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THE ROLE OF TURKISH SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY IN THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract:

This article discusses the role and importance of Turkey's 'soft power' diplomacy in the development of Central Asia, the work done in recent years, its impact and significance for the countries of the region in general. The article analyzes the directions, mechanisms and tools of 'soft power' in Turkish foreign policy. The impact of Turkey's 'soft power' policy on the socio-economic, political and cultural life of Central Asian countries has been studied.

Unlike other geopolitical actors active in Central Asia, Turkey does not have the financial resources to pursue a 'soft power' policy. But its linguistic and ethno-cultural closeness to the Turkic-speaking peoples prevails. The study shows that the emergence of the notion of a 'reliable partner' in the attitude of the countries of the region towards Turkey in recent years has played a major role.

In conclusion, Turkey's 'soft power' diplomacy is aimed at shaping and strengthening of 'image' in Central Asia. This is mainly in the cultural and humanitarian sphere. Turkey is trying to enter the socio-economic sphere in various ways and means.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, it has been said that Turkey's 'soft power' policy in Central Asia will not be effective due to its foreign policy problems. In this context, he considers it the right way for Turkey to intensify its relations with its brotherly Central Asian states. Turkey sees the region as a source of raw materials and energy resources, while at a time when it is isolated in foreign policy, it is useful to gain the support of the countries in the region. To this end, Turkey is actively using 'soft power' against Central Asian

states. It is also important for us to determine Turkey's approach to the use of 'soft power' and the extent to which it affects the Central Asian states.

Looking through the prism of Turkey's 'soft power', it is necessary to study how it will benefit the Central Asian states, or the risks and consequences.

The main goal of the current Central Asian development is the role and importance of Turkish 'soft power' diplomacy in Central Asia, analysis of approaches, mechanisms and tools, directions in its implementation, disclosure of economic and cultural aspects for Central Asia.

As a novelty in the article can be mentioned to the main goals, problems, achievements, future plans and distinguishing features of the projects implemented by Turkey's "soft power" diplomacy in recent years. Attempts have been made to justify Turkey's shortcomings, problems and consequences in implementing the "soft power" policy.

Moreover, even in the context of the 2020 CoVID-19 global pandemic, Turkey has not stopped its "soft power" policy.

The article also includes the views of Turkish analysts on the direction and mechanisms of 'soft power' and an analysis of the emergence of Turkish 'soft power' and its experience in Central Asia. The legal framework, institutional systems, mechanisms and instruments, directions, economic and cultural spheres of Turkey's implementation of "soft power" diplomacy in Central Asia form the basis of our research.

MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Turkish approaches to 'soft power'. Although the importance of 'soft power' is growing around the world, 'hard power' does not lose its place and importance in the context of terrorism and security issues. Today, political analysts say that the concept of 'smart power' [1] has emerged as a result of the 'soft power - hard power' tandem. The 'soft power' policy became even more popular after the events of September 11, 2001. Because it showed that the military power and security of the state was not enough to be perfect. It became clear that new approaches to the problem were needed. Counter-terrorism, peacekeeping military operations require large financial and economic costs. It is believed that 'Soft Power' will save these resources [2]. 'Soft power' also means achieving defined political goals and interests without war.

'Soft power' diplomacy is being chosen as a facilitator of foreign policy. Economic aid loans, transnational corporations, TV and media industry, various brands, charitable organizations, preferential educational grants (programs), international cultural and educational events and festivals help it to achieve this goal.

The independence of the Central Asian states was recognized during the reign of the late President of Turkey Turgut Ozal, who is known as the architect of foreign policy with Central Asian countries, and it was during this period that political, cultural, humanitarian, trade and economic activity began. It is said that after the end of the Cold War, Ozal determined the direction of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy. 'The 21st century should have been the century of the Turks' [3] Ozal said. With

similar ideas, Turkey should have promoted Turkish integration in Central Asia.

Suleyman Demirel, who later continued Ozal's policy, said 'From the Adriatic Sea to the Wall of China' [4] and reiterated that the initiative to ideologically unite the Turkic world would be taken under Turkish leadership. However, the idea of uniting the Turkish world in the interests of Turkey was not supported in Central Asian countries. As a result, the Turkish integration plan failed. The reason was the desire of the Turks to play the role of 'big brother' in the region [5]. This was stated by the leaders of the region N. Nazarbayev and I. Karimov in the 90s [6].

But in any case, Turkey does not want its relations with Central Asia to deteriorate. Therefore, relations in the economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres did not stop, but continued as long as possible.

Having fulfilled the conditions of candidacy under the 1993 Copenhagen Criteria, in 1999 Turkey was officially a candidate for membership in the European Union under the Helsinki Accords. According to the demands, Turkey had to improve democratic freedoms in the country, the Kurdish issue, the Cyprus issue, and relations with Greece. In turn, Turkey has tried to pursue a good neighborly policy with Armenia and the Balkans. As a result of political reforms, the Turkish economy grew and became one of the top 20 economies in the world [7]. Analysts believe that the economic reforms led to growth because of the ruling Justice and Development Party in the early 2000s [8][9]. However, such successes did not accelerate Turkey's EU membership, but rather stalled its candidacy. Realizing that Turkey will not be able to join the European Community, it has turned its attention to Eurasia.

It is well known that the implementation of a 'soft power' policy will require sufficient economic infrastructure and financial capacity. Turkey has a lower potential in the face of countries with strong economies in the world and a wide range of instruments to pursue an influential 'soft power' policy. Nevertheless, it is pursuing its 'soft power' policy in Central Asia in the interests of cultural and humanitarian activities, the ideas of Turkish integration, trade and economic cooperation with the countries of the region. As an assessment of Turkey's efforts, the British Portland-PR agency has published a world ranking of 'Soft Power' diplomacy in 2019. Turkey is ranked 29th in this ranking [10].

Former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, one of the most active proponents of "soft power" policy in modern Turkey, has pamphlet "Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Role" and 'Policy of Zero Problems with our Neighbors' conceptual policy. These views directly gave direction to the concept of foreign policy and the policy of "soft power". This is because Davutoğlu said that Turkey's image should be raised and strengthened in North Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Turkish analyst S.Çevik [11] explains the influence of Davutoğlu's foreign policy doctrine and the activities of the ruling party in the activation of Turkey's "Soft Power" policy in the 2000s. Irfan Sancak [12] says he sees the development of "soft power" diplomacy in Central Asia in the media sector and in Turkey's tourism potential. He also acknowledges that Turkey's participation in the modernization of tourism infrastructure in

Central Asia has intensified in recent years and the impact of media industry products.

Researcher Özden Eren [13] says that TİKA, TURKSOY, TURKPA, (the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries) and Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) play a key role in Turkey's institutional approach to soft power policy in Central Asia. Regarding the participation of Turkey in the education system, which is the most active branch of the Turkish soft power, B.Aras and Z.Muhammad [14] say that the growing interest of foreign youth in Turkish universities, the increase in the number of students is due to Turkey's soft power policy. indicates. They also say that Turkey should take all necessary measures to ensure that Central Asian students do not fall under the influence of FETO and other radical groups, so that neither the host country nor the parents feel the same.

According to Sancak, ethnic, linguistic and religious closeness has played a significant role in the successful implementation of the Turkish soft power in Central Asia. He also emphasizes that the cultural factor is the great potential of Turkey's soft power in Central Asia [15]. As a continuation of Sanjak's thoughts, A. Yilmaz believes that [16] the change of negative stereotypes about Turkey through culture and art will lead to the improvement of the country's image. Analyzing Turkey's "soft power" diplomacy in Central Asia so far, G. Kiliçoğlu [17] said that Turkey should take an individual approach to the application of "soft power" policy in the region and rely on a well-thought-out plan to avoid repeating previous mistakes, especially in the region. and cultural and humanitarian projects remain flawed, emphasizing that Uzbekistan has an important role to play in Turkey's "soft power" policy.

Critically analyzing Turkey's "soft power" policy authors Benhaïm Y. & Öktem K. [18] write that it creates a sense of mistrust in the Middle East, the Arab world and the Balkans. In addition, they wrote that the "Turkish model" of development, which was initially welcomed by all Central Asian states in the 1990s, was later rejected. This is a warning that this could happen with Turkey's soft power in Central Asia. As a follow-up, M. Ekşi [19] says that the crisis in Turkey's "soft power" policy began to occur after the events of the Arab Spring. The main reason is that have intensified the policy of soft power in Turkey, as well as soft power policy in the Middle East, Israel, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Greece and Cyprus, military operations against the Kurds in Syria and Iraq.

Based on the above considerations, in the international arena following negative attitudes (Military operations against the Kurds in Syria, arming the Sarajah government in Libya, allowing illegal migrants to cross into Europe, conducting geological exploration for gas in the Cyprus Sea, relations with the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt and other Arab countries, relationship breakdown, etc.) is unlikely to affect Turkey's "soft power" policy in Central Asia. Because the Central Asian states are neutral on some foreign policy issues. The shooting down of a Russian airliner by Turkey in 2015 did not affect the relations of pro-Russian Central Asian states with Turkey. It was after that incident that Kazakhstan played a mediating role in the reconciliation between Russia and Turkey. In recent years, Central Asian states have unanimously approved Turkey's military

operations against Kurdish separatists. In addition, Turkey's views on the FETO terrorist organization are consistent with those of Central Asian states [20].

Legal basis for the implementation of 'soft power' diplomacy. The Turkish Council plays an important role as an important subject between the Central Asian states and Turkey. Within the framework of this organization, it has agreements with the countries of the region in the field of cooperation in the fields of education, culture, trade, economy, transport and communications. In addition, since 2012, Turkey has been participating in the agreements reached in the scientific, technical, cultural and humanitarian spheres of the SCO. Founded in 1984, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Organization (ECO) is a member of all Central Asian states, including Turkey. It also has agreements on cultural and humanitarian cooperation within the Institute of Culture [21]. Turkey is actively cooperating with Central Asian countries in trade, industry, agriculture, transport, tourism, science and other fields within the framework of the summits of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia [22].

The legal framework of Turkey's 'Soft Power' policy is being strengthened by the activities of international and institutional organizations in Central Asia, such as TIKA, TURKSOY and the Yunus Emre Institute. For example, Turkology centers are being opened in several higher education institutions in cooperation with TIKA, which has offices in all Central Asian countries.

If we look at the legal basis of bilateral economic relations, we can see that the mutual trade turnover between Turkey and Central Asia (*Table 1*) has reached \$ 5 billion. Turkey has invested in construction, chemicals, light industry, tourism and agriculture in the region. Turkey is one of the top ten trading partners of almost all countries in the region. In addition, Turkey has established economic relations within the framework of the Belt and Road initiated by the and China, Turkish Council and ECO organization.

As for Turkey's unilateral agreements with Central Asian countries, in particular, on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey (1995), the Treaty of Eternal Friendship and Cooperation (1996), Cooperation in Environmental Protection (1996) , Agreements on Cooperation in Health and Medicine (1997), Cooperation in Tourism (2017), Cultural Cooperation (2018), Strategic Cooperation (2020) were signed. Such agreements will certainly support Turkey's soft power.

Turkey's largest partner in the region, the Trade and Economic Cooperation Protocol with Kazakhstan in 1991, the Agreement on Cooperation in Military Education, Science and Technology in 1993, the Strategic Cooperation Agreement with Kazakhstan for the first time among Turkish states in 2009. environment, tourism development agreements, and the establishment of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council in 2012.

Turkey and Kyrgyzstan signed the Eternal Friendship and Cooperation Agreement in 1997 and the High-Level Strategic Cooperation

Council in 2011. The Working Councils of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey have been functioning since 1999. To date, about a hundred trade, economic, political, cultural and humanitarian agreements and treaties have been signed between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey [23].

Tajikistan, which is not Turkish-speaking but culturally and religiously close to the peoples of other Central Asian countries in terms of lifestyle, established diplomatic relations with Turkey on January 29, 1992. To date, more than 65 agreements in various fields have been signed and about 30 bilateral cooperation projects are being implemented. In addition, the Tajik-Turkish Business Council is functioning.

Turkey's largest funded projects in the region have been signed with Turkmenistan [24]. In 1998, the Law on Free Economic Zone, which strengthened cooperation, contributed to the development of bilateral relations. For example, Turkey participated in the implementation of the largest Avaza tourism project in Central Asia. Turkey is also more active in Turkmenistan's construction and service sectors. In the future, Turkey will seek to act as a "hub" in the transit of Turkmen gas to Eastern Europe under the Nabucco project. To this end, Turkey is actively involved in the modernization of the oil and gas sector.

Special intergovernmental councils have been set up between the Central Asian states and Turkey to implement cooperation mechanisms on the basis of agreements and treaties. As a result of the work of these Councils, agreements have been reached on the abolition of interstate visas, cultural, trade, economic and logistics.

The Turkish Airlines will also fly to the capitals of Central Asian countries and six other cities [25]. The only way to Turkey is by air for citizens of Central Asian countries.

Directions, instruments and mechanisms of Turkey's soft power policy in Central Asia. One of the important directions is cultural cooperation and common language promotion. The Turkish government has a policy program that seeks to bring cultural and linguistic rapprochement and ideological unification of Turks around the world, as well as the Turkic-speaking peoples of Central Asia. To this end, it serves to arouse positive thoughts and sympathy for Turkey through the holding of cultural days, festivals and exhibitions in Central Asian countries.

One of the first projects of Turkey's "soft power" policy in Central Asia began with the "Great Student Project". In the 1990s, 42,318 young people from Central Asia and the Caucasus were educated in Turkey, of which only 8,941 had completed their education. Due to organizational shortcomings, the project did not yield the expected results [26]. Concluding the mistakes, the Turkish government has increased the number of public and private universities for foreign students and updated its material and technical base on the basis of world standards. In 2012, more than 42,000 foreign students studied in Turkey after funding from educational grants and other sources, but by 2016, the figure had risen to 172,000 [27]. Most of the students currently studying in Turkey are young people from Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. According to the latest data from the Turkish Migration Board [28], Turkmenistan has the largest number of students from Central Asia. Then there are Kyrgyz and Kazakhs. The number of students from Uzbekistan and

Tajikistan exceeds 2,000. Turkey plans to increase these figures in the near future. It has become a priority for Turkey to serve as an instrument of education for its soft power.

Thousands of Central Asian youth are currently studying at Turkish universities. In addition, in cooperation with Turkey in Central Asia, there are Kazakh-Turkish and Suleyman Demirel Universities named after Ahmad Yassavi in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University in Kyrgyzstan. Some of the banned Gulen schools in Turkey still operate in Kyrgyzstan. At present, joint faculties of Turkish universities are being opened in Uzbekistan on the basis of joint projects. From the 2020-2021 academic year, the Turkish University of Economics and Technology in Tashkent [29] is expected to start accepting students. Yunus Emre Institute has been successfully developing the Turkology project in Central Asia. About 100 Turkish language centers promoting Turkish language and culture have been opened at various educational institutions [30].

In Central Asia, there are institutions and institutions such as the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, TIKa, the Turkish Red Crescent Society, and the Yunus Emre Foundation that closely assist the government in implementing Turkey's "soft power" policy. In addition to such national institutions in the implementation of the "soft power" policy, Turkey is always ready to establish and coordinate intergovernmental cooperation associations with Central Asian countries, to provide funding.

In addition to the above institutions, the Turkish Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Turkish Religious Foundation, Anadolu Agency, TRT TV and Radio Company, TURKSOY, Turkish Airlines, TURKPA, (the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries) and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), TÜBİTAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey), The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB).

It is natural that Turkey's visa-free regime with Central Asian countries will also serve Turkey's interests. This will increase the number of visits of Turkish citizens to Central Asia for tourism purposes as small and medium businesses enter Central Asia.

Application of Turkish "Soft Power" diplomacy in the economic sphere. There is a soft power in the development of Turkey's trade and economic relations with Central Asian countries. Although the Central Asian states are not among Turkey's top 20 economic partners, [31] but Central Asia may be a reliable market for Turkey in the near future. Turkey is well aware that Central Asia can be an alternative market for Turkish goods. At the same time, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are Turkey's largest economic partners in Central Asia (*figure 1.*).

The role of energy resources as the engine of the economy is important. The reason for Turkey's participation in Central Asian oil and gas transit projects seems to be its intention to offer itself as a transit route for hydrocarbon resources to Europe. However, Turkey itself is not a major consumer of Central Asian energy resources. The share of Kazakh oil and Turkmen gas in Turkish oil and gas imports is small [32]. The main buyers of Turkmen gas are China and Iran, [33] while Russia and China are buyers

of Kazakh oil [34]. However, at the end of 2019, Kazakh oil imports to Turkey increased [35].

Turkey is a major buyer of Central Asian raw materials. Central Asia is a ready raw material base for Turkey. Despite low import prices, Turkey is a stable buyer. Also, Turkish specialists are mainly involved in major industrial projects with Turkish participation. Turkish contractors explain this by the lack of qualified personnel in Central Asia. For example, almost all modern hotels in Central Asia were built by Turkish construction companies.

Figure 1.

Total export and import indicators of Turkey with Central Asian countries for the period from January 2019 to May 2020 * (in million dollars)

	export		import		Total sales volume
	2019	2020 may	2019	2020 may	
Kazakhstan	343	338	633	479	1.793
Turkmenistan	259	308	128	105	800
Uzbekistan	496	402	460	367	1.725
Tajikistan	67	54	115	60	296
Kyrgyz Republic	147	146	34	26	353

* Source: Annual statistics of the Turkish Ministry of Commerce (<https://ticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler/dis-ticaret-istatistikleri>) and the World Trade Organization (<https://data.wto.org/>).

One of the economic supporting elements of the “soft power” policy is tourism. It is estimated that a record 51.7 million people visited Turkey in 2019, generating \$ 34.5 billion in revenue. Meanwhile, 5.5 million tourists visited Turkey in January-March 2020 (a decrease of 20.52% compared to last year) due to the pandemic worldwide. The majority of visitors to Turkey are from the former Soviet republics, who receive temporary residence and work, student visas. Visitors to Turkey from Central Asia include Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, followed by Uzbekistan [36]. Turkey has introduced visa-free travel for a period of time to increase the number of visitors from Central Asia. As a result of visa-free travel to Turkey, radical groups in the Middle East (ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, Jabhat Ansar al-Din, etc., banned in Uzbekistan) are stepping up jihadist propaganda to fill their ranks. At the request of many states, Turkey took control of its borders with Iraq and Syria. Because Kurdish separatists have also started to worry Turkey.

The reason why citizens of Central Asian countries visit Turkey for tourism, education, residence and work is, firstly, language unity and good attitude towards Central Asians, secondly, cheap real estate and quality of service, thirdly, conditions and quality of education for students, visas in the simplification of obtaining. In addition, the fact that the average lifestyle in Turkey exceeds the level of Eastern European countries and the quality of service is also attracting visitors.

An extraordinary summit of the Turkish Council was held on April 10, 2020, during which views were exchanged on pandemic measures. It was also stressed that there is a need for consensus among member states on the need to support the economy and business, to strengthen social protection in the Soviet states with a population of about 160 million. To improve the epidemiological situation, the Government of Uzbekistan has been active in sending humanitarian aid to the member states of the Council. Even aid was sent to Hungary, the observer state in the organization.

On June 23, 2020, the 5th Online Conference of Tourism Ministers and Officials of the Turkic Council Member States was held. In particular, the tourists visiting Uzbekistan in 2019 will be citizens of the member states of the Turkish Council. Therefore, the online conference was very important for Uzbekistan. The following year, the 6th conference was hosted by Uzbekistan. Turkey has announced the opening of its tourist areas for citizens of countries where the pandemic situation has improved since July 2020. Necessary measures will be taken to ensure the health and safety of tourists [37]. The reason for the quarantine of the past five months is that the Turkish tourism industry is ready to receive tourists despite the epidemic situation around the world to prevent economic damage and the deepening crisis.

Application of Turkish "Soft Power" diplomacy in the cultural sphere.

Turkey's first "soft power" diplomacy in Central Asia began in 1992 with the "Great Student Project" initiated by the late Turkish President Turgut Ozal. By 2012, the project was completed. Instead, under the auspices of the Turkish Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), Turkish Scholarships for foreign students have begun to provide educational grants for Central Asian youth.

In addition to cooperating in educational programs, the Yunus Emro Institute, which promotes the Turkish language and culture and was established in 2009, was established as a structure similar to the Confucius Institute of China, which has been operating in Central Asia since 2004. This structure is coordinated by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB).

The Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), which cooperates in cultural, humanitarian, scientific and technical fields in Central Asia, has been active in Central Asia since 1992, implementing more than \$ 100 million in projects in the region. In total, the \$ 8.120 billion (2017) allocated by the Turkish government for cultural and humanitarian assistance since 2002 has been largely disbursed by TIKA for its various projects [38].

TURKSOY, an international organization for the development and promotion of the Turkish language and culture, established at the initiative of Turkey, operates in all Central Asian countries except Tajikistan. TURKSOY specializes in the cultural sphere and deals with the preservation and development of the culture of the peoples of the Turkic world. In particular, it organizes meetings, seminars, fairs, exhibitions, various competitions for representatives of culture and art. A number of Russian autonomous republics with observer status have suspended their activities at the request of the Russian Ministry of Culture. The organization was accused of pan-Turkism, activities against the constitutional regime. The organization is not banned in Central

Asia. In particular, by initiative of TURKSOY, Khiva was declared the 'Capital of Culture of the Turkic Peoples' in 2020. However, due to the pandemic, no events were held on this date.

Another element of soft power is the role of the media industry in advocacy and advocacy. TRT AVAZ, a special channel for Turkish-speaking countries, broadcasts its programs via satellite. The only drawback is that the broadcast is in Turkish and Russian. The Turkish State Television and Radio Company (TRT) broadcasts free of charge major festivals and ceremonies in Central Asia, in particular official ceremonies in Uzbekistan.

In recent years, the Turkish film industry has been gaining ground in the Middle East, Central Asia and other regions. Turkish films and TV-melodrama products serve as a tool to spread the Turkish mentality and culture around the world. Especially in recent years, the popularity of Turkish historical TV series in the Middle East has been seen as a propaganda of Turkey's 'neo-Ottomanism' ideology [39]. Film series depicting the power of the Ottoman Turkic state in historical images such as "Khurrem", "Magnificent Hundred Years", "Ertugrul" were aired in Central Asian countries. In addition, Turkish TV series on various domestic topics have high ratings in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In a similar way, Turkish culture and history, social life were shown to the fans in front of the screen, the combination of Islamism and Europeanization, the way of life of the Turkish nation among the Turkic peoples is at a high level. This is probably aimed at getting Central Asians to choose Turkey as a tourist destination.

It should be noted that in 2012, Turkish TV series were stopped on Uzbek TV channels. By 2017, it began to be rebroadcast on private TV channels. The coming to power of Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Uzbekistan has led to the revival of cultural ties with Turkey.

In any case, Turkey has not stopped its cultural and humanitarian activities in Central Asia. On the contrary, it is on the path of developing a soft power policy.

CONCLUSION

"Soft power" is like a light matter. It cannot be shaped administratively or with large resources. It's like a reputation that is hard and long to accumulate and easy and quick to spend. With such descriptions, Turkey is using its soft power to its advantage in order to increase its prestige in the eyes of the international community and to spend more resources and strengthen its image.

According to Turkish authors, any of Turkey's first initiatives or projects in Central Asia have been unsuccessful. It is known that Turkey will be cautious in subsequent attempts when the first attempt does not bring the expected result. This situation can be compared to Turkey's "soft power" policy in Central Asia. As before, Turkey has realized that it is impossible to pursue a policy of behaving like a 'big brother' and thinking of its own interests. At the same time, the addition and development of cultural ties to the stagnant economic ties has allowed Turkey to activate its soft power. It is known that Central Asia has always been described as a "motherland" and an attempt is made to maintain a positive level of relations on the basis of common language and history. In any case, and beyond, Turkey will not feel like an outsider in Central Asia.

The history and culture of each state, along with "soft power", is an element that determines its prestige and attention in domestic and foreign policy,

as well as in the international arena. Joseph Nye also cites history and culture as the main source of soft power. At the same time, Turkey, which has a rich history of statehood among the Turkic peoples, is strengthening its cooperation in Central Asia through agreements and treaties mediated by institutional organizations. Turkey has historically been working to restore its status as a "bridge" between Europe and Asia.

As part of Turkey's educational cooperation with Central Asian countries, the activities of Fethullah Gulen schools and lyceums at the initiative of Turkey in the recent past have created a negative reputation after being criticized and closed by regional governments. The Turkish government later admitted that it was a mistake to entrust the education system in Central Asia to Gulen-affiliated organizations. Today, Central Asian youth are attracted to Turkish universities and joint educational institutions in Central Asia due to the fact that the education sector has sufficient influence. However, there is a risk that young people studying in Turkey will become radicalized and pan-Turkic ideas will be assimilated. This is probably what Central Asian governments need to think about problem.

Turkey wants to be a reliable partner for Central Asia and will take the necessary measures in this direction. He needs a reliable partner like Central Asia. In addition, the role of Central Asia as a stable supplier of energy resources and raw materials is also important for Turkey. Turkey has a place in Central Asia in the economic sphere of the "soft power". Although Turkey has a small share in Central Asia's foreign trade, it is a major importer. But it is also unlikely that the entire Asian economy will be tied to the Central Asian states. Turkey's own economy is also directly dependent on its diplomatic relations with the United States and the European Union. A simple example is the diplomatic confrontation between the United States and Turkey in recent years, which has caused economic problems for Turkey. From this, it is clear that Turkey's main trade and economic partner is the West, not Central Asia.

In terms of security and stability, we cannot call Turkey a reliable partner for Central Asian states. Because Turkey is also involved in the turmoil in the Middle East. Turkey's mistakes could give Central Asian countries a reason in the near future. The fact that Central Asian nationals have joined ISIS in Syria and Iraq through Turkish territory has caused some damage to the security of Central Asian states due to its borders and visa-free and uncontrolled status. Central Asian women and children who have joined ISIS in Syria and are being evacuated have gone to those areas through Turkey.

In addition to studying or leisure, Central Asians also come to Turkey to work. This is, of course, a problem for Turkey and Central Asia. Because there is a risk that people who go to work will join radical terrorist groups. It is difficult to guarantee that Central Asian citizens, who have been trained in the ranks of terrorists and are radicalized, will be able to live a peaceful life in the future. In addition, in the recent past, the governments of Central Asian states have been cold-blooded for giving political asylum to the opposition. Now, in the future, Turkey will be wary of expanding the level of its "soft power" policy and entering other areas.

2020 has been a difficult year for all states. In particular, preparations for the pandemic began in Turkey in January 2020. The first infected patient was registered in Turkey in March 2020 [40]. Immediately, Turkey closed its borders to water and air routes to neighboring countries. Flights to Central Asia

have also been suspended since March 27. Turkey's tourism industry has been hit hard by the pandemic. The troubled Central Asian states and Turkey exchanged humanitarian aid. Growth has stopped in almost all areas. The soft power policy also had to pause a bit. The implementation and financing of projects of Turkey's 'soft power' instruments may be delayed or delayed due to internal and external economic problems caused by the pandemic. In the political, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres, the Turkish government is trying to prevent the suspension of planned projects in the framework of online communication with Central Asian countries.

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