria-manbij-conundrum>

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

of dialogue has dissuaded the risk of possible conflict between two allies, and has opened room for future cooperation, which Turkey has been seeking since the early period of Syrian Civil War.

5.3 Hedging's Apparent Benefits to Turkey

In contrast to the setbacks experienced due to precedent soft-power leaning policy approach of Turkey, which applied throughout the 2000s, the new multi-vectoral approach that has aimed to minimize the risks occurred due to turbulence and instability in international system, and reverse the damages occurred due to Turkey's miscalculations regarding the international system and regional order, which occurred due to overstatement of its soft-power leaning view, and relying on the stability of system. In this study, I mainly analyzed Turkish hedging application via Syria Civil War case. However, that case also offers relevant inferences in a broader scope, which complements with the reasons for Turkish application of hedging, that stated in the beginning of hedging and the current Turkish Foreign Policy main chapter.

Firstly, Turkey has managed to regain the ability of maneuver it lost previously, due to the wanting foreign policy approach, which eludes with the unpredictability of system. As explained at previous sub-chapter, Turkey was isolated by its NATO allies, and also were having difficulties to cooperate with non-NATO actors, due to the

mistaken moves in Syrian Civil War and the Middle East in general.²⁹⁰ Since 2016, an improvement has been achieved in this track. As a result of the new multidimensional, and flexible approach, that complements with hedging, Turkey is able to maneuver between various actors such as, the US and Russia. As explained in the previous sub-chapter, cooperating with Russia, and Iran via the Astana Format since 2017, simultaneously working together with the US, and NATO alliance in Syria. The Turkish President's aide, Ayse Sozen Usluer's interview will depicts the flexibility of the current track of Turkish Foreign Policy:

“To me, that photo op underlines the strategic importance of Turkey and shows its rise in foreign policy. This is not a shift of axis,” she said in an interview with the *Hürriyet Daily News*.” (Source: Sevil Erkus. *Hurriyet Daily News*, 2018)

Furthermore, she adds:

“We know that Turkey is a very important member in the NATO alliance, and this partnership is indispensable for both sides. If we are giving a close picture with Russia regarding Syria, and we have relations with Russia, it certainly does not mean that we have abandoned the alliances we had established with the West,” she added.” (Source: Sevil Erkus. *Hurriyet Daily News*, 2018)

²⁹⁰ Ziya Onis, and Mustafa Kutlay. “The Dynamics of Emerging Middle Power Influence in Regional and Global Governance: The Paradoxical Case of Turkey”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, volume: 71/2, (2017)

Secondly, Turkey's quest for autonomy in foreign policy strengthened and regained ability to exert its influence in the Middle East as a vital actor. As corollary to the failure of idealist Turkish foreign policy approach, that has been conducted throughout the 2000s, Turkey's stance as a regional power nearly eroded.²⁹¹ Turkey's exclusion as an actor from the solution Iranian nuclear crisis, and Syrian Civil War further exemplifies the downturn trend in Turkish Foreign Policy.²⁹²

The statement from the US President Donald Trump, and French President Emmanuel Macron illustrates the increased capability of Turkey in the Middle East due to applying hedging:

“President Donald J. Trump spoke today with President Emmanuel Macron of France. Both leaders expressed support for the West's strong response to Russia's chemical weapons attack in Salisbury, United Kingdom, including the expulsion of numerous Russian intelligence officers on both sides of the Atlantic. President Trump stressed the need to intensify cooperation with Turkey with respect to shared strategic challenges in Syria. The two leaders also discussed trade practices between the United States and European Union and the next steps in addressing China's unfair trade practices.” (Source: The White House, 2017)

According to the statement above, the US administration realized the importance of working with Turkey to achieve lasting solution in Syria. Before the improvement of

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Dimitar Bechev, and Joost Hiltermann. “Turkey's Forays into the Middle East”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, volume: 16/3, (2017)

Turkish Foreign Policy's stance in Syria, and the Middle East in broader scope, there were arguments in the US policy circles, which were based on to replace Turkey with the non-state actors such as, Syrian Kurds to achieve solution in Syria, and more broadly the Middle East.²⁹³

Aforementioned developments have been recognized by the Turkish public as well. A public opinion poll conducted by Kadir Has University Center for Turkish Studies depicts the perception of Turkish public towards the changing track of Turkish Foreign Policy:

²⁹³ Burak Kadercan. "BETWEEN A ROCK AND DYNAMITE: AMERICAN OPTIONS IN THE FACE OF THE TURKISH-YPG CRISIS", *War on the Rocks*, published: April 6, 2018, accessed: May 4, 2018, available at: <https://warontherocks.com/2018/04/between-a-rock-and-dynamite-american-options-in-the-face-of-the-turkish-ypg-crisis/>

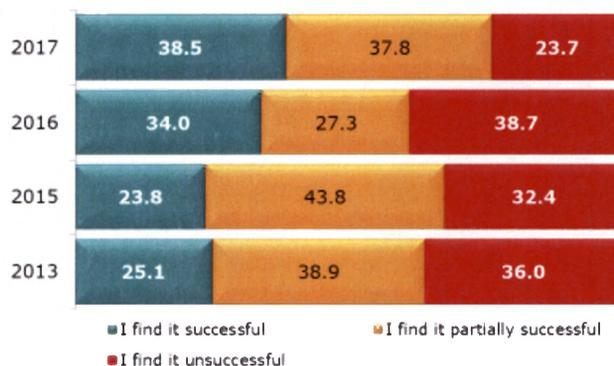
Figure 3: Turkish Public Regard on Turkish Foreign Policy



Public Perceptions on Turkish Foreign Policy-46

Conclusion

To what extent do you consider the government's foreign policy successful?

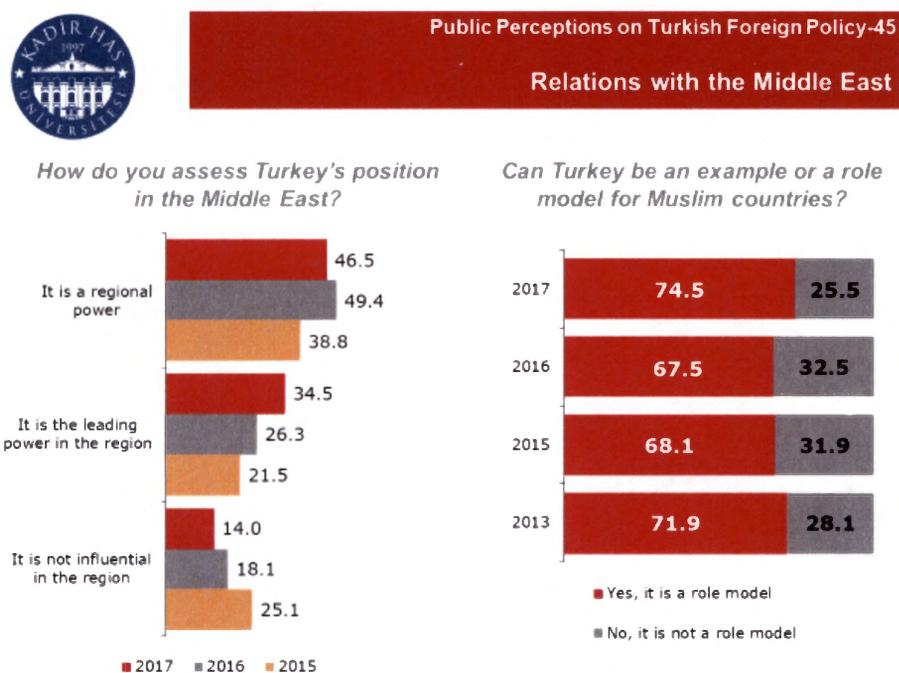


(Source: Kadir Has University Turkish Studies Center, 2017)

As the figure above shows, the Turkish public were disapproving the application of idealist foreign policy since 2013, due to its failures became obvious by that date. On the figure above, 2015 is the year, which the Turkish Foreign Policy had least support by the public, due to the crises occurred such as, Turkey's shooting down of Russian SU-24, and escalation in tensions between the two states. In 2016, as the figure above depicts, the public's support towards Turkish Foreign Policy improves, due to the replacement of former idealist approach with the new multi-vectoral, and resilient approach, and its first

positive results, which can be summarized as, the reconciliation with Russia, and the execution of Euphrates Shield Operation in Syria. As the figure above depicts, supportive trend on the new Turkish Foreign policy continues during 2017 as well. To further illustrate the impact of hedged Turkish Foreign Policy on Turkish public, I present the public perception regarding Turkey's stance in the Middle East:

Figure 4: Turkish Public Regard on Turkey's Middle East Policy



(Source: Kadir Has University Turkish Studies Center, 2017)

As it can be seen from the figure above, The Turkish public regarded Turkey's stance and influence in the Middle East as ineffective, in accordance with the foreign views. However, with the application of hedging, this trend seems to be reversed, as the

data above depicts. According to the data above, the Turkish public's perception of Turkey as a regional power, and a hegemon of the Middle East has steadily increased throughout 2016, and 2017.

Nonetheless, hedging strategy is not exempt from setbacks. There are two vital shortcomings of hedging, which causes possible obstacles on its efficiency. First important setback of hedging strategy, and its application by regional, medium, and small powers is hedging's dependency on unpredictability of international system. In this context, Hedging can only be applied properly when the state actors are not able to execute traditional balancing approaches.²⁹⁴

As evaluated throughout this thesis mainly via Turkey case, along with several cases such as; Thailand, Singapore, China, and Gulf States, hedging is viable and beneficial as long as the unpredictability remains in international system, and/or regional structure. If a hegemonic power rises, and/or a bipolar structure emerges in international system, then there will not be any room to conduct flexible, multi-vectoral foreign policy, which are the main instruments of hedging, for regional, middle, and small powers of the international system.

In this context, if the assumption above related with Turkey, the US's reassertion itself as a hegemon, and this rebound's reflections becomes visible in Turkey's region (the Middle East), then Turkey will lose its ability to maneuver, and will be compelled to

²⁹⁴ Evelyn Goh. "Understanding "hedging" in Asia-Pacific security", *PacNet* 43, (2006)

bandwagon with the US. Such possibility has been mentioned regarding the Middle East.²⁹⁵ As for an additional example, in the case of Oman Sultanate, one of the Gulf Cooperation Council members, which has been applying hedging vis-à-vis Iran,²⁹⁶ if Iranian threat towards the Persian Gulf further escalates, the sultanate would stop hedging, and have to bandwagon with the rest of the GCC countries, and the US.

As for the second considerable wanting point of hedging is the diversity of methods on the application of hedging. In this context, one credible criticism towards hedging's methods explains that, security cannot be achieved by executing the non-security methods as hedging approach posits.²⁹⁷ According to this view, economic approaches are not determined by security needs, which contradicts the hedging's multi-vectoral approach. To illustrate this perspective, South-East Asian states' policy towards China, which aims to minimize the risks of China's rise via applying hedging, by developing close economic ties with China, but in terms of defense, cooperate with the US in the region is irrelevant.

In conclusion, despite its shortcomings, hedging still offers a viable option for regional, and other relatively weaker actors of international system, when compared with

²⁹⁵ Dov Zakheim. "Iran, Turkey, and Russia Aren't Natural Friends. It's Up to the U.S. to Keep It That Way", *Foreign Policy*, published: September 4, 2017, accessed: May 4, 2018, available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/09/04/iran-turkey-and-russia-arent-natural-friends-its-up-to-the-u-s-to-keep-it-that-way/>

²⁹⁶ Leah Sherwood. "Small States' Strategic Hedging for Security and Influence", *Trends Research&Advisory*, published: September 14, 2016, accessed: January 26, 2018, available at: <http://trendsinstitution.org/small-states-strategic-hedging-for-security-and-influence/>

²⁹⁷ Darren J.Lim, and Zack Cooper. "Reassessing Hedging: The Logic of Alignment in East Asia", *Security Studies*, volume: 24, (2015), accessed: April 25, 2018, available at: DOI: 10.1080/09636412.2015.1103130

traditional balancing, in times of unpredictability in international structure. As widely evaluated throughout this study, Turkey has minimized the damages, and partly reversed from the major failures it suffered in the Middle-East, due to its former soft-power leaning policy, that did not fit with the unstable structure of international system and its reflection on Turkey's region by applying hedging. In addition to Turkey case, other explained cases in this study such as, Malaysia and China also further demonstrate hedging's efficiency.

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