The Intersection of Grand Strategies in Turkey-Russia Relations: Reflections of Smart Alignment and Flexible Competition in the International Arena

ALPEREN KÜRŞAD ZENGİN* **and İLYAS TOPSAKAL****

* National Defense University, Turkey
ORCID No: 0000-0003-2254-6680

** İstanbul University, Turkey
ORCID No: 0000-0003-1415-4898

ABSTRACT *Evaluating Turkey-Russia relations is a dilemma, as the two countries fluctuate between perceptions of mutual historical hostility and strategic partnership. An alternative perspective is needed to get beyond the impasse of this dilemma. The main purpose of this study is to explain the common aspects of the grand strategies of Turkey and Russia within the framework of the pattern and to evaluate the policies of both countries in Syria, Libya, and the South Caucasus where the interests of both intersect and occasional conflict. We propose that Turkey-Russia relations can best be defined around the concepts of 'smart alignment' and 'flexible competition.' Their bilateral relations cannot be considered black or white in the abstract, but rather take place in the 'gray zone.' Alternative scenarios for the future of bilateral relations are presented in the conclusion.*

Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of Turkey and Russia's bilateral relations by reviewing the history of those relations, especially in light of recent events in Syria, Libya, and the South Caucasus, and evaluating their grand strategies. In this regard, as a *juste milieu*, instead of focusing solely on their fierce competition and hostile discourse –or on the other extreme– their discourse of 'strategic partnership,' which has emerged through the evaluation of recent events–we focus on the 'gray zone,' where the two extremes come together, in which smart alignment and flexible competition are found.

The methodology of the study consists of two conceptual parts; in the first part, the concept of grand strategy will be explained by examining the literature that addresses Turkey's and Russia's national security and future vision dynamics. Instead of explaining the grand strategies of Turkey and Russia separately (which is beyond the scope of this study), a pattern will be sketched out around two dynamics. The first consists of the geopolitical insecurity that surrounds the concept of national security and, accordingly, the self-help phenomenon. The second dynamic is that of the interplay of opportunities and risks created by the current world order, in which the structural transformation of the international system is affecting both countries.

In the second conceptual part of the study, the grand strategy pattern that is traced in the first section in order to explain Turkey-Russia relations is tested through the concepts of 'smart alignment' and 'flexible competition.' First, these concepts will be defined according to the theoretical propositions of offensive and defensive realism; then an evaluation will be presented, focusing on the regional events pertinent to the two countries. In the conclusion, the future of Turkey-Russia relations will be analyzed through alternative scenarios.

Explaining the Concept of Grand Strategy

Grand strategy is the highest form of state administration and is the architecture that gives structure to foreign policy. It aims to enable states to survive and thrive in the complex and insecure environment of the international system. Therefore, creating a grand strategy is exceedingly difficult, even for the most gifted leaders. In addition to national interests, threats to national security and resources need to be considered within the framework of relational integrity and should be understood as part of the multidimensional nature of power.[1] Meeting this challenge requires states to develop both soft and hard power capabilities, and calls for infrastructure that is secure, up-to-date, and capable of both scaling and evolving.

What makes strategy 'grand' is its ability to mobilize all of the available means of power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) in line with a unified set of objectives.[2] In this respect, it is necessary to harmonize unlimited ends with limited means[3] and to determine current and potential power sources as dependent variables. To put it more dramatically, we can say that 'hope is not a strategy;'[4] if a state sets an objective that exceeds its power resources, successful implementation of its grand strategy is unlikely to be achieved. The aim of policymakers who create a grand strategy is to realize the general objectives that the state wants to achieve after realistically determining its role in the international system. In this respect, grand strategy, by its very nature, must change and evolve according to the structural changes in the international system. Without a unifying and overarching grand strategy, a state may have a complex and chaotic foreign and security policy and thus suffer significant problems.[5]

Geopolitical insecurity lies at the main axis of the security-oriented approach in Russia and Turkey's grand strategy

Barry R. Posen defines "grand strategy as the theory of a political-military means-ends chain, a state's theory about how it can best 'cause' security for itself."[6] In this sense, the grand strategy focuses on military threats, because they are the most dangerous threats, and acknowledges that military methods, which are the most costly, are nonetheless necessary to eliminate these threats.[7] However, it is next to impossible to resolve an international conflict by military means alone, and the International Relations (IR) perspective on the gains of using military force to achieve desired ends is doubtful. Both military and non-military security threats often involve multiple-headed orders. Therefore, we can see grand strategy as the highest-level connection or primary interface (link or bridge) between non-military power instruments and the military establishment.[8]

Paul Kennedy's approach to grand strategy broadens the definition by bringing economic capacity to the fore. According to Kennedy, grand strategy is as much about peace as it is about war. Grand strategy is about the evolution and integration of policies that have to work for decades or even centuries. In more concrete terms, it is not enough for statespersons to think about how to win a war; it is important how much it will cost (especially economically).[9]

Grand strategy thus includes a vision for the future as well as references from the past and emerges from an evaluation of the current and potential power elements in play, and the structure of the international system. The vision a state puts forward is related to its role in the international system; it is important to establish a coherent and independent role in relation to the system's current and potential power elements –if a state is not at least trying to set its own

The strategy of containing the Soviet Union, which the U.S. put forward within the framework of its grand strategy during the Cold War, remains the most important reason for Russia's present geopolitical insecurity

objectives, another power will choose objectives for that state.[10]

A state's level of activity in fomenting change is generally related to its dissatisfaction with its position in the current international system (if it is not among the determining forces *of* the international system). However, a state's willingness to resolve its dissatisfaction must be associated with the appropriateness of the structure of the international system. While ensuring national security is integral to the implementation of grand strategy, threats to national security are the biggest obstacle to this vision. Thus, correctly conceptualized security threat assessment has vital importance for grand strategy.

The First Dynamic: Geopolitical Insecurity and Self-Help

Geography is the very essence of the concept of geopolitics. The topographic structure of a country, the region in which it is located, and the characteristics of its neighbors are the most salient elements of that country's geopolitical imagination; these structural factors directly and persistently affect the state's political decision-making process, especially in regard to its foreign policy. Therefore, it can be said that geopolitics directs political studies with the rules and value judgments it determines by establishing a cause-effect relationship between geography and politics.[11] Since the effects of geopolitics in the political decision-making process can present both opportunities and threats, geopolitical factors are of great importance for the formation of national policy and grand strategy.[12] For example, the fact that a state is surrounded by seas, shares a border with a conflict zone, or lacks natural elevation will directly affect its national security.

Geopolitical insecurity lies at the main axis of the security-oriented approach in Russia and Turkey's grand strategy. In other words, the national security threats of both countries stem from the complex nature of their geopolitics. After the Cold War, both states began to prioritize efforts to provide their own security. This approach is reminiscent of the concept of self-help: Every state is independent;[13] since there is no authority to judge or prevent a state from using force against another state, a state may always do so. As a result, the state that is under attack is posed with a survival problem.[14] In order to overcome this problem, states that are struggling for survival work to address the security threats arising from the anarchic system by taking actions

such as increasing their relative strength and military capabilities within the system.[15]

Russia: Breaking the Containment

From a geopolitical point of view, Russia's vast territory and unique geographical features have deeply influenced its perception of security and its relations with other states throughout history. The East European Plain, which completely surrounds the western borders of the country, is monotonous, devoid of natural obstacles, and quite flat;[16] thus, Russia has been open to attacks from the West for centuries, purely due to the physical conditions of its geography. The strategy of containing the Soviet Union, which the U.S. put forward within the framework of its grand strategy during the Cold War, remains the most important reason for Russia's present geopolitical insecurity.[17] In this regard, Russia perceives security as the depth of field. Using the policy of defensive expansionism, it has continued to establish buffer zones between its borders and states-blocs that it regards as a threat.[18] In the first ten years after the Cold War, Soviet Russia developed harmonious relations with the West under the umbrella of the security of the West and the U.S., while experiencing survival problem[19] posed by internal challenges. However, NATO's enlargement policies in 1999 and 2004,[20] stretching into Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, led Russia to fear renewed containment, not without reason. In 2008, when Georgia's entry into NATO became an issue, Russia deployed military force to invade the country. The same situation occurred with the invasion of Eastern Ukraine and Crimea in 2014. In fact, the signals that Russia will use such military means over the region are clearly stated in the 'National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020' published in 2009. The document's statement on "the creation of multifunctional border complexes and increasing the effectiveness of state border defense in the name of resolution of border security problems (particularly on the borders with Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan...)"[21] provides important information regarding Russia's geopolitical border insecurity. Russia's National Security Strategy document, published in 2015, states that the U.S. and the western front have expressed an effective opposition to the strengthening of Russia and that the Cold War-era containment policy is still ongoing.[22]

The threat perception of Russia against NATO and the EU revealed the interventions in Georgia and Ukraine, but its policies towards the South Caucasus (will be explained in the next section) are not directly related to the same threat perceptions. However, Russia's interventions in all three conflict zones meet on the common ground of preventing instability on its borders. In other words, the dimension of ensuring national security through the active use of military force to address problems arising from geopolitical insecurity is an important component of Russia's grand strategy.

Turkey: Destroying the Terror Corridor

Turkey's conceptualization of security is of unprecedented importance in its relation to the international system, which it seeks to change. Turkey's foreign policy is strongly influenced by its geopolitical position, which at times necessitates the use of military force beyond its borders in the interest of national security.[23] Ironically, Turkey's geopolitical advantages can become disadvantages; its proximity to East-Mediterranean, Caspian Sea, and the Middle East energy sources and its significant place in the transfer of these resources, especially to Europe, potentially situate Turkey in a central power position,[24] while its proximity to the hottest conflict zones of the international arena causes the country to experience geopolitical insecurity. Another reason for Turkey's geopolitical insecurity is that its neighbors have a variety of characteristics in terms of regime type, ideology, and many other respects, meaning that the country remains situated within a fragmented and volatile security structure.[25] In other words, Turkey's place between the European and Middle East subsystems,[26] whose geopolitics are incompatible with each other, is the most important feature driving its geopolitical insecurity. Since the structural elements and worldviews inherent in both sub-systems are different, Turkey has trouble achieving a balance between the two while producing a coherent overarching policy. In addition, Turkey's national security is directly affected by situations taking place in neighboring countries, such as their gaining or losing power,[27] being invaded, or losing central authority. For this reason, it is essential to provide a sketch of the strategic orientation in Turkey's geopolitical vision.[28]

In order for Turkey to overcome its geopolitical insecurity, it is necessary to first determine its geopolitical situation and who can be potential allies and enemies. In more concrete terms, a roadmap must be prepared and determinations must be made regarding where and in what way geopolitical conflicts may arise and how they can be overcome, especially with regard to Turkey's neighbors. In this regard, the best strategy available to Turkey is being militarily deterrent and effective, taking a clear position on the events taking place in its immediate geography and following a line that prevents any challenge that may arise against it.[29]

Historically, the greatest danger that Turkey has faced on its borders has been Russia; this held true during the period of the Ottoman Empire and Imperial Russia. Turkey aligned itself with the United States and the western bloc against the Soviet threat during the Cold War, while nonetheless trying to maintain bilateral relations with Russia. When *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* policies were implemented in the last years of the Soviet Union, the two countries became closer and have since tried to maintain bilateral relations on a more solid basis.[30] After the collapse of the USSR, Turkey remained on the western

side of the unipolar world order. It competed with Russia until the mid-1990s in the geopolitical gaps (especially in the Caucasus and Central Asia) that emerged after the Cold War. Following the changes in power in both countries in the early 2000s, relations moved to the more reliable ground, especially with the contribution of the country's leaders. However, Russia's intervention in Georgia in 2008 and the invasion of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine in 2014 were perceived as threats to Turkey's national security. In this respect, it is possible to read the relations between the two countries through the lens of the 'security dilemma'[31] and to make ontological biases.

China and Russia, in particular, work to provide an environment that would undermine the norms of the liberal world order

In the crisis that broke out in Syria in 2011, Turkey did not receive the necessary support from the U.S., NATO, and the West, its traditional partners, in the fight against both the PYD/YPG, the Syrian branch of the PKK, and the radical terrorist organization ISIS.[32] In the absence of such support, it undertook a military intervention to dismantle the terror corridor emerging in its southern borders in 2016. The ongoing Astana talks, led by Turkey, Russia, and Iran, have been important to the process of finding a diplomatic solution for achieving lasting peace in Syria or at least stopping the conflict.[33] 'Geopolitical insecurity' motivated these efforts, and Turkey's grand strategy evolved to include the readiness to deploy military force on the basis of its own opportunities and capabilities in order to ensure its national security.

The Second Dynamic: The Decline of the U.S. and the Geopolitical Power Gaps

The international system has entered a period in which the future is difficult to predict, the distinction between friend and enemy cannot be made, conflicts are on the rise and traditional security institutions are losing clout.[34] At present, debates abound about the U.S.' relative loss of power and the weakening of the liberal order; states have begun to act more independently, and states and some institutions have emerged in the international system to balance the waning leadership of the U.S.[35]

China in particular, and other fast-rising states (India and Russia), have different cultural, political, and economic experiences from those of the West, and do not share the concerns of advanced capitalist societies, although they still grapple with fundamental development problems.[36] It would be wrong to say that these states act on the same plane, one that resembles the structures of an old bloc. However, they do have a certain level of partnership. China and Rus-

sia, in particular, work to provide an environment that would undermine the norms of the liberal world order. China has made itself a lucrative partner for many states, particularly in a 'world where the U.S. is seen as a tyrant,' by adopting an 'asymmetrical strategy' that includes talent-based diplomacy and economic statecraft and emphasizes its own model of political and economic development.[37] Russia, for its part, has damaged the West's understanding of 'common security and 'common security institutions' with the dimension of norms and, to a certain extent, with its revisionist hard power practices.

All these developments are not enough to declare the end of the post-Cold War world order and to argue that a new one will be born. However, it seems unlikely that the current order will continue in its present form.[38] The main factor driving the present uncertain and complex transition period is the increasing influence of regional elements in global economic politics. The last level of globalization has given a different meaning to regionalization, resulting in the formation of autonomous regional security units. In addition, the ongoing process of the rise of regional powers and the enlargement of room for maneuver of the great powers[39] has brought with it opportunities and a certain level of chaos arising from the emerging power gaps. As a result, the weakening of the central power of the international system, or its unwillingness to fulfill its responsibilities in this position –or its collapse– will create opportunities, anarchic conditions, and power gaps.[40]

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Russian President Vladimir Putin meet at the Russian Official Residence of the Presidency in Sochi, Russia on September 29, 2021.

MUSTAFA KAMACI / AA

The grand strategies of Turkey and Russia are highly influenced by the structural dynamics of the international system, as outlined above. Their grand strategies can be better understood by an explanation of the distinction between 'deliberate' strategy, and 'emergent strategy' and the inclination toward the latter. Deliberate strategy refers to the mobilization of national resources and instruments for a previously and strictly defined purpose; emergent strategy refers to an understanding in which originally determined goals and instruments are constantly revised according to international developments.[41] In this regard, we can say that both countries have a balance of deliberate and emergent strate-

gies, which affect their grand strategy within a structure that favors emergent strategy.

Turkey's Quest for Strategic Autonomy

Strategic autonomy is to increase the capacity of a state to produce independent policy instead of adapting to the pressures of the international system. In other words, it is a state's effort to resist the international system. In the international system, where there are geopolitical power gaps, it can be said that states' quest for strategic autonomy may increase. Strategic autonomy emerges primarily in the national security and defense industry areas of a state and then independent policies can be produced in economic and political elements.

The first indication of Turkey's new orientation toward the external environment has been its search for autonomy, especially in regional politics

The current practices of Turkey's grand strategy and its vision for the future are undeniably focused on turning geopolitical power gaps caused by structural change and/or transformation in the international system into opportunities which it continues to expand by increasing its defense capacity, according to the country's acquired capacity. The geopolitical gaps mentioned here should be read not only in the military sense, but also through the relaxation of political interactions based on strict discipline and, accordingly, providing greater autonomy to various actors.

When Turkey's recent foreign policy is examined, it may be seen that radical changes are taking place. The diplomacy it has conducted in the wake of its cross-border military operations, its involvement in the 'just global order' and power policy discourse, and its activities in unstable regional areas are signs of its grand strategy.[42] Although it is often the subject of axis shift discussions, Turkey has neither severed its ties with the West nor turned to the Islamic world –nor to Russia. Turkey's 'axis' sits on its own national security and national interests. In other words, Turkey has made its own geopolitical definition, taking into account present-day structural variables, including the structural changes and/or ongoing transformation of the international system, and has turned toward its immediate environment to enact its strategy.

The first indication of Turkey's new orientation toward the external environment has been its search for autonomy, especially in regional politics.[43] In more concrete terms, Turkey's current and developing medium-term vision in its grand strategy is to gain strategic autonomy.[44]

Turkey's quest for strategic autonomy is formed within the interplay of three elements. The first is the use of military force to intervene in unstable regions

The activities of Turkish UAVs and UCAVs in Syria and Libya, in particular, serve not only as a reflection of Turkey's military power but also the political purpose of deterrence

in its immediate geopolitical environment, and the pursuit of political goals through diplomatic instruments. As explained above, the rationale for Turkey's intervention in the Syrian crisis is based on national security. The Astana platform, led by Turkey, Russia, and Iran, is a case in point for diplomatic efforts.

The 'joint statement'[45] put forward as a result of the decisions taken after many negotiations has not only eliminated the conflicts but also laid the foundations for the stable structure that Syria can achieve in the future. The diplomatic success of the Astana trio on the Syria crisis, which is still a hot topic on the international agenda, (although the parties have different opinions), reveals quite important breaking points both in Turkey and the international area. Because Turkey has become one of the leading actors for the solution of a crisis in its close vicinity. In addition, the fact that western powers are not involved in the resolution process of the crisis can be seen as an outcome of the regionalization trend in the international system.

Turkey's intervention in Libya and its subsequent struggle in the Eastern Mediterranean have different motivations than its involvement in the Syrian crisis. Although the consequences of its military intervention in the Syrian crisis have implications internationally, Turkey's national security quest is at its center, while its struggle in the Eastern Mediterranean represents an early response in the name of protecting its national interests with a vision for the future. Given Turkey's serious external dependence on energy resources, the rich natural gas and oil resources that have been discovered and are waiting to be discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean are of great importance. Like other countries in the region, Turkey conducts energy exploration activities in maritime zones located within its continental shelf.[46] Turkey, which is on the side of the Libyan GNA[47] has not received the support it should be able to expect from its traditional western partners and NATO forces and may even face them (for example France) in this area, where events are escalating at the time of writing. Turkey is also on separate sides from Russia in this context, in which it aims to protect its national interests through diplomatic means (especially coercive diplomacy) and military means, if necessary, to ensure effectiveness in stopping conflict in unstable areas in its immediate surroundings. In this regard, Turkey's successful Eastern Mediterranean policies have reinforced its quest for strategic autonomy and its status as a regional power and a problem-solving actor.

Finally, Turkey's involvement with diplomatic means during and after the second Nagorno-Karabakh War is of great significance in terms of its grand strat-

egy. Although Turkey is not mentioned in the articles of the agreement signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia under the mediation of Russia, at the request of Baku, Turkish soldiers are present in the region together with Russian troops. The results of this issue are two-dimensional for Turkey; first, Turkey has proven itself as a regional power. With the end of the status quo that had been established in the Karabakh region in the 1990s, Turkey has shown that it will not remain indifferent to events in its immediate surroundings, in keeping with its grand strategy. Turkey also reduced the effectiveness of both the West and the Minsk Group in the region and brought a balance to Russian influence there within this framework. Its gains also include the trade corridor that will be established between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan, which will benefit Turkey and the Turkic world.

The second element of Turkey's quest for strategic autonomy involves its investments in defense industry. The increase in Turkey's strategic weapon capacity is occurring along two lines, the first of which is procurement. If a state's domestic capacity to access the necessary weapons technology is insufficient, it is reasonable to import such systems.[48] The best example of this is Turkey's purchase of the S-400 air defense system from Russia.[49] The second line is domestic production, i.e., the nationalization of Turkey's defense industry by expanding its own capacity and opportunities. Some of the weapon systems developed by Turkey recently have already been used effectively, while others are ready for mass production. These include the Corvette MILGEM; attack helicopter T129 ATAK; battle tank ALTAY; infantry rifle MPT-76; combat aircraft TF-X; T625 helicopter; armed basic trainer aircraft HURKUS; missiles (CIRIT, *Kaplan*, *Mızrak*, HISAR, *Som*, *Bora*); UAVs (Bayraktar TB2, ANKA, and *Karayel*); the GOKTURK-1 satellite and various armored combat vehicles.[50] The activities of Turkish UAVs and UCAVs in Syria and Libya, in particular, serve not only as a reflection of Turkey's military power but also the political purpose of deterrence.[51]

The third element of Turkey's quest for strategic autonomy, which represents an important criticism to the structure of the international system, is embodied in the President's motto: 'The world is bigger than five' In a speech given at the 69th General Assembly of the UN on September 24, 2014, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made this remark while addressing such international crises as those in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. Turkey's proposed solution to the crisis of representation within the UN is that "the number of permanent members in the UN Security Council (UNSC) should be 20 instead of five and they should be determined by taking into account the continent, faith, origin, and other factors."[52] Turkey's criticism of and proposal for the UNSC is founded on the assessment that the functioning of the UN's security architecture based on the conditions of the Cold War period does not correspond to the current world order. The criticisms and sug-

Iran's President Rouhani, Russia's President Putin, and Turkey's President Erdoğan (L-R) give a joint news conference following their trilateral talks to discuss prospects for the Syrian peace process.

MIKHAIL KLIMENTYEV / Russian Presidential Press and Information Office / TASS via Getty Images

gestions Turkey has put forward can be considered as a reflection of its quest for strategic autonomy in the international arena.

Russia: Becoming a Great Power in a Multipolar World

Russia's vision for the future in its grand strategy includes a combination of policies that highlight the multipolar structure of the international system and a desire to become a great power. Russia's emphasis on the multipolar system and the desire to be a great power are not elements that can be evaluated separately; rather, both elements are intertwined with the dimension of both the cause and the consequences of each other. In more concrete terms, the multipolar international system is one of the most important considerations that increases Russia's room for maneuver on the global level and is also the result of the functioning processes in which it has consolidated its place as one of the poles in this system.

A speech made by Russian President Vladimir Putin at the 43rd Munich Security Conference[53] provides very important data in terms of expressing the elements discussed above regarding the international system. In this speech, Putin stressed that the unipolar world order, which was expected to emerge after the Cold War, did not emerge; instead, new forces came on the scene, especially economically, under the influence of globalization. According to Putin, unipolarity is actually impossible rather than unacceptable. At the same time,

he argued that it was a big mistake for the UN to look after the interests of NATO and the EU rather than global security and that this tendency led to a decline in the functionality of the UN. He predicted a confrontational world order for the future (if this continues). In addition to his criticism of the unilateral practices of the United States, he noted that multipolarity is a more realistic and acceptable dimension for the system.

Russia's emphasis on multipolarity in its national security documents is of great importance in terms of conceptualizing the role it determines for itself in the international system

Almost all of the national security strategy documents published in Russia draw attention to multipolarity. Russia's 1997 national security strategy document[54]emphasizes that the formation of a multipolar system would take place over a long period of time. The 2000 version[55] points out that the international system has transformed into a dynamic process and emphasizes 'the economic and political empowerment of a significant number of states [and] the emergence of cohesive mechanisms for multilateral governance and multi-polarity.' At the same time, it includes criticisms of the unilateral practices of the United States. In the national security strategy document to 2020 (in 2009), the reference to "the transition of the international system from a bipolar to a multipolar system allows the Russian Federation to increase its influence on the world stage with an active and pragmatic foreign policy," confirms the previously mentioned claim that "structural change and/or transformation in the international system gives Russia room for maneuver." [56] In the national security document of 2015,[57] while criticisms about the United States and NATO continue, the multipolar international system is accepted unequivocally.

Russia's emphasis on multipolarity in its national security documents is of great importance in terms of conceptualizing the role it determines for itself in the international system. Its global effectiveness as a great power has led to the shaping of its implemented policies. Russia's military intervention in Georgia and Ukraine draws attention to the functioning processes of political goals that go beyond national security. To make it clear, we can say that while Russia has succeeded in countering structures that pose a threat to its national security through these interventions, it has not been deterred by either the United States or NATO, although it has been worn down by sanctions. By eliminating its geopolitical insecurity, Russia brought into reality its desire to 'become a great power.'

In this context, it is necessary to situate Russia's military intervention in the Syrian crisis in a separate category. Russia had continued to support the

Russia sees Turkey as a useful tool to increase its effectiveness in the international arena, while Turkey sees Russia as an element of balance that it can use to strengthen its strategic autonomy

Assad regime while the events in Syria were escalating and chose to intervene militarily when it realized that the regime could no longer be kept afloat from afar. In contrast to its other military interventions (Georgia and Ukraine), Russia intervened in Syria to realize its long-term national interests, rather than to control geopolitical insecurity and, accordingly, to ensure its national security. The Astana platform, which was created with the participation of Turkey and Iran under Russian leadership to address the Syrian crisis through various diplomatic steps (still a hot topic in international circles) has succeeded in stopping the existing conflicts. The fact that the United States and the West are out of the process is the most obvious example of how the geopolitical power gaps caused by structural change and/or the transformation of the international system can expand Russia's room to maneuver as a major power trying to demonstrate its effectiveness on a global scale.

Russia has not been able to achieve as much effectiveness in Libya as it has in Syria, yet its involvement there is nonetheless significant. There is a historical dimension behind Russia's support of the forces opposed to the legitimate government in Libya and its military presence there. Russia's approach to Libya envisions the resurrection of a legacy that began during the Tsarist era and ended with North African interventions during the Soviet era. Russia's activities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions, especially the protection of Russian oil companies on Libyan territory and the expansion of their fields are opening the way for various gains.[58] In this regard, Russia has both increased its competitiveness against the U.S. and the West internationally and enlarged its room for maneuver and capacity to have a global impact by showing a presence beyond the Black Sea.

Another region in which Russia intervenes in accordance with its grand strategy in the South Caucasus. Russia's policies, based on recent developments in the South Caucasus, have strengthened its status as a problem-solving actor in its immediate surroundings post-Syria. Moreover, by reluctantly accepting Turkey's intervention in the region, Russia has rendered western powers and NATO ineffective. Russia's attitude in the South Caucasus is a very important example of pragmatism. By further developing its military presence in the South Caucasus, Russia has managed to exclude the West and proved that it still remains the dominant force in its immediate surroundings. Russia has made a series of tactical moves that avoid making excessive commitments

to the parties in the event of a conflict in its immediate surroundings. This reflects a sense of pragmatism in Russia's policy toward its 'near abroad' by tacitly acknowledging realities in the area, against the remnants of neo-imperial nostalgia.[59] This pragmatism is part of Russia's new strategy in its policies towards its immediate surroundings, which involves adhering to a structure that includes legitimate claims based on existing agreements while supporting interventionist policies toward the states in the former Soviet area according to the proximity of these states to Russia's borders.

Conceptual Context: Smart Alignment and Flexible Competition

The concept of 'smart alignment' refers to the structure of a state's relations with another state or group of states in order to ensure its national security and advance its national interests. Rather than involving close allies and/or alliances of states, smart alignment refers to situations in which states can form a coalition based on a structural change or transformation in the international system, in order to counter national security threats and pursue their national interests. While states may prefer a balancing strategy against the common threat in an alliance structure where they prioritize their national security, they may demonstrate revisionist tendencies when they prioritize their national interests. While uncertainty and sustainability issues come to the fore in this kind of relationship modeling, there may be a tendency to turn to medium and short-term strategies rather than long-term strategies.

The concept of 'flexible competition' expresses the relationship between states in areas where national interest and national security motivations overlap and conflict. In situations of flexible competition, where event and situation-based coalitionist relations are intensified, the mutual use of military power is postponed, and states take a more defensive tack to deter each other. By expanding the dimensions of their relations to different areas, these states may prefer harmony in every possible field instead of increased competition. For instance, if fierce competition between two states deprives them of progress in the international system and the cost of competition is not advantageous in terms of profit and loss, they may turn toward a more flexible competition model. The concept that best explains this scenario is the 'alliance security dilemma.' Alliance ties are uncertain, especially in the context of securing and advancing national interests in multipolar systems. Alliance partners can abandon and/or drag each other into an undesirable war. The alliance security dilemma arises when one state's protection from danger increases the vulnerability of another state.[60] If the offense is advantageous in the offense-defense balance, the alliances remain in a tight structure, but if the defense situation is lucrative, the states try to get more shares by exceeding their areas of responsibility, and thus the balancing strategy fails.[61]

An important factor that turns the asymmetry in Turkey-Russia relations into smart alignment and flexible competition is related to Turkey's ability to increase its military capacity

Turkey-Russia Relations: Smart Alignment and Flexible Competition in the International Arena

When we examine the grand strategies of Turkey and Russia, we see that both countries are dissatisfied with the current international order and, accordingly, are left alone with national security problems. In this regard, we can say that both countries are looking for world order as a result of the role they have designed for themselves. Order-centered logic can lead to a certain degree of reduction of the security dilemma that the two countries face with regard to one another. This perspective suggests that the states' options may be more than a zero-sum game; e.g., if two states experiencing a security dilemma make choices for establishing an international order, the mutual understanding between the decision-makers of the states may soften the security dilemma.[62] While accepting that the nature of the aforementioned phenomenon of order can have an international impact, we should say that it is a matter of a quest in the regional dimension. While it makes more sense to be in competition and alignment with Turkey, which is a regional power,[63] in order to ensure the exclusion of the United States from conflict zones in the international arena (this is very important for Russia), Turkey's own national interests and pragmatic ways of seeking strategic autonomy in the international arena can be achieved through cooperation with Russia. In this regard, every step toward creating an order is part of the smart alignment we are talking about and the flexible competition that goes along with it. In other words, in the process of structural change and/or transformation of the international system, Russia sees Turkey as a useful tool to increase its effectiveness in the international arena, while Turkey sees Russia as an element of balance that it can use to strengthen its strategic autonomy.

Viewed together, Turkey's failure to get the support it expects from NATO and its western allies against threats to its national security emanating from Syria, and Russia's efforts to protect (and even advance) its national interests in the Mediterranean and to gain room to maneuver through its efforts to balance U.S. influence in the region have brought relations between the two countries to a natural unity of interest and understanding. In addition, both countries have heightened their image in the international system as 'problem-solving

actors' on the diplomatic ground, thanks to the Astana negotiations. In this context, relations between Turkey and Russia can be understood as a smart alignment stemming from factors other than necessity and entailing flexible competition. The two countries, having learned to take joint steps on the Syrian issue, have declared themselves as mediators. Despite supporting opposing sides in Libya, they have turned to flexible competition and smart alignment, choosing a more reasonable path than that which would lead to conflict.

The convergence of smart alignment and flexible competition presented by both countries by the situation in Syria and Libya has also occurred in the South Caucasus, which Russia considers its neighbor. The geopolitical power gap that arose in the international system, due to the increasing ineffectiveness of the U.S., could be filled under the leadership of Russia and Turkey, in tandem with a shift from multilateralism to regionality. Both states have isolated the U.S. and ineffective western institutions in the most important conflict area of the past 30 years and have managed to at least stop the conflict. In this regard, we can say that the smart alignment and flexible competition that we claim to exist between the two countries have been proven as a result of the recent situation in the South Caucasus.

Turkey-Russia relations are not in a structure that takes place between two equal actors. Considering the military, diplomatic, information, and economic power tools, Russia's superiority over Turkey can be understood. In addition, Turkey's dependence on Russia's energy resources should also be taken into

account. However, the ability and sophistication of the mentioned power tools can create a balance against quantitative superiority.

An important factor that turns the asymmetry in Turkey-Russia relations into smart alignment and flexible competition is related to Turkey's ability to increase its military capacity.[64] The success of Turkey's UAV technology in Syria and Libya, being an important tool of strength,[65] demonstrated superiority to Russian-made air-defense systems,[66] and thus strengthened Turkey's hand. To offset Turkey's gain, Russia is trying to pragmatically use situations caused by the problems that Turkey is experiencing with its traditional partners, NATO, and the U.S., in order to shift the balance of power in their bilateral relations in its favor.

As a result, understanding Turkey-Russia relations as a strategic partnership and/or high-level cooperation (i.e., with rose-tinted glasses) or as an ontological security dilemma within the paranoia of fear can lead to a rather narrow and unsustainable evaluation. It has been seen that the change from 'strategic partner' to 'historical enemy' (or vice versa) can occur in quite a short time. In this respect, the trend in recent Turkey-Russia relations has continued in a gray zone. Therefore, as a middle ground, we must focus on situations of smart alignment and flexible competition based on the national interest.

Conclusion: Alternative Scenarios for the Future of Turkey-Russia Relations

It may be useful to conclude with an evaluation of the future relations of two countries in the aforementioned gray zone. In terms of geopolitics and security, this gray zone is comprised of the intersection points of the two countries, mainly in the South Caucasus and the Black Sea Basin in Eastern Europe, and in the South, the Middle East, and the Eastern Mediterranean region. In these regions, the two countries stand on different sides at times; while moving toward fierce competition, on the one hand, they incline toward flexible cooperation and smart alignment, which take each other's national interests and national security into account. The Astana process, the agreement on Karabakh, and the fact that the two countries are on opposite sides in Syria, Libya, and Ukraine, are the most important outputs of the foregoing 'gray zone.'

Based on this analysis, we can talk about different scenarios for the future in terms of the issues the two countries mutually face. The first has to do with the expansion of the 'gray zone.' The growth of this uncertain area, which cannot be evaluated in terms of either hard competition or strategic partnership, may negatively affect the future of bilateral relations. Because, we can say that in an environment where national interests and national security are strictly observed, topic-centered common areas may disappear. For example, while it

may be possible for Turkey and Russia's differences of opinion regarding Syria's Idlib region to turn into hot conflict, in such a case, conflict areas can be expected to emerge in Libya, the Black Sea, and the South Caucasus. Also, replacing bilateral relations with the original efforts of leaders rather than an institutional structure can again create future concerns in terms of the relations. We can say that

The Astana process, the agreement on Karabakh, and the fact that the two countries are on opposite sides in Syria, Libya, and Ukraine, are the most important outputs of the foregoing 'gray zone'

the 'gray zone' is an appropriate ground according to the current outputs of the international order and that the transformation of the system into a different state than it is now could radically affect Turkey-Russia relations.

The second scenario is based on the possibility that bilateral relations will become interdependent and comprehensive. Sharing nuclear technology, taking common steps in the military defense industry including conventional weapons, and a noticeable increase in trading volume are essential moves for the realization of this scenario. The two countries' common areas of interest in terms of cultural and geopolitics: The existing and future partnerships in multinational organizations in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea Basin can exponentially expand their relations.

The third scenario is that the international organizations in which Turkey is a member or has membership interest, such as NATO and the EU, will increase their effectiveness and restore their relations with Turkey to the level of strategic partnership. If this process works, it might be expected that relations between Turkey and Russia will evolve into a new area and new problems may arise. At least in the ongoing Eastern European strife, and especially regarding the matter of Ukraine and Belarus, Turkey's position may have to change. As a consequence, its position in the Caucasus-Caspian region and Central Asia may grow out of stagnation and enter the field of competition. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, within the framework of Russia's attitude toward NATO and the EU in accordance with its national security documents, it should be strongly anticipated that Russia would consider Turkey a threat in any possible scenarios that involve Turkey's increased cooperation with these institutions. ●

Endnotes

1. Hal Brands, "The Promise and Pitfalls of Grand Strategy," *Strategic Studies Institute*, (U.S. Army War College: 2012), retrieved from https://pubs-repository.s3-us-gov-west-1.amazonaws.com/2194.pdf, p. 10.

2. Peter Layton, "Grand Strategy? What Does That Do for Me?" *The Strategist*, (July 2012), retrieved from https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/grand-strategy-what-does-that-do-for-me/.

3. John L. Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2018), p. 21.

4. Layton, "Grand Strategy?"

5. William Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for an Effective American Foreign Policy,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) p. 5.

6. Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 13.

7. Barry R. Posen, *Restraint*: *A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*, (London: Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 1.

8. Dennis M. Drew and Donald M. Snow, *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy: A Introduction to Modern National Security Processes and Problems*, (Alabama: Air University Press, 2006) pp. 17-18.

9. Paul Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 1-10.

10. Layton, "Grand Strategy?"

11. Güngör Şahin and Cem Oğultürk, *Jeopolitik Düşünce: Büyük Güçler ve Türkiye*, (İstanbul: Yeditepe, 2020), p. 62.

12. Colin S. Gray, "Geography and Grand Strategy," *Comparative Strategy,* Vol. 10, No. 4 (September 2007), p. 311.

13. Each state emphasis here can be understood as a demonstration of its military power, in particular.

14. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 105-109.

15. Mustafa Aydın, "Uluslararası İlişkilerin 'Gerçekçi' Teorisi: Kökeni, Kapsamı, Kritiği," *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 1, No.1 (Spring 2004), p. 38.

16. Geoffrey Hosking, *Rusya ve Ruslar: Erken Dönemden 21. Yüzyıla*, translated by Kezban Acar, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), p. 13.

17. For the opinion that Russian expansionism is more about geopolitics than ideological and intellectual elements, see, Benn Steil, "Russia's Clash with the West Is about Geography, not Ideology," *Foreign Policy,* (February 12, 2018), retrieved November 24, 2020, from https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/12/russias-clash-with-the-west-is-about-geography-not-ideology/.

18. Alperen Kürşad Zengin, "Rusya Federasyonu'nun Ulusal Güvenlik Politikalarına Yön Veren Belgeler ve Etki Eden Güvenlik Yaklaşımları," Unpublished Master Thesis, Kahramanmaraş Sürçü İmam University, 2019, p. 42.

19. "The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation" *Military Doctrine*, No. 2.1 (November 2, 1993), retrieved from https://nuke.fas.org/guide/russia/doctrine/russia-mil-doc.html.

20. "What Is NATO," *NATO*, retrieved November 24, 2020, from https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html.

21. President of Russia, "National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020, Approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation," No. 537 (May 12, 2009), retrieved November 25, 2020, from https://www.prlib.ru/en/node/353849.

22. "National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation," *The Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies,* (December 31, 2015), retrieved from http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/2016/Russian-National-Security-Strategy-31Dec2015.pdf.

23. Mustafa Aydın, "Türkiye'de Güvenlik Kavramsallaştırması," in Mustafa Aydın et al., (eds.) *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Çatışmadan Güvenliğe*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015), p. 492.

24. Şahin and Oğultürk, "Jeopolitik Düşünce," p. 289.

25. Murat Yeşiltaş and Ferhat Pirinççi, *Küresel Dönüşüm Sürecinde Türkiye'nin Büyük Stratejisi*, (İstanbul: SETA, 2020), p. 63.

26. Haluk Özdemir, "Türkiye'nin 'Sınır-Ülke Niteliği': Farklı Stratejik Kültürler Arasında Türk Dış Politikası," *Avrasya Etüdleri,* Vol. 33, No. 1 (2008), p. 22.

27. Aydın, "Türkiye'de Güvenlik Kavramsallaştırması," p. 498.

28. Haluk Özdemir, "Tasarlanmış ve Beliren Üst Stratejiler: Türkiye ve Diğer Orta Büyüklükteki Devletler için Alternatifler," in Ali Karaosmanoğlu and Ersel Aydınlı (eds.), *Strateji Düşüncesi: Kuram, Paradoks, Uygulama,* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2020), p. 43.

29. Yeşiltaş and Pirinççi, Küresel Dönüşüm Sürecinde Türkiye'nin Büyük Stratejisi, pp. 61-62.

30. İlyas Topsakal, "Tarihi Süreçte Türkiye Rusya İlişkileri," *Marmara Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2020), pp. 33-53.

31. "One state knows that it will not harm another state, or at least that it will not do so intentionally, but as the other state can never be sure of your intentions, you can never be sure of the other state's intentions regarding you." Herbet Butterfield, *History and Human Relations*, (New York: Collins, 1951), pp. 20-21.

32. İlyas Topsakal, "Turkey-Russia Relations: Harmony of National Interests," *Russia and Turkey Bilateral Relations in International Context International Conference October 19-20, 2018*, (İstanbul: TDBB, 2020), p. 215.

33. Mitat Çelikpala, "Viewing Present as History: The State and Future of Turkey-Russian Relations," *EDAM*, (April 2019), pp. 25-28.

34. Mustafa Kibaroğlu, "Paradigma Yokluğunda Küresel ve Bölgesel Politikalar Belirlemek," *Stratejist,* No. 23 (June/July, 2019), pp. 22-25.

35. Alperen Kürşad Zengin, "Paradigmasız Uluslararası Sistem ABD'nin Kontrollü Geri Çekilişinin Bir Sonucu Olabilir," *Asya-Avrupa,* Vol. 5, No. 50 (April 2020), p. 57.

36. John Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order: Internationalism after America," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (2011), pp. 56-62.

37. Fareed Zakaria*, The Post-American World*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), pp. 123-129.

38. Yeşiltaş and Pirinççi, *Küresel Dönüşüm Sürecinde Türkiye'nin Büyük Stratejisi*, pp. 13-14.

39. Ziya Öniş and Mustafa Kutlay, "Rising Powers in a Changing Global Order: The Political Economy of Turkey in the Age of BRICS," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 8 (2013), p. 1410.

40. Henry Kissenger, *Dünya Düzeni,* (İstanbul: Boyner Yayınları, 2016) pp. 398-399.

41. Özdemir, "Tasarlanmış ve Beliren Üst Stratejiler," p. 45.

42. Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "Büyük Stratejinin Anlamı ve İşleyişi," in Karaosmanoğlu and Aydınlı (eds.), *Strateji Düşüncesi: Kuram, Paradoks, Uygulama,* p. 39.

43. Şaban Kardaş, "Quest for Strategic Autonomy Continues, or How to Make Sense of Turkey's 'New Wave,'" *GMF*, (November 2011), retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/1121561/Quest_for_Strategic_Autonomy_Continues_or_How_to_Make_Sense_of_Turkey_s_New_Wave_, p. 2.

44. Yeşiltaş and Pirinççi, *Küresel Dönüşüm Sürecinde Türkiye'nin Büyük Stratejisi*, p. 83.

45. For the articles see, "Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey on Agreed Steps to Revitalize the Political Process to End the Syrian Conflict," *Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, (December 20, 2016), retrieved December 8, 2020, from http://www.mfa.gov.tr/joint-statement-by-the-foreign-ministers-of-the-islamic-republic-of-iran_-the-russian-federation-and-the-republic-of-turkey-on-agreed-steps-to-revitalize-the-political-process-to-end-the-syrian-conflict_-20-december-2016_-moscow.en.mfa.

46. Kemal İnat, "Türkiye'nin Doğu Akdeniz Politikası: Hedefler, Araçlar, Yöntemler," *Kriter*, Vol. 5, No. 49, (September 2020), pp. 26-27.

47. "Bilateral Relations between Turkey and Libya," *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey,* retrieved November 27, 2020, from http://www.mfa.gov.tr/bilateral-relations-between-turkey-and-libya.en.mfa

48. Hasan Basri Yalçın, "Stratejik Silah Kapasitesi," in Abdullah Erboğa (ed.), *Türkiye'nin Stratejik Silah Kapasitesi,* (İstanbul: SETA, 2019), p. 24.

49. For an important study in which Turkey's purchase of S-400s from Russia is evaluated in detail, see, Mustafa Kibaroğlu, "On Turkey's Missile Defense Strategy: The Four Faces of the S-400 Deal between

Turkey and Russia," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (December 2019), pp. 159-175.

50. Abdullah Erboğa, "Türkiye'nin Stratejik Silah Kapasitesi ve Silahlanma Stratejisi," in Erboğa (ed.), *Türkiye'nin Stratejik Silah Kapasitesi*, p. 75.

51. For sources that integrate with the work of Arda Mevlutoğlu and contain important analyses related to the Turkish defense industry, including Turkey's UAV technology, retrieved from: https://www.siyahgribeyaz.com/.

52. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, *Yeni Türkiye Vizyonu: Dünya 5'ten Büyüktür*, (Ankara: Cumhurbaşkanlığı Yayınları 2017), p. 13.

53. "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," *Kremlin*, (February 10, 2007), retrieved December 11, 2020, fromhttp://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034.

54. "Russian National Security Blueprint," *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, (December 26, 1997), retrieved December 11, 2020, from https://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/blueprint.html, pp. 4-5.

55. "National Security Concept of the Russian Federation," *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation,* (January 10, 2000), retrieved December 11, 2020 from https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/589768.

56. National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020.

57. "National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation."

58. H. Andrew Schwartz and Caleb Diamond, "Exploiting Chaos: Russia in Libya," *CSIS*, (September 23, 2020), retrieved December 22, 2020, from https://www.csis.org/blogs/post-soviet-post/exploiting-chaos-russia-libya.

59. Laurence Broers, "Perspectives: Did Russia Win the Karabakh War," *Eurasianet*, (November 17, 2020), retrieved December 31, 2020 from https://eurasianet.org/perspectives-did-russia-win-the-karabakh-war.

60. Glenn H. Snyder, The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics, *World Politics,* Vol. 36, No. 3 (July 1984), pp. 466-468.

61. Thomas J. Christensen and Jack L. Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 140-143.

62. Ali Bilgiç, "Güvenlik İkilemi'ni Yeniden Düşünmek Güvenlik Çalışmalarında Yeni Bir Perspektif," *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 8, No. 29 (2011), p. 132.

63. Alexander Baunov, "Why Russia Is Biding Its Time on Nagorno-Karabakh," *Carnegie Moscow Center*, (October 9, 2020), retrieved December 31, 2020, from https://carnegie.ru/commentary/82933.

64. Şener Aktürk, "A Realist Reassessment of Turkish-Russian Relations, 2002-2012: From the Peak to the Dip?" *Caspian Strategy Institute*, (January 2013), retrieved December 25, 2020, from http://home.ku.edu.tr/~sakturk/Akturk_2013_Turk_Rus_Relations.pdf.

65. David Axe, "Turkey Has a Drone Air Force and It Just Went to War in Syria," *National Interest*, (March 2, 2020), retrieved December 25, 2020, from https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/turkey-has-drone-air-force-and-it-just-went-war-syria-128752.

66. Seth Frantzman, "Russian Air Defense Systems Outmatched by Turkish Drones in Syria and Libya," *Long War Journal*, (June 10, 2020), retrieved December 25, 2020, from https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2020/06/russian-air-defense-systems-outmatched-by-turkish-drones-in-syria-and-libya.php.