



The New Turkey: The Spread of Turkish Military Bases Abroad, Role and Indications 2002-2020

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aims to answer and investigate the following questions: What is the reason for having Turkish military outside Turkey, including the hosting of Turkish military bases abroad? Do these bases reflect Turkey's desire to expand its influence and assert its leadership role in the Middle East? Do they reflect a new vision for Turkey as an international actor with a centrally coordinated foreign policy? The researchers pose these questions in light of Turkey's growing role in the Middle East, as indicated by its trend towards using public diplomacy to enhance its external relations in the regional and international environment, play a more active role, and assume a more effective strategic position.

Methods: To answer the research questions, the researchers followed a theoretical approach, conducted an in-depth search using the national interest theory approach and the "strategic depth" theory.

Results: Results: According to our investigation, we concluded that Turkey's location and history make it ready to move positively in all directions, especially within its geographical neighborhood, to preserve its security and achieve its interests. Thus, the decades-long Turkish boycott of the Middle East region and its issues had to end. Consequently, Turkey began to establish military bases in African or Arab countries that are either politically fragile or in need of external protection from their opponents and neighbors. This helped to counter the growing influence of some regional and international powers, enhance Turkish presence, and advance Turkey's political, economic, and military interests.

Conclusion: This study concludes that the construction of Turkish military bases abroad was a response to the increasing influence of certain regional and international powers.

Keywords: Turkish overseas military bases, Turkish external military influence, Turkish diplomacy abroad.

تركيا الجديدة: انتشار القواعد العسكرية التركية في الخارج والدلالات (2002-2020)

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ملخص

الأهداف: هدفت الدراسة إلى الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية: استعراض أماكن القواعد العسكرية التركية الموجودة خارج تركيا، وما هي مهامها في الدول التي تستضيف هذه القواعد؟ وهل تعكس القواعد العسكرية رغبة تركيا في توسيع نفوذها والتمدد لتأكيد دورها القيادي في منطقة الشرق الأوسط؟ وهل القواعد العسكرية التركية في الخارج تُمثل رؤية جديدة لتركيا بعينها دولة مركزية وفاعلٌ دوليٌ ذو سياسة خارجية متشابهة الأبعاد.

المنهجية: للتحقق من إشكالية الدراسة وتساؤلاتها اتبعت الدراسة منهج صنع القرار، ومنهج نظرية المصلحة الوطنية. **النتائج:** خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الاستراتيجية التركية استندت في دورها الإقليمي إلى نظرية "العمق الاستراتيجي" التي تعد أن موقع تركيا وتاريخها يجعلها مستعدة إلى التحرك الإيجابي في كافة الاتجاهات وخصوصاً جوارها الجغرافي للحفاظ على أمنها وتحقيق مصالحها، لذلك توجب عليها إنهاء حالة القطيعة تجاه منطقة الشرق الأوسط وقضاياها التي استمرت عقوداً طويلة، وقد استخدمت تركيا استراتيجيتها تلك وبناء القواعد العسكرية التركية في الدول الإفريقية أو العربية الهشة سياسياً، أو تلك التي تحتاج لحماية خارجية من خصومها وجيرانها، وقد ساعد إنشاء القواعد العسكرية التركية في الخارج، مواجهة تنامي نفوذ بعض القوى الإقليمية والدولية، وتعزيز الحضور التركي وحماية المصالح الاقتصادية التركية، والبحث عن المزيد من الاستثمارات، والعديد من المميزات على جميع المستويات السياسية، والاقتصادية، والأمنية، والعسكرية.

الأهداف: هدفت الدراسة إلى الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية: استعراض أماكن القواعد العسكرية التركية الموجودة خارج تركيا، وما هي مهامها في الدول التي تستضيف هذه القواعد؟ وهل تعكس القواعد العسكرية رغبة تركيا في توسيع نفوذها والتمدد لتأكيد دورها القيادي في منطقة الشرق الأوسط؟ وهل القواعد العسكرية التركية في الخارج تُمثل رؤية جديدة لتركيا بعينها دولة مركزية وفاعلٌ دوليٌ ذو سياسة خارجية متشابهة الأبعاد.

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الخلاصة: وتخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أن بناء القواعد العسكرية التركية في الخارج جاء استجابة لتزايد نفوذ بعض القوى الإقليمية والدولية. خلاصة: وتخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أن بناء القواعد العسكرية التركية في الخارج جاء استجابة لتزايد نفوذ بعض القوى الإقليمية والدولية. **الكلمات الدالة:** القواعد العسكرية التركية، دور ومؤثرات النفوذ العسكري التركي الخارجي، السياسة الخارجية التركية.



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The Turkish Republic, which was established in 1923, inherited a heavy historical, political, and military legacy from the Ottoman Empire. That empire began to manifest weakness at the end of the nineteenth century, leading to its defeat in the First World War and. (Gemayel, 1997). These wars ended with the signing of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and international recognition of the Turkish Republic.

Turkey's geostrategic location played an important role in shaping its foreign policy, as its location has many advantages that



have played a major role in relations with the rest of the world. It supervises the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles straits that connect the Black Sea with the Mediterranean through the Sea of Marmara. In addition, one part of the country is located on the Asian continent, while the other part is located in Europe, forming a meeting point for the geographic entity of "Eurasia." Its proximity to the Caspian Sea, black and white waters, also gave it strategic importance. Hence, it occupies a crossroads of land, sea, and air transport routes in the region, and controls energy transport routes between the Middle East and Europe (Nur al-Din, 2010). From a military perspective, Turkey has

the second-largest army in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after the American army, and it ranks fifteenth in the world in military spending (Danny, 2010). In recent years, Turkey has established several military bases in both the Middle East and Africa, which allows it to be present in areas of strategic importance outside of its borders. Those overseas military bases represent a strategic shift in Turkey's foreign policy, and its endeavor to establish a new reputation for itself as a powerful country with capabilities and interests that transcend its geographical borders. This move signaled to regional and international powers Turkey's ability to play a more effective and vital role in the global security system.

Significance of the study:

The importance of this study is that it deals with an issue that has sparked political and security movements in other countries of the region and the world. Turkish military and economic expansion in the Middle East and its activities in oil and gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean waters have become the focus of political and military tensions in a region that has always possessed strategic importance. Occupying the "heart of the world" from the geopolitical point of view, Turkey is a major meeting point for the global land, sea, and air transport network, in addition to being one of the world's richest nations in natural resources. These factors give it a fundamental role in maintaining international peace and security. Consequently, like many powerful states, Turkey has endeavored to claim an important role for itself in this region. The political fragility of several countries in the region, the abundance of political and security variables, and the lack of confidence among political actors all contribute to enhancing the role of Turkey.

The Study questions:

The Turkish strategy for its regional role is based on the theory of "strategic depth," which considers that Turkey's location and history allow it to move positively in all directions. Such moves are aimed to preserve its security and achieve its interests, as well as end the Turkish estrangement from the Middle East. They also reflect Turkey's desire to end its isolation on the "Anatolian plateau" and its refusal to act as a peripheral state in the Western camp and NATO. This paper reviews the establishment of Turkish military bases in the region and their tasks in those countries. Does the establishment of Turkish military bases reflect a desire to expand Turkey's influence to assert a leadership role in the Middle East region? Are the Turkish military bases abroad a new vision for Turkey as an international actor? To what extent does Turkey depend in its public diplomacy on "soft powers" to create a new place for itself among the nations?

Study hypothesis:

This study assumes that there is a growing role for Turkey in the Middle East and northern Africa, especially in politically fragile states or countries that need external protection from their opponents and their neighbors.

The Study Problem

Waltz argues that anarchy is a feature of the international system and that there is no ultimate authority to which nations may turn in the case of an assault, forcing states to seek protection through a balance of power. In an unstable environment, a state cannot be certain of another state's intentions. To survive, everyone strives to increase their strength. This chaotic feature of the international system's structure will encourage nations to compete for power, but these states should not just attempt to gain power, but also exclusively control it. According to Kenneth Waltz (Waltz, 1979), anarchy leads to the formation of the security problem. Because of the state's uncertainty about other nations' intentions, it hurries to embrace hostile measures because it believes that expansion policies will increase its sense of security, which is supported by stimulating circumstances at the international system level in order to grow.

However, the strategies for seeking security are reciprocal, and each country will meet the hostility of other countries in the same way. Therefore, countries must seek to adopt moderate strategies and seek a balance of power through disciplined military, economic, and diplomatic policies.

The realistic (offensive) theory is one of most prominent and influential theories that dominated Turkish foreign policy after 2010 and the occurrence of the Arab Spring revolutions, as it exploited the situations of other countries to gain strength at their expense, as Turkish military bases increased their relative strength towards them and weakened the capabilities of their enemies.

Methodology: The study uses the following scientific approaches:

National interest theory approach (Disher, 2016): This approach is related to the national goals of states, as their national interests are the main motivation in their foreign policy, in a way that guarantees their survival. So, the conflict of national interests among states expresses the struggle over power. Strength is the ability to guarantee the interests of the state even in its own right. The bottom-line goals are territorial integrity, independence and survival (Murshid, 2017).

Approach of decision-making: This method makes it possible to reach a reasonable working formula from several competing alternatives, and all decisions are aimed at achieving specific goals (Mustafa, 2019).

Approach of building alliances: Given the nature and objectives of an alliance, it does not arise arbitrarily or randomly. Rather, a state forms an alliance with another country or a group of countries to keep pace with the military capabilities of an opponent or opponents. Doubting its ability to achieve military deterrence or unable to weaken its opponent and the opponent's allies to the point that it no longer poses a real threat, the state needs to supplement its current strength with an additional force. Of course, these issues and assessments depend on the state's vision and its near, medium, and long-range security strategies. Consequently, the state may dispense with an alliance if it finds that it possesses sufficient strength to withstand its potential enemies alone. It may also withdraw if the coalition's burdens outweigh the benefits and value derived from it on the military and political levels (Bader El-Din, 2014).

Analytical and descriptive Approach: a statistical method that is used to search and summarize historical data in order to identify patterns or meaning, This Study used two techniques in descriptive analytics to discover historical data.

Literature Review

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Turkish military activity in the Middle East has received the attention of many Western, Turkish and Arab researchers and analysts. In *The Strategic Depth of Turkey's Position and Its Role in the International Arena*, Davutoglu viewed these activities as the basis of a new Turkish strategy to deal with international and regional events. Davutoglu showed that Turkey needed to restore its cultural, economic and political depth to become the biggest competitor to international powers in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and Africa (Davutoglu, 2010). Hamed Nasser, in the 2012 study, "Transcending Regionalism: Networks of Economic Interests in the Middle East Region," showed the interest component in Turkish foreign policy. That study found Turkish foreign policy to be based primarily on the use of soft power in building a network of international and regional relations along economic, cultural, and military

dimensions (Nasser, 2012). Kasapoglu's 2017 study "The Turkish Position on Establishing Advanced Military Bases" detailed the expansion of Turkey and its increasing role regionally, through the establishment of a group of advanced bases. Kasapoglu indicated that despite the differences in these rules in its political and military agenda, they reflect Turkey's regional ambitions in the 2020s, through deployments outside the country, which will build strong strategic cultural relations with the host countries (Kasapoglu, 2017). In his study "The Military Bases Race in the Horn of Africa: Opportunities and Security Risks for Egypt," Hamdi Abdel-Rahman explained Turkey's motives and ambitions in the Horn of Africa, and its implications for Egyptian national security (Abdel-Rahman, 2018). Hazem Omar's study "Turkey's Policies in the Red Sea Region in the Twenty-first Century", analyzes how Turkey sought to strengthen its presence and control over the sea ports bordering the Red Sea coasts and to consolidate its relations with the countries in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Djibouti and Eritrea) bordering on the Red Sea. It also analyzes the nature of the regional and international competition in that region, particularly the motives and strategies of Turkish action and the intensification of its military presence in the countries bordering the most important global waterways.

Al-Kafarneh's 2018 study, "Strategic Options for Turkey, Regionally and Internationally," focused on Turkish trends after the AKP's victory in the Turkish elections in 2002. The Justice and Development Party government with moderate Islamist tendencies sought to present new strategic aspirations aimed at managing its higher interests through a reformulation of its foreign policy priorities. Therefore, Turkey reexamined its new strategic path through important qualitative reviews. The new strategic vision has made Turkey more attractive to many countries and peoples. Its focus was clearly on the Arab countries, especially in what was called the Arab Spring. Turkey adopted the concept of soft power, through which it sought to improve its negotiating ability to enter the European Union and support friendly relations with the United States of America. It also showed itself to be a regional and international mediator, which would restore strategic options for Turkish policy. The European Union and the United States of America have begun to view Turkey as a major regional power that has a key role in solving the problems facing the region (Al-Kafarneh, 2018).

Finally, Khedirat's 2016 study, "Factors Affecting Turkish Foreign Policy Trends Towards the Arab Region: 2002 – 2012," helped to identify the most important factors affecting Turkish foreign policy orientations toward the Arab region from 2002, when the AKP came to power in Turkey, until 2012. Khedirat examined the interaction between Turkey's vision of its external political role as an "independent variable," and its perception of its regional and international position as a "dependent variable" that created levels of opportunities and challenges in fulfilling this role. Turkish foreign policy has witnessed a remarkable shift in the events in neighboring regions in general and in the Middle East region in particular. The rise of the Justice and Development Party and its accession to power in Turkey especially affected its relations with Arab nations. The study concludes that the new directions in Turkish foreign policy are related to its internal situation, represented by the rise of the ruling Justice and Development Party, which has Islamic roots and background. This interpretation is consistent with the hypothesis from which the study was launched, and others are related to the regional situation in the Middle East, especially after the outbreak of the Arab Spring revolutions, while other factors are related to an international multilateral setting (Khedirat, 2016).

Public Diplomacy: Its Tools and Uses

The definition of public diplomacy was initially limited to strategies of promotion and persuasion, which were closely related to the self-interest of a state and the general impression it wanted to convey to the international community. Therefore, public diplomacy was defined specifically as a means of direct communication with the international community to influence public opinion. Public diplomacy now includes a variety of activities and practices that fall under the three main pillars of soft powers, hard powers and smart forces, each with its effective tools. Therefore, public diplomacy considered a basic pillar in the process of organizing and building the reputation and international hegemony of any country. It also gives foreign policy a strategic dimension through which countries aim to influence international public opinion positively, especially because influencing international public opinion is a fundamental goal that most countries aspire to achieve.

Recently, various countries of the world began to focus on using public diplomacy with its various tools to create a kind of international hegemony and status for themselves. International trade, cultural, military and educational agreements and

the media are the main forces of public diplomacy and have always been a major cause of the elimination of communism (Szondi, 2009). This study will examine Turkey and its recent use of public diplomacy of all kinds to revive its previous international hegemony and position that reached its peak in the sixteenth century. During the Second World War and the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy underwent radical changes, including the Turkish-American alliance and the beginnings of Turkey's use of public diplomacy in its foreign policy. During this period, America's foreign policy focused primarily on resisting communism, while Turkish foreign policy focused largely on Westernization and the survival of the state. The existence of common interests between Turkey and the US encouraged the establishment of their international alliance. On the one hand, Turkish-Russian relations had many points of tension and continuous conflicts. On the other hand, America was seeking to limit communism and at the same time strengthen capitalism and democracy, making them the dominant patterns in the world (Fraina, 2011).

Therefore, during the Cold War, one of the priorities of Turkish foreign policy was to maintain good and solid relations with America. Many Turkish analysts recognized that this alliance might carry disadvantages, and some described the Turkish-American relationship as a necessary evil. At the beginning of the Cold War, one of Turkey's priorities was to maintain strong relations with the United States of America. However, between the 1960s and the 1990s, Turkish-American relations changed. When turmoil erupted in Cyprus between the Greeks and Turkish Cypriots, the US initially took a neutral position. Such a position undermined Turkish confidence in America as an ally who would guarantee its international security. The Turkish government warned of the repercussions of Turkish military intervention in the island of Cyprus. In addition, the continued fighting between Turkey and Cyprus throughout the 1970s angered the Turkish public, creating a negative attitude toward the US (Uslu, 2003). Hence, during the 1980s, the Turkish-American relationship was limited to cooperation in the military and economic fields only. In 1990, when American forces invaded Iraq, its popularity among the Turkish people suffered a severe decline. Consequently, Turkey rethought the nature of its relationship with America, and the need to redirect its foreign policy to create regional allies and partners (Uslu, 2005).

The public diplomacy that Turkey is currently pursuing, aspires to achieve an organized and specific identity for Turkey and a comprehensive change in its international image. Turkey must make optimal use of public diplomacy tools to achieve the following:

First: Keep Turkey away from its old economic and political image with negative connotations, which often reflected intolerance of the Turkish race and distance from the Islamic world. For example, Turkey could replace Arabic letters with Latin letters in an effort to draw closer to the European world.

Second: Show Turkey as a reliable ally and reliable partner in international relations.

Third: Move Turkey from a peripheral state to a central state in geopolitical importance by highlighting its leadership position in the center and heart of the region.

Fourth: Facilitate the reformation of the national identity and its return to its Islamic identity, as identities also change during the transitional period of a state's politics.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1990 contributed to the transformation of international conflict and the formation of new dividing lines based on cultural foundations. This transformation prompted the theory of the earthly heart of Mackinder to shift slightly toward Turkey, whose geopolitical position plays a role in linking the three worlds Of Secular Turkey (Europe and the West), Islamic Turkey (Middle East and Arabs) and Turanid Turkey (Central Asia and the Caucasus) (Ersen, 2013).

The American invasion of Iraq in 2003, the subsequent Arab Spring revolutions at the end of 2010 and the collapse of the Arab regional order rearranged the areas of influence of the major and regional countries (Salim, 2013). The traditional roles of some Arab countries, such as Egypt, retreated in exchange for the leadership of other countries, such as aspiring hegemony Turkey and Iran. Hegemon status in exchange for the sufficiency of peripheral states led other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, to practice "neutrality." (Holsti, 1987)

The Strategic Depth theory is the most prominent driver of Turkish policy. Its primary assumption is that Turkey is a multi-continental country, which gives it strategic depth in the African continent, in parallel with promising potentials to

influence both the continents of Europe and Asia (Davutoglu, 2018). Pinar Bilgin explained in his article on "Geopolitical Sensitivity" that Turkey is an axis country located on the largest piece of land in the world, which is made up of Europe, Asia and Africa, or the central island of the world in the geopolitical sense. It is the key and lock of this axis, and for a long time, it was the only island of the world where all of the famous primary civilizations and religions developed around the intersection point of these three continents due to their geographical position (Bilgin, 2012). Turkey began looking for a greater role in its regional environment, a role described by Ahmed Davutoglu, who wrote that Turkey now has a stronger foreign policy vision toward the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus region. Turkey would be the pioneer of this new system and its mouthpiece, but only if Turkey became a country that could predict crises before they arose and could intervene in crises effectively, giving them a pivotal role in the region's politics (Al- Kafarneh, 2018).

1: Turkish military bases abroad: strategic dimensions and implications

The Turkish role increased after the Arab Spring revolutions. Turkey took an interest in most of the central issues in the Middle East in general, and those of neighboring countries in particular. The new strategic vision of Turkish foreign policy rested on the following pillars (Al- Kafarneh, 2018)

Predicting crises before they arose and intervening effectively. It is a geostrategic vision in which Turkey plays the role of an effective and influential regional party working to solve regional problems. Far from Kemalism (related to the founder of the Turkish state, Kemal Ataturk), which was based on two pillars. The first was revolutionary based on a formula of militant secularism, largely against Islamic manifestations. The second was the establishment of a secular Western republic, a "civil state" (Taspinar, 2008)

The occupation of Iraq in 2003 came with security, political, and cultural variables, which reshaped the region in major ways. On the ruins of the Arab system, Turkey became an active and influential party in the political and security geopolitical and security of the region through friendship and mutual trust, not through ideology or manifestations of power and hegemony (Al-Rahaleh, 2014).

Neo-Ottomanism (mixing Turkish secular heritage with Islamic heritage): The aim is to establish a moderate model of secularism to solve Turkish disputes at home and to adopt a more active policy abroad. Within this framework, Turkey is pursuing a new policy based on the use of economic and cultural soft power to exert Turkish influence in foreign policy and to make Turkey a bridge, linking East and West. It is a secular state with a democratic political system, a capitalist economic power, and an Islamic state (Taspinar, 2008). This Turkish role, with its many dimensions, has sparked controversy over the nature and truth of the motives driving it. Some view these trends that highlight the pragmatic character of Turkish policy, and its focus on achieving national interests according to short-term calculations, as positive. Others see the transformation of Turkish foreign policy toward the Middle East within the framework of Turkey's restoration of Islamic civilization under the leadership of an Islamic party. A third vision sees the continuity of a Western trend in Turkish politics, and the compatibility between its policy in the region with its activity, linked to its efforts to increase its strategic importance to enhance its access to the European Union (Sabri, 2012).

Turkish expansion abroad: Three factors contribute to Turkish expansion abroad with the willingness to reconcile with Turkey's Islamic and Ottoman heritage at home and abroad. Turkey can develop a more dynamic foreign policy through less strict secularism, economic expansion in the framework of soft power, and political expansion in the former Ottoman lands, where Turkey has national, cultural and strategic interests. These broad visions of Turkish foreign policy require embracing the Ottoman "superpower" legacy and redefining Turkey's strategic and national identity (Taspinar, 2008).

The Turkish role and the establishment of its military bases in Somalia, Qatar, Sudan and Libya came to form a strategic triangle for it in the region. That area includes the Red Sea through Suakin Island, the coasts of the Indian Ocean in Somalia, on the Gulf of Basra, and the Gulf of Aden in Qatar. Turkey hopes to move from playing the role of a bridge linking these three worlds, to playing the role of the center that manages three worlds at the same time.

1:1: Turkish military bases: the areas of their presence and their political and strategic dimensions

The objectives of Turkey's policies and its application of soft power in the Red Sea region and with countries in the Horn of Africa vary according to the following considerations: Strategic/military, as the desire to strengthen its presence

near waterways, particularly the Bab al-Mandab strait. Political/diplomatic, through the establishment of a wide network of political and diplomatic relations with Arab and African countries. Economic/commercial, as it aspires to increase its economic influence and open new fields and markets for Turkish industries and investors (Hazem, 2018).

Turkey is trying to expand the scope of its military strategy by deploying advanced military bases in its unstable surroundings in the Middle East and Africa. It has established military bases in the Republic of Northern Cyprus, Iraq, Syria, Qatar, Libya, Somalia, Djibouti, Niger, and maintains a military presence in Afghanistan and Azerbaijan. In the extent of its foreign military bases in the region, it competes with major countries in the world, such as the United States, Britain and France. The following sections detail the Turkish military bases abroad (Kasapuglo, 2017).



1: The military base in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus:

Cyprus is located in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean, 80 km from Turkey, and 800 km from Greece. Its union with Greece could threaten Turkey's security, increase the naval blockade on it, and close its seaports at the entrance to the Aegean Sea leading to the Dardanelles, the Bosphorus, and all Turkish ports from Istanbul to Iskenderun (Hamid. 2016). The period of conflict between Turkey

and Greece over the island dates back to 1974, when the island witnessed a successful military coup led by Greek Cypriot officers. In response, Turkish military forces invaded Cyprus, gaining control of large areas in the north of the country and declaring the northern areas of Cyprus to be an autonomous region. They called it The Federal Turkish Cypriot states, but this was not sufficient to stabilize the situation. In 1983, the Turkish Cypriots declared those areas an independent republic under the name of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," and the Turkish state immediately recognized it. However, it has been unable to obtain recognition from any other country in the world. The United Nations did not grant it membership, and the UN Security Council issued Decision No. 541, declaring this independence illegitimate and demanding that the Turkish forces withdraw. Therefore, all other nations still recognized only one Cypriot government for one Cypriot state in the south (Abdel- Ati, 2018). Since that time, tens of thousands of Turkish soldiers have been deployed on the island, with the escalation of tensions in the Mediterranean. Turkey has increased its military deployment, especially the surveillance operations carried out by modern Turkish drones, which have become Turkey's most powerful military tool in terms of surveillance technologies. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus announced that it had agreed to permit drones from Turkey to operate from the Gjit Qala airport. However, authorities made it clear that the decision came at the request of the Turkish Peace Forces Command in Cyprus, to protect the legitimate rights and interests of Turkey and Turkish Cyprus (Kasapoglu, 2017).

2: Military bases in northern Iraq: The Turkish army established a military base in northern Iraq as part of an agreement with the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan region. This base was established to train Peshmerga forces and Iraqi Sunni forces to confront the "Islamic State" organization that was expanding in Iraq at the time. It has been the largest Turkish presence for many years in separate areas of northern Iraq in the context of the ongoing war against the PKK organization, which uses the mountains of northern Iraq as its rear bases. The city of Dohuk serves as a logistical military base and has an airport. There are also several Turkish military bases and intelligence centers inside Iraqi territory. These bases include those at Batofa, Kani Masi and Senki, the Bikova complex, the Zakho Valley, the Seri in Chiladze, the Koyki and Qamari

Barwari, the Kochi Spi, Dery Dutiya and Gil Serziri, and one in the Zilkan district near the Maqloub Mountain in Bashiqa (Mosulu. 2019). Twenty-five kilometres from the Iraqi city of Mosul, Turkish forces have been stationed in the Bashiqa camp since 2015. Despite the end of the operation for the “liberation of Mosul,” the Turkish forces are still stationed there with 450 soldiers and 16 tanks north of Mosul. Turkey still maintains its forces there to preserve the balance of power for the future political equation of Iraq in its favor as much as possible (Al- Saadoun, 2011).

3: Safe areas in Syria: After years of Turkey’s attempts to deal with the Syrian crisis from a distance, through the support of the Syrian opposition militants, the Turkish army found itself forced in 2016 to enter a ground military operation against ISIS militants on the Syrian border. The operation also indirectly targeted the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) (Al-Shabana. 2018). Gradually, the Turkish army expanded its deployment in northern Syria, where it is still present in the areas of Jarablus, Dabiq and Al-Bab, before starting a large-scale deployment in the Idlib governorate within the so-called “no engagement” areas agreement. Later, the Turkish army launched Operation Olive Branch against the Kurdish units, during which it took control of Afrin and its environs. Recently, the Turkish army launched Operation Peace Spring against the Kurdish units, during which it controlled large areas between Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad with a length of 145 km and a width of 30 km. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan asserts that his army will not withdraw from the area until all foreign forces withdraw from Syria to reach a final solution to the crisis in Syria (Larayed, 2018).

Turkey’s bases in Syria and Iraq have a specific functional role, which is linked to preventing the Kurds of Syria from achieving any kind of independence or autonomy. The Turkish state has held this position since its birth at the hands of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk nearly a century ago. These rules also aim to counter the activities of the PKK elements, whether in Iraq or in Syria and to transfer the war there instead of confronting them inside Turkey. These actions serve the function of deterring Kurdish forces and parties in Syria and Iraq from thinking of seceding from those countries. That goal was evident during the referendum that took place in the Kurdistan region of Iraq in 2017, as Ankara rushed to cooperate with Baghdad and imposed a land and air blockade on the region.

The Turkish position on the situation in Syria

The only constant in Turkey's position on the Syrian revolution was the continual shift in its foreign policy, and that constant change was based on the interplay of three factors: The Syrian field reality, the Turkish domestic scene, and the international position on the revolution-crisis. (Al-Hajj, 2016).

In Syria, Turkey has used a variety of overlapping techniques. Turkey abstained from interfering in the early stages of the war before choosing to intervene militarily in 2016. Turkey served in a number of capacities between the two positions. In the early months, it attempted to persuade President Bashar al-Assad to accept the power-sharing arrangement, eventually offering military support to the opposition. While Turkish influence has shifted throughout time. (Abdel Fattah, 2014).

Turkey was able to establish a "safe zone" in northern Syria, expel the "ISIS" organization from the region, prevent the establishment of a Kurdish corridor along the border, control the west of the Euphrates River, and stop the flow of refugees by ensuring adequate living and security conditions inside Syria, as well as rehabilitate Turkey's role and support for the Syrian opposition after it became a field for international and regional interventions, and even military intervention. (Al Shabana, 2018).

4: The Turkish base in Somalia: Turkey established a military base in Mogadishu according to a military agreement concluded between the two countries in December 2012. In the agreement, Turkey pledged to participate in the rehabilitation of the Somali army (Vertin, 2019). The Turkish military base in Mogadishu was inaugurated as its largest military base abroad on September 30, 2017. Its main goal, as stated by Turkish Defense Minister Akar, during the opening ceremony, is to support the Somali army against the “youth” organization that undermines peace and security in Somalia and to train ten thousand Somali soldiers by 200 Turkish officers (Jamal, 2017). This base includes three military schools, and its cost reached \$50 million on an area of 400 acres. The base overlooks the Indian Ocean and is not far from the Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Bab al-Mandab, making it a strategic location that increases the security and commercial influence of Turkey (Shabana, 2017). Due to its strategic location on the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab strait, Somalia is the main gateway to the Horn of Africa. Turkey seeks to establish its presence and influence in these waterways, which are a major

corridor for energy and international trade. Somalia is a vital focus for the Horn of Africa region. Whoever controls Somalia can control the entire Horn of Africa through it (Arab, 2017).

Somalia is also located at the center of regional events, which makes it strategic for Arab national security because of its geographical proximity to the Arab Gulf region and the Middle East region. Turkey is well aware of the importance of Somalia as an important corridor of energy in the world. In addition to the wealth that Somalia possesses and its oil reserves, Somalia is part of Turkey's general policy to exert influence at the regional and international levels. Turkey is one of the strategic partners in Somalia, as the volume of Turkish exports to that nation reached about \$80 million. It is concentrated in foodstuffs, textiles and building materials. Turkish companies also manage the port of Mogadishu and Mogadishu International Airport after Turkish companies rehabilitated them. Turkey also established projects in the field of education, which provided approximately 1,500 educational opportunities at different levels of education (Arab, 2017).

From its strategic expansion into the Horn of Africa, Turkey aims to exert its presence and influence in this area near the waterways. Turkey also hopes to prove that it is a regional power by strengthening its military presence through building military bases and protecting its economic interests passing through the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait. The Turkish Maritime Strategy Document, issued in 2014, indicated that the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden are the main links between Turkey, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. The document gave importance to the countries of the Horn of Africa that border the Red Sea and stressed the need to activate bilateral military relations with these countries. Another strategic motive is the Turkish leadership's realization that having passed a major stage of economic development, political stability and military resilience internally, it needs to strengthen its role abroad to influence its external surroundings (Hazem, 2018).

5: The Turkish base in Qatar: In the wake of the "Gulf crisis" that broke out between the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt on the one hand, and Qatar on the other in 2017, forces besieged Qatar by land, air and sea, and diplomatic relations with it were intense. The "blockading countries" accused Qatar of "supporting and financing terrorism and interfering in its internal affairs." Fearing an attack from these countries, Qatar, like all small countries with limited geography and demographics, resorted to adopting strategies to protect its political security and national sovereignty. It adopted a good-neighbor strategy and made strategic regional and international alliances (Tamimi, 2017). Hence, Qatar requested Turkish military protection. On June 7, 2017, the Turkish parliament approved the deployment of Turkish military forces to a military base in Qatar based on the joint defense agreement concluded between the two countries in 2014. The agreement provides for the formation of a mechanism to enhance cooperation between the two nations in the areas of military training, defense industry, joint military exercises and mutual troop stationing.

Former Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Wisi Kaynak stressed that the military base in Qatar aims to "provide training" for Qatari soldiers. The importance of the Turkish base in Qatar is evident from the fact that it is Turkey's first military influence in the Arabian Gulf since the Ottoman Empire left the region after signing the Anglo-Ottoman agreement in 1913. Its strategic location overlooking the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula plays an important role for Turkey and it provides an advanced military presence for the Turkish forces on the Red Sea border and near Emirati military bases in the same location in southern Yemen, near Bab al-Mandab. The Qatari objectives for establishing a Turkish military base there are to provide military protection for that "small country" without strategic depth. The country floats on a sea of natural gas. The Americans have considered the possibility of closing the US military base at Al Udeid in Qatar, a development that may pose a threat to Qatari national security. Therefore, it has resorted to concluding military agreements with Turkey for protection against a possible confrontation with neighboring countries, especially after the escalation of the Gulf-Qatar crisis since 2014 (Salah, 2018).

The presence of the Turkish Al-Rayyan base in Qatar, a century after the Turkish forces left Qatar in 1915, ensures that Turkey has a military force close to the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. This presence facilitates its trade with Asian countries, and its proximity to Iran creates a balance between the powers in the Middle East. Iran has a presence through its military militias, including those in southern Iraq and Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon, who are directly overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. The Turkish military presence allows the Turkish forces to train in an environment

different from the Turkish environment, especially the desert environment, which enhances their ability to carry out operations outside the scope of Turkish geography (Salah, 2018).

The political and security relationship between Qatar and Turkey reflected in their economic, cultural and social relationships. These relationships have been reinforced by more than 15 summit meetings between the Turkish President and the Emir of Qatar since 2014. These meetings have resulted in the signing of 40 agreements in various fields. During the Gulf crisis, Turkey was quick to compensate for the shortfall in the Qatari market with thousands of tons of foodstuffs, delivered via Turkish cargo ships and aircraft. On the other hand, when the crisis in Turkish currency (the lira) happened in 2018, which depreciated against foreign currencies, Qatar announced the signing of a currency exchange agreement between the two central banks of Qatar and Turkey, worth \$3 billion. In mid-August, the Emir of Qatar pledged to invest \$15 billion in Turkish banks and financial markets at a time when the Turkish currency had lost about 40 percent of its value (Thema News, May 31, 2017).

According to official statistics of the Qatar Chamber of Commerce, in 2017 Turkish exports to Qatar increased by more than 50 percent to a value of \$750 million. Thus, the value of trade exchange rose to about \$1.5 billion, which was an increase of 46 percent compared. This trade placed Turkey eighth among the largest market suppliers to Qatar in 2017, with the hope of reaching a ceiling of \$5 billion over the next few years. The volume of trade exchange during the first quarter of 2018 amounted to more than \$200 million, an increase of more than 20 percent, compared to the same period in 2017. The volume of Turkish companies' investments in Qatar amounted to \$16 billion, distributed among 205 companies. A joint Qatari-Turkish company, and 19 companies wholly owned by Turkish capital, according to the Qatar Chamber of Commerce. Qatar ranks second in the volume of foreign investments in Turkey, with \$20 billion invested in the sectors of agriculture, tourism, real estate and banking (Huda, 2017).

The Turkish-Qatari relationship represents an ideal model for the policy of soft power. In addition to the military and economic relations that linked the two countries, the cultural and social relations between them were also strengthened. In 2015, a Qatari-Turkish Relation Year was launched by Qatar Museums under the name of the "Qatar-Turkey Cultural Year." "The Cultural Year celebrated the relations between the two countries by establishing partnerships between individuals, organizations and institutions in both countries. This year represented a vivid application of the soft powers used by both countries, which aimed to consolidate relations not only between the two countries at the political level but also at the level of their peoples. The Qatari-Turkish Cultural Year program included intensive activities that shed light on the different colors of traditional and contemporary arts that reflect the culture of the two countries. Cultural activities also included organizing international exhibitions, festivals, performances and events for cultural exchange and other educational events. All aimed at highlighting the unique aspects that characterize the culture of the two peoples (Al- Sharq, January 5, 2015).

6: The Turkish base in Sudan: On December 24, 2017, in the first visit by a Turkish president since 1956, Erdogan visited Sudan for three days, accompanied by a delegation of about 200 Businessmen. During the visit, the two countries signed 22 agreements in various fields. The most important agreement was the joint declaration on the strategic cooperation program, which established the "Supreme Council for Strategic Cooperation" to develop bilateral, regional and international cooperation between the two countries. Areas of cooperation included "politics, defence, military, security, internal affairs, economics, trade, customs, energy and mining, transportation, agriculture, tourism, health, education, culture, science, humanitarian and development aid, and regional cooperation in the African context." (Al- Sharqawi, 2019). They also agreed that the Turkish side would develop the historic Ottoman island of Suakin with a 99-year lease agreement for linking the island to the mainland, with the construction of a berth for military and civilian ships. After the end of Omar al-Bashir's rule in Sudan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates moved to draw the new Sudan away from Turkish influence (Vertin, 2019).

7: The Turkish-Libyan Military Agreement: On November 27, 2019, the Turkish government and the Libyan Government of National Accord signed two memoranda of understanding. The first covered security and military cooperation between the two countries. The second addressed sovereignty over maritime areas, stemming from international

law, and aimed to protect the rights of the two countries. The agreement allows Turkey to use Libyan airspace and establish bases in it, according to the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Tobruk Parliament (eastern Libya), which supports Haftar's forces fighting against the reconciliation government (western Libya). The memorandum states in its preamble that the two parties "decided to work on defining the maritime areas in the Mediterranean in a fair and just manner in accordance with the powers emanating from international laws." As for the remaining chapters of the memorandum, they related to controlling the boundaries of the "continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone" according to exact geographical coordinates, and the procedures for their registration. The memoranda also included methods of resolving disputes and mechanisms for reviewing and amending them. The map attached to the second memorandum shows the boundaries of the maritime sovereignty areas between the two countries (Arab Center for Research and Policy, 2017).

With this agreement, Turkey sought to respond to the Egyptian effort to strengthen military relations with both Cyprus and Greece and to form a military axis in the eastern Mediterranean. This alliance expressed Turkish fear of Egypt's intention to build a pipeline with Greece and Cyprus, ignoring Turkish ports. Egypt hopes to diminish the importance of the Turkish ports as a "gas outlet" on the Mediterranean Sea (Allam, 2017).

The Turkish leadership also sought to strengthen the Turkish economic presence in Libya. According to the estimates of the US Geological Survey, announced in 2010, the eastern Mediterranean stores approximately 107 billion barrels of crude oil and 122 trillion cubic meters of gas. These are huge and sufficient reserves to revive the economies of the countries concerned and adjust their energy balance for many years to come. In addition to this estimated stock, much has been discovered in recent years and extraction has begun in areas such as the Cypriot "Aphrodite" field, the fields managed by Egypt in the Nile Delta, and the fields exploited by Israel off the Palestinian coast (Bakir, 2020). In addition to its economic repercussions, Turkey and other countries in the eastern Mediterranean believe that the share that it will receive from this huge reserve will be among the determinants of its geostrategic role in the region. Overall, it can be said that the Turkish military presence in the Red Sea may constitute a threat in the future to the interests of the Gulf States and Egypt, in a way that hinders its military operations in Yemen and may limit its influence in Africa.

Chronological table of the establishment of Turkish foreign military bases and missions¹

Year	Location	Duty
1974	Northern Cyprus	The oldest and most important military base for Turkey's security, and it includes about 40,000 soldiers. It is the largest concentration of Turkish army forces outside its borders.
1992	Northern Iraq	Turkey has the largest number of military bases in Iraq. They include about 2,500 soldiers, after the agreement with the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq. They participate in offensive military operations against the PKK and are tasked with training Peshmerga forces.
1999	Kosovo	300-400 Turkish soldiers are serving in NATO forces to provide protection and logistical support.
2002	Afghanistan	In implementation of United Nations Resolution No. 2189, about 600-700 Turkish soldiers are deployed in the Afghan capital, carrying out training missions and securing the international airport.
2004	Bosnia and Herzegovina	About 250 Turkish soldiers are serving with the European Union and NATO forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in implementation of the Dayton Agreement.
2014	Qatar - First Base (Tariq Bin Ziyad)	It was the first base for Turkey in the Arabian Gulf, and it came as a culmination of military relations and to provide support and training to the Qatari forces. It includes 3,000-4,000 military personnel.

¹ Turkey's Military Engagement Abroad- CATS. Center for Applied Network. Dec 2020. <https://www.cats-network.eu/topics/visualizing-turkeys-foreign-policy-activism/excursus-turkeys-military-engagement-abroad/>

Year	Location	Duty
2016	Syria	The Turkish forces in northern Syria include about 10,000 soldiers, carrying out the tasks of activating safe areas, intelligence and logistical support missions, training loyalist forces, and attacking enemy Kurdish factions.
2017	Djibouti	It is a result of a series of agreements signed by Ankara with Djibouti in the field of security coordination and cooperation. It is considered the second Turkish base in Africa, after its base in Somalia.
2017	Qatar	The second and largest Turkish military base is in Qatar. The Turkish military presence was strengthened after the blockade of Qatar in 2017. The forces are carrying out training and support missions for the Qatari forces. In addition to the possibility of carrying out offensive operations if necessary and the right to use Turkish land, Qatari and Turkish sea and air forces work together to achieve common goals.
2019	Libya	The true size of the Turkish military presence in eastern Libya is unknown, but it is supporting the Government of National Accord in Tripoli. It defended against the attack on General Haftar's forces and conducts training and intelligence missions.
2020	Azerbaijan	Turkey began preparing the infrastructure for two military bases in Nakhchikan and Kanja after the recent war in the Nagorno Kara Bach region. They will house an aviation base and peacekeepers who will conduct ceasefire monitoring.
2020	Niger	The military agreement was signed in July 2020 to preserve peace and security and provide training and support. It is considered an auxiliary base for the Turkish military bases in Libya.

1:2: the implications of establishing Turkish military bases abroad

The increased Turkish involvement abroad can be seen as part of Turkey's new vision for itself as a central state and international actor with a complex and interdependent foreign policy. It operates within the framework of the Strategic Depth theory, the main assumption of which is that Turkey is a multi-continental country. What gives it strategic depth is its role in the African continent, in parallel with promising potential to influence both the continents of Europe and Asia. According to this approach, Turkey is an "Afro-Eurasian" country. It is a European-Asian country by virtue of geography, but it is also close to Africa. History and geopolitics, through the eastern Mediterranean gateway, give it a distinct view of the shores of North Africa, the entrance to the continent (Allam, 2017). Turkey can develop depth for itself in all of its relations through the use of soft power and the strategic legacy of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East (Khaza'leh, 2018). While Turkey continues its efforts to join the European Union and maintains its links with the federated states and NATO, it will also approach the countries of the Middle East as a mediator and a stabilizing force in the region. There are several implications of establishing these Turkish military bases abroad (Arab, 2017).

First: Turkey is confronting the growing influence of some regional and international powers, such as Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. It is also trying to limit some other powers, such as the UAE and Egypt, in the competition for influence in the region. It is seeking to present itself as an alternative regional power ready to achieve and protect the interests and goals of Western powers and the United States in the region, as part of its strategy to build power and influence that makes it a political, economic and military superpower.

Second: Turkey aims to hamper the effectiveness of Egyptian efforts to take a leadership role on the African continent, and to thwart Egypt's chances of success in containing the Sudanese leadership, by expanding the margin of man oeuvre in front of the Sudanese regime. By establishing a military base in Suakin, close to the Egyptian border, Turkey has aimed at Egyptian national security, especially in light of the tense relations between Egypt and Turkey and Qatar, and to a lesser extent Sudan.

The increase in foreign military bases in the Red Sea affects the regional balance of power among the Arab countries. The Arab Gulf states, which are making extensive efforts to reduce Iranian influence in the Red Sea, do not want to replace

this influence with Turkish influence, especially in light of the alliance between Qatar and Turkey during the recent Gulf crisis. Some East African countries, such as the Sudan and Somalia have adopted a neutral position on the crisis, which indicates the possibility of Qatar regaining its position in East Africa, especially as it has made efforts to mediate the crises in this region in recent years (Weber, 2017).

Building advanced bases has had unexpected results for the political-military situation of the Turkish state. On one hand, this strategy enables Turkey to improve its emergency response capabilities by enhancing its ability to deter and ensure Turkish national security. It can send effective political messages, develop security cooperation and provide strong capacity-building opportunities for partners. On the other hand, advanced base building carries several risks, as it is highly dependent on bilateral relations with the host country. In this regard, the host state can impose restrictions, such as imposing restrictions on the missions of combat strikes or the number of sorties or even revoking the rights to establish military bases (Arab, 2017).

2: Enhancing the Turkish civilized presence in the Horn of Africa and the Arab Gulf region

The strategic importance of the Horn of Africa is evident from its control of the Arabian Sea. It overlooks both the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, and its participation with Yemen in direct views of the Gulf of Aden and the Bab al-Mandab Strait make it important. From the landside, it is also the starting point from warm waters to land to reach the heart of Africa; which represents the connecting point between land and sea. This location explains the history of the colonial conflicts that have raged across the region for centuries with the aim of controlling it. Since ancient times, the Horn of Africa has been a target of the greedy. Over the past few years, the race has become feverish for control of the Red Sea, through which pass about 3.3 million barrels of oil per day. It is also the main crossing for trade with East Asian countries (Allam, 2017). The Red Sea supports trade especially from China, India and Japan with Europe, in addition to the regional countries bordering the Red Sea (Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Yemen, Djibouti and Israel).

In the era of the Justice and Development Party, Turkey has employed religion in its strategic involvement in Africa and the Middle East. It has supported a policy of openness as a means to achieve Turkish national interests. Other actors with significant influence in the African continent include China and India, and those in the Middle East region include Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Israel. Hence, religion helped Turkey build bridges of trust with African and Arab parties. Other international powers wishing to strengthen their influence have not achieved as much success, given the importance of religion in the Arab and African popular consciousness.

To protect Turkish economic interests and to search for more investment opportunities in the East African region, the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Gulf offer Turkey many advantages at all political, economic, security and military levels. While the volume of Turkish direct investments in all of Africa is about \$6 billion, investment in East Africa accounts for nearly half of it, and Somalia's share is about \$100 million (Al- Quds Al- Arabi, January 20, 2016). Likewise, Qatar is one of the most important investors in Turkey, with its investments amounting to \$22 billion, and the volume of trade between the two countries exceeded \$2 billion, as Qatari investments focus in particular on the Turkish banking sector, energy, manufacturing, tourism, real estate, agriculture, in addition to industries and the military (Al- Sharqawi, 2019).

Regional positions on Turkish military expansion.

Turkish military expansion in Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Sudan has elicited international and regional condemnation. The Egyptian, Emirati, and Saudi sides were vehemently opposed to the Turkish-Sudanese agreement, viewing it as a threat to their Red Sea interests. The Libyan-Turkish agreement and Turkish military action in Libya also worked to undermine the pact, as the Egyptian Foreign Ministry deemed it "illegitimate," while Greece stated that the maritime sovereignty agreement is a threat to it and violates international law. There is a regional rejection of Turkey's intervention in the Syrian issue (Bani Salameh, 2019), and with the withdrawal of the US from the Middle East, Turkey is attempting to impose itself as a hegemonic power and diminish the role of Saudi Arabia and the strange United Emirates as dominant actors in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Turkish position on the situation in Syria

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international position on the revolution-crisis. (Al-Hajj, 2016).

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Future studies

Turkey is one of the countries in the region with significant strategic weight, necessitating distinct future methods in dealing with disputes and conflicts in the region, as well as in its political connections with the countries in the region. The report offers three possible scenarios for Turkey's position in the region in the next few years, which are as follows: (Majed, 2018).

Turkey is one of the area's countries with major strategic weight, needing specific future approaches in dealing with disputes and conflicts in the region, as well as in its political relationships with the region's countries. The paper proposes three possibilities for Turkey's role in the area during the next few years, as follows. The second possibility involves economic cooperation with the region's countries and the completion of cooperative projects with them.

The third scenario is the decline of Turkey's role in the region as a result of its failure to achieve either of the two previous scenarios, namely, its failure to conclude military and security alliances or to play a leading regional role that is dependent on achieving economic cooperation that assists the region's countries in improving their political and economic conditions, both internally and externally.

Conclusion

The Strategic Depth theory is the principal basis of Turkish foreign policy, and its primary observation is that Turkey is a multi-continental country. This position gives it strategic depth in the African continent, in parallel with promising potential to influence both the continents of Europe and Asia. In the era of the Justice and Development Party, Turkey has employed religion in its strategic alliances in Africa and the Middle East. This approach supports the policy of openness as a means to achieve Turkish national interests. Turkish decision-makers realized that religious affinities could increase Turkey's competitive strength. This study concludes that building Turkish military bases abroad came as a response to the growing influence of some regional and international powers. Building bases came as an attempt to forestall the efforts of some regional powers who were opposed to Turkish policy, strengthen the Turkish presence in the Horn of Africa and the Persian Gulf region, protect Turkish economic interests, and provide opportunities for more investments in East Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Gulf.

Turkey has established several bases in the African continent, and others have combatted the militant groups affiliated with the Islamic State and Al Qaeda in several regions.

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