

## سياسة تركيا الشرق اوسطية و دورها الاقليمي للمدة من عام 1991-2010 في ظل التغيرات الاقليمية والدولية المعاصرة

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## Turkey's Middle East policy and its regional role for the period 1991-2010 In light of contemporary regional and international changes

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### المخلص

استطاعت تركيا تأدية دور متميز في الصراعات الاقليمية التي نشبت في منطقة الشرق الاوسط مستخدمة قدرة على الموازنة في سبيل تحقيق مزيداً من المكاسب على الصعيد الذاتي ، دون أن يؤثر هذا الدور على علاقاتها الخارجية ، لاسيما على اطراف الصراع . وفي اعقاب فشل التجربة الاشتراكية في اوربا الشرقية والاتحاد السوفيتي ، طرأت تغيرات على فرص وحركة " ديناميكية " السياسة التركية في الاطار الدولي والاقليمي لاسيما منطقة الشرق الاوسط . ومع الوضع الدولي الذي آل اليه عالمنا المعاصر بسبب فشل تجربة الاشتراكية في الاتحاد السوفيتي السابق وفي اوربا الشرقية كما ذكرنا آنفاً، وفي ظل المتغيرات الدولية والإقليمية وانعكاسها على منطقة الشرق الأوسط لاسيما التطورات اللاحقة وما أفرزته حرب الخليج الثانية وتطورات التسوية السياسية للصراع العربي الإسرائيلي في بداية عقد التسعينيات من القرن الماضي وحرب احتلال العراق عام 2003 وجدت السياسة التركية نفسها بأنها يجب عليها

تكييف سياستها الخارجية بشكل يتلائم مع الواقع الدولي والإقليمي وذلك بهدف تفعيل دورها الإقليمي في منطقة الشرق الأوسط، وبالتالي إعادة تشكيل سياستها حيال عدد من المشاكل الإقليمية.

### Abstract

In addition, Turkey was able to play a distinguished role in the regional conflicts that erupted in the Middle East, using its ability to balance in order to achieve more gains on the subjective level, without this role affecting its external relations, especially on the parties to the conflict. And in the wake of the failure of the experiment. Socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, there were changes in the opportunities and movement of the “dynamism” of Turkish politics in the international and regional framework, especially the Middle East, and with the international situation that our contemporary world has become due to the failure of the socialist experiment in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, as we mentioned above. In light of the international and regional changes and their reflection on the Middle East, especially the subsequent developments and the outcome of the second Gulf War and the developments of the political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict at the beginning of the nineties of the last century and the war of occupation of Iraq in 2003, the Turkish policy found itself that it must adapt its foreign policy in a manner consistent with reality International and regional, with the aim of activating its regional role in the Middle East, and thus reshaping its policy towards a number of Regional problems

### Introduction

For a while, Turkey has been seeking to rebuild its political and strategic position, to strengthen and support its international and regional standing, and to create influence for it in the Middle East Therefore, it joined NATO in 1952, despite the alliance's security missions specific to Europe at the time, to find in it and through it political, economic and military support and backing to play a complex role in the Middle East, represented in the following two considerations.

**The first:** as an impenetrable dam that could impede any Soviet approach to the region.

**The second:** What Turkey will gain regionally by joining NATO.

Which prompted the Turkish political decision-maker to readjust the Turkish foreign orientations in general, especially towards the Middle East, as the Turkish elites, with their different tendencies and approaches, faced several questions, including those raised by one of the Turkish researchers "Shahin Al-Bani" wondering "Will it become Turkey is a



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member of the European Community in the coming decades? Or will it develop and develop its relations with the United States of America away from Europe? Will you see a change" in the political trends of Turkish foreign policy? Will Turkey turn into a regional Middle Eastern country away from dealing with Europe ?

These and other questions summarize the reality of the options available to Turkey today. Specifically, Turkey under a unipolar regime. Accordingly, this study or research will be divided into two sections, each of which is concerned with a choice of Turkish foreign policy options, the first of which is the Western option, which is what Europe wants from Turkey regionally. And internationally, "a reward for considering the issue of its acceptance in the European Common Market. As for the second topic, it is concerned with Turkey's fulfillment of its role in the region, depending" on what it possesses of the elements it possesses to play this role within its regional surroundings.

### **the importance of studying:**

The importance of the study stems from the nature of the tasks it aims to achieve, which are as follows:

- 1-Enhancing awareness of Turkey's strategic importance and determining its goals.
- 2-Employing science for the purposes of strategic work in the service of the national decision-maker.

Accordingly, we aim behind the subject of our study to achieve these tasks, and it is a study that is considered one of the scientific necessities, because a country like Turkey has an important weight and influence in the region and contributes to most of its interactions.

### **Objective of the study: The study aims in particular to:**

- 1-Analyzing the reality of Turkey's foreign political interactions regionally and internationally and their effects on the Middle East region.
- 2-The relative position occupied by Turkey in the contemporary international system.

The nature of the Turkish role in the regional conflicts in the region. 3-4-The possibilities of movement available to Turkey and its borders after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the extent of its ability to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the international environment and its resistance to the pressures imposed by it. And its reflection on the Middle East region.

### **The First topic:**

**The paths of transformation in Turkey's Middle Eastern relations following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.**

The world witnessed at the end of the eighties of the last century many radical transformations, starting with the end of the Cold War and then the collapse of the Soviet Union after the failure of socialism in it and in Eastern Europe. In the foreseeable future. However, in the context of seeking to present a model or theory to explain the course of political development and predict its future, the American political scientist (Samuel Huntington) presented his theory of the clash of civilizations, stating that “the causes leading to conflicts in the world in the future will not be economic, ideological or political.” Rather, there will be conflicts between contradictory civilizations that cannot meet.<sup>(1)</sup>

Huntington presents Turkey as the clearest example in this regard, and despite its enjoyment of a large degree of cultural harmony, it is divided over whether its society belongs to one civilization or to another. These are the fractured countries whose leaders usually want to follow the strategy of joining the West , especially since its history, culture and traditions are not Western<sup>(2)</sup> The leaders of Turkey at the end of the twentieth century followed the traditions of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk <sup>(3)</sup>. They defined Turkey as a secular state close to the West, so it allied itself with the West within the framework of NATO, and then advanced By applying for membership in the European Community in the eighties of the last century and aligning with Western goals in the second Gulf War. In addition, there were elements in Turkish society who supported Islamic affiliation and asserted that Turkey was primarily a Middle Eastern Islamic society, and at the time the elite of Turkey renewed its society as being In a “Western” society, the elite of the West refuses to accept Turkey as such, and therefore Huntington did not decide that Turkey would not become a member of the European Community, and the real reason was mentioned by Huntington from “Turkt Ozal” by saying “We are Muslims and they are harmed.”<sup>(4)</sup> They live and they do not say that)) .<sup>(5)</sup> Huntington asks, "If Turkey is rejected by Mecca, and rejected by Brussels. Where is it looking? Perhaps Tashkent will be the answer." So when Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan - from the collapsed Soviet Union - were born, Turkey regained its national and historical ambitions. That is why, in 1990, I joined an “international” conference whose slogan was “the unification of the Turkish nation from China to the Balkans.”<sup>(6)</sup> The conferees focused on the necessity for the Turkish nation to restore its unity, where there are Turkish minorities. However, the impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union was not limited to the Asian arena, but rather the Turkish role was active in other arenas, including the Middle East. To





perform new non-traditional jobs that fit the conditions of the world of American hegemony.

**First: The collapse of the socialist experiment and its impact on Turkey's position in the Middle East**

The Soviet collapse removed a major constraint on the movement of Turkish foreign policy and gave it greater opportunity and freedom to maneuver and choose to plunge into international relations, whether at the regional level or at the international level. The Soviet collapse also provided an opportunity to adapt to new political choices, and here we intensify the presence of what was termed the circular model <sup>(7)</sup>, which came into existence in the period (sixties) of the last century in an attempt to define the frameworks of Turkish foreign policy, as it returned in another form that model in the era of President Turket Ozal <sup>(8)</sup> when it was presented and published by the Turkish newspaper (Mallit), whereby Turkey will have the following circles of movement: the Aegean Sea, the Middle East, the Islamic republics, the regions of Ukraine, Georgia and Russia.<sup>(9)</sup>

In the wake of the Cold War, Turkey moved from the outskirts of Europe to be at the center of a new political and economic reality called "Eurasia." This region, which includes the countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Black Sea, is receiving increasing attention. Turkey plans to become the pivotal country in "Eurasia." <sup>(10)</sup> The disintegration of the Soviet Union placed Turkey in the position of the most powerful country in its regional environment, in terms of its large population mass and geopolitical advantages, or in terms of the great opportunities that this disintegration provided in front of the growing Turkish power in terms of role and economy, and the first of these opportunities is, without a doubt, the exposure of a large Turkish world that was opposed In the Soviet room for seventy years in the Caucasus and Central Asia and even within the current Russian Federation itself, which prompted the former Turkish President Turket Ozal to put forward the idea of (the neo-Ottomanism), which is that Turkey plays a vital and effective role in its surroundings extending from the Adriatic Sea to the China Wall through the Middle East Thus, the neo-Ottoman idea is a transgression of the most important propositions of Kemalism in foreign policy in retreating to the point of isolation.<sup>(11)</sup>

In light of this, any geostrategic treatment of Turkey's movement spaces must be linked to several circles, including: (Caucasian and Asian circle), Islamic, (Arab circle), Islamic, (European circle), Christian, (international circle), Christian, where the motives of the Turks vary. Towards these spaces and circles, some of them are related to Turkish

national security, some are economic, and some have intellectual, cultural, and civilized ties, and the international circle often overlaps with regional circles. The access to this region through regional parties such as Turkey, and for this reason the Turks see the necessity of strengthening the alliance with the United States, because the European Union is working to swallow and digest other powers in its surroundings, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the United States seeks to perpetuate and consolidate the new structure of a global order that takes the form A hierarchy in which the United States holds global leadership<sup>(12)</sup>. It is worth noting that Turkey constitutes one of the regional bases of this system, given its relationship with the United States through NATO, and on the other hand, through its relations with the republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus, and that this will help the United States to move towards this region through Turkey<sup>(13)</sup>. This move will push the United States to achieve two goals: **First:** Getting rid of the Turkish economic and financial demands. **Second:** Reducing the emergence of a new global system that takes the form of a new accord of power in which the American leadership retreats, and a new kind of balance of power occurs between the three major blocs (North American Free Trade Area - NAFTA - the European Community, and the ASEAN Group) with differentiation of interests between them. Where competition takes a higher degree of intensity and heat without reaching the level of hot conflict due to the presence of a high degree of interdependence imposed by the economic nature of the global system<sup>(14)</sup>. Turkey will find a place for it in this arrangement by being located in the middle of the road connecting the European Community, considering that it is located on its southern borders on the one hand, and its neighbor on the other hand to the countries of Central Asia through the Caucasus<sup>(15)</sup>.

Based on this, it has been observed that the US support for Turkey and its military alliance with Israel has increased, which is not affected much by the tensions of Turkish-Greek relations. On the one hand, Turkey's strategic importance within the framework of the American strategy has become more important than Greece, whether this strategy is related to the Middle East, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans, or to encircling Russia. On the other hand, the United States, which is following a relatively successful policy in controlling the arms race between Turkey and Greece to ensure that there is no sharp imbalance of power in the Aegean Sea, has proven so far that it can intervene when necessary to play the role of "mediator" or "pacifier." ) for these tensions to prevent the outbreak of a direct military clash between the two NATO





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members. So, the Turkish variable is as important in the south as the German variable is in Europe. In the past centuries, Turkey, as the center of the Ottoman Empire, dominated the Balkans, Southeast Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, and was also a dominant power in the Caucasus, and today Turkey is in a suitable position to extend Its influence extended to the regions of Central Asia and the Volga coast, inhabited by the majority of the population of Turkish origin, including the republics of part of the Russian Federation (Tatarstan and Bashkiria), and with the demise of the Soviet threat from Turkey, Turkey began looking for a new strategy (includes economic, political and military aspects) for it in the region, Thus, its strategy moved from the duty to defend its borders with the Soviet Union to an offensive strategy towards the Middle East in general and the Arab countries in particular. <sup>(16)</sup>

This new strategy was not a substitute for its previous strategy based on alliance with the West and the United States, but rather a tactic that serves Turkish, Western and American interests, and compensates for the role it played during the Cold War on the one hand, and to adapt to the new international changes. The end of the Cold War has He reduced Turkey's importance to the West and its dependence on it, but it allowed it to play an influential regional role in the Middle East, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Balkans and the Black Sea. As Turkey benefited from an additional impetus for what the West wants from it in Central Asia, it benefited from its role in the second Gulf War (or The battles) in a direction opposite to Iraq and in the interest of the West and the United States, to pour into another employment in the countries of Central Asia and perhaps the Caucasus as well." "Clearly", and it ended with a clear predominance of Turkey's opponents, thus strongly affecting its regional ambitions<sup>(17)</sup>. The collapse of the Soviet Union in late 1991 led to the emergence of more than five Islamic republics, the vast majority of whose population embraced Islam and descended from Turkish origins,<sup>(18)</sup> which means, from a Turkish point of view, the possibility of establishing a Turkish world in which Turkey would be the nucleus and the command center. <sup>(19)</sup>

The Ottoman Empire controlled the Central Asian region, which includes Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan), almost complete control throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and only a European alliance led by the Austrian Heisburg Empire eliminated that control. When a military coup took place in Azerbaijan led by Enver Pasha in 1918 to rid Turkestan of communist control, Turkey announced its encouragement of the coup, but the Soviet Red Army entered it in 1920 and declared it a Soviet Republic



<sup>(20)</sup> Turkey is also not alien to the Central Asian region, and Turkish policy may have been close to what happened on the Asian scene in the late Soviet era, which suggests that the Turkish Foreign Ministry established in 1989 a special department whose mission is to restore ties and ties with Turkish minorities everywhere in the world. Providing cultural and economic assistance to them. Just as Turkey encouraged Azerbaijan's attempt for independence in 1918, it was the first country to recognize the independent Azerbaijan Republic in August 1991.<sup>(21)</sup> And the first country to support the independence of these republics in the United Nations. This position and the influence of the Islamic group had a great impact on the international community's recognition of these republics, especially if we know that Turkey provided great aid to these republics when it was within the Soviet Union in order to obtain independence.<sup>(22)</sup>

It is clear to us from the foregoing that Turkey represents a prominent place in the perceptions of policy makers in the republics independent of the former Soviet Union because it is geographically adjacent to these republics, and as one of its important outlets on international seas, as these republics do not have any outlet on the sea except through Turkey. About that the religious, cultural and economic approach contribute to achieving this status. And that the linguistic and ethnic ties in those republics give a greater dimension and a closer rapprochement between them and Turkey. In addition, the Turkish orientation towards the Islamic republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus achieves for Turkey two goals, the first of which concerns Turkey. And its regional position in this region and the restoration of its historical heritage there. The second relates to the relationship with the West and the United States through the approaches that Turkey will provide through this region with other regions such as the Middle East and the Arab region, which are of interest to the United States and the West in particular.

**Second: Turkey, Western European countries and the United States of America.**

Most of the political studies that dealt with the trends of Turkish politics almost agree that the attempt to pull Turkey towards the West at the level of thought and movement represents a common denominator for the choices of the ruling elite since the beginning of the era of modern Turkey led by Kemal Ataturk.<sup>(23)</sup> As well as "the bias of the ruling elites to follow various ways (political and economic) in order to get closer to the West. These elites, in successive Turkish governments, were keen to establish a European identity, given that Turkey is an extension to the west of the Bosphorus that highlights this identity despite its deepest Asian extension." Geography, history, culture,





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etc., as well as considering that Turkey adopts Western ideals of democratic values, partisan pluralism, and democratic practices. It is noted that these elites, based on the previous understanding of Turkey's situation, proceeded to confirm their belonging to the West, and sought to link with it in an institutional, strategic, military (security) and economic manner. Turkey was among the first countries to join the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Tariff Agreement Customs (GATT) and NATO.<sup>(24)</sup> And in the wake of the recent era in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the socialist systems in it, and their failure in the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War between the two superpowers. And the subsequent retreat of the Soviet threat from Europe and the world reduced the Western focus on Turkey's strategic importance, and the graph of American and Western aid during that period indicates that fact, as the aid decreased to its lowest western and American borders. However, the outbreak of war during the Thirtieth Aggression on Iraq, restored Turkey to its strategic balance. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, in its strategic survey for the year 1990-1991, issued a "high" assessment of the Turkish position regarding Western security during its role during the events of August 2, 1990, and during the aggression on Iraq by the United States and its allies..<sup>(25)</sup> US President George Bush praised her as a strong member of the Western alliance and an important participant in Western security in general.<sup>(26)</sup> In the eyes of the United States and Western European countries, Turkey played a pivotal role in defending Europe and the Middle East .<sup>(27)</sup> The view that was emphasizing the dwindling of Turkey's balance in Western defense, especially the Western European view, has changed.

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the creation of a new picture in the thinking of the United States and the West of Turkey's strategic role in NATO for two main reasons:

The first: after the failure of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. And the events of August 2, 1990, it became clear that the most likely danger to the Western alliance today may not be directed to Western Europe directly, but rather extends similarly across regions of the third world such as the Arab Gulf, which necessitated the creation of a defensive shield and here represents Turkey. A key player in strengthening and controlling this shield.

The second: the importance of the Turkish strategic location makes the confirmation of its participation in an alliance for the security of the Arab Gulf states "vital" for the success of NATO to perform its tasks, as it will provide protection for Western oil sources in the Arab Gulf region, and

provide it with the possibility of rapid and early transfer of its forces .<sup>(28)</sup>  
This is what happened during the Thirteenth aggression on Iraq.

Based on the foregoing, there is a question that needs a clear answer, which is what the West wants from Turkey in the Middle East. To answer that, we must show that the United States and Western European countries seek two things at the same time. The first aims to reduce Turkey's role while taking into account its strategic necessity. As for the second, its goal is to preserve its secular political system with its internal and regional problems so that the shock to the United States and the West is not repeated on the Iranian or other models. fixed through its regional function, and through the following strategic constants:

1 -To be a security pillar in the strategy of the West, as the global strategic balance has collapsed in favor of the West, to start searching for a security mission to assign to Turkey. He found in it a justification for it to play the role of balancer and guard entrusted to him with a specific mission in the Middle East<sup>(29)</sup> . And to meet again the reasons for Western and Turkish orientation together, which has marked the opinion that Turkey cannot live and play an independent "security" role except with the help of the West. In fact, the events came to prepare the optimal environment for Turkey to exercise its Asian option announced by President Ozal, which is based on an economic alliance and strategic economic security as if it were a mixture between Turkish desires and reasons for entering the Middle East and the task that would be placed on Turkey and forcing it to perform it for the benefit of the West.<sup>(30)</sup>

2- Turkey's continuation of its secular approach in its internal and external policies, and this brings it closer to the West in the face of Islamic movements and gives it hope for more ties with the Islamic East, both parts of the Middle East and Central Asia.<sup>(31)</sup>

3- Turkey's continued carrying out of strategic missions within the framework of NATO. The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the reduction of conventional forces in Europe in accordance with the Treaty on Reduction of Forces in Europe and the Agreement on Strengthening and Building Confidence and Security in November 1990 reduced the importance of the Central Front to NATO, The southern front, especially Turkey, which neighbors the most unstable regions in the Soviet Union, the Caucasus region, will continue to feel the danger of the Soviet Union. organization under the framework of NATO, in particular Turkey.<sup>(32)</sup>

4 - That the West deals with future crises in the Middle East and its need to respond quickly to them, perpetuates and seriously rethinks Turkey's strategic importance in the Middle East.<sup>(33)</sup> Turkey's strategic importance returned once again to its considerations and its important position in its





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position with the Middle East.<sup>(34)</sup> Especially during the military preparations of NATO and the United States for the aggression against Iraq in January 1991, and according to "what was stated in an international analysis"<sup>(35)</sup>, the war announced the return of Turkey to the Middle East in a military manner.

5- The consolidation of peace as a Western (European-American) goal to preserve vital interests in the Middle East. It requires the removal of weapons of mass destruction from the region, and the creation of a system that raises the level of dependence and cooperation among the countries of the Middle East, with the presence of Turkey, which is strong in economic, social and military terms, to serve as a gateway and link between Western Europe and the Middle East.<sup>(36)</sup>

6-Turkey's orientation towards the Central Asian republics with a Turkish majority, and increasing ties with them in favor of Turkey and creating a commonwealth with it similar to the British Commonwealth, reinforces Turkey's strategy there and is in its interest and the interest of the West in dealing with this Eurasian region in relation to the West's strategy<sup>(37)</sup>.

7- Turkey represents for the West the only Islamic country that can link the West with the Islamic countries, as it is the only successful one in the industrialization of Europe. For this reason, it will work to develop the West's relations with the Islamic world, as in the future, the Christian club will be removed from the European Community by belonging to Turkey, which will serve the interests of Europe's security and preserve the possibilities of religious rapprochement in the post-Cold War relations.<sup>(38)</sup>

8- Because of Turkey's geographical location, the West, along with the United States, sees the necessity for Turkey to play a special role in the Arab Gulf region, especially after the emergence of a realization among NATO leaders that the coming danger will not come from the alliance's regions only, but from outside them, such as the Arab Gulf region<sup>(39)</sup>. In this regard, Turkey, through such a mission, has duties, most notably the protection and maintenance of oil supply routes.

In view of this difficult equation represented by the West's desire to keep Turkey as its ally without giving it its desire to become a full European member, it is expected that the United States will press for a special relationship between Turkey and the European Union, which justifies its rejection of Turkey by changing international conditions and thus changing European priorities that have become focused on interest in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe just emerging from Soviet control.<sup>(40)</sup>

Thus, Turkey has a type of special alliance relationship that includes two parts, the first: an economic relationship through a preferential relationship in the fields of trade. The second: security in the field of European collective security by granting it full membership in the Western European Union and an active participation in the European Defense and Security Initiative. The Europeans' acceptance of Turkey as a participating member of the Western European Union is a positive step to activate its military role and confirm its link with the West, but it is, at the same time, an insufficient step for the Turks, unless it paves the way for full membership in the European Union, which can be achieved if it is realized Europeans that Turkey's membership in their union is a necessity to ensure the continuation of its membership in NATO.<sup>(41)</sup>

Based on the foregoing, we can say that Turkey's view of the United States and Western European countries and the view of the United States and Western European countries of Turkey within the framework of the Middle East or within the framework of the regional function and its relations with the American strategy and the Western strategy both share the same dimension, conferring a mutual benefit and benefit, which is that expanding the dimension The European or the Turkish dimension will lead to the consolidation of security for both, as Turkey's entry into the West's strategy is nothing but an expansion and strengthening of NATO's position and the distribution of its responsibilities within the alliance in different directions, not limited to the European group within the European common market, but through the intervention of other parties not affiliated with the European community, such as Turkey. Turkey's role and survival within the Western alliance, and the promotion of its economic growth is a common goal of the West, Europeans and Americans alike.

#### **The second topic:**

#### **The Turkish regional role and its compatibility with the American-Western vision in the Middle East.**

Over the past decade, Turkey has become a more vital regional actor, and a large part of this vitality has been focused on the Middle East, as the Turks, more than before, focused on their southeastern neighborhoods, not as a major option in the directions of Turkish foreign policy, but rather As a response to perceived security challenges, Turkish perceptions viewed the Middle East as a space for dangers rather than as a field for acquiring expected opportunities,<sup>(42)</sup> meaning that the Turkish attempts to plunge into the region's dilemmas, which it often avoided approaching it except to the extent required by the requirements of its Atlantic alliance It came as a step by Turkey to address the security





concerns and the challenges surrounding its national interests, whether they have extensions with the Turkish interior (Kurds and Armenians) or those stemming from the nature of the problems that plague the region, and in which Turkey has no hand, but the results are cast Intense shadows over the interests and the future of Turkish politics, such as the emerging disputes between the countries of its close neighbours, and the growth of separatist-monotheistic tendencies of a national nature, especially the emergence of political currents with Islamic hue.

Therefore, the Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East, in contrast to what happened during the Cold War, has been characterized to some extent by the predominance of Turkish (subjective) motives and data in crystallizing its goals and interests in the region, regardless of the extent of harmony or disagreement with the interests of its allies, even if the dispute This is ruled out due to the convergence of the visions of decision makers in Turkey and of their different affiliations, in favor of the sovereignty of common interests between their country and its allies in the region. In general, Turkish trends are almost in line with the interests of its allies, especially the United States, with regard to Arab and Islamic issues such as the Palestinian cause, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the security of the Arab Gulf, and American efforts to contain Islamic movements and the American concept of the “war on terror” based on them, although there are some exceptions. With regard to its neighbors, Syria, Iraq and Iran, where the perceptions of the two parties in how to deal with them partly differed. In order to understand the nature of the Turkish role in that region, we will discuss what Turkey possesses of the basic ingredients that qualify it to perform its regional role in the region, including the following:

**First: the internal reasons**

.1-The importance of the Turkish position after the collapse of the Soviet Union (the end of the Cold War:

Although Turkey lost one of its main functions at the end of the Cold War phase as the southern gateway to NATO during that era, it still retained its strategic importance due to its geographical location centered at the crossroads of the Caucasus, the Balkans and the Middle East, a region of attraction and influence, as it is a Middle Eastern country and a country bordering the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and is concerned with providing security not for itself, but for the neighboring regions<sup>(43)</sup>.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent states in the Caucasus and Central Asia provided Turkey with a unique opportunity to explore a new role for it as an influential regional power.

Turkey enjoys language, ethnicity, and relations with the five countries of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, which seem to provide a solid foundation for an influential role in shaping economic development. And the political direction and foreign relations with it. Moreover, Turkey's success as a modern, economic and market-oriented secular state as an alternative to these countries in the post-communist era, this vision gained the support of the United States and Europe as an alternative to the Islamic-Iranian model.<sup>(44)</sup> Turkish foreign policy expressed that this would enhance Turkey's importance to the West by Where strategy and economics<sup>(45)</sup>.

It is known that Turkey has been seeking since 1923 in its foreign policy towards rapprochement with the West and desires to join the European Union. It has adopted a defense policy and avoids slipping outside the territorial borders or carrying out activities of an interest nature that go beyond the borders of the country, and most important of all that Turkey is still part of the regime. The organized Middle East by the United States and Turkey is a major military and economic ally of the United States. It is a powerful country that lies directly on the edge of the oil-rich Middle East,<sup>(46)</sup> although Turkey's refusal to allow the United States to use its territory during the Iraq war in 2003 led to the devaluation of Turkey in the strategic calculation of the United States. However, it still enjoys geostrategic importance in the Middle East thanks to Turkey's geographical location and its high level of political modernization, democracy, secularism, moderate Islamism, political structure and economic recovery.

Based on that, we must point out, in this direction, to the smart way in which Turkey managed its relations with the United States during the war, enabling it to withstand American pressures without causing real damage to its strategic relations with the United States, and this is clear from the visit of the Turkish Prime Minister. Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the United States in early 2004 to turn the page on the differences that arose between the two countries due to the war on Iraq and his assertion that (the strategic alliance between Turkey and the United States will always be under the Justice and Development Party government after it obtains the support and support of the Turkish people).<sup>(47)</sup> The content of the agreement, which bore the title of the Turkish-American Joint Strategic Vision Document signed between Turkey and the United States in early 2006, is an important step in reactivating the Turkish role regionally and internationally<sup>(48)</sup>.

We must also not forget that the importance of the Turkish position also stems from Turkey's enjoyment today of good political relations with





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various countries in the Middle East and strategic cooperation with the Russian Federation despite its membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Therefore, Turkey today is in a unique position that enables it to perform An active role in regional interactions, especially since Turkey ranks 34th in the world in terms of area and 19th in the world in terms of population and enjoys a huge military power, in addition to its membership in NATO. The importance also lies in the role that Turkey plays In the region to achieve its interests and increase its regional influence and weight along with external interests related to the Western alliance, especially since this role Turkey continued to exercise during the period of the Cold War, which witnessed a remarkable development in Turkey's relations with the countries of the region .<sup>(49)</sup> The most prominent of these is its connection to water issues, minorities, and the possibility of transforming the region into a Middle Eastern regional system, as there is a clear relationship between the nature of the Turkish role in the Middle East and the Western orientation of its policy, without forgetting that any change in the The decision-makers in Turkey do not affect the stability of its national interests, and this expresses a clear vision in deciding Turkish national interests and working to achieve them under this or that title<sup>(50)</sup>.

Based on the foregoing, it can be said that Turkey's geostrategic position qualifies it and forces it to pay attention to regional considerations and to distance it from any form of security threat to its lands on the one hand and bring it various economic benefits, whether in the context of trade relations or the passage of energy materials through its lands on the one hand. second, and gives it more scope for movement and the search for regional and international influence on a third hand.

2-The role of the Justice and Development Party: There is no doubt that the arrival of the Justice and Development Party to the hierarchy of power in 2003 and its relentless pursuit of the provisions of its control over the details of decision-making and its ability to impose its discourse on the political arena in the form of modernity and its adoption of the issues of the Turkish street and the ability to liberate its reform project have earned it European acceptance<sup>(51)</sup>. The presidency of the republic was the most difficult test in his agenda, as Turkey witnessed a third presidential crisis in the context of the conflict between secularists and Islamists, and a turning point in Turkey's history as a secular state headed by an Islamic figure, Abdullah Gul , <sup>(52)</sup> and the crisis demonstrated the success of the Justice and Development Party as a moderate Islamic party in Managing the helm of governance and the people's support for its reform project, and that the military institution is no longer able to play any political role



in political life despite the threats it issued in the various stages of the crisis in light of the conditions that Turkey is experiencing internally and externally,<sup>(53)</sup> and it is worth noting that the Justice and Development Party has emerged within the Welfare Party,<sup>(54)</sup> and its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was able to form a modernist trend to become compatible with the reality of the secular political system. Erdogan began with a public criticism of the Welfare Party and sought to find a new legitimacy for the movement abroad, as Erdogan traveled to the United States and Europe to mobilize support for him,<sup>(55)</sup> In foreign policy, Erdogan sought to find support towards Turkey's admission to the European Union, as well as to develop his political and economic relations with the United States and Europe. Erdogan has to gain legitimacy to form his own political party, the Justice and Development Party, as a national party that is not based on minority, ethnic or religious minorities, and this enabled the party to avoid many issues related to secularism, such as the veil and others, and to pay attention to larger issues related to internal reforms and creating an influential regional role for Turkey. Undoubtedly, the AKP leaders' adoption of new methods of work that avoid any confrontation with the regime and its deep-rooted nature and not give justifications to repeat what happened in February 1977 has made it successful. The slogan of the party's founding conference on August 14, 2001 came under the title "Work for all of Turkey and polarization." Various segments of society)) The party leader also declared in this conference his position on secularism and Islam, as secularism is a fundamental principle of social peace and gave a clear vision of secularism that depends on the state's neutrality towards religious beliefs. Erdogan also emphasized the reference of the (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and (European Convention To protect human rights and fundamental freedoms).<sup>(56)</sup>

In this context, Abdullah Gul, the second man in the party (currently the head of state), emphasized the party's inclusive dimension, one day after the party's founding, saying, "Our party is not a religious party. The politician is not a means of communication, but rather of service, by serving our goal of application and working to popularize a new concept in politics<sup>(57)</sup>. Thus, the party's program does not conflict with the inherited political system since the establishment of the Turkish state after World War I, which is based on the principle of secularism, and this explains the party's ability to overcome any doubts directed at it by supporters of secularism, especially since it did not adopt any directions calling for the application of Islamic law and the economic policy came to adopt it The Justice and Development Party spread an atmosphere of





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confidence and optimism within the Turkish society and the economic sectors, as the improvement in economic performance was accompanied by a decrease in inflation rates and its decline in 2004 to 30%, while growth rates rose to 5.9%, and the Turkish government's action led to an increase in the value of the Turkish lira at the beginning of 2005 against the dollar. The US dollar raised six zeros from the lira, as its value stabilized at (0.795) dollars.<sup>(58)</sup> On the external level, the Justice and Development Party was able to take several steps that enhance the Turkish regional role in accordance with the new Turkish vision, which sees Turkey as a force with great capabilities at the geographical, human, economic and military levels, which qualifies Turkey to play a regional role and achieve its interests accordingly, including trying to improve Turkey's relations with The European Union by activating the process of democratization and improving the economy and interacting with the Cyprus issue by declaring Turkey's desire to solve the Cyprus problem when the Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash was criticized for rejecting the United Nations proposal to resolve the conflict. In fact, Turkey's approach to resolving its problem with Greece over the Cyprus issue is a serious attempt to reduce problems with neighboring countries in order to pay attention to playing an important regional role in the Middle East.

3-Turkey maintains good relations with the countries of the region: Among the countries in the Middle East, Turkey is unique in its openness to the countries of the region, especially those countries that have conflicts that require Turkey to play a mediating role, such as the Arabs and (Israel). In the last few years, Turkey has sought to find an important role as a key player in the region, and its opinion is taken on issues of interest to the region. Turkey tried to play an important role in Iraq after 2003, taking advantage of the security situation in Iraq and the problems and challenges facing the United States. Turkey wanted to play a role in the Lebanese issue by sending forces to southern Lebanon to participate in the UNIFIL force under the leadership of the United Nations after the 2006 war between the PKK. The Lebanese God and (Israel), however, stumbled due to the Syrian and Iranian efforts and the internal Lebanese influences.<sup>(59)</sup> Turkey also showed its serious desire to play a role in the Palestinian issue through mediation between the Palestinians and the Israelis, but it was rejected by (Israel). As for the most successful role that Turkey has played, it is the strong relations with Syria after decades of tensions and mistrust in light of Turkish accusations of Syria harboring the PKK within its territory.

In this regard, Turkey succeeded in playing the role of mediator between Syria and (Israel) in the indirect negotiations, which were halted due to

the Israeli intransigence and the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip in late 2008. It is known that Turkey has strong relations with (Israel), as there is a military cooperation agreement between The two countries are (Israel) assisting Turkey in the process of modernizing the Turkish army, as Turkey is betting on its relations with (Israel) to restore warmth to its relations with the United States. Against the Arab World. <sup>(60)</sup> The Turkish government has come to realize that it has to develop its foreign relations beyond the traditional orientation towards the West, especially with its Arab and Islamic surroundings, as it recently adopted an open policy towards the Russian Federation and culminated in the visit of President Vladimir Putin of the Russian President (currently Prime Minister). Improving its relations with Greece and this would place Europe on the borders of the Arab and Islamic worlds to achieve economic benefits and cultural interaction that enhances the idea of a dialogue of civilizations, in addition to that Turkey's good relations with its neighbors will qualify it to play the role of a bridge between the West and the East, adding a positive point to its entry to the European Union. <sup>(61)</sup>

In its relations with the countries of the region, Turkey embarked on a new vision of its foreign policy, which is to zero differences with all the countries of the region, which is the vision that Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu called the “no problem” policy, while avoiding involvement in international confrontations. <sup>(62)</sup> On this basis, the Turkish openness to all sides came through the new approach in Turkey’s foreign policy, which could open up many opportunities and bridge the rift in the Turkish relations with the neighborhood, as the Turkish-Syrian relations began to witness more détente and improvement, and the first steps were the signing between Turkey and Syria An agreement in Istanbul on September 17, 2009 provides for the establishment of a high-level (Strategic Cooperation Council) with the aim of ensuring maximum integration in the economic field and is based on organizing periodic meetings between the ministers of (foreign, defense, interior, economy, oil, electricity, agriculture, health) In the two countries, with a joint ministerial council, and the first meeting of the Cooperation Council was held in the Syrian city of Aleppo, in the presence of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the ministers concerned. Turkey supported by banning the PKK, and the Turkish Foreign Minister in Aleppo stressed the importance of the meeting for the two neighboring countries, saying: “Turkey is considered a gateway to Syria to Europe, just as Syria is a gateway to Europe.” (Kia to the Arab world)) <sup>(63)</sup> and what is meant here is that Turkey will be a gateway for Syrian goods to enter its lands and transfer them to the





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European Union and the West in general, and at the same time, Syria will be a gateway for Turkish goods to the Arab world, just as Turkey sought to strengthen its relations with Syria to search for a partner who would secure It has a mediating role in the region on issues of concern to the European Union and the United States, as Turkey is a major regional player that should not be overlooked, especially in the context of the ongoing American attempts to find a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The strategic agreement signed by Turkey with Armenia on October 10, 2009 in the Swiss city of Zurich, as a result of the negotiations that took place with Swiss mediation, aimed to establish diplomatic relations that had been cut off for a long time between the two countries, normalize relations and develop them in various directions, as well as “resolving the deep and comprehensive outstanding problems between them.”<sup>(64)</sup> , In fact, Turkey is seeking to turn the page on the past in its relations with Armenia, especially the accusations leveled against Turkey regarding the events of 1915 with the so-called “Armenian massacre” by clarifying those events through a joint historical committee and saving Turkey from those accusations as well as ending The Armenian occupation of the Azerbaijani lands and the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, and thus, Turkey seeks to end the problems with neighboring countries to play a greater regional role in the region and improve regional security. Foreign affairs in the vision towards the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus” .<sup>(65)</sup>

Thus, it can be said that Turkey was able, under the AKP, to transform relations from the limits of confrontation to the limits of cooperation with all its neighbors, which qualifies it to indulge in intensive and effective regional and international political interactions.

4-The historical-religious factor: the observer of Turkish foreign policy over the decades notes that secular Turkey, with a Muslim majority, has turned its policy towards the West as its membership in the Council of Europe (1949) and its active participation in NATO (1952) and its always Western orientation, The Association Agreement (Ankara Agreement) between the European Community and Turkey in 1963 and its relentless pursuit, within the framework of its long-term strategy, to become a full member of the European Union. However, with the arrival of the Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party to power, a new phase in Turkish foreign policy has begun to move towards formulating its own pragmatic vision at the regional and international levels as an important regional player in the neighboring regions of the South Caucasus and the Middle East, in parallel with Turkey's aspirations for membership in the

European Union to strengthen its position in the region and the expansion of its sphere of influence.<sup>(66)</sup>

The Egyptian writer and politician Muhammad Hassanein Heikal believes that the change that occurred in the orientations of Turkish politics is compatible with the historical change of its European role, as its Islamic nature makes it move towards the south and is absent from the West, and that its Islamic culture and the legitimate authority in it flow in this direction by virtue of history,<sup>(67)</sup> And that despite Turkey's adoption of the secular system as an ideological system for more than eight decades since its founding in 1923, after the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Islam has remained strongly present in Turkish society, where the Islamic faith has been imbibed for more than seven centuries, as it controls Turkey is a mixture of the social fabric, sectarian and ethnic.<sup>(68)</sup>

Undoubtedly, the religious and historical factor gives the Turkish regional policy an added impetus to the elements of the Turkish regional role. It presents itself to the region as a Muslim country with a secular system that has importance at the level of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and has deep historical, cultural and social relations with it. These concepts were presented by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan before the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington on January 26, 2004.<sup>(69)</sup>

On the Western level, Turkey is trying to utilize its advantage as the only European member of the Islamic Conference, which qualifies it to play a dual role as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East on the one hand, and as an effective tool capable of contributing to securing European and Western interests on the other hand<sup>(70)</sup> Accordingly, the West sees Turkey as a wonderful model of Islamic democracy, and it is unavoidable for the West to support secular Turkey in the face of the growing fundamentalism and Islamism at the level of society and whose danger is increasing at the regional level due to the geographical proximity<sup>(71)</sup>.

In fact, the Turkish move in the Arab-Islamic circle is taking place in a balanced way with the western circle, and it is a continuation of Turkey's active activity, which was gradually developing during the era of former President Turgut Ozal, despite the criticism directed at Davutoglu's policy, as most of Turkey's foreign policy takes place in the former Ottoman provinces. As Ibrahim Kalin says, "Post-modern Turkey seems to lie in its Ottoman past."<sup>(72)</sup>

And if Davutoglu's reference to historical and cultural ties does not ignore Turkey's Ottoman past and does not seek to merely exploit it as





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such, it provides an advantage for Turkey in its involvement in neighboring regions. A political problem in the region without using the Ottoman archives)) is a saying that aims at the actions of the Ottoman past to give Turkey a position in the peace track in the Middle East.<sup>(73)</sup>

On this basis, Turkey's approach to the Arab region is not just an option, but rather a necessity because of its need for a new regional role that preserves its position in the Western strategy within the regional framework. It has created political and intellectual changes at the official and popular levels in the Arab world, foremost of which is the end of the political divisions between progressive and conservative. , national and western factors that help Turkish access to interaction with the region's data .<sup>(74)</sup> Thus, the historical factor of the Arab majority has been neglected or at least marginalized, which makes normalization with Turkey desirable and justified, in addition to the emergence of educated voices with different directions that push for a new reading of the relations at the time of the Ottoman Empire away from the prevailing traditional discourse that portrays it as a colonial power, in addition to The penetration of Western cultural policy values into the political and social body in the region, which made Turkey an acceptable entity, to say the least. Moreover, the change in the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict has greatly narrowed the gap that separates the majority of the Arab elites and Turkey on this issue, based on the reality of history and geography, and not just because Turkey is an Islamic state<sup>(75)</sup>. And based on all the above international and regional data, the Turkish policy had an opportunity to take the initiative and focus in its orientation towards the south and to adapt its foreign policy in line with international and regional reality and achieve an effective and influential position in the regional arena, in a way that makes Turkey able to lead the region and benefit from the erosion The Arab strategist and the absence of any force capable of finding a kind of balance in the various regional trends, as is the case in the new Turkish policy based on balance with everyone.

5-Activating the democratic transition: The Kurdish problem in Turkey is one of the intractable problems that the Justice and Development Party government inherited from the previous Turkish governments, where the continuous military confrontations with the PKK elements in southeastern Turkey, which found a safe haven in northern Iraq, where the security vacuum that occurred after The US occupation of Iraq in 2003 and launched more attacks inside Turkey against the Turkish army, which required the mobilization of thousands of Turkish soldiers on the Turkish-Iraqi borders, and the Turkish planes bombed the PKK sites in northern Iraq. Aware of the AKP's vision that Turkey cannot play a regional role

unless it secures the Turkish interior, the party adopted the slogan launched by Ataturk (Peace at home, peace abroad). Without peace at home, sustainable peace cannot be achieved abroad. Outstanding progress abroad determined to achieve the first part of the equation, even if this led to a fierce battle with its critics at home, <sup>(76)</sup>hence the initiative launched by Erdogan in early November 2009 with his democratic openness to 15 million Kurds, considering that reconciliation with the Kurds is a necessity that cannot be Avoiding it, no matter how difficult it may be, is an essential element in the diplomatic campaign launched by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, which aims to make Turkey a key player in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus by mediating conflict resolution and strengthening economic and trade ties with Syria, Iraq and Iran, in addition to spreading peace and stability in the region<sup>(77)</sup>.

The reform measures announced by Erdogan's government are more cultural than political. They provide for broadcasting Kurdish-language programs on radio and television, allowing political parties, such as the Kurdish Democratic Gathering, to use their language during the election campaign, restoring Kurdish names to Kurdish areas that had previously been replaced by Turkish names, and reducing the use of provisions. harsh measures against Kurdish youths for throwing stones during demonstrations, allowing Kurdish prisoners to communicate with their visitors in their mother tongue, and establishing an independent commission to investigate accusations of torture.<sup>(78)</sup>

It is useful to mention here that Turkey's various internal reforms were welcomed and praised by the United States, considering Turkey to be a model for Islamic countries, especially after the events of September 11, 2001, and that was stated by former US President George W. Bush when he attended the NATO summit In Istanbul in June 2004, he said, "I greatly appreciate, for example, that your country has set out how to be a Muslim country that embraces democracy, the rule of law, and freedom."<sup>(79)</sup>

By implementing the reforms, Turkish officials sought to improve Turkey's record in the field of human rights and promote democracy to meet the conditions demanded by the European Union to achieve the Turkish dream of joining it. He said ((Turkey is the only country that can talk about the region in Europe in terms of the values of democracy and freedom)).<sup>(80)</sup> Thus, Erdogan's government's move towards implementing democracy in Turkey and the serious approach to solving the Kurdish problem from its roots gives a strong impetus to an active foreign policy at the regional and international levels

**Second: International External Causes:**



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1-The importance of the Turkish role in the American strategy: The follower of the history of US-Turkish relations after World War II finds that these relations were established on the basis of strategic interests and common security towards Turkey, and during the Cold War, the United States looked to Turkey as a firm dam against influence The Soviet Union in the Middle East, therefore, Turkey's role was merely an operational tool within the American strategy, and it was prevented from playing an important role in the Middle East for a long time.

However, the United States changed its view of Turkey after the end of the Cold War, especially after the events of September 11, 2001, as more than just a geographical barrier, which affects a shift in the nature of this relationship, as most of the years of the alliance and the relationship were established within the framework of the Cold War .<sup>(81)</sup> Contrary to the American vision of Turkey's regional function within the framework of the American strategy for the Middle East with global goals, Turkish perceptions of its role were based on mainly regional motives and goals, whether they were political, security, or economic. However, despite this difference in visions of the extent and scope of the role, the interests of the two parties converged in activating Turkey's role regionally. Therefore, I added importance to the political and security roles that Ankara plays in the service of the American strategy in it ,<sup>(82)</sup> which indicates the increasing strategic importance of Turkey for the United States, despite the freedom of movement and the direct and semi-direct American military presence that the United States enjoys in the region.

The truth is that if the developments resulting from the end of the Cold War had created perceptions about Turkey's declining importance in the Western and American strategy in particular, then the crisis and the second Gulf war and its repercussions came with a historical opportunity to re-establish that importance, as was clearly expressed by Turkut Ozal, in February 1991, He said, "On the basis of the perception that Turkey's strategic importance to the West will decline after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, Europe began to pressure Turkey in the issues of Cyprus, human rights and others, but the Gulf crisis provided a good opportunity to refute this inaccurate perception" .<sup>(83)</sup> Najib Tormaty, the former chief of the Turkish General Staff, had previously indicated that "the Gulf crisis clearly expressed the sensitivity and importance of the geopolitical and strategic situation of Turkey, which will continue its vital role as an element of stability in the region and will remain in a position to confront threats against NATO in its southern flank." And Turkey, which is militarily and economically strong, especially after the Gulf crisis, will play a vital role in overcoming



new problems, as the alliance will face in the near future dangers related to (terrorism), drugs, religious fanaticism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and Turkey can play an active role in confronting most of these Risks <sup>(84)</sup> . In confirmation of this, Ozal stressed that Turkey adheres to participating in the negotiations that may take place after the war (the Second Gulf War). It also adheres to having a role in the decisions that will be taken regarding the region <sup>(85)</sup> . In the sense that Turkey wishes to play a key role in the regional system, where the inevitability of change in the geography, the political-social composition, and the security and economic policies that the region will witness. For his part, "Kenneth Allard", the former assistant to the US Chief of Staff for Intelligence, stressed that Turkey was not only a major ally of Washington during the Cold War, but was also a major ally in the Second Gulf War, and since then Turkey must be considered at the top of the list of countries which the United States cannot ignore <sup>(86)</sup> . Turkey is an important country for NATO and the United States, and we should not sacrifice our relations with it because of Iraq. Rather, we should be keen on its contribution to the formulation of a regional policy towards Baghdad, and Washington should remember the role that Ankara played in the Gulf region, Afghanistan and the Balkans. <sup>(87)</sup>

In February 1991, former US Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney stressed the importance of relations between Turkey and the United States, and that they have become stronger and more developed than before thanks to the Gulf crisis, and that the two countries have common values based on "commitment to democracy and the pursuit of security and stability in the Middle East." He makes cooperation between them of great importance, pointing to Turkey's strategic importance as a "stable island" in a turbulent environment, not only in the Middle East, but also in the Caucasus and Balkan regions . <sup>(88)</sup> It seems that the perceived importance of the Turkish decision-maker for his country's role in the American strategy stems from the fact that its geographical location still enjoys its political and military importance, as the demise of the socialist camp canceled the strategic distinction between Europe's periphery and its center and the resulting challenges centered on the extensions of what Known as the arcs of crises, unlike what happened during the Cold War, when the conflict centered along the German division line, at that time. <sup>(89)</sup> Those arcs of crises, the first of which, the eastern, extends from Turkey to the Caucasus and Central Asia, which resulted in the collapse of the Soviet Union of multiple political entities with traditional and nuclear military capabilities coupled with political, economic and social instability and pulsing with a nationalist spirit eager to build its national





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entities after decades of repressive Soviet policies. For its national aspirations, and secondly, it extends from North Africa, the Mediterranean basin, and Southwest Asia, regions that suffer from instability stemming from the policies of American hegemony and Western hostility to Arabs and Muslims<sup>(90)</sup>. It has always been for Washington that at the level of bilateral relations or within the framework of NATO, there is an island of stability in the traditionally unstable region of the Middle East.<sup>(91)</sup>

As for the regional security arrangements in the Middle East proposed by the United States, Turkey has spared no effort to find an active role for it in them, especially since it has been prepared since the beginning of the 1990 Gulf crisis to play such a role, with the US administration emphasizing in March 1991 that "Turkey can play a role important in the post-Gulf War regime"<sup>(92)</sup>. Therefore, President Ozal announced that his country will take an active role in achieving peace and stability in the Middle East, and that Turkey will develop cooperative relations with Washington in this regard,<sup>(93)</sup> therefore, in line with American perceptions regarding the Middle East, Turkey has presented many formulas for security and economic arrangements. In order to obtain a greater role in reshaping the structures of the region politically, security and economically, such as the arrangements proposed by Ankara for the regional security of the region, especially since it had participated in similar mechanisms such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and its activities in multilateral talks on disarmament. The Turks saw the possibility of doing this, whether in cooperation with Egypt bilaterally or within the framework of multilateral talks on disarmament in the Middle East, and it could also be a mediating party between the Arabs seeking peace and (Israel) wishing to achieve confidence-building measures.<sup>(94)</sup> These Turkish theses were met with Israeli impetus, as the former Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres called in 1994 for Turkey to take a leading role in convening a conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East.<sup>(95)</sup>

It is noted here that the Turkish theses are consistent with the American perceptions about the region and its interests there, if not a reflection of it. The entire process is part of building a regional system as an alternative to the existing Arab regional system, whose main pillars are Turkey and (Israel). With regard to the Middle Eastern system, Turkey sees it as an occasion for its participation in regional cooperation, especially the economic aspect of it, as Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin had previously indicated. The former Turk, stated that Turkey "will join all effective projects directed at regional cooperation, especially in the economic



field... The diversification and development of regional cooperation relations will lead to an increase in economic interdependence and exchange between the countries of the region, which will lead to stability and cooperation and contribute to removing the causes of mistrust among the countries of the region".<sup>(96)</sup>

Based on this, the Turks' perception of their country's role in the Middle Eastern system is centered around three axes:<sup>(97)</sup>

1-Turkey's role in the Middle East is based on the vision that reshaping the region depends on the idea of the Middle East as a political, economic and security entity in which Turkey is at the top of the pyramid.22-Turkey should fill the strategic void in the Arab Gulf region by playing a political and economic role in it.

3-In order for Turkey to achieve these visions, it must establish a network of alliance relations with (Israel), especially in the military and security fields Therefore, this goal has become a priority for Turkish policy, as they are the strongest militarily in the region and are qualified to be at the head of the influential Middle Eastern countries in the region, and because they are strong allies of the West and the United States in particular. It is worth noting that Turkey's importance in the American strategy increased after the United States chose the Islamic world as a battleground for it in the framework of its declared war on so-called terrorism by invading Afghanistan and Iraq between 2001-2003. primarily cultural, political and economic .<sup>(98)</sup> There is a clear perception in Washington that Turkey represents a successful alternative to penetration into many countries of the Middle East and Central Asia, as a moderate Islamic model to be followed, and as the only Muslim member of NATO, in addition to its historical relations with the West.<sup>(99)</sup>

Most important of all, the Middle East region as a whole poses the most important strategic challenges posed to successive US administrations in terms of maintaining US hegemony in a geo-strategic region that includes the world's largest oil and natural gas companies, which are very vital to the United States, the West, and global markets, as it supplies them with energy resources from oil and gas. In addition, one of the strategic goals of the United States in Central Asia and the Caucasus is to prepare the appropriate ground for giant American oil companies aspiring to invest in the region's oil, which is today the second in terms of oil reserves in the world after the Persian Gulf, and American eyes have always been directed at Caucasus oil and the sea Caspian, where the Azeri wells maintain close relations and partnerships with the United States, as well as the American effort to inaugurate a new line to transport oil and natural gas through the Turkish Baku-Tbilisi-Seyhan line on the





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Mediterranean Sea in order to bypass the oil lines transiting Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, then to Western Europe .<sup>(100)</sup> It is likely that the US policy adopted by Bush Jr. in the context of his military campaign in Afghanistan and Iraq, besieging other major parties such as Iran and Syria and working to weaken them, has contributed to opening the way for Turkey to expand regionally by pushing Turkey towards easing tension between these countries and Turkey and facilitating ways of cooperation with them. The prevailing state of regional polarization has given great weight to the Turkish policy that has crossed polarizations and camps.<sup>(101)</sup> Accordingly, the Turkish-US relations during the time of former President George W. Bush were characterized by instability due to the Erdogan government's adoption of an independent regional policy regarding many of the region's issues, which often do not align with the American policy, especially Bush's hostile policy in the region, which is the main reason behind the hostility of the people The Turkish and the peoples of the region and the most present factor in the escalation of hostility between them and a sufficient reason for the tension of diplomatic relations between the two countries .<sup>(102)</sup> However, this stalemate in the Turkish-American relationship was corrected after the visit of former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Ankara on April 24, 2004, and her affirmation with her counterpart Abdullah Gul on the importance of the strategic partnership between the United States and Turkey, noting that the two countries' views matched a number of issues Regional and international issues, especially those related to Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan ,<sup>(103)</sup> as the content of the Turkish-American joint strategic vision document indicated that the Turkish Foreign Ministry had taken important steps by reactivating the Turkish regional and international role, and the document focused on escalating the Turkish role in the foreseeable future with regard to Arab issues such as The issues of Iraq and Palestine, as well as the issue of the Iranian nuclear file.<sup>(104)</sup>

In fact, the Turkish Parliament's rejection of the Turkish administration's request to allow the entry of US forces through Turkish territory into northern Iraq on the eve of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a historical turning point for Turkey by proving its capabilities not to be drawn into the US policy of aggression against peoples on the one hand, and Washington's weak ability to pressure Turkey on the other hand. Turkey believes that the United States understands and recognizes the importance of the Turkish role in regional and global stability, and that ignoring this fact will harm the strategic partnership relationship between them, especially since Turkey's holding of a non-permanent seat on the

UN Security Council until the end of 2010 helped it enhance the effectiveness of its role in resolving issues in the region. Despite these facts that cannot be ignored, Turkey cannot play an active and important role in addressing and resolving the region's issues without American consent and without agreement between Washington and Ankara on basic principles for that role and with a common vision and cooperation in efforts between them<sup>(105)</sup>. This was evident from the United States' rejection of the mediation role offered by Turkey to mediate between it and Iran regarding the Iranian nuclear file, away from attempts to isolate Iran and punish it economically, but through engaging it in dialogue with it regarding stability in the region.<sup>(106)</sup> Likewise, the United States is dissatisfied with the relationship that has begun to strengthen between Turkey and Syria, and Turkey's silence regarding international and regional pressures led by Washington against Syria in the spring of 2007 to withdraw its forces from Lebanon.<sup>(107)</sup>

However, Barack Obama's arrival at the White House has contributed to alleviating the differences between Turkey and the United States, as the selection of Turkey as the first Muslim country to be visited indicates the extent of the new US administration's interest in the Turkish regional role. US President Obama spoke on April 6, 2009 by saying)) The United States will continue to support Turkey because of its central role) and ((The United States and Turkey seek to serve many opportunities and prosperity for our two peoples, especially when it comes to energy, and we can increase trade and investment between our two countries)) The President called. Obama to Turkey's admission to the European Union by saying ((let me be clear, the United States strongly supports Turkey's efforts to become a member of the European Union)).<sup>(108)</sup>

In fact, the new US approach towards Turkey gives Erdogan's government freedom of maneuver and movement towards the adoption of effective and influential regional policies as long as those policies are in harmony with the US orientation towards the region, as the Obama administration envisages a major role for Turkey in the Middle East and in aspects related to the issues and challenges facing the United States, including the following:

- 1- A major role in stabilizing Iraq
- 2- The United States regained control and stability in Afghanistan
- 3- Normalization of relations between the United States and Iran
- 4- Reducing Syrian and Iranian support for Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza
- 5- Strengthening US influence in Central Asia
- 6- To stop Turkey's drift towards strategic cooperation with Russia



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.7-Providing pipelines for transporting huge energy resources from the Caspian Sea Basin, as Turkey is a transit corridor to global markets

**Third: The problem of the Turkish-European relationship:**

The Turkish aspiration to accept the European Union's accession to it still constitutes the cornerstone of Turkish foreign policy, and this orientation towards the West is not just a temporary phenomenon, but is a tradition that dates back to the twenties of the last century when the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, began seeking to normalize the West by introducing important reforms. On the Western European model, and indeed, Turkey submitted its official application to join the European Union in 1987. However, the internal reforms that the European Union required Turkey to be eligible for admission to membership in the Union, and which were implemented by the Turkish government, met with the European rejection on the grounds that those reforms did not rise to the required specifications. In the face of the European rejection, Turkey had to change its approaches and methods to reach the goal and to continue the difficult process of negotiations with the European Union and attempts to agree with it. As the Turkish government saw that heading to its regional environment east and south does not contradict its fixed orientation to the north and west, but may serve and advance it by highlighting the importance of the Turkish role as a stabilizing force in the European neighborhood and as a link with the Islamic world.<sup>(109)</sup>

On this basis, the European Union should encourage Turkey to resolve disputes in the South Caucasus and the Middle East to ensure the stability of these areas of interest to the Union, where energy supplies and transit routes to world markets. Accordingly, Erdogan's government has shifted Turkish foreign policy away from the West and NATO in the first place and towards improving relations with Islamic countries in the Middle East, as well as in the Caucasus and Russia, and this has led to disappointment in some Western countries, as they have been appreciated. By the Arab countries, Russia and Iran, and it has strengthened Turkey's role to play a major role in the region,<sup>(110)</sup> but this does not mean that Turkey has focused on this priority in its foreign policy or has shifted from the West axis to the East axis, as Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu emphasized, saying, "It is a mistake to artificially maintain a priority in a particular region." Therefore, Turkey seeks an integrated policy that brings together all areas and issues of foreign policy in one form to formulate policy. Davutoglu rejects the idea that Turkey has shifted from the axis of the West to the axis of the Middle East, as it occupies a non-permanent seat in the Security Council and an

active member of the Group of Twenty, as it maintains its commitments to the path of membership in the European Union.<sup>(111)</sup>

In fact, this Turkish vision stems primarily from the concept of a policy of balance to give the greatest ability to maneuver its foreign policy towards American policies in the Middle East through ensuring internal, regional and international political balances and preferential orientations to limit alienation from the West and the United States. The Turkish government believes that it cannot play any regional role unless it is accepted by the West and the United States. Undoubtedly, Turkey's mediation efforts between (Israel) and Arab countries and the resolution of conflicts in the Caucasus does not diminish the relations with the West, as it will remain the main axis of Turkey. And NATO is one of the pillars of the policy to find a balance between security and freedom”<sup>(112)</sup> and by saying that “it wants the nation to play a greater role in the Middle East and the Balkans, but relations with the West will continue to become the main pillar of foreign policy.”<sup>(113)</sup>

This confirms that Turkey does not seek to compromise its relations with the West, and that its new role in the Middle East or the Balkans, such as the role it played in the indirect negotiations between Syria and (Israel) and its position on the Iranian nuclear file and the events in Gaza, comes within the framework of the multiple Turkish action. It serves as a message to Western countries that Turkey is a necessity for them in the Middle East to secure the stability that Europe seeks, which becomes difficult without the help of Turkey, which is able to communicate with all countries in the region without exception.<sup>(114)</sup> It is worth noting that there is European opposition to Turkey's entry into the European Union, and Turkish relations with the European Union remained at their lowest levels until 2002. On the agreement for the future of Europe, the former French president (Valéry Giscard d'Estaing), the former French president, said that Turkey should not join the European Union, and the French Foreign Minister stated Former Hubert Vedrine that Turkey is not a European country.<sup>(115)</sup> France's opposition to Turkey's accession to the Union was repeated when US President Obama called on the European Union to accept Turkey's accession. The response came quickly from French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who said, "Work has been done hand in hand with President Obama, but when it comes to the European Union, the matter is up to European Union member states to take the decision," and he repeated his words in an interview with French television (I was always against this entry and I am still against), as German Chancellor Angela Merkel indicated that there are differences of opinion with the US President.<sup>(116)</sup> So, on the other hand, France seeks Turkey's participation





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in the regional sub-systems as a regional power that contributes to the stability of the Middle East and the Caucasus. President Sarkozy stressed the necessity of Turkey's participation in the Union for the Mediterranean, which he proposed in 2007, where Turkey participated in the summit of this union in July 13, 2008.<sup>(117)</sup> This means that Turkey will remain the important partner for Europe despite its rejection of its full membership in the European Union, given the importance of Turkey as it is the vital area for protecting the interests of the West in the region. Based on this, Turkey seeks to actively engage in regional interactions to increase its regional position with the European Union to the extent that Europeans are convinced of the importance of Turkey's strategic weight in Western politics, and that Europe cannot become a global security force through Turkey's full integration into it.

**Fourth: Regional Developments (Turkish-Iranian Rivalry):** Since the end of the Cold War and after the occupation of Iraq in 2003, and the change that took place in it, especially the weakening of its military, political and economic capabilities, this event constituted a major changing reality in the region's geopolitics, which allowed the regional powers seeking to achieve a role It is recognized regionally, and the associated indication of these regional endeavors comes in the context of division and conflict between the various regional powers to control the unstable and complex region due to regional and international interventions. In the absence of any Arab powers on the regional arena, the vacuum of regional powers has tempted non-Arab countries such as Iran and Turkey to fill it, and due to the nature of Iranian discourse and Iran's tense relationship with the West, Turkey had a better chance of extending its regional role, especially as it seeks to compete with Iran by creating a base of common interests with her. Nor did the Israeli-Turkish relations deteriorate to the point of confrontation and become an obstacle to Erdogan's government when it adopted a strong and just position during and after the Israeli aggression on Gaza.<sup>(118)</sup>

With regard to the Turkish-Iranian competition for the regional role in the region, we must point out some of the characteristics that Turkey possesses, which are the following.<sup>(119)</sup>

- The possibility of Turkish acceptance of all countries in the region, where there are no sensitivities to political or ideological control, as is the case with Iran.
- Turkey's ability, which is the only country that can prevent Iran from expanding politically, militarily, and ideologically against the Arab countries, has capabilities that other Arab countries do not have.





-Turkey does not compete with the Arab regime or any other Arab country, and it does not have controversial accounts with some Arab countries.

-The harmony of Turkish regional performance in relations with Arab countries in the central Arab issues of common interest.

It is worth noting that the Israeli aggression on Gaza revealed a Turkish orientation towards the south, which gave it the opportunity to directly intervene on a regional hot line, which gives it the opportunity to play an active role in the regional arena and enables it to try to solve many of the region's outstanding issues with many local, regional and international players, considering Gaza A starting point for the Palestinian issue and other outstanding issues in the Middle East<sup>(120)</sup>. On this basis, Turkey took a hard stance towards the Israeli aggression, especially the stormy confrontation between Erdogan and Israeli President Shimon Peres during a session of the Economic Forum in the Swiss resort of Davos on January 29, 2009 Erdogan strongly criticized Israel and said that it bears responsibility for the tragedy and injustice it has inflicted in Gaza and the killing of civilians during its aggression on Gaza .<sup>(121)</sup> Erdogan's bold stance towards the Israeli aggression on Gaza has received great popular support among the Turkish people and strong sympathy from among the Arab people, as it is a unique and just position that no head of any Arab or Islamic country could take in light of Arab weakness and the existing international silence. Despite the tension this situation caused in Turkish-Israeli relations and the criticism of many Israelis and their questions about how Turkey played the role of mediator in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, this did not contribute to the relations between the two countries reaching the point of no return, as a kind of apathy prevailed between them that quickly vanished. In light of the visit of the Israeli Minister of Trade and Industry, Benjamin Eliezer to Turkey, where he stated in Istanbul, "Turkey can contribute to restoring things in the conflict between Syria and Israel, and Turkey must play its role." There is nothing between Turkey and Syria that does not bother us)).<sup>(122)</sup>

Therefore, it can be said that the arrival of the Justice and Development Party to power in Turkey has brought about a kind of balance in Turkish-Israeli and Turkish-Arab relations. Rather, the curve of those relations has tilted in favor of a greater kind of sympathy with Arab issues, specifically the Palestinian cause, and Turkish visits have increased. Official Palestinian Territories. However, despite all that, Turkey tried to adopt policies balanced in its standards, but it did not bypass Turkish-Israeli relations.





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Within this framework, Erdogan said during a press conference in Libya that his country had originally played the role of mediator during five rounds of negotiations between Syria and Israel, and the Anatolia news agency quoted him as saying, "If we are asked again to perform such a task, we are determined to play the role of mediator and provide all support." (123) In fact, Turkey and (Israel) need each other, and Turkey realizes that the road to Washington passes through Tel Aviv, and it needs to develop its military equipment. Also, (Israel) needs Turkish airspace to train its pilots and gather information about Iran and Iraq, as well as its need of Turkish fresh water. Turkey's role is not limited to participating in finding a just solution to the Palestinian issue, but rather includes its role and its increasing involvement in Iraq, Syria, Iran and Lebanon, as well as "presenting itself as a mediator in the settlement process in the Middle East." Regarding its role with Iran, Turkey is trying to play the role of mediator between Iran and the West regarding its nuclear program. It is noticeable that the nature of Turkish-Iranian relations is determined by the influence of regime change in Iran, conflict of interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus, relations with the United States and Israel, and concern about the future of Iraq, especially northern Iraq. In addition, Turkish companies' investments in Iran and agreements on the purchase of natural gas have added a dimension to relations in recent years, (124) and the volume of trade between Turkey and Iran increased from 1.3 billion dollars in 2002 to 8.1 billion dollars in 2007. (125) Turkey adopts a similar policy To accommodate the line of the European Union when it comes to Iran, therefore Turkey is keen to balance in the context of the emerging relations in the triangle of the United States and (Israel) and nuclear weapons. The Turkish policy towards Iran is summed up in that it is against Iran's possession of nuclear weapons, but it refuses to use the military option against Iran and calls for the adoption of The policy of dialogue between Iran, America and the West to find practical solutions to the issue of Iran's nuclear program, including Turkey being a suitable place for Iranian uranium enrichment.

Based on all of the foregoing, the regional vacuum created by the absence of effective regional powers has made room for Turkish policy with more effective regional action to maintain stability by maintaining communication with all regional parties in a balanced manner.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations.**

Turkey, by virtue of its geographical location, represented the role of the Buffer State between the eastern and western camps during the Cold War. Had it not been for its role described as (the advanced outpost) or the

southeastern flank of NATO, and its control over the most important strategic sea corridor (the Turkish Straits) and its vast continental extension that prevented the Soviets from extending their influence towards Europe in the west and the Middle East in the south, the geopolitical map of the world would have been different. Current.

This role made it imperative for Turkey, at the time, to follow a one-dimensional foreign policy - so to speak - meaning that its foreign policy was a reflection of the reality of this location and the nature of this role. The ideological (communist) influence in Turkey is a major factor in pushing the latter towards the West as a strategic ally that preserves its national security, and this position has resulted in the Turkish foreign policy revolving around the importance of its security and military function within the framework of the alliance and its role in serving its interests, which are relatively consistent with interests of its allies. Therefore, most of its foreign policy orientations came in the context of Western strategic goals and interests.

Therefore, the fear of the possibility of diminishing this importance as a result of the international and regional changes that surrounded the international system and affected the interaction relations between its main forces, prompted Turkish decision-makers and elites to search for new ways in which their country would maintain its importance to the West on the one hand, and to perform a new regional function based on its own capabilities to achieve its own interests away from the limitations of the roles that were previously assigned to it. Therefore, Turkey has invested all the opportunities available to it to prove its continued availability of strategic importance, and to prevent it from becoming a marginal country. Rather, its leaders desired to move it from a (peripheral) state to a (pivotal) state regionally.

At the level of Turkey's relations with the United States and the West, the Turks worked to prevent the aforementioned international changes from withdrawing from the importance and position of Turkey in the American strategy, whether related to the future of NATO and the roles expected to be played in the post-Cold War environment, or in terms of ensuring security and stability according to the vision in the areas of Turkey's regional periphery that are strategically important to American interests and national security, which are described as unstable, such as the traditional American spheres of influence (the Middle East) or the new ones in Central Asia and the Caucasus, which contain reservoirs of natural resources, and suffer political instability in them.

As for the Turkish policy towards Europe and the desire for it to obtain full membership in the European Union, Turkey started the process of





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Europeanization early and worked to integrate fully into the European security and economic institutions, but if it had achieved success in the past by joining the European Common Market, and later concluding the Union Agreements. The customs union and its acquisition of membership in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Western European Union, as its biggest dream of obtaining full membership within the European Union, the most important European organization, is still prevented by real obstacles.

Despite the efforts of the Turks, whether within the framework of the official institutions concerned with foreign policy or those supporting it, in order to fulfill the requirements of this membership, the Europeans continued the policy of procrastination and permanent hope towards Turkey by refusing to give Turkey a specific date to start negotiations for full membership and at the same time not closing the door. Finally, the Europeans offered her special treatment (privileged partnership) without full membership.

Assuming that Turkey will be able to respond to all the requirements of the European Union and its aforementioned problems have been settled, the main obstacle to Turkey's integration into Europe in general remains, by which we mean the cultural difference and the difference in the cultural heritage. Mustafa Kemal's efforts to forcibly separate the Turkish people from their historical and religious heritage failed, but rather increased their adherence to it, and the Islamic religion has become a major role in contemporary Turkish political life, despite the many restrictions placed by the military and secular forces to prevent it, in contrast to a hostile European view that reaches the point of excessive hatred. Against Muslims in general and Turks in particular, especially since some European circles are trying to resurrect the memories of the Ottoman Empire and its control over important parts of Europe, which increased the negative effects of the events of September 11, 2001. Against the background of discussions about Turkey's membership, European statements came confirming that Turkey should (undergo a cultural revolution) in order to become European, which angered the Turks, who emphasized that the normative foundations for The European Union is based on respect for the cultural and historical personality of its members and that the European Union should not be a "Christian club." Turkey's efforts to bridge the cultural gap with Europe have focused on emphasizing ties based on civil values and common Western civilization with reference to similar and successful experiences despite different cultures religions among its inhabitants. It also tries to emphasize the tolerant nature of Islam.

With the end of the Cold War, the variables of the regional environment in the region, especially the second Gulf War in 1991, restored Turkey to its regional function, which it almost lost, by undertaking roles that are complementary or consistent with American policy towards the region or within the framework of the new directions of NATO, whose interests are not limited to its geographical scope. Rather, it included areas of conflict and instability, the Middle East and the Arab Gulf region in particular. During the second Gulf crisis of 1990 and the aftermath of its war in 1991, Turkey became completely involved with the United States in promoting security projects for the region, such as establishing a Gulf security structure similar to NATO or a conference-style organization European security and cooperation, and Turkey has had several entrances to perform its Gulf role; Including allowing the Gulf states to effectively contribute to the Turkish army's modernization programs and financing Turkish military production, and the Turkish contribution to training and arming the (armies) of the Gulf states, or by considering Turkey as a depot for storing American weapons in it to secure an immediate response to emergency situations that may occur in the region. Turkey also renewed its call for the implementation of regional cooperation projects in the areas of development and infrastructure. And that this Turkish role is not confronted by local opposition, if it is not accepted, compared to the Iranian role. There are no sensitivities among the Gulf states towards Turkey, as they are towards Iran, and Iraq, whose regional role has diminished, to the removal of the most important obstacle to the Turkish orientation towards the Gulf region.

And regarding the Turkish role in the Arab-Zionist settlement process, Ankara has been keen, since the first steps, to participate in it, with the aim of consolidating its presence in the future arrangements for the region, especially since the settlement process itself was intended to be the basis for a Middle Eastern regional order as an alternative to the Arab regional system. The leadership would be for Israel And Turkey as an active participant in it. In addition to the economic gains that this achieves through development projects and economic cooperation in the region, where Turkey presents its water and energy projects, without neglecting an important factor in Turkish enthusiasm in this regard, which is the desire to gain Jewish votes (the lobby) in the United States and Europe to balance the effects of the Greek lobby. And the Armenian hostile to Turkey on the one hand, and to use this to put pressure on decision-making centers in European countries to accept Turkey as a member of the European Union.





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The Justice and Development Party has reformulated Turkey's foreign policy, which was based on preserving the integrity of the Turkish state that emerged from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and avoiding conflict. It means to expand the circle of its foreign relations to include, in addition to the West, a greater number of circles, especially those with which it has geographical, cultural, and historical ties. In describing its geographical function, which it assumed during the Cold War era, Turkey had a pivotal role in the Atlantic strategy of containing the Soviet Union, based on its geographical location, which dominates the southern entrance to the Asian Soviet republics. This was yesterday, but today there is a new definition of the geographical function, in which Turkey presents itself as a link between East and West, in the civilized sense. In parallel, it is a bridge for energy supplies destined for the West, from Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East.

The Justice and Development government affirms the multi-dimensionality of Turkish roles in the Middle East in recent years, with the possibility of including all of them within a comprehensive framework for Turkey as a center for achieving security and stability in the region. The vast majority of Turkish roles fall within the scope of cooperative roles, which is evident in Turkey's role as a channel of communication and mediator between the various conflicting parties in the region, an active partner in addressing political differences in the region, a center for promoting economic interdependence at the regional level, and an inspiring model or example for countries. The region is involved in political, economic, cultural and social reforms, support for security cooperation between the countries of the region and the development of the concept of common security. But the continuity of the Turkish regional role and its ability to develop remains dependent on the factors governing it, the pressures it faces and how to deal with them, especially with the difficulty of maintaining the consensual formulas proposed by the Justice and Development government between its pursuit of its national interests on the one hand, and its role as an ally of the United States and the West on the other hand, and promoting its role as a regional actor that seeks to achieve stability and the interests of the region as a whole from a third party, with an emphasis on the lack of conflict between these dimensions and their complementarity with each other. Therefore, the Turkish role must be objectively evaluated, far from relying on it completely, ignoring it, or motivating against it. Turkey - by virtue of its geographical proximity, at least - represents a genuine party in some of the issues that revolve on its borders, such as the Iraqi issue, the Iranian nuclear file, and relations with Syria, and it is also a

participant in several other regional issues beyond its direct borders. But the complex and extended nature of the region's issues, and the complexities of the Turkish interior make the Turkish role - on its activity - constrained by subjective factors, external data, and the roles and positions of other parties, some of whom are initiators and put forward perceptions and projects that contradict the Turkish vision, and some of them have to assume their responsibilities before betting on Turkish roles or dependent on it.

**From the foregoing, we can mention the most important conclusions reached by the study, as follows:**

1-The Turkish foreign policy has, in many cases, been prepared outside the constitutional framework, in the sense that one of the institutions exceeded the limits of its competences in taking the external political decision, such as the dominant role of former President Turkut Ozal in making the decision to participate in his country in the second Gulf War of 1991

.2-The Turkish foreign policy is largely responsive to the changes in its external environment or part of the components of its internal environment with external extensions, and this stems from the fact that Turkey, despite the great developments it has witnessed politically, economically and socially, is still considered one of the third world countries. Moreover, the objectives of the Turkish foreign policy seeking to join the blocs of the developed world imposed on Turkey a flexible response to the influences of its external environment.

3-Based on that, Turkish foreign policy was affected by the international and regional changes that followed the end of the Cold War to a large degree, which were expressed by the Turkish leaders' fears of the diminishing importance of their country in Western strategy and in serving American interests, and then the loss of its alliance relations within the framework of NATO as a guarantor of national security Turkish.

.4-The Turkish leaders worked to fully exploit the historical opportunities that were available to them, whether the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the emergence of a new world on the scene of international and regional politics, or the new regional roles that Turkey created in the Middle East during the Second Gulf War.

.5-In view of that, if it is true that the end of the Cold War abolished Turkey's security function in the face of the Soviet threat, then it is more correct that this function has taken other directions by giving it roles in areas of instability such as the Middle East, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans.





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.6-If the Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War followed a (unilateral) approach, meaning that all its orientations were centered in the light of the alliance's relationship with the West (NATO), then it kept the same approach in the post-war era, but with new dimensions, as Turkey made its desire Joining the European Union is the focus of its international and regional movement, and if its orientations towards certain regions (Islamic republics, for example) seemed at one time to be an alternative to its European option, then its final outcome came to serve its last option.

.7-The characterization of Turkish foreign policy as (nationalism of foreign policy goals), meaning that there is a national consensus on the importance and priority of the goals that Turkey seeks to achieve regardless of political changes and government changes in it. All political parties have a consensus to pursue policies that serve those goals regardless of Its intellectual trends and political theses despite the difference in the political discourse of this party or that due to its proximity or distance to the government or the opposition, such as Turkey's adherence to its alliance relations with the West, the growth of its relations with Israel, and its continued support for the American policy towards Iraq.

8-Regionally Turkey has departed from many of the principles of its foreign policy, as it no longer avoids getting involved in the problems of the Middle East (its participation in the second Gulf War), and no longer balances its relations with the Arabs and (Israel) by not taking into account the considerations and positions of both sides regarding its relations with them (concluding an agreement Turkish-Israeli Security Cooperation).

9-The goal of maintaining strategic relations with the United States, even its acceptance as a full member of the European Union - and perhaps despite that - remains a major goal for Turkey, a fact indicated by the course of those relations that the Turks were keen to maintain despite the problems and crises that surrounded them, perhaps the last of which was the crisis caused by Turkish positions Refusal to participate in the third Gulf War 2003.

10-Turkey bases its foreign policy on a new approach that abandons the traditional link with Western strategies in favor of a pluralistic perspective that considers that there are interests of Turkey in the Middle East that do not necessarily coincide with American and Western interests in it.

11-The changes that have occurred since the Justice and Development Party took power in Turkey, whether in the Turkish internal environment



or the regional and international environment, have a significant impact on Turkey's adoption of a foreign policy, especially towards the Middle East, and it is not possible within the framework of searching for this policy to separate the internal variables and external.

12-The Justice and Development Party has redefined the principles and foundations of foreign policy, since it took over the reins of power in Turkey in 2002, and raised it to a new level. Not only did these principles remain confined to the theoretical framework, but now they found their opportunity for application, and most importantly, they achieved remarkable successes through the policies that resulted in this victory and that paved the way for radical changes at home and abroad that are still interacting to this day and overriding Turkey's interactive role in the region and its rise. The regional and international are prominent as a pivotal country of strategic importance.

13-Turkey stems from its desire to cooperate and develop its economic relations with the Arab countries and the countries of the independent Islamic republics in the Middle East and to define the fields of this cooperation for two basic considerations:

Firstly. The need to finance its development projects and develop its economic growth

Secondly. Proving its importance to the European Community by playing an active and leading role in the economies of the Middle East, in order to gain its accession to the European Economic Community.

14-Turkish thinking at the level of the people and the leadership has become different in dealing with its allies, especially Israel. Turkish politicians are trying to act with the logic of the great state whose decision stems purely from itself without going into the orbit of any other policy it follows, until it proves its sincere vision towards outstanding issues in the East. The Middle East, in which it interferes with international and regional parties, especially with the implementation of the strategic depth policy of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, which gave the Turkish player in the region a qualitative leap, and allowed Turkey to rise to an interactive, non-confrontational region.

15-The Turkish-Israeli relations will remain in all cases, and they may improve at times and may worsen at other times, but they will not be able to destroy the principles on which their regional rise was based, and they follow a policy of "zero problems" with neighboring countries, and they cannot turn a blind eye to what is happening in the region. The region is witnessing popular Arab revolutions that will eventually push towards the improvement of Arab-Turkish relations due to what these revolutions may produce from popularly acceptable governments, which may push





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for the provision of abundant experience in achieving sustainable development, which will make Turkish-Israeli relations marginal and not of the size they were previously. In addition, Turkey cannot remain silent about what Israel is doing against the Palestinians; Because it will then be just a modified version of the Arab regimes that do not have any leading role towards the Palestinian issue, which contradicts Turkey's existing policy.

.16-The policy of multi-dimensionality would not have succeeded if the goal of weakening Iran was set before it. Whoever seeks to weaken the other does not work to deepen cooperation with him. Turkey has shown that it does not want to be an opponent or enemy of Iran, but rather a friend, partner and good neighbor, so it concluded. Economic agreements with it in several fields. Turkey stood by Iran in the nuclear file for peaceful purposes. It opposed the United States' attempts to isolate Iran and impose an economic blockade on it. It refused to use its territory for any aggressive action against Iran. The Turkish national interest also requires full coordination with Iran in the most serious threats that it poses. Facing the Turkish national security and the unity of the country ie the Kurdish problem, especially after the occupation of Iraq. These previous indicators lead to say that the graph of Turkish-Iranian relations is on the rise, overcoming major obstacles and challenges.

**Margins**

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