
**NEW WORLD ORDER:
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS**

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**Geopolitical Aspect of Russian-Turkish Relations: Rivalry or
Cooperation?**

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The article discusses the features of the Russian-Turkish relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the context of geopolitical rivalry in the South Caucasus. It particularly focuses on the processes taking place after the Five-Day War between Russia and Georgia. The clashes of interests of both parties are most clearly manifested in the two most troubled regions of the Eurasian Heartland – the South Caucasus and the Middle East. The Russian-Turkish relations are distinguished by the unusual combinations and alternation of rivalry and cooperation. In a new era it is best illustrated with regard to the flows and routes of energy resources towards Europe. Over the last decade, both countries face difficulties in international relations and, as a hundred years ago, they try to overcome them cooperating/competing in the framework of the projects of mutual interests.

Keywords

Turkey, Russia, Middle East, South Caucasus, Caspian basin, energy resources, rivalry, cooperation

Introduction

The Russian-Turkish relations stand out in international bilateral relations for their sharp fluctuations, the most unusual combinations and alternation of cooperation and rivalry. This is due to a highly specific foreign policy run by both states and the clash of their interests in the two

most active regions of the Eurasian Heartland¹ – the South Caucasus and the Middle East. The peculiarities of this relationship, characterized by a three-hundred-year history, have the most striking manifestations during the geopolitical realignments, the latter of which started after the collapse of the USSR. At the beginning of the 90s, when Russia was facing numerous challenges conditioned by the post-Soviet transformation, Ankara considered that a favorable situation was created in the South Caucasus and Central Asia to fill the vacuum of foreign influence caused by the collapse of the USSR and to make these regions the zones of its influence². However, very soon Turkey realized that the accomplishment of this goal was unrealistic due to several reasons, and it sought to ensure a new role in the region in another way. The beginning of the 90s marked a great interest of the West towards the energy resources of Azerbaijan and, in general, the Caspian basin. Ankara managed to block the transportation of these resources through the territory of Russia, setting new requirements for the energy supply through its straits. Meanwhile, the United States and the European countries obviously opted for the route bypassing Russia. The result was that in a given situation the only potential route to transfer the energy resources of that region was through the territories of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. In 2005 Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and in 2006 Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) gas pipeline were implemented based on the agreements signed in the mid 90s. It seemed that there were real opportunities for the accomplishment of the goals set out in 1998 Declaration on the transfer of the Caspian basin and the Central Asian oil resources to the international markets through the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, signed by Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Ankara hoped that the unequivocal support of the United States and the EU countries to the project will not only guarantee its success, but will turn to a decisive factor for the qualitative increase of Turkey's role in the Eurasian Heartland. To this end Turkey tried to use both the fact of being the only transit country for

¹ **Mackinder H.**, The Geographical Pivot of History, *The Geographical Journal*, 1904, 23; **Mackinder H.**, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, London: Constable and Company, 1919.

² **Torosyan T.**, The Return of Turkey, *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2009, 3, July-September, 120-129.

transferring the energy resources to Europe in near future, and its significant impact on Azerbaijan – one of the donor countries of that project. However, things developed in a different direction. Since the early 2000s, due to several factors the tensions have been steadily growing in two parts of the Eurasian Heartland – the South Caucasus and the Middle East. Russia managed to cope with the internal political tensions, to consolidate its power, and it started to openly manifest its aspirations of acquiring a growing role in international relations. While the United States did not give up its goal of establishing a unipolar world order, the EU tried to find opportunities for the increase of the energy import volumes and diversification of transport routes and energy sources. As a result, on the one hand the transportation of the Caspian basin and the Central Asian energy resources becomes a tool of geopolitical rivalry, and the hostage of the clash of geopolitical interests on the other. The Russian-Turkish relations bear a clear impact of these tensions and the exotic combinations of the rivalry-cooperation elements typical to them most clearly manifest the process developments. The situation has been further complicated due to a new hotspot in the Middle East, which sidelined the other regional issues with its scope, variety of foreign actors (including the US, Russia and Turkey) and the potential unforeseen consequences. In terms of the subject matter of the article, it is necessary to examine not only the region in its wider scope, issues of energy resources transportation to Europe, the engagement of powerful actors in the processes and the serious clashes of their interests, but also the features of the policy they pursue.

Prerequisites for the formation of new geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus

Due to the lack of the agreement among the littoral states on the use of the Caspian Sea, as well as the preventive measures arising from the geopolitical aspirations of Russia since the early 2000s, the project of the transportation of the Caspian energy resources started with BTC and BTE has not been further processed as a result of entirely new regional developments. Following the NATO and EU enlargements, the Black Sea became the Eastern frontier of Europe and its significance for NATO

highly increased. Despite strong Russian objections, both Ukraine and Georgia have clearly expressed their willingness to become the future EU and NATO members. On the one hand, Russia was trying to firm up its grip over the Black Sea region, on the other the United States and NATO sought to increase their influence in this turbulent, yet highly strategic region³. The elimination of dividing buffer zones made the clashes inevitable. Moscow's position was precisely formulated in Putin's speech at 2007 Munich Conference on security policy⁴. He announced that Moscow will not accept any attempt of unipolar world order formation, particularly those of the US aimed at acquiring a new role in international relations. The speech had a symbolic meaning in terms of a new stage of the Russian-American rivalry within the new world order formation, which later led to harsh confrontations, sanctions and indirect clashes⁵. This had a serious impact both on the bilateral relations of the countries seeking dominance in the South Caucasus and the Middle East, and on further developments in these regions. The impact is particularly noticeable with regard to the Russian-Turkish relations. On the one hand Ankara uses the decades-long partnership with the United States to achieve its goals, on the other – the possibilities of cooperation with Russia. Turkey's president R. T. Erdogan formulated Ankara's ambition in the following way "America is our ally and the Russian Federation is an important neighbor. Russia is our number one trade partner. We are obtaining two-thirds of our energy from Russia. We act in accordance to our national interests. We cannot ignore Russia"⁶. Of course, in the past Russia also had occasions to make sure that Turkey opts for tactical measures with the intention of getting maximum benefit from given situations. Moscow probably considers it as a possibility of combining interests with Ankara yielding a large part of its tactical interests with the

³ **Öniş Z., Yılmaz Ş.**, Turkey and Russia in a shifting global order: cooperation, conflict and asymmetric interdependence in a turbulent region, *Third World Quarterly*, 2015, **37**, 1, p. 13.

⁴ Vladimir Putin, "Speech at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy", 10 February 2007, http://globalsecurity.org/.../2007/putin-munich_070210.htm.

⁵ **Torosyan T., Vardanyan A.**, The South Caucasus Conflicts in the Context of Struggle for the Eurasian Heartland, *Geopolitics*, 2015, **20**, 3, 559-582.

⁶ **Aras B.**, Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy, *Insight Turkey*, 2009, **11**, 3, p. 137.

expectation of having strategic outcomes. Moreover, due to the sanctions of the West following the crisis in Ukraine, Moscow does not have much option in the field of international cooperation. Turkey has an important place within a limited scope of Russia's partner countries. It is clear that in the last stage of new world order formation both Russia and Turkey are not only doomed to delicate maneuvering between cooperation and harsh rivalry but sometimes have to use drastic measures.

New Geopolitical Situation in the South Caucasus

Immediately after the Five-Day War between Russia and Georgia, Turkey blocked the access of US warships to the Black Sea through the Turkish Straits⁷. The official explanation was strongly diplomatic. The US is trying to revise the provisions of the Montreux Convention which is unacceptable for Turkey. However, the problem was not Turkey's "full commitment" to the Convention, but its opposing to its chief ally in favor of its chief rival. While some Turkish experts were trying to represent this as an escape from dangerous confrontation with Russia⁸, in fact it was obviously a favorable step towards Russia⁹. It is no coincidence that the West sharply criticized this act accusing Turkey of betraying NATO and backing Russia¹⁰. However, a few days later Turkey made the second similar step. On August 12, 2008 Turkey's Prime-Minister Erdogan visited Moscow and suggested the creation of the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform with the inclusion of three recognized states of the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) as well as Russia and Turkey¹¹. Obviously such an initiative

⁷ **Aras B.**, Turkey and the Russian Federation: An Emerging Multidimensional Partnership, *SETA Policy Brief*, 2009, 35, p. 8; **Morrison D.**, Turkey restricts US access to the Black Sea, 18.10.2008, www.david-morrison.co.uk.

⁸ **Özel S., Şuhnaz Y.**, Turkish–American Relations for a New Era: A Turkish Perspective, *TÜSİAD Report*, İstanbul, April 2009, p. 73.

⁹ **Öniş Z., Yılmaz Ş.**, Op. cit.

¹⁰ **Baran Z.**, Will Turkey Abandon NATO?, *The Wall Street Journal*, August 29, 2008,

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121997087258381935.html?mod=googlenews_wsj.

¹¹ **Devrim D., Schulz E.**, The Caucasus: Which Role for Turkey in the European Neighborhood?, *Insight Turkey*, 2009, 11, 3, 177-193; **Çelikkpala M.**, Türkiye ve

would not have been possible for the near future in particular given the Russian-Georgian and the Armenian-Azerbaijani bilateral relations. It is hard to believe that this has not been realized in Ankara. The sense of this initiative, failed shortly after it was introduced, was completely different. Erdogan has not only openly announced about this initiative without discussing it in advance with the US, but it has not even considered the participation of Washington in suggested platform. Even given the lack of the prospects for the Platform implementation, Turkey's step was a significant support to Russia. It became the subject of harsh criticism of the West due to geopolitical ambitions and the Five Day War between Russia and Georgia. This gave rise to a dramatic improvement of the Russian-Turkish relations manifested not only by a significant increase in the frequency of high-level state visits¹², signing of more than forty agreements on trade and economic relations¹³ and the perspective of increasing the trade turnover between two countries to \$ 100 billion in 2020¹⁴, but also by a new level of cooperation in the field of energy. It was marked both by multi-billion finance programs, and by its strategic importance. Of particular importance are the agreements on the joint implementation of the projects regarding the construction of the first nuclear power plant in Turkey, Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the South Stream gas pipeline¹⁵. Still, the Russian-Turkish relations are not regarded as “strategic partnership”, though it is considered that they are

Kafkasya: Reaksiyoner Dış Politikadan Proaktif Ritmik Diplomasiye Geçiş, *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 7, 25, 93-126.

¹² **Özbay F.**, The Relations between Turkey and Russia in the 2000s, *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 2011, 16, 3, p. 77, **Kolobov O.**, A. Kornilov, Middle East Policy of Russia Under President Medvedev: Strategies, Institutes, Faces, *Bilge Strateji*, 2011, 2, 4, p. 30 ; Weitz R., Russia-Turkey Energy Ties: Cooperation with Conflict, *DIPLOMAATIA*, September 2012, No. 109, <http://www.diplomaatia.ee/en/article/russia-turkey-energy-ties-cooperation-with-conflict/>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Turetskiy premyer: tovarooborot s Rossiei vyrastet do 100mlrd dollarov k koncu desyatiletia

22.11.2013, http://fedpress.ru/news/polit_vlast/news_polit/1385117429-turetskii-premer-tovarooborot-s-rossiei-vyrastet-do-100-mlrd-dollarov-k-kontsu-desyatilet.

¹⁵ **Raufoglu A.**, Turkey, Russia at Odds over Middle East, Caucasus, *Foreign Policy*, 03.06. 2012, <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2012/06/03/turkey-russia-at-odds-over-middle-east-caucasus/>.

in a “strategic dimension” in the field of energy¹⁶. Meanwhile, the latter does not imply the absence of problems in that sphere especially given the mismatch of the objectives of the two countries. Russia is aimed to increase Turkey's dependence on the Russian gas thereby preventing the construction of pipelines passing from the Central Asia and the Caspian basin that are not under Moscow's control. In its turn, Ankara is seeking to diversify its sources of energy supplies and to become the largest transit corridor from these regions to Europe. To this end, Turkey is trying to best use the rivalry between Russia and the EU. The latter has actively supported the idea of the pipeline construction projects (first of all, the “Nabucco” gas pipeline) regarding the transfer of energy resources from the South Caucasus and Central Asia to Europe bypassing Russia¹⁷. Turkey similarly wanted to play a significant role in this project. It is no coincidence that the intergovernmental agreement on the construction of the pipeline was signed in Ankara on July 13, 2009, when the discussions started over Turkey's participation in the Russian “South Stream” project – an alternative to “Nabucco”. Although Russia reacted harshly to the signing of the Agreement, Russian Energy Minister S. Shmatko cautioned against planning for an energy future without Russia recalling one the most famous Russian expressions “Don't sell the skin of a bear before you kill it”¹⁸. However, it affected the Russian-Turkish relations in no way.

The situation in the Eurasian Heartland gained new quality and the prospects for the future developments significantly changed due to an unprecedented and irrevocable strengthening of the US presence in the region (in Georgia), EU's active regional involvement, the Russian-Turkish rapprochement and the exacerbation of the Syrian conflict. To get the maximum benefit from these multi-vector processes, Turkey had

¹⁶ **Özbay F.**, Türkiye-Rusya İlişkileri: Stratejik Ortaklık Mı?, *Hasret Çomak (ed.), 21. Yüzyılda Çağdaş Türk Dış Politikası ve Diplomasisi, Kocaeli, Umuttepe Yayınları*, 2011, pp. 301-312.

¹⁷ **Roberts J. M.**, The Black Sea and European energy security, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 2006, **6**, 2, 207-223; **Kardas S.**, Nabucco Intergovernmental Agreement Signed in Ankara, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, **6**, 134, 14.07.2009, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35262&no_cache=1#.V1FFtjV97cs); **Freifeld D.**, The great pipeline opera, *Foreign Policy*, 22. 08.2009, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/08/22/the-great-pipeline-opera/>.

¹⁸ **Freifeld D.**, Op. cit.

to maneuver carefully with balanced rapprochements and not irreversible disruption of relations keeping the necessary distance from all (the US, the EU, Russia). In this regard, one could have been expected that Turkey will show Russia and the others that any new situation requires new bargaining in one of the most critical situations for the West. It happened in the UN Security Council during the voting on a draft resolution to impose sanctions on Syria, when Turkey joined the West and the League of Arab States entering into a confrontation with Russia¹⁹. However, according to Ayyub, this does not mean that Turkey will return to its traditional strategic dependence from the US and its allies – the approach defining Turkey's foreign policy during the Cold War and the first decade of the Post-Soviet era. He considers that under the Justice and Development Party Turkey was striving for a strategic autonomy of the country as well as for greater engagement in the Middle East. Meanwhile, it realizes that such a policy should not undermine its relations with NATO and the US²⁰.

The impact of energy supply routes on the formation of new geopolitical situation

Although the trade and economic relations between Russian and Turkey were developing in almost every direction, including construction (the total cost of the projects carried out by the Turkish construction companies between 1989 and 2014 amounted to more than 61.7 billion dollars²¹), banking (in September 2012, Russian Sberbank acquired 99.85% of Denizbank for 3.5 billion dollars²²), tourism (about 4.5 million Russian tourists visited Turkey in 2014²³ due to which Turkey's revenues

¹⁹ **Arbatova N.**, Moskva i Ankara v mnogopolyarnom mire, *voenno-promyshlenniy kurier*, № 26 (443), 04.07.2012, <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/9018>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Torgovo-ekonomicheskie otnosheniya Turcii i Rossii, 16.03.2016, <http://moscow.emb.mfa.gov.tr/ShowInfoNotes.aspx?ID=220069>.

²² **Bozbay B., Topanoğlu E.**, Turkey: Commercial Relations between Turkey and the Russian Federation, 20 June 2014, <http://www.mondaq.com/turkey/x/321956/international+trade+investment/Commercial+Relations+Between+Turkey+And+The+Russian+Federation>.

²³ **Öniş Z., Yılmaz Ş.**, Op. Cit.

amounted to about 7 billion dollars²⁴) etc. The energy field is of particular importance for both countries. Energy export volumes and costs are crucial in the formation of the Federal budget of Russia. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), to ensure the growth rates of the socio-economic development of recent years it will be necessary to provide oil reserves exceeding 237 million tons in 2030²⁵. It may seem that the interests of both countries coincide in that field, particularly given the fact that Russia ensures 29% of Turkey's oil resources and Turkey receives 63% of its natural gas via the Russian "Blue Stream" pipeline. The foreign political component of this sector is no less important than its internal economic importance. Moreover, it is the foreign political component that conditions the clash of interests between Russia and Turkey in this particular field.

Energy export is one of the key tools of foreign and security policy²⁶. Moscow is trying to regain its status of superpower using energy diplomacy, as was the case with the Soviet Union²⁷. But today it is a more difficult task. As compare to the USSR, today's Russia does not incorporate two hydrocarbon-rich regions – the Caspian basin and the Central Asia. To ensure its geopolitical influence, Russia needs to control the oil and gas export routes from these regions to international markets. To this end, Moscow should address two problems – the establishment of the appropriate relations with the countries having these reserves and the neutralization of the EU aspirations to meet the energy demands and to diversify the energy supply sources and routes emerged as a result of the formation of independent states in these regions. To address this problem, the EU has two more options – energy imports from the Arab states or Iran. However, the increase of tensions in the Middle East, the Syrian crisis, as well as the ambiguous prospects for the full normalization of

²⁴ V Turcii ocenili vozmojnye ubytki ot rossiiskikh sankcij v 20 milliardov dollarov, 30.11.2015, <https://lenta.ru/news/2015/11/30/turk/>.

²⁵ **Shangaraev R. N.**, Vzaimodeystvie Rossii i Turcii v sfere energetiki, Turkiya: novye realii vo vnutrenney politike i uchastie v regionalnikh geopoliticheskikh processakh, MGIMO Universitet, 2014, p. 243.

²⁶ **Blank S.**, Russian energy and Russian security, *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 2011, **12**, 1, 173-188.

²⁷ **Ozkan G.**, Post-Cold War Turkish Foreign Policy in the Caspian Region within the Context of Pipeline Geopolitics and Geoeconomics, *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 2015, **5**, 7, p. 635.

relations with Iran almost excludes the use of these options in the near future. However, Russia faced another serious problem after the collapse of the USSR. Belarus and, in particular, Ukraine, which the pipelines to Europe are stretched through, are trying to get benefits from the Russia-EU rivalry/“cooperation” in the field of energy. Although the construction of the “North Stream” pipeline provided some alternative, to fully address the problem it was necessary to build a new pipeline in the southern direction for the transfer of the Russian gas. On the one hand, it would meet a growing demand of the European states, on the other hand it would strongly weaken the political significance of the pipelines passing through Ukraine and Belarus. To this end, it is planned to build the “South Stream” pipeline which is to unite the coast of Russia to that of Bulgaria under the Black Sea, from where the Russian gas is to be transferred to the European states²⁸. Meanwhile, Russia regarded this pipeline as an alternative to the pipelines (“Nabucco”, “Trans-Adriatic”(TAP), “Trans-Anatolian” (TANAP), “Turkey-Greece-Italy) proposed within the “Southern Gas Corridor”²⁹ and, in particular, the largest one of them – “Nabucco”³⁰. Russia believed that the “Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan” oil pipeline undermined its influence on the settlement of the issues related to the Caspian oil resources. The implementation of “Nabucco” may have the same impact in the field of the natural gas. This is the reason why Moscow tried not only to build an alternative gas pipeline but also to activate talks on the transfer of the Azerbaijani gas, thereby seeking to deprive “Nabucco” from its only real source in the near future³¹.

The normalization of relations with Turkey created new opportunities for Russia to pass the “South Stream” through the Black Sea coastal areas of this country. In December 2011, the Turkish

²⁸ **Watkins E.**, Russia to build South Stream natural gas pipeline via Turkey, *Oil & Gas Journal*, 01.09.2012, <http://www.ogj.com/articles/print/vol-110/issue-1a/general-interest/russia-to-build-south.html>.

²⁹ **Sartori N.**, The European Commission’s Policy Towards the Southern Gas Corridor: Between National Interests and Economic Fundamentals, *Istituto Affari Internazionali, IAI Working Papers 1201*, 2012, pp. 6-7.

³⁰ **Roberts J. M.**, Op. cit.

³¹ **Cohen A.**, Azerbaijan and U.S. Interests in the South Caucasus: Twenty Years after Independence, *The Geopolitical Scene of the Caucasus: A Decade of Perspectives*: Edited by Diba Nigâr Göksel & Zaur Shiriyev, İstanbul, 2013, p. 61.

Government allowed the Russian company “Gazprom” to start the construction of the pipeline³². It was due to Moscow’s expected support from Turkey to realize the “Samsun-Ceyhan” oil pipeline project and the falling of the Russian gas prices³³. Later on, it acquired an exceptional importance in transporting the Russian gas to the Southern Europe.

Russia-US geopolitical rivalry reached its peak when following the overthrow of Yanukovich, the President of Ukraine, the new government clearly formulated its strong pro-Western stance, and Russia initiated drastic measures among the Russian-speaking and pro-Russian population of the Crimea and the Eastern Ukraine promoting secessionist aspirations to escape further irrevocable developments. When the latter led to armed clashes, the United States and later the EU imposed harsh sanctions on Russia. Russia’s annexation of Crimea strengthens its positions in the Black Sea region which is also considered to be the zone of Turkey’s interests where it plays an important role. Still, though Turkey announced that it supports the territorial integrity of Ukraine, it did not express strong criticism towards Russia. According to Demirtas, “Turkey will not risk its relations with Russia for the Crimea”³⁴. Moreover, Ankara has not joined the US and the EU sanctions against Russia due to the crisis in Ukraine. Turkey’s Foreign Minister M. Cavusoglu noted that Turkey did not want to join the EU sanctions against Russia highlighting that Moscow is Turkey’s important trade partner. He also urged the other EU states to be “realistic” and try to understand what they can do without the Russian gas, noting that “each state should consider its own interests”³⁵. Zeybekci, Turkey’s Minister of

³² **Watkins E.**, Op. cit.; **Okumuş O.**, Russia Winner in Energy Transit Deal With Turkey, 10.07.2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/fr/originals/2013/07/russia-turkey-energy-cooperation-south-stream.html>.

³³ **Raufoglu A.**, Op. cit.

³⁴ **Demirtas S.**, Turkiye, Kirim’da Rusya ile iliskilerini riske atmayacak, *BBC Turkce*, 15.03.2014, www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2014/03/140315_kirim_turkiye.shtml.

³⁵ Turkey Refuses to Join Anti-Russia EU Sanctions for Economic Reasons, 11.02.2015, <http://sputniknews.com/politics/20150211/1018132862.html>.

Finance gave more accurate assessment stating that the current crisis between Moscow, the US and the EU is a real opportunity for Ankara³⁶.

It may seem that the use of sanctions against Russia and, in particular, the joining of the EU to this was rather favorable for “Nabucco” in terms of the competition with the “South Stream”. Due to this, Brussels asked its member states not to participate in the construction of the “South Stream” project. Bulgaria announced that it was withdrawing from the project (the European section of the pipeline should have run through Bulgaria), and it seemed that Moscow appeared in a hopeless situation. It would have both economic (several years and significant financial resources have been spent for project preparation), and political losses (Russia would lose an important lever to influence the Ukrainian issue). Nevertheless, during his visit to Ankara at the end of 2014, President Putin introduced the only realistic solution to that complex problem. He announced that Russia would abandon the "South Stream" project and instead initiate a new “Turkish Stream” project³⁷. Certainly, it is not an entirely new project, since it proposes to transport all the gas intended for the “South Stream” project (63 billion cubic meters) via the starting point of the same route, i.e. through the gas pipeline under the Black Sea; and to sell it to Turkey. Europe will have to buy that gas from Ankara, since Russia has nothing to offer to the European countries purchasing significant portion of their gas reserves from Moscow. Meanwhile, there will be no serious ground behind purchasing gas from Turkey. In April 2015, the foreign ministers of Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary discussed in Budapest their countries participation in the “Turkish Stream” project; and all five approved it. However it was soon followed by strong pressures. Hahn, the European Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, announced that Turkey’s attacks on the European countries regarding the issue of the Armenian Genocide are

³⁶**Michalopoulos S.**, Greece accuses Turkey of exploiting Russian EU Food Ban, 11.08.2014, <http://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/greece-accuses-turkey-of-exploiting-russian-eu-food-ban>.

³⁷**Bierman S., Arkhipov I., Mazneva E.**, Putin Scraps South Stream Gas Pipeline after EU Pressure, *Bloomberg*, 02.12.2014. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-12-01/putin-halts-south-stream-gas-pipeline-after-pressure-from-eu.html>.

only complicating Turkey's accession to the EU³⁸. The resolution adopted by the European Parliament on the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide also comes to prove the EU's hardening attitude towards Ankara³⁹. According to Hochstein, the US State Department's special envoy, during the talks with Lafazanis, the Minister of Productive Reconstruction, Environment and Energy of Greece, the latter announced that the "Turkish Stream" is undesirable for the US. He advised Greece to abandon that project and to focus on TAP⁴⁰. Greece may also be offered to participate in the construction of TANAP based on the agreement signed by the presidents of Turkey and Azerbaijan on June 26, 2012. According to the project, 16 billion cubic meters of gas will be transferred via this pipeline from Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz-2 gas field to Turkey, of which 6 billion to be expired in Turkey and the rest – exported to Europe. This pipeline can not obviously meet the demands of Europe, and it is only aimed to save the reputation of Europe in the context of presenting the "Southern Gas Corridor" as an important component of the EU energy security. Later on, Yildiz, the Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, reiterated once again Turkey's commitment to the "Trans-Anatolian" and "Trans-Adriatic" projects (the basic elements of the "Southern Gas Corridor"), as well as to the Turkish-Russian energy cooperation⁴¹. TANAP did not face Russia's confrontation as was the case with Nabucco due to its limited capacity.

The government of Greece considers the "Turkish Stream" to be beneficial for the country, and it will make efforts for its

³⁸ EU Commissioner . Turkey's Reaction over Armenian Genocide may Complicate EU Ambitions, available at <https://news.am/eng/news/264682.html>, 30.04.2015

³⁹ Armenian genocide centenary: MEPs urge Turkey and Armenia to normalize relations, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150413IPR41671/html/Armenian-genocide-centenary-MEPs-urge-Turkey-and-Armenia-to-normalize-relations>, (15.04.2015).

⁴⁰ US urges Athens to focus on TAP, not Turkish Stream, <http://www.infobalkans.com/2015/05/08/us-urges-athens-focus-tap-not-turkish-stream>, (14.05.2015).

⁴¹ **Peker E.**, Russia, Turkey Complete Initial Turk Stream Gas Pipeline Talks, *The Wall Street Journal*, 11.12.2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-turkey-complete-initial-turk-stream-gas-pipeline-talks-1418288422>.

implementation⁴². Considering the financial and economic complex situation in Greece, it can be assumed that this country will be more determined than Bulgaria which easily abandoned the “South Stream”. However, the failure of “Nabucco” was also due to the inaccurate assessments of its starting point⁴³. The project developers did not take into account three major factors regarding the transportation of energy resources: the coordination possibilities of the actual amount of resources of donor countries, geographical and political realities. Otherwise, they will clear out that Azerbaijan have small reserves to meet the EU needs in near future. According to forecasts, between 2006 and 2030 the import volumes of natural gas will be increased by 87%⁴⁴. The possibilities of transporting the Central Asia’s rich gas resources to Europe through the territory of Azerbaijan are rather hypothetic given the ambiguity of the Caspian Sea status. Moreover, there are no restrictions related to the volumes or routes for transferring these reserves to the East. The transportation possibilities of Iran’s rich resources are too vague in near future due to ambiguous relations with the West, Azerbaijan and Turkey. In addition, Turkey pursues strongly pragmatic foreign policy with regard to a particular problem and a particular situation.

The current situation seems to be very promising for official Ankara in terms of becoming a major corridor for the transportation of energy resources. Moscow could obviously play a key role here as a guarantor of gas transportation via the “Turkish Stream” to the European border. This explains a series of pro-Russian steps made by Ankara in a new geopolitical situation since 2008, in particular, the refusal to join the anti-Russian sanctions imposed by the West as well as the creation of a unique opportunity for Russia regarding the construction of the “Turkish Stream”.

⁴² Amerika pryamo zayavilo chto ne khochet uchastiya Grecii v “Tureckom potoke”, www.regnum.ru/news/1923051.html.

⁴³ **Torosyan T., Arshakyan G.**, Turkey’s Modern Foreign Policy: New Challenges and New Opportunities, *Armenian Journal of Political Science*, 2015, 2, 73-90.

⁴⁴ **Söderbergh B., Jakobsson K., Aleklett K.**, European energy security: An analysis of future Russian natural gas production and exports, *Energy Policy*, 2010, 38, 12, 7827-7843.

The impact of geopolitical factor on the transportation possibilities of energy resources

R. Erdogan, the President of Turkey, inspired by the perspectives of the “Turkish Stream” proposed the creation of Russia-Turkey-Iran alliance thereby drastically changing the geopolitical situation in the Middle East given the new developments related to the gas fields in this region. Together with Qatar Iran initiated the producing of gas from the “North Pars”, the world’s largest gas field⁴⁵. The prospects become more complete while regarding the significant gas reserves found in the offshore areas of Cyprus, Lebanon and particularly, Israel. These countries are seeking to export gas to Europe in near future, which can be accomplished in two ways. The first possible route is through the Turkish territory, reaching under the Mediterranean Sea to Cyprus, then to Greece, finally by land to Europe. Ankara has several arguments in favor of running these streams through its territory, i.e. the unresolved conflict of Cyprus, the financial and economic complex situation in Greece, etc. Still, there are serious challenges on the Turkish path as well. The regulation of huge flows of energy supplies requires adequate financial and political resources. In terms of the first, the above-mentioned trilateral alliance, suggested by Erdogan, is rather promising. However, the relevant “price” should be paid for its realization. Russia will never agree to the transit of the Iranian gas through TANAP which will create an alternative to the Russian gas for Europe. Therefore, Ankara should solve the problem of interest clashes with Azerbaijan since the importance of the latter for Europe may grow in case of transporting the Iranian gas through TANAP. The transit of Israeli gas is possible through the restoration of cooperation with that country removing from the special relationship with the Muslim world. Turkey has not only future but also present challenges.

Although the Syrian crisis has no direct connection with the issues related to the transfer of the energy resources, it may be a powerful geopolitical factor undermining the cooperation.

⁴⁵ Stanislav Tarasov, Stanet li Putin Leninom, a Erdogan - Ataturkom, www.regnum.ru/news/1872663.html.

The Syrian crisis is important for Turkey in two dimensions. First, to solve its own problems, on the one hand Turkey is looking for the opportunities to strengthen its positions as a Middle Eastern regional “superpower”, on the other hand, it tends to suppress any manifestation of the Kurdish self-determination⁴⁶. Meanwhile, considering the tough geopolitical clashes of interests between Russian and the US in Syria, Turkey needs to demonstrate more flexibility in order to avoid complaints from both parties. Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, Turkey runs an explicit anti-Assad policy strongly supporting the anti-Assad forces, including the “Islamic State” terrorist group, as well as conducting propaganda and diplomatic struggle against official Damascus⁴⁷. The Western officials often blame Ankara that it acknowledges, allows and even with the help of the Turkish special agencies supports the penetration of armed terrorists and the weapons sent to them through Turkey to Syria⁴⁸.

Russia's interest in Syria also has several dimensions. After the collapse of the USSR, it is the first time that Russia plays an important role in the processes taking place far from its borders and bearing exceptional importance using its military forces. Therefore, the success is particularly important for Moscow in terms of its self-affirmation and its ambitions to become one of the major players in international arena. According to the official position, Russia perceives the strengthening of the radical groups and the perspective of statehood fall in Syria as a real threat to Russia and the post-Soviet neighbor states. Russia considers Assad's government to be legitimate and tries to accomplish its goals backing the government of Syria. Turkey and Russia obviously have conflicting ambitions in the Middle East. However, at the initial phase of the Syrian crisis, the Turkish-Russian high-level bilateral relations

⁴⁶ **Markedonov S.**, Rossiysko-tureckie otnosheniya i problemy bezopasnosti Kavkazskogo regiona, 30.05.2016, <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/valday/Rossiisko-tureckie-otnosheniya-i-problemy-bezopasnosti-Kavkazskogo-regiona-18188>.

⁴⁷ **Brooker P. S.**, Russia vs. Turkey: Competition For Influence, 12.12.2015, <http://www.valuewalk.com/2015/12/russia-vs-turkey-competition-for-influence/>.

⁴⁸ **Hubbard B., Yeginsu C.**, After Opening Way to Rebels, Turkey Is Paying Heavy Price, *The New York Times*, 24.06.2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/25/world/europe/after-opening-way-to-rebels-turkey-is-paying-heavy-price.html>.

allowed both parties to balance the economic challenges and geopolitical rivalry minimizing the impact of disagreements on multilateral cooperation over political issues⁴⁹.

To support the Iraqi land forces, in September 2014, the US-led coalition comprised of 60 states conducted airstrikes on the positions and infrastructure of the “Islamic State”⁵⁰. However, one of the major goals of the US was Assad’s removal from power supporting the Syrian anti-government groups. As a result, the struggle against the “Islamic State” was not highly effective.

On September 30, 2015 the Federal Council of the Russian Federation, on the basis of the official request of Syria’s President, gave its consent to the use of the Russian Air Forces in Syria, if necessary, with the aim of providing air support to the land forces of this country⁵¹. The involvement of the Russian Air Forces in the conflict, with the aim of the massive bombing of the positions of the “Islamic State” and the Syrian opposition, raised the discontent of the West and Turkey⁵².

The rising tension in the Russian-Turkish relations turned into crisis in November 24, 2015, when in the Syrian-Turkish border the Turkish warplanes shot down the Russian Su-24 attack aircraft⁵³. Russia’s response was rather harsh, and a month later President Putin signed a

⁴⁹ **Öniş Z., Yılmaz Ş.**, Op. cit.

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of State, “*Joint statement issued by partners at the Counter-ISIL Coalition Meeting*”, December 3, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/12/234627.html>.

⁵¹ Sovet federacii razreshil ispolzovanie rocciiskikh voisk v Sirii, 30.09.2015, <https://lenta.ru/news/2015/09/30/za/>.

⁵² **Khoury G.**, Putin’s Road to Disappointment in Syria, 01.10.2015, <https://medium.com/the-eastern-project/putin-s-road-to-disappointment-in-syria-2f53ba484e1f#hvp0853bg>; **Stewart W., Tomlinson S.**, Putin signs decree drafting 150,000 conscripts into the Russian military... as Iran and Hezbollah prepare major ground offensive in Syria with air support from Moscow’s bombers, 02.10.2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3255876/Russia-pouring-gasoline-fire-Syria-s-civil-war-says-America-Putin-defies-West-drops-bombs-non-ISIS-forces-fighting-Assad.html>.

⁵³ **Skorobogatiy P.**, V Sirii sbit rossijskij bombardirovshcik, 24.11.2015, <http://expert.ru/2015/11/24/turetskie-pvo-sbili-voennyij-samolet/>; **Shaheen K., Walker S.**, Putin condemns Turkey after Russian warplane downed near Syria border, *The Guardian*, 24.11.2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/24/turkey-shoots-down-jet-near-border-with-syria>.

decree imposing economic sanctions on Turkey⁵⁴. Ankara, in its turn, restricted the access of the Russian warships to the Bosphorus⁵⁵. A sharp decline in trade between the two countries shows serious effects of the Russian sanctions. It amounted to almost 30 billion dollars in 2014, 23 billion dollars in 2015 and 4.8 billion dollars in the first quarter of 2016⁵⁶. In December 2015, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Simsek announced that the economic sanctions imposed by Russia could cost Turkey's economy approximately 9 billion dollars⁵⁷. The future of the "Turkish Stream" was also highly endangered.

The problems of Turkey were not only limited to the Russian sanctions. According to Aydintasbas, Erdogan has become isolated diplomatically. For the past few years Turkey had been going through a deep sense of isolation having switched from its "zero problems with neighbors" policy to a place where they had no neighbors without problems⁵⁸. Having been engaged in numerous and complex multi-vector processes, Turkey has significantly increased the risk of its failure. According to Phillips:

"When facing a difficult task, Ankara rarely demonstrates an ability and foresight of a well-coordinated strategy. The Turks are good administrators when it comes to daily matters, however

⁵⁴ Vladimir Putin podpisal ukaz o vvedenii sankcii protiv Turcii, 28.12.2015, <http://izvestia.ru/news/597508>; Putin podpisal noviy ukaz o sankciyakh protiv Turcii, 12.2015, <https://lenta.ru/news/2015/12/28/measures/>.

⁵⁵ S pervogo iyunya Turciya vvela vizy dlya dalnoboyschikov, 02.06.2016, <http://informing.ru/2016/06/02/s-1-iyunya-turciya-vvela-vizy-dlya-dalnoboyschikov-iz-rossii.html>.

⁵⁶ Tovaroorobot Rossii s Turciey v 2015 godu sokratilsya pochti na chetvert, 09.02.2016, <http://www.interfax.ru/business/493872>; Milyukova, P. Khimshiashvili, A. Levnskaya, Sem mesyacov v ssore. Skolko Rossiya i Turciya poteryali na konflikte, 27.06.2016, <http://www.rbc.ru/economics/28/06/2016/577157b89a7947239346aba3>.

⁵⁷ Turkish economy risks losing \$9 billion over Russia crisis: Deputy PM, 07.12.2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-economy-risks-losing-9-billion-over-russia-crisis-deputy-pm.aspx?pageID=238&nID=92187&NewsCatID=344>.

⁵⁸ **Tavernise S.**, Seeking to Improve Ties With Russia, Turkey Apologizes for Downing Warplane, *The New York Times*, 27.06.2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/28/world/europe/russia-turkey-erdogan-putin.html?_r=0.

they have less potential in developing delicate policy requiring vision and flexibility”⁵⁹.

The complex political and economic situation, the deterioration of relations with the US and the EU due to the ambitious projects with Russia regarding the energy field and the refugee issues, forced reconciliation with Israel after six years of diplomatic competition, the failure of the “neo-Ottomanism” policy⁶⁰, as well as the failure of creating an alternative to Russia in the Black Sea via Ukraine made the situation extremely dangerous. Given the probable effects of the challenges facing Turkey, in June 27, 2016 President Erdogan apologized in a letter to President Putin over the downing of a Russian military jet⁶¹. According to Wood, this decision marks a total capitulation of Turkey and it strengthened Putin’s image as the strongman of Europe showing once again that in a waiting policy the Russians will always win, and the only way to change Moscow’s behavior is with the threat of using force⁶². The process of normalization of relations began after 7 months of crisis in the Russian-Turkish relations under highly complex geopolitical and economic situation. Although the tensions eased in the Russian direction, they still continue to grow in both internal and the Western directions. On the night of July 15, 2016 the failed coup attempt perpetrated in Turkey attracted considerable attention not only internally but also internationally. President Erdogan’s harsh reaction to these developments – 6000 arrested, persecution of dissident politicians and journalists, and even a threat to the restoration of the death penalty – led to a growing negative attitude of the West⁶³.

⁵⁹ **Philips D. L.**, *Unsilencing the Past: Track Two Diplomacy and Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation*, Oxford, Berghahn Books. 2005.

⁶⁰ **Torosyan T., Arshakyan G.**, Op. cit.

⁶¹ **Kravchenko S.**, Kremlin Says Erdogan Apologized for Turkey Shooting Down Jet, 27.06.2016, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-06-27/kremlin-says-erdogan-apologized-for-turkey-shooting-down-bomber>.

⁶² **Wood T.**, Putin ascendant over NATO as Turkey turns tail, *The Washington Times*, 30.06.2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jun/30/vladimir-putin-uses-nato-weakness-for-russia-domin/>.

⁶³ **Bodkin H., Millward D., Ensor J., Rothwell J.**, Turkey coup attempt: World leaders warn President Erdogan not to use uprising as excuse for crackdown as more than 6,000 arrested, *The Telegraph*, 18.07.2016,

The problematic relations with the EU have no perspective of improvement in near future. In August, Putin and Erdogan expressed their willingness to reestablish cooperation and search for compromise over the question of Syria. This provoked the anxiety of the West as after the attempt of the military coup the President of Turkey was negotiating not with the NATO allies, but with the President of Russia⁶⁴. It is important to find out whether it is Ankara's another attempt of using the "Russian card" against the US and NATO or a real turning point in Turkey's foreign policy. According to Kruk, if Turkey really wants to turn towards Russia, then this will surely have great strategic importance. It will mean the disappearance of the last real point of support for the US hegemony in the Middle East as well as the rupture of the NATO ring around Russia⁶⁵.

Of course, the West will not allow this to happen. If the first attempts of Ankara's pro-Russian stance, given their small and temporary effects, might have escaped from the harsh reaction on the part of the West, the new wave of the Russian-Turkish rapprochement may lead to other developments. On the whole, the response of the EU member states regarding Turkey's aggressive actions has been significantly changed. If previously the elites of these countries waited for the redemption of the Turkish aggression, sometimes even attempting to encourage it, now it is usually followed by harsh responses. In particular, Germany and the Netherlands barred Turkish Prime Ministers from entering the country to campaign for constitutional amendments among the Turkish

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/17/turkey-coup-plot-president-erdogan-rounds-up-thousands-of-soldie/>.

⁶⁴ **MacFarquhar N.**, Russia and Turkey Vow to Repair Ties as West Watches Nervously, *The New York Times*, 09.08.2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/10/world/europe/putin-erdogan-russia-turkey.html>.

⁶⁵ **Kruk A.**, Erdogan mezhdu Rossiei i SSh. Chto budet s ideei neosmanizma, 11.08.2016, <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/global-processes/Erdogan-mezhdu-Rossiei-i-SShA-Chto-budet-s-ideei-neosmanizma-18309>.

community⁶⁶. Moreover, the harsh response of the official Ankara was followed by very hard criticism addressed to the Turkish authorities. During the March 27 Conference “Quo vadis. Germany-Turkey”, the President of Bundestag Norbert Lammert announced:

“What happens today in Turkey is not the normal course of events, but a pre-calculated plan. In a country which is a NATO member and seeks to become an EU member there are violations of civil rights and the arrest of deputies elected by the people. We can speak of two coups in Turkey since summer. The first was a coup d'état that failed, and the second was organized by Erdogan against his own country's constitution. And this one seems to be successful. Erdogan actually dissolves the parliament arresting deputies. He does so through a referendum disarming the parliament elected by the people...President Erdogan and AKP envisage to transform the unstable but democratic order to totalitarian system based on a long-prepared scenario”⁶⁷.

The developments demonstrate that the Turkish-European problems are not reduced, but are even institutionalized moving from bilateral cooperation to the European institutions.

In April 2007, the Council of Europe resumed the monitoring of Turkey suspended in 2004, in response to the constitutional

⁶⁶ Sparks between Turkey and Holland as Erdogan calls the Dutch 'Nazi remnants'
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/11/erdogan-calls-dutch-fascists-row-turkey-netherlands-escalates/>; Polizisten eskortieren türkische Ministerin zur deutschen Grenze

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/niederlande-vs-tuerkei-fatma-betuel-sayan-kaya-nach-deutschland-geschicht-a-1138374.html> ; Niederlande verweigern türkischem Außenminister Landeerlaubnis

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/streit-mit-tuerkei-niederlande-verweigern-mevluet-cavusoglu-landeerlaubnis-a-1138332.html> ; AKP sagt alle Ministerauftritte in Deutschland ab <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/tuerkei-regierungspartei-akp-sagt-alle-ministerauftritte-in-deutschland-ab-a-1139758.html> .

⁶⁷ Bundestagspräsident Norbert Lammert: „Zweiter Putschversuch droht erfolgreich zu sein“, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_bSXpY7Ueo; Scharfe Worte gegen Erdoğan, <http://www.taz.de/!5396880/>.

amendments⁶⁸. Following this event, Erdogan even threatened to restore the death penalty in Turkey⁶⁹. This is a completely new quality of the relationship between Turkey and the European institutions as for decades the reasons of tensions, if any, were explained by the activation of the extremist forces. Official Ankara promised to solve the problems receiving from Europe statements of support and a series of concessions. This new situation probably shows that, like a century ago, Russia and Turkey continue to consider bilateral relations to be the main direction of their foreign policy for the near future.

Conclusion

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the developments in the two most active regions of the Eurasian Heartland – the South Caucasus and the Middle East – have been affected by the uncompromising struggle for new world order formation and the reconsideration of transportation routes and flows of energy resources. It has a strong impact on the Russian-Turkish relations traditionally characterized by the unusual combination and alternation of rivalry and cooperation.

The Russian-Turkish relations may be divided into four phases in considered period. During the first phase, started after the collapse of the Soviet Union and continued till 2007, Ankara sought to become the most powerful foreign actor in the South Caucasus and the Central Asia. However, it failed, because having overcome its internal political challenges Russia was gradually restoring its influence. The beginning of the second phase was registered by the Five-Day War between Russia and Georgia in 2008, the events related to which revealed the pro-Russian stances of Ankara. During this phase, lasted till 2015, the Russian-Turkish relations undergo rapid developments due to serious problems both countries faced in international relations and the tempting prospects.

⁶⁸ The functioning of democratic institutions in Turkey, Resolution 2156 (2017), <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23665&lang=en>.

⁶⁹ Turkey Put on Council of Europe Watchlist Over Rights Record, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-25/turkey-put-on-council-of-europe-watchlist-over-rights-record>.

In 2015, the downing of a Russian military aircraft near the Syria-Turkey border to neutralize the effects of the pressures from the US and the EU and the undesired operations for Ankara conducted by the Russian Air Forces marked the end of this phase and the beginning of the crisis in the Russian-Turkish relations. Though the crisis lasted only 7 months, due to its significance it can be considered the third phase of the Russian-Turkish relations.

The overcoming of 2016 crisis and the restoration of cooperation primarily due to serious difficulties Russia and Turkey faced in international relations, already demonstrating significant signs of isolation, put the beginning of the fourth phase. Russia's relations with the West are not getting better. These are even worse with the US despite the predictions that Trump's presidency would lead to a reduction of tensions. To have a place in new world order, Moscow has yet to prove that it can overcome the challenges of different regions – the Eastern Ukrainian and the Crimean conflicts in the Black Sea region, the Syria crisis in the Middle East, the renewal of Nagorno-Karabakh war in the South Caucasus.

The power of Turkey does not seem to withstand the multi-vector (in some cases, conflicting with each other) relations established during 2000s due the Ankara's foreign policy. The situation is particularly complex due to a series of domestic political difficulties, in particular the coup attempt, a great wave of violence that followed, and the anti-democratic constitutional amendments. There seems to be the repetition of what happened a century ago when in the process of shaping the new world order Russia and Turkey, rejected by all, were able to get out of a complex situation relying on each other. Of course, these situations vary in some aspects. Although Europe has difficult problems to solve, namely a huge flow of refugees and terrorism, challenges caused by the EU's dramatic enlargement and Brexit, the sidelining of its own interests in some instances as an expression of solidarity with the US, etc, it is not fully crushed (as after the First World War) and it can influence the further developments. The situation is not that bad in the Middle East and the South Caucasus as compared to the past century when the Russian-Turkish "bargaining" had unlimited possibilities. However, the solution of the complex problems in the two most troubled regions of the Eurasian

Heartland will be undoubtedly conditioned by the formation of a new world order and a geopolitical stability.