

THE ISSUE OF AFGHANISTAN IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF TURKEY

Fayzullayev Aziz Husan o'g'li

Doctoral student of Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies

E-mail: fayzullayevazizbek162@gmail.com

Abstract: This article analyzes the features and priority issues of Turkey's foreign policy in Afghanistan. According to him, the changes in foreign policy against the background of Turkey's attempt to become an international global power are revealed in the example of Afghanistan. The article also examines Turkey's efforts to restore Afghanistan, international conferences initiated by Turkey, and the use of the "soft power" strategy. According to the conclusion of the article, Turkey will continue to implement long-term political projects in Afghanistan in order to prove its leadership in the Islamic world based on its pragmatic interests.

Key words: Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Taliban, Katar, Global mediator, "soft power", cooperation.

Introduction. The location of the Republic of Turkey at a unique geopolitical point where the civilizations of the world meet not only provides it with certain strategic advantages, but also requires more efforts to maintain stability and ensure security in the surrounding subregions. This situation is well understood in the concept of Turkish foreign policy. At the beginning of the 21st century. The foreign policy strategy of the Republic of Turkey has changed. These changes are detailed in the article "Strategic depth: "Turkey's international situation" written in 2001 by Ahmet Davutoglu, head of the International Relations Department of Beykent University (Istanbul). Its essence is to use Turkey's favorable geopolitical position to become the largest intermediary country and create a concept of zero problems with its neighbors. Indeed, by the beginning of the 21st century, Turkey is becoming one of the main players in the Near and Middle East. The participation of the country in the management of international processes is determined by its important mediating role. Turkey has very good prospects and opportunities to fulfill this task. For example, it is said that the balanced foreign policy based on democratic institutions is the reason why Turkey was spared from the Arab Spring. Currently, Turkey is one of the few countries in the Islamic world where religion is separated from the state.

The main part. In the successful foreign policy of the Republic of Turkey, it is necessary to pay attention to the factor of geographical location. Its location at the crossroads of important roads, railways and seas has created favorable conditions for the economy and policy of Turkey. Firstly, Turkey has wide geographical opportunities in terms of direct access to the huge markets of the Middle East, and secondly, in terms of controlling the transit routes between Europe and Asia.

Turkey's interest in not only regional but also global political processes and direct participation in them has been evident since the 2000s. Afghanistan is one of the points where the eyes of the international community are focused. The Afghanistan factor has been gaining priority in the daily issues of Turkey's foreign policy for the last hundred years.

The importance of Afghanistan in Turkey's foreign policy is firstly related to the region's geopolitical and economic opportunities, and then to the cultural, historical and religious commonality of the two countries. Meanwhile, relations between Afghanistan and Turkey have a long history. From the beginning of the 20th century, Afghanistan was one of the first to recognize the young Turkish Republic. After the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in March 1921, Turkey sent a large amount of humanitarian and technical aid

to Kabul almost until the 1960s. Turkey, which sent many specialists and personnel to Afghanistan, also played a major role in the modernization of this country. For example, in the middle of 1930s, at the initiative of Turkey, faculties of law and health were opened in Afghanistan, and most of the officers of the Ministry of Defense were trained in Turkey. In a word, the basis of long-term relations between the two countries is built on the foundation of historical and cultural similarity.

As a result of differences in foreign policy after the Second World War, there was a decline in the relations between Afghanistan and Turkey. While Turkey started close cooperation with the Western countries, Afghanistan began to establish closer relations with the USSR. Nevertheless, friendly relations continued. Turkey strongly condemned the entry of former Soviet forces into Afghanistan. For this reason, Turkey tried to use ethnic Turks in Afghanistan. In this regard, it is possible to highlight the relations with Abdulrashid Dostum.

Unfortunately, the withdrawal of former Soviet forces from Afghanistan did not bring stability to this region. Turkey officially recognized the government of B. Rabbani. Only during the years 1992-1996, Afghanistan received about 9.6 million dollars in financial aid from Turkey.

Turkey's interstate relations with Afghanistan have become more relevant especially after September 11, 2001 - large explosions in America. In accordance with UN resolutions (1373 and 1368) and NATO cooperation, Turkey also participated in the international military operations in Afghanistan. In addition, despite the fact that Turkey is the only Muslim country in NATO, it twice commanded NATO troops in military operations in Afghanistan. In addition, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, while developing a new foreign policy doctrine, announced the priority of helping Afghanistan. Since 2001, Turkey, which has established reliable relations with the new leadership of Afghanistan - the government of H. Karzai, has been the most active participant in the events related to Afghanistan.

Since the 2010s, the change in the political picture in Iraq and Syria, the constant pressure of terrorist organizations, the wave of "color revolutions" in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa have led to serious changes in the world political order. During this period, Turkey's desire to have a leading position in the Islamic world became noticeable. Therefore, it is not for nothing that the country's interest in strengthening its position in the Turkic world, especially in Central Asia, is increasing.

In Afghanistan, the power of President M. Najibullah fell, and Kabul was taken over by the field commander A.Sh. After the takeover by the Mujahideen led by Masoud, Turkish support was renewed. In addition, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, while developing a new foreign policy doctrine, announced the priority of helping Afghanistan. The Turkish government officially recognized President B. Rabbani, and after the defeat of the Taliban, established reliable relations with the new leadership of Afghanistan - the government of H. Karzai. In general, since 2001, Ankara has been the most active participant in the events related to Afghanistan.

We can say that Turkey has been actively involved in the processes of reforming the administrative, legal, educational and health systems in Afghanistan, training the Afghan police forces, establishing the Afghan National Army and restoring social facilities, and we can say that this participation continues today. . At the same time, a large group of Afghan police officers was trained in a special center built by Ankara.

Analyzing Turkey's participation in the above fields, we can say that the Turkish leadership is effectively using soft power technologies in Afghanistan. For example, qualified specialists for

public service were trained by Turkish teachers; mosques and schools teaching the Turkish language have been increased, existing ones have been developed; pro-Turkey media were given active financial support; broadcast Turkish TV series and movies. There are a number of Turkish cultural representative offices and centers in the country. In turn, the activities of non-governmental non-profit organizations have significantly expanded, for example, Yunus Emre Foundation, TURKSOY, Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA). But the final fate of these associations under the rule of the Taliban remains a mystery.

At the same time, Ankara paid sufficient attention to economic projects. Turkey does not hide its interest in the "Lazurite Corridor" regional economic project covering Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Georgia and Azerbaijan. This issue continues today under the Taliban government. On February 25, 2024, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Taliban (retired) Amir Khan Muttaqi paid a two-day official visit to Turkmenistan. In these meetings, the issue of Lapis-Lazuri transport corridor and TAPI project was raised again. The Turkish government has developed comprehensive measures to support Turkish businessmen in Afghanistan. The calculation was carried out on companies that are successfully operating in the markets of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and may continue to operate in Afghanistan. These steps are of great importance in terms of regulating social life and providing employment to the population in Afghanistan. According to experts, about 200 Turkish companies are working here today. However, it should be recognized that the global political changes in the Middle East and North Africa do not allow the implementation of a significant part of the new foreign policy strategy of the Turkish government. In addition, irregular migration of Afghans to Turkey is also a problem that needs to be solved between the two countries.

In order to solve these problems, many conferences on Afghanistan have been held in Turkey itself. Among them, the tripartite meetings including Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey and the "Heart of Asia - Istanbul Processes" conference should be highlighted. Turkey, as the main organizer of this large-scale project, set a number of goals. They need to create a peaceful and healthy environment in the region, develop friendly relations with the countries participating in the project, strengthen cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan to achieve peace and stability in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and act as a moderator between them, security contributing to the development of regional relations in the field. For Afghanistan, working in such a multilateral format was noteworthy as it could create an additional opportunity to stabilize relations with Pakistan and integrate the country into regional energy and transport economic projects. The "Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process" security and cooperation conference held in Istanbul on November 2, 2011 served as a practical starting point for the above goals. The Istanbul process can be considered a comprehensive project aimed at the development of regional security, economic and political cooperation aimed at Afghanistan through dialogue and confidence-building measures.

As Afghanistan becomes a focus of powerful power centers, the actions of the Turkish leadership in Afghanistan will not go smoothly. In this case, one should not forget the influence of many interested parties in some sense. There is talk that Turkey's activation in the region will not be liked by Russia and China, who are contenders for the "great membership" of Central Asia. Turkey saw Qatar as an important ally in this regard. In this regard, at the request of Qatar, Ankara began to study the basis for establishing a negotiation process between Doha, Kabul and Washington. At the moment, it has been emphasized by many analysts that Turkey is trying to subjugate and control the ethnic groups in the north and west of Afghanistan with the help of Doha finance. First of all, they had to be managed by Dostum detachments.

In this political game, in addition to the Turkish special services, the leadership of Uzbekistan paid attention to General R. Dostum. Most likely, the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of this country and the Turkish Bureau of Interpol discussed the issues of supporting him at a meeting held in Tashkent in February 2018. The first steps in this direction were taken in 2017 during Sh. Mirziyoyev's official visit to Turkey. It was after this that large-scale transportation of military goods from Uzbekistan to the northern regions of Afghanistan began. But in August 2021, we can say that these actions have stopped against the background of the Taliban retaking power. Turkey tried to continue its activities here even against the background of the Taliban's seizure of power. Despite the fact that the delegations of the Taliban and Turkey met twice on the issue of guarding the Kabul airport named after Hamid Karzai, these relations did not rise to a new level.

Conclusion. Turkey is one of the countries in Central and Central Asia that, based on its interests and goals, seeks to build a new architecture of regional security outside of the United States and NATO. Ankara's activation in the direction of Central Asia can turn this region into a new battlefield between the world's main players. In general, Ankara was considered one of the most influential and important players in Afghanistan's domestic politics in the period before the Taliban retook power on August 15, 2021. Turkey has demonstrated its activity in the construction of very important social infrastructures and political institutions. Turkey still hasn't given up on these projects. In this respect, we can see that Turkey has become a global power and has its own approaches to solving the future of Afghanistan.

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