

## TURKEY'S NEW GEOPOLITICAL NARRATIVE

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### *I n t r o d u c t i o n*

Turkish studies have long been dominated by geopolitical analyses. Regardless of the subject under investigation, Turkey's geopolitical value is taken into consideration as an important methodological concern. Further, it is believed that this geopolitical difference is immune from any major changes. This paper suggests that the traditional geopolitical narrative in Turkey which depends on a classical organic approach can no longer be defended on factual evidences. As an

organic approach, the old narrative of Turkish geopolitics depends on an *aprioristic* logic which is believed to exist between location and state. Therefore, many assumptions of the old narrative, such as Turkey is located between *x* and *y*, stand as simple hypothetical argumentations. This paper attempts to criticize the old, geopolitical narrative on several theoretical levels. In this vein, Turkey's policy of pipelines is studied as a case study in order to analyze the new geopolitical narrative.

## Theorizing Geopolitics

Geopolitics analyzes politics with reference to geography. Geopolitics indicates the causal relationships between political power and geographical space.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is not very clear how this complex relationship between geography and politics is formed. Like other disciplines, different approaches identify the link between geography and politics in different ways because geopolitical stud-

<sup>1</sup> See: O. Osterud, "The Uses and Abuses of Geopolitics," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 25, No. 2, June 1988, p. 192.

ies have evolved in time. In order to analyze the nature of the link between geography and politics and the evolution of geopolitical method, a short comparison between organic and critical views is required. Also, the findings of this comparison would theoretically be practical in explaining the rise of a new, Turkish, geopolitical narrative.

In the past geopolitical scholars such as Nicholas Spykman, Halford Mackinder and Alfred Mahan were the champions of the organic state view. This view asserts that state is studied as an anthropomorphic organism which grows and survives like a human being.<sup>2</sup> Their approach depended on certain predetermined principles which were believed to change gradually. How Nicholas Spykman defined the correlation between geography and foreign policy is, for example, apt to summarize the message of this early tradition: "Geography is the most fundamental factor in foreign policy because it is the most permanent."<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Mackinder advocated the organic view. He developed the concept of the "pivot area" which was the northern and interior parts of the Eurasian continent where the rivers flow to the Arctic or to salt seas and lakes. He believed that this area would be pivotal as it would be easy to defend and hard to conquer.<sup>4</sup> However, these scholars did not witness the unprecedented developments of later generations. Thus, geographical facts were perceived as unchangeable or fixed determinants for them. Because of their anthropomorphic paradigm, the works of these scholars tacitly argue that there is a hierarchy among world lands in terms of strategic importance. The spatial distribution of strategic opportunities in the world was unequal for them.

The organic view was later strongly criticized by recent scholars. The critical school argued that the basic mind-set of the organic school was invalid. In view of that, organic narratives are not based on the groundwork of natural social, cultural, or spatial differences but are woven from the networks of language. In other words, geopolitics is not a fixed phenomenon but varies historically with governmentalized geographical discourse. Geopolitics is a form of political discourse rather than simply a descriptive term.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the concept of geopolitics needs to be conceptualized anew as the twenty first century approaches. Based on this need, critical geopolitics is presented as follows: "Critical geopolitics has emerged from the work of a number of scholars in the fields of geography and international relations who, over the last decade, have sought to investigate *geopolitics as a cultural and political practice, rather than as a manifest reality of world politics*" (italics mine.—G.B.).<sup>6</sup>

Essentially, the critical school rejects the organic view for its dependence on pure metaphysical argument.<sup>7</sup> Critical geography analyzes the case from a relativist perspective in suggesting that cultural and political practices affect the idea of geopolitical value. Thus, a search for a "manifest reality" is illogical. First, certain innovations in different fields such as military, communication and transport certainly affect the relative strategic importance of geographical areas.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, no rigid geographic determination is applicable in geopolitics.<sup>9</sup> Because different political models have emerged in the same geographical location, geopolitics cannot be taken as a fixed set of facts. Thirdly, one should

<sup>2</sup> For a good summary of the organic view see: Ch.B. Hagan, "Geopolitics," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 4, November 1942.

<sup>3</sup> N.J. Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace*, Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1944, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> See: H.J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1919, pp. 12-28.

<sup>5</sup> See: G. Ó Tuathail and J. Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy," *Political Geography*, Vol. 11, No. 2, March 1992, pp. 190-204.

<sup>6</sup> See: G. Ó Tuathail and S. Dalby, "Rethinking Geopolitics," in: *Rethinking Geopolitics*, ed. by G. Ó Tuathail and S. Dalby, Routledge, London and New York, 1998, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> See: L. Alexander, "The New Geopolitics: A Critique," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 5, No. 4, December 1961, p. 409.

<sup>8</sup> See: O. Osterud, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>9</sup> See: W. J. Cahnman, "Concepts of Geopolitics," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1, February 1943, p. 56.

differentiate geopolitics from geographical imagination. The critical school asserts that the organic approach ignores this difference. Geographical imagination is a value-based perception of the world. It is like a declaration of a national idea to inculcate citizens. Such organic views are linguistic games which are far from practical evidences. Political imaginations may be important for national unity or propaganda, but in terms of *realpolitik*, they are of no value. Consequently, no geographical set of definitions based on unique conditions or special locations can be respected because such claims can similarly be presented for any piece of land. Each country is in fact under the influence of its special conditions. In sum, geopolitical imaginations are pure tautological sentences, which derive their value again from themselves. On the other hand, an all-compassing geopolitical conceptualization is not possible. Geopolitical meaning is issue-oriented. Thus, it can be defended on the factual basis of an issue such as technology or economy. Independent of such issue-oriented basis, an overall evaluation is also metaphysical.

## Turkey's Organic Geopolitical Narrative

Turkey's classical narrative of geopolitics aptly fits to the organic framework. Turkey has always been presented as a country that has a unique geopolitical importance merely for its location: Turkey is located between East and West,<sup>10</sup> Turkey is part of many different cultural zones and is considered a Balkan state, Turkey is a Middle Eastern state, Turkey is a Caucasian state, Turkey is Asian, and Turkey is a European or Mesopotamian state. One may extend the list even further by suggesting that Turkey is located between Islamic and Christian worlds and that it is located between democratic and non-democratic regimes or that Turkey is located in the midst of three historical conflict-producing zones i.e., the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus<sup>11</sup> and is located between secular and non-secular cultures.

The common point of these views is very apparent: Regardless of its capability or incapability in various fields, Turkey is depicted strategically as one of the most important states in world politics. The organic view, however, does not present any rational or factual verification. Instead, as a typical reflection of organic logic, several aprioristic theses are used. However, similar theses can be proposed for any other state. Surprisingly, this approach is also adopted by various international actors without any further critical considerations. Recall, for example, Igor Torbakov: "Turkey's location right in the middle of the Southern Caucasus/Northern Mesopotamia region makes it a key player in several overlapping regions: Western Europe, the Balkans, the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, the oil and gas deposits in the Caspian Sea and northern Iraq."<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, this orthodox narrative has become part of official language. For example, when one analyzes how the Defense Ministry defines Turkey's geopolitical importance, similar points are easily seen.<sup>13</sup> Here, the ministry again refers to very typical points such as Turkey's strategic location

<sup>10</sup> According to the Turkish Defense Ministry, "Turkey has successfully practiced the duty of being a *bridge* between East and West on different perspectives." Available at [<http://www.msb.gov.tr/Birimler/GnPPD/GnPPDBeyazKBol1Kis2.htm>].

<sup>11</sup> For example, according to Emre Kongar, a Turkish sociologist, Turkey is indispensable (*vazgeçilmez*), since it is in the midst of four crisis regions (the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Gulf) (see: E. Kongar, "Türkiye'nin Önemi" [[http://www.kongar.org/makaleler/mak\\_tuo.php](http://www.kongar.org/makaleler/mak_tuo.php)]).

<sup>12</sup> I. Torbakov, "The Turkish Factor in the Geopolitics of the Post-Soviet Space." Available at [<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20030110.balkansturkey.torbakov.turkeypostsovietspace.html>].

<sup>13</sup> See the Turkish Defense Ministry Homepage on the website [<http://www.msb.gov.tr/Birimler/GnPPD/GnPPDBeyazKBol1Kis2.htm>].

between very important centers such as the Caspian Sea and the Middle East. Very similarly, an official document, by the Foreign Affairs Ministry follows the organic view: “In the post-Cold War period, Turkey found herself at the center of a large landscape, Eurasia, stretching from Europe to Central Asia. This area is *destined to gain* increasing geopolitical significance in the new millennium” (italics mine.—G.B.).<sup>14</sup>

In the text, a part of the globe is depicted as being “destined to gain increasing geopolitical significance.” The organic reasoning is very apparent. This approach is built on a very rigid deterministic logic between geography and politics which accepts a kind of hierarchy among world territories. But as a typical reflection of the organic view, this is nothing but a tautological statement because what makes Turkey a “destined” place in order “to gain increasingly geopolitical significance” is not answered.

Equally important is the various consequences of organic geopolitics. The organic narrative is predominantly security oriented which creates a defensive approach. When some parts of the globe are taken as naturally important, such geopolitics does expect foreign actors to claim this geopolitical value. Consequently, organic narrative enhances sovereignty-mania. This theoretical explanation aptly fits with the Turkish case. The nationalist discourse has always argued that foreign actors envy Turkey’s precious lands for its geopolitical uniqueness.<sup>15</sup> For example, Russia has long been blamed for having the ultimate aim of reaching lower seas through invading the Turkish straits. Interestingly, this debate, i.e. blaming other states for having secret agendas against Turkey, has become part of different official texts. Similarly, when geopolitical definitions are purely made through geographical imaginations, this approach naturally hinders the rise of new liberal and functionalist horizons. Instead, a simple and static perspective based on geopolitical causality may dominate the actor’s behaviors at a foreign or domestic level. Thus, a stagnant foreign policy behavior is expected to emerge because an organic narrative freezes the related actors’ foreign policy behaviors.

The organic geopolitical narrative has dominated Turkish elites for decades. Concurrently, this land-centric organic view has prevented the rise of pragmatic, functionalistic and flexible political behaviors. The metaphysical belief that accepts Turkey with a special location on the world map has been the major point of departure. On the other hand, the lack of economic or technological competence may also be accepted as another reason in explaining the hegemony of the organic geopolitical narrative. As a country that had long been relatively underdeveloped, it might have been pragmatic for Turkey to recognize the organic view at least in the domestic realm. Lacking comparative advantages in industrial and economic fields, Turkey tried to counterbalance its position through marketing cultural and geopolitical narratives.

## Energy Politics

Developments in the Eurasian region can be seen as the major reason for discursive change in Turkish geopolitical narrative. In this vein, the issue of pipelines deserves distinctive attention as it has emerged as a new factor in determining the new geopolitics. Turkey has relatively been successful in realizing certain concrete projects of pipelines. But more important is Turkey’s integration with different economies and markets through energy politics. This process by changing the classical perceptions of land and neighborhood has created a new approach in foreign policy, which has also chal-

<sup>14</sup> “Synopsis of the Turkish Foreign Policy.” Available at [<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Synopsis/>].

<sup>15</sup> For example, a title of a homework written by a Turkish student is “Türkiye’nin Jeopolitik Önemi ve Yabancı Ülkelerin Ülkemiz Üzerindeki Emelleri” (The Geopolitical Importance of Turkey and the Agendas of Foreign States on Our Country). Available at [[http://odev.gençbilim.com/odev\\_tez/odev\\_tez.php?id=20815](http://odev.gençbilim.com/odev_tez/odev_tez.php?id=20815)].

lenged the traditional organic geopolitical view. Instead of former all-encompassing organic assumptions, Turkey has gained issue-oriented geopolitical assets, such as the construction of certain pipelines through Turkish territories or energy based agreements with different states. Equally, the rise of mutual dependence through several pipeline projects has given way to a kind of paradigmatic shift in Turkish foreign policy. Thanks to this materialistic ground, a new narrative is produced based on objective and material realities. Also the former sovereignty-prone paradigm which perceived the land as precious to protect from others was almost replaced by a new collaborative paradigm which appreciates the role of foreign actors. However, several facts should be considered, which would aid in understanding the political setting in which energy-based concerns and priorities materialize.

1. To begin with, Turkey's increasing energy demand is a major issue. Its expanding economy has necessitated new energy resources. In order to prevent dependency on one state, Turkey seeks to diversify its resources, which, in return, forces Ankara to be in alliance with several energy-producing countries. Therefore, Turkey's acute energy needs and growing appetite for natural gas should first be underlined in analyzing the role of pipelines. Projections for 2010 cite domestic demand at 55.2 billion cubic meters and at 82.7 billion cubic meters by 2020. Such an acute need for energy necessitates certain patterns in foreign policy, such as pragmatism, flexibility, and overcoming normative concerns. However, Turkey needs different resources and markets which would require a flexible foreign policy, allowing it to cooperate with different states.
2. Another very important subject is the European energy market. A massive energy regime is growing close to Turkey. It is extremely practical to be connected with this energy regime. In addition, this may enable Turkey to achieve new leverage in EU politics. It is well-known that matters such as democratization, human rights, and the Cyprus issue have dominated the Turkish-EU relations. Energy-related issues are important opportunities for Turkey to enhance its leverage in the European context. Briefly, the European energy system depends on three important principles: security of supply, competitiveness of the energy industry, and protection of the environment. Once this complex European energy system is considered, it will be clear that many legal and technical reforms are needed.

The energy dependence of the EU on energy imports will increase steadily in the period from 2010 to 2020. The Union's dependency is growing daily.<sup>16</sup> The EU as a whole does not have the resources needed to cover its domestic demand for energy. As a result, Europe is forced to import fossil energies from outside the Union. Given these conditions, the EU has defined four political targets: managing demand, diversifying European sources, a streamlined internal energy market, and controlling external supply.<sup>17</sup> In this vein, under the rubric of controlling external supply, the Union confirms that the EU must enter into strategic partnerships with major potential suppliers.<sup>18</sup> In May 2003, the Union declared its support for modernizing energy supply systems through large-scale infrastructure projects. Due to its dependency on external energy resources, the EU imports 36 percent of its total gas consumption. It is, therefore, necessary to discover other resources. In this vein, the Union has made contacts with many states in the Gulf region and in Africa. The EU is also in contact with many other states in regions such as Russia/Northern Europe/Baltic area and Algeria/North Africa. In

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<sup>16</sup> See: *The Green Paper towards a European Strategy for the Security of Energy Supply*, European Commission (Com (2000) 769 Final), Accepted on 29 November, 2000. Available at [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy\\_transport/en/lpi\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy_transport/en/lpi_en.html)], p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> See: *The Green Paper*, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

sum, the rise of energy consumption in European countries now requires new routes. Likewise, the Barcelona Declaration, within the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, has paid attention to energy-based cooperation. The Barcelona Declaration, adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on 27-28 October, 1995, points out a special section on energy: “[The states] acknowledge the pivotal role of the energy sector in the economic Euro/Mediterranean partnership and decide to strengthen cooperation and intensify dialogue in the field of energy policies. They also decide to create the appropriate framework conditions for investments and the activities of energy companies, cooperating in creating the conditions enabling such companies to extend energy networks and promote link-ups.”<sup>19</sup>

The EU has tried to enhance its energy-based cooperation with peripheral states in other meetings. For example, an important conference was held in Tunisia in 1995 with a follow-up meeting in Athens and an Energy Conference in Madrid on November 20, 1995. Through such meetings, the Union basically has been trying to foster the association of Mediterranean countries with the Treaty on the European Energy Charter. The charter aims to create an international regime on energy by promoting east-west cooperation through legal frameworks in areas such as investment, transit, and trade.<sup>20</sup> Given the intense need for energy resources and the potential conflicts between consuming and producing states, the Union has attempted to create an international regime in which there would be certain norms and principles. Thus, the aim of the treaty is to establish a legal framework in order to promote long-term cooperation in the energy field in accordance with the principles of the European Energy charter. Therefore, the charter includes several important normative rules, such as “the Contracting Parties must encourage and create stable, favorable and transparent conditions for foreign investors” or “trade in energy materials and products between Contracting Parties is governed by GATT rules.”<sup>21</sup> More precisely, the charter adds emphasis on several issues such as transportation, competition, transparency, and sovereignty.

To conclude, the European energy system is a nascent regime whereby certain principles and norms are sought to be formed. Rather than becoming tangled in the bilateral quarrels among different states, the EU prefers a regime-based solution. Thus, the Union has from the very beginning tried to impose a functional energy regime based on certain principles in order to guarantee safe and stable energy transactions. Though a complex situation, Turkey also stands as an alternative. The Turkish option is defined by Priority Axes (see Map 1) as decided in the TEN-E Guidelines: “The EU will need to be connected to the Turkish network by 2010 to receive gas from the Caspian Sea region and/or the Middle East. As Turkish corridor is expected to become a major transit route in the following decade, the possible construction of two Balkan routes, to Austria via Southeast Europe, and the pipeline connection from Turkey to Greece and Italy are foreseen.”<sup>22</sup>

The issue of connecting the European and the Turkish energy systems is critical. This is perceived as an essential step by the EU in order to be connected with the energy resource in the Caspian Sea region and the Middle East. Another very important program from Turkey’s perspective is the European pipeline system project (INOGATE). The INOGATE (Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe) Program is an international cooperation program aimed at promoting the regional integration of the pipeline systems and facilitating the transportation of oil and gas both within the greater New Independent States region and toward the export markets of Europe. The program is also intended to draw private investors and international financial institutions to these pipeline projects.<sup>23</sup> The INOGATE project enhances the security of supply of both the EU and the INOGATE participat-

<sup>19</sup> [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/euromed/bd.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/bd.htm)].

<sup>20</sup> [<http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/127028.htm>].

<sup>21</sup> The European Energy Charter. Available at [<http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/127028.htm>].

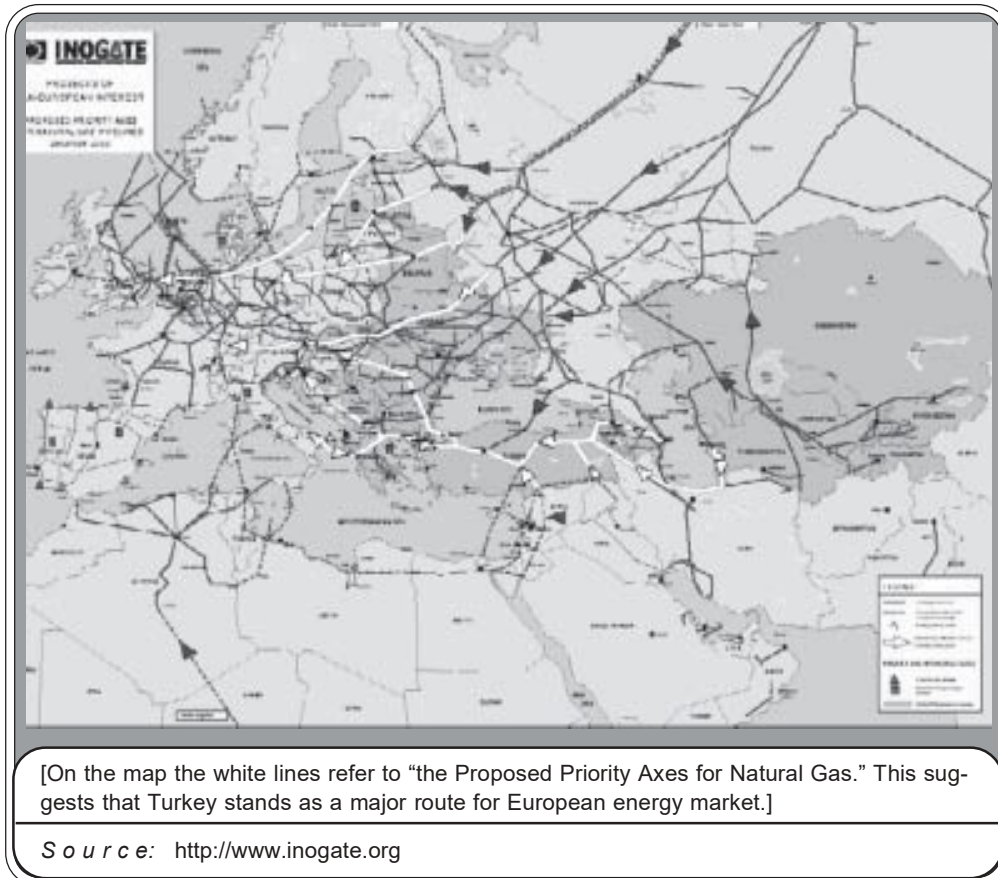
<sup>22</sup> [[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/ten/energy/legislation/guidelines\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/ten/energy/legislation/guidelines_en.htm)].

<sup>23</sup> [<http://www.inogate.org/html/brief/bricf2.htm>].

ing countries by mainly enhancing the safety and security of the existing network. Turkey officially joined the INOGATE Program on 30 March, 2000.

Map 1

The Proposed Priority Axes for Natural Gas Pipelines of Europe according to INOGATE



As stated above, the European energy market clearly requires the fulfillment of certain prerequisites. The European energy system is not only focused on bilateral economic relations, but also on a complex systemic structure based on norms, principles, and regulations. Thus, countries are normally expected to harmonize their legal structure with the European legal system. An ultimate consequence of this progress for Turkey is to harmonize its national systems according to the European regime. To realize this prerequisite, Turkey so far has fulfilled many requirements. For instance, on 18 May, 2001, a new law on natural gas was put into action.<sup>24</sup> This new regulation mostly aims to privatize the gas market on the basis of transparency in Turkey. Another prerequisite is the construction of a pipeline system, another essential step which could assist

<sup>24</sup> [<http://www.pmo.org.tr/kanun/dogalgazkanun/1-1.htm>].

Turkey's integration into the European energy system. The construction of various international pipelines necessitates a new legal framework in which there would be fewer legal, economic, and political restrictions.

3. In understanding the political conditions under which energy based concerns emerge, another important issue is the competition over energy resources. The parties involved have quickly found themselves in hard competition over energy resources. Therefore, many energy projects have come to the fore as alternatives. The competition between the states is extended to the competition of the states' projects. Larger parties such as the United States, the EU, and Russia and middle regional powers such as Iran and Turkey are all part of this clash. Energy cannot be isolated from politics. For example, a pipeline, which was designated to go from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India was cancelled in 1998 because of the rise of the Taliban regime in Kabul. Political concerns have always been of importance when building new pipelines and establishing new trade relations. When all competing parties are considered, one can see that Turkey's policy regarding the energy politics problem is closely related to the post-Soviet rivalry between certain states such as Turkey, Russia, the United States, the EU, and Iran.<sup>25</sup> Yet despite the withdrawal of its dominant political presence, Russia continues to play a very significant role in the energy market. From the very beginning, Russia has been against the involvement of external actors in the region such as the United States and has even opposed the construction of several pipeline projects. In the absence of an energy regime in the region, each state perceives energy cooperation from its national perspective. For instance, Russia was initially against the Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline because it wanted to control all Caspian oil flow through Russia.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the so-called "contract of the century" that assigned 6.75 percent of Azeri oil to Turkey was strongly criticized by Russia. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that Russia would not recognize the agreement.<sup>27</sup> In a similar case, a note from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the British Embassy in Moscow in April 1994 stated that without Russian approval, any oil deals in the Caspian Sea "cannot be recognized."<sup>28</sup>

The United States similarly wants to dominate energy-related political developments. For example, the United States has been critical of any project in which Iran has a major role.<sup>29</sup> From the very beginning, the chief aims of U.S. energy policy have been to tap the region's energy resources in order to diversify world energy suppliers, to provide an opportunity for U.S. trade and investment, and to limit the influence of Central Asia's neighbors—particularly Russia and Iran.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the United States supported several projects while attempting to prevent others. For instance, the Baku-Ceyhan project has been supported by the United States.<sup>31</sup> The United States organized a meeting in 1999 with Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan in Istanbul, where a package of legal agreements

<sup>25</sup> See: S. Bölükbaşı, "The Controversy over the Caspian Sea Mineral Resources: Conflicting Perceptions, Clashing Interests," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 3, May 1998, p. 397.

<sup>26</sup> See: R. Hottelet, "Tangled Web of an Oil Pipeline," *Christian Science Monitor*, Vol. 90, No. 109, 5 January, 1998, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> See: A. Spatharou, "The Political Role of Oil in Azerbaijan, 1989-1994," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2002, p. 34.

<sup>28</sup> St. Blank, "Energy and Security in Transcaucasia," *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 42, No. 4, July/August 1995, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> The U.S. interest dates even back to the early decades of the last century (see: Ph.S. Gillette, "American Capital in the Contest for Soviet Oil, 1920-1923," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, April 1973, pp. 477-490).

<sup>30</sup> See: N. Lubin, "Pipe Dreams Potential Impacts of Energy Exploitation," *Harvard International Review*, Winter/Spring 2000, p. 68.

<sup>31</sup> See: A. Begoyan, "United States Policy in the South Caucasus: Securitization of the Baku-Ceyhan Project," *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2004, p. 141.



was signed under American auspices. The objective was twofold: to reduce Russia's political influence in the Caucasus and to further isolate Iran, and to create a quasi energy regime based on American perspectives.<sup>32</sup> Such steps were considered hostile by Russia. For example, a Major General of Russian Army in North Caucasian Military District wrote that the U.S.-backed Baku-Ceyhan project is against Russian interests. He asserted: "For the U.S. and its allies, crucial geostrategic importance attaches to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project. *First*, as an alternative project it can markedly reduce the significance of Russian pipelines and deprive Russia of the possibility of serving as the only transportation corridor for Caspian oil to the West; and *second*, it will help to squeeze Russia out of Caspian oil projects and then out of the Transcaucasian region in general."<sup>33</sup>

The issues summarized so far are all relevant and influence Turkey's standing in energy politics. They have forced Turkey to create a functional and complex energy system in order to realize what is needed so as to maximize its national interest. Undoubtedly, such a complex picture has required a structural change in Ankara's foreign policy. However, within this framework, what is of importance is that from the beginning, Turkey has been willing to play an active role in the competition over energy resources. Despite the early and short-lived romantic approach, Turkey has to a great extent quickly adapted itself to the political realities. The nature of energy politics has played a major role in the adoption of a pragmatist and functionalist standpoint.

In general, Turkey's energy politics can be summarized as follows: Turkey has tried to increase its share in international projects, and it has tried to increase its role in international energy routes. Also, the integration of the Turkish system into neighboring energy systems, such as the European energy system, has been the main goal of Turkish energy politics. With limited economic and political capacity, Turkey has been relatively successful in accomplishing those goals. When Turkey's position in reference to energy politics issues is analyzed, it is clear that Turkish decision-makers are now far more pragmatic and less preoccupied with moralistic concerns. It was mainly new opportunities, such as those in the energy arena that brought about a need for a new foreign policy perception. In fact, the nature of energy politics requires a different framework, as it is a highly market-oriented issue. Thus, economic concerns dominate political concerns. Energy politics is a rational process, because objective facts such as market figures dominate the process; therefore, incalculable facts such as morality and identity are expected to be limited. Furthermore, since a variety of actors and causes are at work, states are in a complex bargaining process. As a result, there has been an increased mutual interdependence among different actors. Because energy resources are limited and states need energy resources, the diversification of resources is a general policy, and states are forced to cooperate with other states. As part of this framework, Turkey has also carried out many reforms in order to harmonize itself with the political, technical, and legal conditions of the energy market. These reforms and activities have developed a new pragmatic standing in foreign policy.

## The Turkish Pipeline System

The construction of different energy routes through Turkey has become a fundamental parameter for Ankara's foreign policy. It has also changed the traditional understanding of foreign policy. A functionalist approach emerges as a dominating paradigm in the decision-making process. What follows is a short description of various pipeline projects at different stages. The aim of the following

<sup>32</sup> See: A. Rasizade, "The Bush Administration and the Caspian Oil Pipeline," *Contemporary Review*, Vol. 279, July 2001, p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> Yu.Ye. Ivanov, "Russia's National Security Problems in Transcaucasia and the Era of Globalization," *Military Thought*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2005, p. 52.

list is to present the complex picture of energy politics that has generated structural requirements and changes for Turkey.

### **Projects to be Realized or those under Construction**

1. Azerbaijan-Turkey (Shah Deniz) Project: The aim of the project is to bring Azeri gas through Georgia to Turkey. The Turkish section of the pipeline is 225 km. The gas trade contract between Turkey and Azerbaijan, which envisages a 15-year gas trade between two states, was signed on 12 March, 2001. According to the contract, the gas trade began in 2004 with two billion cubic meters. It is also anticipated in the contract that Turkey will buy 6.6 billion cubic meters from Azerbaijan by 2007.
2. Turkey-Egypt Natural Gas Pipeline Project: This project aims to bring Egyptian natural gas to Turkey. Once finalized, the pipeline is expected to bring four billion cubic meters of Egyptian natural gas to Turkey. The contract was signed on 31 March, 2001 between the Egyptian Eastern Mediterranean Gas Company and BOTAS.<sup>34</sup> The first political agreement was signed between the energy ministers of Turkey and Egypt on February 2, 2000 in Ankara. This protocol included both gas and oil trade between the two countries. In addition, a press communiqué from the Turkish Energy Ministry stated that Syria could also be included in the project. According to the Ministry, the Turkish-Egypt pipeline was designed to bring Middle Eastern gas to Europe via Turkey. Hence, a pipeline could also be constructed in Syria. According to the communiqué, official meetings were held between Turkish and Syrian officials. In fact, on 30 June, 2003, Syrian and Turkish energy ministers signed an agreement for energy cooperation, especially in terms of gas and oil. A similar agreement was also signed also during the Turkish Minister's visit to Syria on 1 November, 2003.<sup>35</sup>
3. Turkey-Greece Natural Gas Pipeline Project: This project involves natural gas trade between Turkey and Greece. Originally, the project was also designed within the context of the South Europe Natural Gas System, a related document signed between two sides on 28 March, 2002. Related items were also finalized on 25 March, 2003. This project's significance is that it originated with European states and it is, therefore, especially favored and supported in EU-TEN.<sup>36</sup> According to the project, by 2012, the capacity of the energy trade will reach 11 billion cubic meters. Also, it is planned to bring eight billion cubic meters of this gas to Italy. The pipeline is planned as a 209 km to 300 km pipeline on Turkish territory. Concerning the Italian part of the mission, official deals were made between the Greek and Italian governments. That part of the project was also included in the EU-TEN framework. In other words, the Turkish-Greek pipeline may be completed as the Turkish-Greek-Italian pipeline. The construction of the gas pipeline began on 3 July, 2005.
4. Turkmenistan-Turkey-Europe Natural Gas Pipeline Project: The aim of the project is to bring Turkmen gas from the Caspian Sea to Turkey and to Europe. This project was designed in response to both Turkish and European needs and also envisages the transportation of Russian gas via Georgian territory. In the first year, five cubic meters out of 15 billion cubic meters of gas are expected to be transported from Russia. It is important to note that five billion cubic meters of this gas is Russian gas.

<sup>34</sup> The official Turkish company responsible for constructing pipelines.

<sup>35</sup> See: *T.C. Enerji ve Tabii Kaynaklar Bakanlığı Basın Bülteni*, 21 December, 2004 [www.enerji.tr/belge/suriye.doc].

<sup>36</sup> EU-TEN is the acronym for TransEuropean Network for Transport.

5. Russia-Turkey-Israel Natural Gas Pipeline Project: Even though this project was officially suspended, BOTAŞ still includes it on its homepage. According to BOTAŞ this project may be renewed in the future.
6. Turkey-Iraq Natural Gas Pipeline: The aim of this project is to bring Iraqi natural gas to Turkey and to export it to other markets via Turkey. Two countries signed the first official agreement on this project on 26 December, 1996. According to the agreement, the pipeline will bring ten billion cubic meters a year. Several important Western firms, such as Gaz de France, (GDF) are also interested in the project.

### The Existing Pipelines

7. Russian Federation-Europe-Turkey Natural Gas Pipeline: This project brings Russian gas to Turkey via the Bulgarian borders. The total length of the Turkish sector is 842 km. After various alternatives, an agreement between Turkey and Soviet Russia was signed on 18 September, 1984. According to the agreement, both sides initiated a natural gas trade. In 1987, the first part of the pipeline was finished and the gas brought from Russia was used to produce electricity in the Turkish Hamitabat plant in Kırklareli. In 1988, the pipeline was extended to Ankara. According to the 1986 agreement, the pipeline was designed for six billion cubic meters of natural gas per year. The agreement was signed for a 25-year period. However, another agreement extended the project for another 25-year period on the basis of 14 billion cubic meters natural gas.
8. Iran-Turkey Natural Gas Pipeline: This project was designed to satisfy Turkish market demands from Iranian resources. The project was initially designed to extend to Europe. An agreement between Turkey and Iran was signed in 1996 for a 22-year gas trade. Since 10 December, 2001, the route has been active.
9. The Blue Stream Pipeline: The Blue Stream pipeline was designed for the transportation of Russian gas to Turkey from the Black Sea to Samsun Port up to Ankara for a duration of 25 years in volumes reaching 16 billion cubic meters.<sup>37</sup> Its construction, undertaken by Russia, Turkey, and Italy—involving a joint venture between Russia's gas giant Gazprom and Italy's major energy provider ENI—began in 1997.
10. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline: The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, 1,750 km long and designed to carry one million barrels of oil per day from the Caucasus to the Mediterranean when it reaches full capacity (scheduled for 2009), has been built by a consortium of Western oil companies led by BP, which also includes the American oil giant Halliburton. Its construction begun in 1998, and on 25 May, 2005, the pipeline was inaugurated at a ceremony at the Sangachal Oil Terminal south of Baku. Even though the BTC project is constructed for oil transportation, its huge volume makes it worth mentioning here. The BTC was mainly proposed to save the West from relying on Middle Eastern oil. Once the pipeline is fully operational—expected to happen in five years—it will be capable of carrying one percent of the world's daily oil requirements.<sup>38</sup> Since the pipeline is supposed to reach one million barrels a day, it is believed to have the potential to change the global oil market.<sup>39</sup>

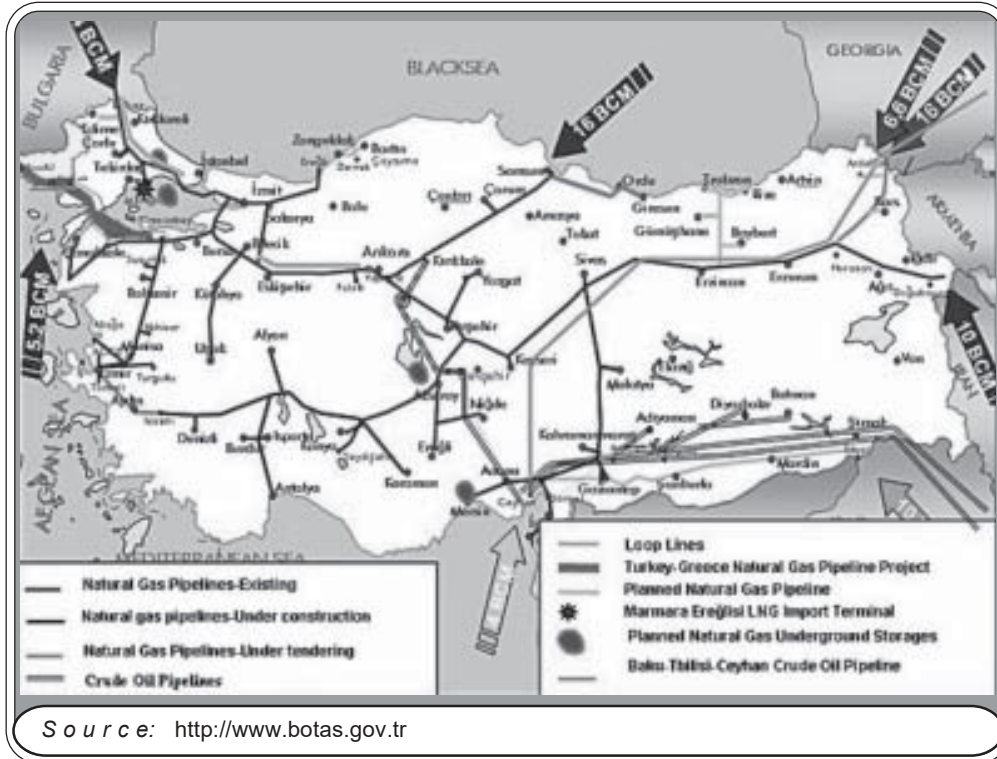
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<sup>37</sup> See: G. Bacık, "The Blue Stream Project, Energy Cooperation and Conflicting Interests," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Autumn 2001, pp. 85-93.

<sup>38</sup> See: I. Siddiqui, "The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline and the Politics of Oil," *Media Monitors Network*, 14 June, 2005 [<http://usa.mediamonitors.net>].

<sup>39</sup> See: D. Howden and Ph. Thornton, "The Pipeline That Will Change the World," *The Independent*, 25 May, 2005.

The Turkish Pipeline System



As analyzed in the above-presented cases, the issue of energy cooperation involves many different actors. Energy-based collaboration among a number of states increases mutual interdependence between actors. Turkey has gradually adopted its foreign policy in order to cope with the energy-oriented requirements in the international field. Energy-based cooperation has enhanced Turkey's bilateral relations with many different countries, such as Iran, Greece, and Russia. Even the idea of cooperation with Armenia, though it is still the hardliners who dominate the power corridors, has become a common idea on the basis of energy cooperation.

## The Role of the Justice and Development Party

Different political actors have to some degree succeeded at rescuing themselves from ideological inclinations in energy politics. For example, despite the heavy value-loaded discourse, even the Turkish ultra nationalist party (the Nationalist Action Party—*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*) did not abort energy cooperation with Russia. However, special attention should be given to the ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) in analyzing Turkey's pragmatic agenda of energy politics. The Justice and Development Party (JDP) government has followed a new stance especially in foreign policy, which can be defined as new functionalism. Pragmatism and flexibility are keywords in understanding the JDP's position. In contrast to the former normative discourse, the JDP has pre-

ferred a materialistic and functionalist approach. The JDP, for example, has in a relatively short period made unprecedented changes in several traditional problems of Turkish foreign policy, such as the Cyprus issue. In the past, functionalist discourse has been part of previous reformist conservative parties, such as the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*) of the 1980s and the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Partisi*) of the 1950s. The JDP brand of functionalism can be explained as follows: The JDP perceives several traditional problems of Turkish foreign policy as structural obstacles that isolate Turkey from the international system. The JDP rulers also are well aware that this isolated structure enhances the status of several domestic actors, such as the army and the bureaucracy. Therefore, the JDP pragmatically wants to overcome these problems.

On the other hand, the JDP follows a strict economic liberal ideology in terms of political economy. This policy does, of course, have certain implications such as privatization and foreign investment. The JDP government has implemented an unprecedented privatization program in the past three years. Many important state corporations, such as the National Petroleum Refineries, were sold despite the traditional nationalist opposition which declared such units as strategic in terms of national security. Similarly, the JDP has managed to attract an unprecedented level of foreign investment in Turkey. As expected, the JDP's unprecedented liberal agenda is strongly criticized by nationalist parties. Facing criticism from both the left and right about his party's economic policies, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan stated that one of his duties was to market Turkey. Similarly, when he was criticized about foreign investment, Erdoğan blamed his critics of being "economic racists."<sup>40</sup> In a popularly debated speech he said, "We invite the Jewish capital, but it is criticized. We also invite the Arab capital, it is also criticized. That means the real problem is possessed by the critics."<sup>41</sup> In a conference on foreign investment organized in Istanbul Erdoğan stated, "I don't care whether it is Jewish, Arab or Western money. I appreciate all."<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, Prime Minister Erdoğan meets investors from Israel and different Arab states, and he regularly visits the rich Arab Gulf States. According to Erdoğan, those who still defend a kind of state-centered economic paradigm are behind the times. He also blames the bureaucratic oligarchy for being a great obstacle to reform.<sup>43</sup>

In sum, the JDP brand of liberalism depends on two pillars: the intellectual pillar and the pragmatic pillar. In reference to the intellectual pillar, the JDP believes that Turkey should harmonize itself to the realities of the liberal world economic system. In this sense, the JDP, despite its religious identity, shares the liberal paradigm. As expected, certain policies of this paradigm, such as privatization, minimizing the role of state, and opening the national market for foreign investment, are implemented in an unprecedented way. Certain liberal policies such as privatization or foreign investment both limit the leverage of non-elected actors in a political system and contribute to long-term stability.

The JDP's functionalist perspective is also influential in energy politics. First, the government has realized many reforms aimed at the liberalization of the energy market. The Turkish energy system has been reorganized to comply with international, and especially European, conditions. Such prerequisites are realized through the liberal agenda of government in the domestic market. The JDP government has realized many liberal reforms. Energy Minister Güler declared that the Turkish energy regime would be organized in parallel with the European energy regime, mainly the European Energy Charter. "We are organizing the energy sector in Turkey according to the free market principles."<sup>44</sup> Second, the government has not hesitated to cooperate with other states in terms of ener-

<sup>40</sup> "Sermaye Polemiği," *Milliyet*, 12 October, 2005.

<sup>41</sup> M. Aşık, "Sermaye Irkçılığı," *Milliyet*, 13 October, 2005 (see also: F. Özkan, "Arap Sermayesini İstiyor muyuz?" *Radikal*, 10 November, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> "Yabancı Sermayeyi Öpüp Başımın Üstüne Koyarım," *Sabah*, 10 November, 2005.

<sup>43</sup> See: N. Karataş, "Erdoğan: Türkiye imajını topyekün pazarlıyorum," *Hürriyet*, 10 November, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> M. Yetkin, "Enerji, Türkiye'nin en büyük kozlarından biri," *Radikal*, 8 April, 2005.

gy cooperation. Turkey, in spite of several problems with countries such as Iran, Greece, and Russia, has been successful in realizing energy-based cooperation with them. The materialistic paradigm has so far dominated normative concerns in the energy context. Third, and most important, the government also takes energy as important leverage in other fields such as in Turkish-European relations. Energy is recontextualized in different fields. Along with well-known goals such as the diversification of energy resources, Turkey wants to use energy as an instrument through which to enhance its role with regard to the European Union. Turkish Energy Minister Hilmi Güler summarized these objectives as follow: “Forty percent oil and 65 percent of the natural gas is produced in our region. Turkey is an important bridge between energy consumers and producers. If we consider China, India and great consumer states like the EU and the U.S. the complexity of the picture will be much clearer. Turkey’s importance lies here.”<sup>45</sup>

Thus, one of the principal goals of Turkish energy politics is integration with the EU. The minister of energy once formulated it as follows: “We are entering into the European Union with pipelines.” For example, referring to the Turkey-Greece pipeline, Minister Güler clarified their vision as follows: “This pipeline will extend to reach Italy. In other words, we will embrace Europe in the south which means that this project can be extended so as to include Spain. Through another pipeline system we can reach Central Europe: Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria.”<sup>46</sup>

According to Güler, energy is a great advantage for Turkey in the process of becoming an EU member. As Turkey stands both as a terminal and corridor state, its importance to the European market is very clear. This strategy is valid both for oil and gas. With new projects such as the Turkish-Greek pipeline and the Nabucco project (Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria route), Minister Güler predicts that by 2020 the amount of gas for the European market through the Turkish pipeline system may even reach 35 billion cubic meters. Minister Güler formulated recent developments in Turkey as a paradigm shift.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Prime Minister Erdoğan underlined many times that Turkey’s position and potential is important for Turkey’s integration into the European Union.<sup>48</sup>

Due to systemic and pragmatic reasons, the JDP has accelerated the course of liberalization which has indeed facilitated energy-based cooperation with different states. Former nationalistic concerns were almost completely eliminated. A materialistic logic, which focuses on benefit-cost analysis, has come to the fore.

## *C o n c l u s i o n*

It is likely that Turkey will employ a new framework in foreign policy with such a complex pipeline system. Such changes are important in evaluating the rise of a new narrative on geopolitics. In a sharp contrast to the former tautological debates, Turkey’s geopolitics is now defined on the basis of tangible facts regarding pipelines. The rise of pipeline politics increases Turkey’s leverage in other fields as well. Turkey’s complex cooperation with many states (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Greece, Syria, Iran, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Austria, Russia, Georgia, Egypt, India, Yemen etc.) may create similar spillover effects.<sup>49</sup> A functionalist paradigm is expected to dominate Turkish view toward those states as energy deals and contracts with various states increase complex interdependency.

<sup>45</sup> *Dünya*, 29 June, 2005, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> M. Yetkin, op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> See: “Türkmen elektriği gazdan önce geldi,” *Zaman*, 23 December, 2003.

<sup>48</sup> See: “Erdoğan’dan Enerji Açığı Uyarısı,” *Garanti Dergisi*, March 2004. Available at [[http://www.garanti.com.tr/anasayfa/garanti\\_dergisi/mart2004/ic\\_ekonomi.html](http://www.garanti.com.tr/anasayfa/garanti_dergisi/mart2004/ic_ekonomi.html)].

<sup>49</sup> See: “Yemen’de Dostluk Rüzgarı,” *Yeni Safak*, 27 October, 2005.

Simultaneously, a new functional link between domestic and foreign domains emerges which is expected to transform Turkish foreign policy. In this manner, the issue of pipelines renders Turkish foreign policy less value-oriented. Certainly, such material facts create a more pragmatic and flexible tendency in Turkish foreign policy. Thus, the rise of economic rationality should be emphasized. Energy politics helps Turkey in rescuing itself from certain traditional value-based discourses. Today, Turkey is open to energy-based relations with any neighbor. In theory, countries are more open to energy diplomacy with those states with whom they have some value-based problems. Also, the rise of such material concerns has enhanced the concept of continuity in Turkish foreign policy. Because energy constructs are long term and complex integration projects, foreign policy become a long-term plan. It may bring stability on a regional scale.

To conclude, the classical geopolitical narrative of Turkey was an organic one. Instead of rational causality, it depends on pure metaphysical or tautological logic. This article has suggested that the rise of energy politics through many pipeline contracts truly produced a change in the Turkish narrative of geopolitics. A new narrative is emerging which depends on solid and rational causality. Several changes such as technology and the infusion of capital can modify the strategic meaning of a particular geographic space. Similarly, the construction of pipelines through Turkish territories has modified the Turkish geopolitical vocabulary. The most apparent and tangible proof of this important change is obviously the Turkish pipeline system.