

The 'Century of Türkiye' as a Strategic Discourse

HASAN YÜKSELEN

Foreign Policy Institute, Türkiye
ORCID No: 0000-0002-9852-5168

ABSTRACT *The 'Century of Türkiye' has been introduced as the new discourse of strategy in Turkish foreign policy with the centennial of the Republic of Türkiye. In this respect, this article explores which factors determined the emergence of the discourse, how the agency has perceived the shifts in structure, how Türkiye has positioned itself concerning shifts in the international political system, global economy, and geography, the perils and promises of determined strategy, and what the discourse entails. It is argued that the new strategy is articulated as a vision-oriented strategy and constitutes a continuity in the preceding century in the country's quest for greater autonomy. The article points out factors that could cause incongruence between what is intended with the articulated strategy, what is spoken through discourse, and what is actualized at the end.*

Keywords: Century of Türkiye, Strategy, Strategic Discourse, Turkish Foreign Policy

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Introduction

The centennial of Turkish foreign policy is being welcomed with a new strategic discourse, the Century of Türkiye. This article aims to explore the dynamics that paved the way for the articulation of a new strategy in the next century of Turkish foreign policy. The questions that are deemed essential to substantiate the answer are defined as follows: which factors have determined the emergence of the discourse; how has the agency perceived the shifts in structure; how has Türkiye positioned itself with regard to shifts in the international political system, global economy, and geography; what are the perils and promises of the determined strategy; and what does the discourse entail.

In exploring the answers to the questions, the first part of the article provides a brief overview of the preceding century to identify the basic characteristics of Turkish foreign policy and the driving mindset behind its articulation. The concept of differences in continuity is utilized to understand how agency and structure condition each other during the process of interaction.¹ The second part, based on the theoretical framework, focuses on the structured context in which ongoing transformations in the international political system, global economy, and geography condition the formulation of strategy by agency. The third part delves into details about the strategy, founded upon the agential reading of the structured context, including an analysis of the remedies to resolve the contradictions produced by the structure. What the discourse of strategy, the Century of Türkiye, entails and how it is perceived are analyzed in the fourth section. The conclusion stands out as an exploratory analysis that provides a prospective analysis dedicated to uncovering sources of (in)congruence between what is intended with the strategy, what is spoken through discourse, and the factors that could create a gap between what is intended and what is actualized. Though the outcomes of the strategy have not unfolded yet, the major perils and promises are explored and analyzed.

This article argues that Turkish foreign policy displays elements of continuity with the preceding century with adaptations to contextually emerging challenges. However, it can be suggested that the centennial of Turkish foreign policy is welcomed with a vision-oriented strategy and discourse devoted to enlarging agency and strategic autonomy.

The Evolution of Strategic Discourse: Differences in Continuity

Throughout the Republican period, Türkiye has articulated different strategies and represented them with corresponding discourses. The dominant discourses of strategy reflected the agential strategic posture that was adopted

in respective periods. This section is devoted to providing a short outlook of the previous century to determine a trajectory of basic characteristics of different strategies and their associated discourses.

As a “goal-directed activity”² strategy is dedicated to actualizing determined strategic ends with available and mobilizable competent means to transform a “potentiality into actuality.”³ Strategic ends emerge out of an agential reading of the structure based on the situation’s dialectical interaction of internality and externality. An agency, depending on its level of awareness and reflexivity,⁴ identifies the contradictions and opportunities inherent to the emerging context and articulates its strategy either to resolve the encountered contradictions or to envisage an enabling strategic environment that is deemed promising to widen strategic room and options. In other words, by strategizing, agents internalize their externalities and externalize their internalities.⁵ Here, a dialectical reading and correspondence interacts, constitutes, and accommodates the encountered context and shapes the ongoing agential *praxis*. The act of strategizing, which is inherently an attribute of the agency, is essentially an act of positioned practice (*praxis*)⁶ that “denotes the appropriation and transformation”⁷ of the constraining circumstances that were imposed by the structure into desired ones that would enable further room for agency.

Strategic discourses emerge out of the representation of the articulated strategies.⁸ Publicizing the adopted strategy with a tailored discourse can be seen inherently as a political act that reveals what you think and how you will act.⁹ Hence, it involves revelations that reduce the doubts of other agents in particular contexts as it contributes to their knowledge of the situation and hints about future acts of the owner of the circulated discourse. In other words, it has the potential to render counter-acts depending on other agents’ perception of a contradiction, which in the end might even lead to being categorized as a “threat” by receivers. Similarly, the originator of discourse reflects on the strategy, too. Türkiye, throughout the Republican period, adopted several discourses that reflect its strategic posturing on developments. The discourses and strategies were either threat-oriented or vision-oriented, articulated upon the agential reading of the respective structured context, which was seen as either permissive or restrictive.

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means or the enabling and constraining forces of structured context. However, throughout the Republican period, an underlying intent and objective to expand and enhance the agency remained in place. In other words, both differences and continuity can be observed. The concept of “differences in continuity” is utilized to understand how the interaction of agency and structure determines the articulation of strategy. With differences, it is deemed to understand the actions of the agency to alter the structure, and with continuity the factors of structure that conditioned (enabling or constraining) the agency. Though Türkiye has strived to widen its agential space to pursue its policies, actualizing the strategic ends could not succeed in each case, as the structure constrained and narrowed its agential space. But it should be noted that rather than presuming the structure has a determinant effect on agency, it is a dialectical process in which both agency and structure condition each other, though with differing influences in different periods, depending on the strength to shape.

Throughout the Republican period, Türkiye identified different discourses of strategy: “Independence or Death,” “Peace at Home, Peace in the World,” “Türkiye Cannot Assure Its Security through Forging Alliances,” “A New World Is to Be Built, Türkiye Will Take Its Place,” “The Turkic World: From the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China,” and “We Have Historical Responsibilities.”¹⁰ In different periods, each of the discourses represented the adopted strategy, though the actualization of each strategy could not be managed, depending on either scarcity of allocated agential

Structure and Context

The structure and context employed by the agency –in this case, Türkiye– underwent significant transformations with a wide array of significant ramifications that condition the articulation of both strategy and its representation through discourse. The utilized theoretical approach to analyzing the shift within the structure and its implications on the agency covers three essential sub-structures: the international political system, the global economy, and geography, each of which has distinct but interrelated ramifications on the agency. This section is dedicated to sketching out the context that conditions the posturing of the agency. The following discussion on structure aims

to discern the main drivers and determinants that are being taken into account during the agency's strategizing.

The international political system has witnessed growing tensions between great powers and the associated tension of confrontation risks between them. The dominant feature is the quest for a global order, with one side aiming to preserve the existing order and the other seeking to revise it. In the aftermath of the Cold War, Nye characterized global primacy and the role of the U.S with the rods of "bound lead"¹¹ which is transforming into a "bound to compete" given the ongoing competition with China. Ongoing competition is stoking fears which is leading to a new characterization and questioning whether the U.S. is "bound to fail."¹² With the erosion of U.S. power, the rise of China, and the challenge of Russia, the debates of a new world order¹³ led other countries to re-position themselves in relation to ongoing changes and associated challenges. Irrespective of the character of the emerging world order, the shifts triggered the emergence of both enabling and constraining factors with significant ramifications on states and their strategies.

One of the prominent observed outcomes of the shift is the proliferation of state and non-state actors. The number of states registered to the United Nations has not increased but their capacity to pursue their interests has been empowered as they found greater room for agency thanks to the "transition of power among states and diffusion of power away from states."¹⁴ In a similar vein, non-state actors also found space to pursue their own interests or the interests of benefactors that they recruited as proxies.

The U.S. involvement and interventions in the Middle East, with an agenda of a regime change, inadvertently caused the proliferation of terrorist organizations as the interventions weakened the authoritarian regimes without politically viable governments capable of exerting control on the respective countries. ISIS and the PKK/YPG's existence and survival are either the outcome of misreading the regional dynamics or mismanaging the emerging threats, eliminating one terrorist organization by employing another as a proxy as in the case of ISIS and the PKK/YPG. The proliferation of terrorist organizations, primarily the PKK/YPG and ISIS, that pose security challenges in the southern borders of Türkiye, and the growing role of private military companies and mercenaries in either Libya or Ukraine have created sources of instability and concern.

Apart from terrorism and challenges posed by non-state actors, since 2014, Russia has gradually been considered a direct threat to the West,¹⁵ and starting in February 2022 with the Ukrainian war, the division between the West and Russia leaped to another stage bearing the risk of direct confrontation. While debates claimed tension between the two signaled the start of a Second Cold

Changes in the political and economic system have produced ramifications on geography and inevitably the meaning and functions attached to it are incurring deep transformations

War,¹⁶ the Ukrainian war, however, leveled up the claims and stoked the fears of a Third World War,¹⁷ as growing tensions increased the concerns of nuclear escalation between the West and Russia.¹⁸ Thanks to common sense and nuclear taboos, tensions have not reached that level of escalation, at least for now.

The war in Ukraine disrupted relative stability and increased security concerns in the Black Sea. From the very beginning of the conflict, Türkiye strived to de-escalate tensions between the two countries by organizing diplomatic forums,¹⁹ but hope was dashed by the controversial and brutal attacks on Bucha. Nevertheless, Ankara's success in mediating the warring parties for a grain deal, which curbed the impacts of the global food crisis and subsequent famine in poor countries, maintained the narrowing diplomatic channels. The grain deal also facilitated keeping the maritime domain in the Black Sea relatively stable, which is a top priority for Türkiye.

The great power competition between the U.S. and China has also begun to impact the surrounding region of Türkiye. Chinese involvement in the Middle East by brokering ease in the ongoing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran has the potential to alter the existing landscape in the region, though China prefers economic infiltration rather than political interference in regional politics. Irrespective of the motivation, its involvement is prone to produce implications for regional politics, though early outcomes give positive signals as it eliminates intra-regional tensions while also eroding Washington's influence and interests.²⁰

The global economy is also facing significant transformations with the shifts in trade routes, crises of supply chains, technological advancements that could disrupt existing practices, the fate of globalization in the face of great power competition,²¹ the inflation of energy and food prices that have further deteriorated amid the war in Ukraine, and de-dollarization as a reaction to the weaponization of financial primacy of dollar to sanction, to name a few. All the mentioned developments incur burdens to the economies that already faced heavy losses during lockdowns amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which underlined the excessive interconnectedness of the globe. The measures enacted to control the pandemic triggered disruptions of the supply chains, economic meltdowns, and inflation. Already existing economic difficulties have been further exacerbated by the eruption of the Ukrainian war, which introduced



the weaponization of energy and food to respond to economic sanctions imposed by the West.²²

Behind the shifts, the global economy's growing role of technology and the Fourth Industrial Revolution play a significant role.²³ The possession, access, and control of natural resources have significantly contributed to the countries' international standing. Similarly, as the shifts become visible in the upcoming period, whoever possesses, accesses, and controls the high-tech will gain advantages in asserting international standing. In a way, the commodity-intensive nature of the economy is transforming into a knowledge-intensive one, suggesting the revival of the power-knowledge relationship in different forms.

The rivalry between China and the U.S. regarding technology²⁴ is also producing ramifications for other countries. While the U.S. has enacted export control regimes on high-end technology, China has responded with controls on rare materials crucial in the production of high-end technology products and the green revolution, which is deemed essential to curb the impacts of climate change.²⁵ The developed states, particularly the U.S., maintain a re-industrialization²⁶ process to retain their technological and economic primacy and edge, reshoring and thus repatriating their production capabilities. To legitimize the mercantilist turn from liberal policies, countries have adopted a new concept of patriotism to avoid nationalism, which is laden with negative connotations as it is seen as the root cause of the two world wars.

The U.S. prefers to impose sanctions on countries whenever its interests are at stake. Opting for sanctions is criticized as bullying. However, with the shifts

A family photo, of international leaders and government officials, taken during the NATO Summit that included Turkish President Erdoğan's participation, in Vilnius, Lithuania, July 7, 2023.

NATO / AA

Throughout the Republican period, Ankara sought greater room for agency and therefore formulated corresponding strategic ends

toward multipolarity and diversification, Washington's tools that punish non-compliance and defiance are eroding gradually as the process of de-dollarization gains momentum, accelerating the quest for alternative financial transaction systems. This means instruments of bullying and

sanctioning are becoming counterproductive. The trend will hurt U.S. interests, if not soon, but definitely at some point in the future.²⁷

The major developments in political and economic structures have had significant ramifications on geography as well. Physical geography has not seen major changes but the significance of certain regions is undergoing deep transformations coupled with the expansion of domains to include cyber platforms and outer space. Changes in the political and economic system have produced ramifications on geography and inevitably the meaning and functions attached to it are incurring deep transformations. Connectivity is a function of geography upon which undergoing shifts and newly established connections led to the concept of *connectography*.²⁸ In fact, both concepts are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they complement and reinforce each other with the new emerging realities.²⁹ Nevertheless, *connectography* has the potential to transform the nature of the geographies, both in the sense of enabling and constraining the activities of agents residing across multiple geographies and possessing or adding new connections.

Türkiye sits on the intersection of evolving shifts as the new connections and interactions transform the *connectography*. Despite Parag Khanna's suggestion that Türkiye "has been called as the country where the continents collide, it is now the country "where the continents connect."³⁰ Being capable of reaching out without any barriers has the potential to generate new enabling means for strategizing, whereas the opposite has the potential to create vulnerabilities to be leveraged against Türkiye to constrain room for agency.

Agency and Strategy

Türkiye is facing challenges manifested by the transformations of the structures and mismanagement of them. The direct outcome of this mismanagement is the emergence of discontent with other actors. In strategy formulation, the identification of contradictions and the agency's perception of them shapes the nature of the strategy to be adopted to resolve them. In other words, a strategy emerges out of the agential capability to resist external influence and the ability to practice internality, a process that is mediated through agential awareness.

Throughout the Republican period, Ankara sought greater room for agency and therefore formulated corresponding strategic ends. It can be suggested that there is continuity in terms of strategic ends, despite some fluctuations experienced during its implementation, as each strategy produces counteractions that are employed to curb the outcomes of articulated strategies. In different cases in different geographies, as the grounds of strategy execution, Türkiye found itself on opposite sides. The cases of Syria, Libya, Karabakh, and lastly the Ukrainian war proved this suggestion, leading to the question of whether Türkiye is changing its axis or is to be blamed as the “odd man out”³¹ for pursuing agential policies. However, those kinds of questions and arguments stubbornly misrepresent the point by refusing to acknowledge Türkiye’s quest for autonomy. Discussing each of the cases in detail is out of the scope of this article, but the changes in the structures have produced distinctive tests for Türkiye. If they can be managed effectively, it will be promising to broaden space for agential posturing and strategizing in the future.

As it shifts toward multipolarity, the international political system offers a permissive environment that enables agential strategizing, not restrictive and constraining as it was during the Cold War years, in which period bipolarity and strict alliances with solid commitments left little room for agential actions. Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan’s statement³² on the shifts in the international political system and on Türkiye’s strategy during this period hints at the strategic positioning of Ankara. However, Ankara will continue to face critiques from the Western capitals as they continue to neglect Ankara’s concerns while refusing to acknowledge the emerging realities of the international political system.

Türkiye has positioned itself with two major objectives: not to get entangled with the draining rivalries as in the case of the Ukrainian war and to maintain an outreach through new connections aiming for the diversification of relations. The driving motivation behind setting those goals is the growing distrust of the traditional allies and the quest for strategic autonomy. With the onset of the Arab Spring and most notably with the Syrian civil war, Türkiye found itself in a difficult position as the expansion of the terrorist organizations ISIS and PKK/YPG has created serious security challenges with the spread of their attacks on Turkish soil. Several factors have contributed to Ankara’s resentment, including Western capitals’ reluctance to denounce the July 15 coup attempt and support the democratically elected government in Türkiye; the tensions with Washington on Pastor Brunson and subsequent sanctions that harmed the economy; the letter of President Donald Trump written in patronage style threatening to “obliterate”³³ the Turkish economy after the launch of Operation Peace Spring, which is seen as the second Johnson Letter; the EU’s reluctance to honor the agreements on visa relaxation in exchange of control of refugees; and Türkiye’s exclusion from the F-35 program upon the procurement of S-400 air

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despite Türkiye showing its willingness to reinvigorate the process while opting for Sweden's accession to NATO before the Vilnius Summit. The EU blames Türkiye for backsliding in the reform process and pursuing non-aligned policies with the union, while Türkiye is faced with accession fatigue and resentment of EU policies on vital issues for security. However, the outcome is the growing de-alignment of Turkish foreign policy with the EU foreign and security policy, as the alignment rate dipped from 97 percent in 2007 to 7 percent in 2022.³⁴ However, the EU's weak commitment to the accession process, and growing xenophobic, Islamophobic, populist, and right-wing tendencies are weakening the hopes for further normalization despite European security being closely tied to non-EU NATO members Washington, London, and Ankara. The EU's eroding credibility in the eyes of Türkiye coupled with the bloc's controversial and contradictory conclusion labeling Ankara as the de-Europeanization candidate country³⁵ raises the question of whether the EU is on a quest for a buffer state rather than a partner.³⁶ Consequently, the trust gap with both the EU and the U.S., their unwillingness to recognize Türkiye as an equal partner, and defiance of security concerns have pushed Türkiye on a quest for strategic autonomy and strategic agency.

Ankara is positioning itself in the economic domain to enhance its economic resilience by overcoming the hurdles that were created with the preference for growth over inflation, which led to a massive surge of inflation, a current account deficit, and the devaluation of the Turkish lira. Changing the course of economic policy and a return to orthodox economic policies have the potential to revert the economic degradation of the country. Otherwise, one of the main and essential pillars of strategizing could not support the actualization of the strategic goals.

The economic outlook of Türkiye, especially the power gap with the developed countries of the G7, is narrowing in the long run.³⁷ However, in the short term,

defense systems with following the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) sanctions. It can be suggested that President Obama mismanaged the situation in Syria, President Trump mistreated Syria and Türkiye, and President Biden misread the emerging situation and ongoing transformations. It seems Washington is dealing with the new realities with old solutions, and all have created challenges for Türkiye.

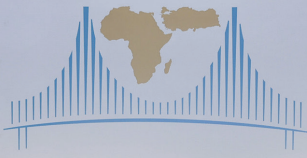
Relations with the EU are also not promising since the accession failure persists de-

starting from the pandemic to today, has not been promising, though efforts to revert the process have already started with the assignment of a new economic team. Beyond conjectural fluctuations, structural constraints remain that should be addressed. They stand out as the underlying factors of continuities that constrain agential efforts to deviate from the preceding course.

It can be suggested that technological competitiveness will be crucial for the success of the strategy in the 21st century, as it has become the driving force of change in politics, economics, and even geography. Türkiye, being aware of its significance, has initiated the “National Technology Move”³⁸ to adapt the transformation from a commodity-intensive to a knowledge-intensive economy. Aware of the dependencies created by the lack of natural resources needed as the basis of a commodity-intensive economy, Ankara is dedicated to increasing the level of investments to support a knowledge-intensive economy. Yet, this approach could have the potential to create deeper dependencies in case of inability to adapt to the changes, as the options for its diversification would be limited, costly, and exhaustive.

In the preceding century, one of the persistent problems of the Turkish economy was the current account deficit. Though the energy dependency of the growing industrial base feeds it, persistent international trade imbalances also have contributed. Türkiye has initiated diversification of trade relations thanks to its geographical position and opportunities offered by the shifts in the global economy. The objective is to obtain economic resilience and overcome the vulnerability to its Western counterparts who do not hesitate to weaponize this vulnerability to issue sanctions against Türkiye. Nevertheless, the diversification attempts have not yielded the desired results yet, as the trade imbalance with Asian counterparts persists. Particularly, China, Russia, and South Korea stand out as the main source of the trade deficit whereas trade with the traditional Western countries remains stable.³⁹ Furthermore, foreign direct investment (FDI) remains Western-oriented. It can be suggested that irrespective of the political tensions with the Western countries, economic ties are still vibrant, and the diversification efforts by establishing new trade bonds with Asian countries have not yielded remedies to overcome the chronic current account deficit.

Demographic resilience stands out as the other essential base for a vibrant economy. Instability around Türkiye has caused the influx of refugees that drained the resources that amounted to more than \$85 billion in 2017 and were claimed to have bounced to \$250 billion.⁴⁰ Apart from economic burdens, the difficulty of integrating into society creates tension that should be addressed. Without securitizing the integration problems of the refugees, Türkiye should produce remedies that are capable of mitigating the negative impacts and stress on the economy and society.



III. TÜRKİYE-AFRİKA ORTAKLIK ZİRVESİ
İSTANBUL, 16-18 ARALIK 2021

THIRD TÜRKİYE-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT
İSTANBUL, 16-18 DECEMBER 2021

TROISIÈME SOMMET DE PARTENARIAT TÜRKİYE-AFRIQUE
İSTANBUL, 16-18 DÉCEMBRE 2021

القصة الثالثة للشراكة التركية-الافريقية
إسطنبول، 16-18 ديسمبر/كانون الأول 2021



TÜRK DEVLETLERİ TEŞKİLATI
DEVLET BAŞKANLARI OLAĞANÜSTÜ ZİRVESİ
ANKARA, 16 MART 2023



EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT OF THE
HEADS OF STATE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES
ANKARA, 16 MARCH 2023



Türkiye's diplomatic efforts continue to extend to various regions, notably Africa and the Turkic states, both of which hold significant positions on the Turkish foreign policy agenda.

SERHAT ÇAĞDAŞ /
AYTAÇ ÜNAL / AA

The second pillar to ensure demographic and economic resilience is directly connected to the capacity of talent in the country. During the Republican period, one of the strengths was the young population and talent accumulation compared to aging European countries. However, due to economic difficulties, Türkiye has experienced an exodus of talent and a shrinkage of birth rates, threatening to degrade one of the strengths of the country. During the previous century, the level of capital accumulation was not sufficient to ensure economic objectives, though a considerable growth rate was achieved. With the new strategy, a new impetus to ensure economic growth has been initiated, which adopts a balanced approach to economic growth and inflation control.

Within the shifting global economic structure, as it transforms from a commodity-intensive to a knowledge-intensive one, capability accumulation stands

as one of the essential elements of attaining the goals of economic autonomy and resilience. Türkiye has experienced an exodus of talent in the last years that could bring about a talent deficit.⁴¹ Western countries are eager to welcome them to remedy their demographic decline and talent gap at the expense of the hurdles inflicted on the source countries, which has been characterized as the “global war for talent.”⁴² The introduced initiatives and programs managed to revert the process and yield positive outcomes.⁴³

Being able to establish good relations with countries in all directions fosters Türkiye’s ability to adapt to transformations in political and economic structures

With regard to geography, the tensions within the surrounding regions were blocking the venues for the outreach of Türkiye. In Syria and Iraq, the existence of terrorist organizations and ongoing instability constrained the outreach of the country to establish cooperative relations with the countries of the Middle East region. Similarly, the occupation of Azerbaijani territories without prospective resolution due to the ineffectiveness and unwillingness of the OECD Minsk Group have blocked Türkiye’s access to Central Asia and China, creating a dependency on the Western direction and severely limiting the attempts of diversification and granting means of leverage to the EU. The war in Ukraine limits northward outreach as the warring parties pour their resources into fighting. Failure to resolve the tensions on the island of Cyprus and Greece’s maximalist demands in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas further complicate Türkiye’s ability to reach out.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the contentious issues and problems constituted one of the basic pillars of Turkish foreign policy in the new century. Efforts to normalize relations with countries in all directions confirm this understanding. Diplomatic efforts are preferred over military means, but the capability to ensure military means for defensive purposes has strengthened in recent years thanks to developments in the defense industry.

Türkiye’s diplomatic overtures with Africa and Asia have strengthened the quest for diversification. Ankara is fortunate to not be associated with negative historical baggage and resentments, and the interactions are increasing smoothly and productively, benefiting all sides and adding new ties. Similarly, relations with Asian countries have flourished with new initiatives such as Asia Anew,⁴⁴ and with projects such as harmonization of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Middle Corridor Project.⁴⁵ Similarly, the positive atmosphere with Greece, mediation efforts for the war in Ukraine, and the growing relations with Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates, confirm the new understanding of foreign policy that is dedicated to fostering resilience.

Türkiye is reinterpreting its geostrategic position to reach and enhance good relations in all directions and domains, which is compatible with the ongoing transformations in political, economic, and geographic structures

Being able to establish good relations with countries in all directions fosters Türkiye's ability to adapt to transformations in political and economic structures. In fact, as the new arteries for the transportation of goods and transmission of knowledge are being shaped, the corresponding new connections and interactions reinforce Türkiye's capability to adapt to changes and resilience to emerging disruptions.

Strategy and Discourse

Within the scope of this article, the identified emerging discourse is the Century of Türkiye, which was circulated with the presidential elections of 2023, setting the goals for both the new Century of Türkiye and the intended objectives for the onset of the presidential period. The scope of the articulated strategy was discussed in the previous section. This section delves into the nature of discourse exploring what the discourse entails and how it is received.

At first glance, the most prominent characteristic of the discourse is its vision-oriented nature instead of adopting a threat-oriented stance. It has not emerged out of a threat perception and does not adopt a defensive narrative. The Century of Türkiye, as a vision, seeks strategic autonomy of the country, which is prosperous, resilient, and attractive. It does not entail a negative connotation in itself that might irritate other countries, nor does it have an "other," which means it refrains from targeting any nation.

It can be suggested that Ankara's road map is more inward-looking without being isolationist. However, it is designed to increase the number of friendly nations and deepen the ties with them without pursuing an irredentist agenda. Türkiye is reinterpreting its geostrategic position to reach and enhance good relations in all directions and domains, which is compatible with the ongoing transformations in political, economic, and geographic structures. The adopted discourse entails an implicit resistant and decisive tone to the attempts that could poison or disrupt interactions necessary for Türkiye's agential role.

When compared with the previous discourses, it is compatible with the overarching and encompassing ultimate goal that was set by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Türkiye, "to attain the level of civilized nations and outpace that level."⁴⁶ The goal was confirmed by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's statement on the occasion of the anniversary of Victory Day, August 30, 2023.⁴⁷

In that sense, it can be suggested that continuity underlies the strategy and its representation through discourse.

Discourses might be counterproductive as they consist of implicit and explicit elements of strategy. Hence the level of resistance and acceptance is critical to see how far they might be counterproductive. In terms of the reception of the Century of Türkiye discourse, both domestic and international approval should be scrutinized to detect indicators of whether the strategy articulated could succeed. Domestically, the approval of the strategy was part of the election campaign and was widely circulated during the elections. The election of President Erdoğan for another term can be seen as the approval of the strategy, which means the society is ready to get mobilized to attain the goals. Furthermore, in statements during the graduation ceremony of the naval academy, Erdoğan stressed the need “to look to the same direction irrespective of our differences... rather than deepening our differences, we need to meet on our commonalities and augment them.”⁴⁸ It can be suggested that irrespective of political differences, he stressed the need to overcome the polarization of the society, which is often claimed by the opposition, to mobilize the intellectual capacity of the country toward a common goal.

Though the election results confirm the domestic approval of the strategy, the approval does not necessarily overlap with the international one, as the competition is fiercer. In fact, an early earmark of the discourse came with the renaming and rebranding of the name of the country, from ‘Turkey’ to ‘Türkiye,’ which ultimately symbolized the agential outlook. The approval and wide use of ‘Türkiye’ instead of ‘Turkey’ can be pointed to as an indicator of Türkiye’s strategy and agential outlook, particularly within informal circles. On the other hand, insistence on the use of the old name can indicate resistance, critique, and bias to the strategic choices of Ankara, while those adhering to the UN-registered name are being seen as objective, confirmative, and friendly to Ankara’s preferences.

Conclusion

Articulation and execution of a strategy do not ensure attaining the identified objectives. What is intended with a strategy and what is spoken through discourse might not correspond to what is actualized at the end. Exploring the sources of (in)congruence is essential to improvise the strategy during the process and revise when it is required. From this perspective, for the 2nd century of Turkish foreign policy, Türkiye has articulated a vision-oriented strategy as discussed in the article.

The strategic end is defined as the enhancement of Türkiye’s agency, which demonstrates continuities from the preceding century, starting with the onset

To realize greater agency and strategic autonomy, Türkiye has positioned itself to formulate a vision-oriented strategy

of the republic. In terms of devotion to actualizing the defined strategic end, the significant changes in the structured context involve both enabling and constraining factors that could feed the (in)congruence between what is intended and what is actualized. However, Türkiye's agential reading and awareness will facilitate the execution of the strategy. There

are several initiatives to enhance the agential capabilities as discussed above to resist externality, what is imposed, and to assert the ability to practice internality, what is exposed. The knowledgeable ability of the agent⁴⁹ and the ability to sustain awareness are crucial to keeping the gap limited between the intentions and outcomes. The role of intelligence, with a broader understanding of the knowledge production capacity (encompassing academic institutions, think tanks, governmental bodies, private knowledge production companies, etc.) is essential in sustaining awareness. Thanks to the recent acknowledgment of the role of intelligence in strategizing and improvements,⁵⁰ Türkiye's adaptation and improvisation capability leaped forward.

The significant transformations within the structures of the international political system and the global economy dictate the articulation of a strategy capable of adapting to those transformations. To realize greater agency and strategic autonomy, Türkiye has positioned itself to formulate a vision-oriented strategy. The discourse of strategy and the strategy itself displays continuities through conjectural differences that were taken into account. In that sense, it can be suggested that the new strategy is the continuation of the preceding century adapted to the differences of the context. However, its actualization depends on Türkiye's ability to mobilize its intellectual capacity as the technological transformations, with the potential to disrupt the existing entrenched practices profoundly, necessitate the transformation into a knowledge-intensive economy. The shift from a commodity-intensive economy to a knowledge-intensive economy requires limiting the talent deficit, reminding us that the trade deficits of the preceding century severely constrained the means available to attain strategic ends. ■

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