



THEMATIC DOSSIER: 100th Anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye: International Dimension

ТЕМАТИЧЕСКОЕ ДОСЬЕ: 100 лет Турецкой Республике: международное измерение

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The Republic of Türkiye on the Eve of the Centenary: The Era of R.T. Erdogan

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Abstract. In 2023, the Republic of Türkiye celebrated its centenary. Standing at the head of republican Türkiye in 1923, the first president of the country, M.K. Atatürk, saw it as independent and free from logic imposed from outside. Nevertheless, Türkiye, whose history included both a pro-Western period and an open struggle against manifestations of the Western neocolonialism based on national interests, has experienced a series of ups and downs over a century-long period. Moreover, a new M.K. Atatürk appeared in its lifetime in the person of the ambitious R.T. Erdogan, who seeks to start the history of the country from scratch. The ideological and foreign policy foundations of Türkiye have undergone the greatest transformation in the last 100 years. Modern Ankara is approaching an important milestone in its history as an independent regional power and a leader who holds a confident course towards joining the “top league” — a group of world actors-members of the UN Security Council. The ideal of the president of the country is a neo-imperial Türkiye, combining the best practices of the past “Kemalism” and modern “neo-Ottomanism,” which is realized through the export of “Turkishness” and the promotion of Turkocentric ideologies into the world, supported by practical actions in a vast geographical space that goes far beyond Türkiye. The study concludes that over the long history of its existence, the Republic of Türkiye has developed a number of ideological and value concepts that serve as a support for the implementation of its foreign policy. As an anthropological state, Türkiye, like a human being, has primary — vital — and secondary needs, related to the perception of other international actors. At the same time, it is important that while the satisfaction of secondary needs is carried out by Ankara quite successfully, the replenishment of primary causes certain difficulties. The economic situation remains particularly difficult, which, in turn, is capable of affecting the general welfare of the state in the future, making it unstable amid general international environment and thereby provoking a certain “existential crisis.”

Key words: foreign policy, values, pyramid of ideas, anthropological state, kemalism, erdoganism

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Турецкая Республика в преддверии столетия: эра Р.Т. Эрдогана

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Аннотация. В 2023 г. Турецкая Республика отметила свое столетие. Вставая во главе республиканской Турции в 1923 г., первый президент страны М.К. Ататюрк видел ее независимой и свободной от навязанных извне логик. Тем не менее за столетний период Турция, в истории которой был как период «прозападничества», так и открытой борьбы с проявлениями западного неокOLONиализма, основанной на национальных интересах, пережила ряд взлетов и падений. Более того, на ее веку появился новый М.К. Ататюрк в лице амбициозного Р.Т. Эрдогана, стремящегося начать историю страны с чистого листа. Наибольшую трансформацию за последние 100 лет претерпел идеологический и внешнеполитический фундаменты Турции. Современная Анкара подходит к важному рубежу своей истории в роли независимой региональной державы и лидера, который держит уверенный курс на вхождение в «высшую лигу» — группу мировых акторов — членов Совета Безопасности (СБ) ООН. Идеал президента страны — неоимперская Турция, сочетающая в себе лучшие практики прошлого «кемализма» и современного «неоосманизма», который реализуется за счет экспорта «турецкости» и продвижения в мир туркоцентричных идеологием, подкрепленных практически действиями на обширном географическом пространстве, выходящем далеко за пределы Турции. Авторы приходят к выводу, что за долгую историю своего существования Турецкая Республика выработала ряд идейно-ценностных концептов, служащих опорой при реализации ее внешнеполитического курса. Являясь антропологическим государством, Турция, подобно человеку, имеет первичные — жизненно важные — и вторичные, связанные прежде всего с восприятием ее другими акторами международных отношений, потребности. При этом важно, что в то время как удовлетворение вторичных потребностей осуществляется Анкарой вполне успешно, восполнение первичных вызывает определенные трудности. Особенно сложной остается экономическая ситуация, которая, в свою очередь, в перспективе способна повлиять на общее благосостояние государства, сделать его нестабильным относительно общей международной среды и тем самым спровоцировать определенный «экзистенциальный кризис».

Ключевые слова: внешняя политика, ценности, пирамида идей, антропологическое государство, кемализм, эрдоганизм

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Introduction

The Republic of Türkiye is confidently approaching an important milestone in its history — the centenary, which it celebrated in

October 2023. Over the past 100 years, Türkiye has undergone a series of internal and foreign policy changes that have given the state its modern appearance. Ankara has definitely

succeeded in some areas, while in others it is still solving a certain number of problems inherited from previous generations. To the share of modern Türkiye, which is on the eve of the next anniversary, among other things, in May 2023 another important test has fallen out in the form of general elections — one of the most ambiguous and least predictable in the entire history of its existence.

R.T. Erdogan, who once again led the country, largely determines its further political course, in which direction it will move for many years to come. It is difficult to downplay the role of the individual in Türkiye's history — it was and remains leader-centered. Of particular importance in this regard is the study of the Republic of Türkiye as an *anthropological state*, many of whose foreign policy actions directly or indirectly reflect the character, qualities and values of the leader or group of persons responsible for state decision-making.

In modern Türkiye, as in many other Eastern societies, special importance is still attached not so much to institutions as to the leaders standing above them, whose worldview should correspond to all other mechanisms of the state administrative apparatus, and not vice versa. In this regard, it can be concluded that the Turkish state itself is anthropocentric and, therefore, belongs to a cohort of countries that are significantly exposed to the “human factor” (Batalov, 2019, p. 118).

Over the past hundred years, however, only a few truly charismatic leaders have been at the head of the state (Nadein-Raevskiy, 2017, p. 140), whose activities will definitely go down in the annals of the country — these are, first of all, the founder of the republican Türkiye, M.K. Atatürk, and the current president, R.T. Erdogan, who ran in the 2023 elections under the slogan “The right time is the right person” (*Doğru zaman doğru adam*), trying to leave his own mark on the history of modern Türkiye, largely by rewriting it.

Another facet of Turkish anthropocentricity is the conduct of the so-called “human-oriented” (*insani*, literally — humanitarian) and initiative

(*girişimci*) foreign policy, officially proclaimed by the Foreign Ministry of Türkiye,¹ in which the Republic of Türkiye appears as a kind, compassionate force (*muşfik güç*), aimed at helping people in the broadest sense of the word.

For a comprehensive understanding of what the Republic of Türkiye has become in such a long post-imperial period, it is necessary to consider the results of its activities in two key areas, which include the ideological and value (ideological) field and foreign policy.

The Ideological and Value Component of Türkiye's Foreign Policy Process

Over the past 100 years, Türkiye has failed to build an official ideology. Nevertheless, this fact has never prevented the country's leadership from implementing, in one form or another, a set of ideological and value concepts corresponding to the time. M.K. Atatürk, having come to power and trying to rid the country of the remnants of the Ottoman Empire, established *Kemalism* as the ideological and value basis of Turkish society, which was personified as follows the so-called “six arrows”: republicanism, nationalism, nationality, laicism, etatism and revolutionism. *Kemalism* soon acquired the status of an unofficial ideology of the Republic of Türkiye, but over the years it has not found full normative consolidation.

Despite the fact that today certain principles of M.K. Atatürk are partially reflected in the basic law of the country, the Constitution of modern Türkiye states that “no activity based on Turkish national interests, the principle of indivisibility of the state with its country, historical and spiritual values of Turkism, nationalism of Atatürk, principles of revolutionism and civilizationism, as well as sacred religious feelings those who justify

¹ Türkiye'nin girişimci ve insani dış politikası // Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı. URL: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/dis-politika-genel.tr.mfa> (accessed: 15.06.2023).

secularism cannot be fully involved in state affairs and politics.”² The concept of *Kemalism* in Turkish legislative practice is absent in principle.

At the same time, Türkiye formally continues to live under the banner of *Kemalism*, memory of the founding father of the Republic and his ideas, however, these ideas are increasingly undergoing a certain revision and transformation with the coming to power of President R.T. Erdogan in 2014. It is worth noting that the era of the rule of R.T. Erdogan’s *Justice and Development Party*, which has been in power since 2002, can be broadly described as a period of counter-reforms. It is generally believed that the current leader of the Republic of Türkiye has introduced a set of ideologies into the country’s politics, commonly called *neo-Ottomanism*, but they owe their emergence in the political space of Türkiye not only to the president. One of the ideologists of the “neo-Ottoman” views, along with the head of the country, was the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye A. Davutoğlu, who at the beginning of the 21st century in his book *Strategic Depth* talked about Türkiye as a supra-regional power—the heiress of the Ottoman Empire (Davutoğlu, 2001, p. 172).

At its core, the ideology of *neo-Ottomanism*, which aims to return Türkiye to its former imperial power, combines two main ideas — pan-Turkism, that is, the unification of the Turkic peoples of the world under its aegis, and Islamism, manifested in strengthening conservatism inside and outside, in particular, in Türkiye’s return to its religious origins. At the same time, each of the components of *neo-Ottomanism* can be considered as an opposition to the principles of M.K. Atatürk. However, if *Kemalism* affects domestic politics to a greater

extent and offers “rules of life” primarily to the citizen, that is, to the Turkish population in a broad sense, then *neo-Ottomanism* focuses more on foreign policy issues.

For example, the gradual *Islamization* of the political process in Türkiye informally embodies the tacit abolition of secularism introduced by M.K. Atatürk after many years of the Caliphate. Particularly revealing in this context was the decision to transform the Hagia Sophia Museum back into a mosque in 2020,³ which lost its religious status in 1935 by decree of the first President of the Republic of Türkiye and was used as a symbol of laicism. Moreover, in 2022, R.T. Erdogan made a proposal to submit to a national referendum the issue of women wearing the hijab.⁴ In particular it was about the consolidation of such a right in the basic law of the country. Of course, the introduction of Sharia norms in Türkiye is not being discussed, but Islam, including political Islam (Kireev, 2007, p. 321), has become increasingly important over the more than 20-year term of the Justice and Development Party.

An important milestone, which marked a certain rollback of Türkiye to the past, was also the coup attempt in 2016, as a result of which the army lost its function as a guarantor of secularism. M.K. Atatürk put the military (Karpas, 2019) on guard of its basic principles, including the protection of the state from the penetration of Islam into politics, including through the organization of anti-government coups. R.T. Erdogan, in turn, carried out personnel changes, removing from the affairs of the military (Druzhilovsky, 2016, p. 18), who disagreed with the president’s policy.

³ Appeal to the Mosque: Erdogan Signed a Decree on the Opening of the Hagia Sophia for Divine Services // RT in Russian. July 11, 2020. (In Russian). URL: <https://russian.rt.com/world/article/763328-sobor-svyataya-sofiya-mechet-turciya> (accessed: 20.08.2023).

⁴ The President of Turkey Proposed to Put to a Referendum the Issue of Women Wearing the Hijab // TASS. October 22, 2020. (In Russian). URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/16128755> (accessed: 17.06.2023).

² Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası // Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İçişleri Bakanlığı. 18.10.1982. URL: <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/kurumlar/icisleri.gov.tr/IcSite/illeridaresi/Mevzuat/Kanunlar/Anayasa.pdf> (accessed: 15.06.2023).

Thus, in the external field, Turkish Islamization manifests itself in harsh criticism of any Islamophobic acts abroad and Türkiye's desire to join the "Sunni arc" as one of the leaders. It is also increasingly trying to play the role of defender of oppressed Muslims, speaking out in support of Palestinians,⁵ Uighurs⁶ and the Rohingya ethnic group.⁷ Internally, it occurs due to the transformation of former museum objects, which still remain symbols of holiness for part of the Christian population of the country, into Muslim ones, as well as other reforms aimed at liberalizing secular foundations, in particular, the proposed amendments to the Constitution and the normative consolidation of the right to wear religious clothes.

A modern modified alternative to the nationalism of the founding father of the Turkish Republic is the *pan-Turkism*, actively promoted by the team of R.T. Erdogan. The difference is that while M.K. Atatürk adhered to the French approach to nationalism and was aimed at creating a nation-state, while R.T. Erdogan resorts to the use of unifying mechanisms in order to unite the Turkic peoples, whose area of settlement is not limited only to the territory of Türkiye, but goes far beyond the borders of the state. On the map of the "Turkic world" — a special subsystem of international relations formed by the Turks — one can find, in particular, Crimea, Eastern

Siberia, the republics of the North Caucasus and other subjects, i.e. the Turkic-speaking regions of the Russian Federation, unlike Türkiye, which historically represents a Turkic civilization. For example, a similar card presented to the President of Türkiye by his colleague D. Bahçeli from the Nationalist Movement Party,⁸ which is part of the same coalition with the ruling Justice and Development Party, has such a graphic reflection.

In this context, it is worth highlighting another ideological superstructure of Türkiye concerning state borders. "Our physical borders are different from the borders in our hearts,"⁹ Erdogan said during one of his speeches in Riza. At the official level, the Republic of Türkiye makes it clear about its claims to historical, in its opinion, "injustice" — agreements summarizing the land division of the World War I, as a result of which Ankara lost a number of territories. This kind of "heart", or "imaginary geography" (Tsibenko, 2022, p. 135) of Türkiye is the objective reality of the country and an integral part of the political discourse of Turkish politicians who attribute a vast geographical area to the sphere of influence of the Republic of Türkiye, relying only on the similarity of linguistic, cultural, religious or ethnic characteristics.

Strongly associated with this concept — "*Türkiye is not only Türkiye*," or "*Türkiye is more than Türkiye*" also entered the list of common names. In 2016, R.T. Erdogan said that in the vast space from Thrace to Eastern Europe, there will definitely be a trace of the ancestors of the Turks, and also expressed the idea that caring for Iraq, Syria, Libya, Crimea, Nagorno-Karabakh, Bosnia and other

⁵ Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Başkenti Doğu Kudüs olan bağımsız Filistin devleti barış ve istikrar için şarttır // Anadolu Ajansı. 25.07.2023. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-baskenti-dogu-kudus-olan-bagimsiz-filistin-devleti-baris-ve-istikrar-icin-sarttir/2954134> (accessed: 14.09.2023).

⁶ Türkiye tüm soydaşları ve kardeşleri gibi, Çin'deki uygur türklerinin de yanındadır // Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı. 09.07.2015. URL: <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/32891/cumhurbaskan-i-erdogan-buyukelcilerle-iftar-yapti.html> (accessed: 14.09.2023).

⁷ Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Rohingya mesajı // TRT Haber. 23.12.2020. URL: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-rohingya-mesaji-540436.html> (accessed: 14.09.2023).

⁸ Erdogan Was Presented with a Map of the "Turkic World" with Russian Territory // RIA Novosti. November 17, 2021. (In Russian). URL: <https://ria.ru/20211117/erdogan-1759551187.html> (accessed: 29.08.2023).

⁹ Gönül sınırlarımız başka // Takvim. 17.10.2016. URL: <https://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2016/10/17/gonul-sinirlarimiz-baska> (accessed: 17.06.2023).

“fraternal” regions is both the duty and the right of the country, since “Türkiye is not only Türkiye and it is responsible for its brothers and sisters across a vast geography, where it is intertwined with deeply rooted historical, cultural and humanitarian ties.”¹⁰

At the same time, Ankara systematically transforms the imaginary into the real. A good example is Türkiye’s demand to NATO to designate in the alliance’s defense strategy the Black Sea Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles (*Straits* in English) as “Turkish Straits,”¹¹ which is a tracing paper from the Turkish language, where the named waterways are called “Turkish” (*Türk Boğazları*).

This perception is due to Türkiye’s desire to influence, including neighboring territories, for example, neighboring Syria and Iraq, the northern parts of which were previously part of the Ottoman Empire. It is worth noting that the neo-imperial policy of R.T. Erdogan provides, among other things, a revision of the foreign policy principle of M.K. Atatürk “Peace in the country, peace in the world,” which is now perceived rather as “Peace in the world, peace in the country.” The ideologization of the security issue has led to the emergence of the phenomenon of “*soft militarization*” of Türkiye, manifested in increasing the prestige of the army in the eyes of the population and the paradoxical practice of solving issues related to bringing peace and eliminating various kinds of threats by military means. For example, Türkiye is fighting international terrorism in Syria and Iraq (Avatkov & Guzaerov, 2023, p. 113) by conducting military operations that are illegitimate from the point of view of international law, but are fully justified from the

standpoint of its national interests and the concept of justice.

Justice in Turkish is another niche of the ideological and value picture of the world of R.T. Erdogan, who in 2021 published a book in 7 languages called “A More Just World is Possible.” The thesis “The world is bigger than five,” closely intertwined with the concept of justice, runs through the text like a red thread, with the help of which the Republic of Türkiye calls for reform of the UN Security Council (Erdogan, 2021, p. 132) and declares to the international community that it has “outgrown” the status of a passive regional power and is ready to move towards transformation into an active supra-regional one — one that is able to take responsibility for global processes. In this case, Ankara appeals to the unfair, in its opinion, distribution of states in the UN Security Council system (Irkhin & Moskalenko, 2021, p. 92), where the fate of other actors is decided by its five permanent members.

Interestingly, a similar idea was expressed during a meeting of the UN Security Council on April 25, 2023 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, who stated about “excessive overrepresentation in the body of the West,” undermining the “principle of multipolarity.”¹² The emerging image of Russia’s future is also historically based on a commitment to metered or multi-level justice, however, if for Türkiye justice means including itself in the list of global managers first of all, then Russia sees not only and not so much Türkiye as representatives of non-Western countries in a broad sense — from Asian states to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thus, Turkish individual justice (Evstafiev & Ilnicky, 2020, p. 62) is based on a psychological “I-concept” (James, 1950), which

¹⁰ Erdoğan: Türkiye sadece Türkiye değildir // Hürriyet. 16.10.2016. URL: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/erdogan-turkiye-sadece-turkiye-degildir-40250602> (accessed: 17.06.2023).

¹¹ Turkey Holds Up NATO Defense Strategy Over Straits amid Sweden Standoff // Al-Monitor. June 26, 2023. URL: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/06/turkey-holds-nato-defense-strategy-over-straits-amid-sweden-standoff> (accessed: 17.06.2023).

¹² The UN Charter: What Sergey Lavrov Said at the Security Council Meeting in New York // Izvestia. April 25, 2023. (In Russian). URL: <https://iz.ru/1503512/iuliana-nemchenko/ustav-ot-oon-o-chem-govoril-sergei-lavrov-na-zasedanii-sovbeza-v-niu-jorke> (accessed: 17.06.2023).

is selfish in relation to other actors of the international political process, aimed at satisfying its own needs. If we consider Türkiye's policy from the point of view of the theory of A. Maslow (1954), then in this sense Ankara, like a person, strives for self-realization — the highest step in the pyramid of needs, which makes its behavior quite natural.

The latter is partly realized due to Türkiye's promotion of the idea of perceiving itself as a multidisciplinary *hub* (Altun, 2022), which puts other actors of world processes in a position dependent on itself. Thus, within the framework of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, Türkiye preferred to occupy a niche as a food and diplomatic hub, controlling the issue of grain supplies to the world markets and — partially — the negotiation process of Moscow and Kiev. At the same time, Ankara is promoting an anti-terrorist hub, in which it appears as a fighter against the threat of international terrorism (Çakır, 2013) — both inside the country and abroad (in the territories of Syria and Iraq).

The culmination of this ideology was the gas hub project, which Türkiye is implementing with the support of Russia. At the end of 2022, the parties agreed to establish a redistributive gas center on the territory of the country, and earlier Russian President Vladimir Putin noted that “European partners should be grateful to Türkiye for ensuring uninterrupted gas transit to the European market.”¹³ All these statements and initiatives, in turn, fully fit into the existing ideological and value logics of the Republic of Türkiye and its concept of leadership (Mayorova, 2022, p. 76).

Nevertheless, despite R.T. Erdogan's confidence in the fidelity of his ideas, the transition from republican *Kemalism* to *post-*

Kemalism, or ultimately to neo-imperial *Erdoganism* (Yilmaz & Bashirov, 2018), however, cannot be called trouble-free. In addition to the rejection of the views promoted by the ruling elite by the secular part of the country's population, it can be assumed that sooner or later the Turkish Republic will also face the issue of legitimizing *neo-Ottomanism* as an official ideology, for which Turkish society remains unprepared. The promotion of imperial logic inevitably means the rejection of *Kemalism* and related attributes, including the mausoleum of the founding father of Türkiye, monuments to M.K. Atatürk and his portraits all over the country.

In a society that unconsciously remains loyal to the first President of the Republic, a social protest may be brewing. It is worth noting that on the eve of the 2023 elections in Türkiye, there have already been clashes between the supporters of R.T. Erdogan and his rival, the leader of the Republican People's Party created by M.K. Atatürk, K. Kilicdaroglu. In the case of the elimination of *Kemalism* as a political phenomenon of this kind, the socio-political unrest may acquire a larger and more serious character of an ideological civil conflict.

Ideology in Practice: The Transformation of Ankara's Foreign Policy

Türkiye's foreign policy has also undergone significant changes on its way from M.K. Atatürk to R.T. Erdogan. And if the presidents differed significantly in their views on the ideological and value level, then the contours of their foreign policy were similar. Thus, the ultimate idea of both leaders was the construction of a “new” Türkiye, free from Western oppression and logic imposed from the outside. Both the founder of Türkiye and his successor in the person of R.T. Erdogan fought against the manifestations of Western colonialism and turned the Republic of Türkiye to independence. After the death of M.K. Atatürk, Turkish managers have once again begun rapprochement with the Western

¹³ Putin: Europe Should Be Grateful to Turkey for Uninterrupted Russian Gas Transit to the Market // RT in Russian. August 5, 2022. (In Russian). URL: <https://russian.rt.com/world/news/1033883-evropa-turciya-gaz> (accessed: 18.06.2023).

world. After the World War II, Türkiye joined NATO, began to make attempts to embark on the path of unity with Europe and become a model of democracy in the Middle East (Krylov & Ostanin-Golovnya, 2023, p. 291), combining the values of the East and the West at the same time.

For a while, Ankara really succeeded in following a Western-oriented course, but with the transformation of ideological attitudes, its foreign policy priorities also underwent changes. 100 years after its founding, Türkiye is entering a new era of its development as a state focused on its own national interests. History is cyclical — modern Türkiye, like the state of M.K. Atatürk, once again puts the world of non-Western at the forefront (Avatkov, 2022, p. 22): it is getting closer to Russia, its Middle Eastern neighbors, the monarchies of the Persian Gulf and consistently defends its interests on the Western front. Somewhat disappointed by the hegemonic policy of the West, the Republic of Türkiye resolutely undertook to build an allied, or rather partner corps from its inner circle.

To this end, Ankara is reviving the previously failed policy of “zero problems with neighbors” (Bdoyan, 2017, p. 25). For the first time in many years, Türkiye sat down at the negotiating table with Iran as part of the Astana process (Mozloev, 2021, p. 74); the normalization of relations with Egypt and Syria was initiated, contacts with which had been reduced to a minimum during the “Arab Spring” and the pro-Western period destructive for Ankara; the ground has been prepared for a “thaw” in relations with Israel, which, nevertheless, are still overshadowed by Türkiye’s attempts to stand up for the Palestinians and criticize Tel Aviv’s policy; unprecedented negotiations and meetings between Türkiye and Armenia took place in the South Caucasus direction. Of particular importance is the rapprochement between Ankara and one of Washington’s most important partners among the Gulf countries,

Saudi Arabia, after the resonant murder of the Saudi journalist J. Khashoggi in Istanbul.

It is noteworthy that Türkiye had a number of contradictions with all the listed states, and only in the case of Yerevan and — partially — Iran, they were historical, and not acquired in modern times. At the same time, the Turkish era of normalization and good neighborliness (Guzaerov, 2022, p. 2) extends mainly to the East, while opposite trends can be traced in the Western direction.

In the country’s foreign policy as a whole, there has been a so-called “*turn to the East*”. Unlike the former state, which for many years was given the role of a junior ally of the United States in the Middle East, the modern Republic of Türkiye seeks to pursue a multi-vector policy with an emphasis on “kindred” communities. One of the most important directions of its foreign policy course in this regard has become the so-called “Turkic world,” where it traditionally includes the Turkic-speaking republics of the former Soviet Union, as well as the corresponding regions of Russia.

Under the banners of pan-Turkism, skillfully veiled under the idea of cultural unification, Türkiye spreads its instruments of “soft power” in the face of the almost world-famous Organization of Turkic States (TDT), the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSOY), and the Agency for Coordination and Cooperation (TIKA), Yunus Emre Institutes and others (Kurylev & Yenokyan, 2023, p. 84). At the same time, the purpose of such organizations is to erase the cultural codes of the mentioned states and unify them according to the Turkish model. For example, under the influence of Türkiye, 4 out of 5 post-Soviet Turkic-speaking states — Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan — have already switched or announced their transition from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet at different times. Currently, there is an active discussion about the creation of a “common Turkic language,” as well as a narrative that is not supported by reliable facts about the

common civilizational and historical roots of the peoples inhabiting these countries with Türkiye.

Despite such successes in the Eastern direction, Türkiye's relations with the West at the turn of the country's 100th anniversary have taken on the format of a *forced partnership*. Until 2023, the Republic of Türkiye could not succeed in the process of joining the European Union, but it became the second largest army of the North Atlantic Alliance and the only non-Western player of the bloc setting trends. The case of Finland and Sweden joining NATO clearly demonstrated Ankara's desire not to play by Western rules, but to form them for its Western counterparts. Thus, Türkiye boldly makes demands on the Scandinavian states, which, in its opinion, are not fighting terrorism enough and are hurting the feelings of Muslim believers with public acts of burning the Quran, and also seeks to take full account of the issues that cause its concern.

Returning to the role of the individual in Türkiye's history, it should be noted that today individual politicians or groups of politicians embody a set of certain ideological and value concepts, and a whole pool of high-ranking officials has formed in modern Türkiye, openly promoting *anti-Western discourse* to the masses and personifying it. For example, the former Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, S. Soylu, stated that "The whole world hates America," and called Europe "a train in a US convoy."¹⁴ The Turkish President's spokesman, I. Kalın, who became the head of the National Intelligence Organization after R.T. Erdogan's re-election in 2023, was quoted as saying that there was "the lack of strategic thinking in most Western circles."¹⁵ It is

noteworthy that this idea was expressed in an interview with the German *Die Zeit* newspaper.

On the one hand, R.T. Erdogan's Türkiye is systematically distancing itself from the United States and its European partners. On the other hand, it retains membership in the key strategic military-political bloc of NATO, using it as a means of exerting pressure on its partners. According to Ankara's logic, from now on the rest of the world should be part of Turkish projects and initiatives, and not vice versa. Given Ankara's strategic role as a NATO (and the U.S.) outpost in the Middle East, the Western world finds itself in a situation in which it cannot directly object to the Turkish Republic, as a result of which it is forced to patiently observe the inconsistent policy of its "ally," including the non-alignment to anti-Russian sanctions after Moscow began its special military operation in Ukraine and the contrary decision to purchase Russian S-400 systems, which are incompatible with NATO complexes.

A different approach prevails in Türkiye's relations with Russia. The incident with the downing of a Russian bomber in 2015, accompanied by the strongest regression of bilateral relations since the Russian-Turkish wars; the sanctions that seriously hit Türkiye's economy and the lack of support from the United States and Europe taught Türkiye not to test the patience of partners like Moscow and to seek compromises with them.

However, the compromise interaction between Russia and Türkiye is just beginning to take shape and is combined with a *one-sided multi-vector policy* — the desire to please all dialogue partners while retaining key preferences for oneself, which can be considered as an extension of the policy of neutralizing problems, henceforth affecting not only geographical neighbors, but also neighbors in interests. Thus, the anti-sanctions "concessions" to Türkiye are overshadowed by measures to suspend the operation of Russian Mir cards on the territory of the country,

¹⁴ The Interior Minister of Türkiye Said That the Whole World Hates the USA // RIA Novosti. April 19, 2023. (In Russian). URL: <https://ria.ru/20230419/turtsiya-1866248559.html> (accessed: 18.06.2023).

¹⁵ Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sözcüsü Kalın: Batı, dünyanın geri kalanına yabancılaşıyor // Anadolu Ajansı. 04.05.2023. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/cumhurbaşkanligi-sozcusu-kalin-bati-dunyanin-geri-kalanina-yabancilasiyor/2889327> (accessed: 18.06.2023).

undertaken under pressure from the West; the “neutral” position in the conflict over Ukraine is the supply of weapons to the Kiev regime, in particular, Bayraktar TB2 attack unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and statements about the need to preserve the territorial integrity of Ukraine (Demeshko & Irkhin, 2022, p. 760) with the return of the Crimea to the latter.¹⁶

The successful cooperation in the field of security (Chmyreva, 2021, p. 229) in the Syrian Idlib, in turn, hides contradictions in the field of counter-terrorism: Moscow and Ankara have different approaches to the definition of terrorist groups and the fight against them. In particular, for this reason, the parties experienced difficulties in separating terrorists from non-terrorists in northern Syria in 2019: Ankara insists on clearing the territory from the *Kurdistan Workers' Party*, which is officially recognized as a terrorist in Türkiye, while Russia does not consider the organization as such. For its part, Ankara cooperates with the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization recognized as a terrorist and banned in Russia, which complicates cooperation in this area.

In addition to the above, Türkiye's fundamentally important achievement in the international arena is its *export of “Turkishness,”* which is just entering its development phase. Ankara is exporting both tangible and intangible objects, such as the aforementioned ideological and value concepts and Turco-centric logics. In June 2022, at the request of Ankara, the UN officially renamed the country, giving it the original Turkish name — Türkiye¹⁷ — provided that at least a letter similar to the Turkish “ü” is absent in the English alphabet. Since then, foreign economic

activity has also shifted to the Turkish way, and all goods exported from the country carry the appropriate label “Made in Türkiye.”

The Republic of Türkiye has made a separate breakthrough in the field of cinematography, gradually becoming a new Hollywood at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. Turkish TV series are popular far beyond the borders of the country, and such large entertainment companies as the American Netflix, which opened its representative office in Türkiye and provided the opportunity to show multi-part Turkish films in 190 countries, are showing interest in Turkish-made films. In December 2022 company's survey revealed that watching Turkish TV series on the platform increases the interest of users both in learning the Turkish language and in Türkiye itself.¹⁸ In addition, in addition to the cultural expansion, in 2021, the cooperation with Netflix brought 583 million Turkish liras to the Turkish economy and provided employment for more than 3,300 people.¹⁹

At the same time, even within the framework of such interaction, Ankara seeks to influence partners and promote its values. Back in 2020, the Supreme Council for Radio and Television of Türkiye (RTÜRK) demanded that the company ban the screening of the French film “Cuties,” which tells about a Muslim woman who took off her religious clothes, which was explained by the possibility of a negative impact on the “psychosocial development of children.”²⁰ In addition, a

¹⁸ Netflix: Dünyanın Türkiye'ye ilgisi katlanarak artıyor // Anadolu Ajansı. 26.12.2022. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/sirkethaberleri/kultur-sanat/netflix-dunyanin-turkiyeye-iligisi-katlanarak-artiyor/677722> (accessed: 24.06.2023).

¹⁹ Netflix dizilerden Türkiye ekonomisine 583 milyon liralık katkı // Anadolu Ajansı. 22.11.2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/sirkethaberleri/hizmet/netflix-dizilerinden-turkiye-ekonomisine-583-milyon-liralik-katki/669083> (accessed: 24.06.2023).

²⁰ The Turkish Authorities Demanded That Netflix Cancel the Screening of the Movie “Cuties” // RIA Novosti. September 4, 2020. (In Russian). URL: <https://ria.ru/20200904/zapret-1576704307.html> (accessed: 27.06.2023).

¹⁶ Dmitrova D. Turkish President Erdogan Said It Was Necessary to Return Crimea to Ukraine // Gazeta.ru. August 23, 2022. (In Russian). URL: <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2022/08/23/18394622.shtml> (accessed: 29.08.2023).

¹⁷ BM onayladı; Türkiye ismi resmileşti // TRT Haber. 01.06.2022. URL: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/bm-onayladi-turkiye-ismi-resmilesti-684939.html> (accessed: 24.06.2023).

number of other paintings have been criticized in Türkiye at various times for mentioning the Armenian Genocide, sexual content and propaganda of non-traditional values. Thus, by banning “wrong” films on its territory, the Republic of Türkiye is successfully promoting its own film industry, and with it the “right” cultural image — equally “unconventional” for the diversity of some Western countries — on foreign platforms.

In Russia, the branch of Turkish cinematography has become the TV channel “Domashny,” which regularly broadcasts series produced in Türkiye, in particular the historical drama *The Magnificent Century*. In addition, in 2018, the joint Russian-Turkish multi-part historical melodrama *Sultan of My Heart* got into the rotation of the federal “First Channel,” and at the end of 2022 it became known about the intention of the Mediaslovo company, in cooperation with the Okko online cinema and Gazprom-Media Holding, to shoot an adaptation of the Turkish romantic comedy *Knock on My Door*.²¹ At the same time, films of Turkish authors can also be seen among other products of the entertainment program of Aeroflot, which is the largest air carrier in Russia.

The era of the presidency of R.T. Erdogan will also be remembered for Türkiye’s transition from the status of an importer of Western weapons to a globally recognized exporter of national equipment, forming pro-Turkish ties in the field of security. The visiting card of the exported “Turkishness” in the field of military industry and technology became, first of all, the Bayraktar TB2 UAVs, which are popular in the former USSR. At the same time, the manufacturer was “rooted” in Azerbaijan in the form of the opening of a representative office of the manufacturer Baykar Makina²² there, and

²¹ The Adaptation of the Series “Knock on My Door” Will Be Filmed in Russia // Lenta.ru. December 22, 2022. (In Russian). URL: https://lenta.ru/news/2022/12/22/knock_rus/ (accessed: 30.06.2023).

²² A Representative Office of the Manufacturer Bayraktar Has Appeared in Azerbaijan // Lenta.ru.

the intention to build factories for the production of shock drones of this type has also been repeatedly stated in Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

In 2023, Türkiye also entered the international automotive market by releasing TOGG electric cars of national production and presenting the first models to the leaders of the “fraternal” Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. At the same time, R.T. Erdogan called the release of the car the realization of the 60-year-old dream of the nation, expressing the hope that the Turkish electric car will become a brand not only national, but also worldwide.²³

Conclusion

To summarize what has been said, it is worth turning again to the anthropological theory of international relations, within the framework of which, over the 100 years of its existence, Türkiye has grown from a small teenage state, which emerged on the wreckage of the World War and only suppressed emotional outbursts in the form of a national liberation movement into an “adult” state with a stable worldview, clear national interests and goals.

In its foreign policy, the Republic of Türkiye has developed a number of ideologies and ideological and value concepts that help it to implement its key needs in the international arena, which in reality are similar to human ones. Taking as a basis the pyramid of human needs according to A. Maslow and projecting it onto a specific anthropological state (in this case, Türkiye), we can distinguish the following pyramid of ideas of the Turkish Republic created for the realization of primary — vital (ensuring sovereignty) and secondary (responsible for the status of the country in the international environment) needs (Figure 1).

December 26, 2022. (In Russian). URL: <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/12/26/azerbpla/> (accessed: 19.08.2023).

²³ Togg’da ilk teslimat Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan’a: Türkiye Yüzyılı’nın ilk meyvelerinden Togg hayırlı olsun // Yeni Şafak. 03.04.2023. URL: <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/toggda-ilk-teslimat-cumhurbaskani-erdogana-turkiye-yuzyilinin-ilk-meyvelerinden-togg-hayirli-olsun-4520380> (accessed: 04.06.2023).

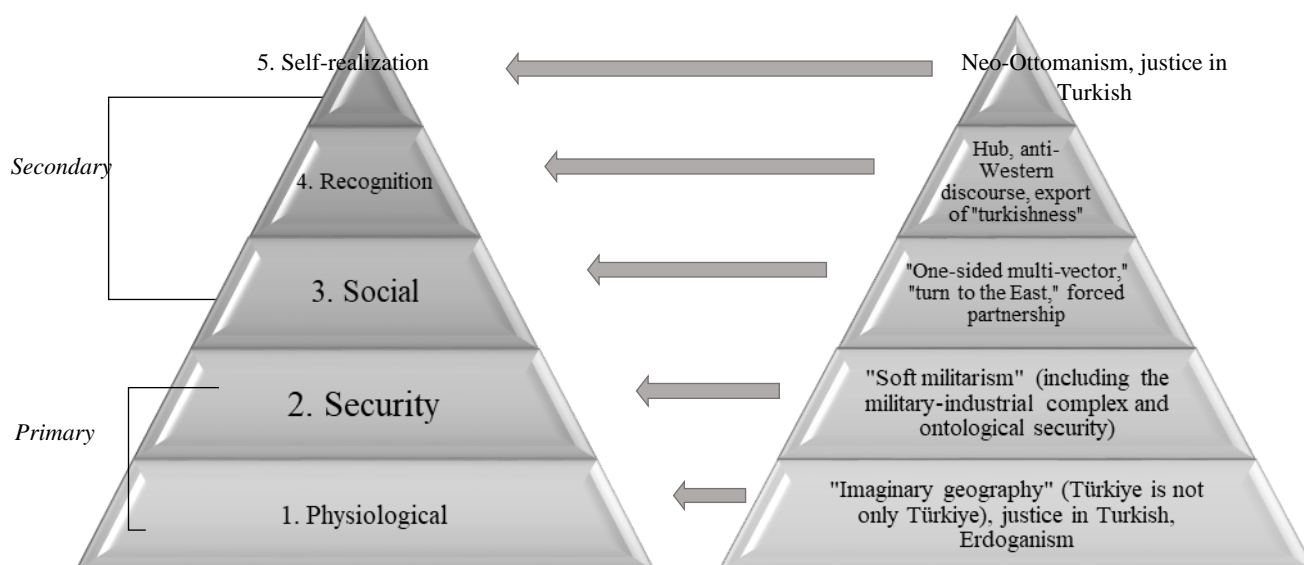


Figure 1. The Hierarchy of Türkiye's Ideas through the Prism of A. Maslow's Pyramid of Needs

Source: compiled by the authors based on: (Maslow, 1954).

Thus, “physiological” needs for a state mean its sovereign existence within its borders and internal political stability without shocks, such as anti-government coups, socio-economic crises, etc. In the case of Türkiye, the right to state borders, which in its understanding are wider than those indicated on the map, is the responsibility of the “imaginary geography” promoted to the masses, which in turn is fair in Turkish.

Political stability is partially covered by the emerging *Erdoganism* because Türkiye, being a non-Western human-centered state, needs a strong leader who is able to unite Turkish society. However, as long as *Kemalism* is alive in the minds of citizens at the same time, it will not be possible to completely protect Türkiye from splits and criticism of the leader. In addition, Ankara has an obvious ideological gap in the economic sphere with an abundance of ideological concepts in the field of foreign policy, which periodically plunges it into serious crises, preventing it from meeting vital needs.

State security in a broad sense consists in the absence of threats, which for Türkiye means the elimination, in its opinion, of terrorist elements as the main threat to life. This problem

is being solved by Ankara through “soft militarism” — by conducting cross-border operations in neighboring regions, clearing borders of undesirable and potentially dangerous elements and developing reliable national weapons and equipment.

The realization of social needs is due to Türkiye's interaction with the states of the East, forced partnership with the Western world and multi-vector in its own interests. In other words, the Republic of Türkiye is developing the necessary ties and establishing contacts with other actors of the foreign policy process for a successful stay in the international political “society” as an active player and initiator of integration processes, and not as a rogue country.

Recognition is achieved by Türkiye through the implementation of a number of ideas — the ideology of a hub for becoming, first of all, a transit-gas power and a multidisciplinary center of attraction; the export policy of “Turkishness”, which contributes to the perception of Türkiye as a military power, cultural and tourist center, as well as a reliable producer and economic partner.

At the same time, it is noteworthy that the anti-Western discourse at this stage is a separate idea, which for the subjects of the non-Western

world serves as an instrument for recognizing Türkiye as a free independent state and a leader that has the opportunity to disagree with the hegemonic West, thereby increasing its authority both among the mentioned countries and other world states as a whole.

The apogee of the pyramid of needs is self-realization, which in the pyramid of Turkish ideas manifests itself due to the emergence of *neo-Ottomanism* as a common set of ideas of Türkiye, through which it is realized in the world as a post-imperial power with a significant historical heritage, one of the leaders of the Islamic world and a vast ethno-cultural space — the “Turkic world.” At the same time, some components of the ideological Turkish pyramid move from one stage to another and complement each other.

So, for example, the concept of justice is responsible for the formation of Türkiye as a supra-regional actor, within the framework of which, at the stage of self-realization, Türkiye promotes the idea of a “world is bigger than five,” and at the first, basic stage, justice changes its content, helping Ankara to defend the right to influence within the “kindred” (in its view) territories. The same idea, therefore, can serve to implement different types of needs.

Thus, after 100 years, Türkiye has learned to successfully realize its secondary needs, but has serious problems with filling the primary ones, such as economic stability, which, by a chain reaction, can provoke an increase in social unrest, thereby bringing down the Turkish “pyramid” at the base. The ideological and value concepts developed by Türkiye and the policy implemented on their basis are mainly aimed at the sphere of foreign policy activity. Since the Republic of Türkiye is striving to join the rank of world powers, the ideal scenario for it involves filling needs from the bottom up, not from the top down, which is explained by the need for domestic political stability to achieve success in the external environment.

However, the real picture of the world is different, and not all states, even on a global scale, demonstrate domestic political and, moreover, economic stability. For this reason, the Republic of Türkiye has a chance to reach the level of conditionally supra-regional states, which, nevertheless, still find it difficult to exist in an international political “society” without the support of other, more significant participants in the world community.

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