

## RECONSTRUCTION OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE ROLE OF TURKEY

### *AFGANİSTAN'IN YENİDEN YAPILANMASI VE TÜRKİYE'NİN ROLÜ*

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This article provides an overview of international efforts for reconstruction in Afghanistan, then highlights and examines Turkey's contributions within this larger context of international assistance. In so doing, the article attempts to contribute to the neglected literature on Turkey's role over Afghanistan. International efforts for the reconstruction in Afghanistan continue nearly a decade. In parallel to international efforts, Turkey has both military and non-military contributions to Afghanistan. Recently the priority in Turkish foreign policy over Afghanistan is given to improving regional cooperation in order to negotiate on how to work more efficiently for bringing peace, security and stability to Afghanistan, particularly offering a trilateral dialogue between Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The article argues that Turkey is following an eclectic approach in Afghanistan in which it combines security interests with the societal aspects that is developing the Afghan society. It is concluded that with diplomatic initiatives, training efforts and economic projects the role of Turkey in post-conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan is constructive.

**Key Words:** Afghanistan, Turkey, Reconstruction, ISAF, UN, Pakistan, Diplomacy

#### **ÖZET**

Bu makalede Afganistan'ın yeniden yapılanması konusundaki uluslararası çabalar gözden geçirilmekte ve Türkiye'nin katkıları bu geniş uluslararası destekler çerçevesinde incelenmektedir. Böylece, bu makale, Türkiye'nin Afganistan'daki rolü ile ilgili literatürde üzerinde durulmamış olan bir konuda katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Afganistan'ın yeniden yapılanması için uluslararası çabalar yaklaşık 10 yıldır sürmektedir. Uluslararası çabalara paralel olarak, Türkiye'nin Afganistan'a hem askeri hem de askeri olmayan katkıları vardır. Afganistan'da barış, güvenlik ve istikrarın sağlanması için daha etkin nasıl çalışılabileceğinin görüşülmesini sağlamak amacıyla yakın zamanda Türk dış politikasında Afganistan konusunda bölgesel işbirliğinin geliştirilmesine öncelik verilmiş, özellikle Türkiye, Afganistan ve Pakistan arasında üçlü diyalog önerilmiştir. Bu makalede, Türkiye'nin Afganistan'da, güvenlik çıkarları ile Afgan toplumunun kalkınmasını içeren toplumsal yönleri birleştiren eklettik bir yaklaşım izlediği iddia edilmektedir. Diplomatik girişimleri, eğitim çabaları ve ekonomik projeleri ile Türkiye'nin Afganistan'ın çatışma sonrası yeniden yapılanma sürecinde yapıcı bir rolü olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Afganistan, Türkiye, Yeniden Yapılanma, ISAF, BM, Pakistan, Diplomasi

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## INTRODUCTION

In KOFF Peace-building Report of 2001, it is noted that the conflict in Afghanistan has a regional and transnational character and thus, cannot be overcome by simply "ending the war". The goal should be reconstructing the country. Hence, rather than reconstruction and development efforts following the political agreements, they advised that it should accompany them.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, though presently reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan are put in first and accompanied by an increase in military forces to protect them, in the beginning the plan was the opposite. Intervention in Afghanistan neither was motivated by humanitarian concerns, nor was the Bush administration committed to state-building when first entered Afghanistan. Yet today, within the exit strategy, the US and other international actors help for state-building, which would serve the interests of Afghans as well as the international community. Presently, there is also emphasis for leaving more responsibility to the local government and getting more aid delivered by the government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). In fact, in 2006 the Afghan government has set a plan for development, governance and security. At the Kabul Conference in July 2010, in which more than 60 countries and 12 international entities attended, it is agreed that the GIROA will take more responsibility, while the international community will assist it in reaching its goals. Overall, the first two strategies of the international community in Afghanistan were first of all military victory and then reconstruction. In 2006, a third strategy began, that is increasing responsibility of the GIROA.

This article provides an overview of international efforts for reconstruction in Afghanistan and examines Turkey's contributions within the larger context of international assistance. To put it differently, the aim of this article is to analyze the role of Turkey over Afghanistan in the broader international context. There are many nations, nongovernmental organizations, the United Nations, NATO and more involved in Afghanistan's reconstruction. Each of the major efforts merits individual analysis. In fact, based on assuming greater significance, which is also emphasized by NATO spokesman James Appathurai<sup>2</sup> and US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke<sup>3</sup>, it merits analyzing the role of Turkey.

Analysis of literature on reconstruction shows that there are both studies on international and domestic conditions. For instance, Alexandros Yannis examined the normative implications of state collapse for reconstruction in the post-Cold War period, focusing on the requirement for greater development of

<sup>1</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, Ashraf Ghani, William Maley, Ahmed Rashid, Oliver Roy, *Afghanistan Reconstruction and Peace-building in a Regional Framework*, (Bern: KOFF Peace-building Report, Center for Peace Building, Swiss Peace Foundation, June 1/2001).

<sup>2</sup> Minhar Celik, "Turkey's Role in Afghanistan Unique, NATO Spokesman Says", *Today's Zaman*, 27 January 2010, (<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-1999796-turkeys-role-in-afghanistan-unique-nato-spokesman-says.html>).

<sup>3</sup> "Nato'nun Geleceğinde En Önemli Kritik Rol Türkiye'nin", *Star*, 2 December 2010, (<http://www.stargazete.com/dunya/nato-nun-geleceğinde-en-kritik-rol-türkiye-nin-haber-242446.htm>)

rules and institutions to deal with state collapse and reconstruction.<sup>4</sup> Somewhat similar to Yannis but focusing specifically on peace-building and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, Rubin examined the deficiencies of the international institutions responsible for the reconstruction of the nation-state. He concluded that successful reconstruction efforts require international actors to delegate some sovereign functions to a multilateral entity.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, focusing on internal requirements for peace and reconstruction, Cramer and Goodhand argued that "peace is likely to depend on an institutionalized expansion of economic interdependence nationally and internationally, and that this requires effective centralized state formation."<sup>6</sup> Thus, they suggest that international efforts should support development of a centralized state in Afghanistan. Another study on reconstruction of Afghanistan by Suhrke argues that reconstruction of Afghanistan has also involved tensions due to efforts for social change.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, when discussing Afghanistan's stabilization, some look only from the aspect of counter-terrorist war being waged in Afghanistan, elimination of terrorist safe havens and development of the state, limiting focus to counter terrorism and counterinsurgency strategies and building state capacity, which seek to resolve the problems by military and financial assistance. Others also consider the societal aspect that is developing the Afghan society. Though these two converge to some extent in Afghanistan, the two approaches are not the same.<sup>8</sup> In the former approach, there is pursuit for security from international terrorism and other challenges in Afghanistan, while in the latter there is more pursuit for delivering assistance for reconstruction and development of Afghanistan.

This article argues that Turkey prefers an eclectic approach that considers both. While establishing peace and security, particularly in a country like Afghanistan is an important concern, other issues including reconstruction of economic and political institutions for ensuring social welfare, rebuilding of economy, increasing education level, raising the quality of life and improving the status of women are as well considered important. Turkey's policy especially focuses on reconstruction and development activities, considering that a military solution alone could not resolve the problems in Afghanistan.

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<sup>4</sup> Alexandros Yannis, "State Collapse and Its Implications for Peace-Building and Reconstruction", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5, 2002, pp. 817-835.

<sup>5</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, "Peace-building and State-building in Afghanistan: Construction Sovereignty for Whose Security", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2006, pp. 175-185.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Cramer and Jonathan Goodhand, "Try Again, Fail Again, Fail Better? War and the State, and the 'Post Conflict' Challenge in Afghanistan", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5, 2002, pp. 885-909.

<sup>7</sup> Astri Suhrke, "Reconstruction as Modernisation: The Post-conflict Project in Afghanistan", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 7, 2007, pp. 1291-1308.

<sup>8</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, "Peace-building and State-building in Afghanistan: Construction Sovereignty for Whose Security", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2006, p. 177.

### **International Efforts for the Post-conflict Reconstruction**

The framework of post-conflict reconstruction programme of Afghanistan was established in the Bonn Agreement of December 2001 under the UN leadership, less than two months after the US and coalition forces removed the Taliban regime. This document also involved frameworks on political reform and security, which were planned to create conditions for the reconstruction process in Afghanistan. Today, there is partnership between the Afghan government, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and NATO-International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in providing reconstruction. The Bonn agreement also created an interim administration to run for six months, which would establish a *loya jirga*, or grand council, for formation of transitional government that would organize general elections. Political transition started by adoption of a constitution (2004) and election of a representative government (2005).

Firstly, we will focus on ISAF and its role on reconstruction of Afghanistan. ISAF was created in accordance with the Bonn Conference in December 2001, which was initially limited at providing security in around Kabul. On August 2003 NATO took command of ISAF. After October 2003 according to UNSCR 1510, ISAF started to extend its role covering the whole Afghanistan, because of growing concern about resurgence of the Taliban. The number of ISAF troops increased from the initial 5000 to around 100,000 troops from 46 countries including all 28 NATO member nations in 2010. The main objective of ISAF is assisting the government of Afghanistan in providing security and stability, in order to create the conditions for reconstruction and development. There are five main security tasks of ISAF: conducting security and stability operations; development and training the Afghan National Army (ANA); disarming illegally armed groups; facilitating bullets depository managements; and providing post-operation assistance. Presently, training of the Afghan army is carried by nine states: the US, Great Britain, France, Germany, Turkey, Romania, Mongolia, Canada and Estonia. In addition, through its Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), ISAF tries to help the Afghan authorities to strengthen the institutions required to establish good governance and rule of law, and to promote human rights. The PRTs are hosted and assembled by individual countries. They possess both military units and civilian political advisors that is they are led by civilian and protected by military forces. Current strategies of ISAF are to confront Taliban, to gradually transfer responsibility to the Afghan security forces and to help the Afghan government for providing good governance.<sup>9</sup>

Overall, there is combination of counter-terrorism warfare with the Taliban and al-Qaeda, as well as political, economic, military efforts to support state-building. However, NATO is struggling to combine these two strategies since there is tension between the two, because counter-terrorism operations lead to civilian casualties, which undermine the efforts to win hearts and minds of the Afghans. Nevertheless, it should be also underlined that for the first time in its

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<sup>9</sup> For details about ISAF see official website (<http://www.isaf.nato.int/>).

history NATO put a senior civilian representative in Afghanistan to work the political issues, alongside the military commander.

Secondly, we have to highlight the role of UNAMA in reconstruction. UNAMA was established in March 2002 following the Bonn agreement. It is responsible for all UN relief, recovery and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. Its development programs continue in coordination with the Afghan government's development strategy, focusing mainly on five sectors in Afghanistan: agriculture, energy, private sector development, capacity building, and higher education and vocational training. In addition, while the political affairs division at UNAMA supports political outreach, conflict resolution, disarmament and regional cooperation, its human rights unit plays an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

Besides UNAMA, other UN bodies as well have impact on Afghanistan's reconstruction, including the UN Development Program, the UN High Commission for Refugees and the UN Development Fund for Women. Likewise, non-governmental organizations, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have a significant place in the reconstruction efforts.

Thirdly, we have to consider the role of Afghanistan's government in reconstruction. Firstly, with the Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report 2005-Vision 2020 announced by Afghanistan President Karzai, and adapted by the UN, the government has begun planning its contribution to the UN-sanctioned global targets that would enable more of the world's population to enjoy the minimum requirements of human dignity.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, Afghanistan has committed to make progress in national development with the Afghanistan Compact\_ an agreement signed at the London Conference of 2006. Afghanistan's MDGs and the Compact are the basis for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) (2008-2013)\_ the strategy for security, governance, economic growth and poverty reduction. At the core of the ANDS is a policy of 'Afghanization', which reflects the government's vision, principles and goals for Afghanistan. The government developed the ANDS to clarify existing conditions, establish objectives and define the policies, programs and projects needed to achieve these objections.

The framework for cooperation on reconstruction between the government of Afghanistan, the UN and the international community has been outlined and agreed in a number of key documents and conferences including the Tokyo Conference of 2002 on reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan, the Berlin Conference of 2004 on Afghanistan, the London Conference of 2006, the Afghan Compact of 2006, the Paris Declaration of 2008, the Afghan Conference in London of 2010 and recently the Kabul Conference of 2010. Remarkably, the London International Conference on Afghanistan in January 2010 was an

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<sup>10</sup> For details about UNAMA see official website (<http://unama.unmissions.org>).

<sup>11</sup> In September 2000, Afghanistan could not participate in the formulation of MDGs, which provide a framework for UN system to work toward a common end. For details about UN Millennium Development Goals see official website (<http://www.un.org/MDG/index.shtml>).

important step towards greater Afghan leadership for reconstruction. The GIRoA articulated priorities for stabilizing and developing Afghanistan and gave a plan for more coherent and coordinated development. Also, a plan for phased transition of security to the Afghan forces was given at the London Conference. Furthermore, the Conference participants highlighted that regionally-owned initiatives is the best chance of success, therefore, called for neighboring and regional partners to work constructively together.<sup>12</sup> Besides the London Conference, the Kabul Conference on July 20, 2010, which was hosted by the government of Afghanistan and co-chaired by the UN, is critical for transition to full Afghan leadership and responsibility. It has been built on previous international commitments including the London Conference. At this conference, the Afghanistan government's national agenda that is the Afghan-led plan for improving development, governance and security is presented.

As agreed at the London Conference earlier in 2010, as again agreed in Kabul, the Afghan government will take more roles in shaping the country's future and the international community will play a supporting role. President Karzai announced that the Afghanistan government plans to assume the entire responsibility in terms of military and security by 2014.<sup>13</sup> NATO supports the roadmap for transition to the Afghan security forces, in the due course continues to train the Afghan soldiers and police, and plans to leave after the Afghans able to maintain security on their own.<sup>14</sup>

### **Factors Affecting the Post-conflict Reconstruction in Afghanistan**

The current post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan have attracted attention to reasons for failure of previous efforts. Several factors can be underlined that affects the reconstruction in Afghanistan. Firstly, leadership and coordination of the international efforts is considered important.<sup>15</sup> So far, fragmentation of the international efforts created an obstacle. As indicated by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, today more coordination is required between NATO and the UN as well as cooperation between NATO and nongovernmental organizations in Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, overemphasis on military solution due to continuing view that the 'war on terror' could be won by primarily military means has challenged the reconstruction efforts. Besides, it is essential to win the support of the Afghans in counter-insurgency strategy. Thirdly, the success of reconstruction is also dependent on expansion of

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<sup>12</sup> For details about the London Conference, January 2010 see website (<http://afghanistan.hmg.gov.uk/en/conference/>).

<sup>13</sup> "Statement by President Karzai at International Kabul Conference", 20 July 2010, (<http://www.president.gov.af/Contents/72/Documents/2030/>).

<sup>14</sup> "Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Kabul Conference", 19 July 2010, ([http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_65024.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_65024.htm)).

<sup>15</sup> Andrew J. Williams, "Reconstruction 'before the Marshall Plan'", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2005, pp. 541-558.

<sup>16</sup> Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary, "The Future of Peace Operations", Speech Given at the University of Chicago, 8 April 2010, ([http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/Open\\_Think\\_Tank\\_Article/The\\_Future\\_of\\_...](http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/Open_Think_Tank_Article/The_Future_of_...)).

institutionalized economy, centralized and effective state,<sup>17</sup> as well as rebuilding legitimate local security and social structures in order to transfer the responsibility for security to local forces.<sup>18</sup> Yet, so far, there is failure of state-building in Afghanistan.

In this regard, recent attempts of the international community to support the post-conflict reconstruction have often been based on the concept of state-building. According to Bogdandy and his colleagues state-building is different from nation-building challenging the recent arguments that consider state-building as substitute to nation-building. It means "the establishment, re-establishment and strengthening of a public structure in a given territory capable of delivering public goods."<sup>19</sup> Besides, state-building involves reconstruction of state capacity to fulfill core functions such as providing security, representation and welfare.<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, in contemporary post-conflict reconstruction programme, the role of international agencies is higher than national initiatives, which results with internal legitimacy problems.<sup>21</sup>

Within the context of above discussion about the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, at the following section, we will examine the role of Turkey.

### **The Role of Turkey**

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, broad-based interaction is taking place between Turkey and Afghanistan. This is also the time when Turkey has adopting a new foreign policy approach under the AK Party government. Particularly, Ahmet Davutoglu the former chief advisor to the current Turkish Prime Minister and the present Foreign Minister who has been appointed in May 1, 2009, is the initiator of this new approach. Davutoğlu has used the concept of 'strategic depth' to conduct the Turkish foreign policy. In Davutoglu's terms, 'strategic depth' is based on geographical and historical dept.<sup>22</sup> Turkey's geographical dept is defined as being once a Mediterranean, a Middle Eastern and a Caucasian, an Asian and European country. Consequently, it is assumed that strategic depth places Turkey at the heart of many geopolitical areas of

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<sup>17</sup> Christopher Cramer and Jonathan Goodhand, "Try Again, Fail Again, Fail Better? War and the State, and the 'Post Conflict' Challenge in Afghanistan", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5, 2002, pp. 885-909.

<sup>18</sup> Major Dan Fayutkin, "Stabilization and Reconstruction of Nations after the Military Victory: Afghanistan and Chechnya Case Studies", *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2009, pp. 367-372.

<sup>19</sup> Armin von Bogdandy, Stefan Haufler, Felix Hanschmann ve Raphael Utz, "State-Building, Nation-Building and Constitutional Politics in Post-conflict Situations: Conceptual Clarifications and Appraisal of Different Approaches", *Max Planck Yearbook of UN Law*, Vol. 9, 2005, pp. 583-4.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Lister, "Changing the Rules? State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan", *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 6, 2009, p. 991.

<sup>21</sup> Astri Suhrke, "Reconstruction as Modernisation: the post-conflict project in Afghanistan", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 7, 2007, p. 1294.

<sup>22</sup> Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (Istanbul: Kure, 2007), p. 6.

influence, enabling Turkey to play a more constructive role in multiple regions.<sup>23</sup> The second main element of the AK Party government's foreign policy under Davutoglu's leadership is search for 'zero-conflict' with all neighboring countries as well as development of political and economic relations.<sup>24</sup> In this sense, Turkish President Gul told in his speech on "Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Era" that Turkey wants to promote peace in its wide region considering that there cannot be any economic development, cooperation or welfare in any region without stability and security.<sup>25</sup> The third element of new foreign policy is quest of multi-dimensional negotiations and pre-emptive diplomacy. In short, within this foreign policy approach, the AK Party government rather than isolating Turkey from surrounding troubles tries to create a region of peace by improving relations with its neighbors, and also adapted a proactive commitment to alter the environment. Turkey's actions are above all motivated with the aim of contributing to global stability.

Particularly after 9/11, faced with extremely difficult challenges in Afghanistan and its periphery, Turkey started to pay high attention to the developments in Afghanistan and its neighbors. In fact, according to the former Turkish ambassador Resat Arim, Turkey's soft power has been required for Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> Turkish approach toward Afghanistan in the post-9/11 has been shaped by four main factors. The first one is Ankara's search for a new proactive foreign policy. Turkey is searching for a greater role in regional affairs. Thus, while coordinating with the US and NATO in Afghanistan, Turkey also maintains cooperation with non-NATO countries such as Pakistan, hoping to strengthen regional cooperation to deal with regional challenges. According to Davutoglu, Turkey is assuming an important regional role and trying to harmonize its commitments to neighboring regions and strategic allies.<sup>27</sup> The second factor is the "war on terror". It is vital that Afghanistan would never emerge as safe haven for terrorism and extremism as Turkey has been also a target of international terrorism.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Turkey has shared interest with the international community in a stable Afghanistan with a regime that could promote economic development and social stability, thereby enhancing the security of the entire region. Turkey is highly concerned about challenges and risks in Afghanistan and Pakistan regarding terrorism, extremism and illegal drug trafficking, and is willing to cooperate in the fight against them. The third factor is recent deepening of political and economic relations with Afghanistan as well as

<sup>23</sup> Bulent Aras, "Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", May 2009, SETA Policy Brief, No. 32, (<http://www.setav.org/ups/dosya/20875.pdf>)

<sup>24</sup> Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkey's New Foreign Policy Vision", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2008, pp. 77-96.

<sup>25</sup> Full-text of Turkish President Abdullah Gul's Lecture on "Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Era" delivered at International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) on 16 December 2009 can be retrieved from (<http://www.usak.org.tr>).

<sup>26</sup> Resat Arim, "Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan", 2009, *Foreign Policy Institute*, ([http://www.foreignpolicy.org.tr/documents/rarim\\_100709.htm](http://www.foreignpolicy.org.tr/documents/rarim_100709.htm)).

<sup>27</sup> Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy", *Foreign Policy Magazine*, 20 May 2010, ([http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys\\_zero\\_problems\\_foreign\\_policy](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy)).

<sup>28</sup> Bulent Aras and Sule Toktas, "Al-Qaida, 'War on Terror' and Turkey", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 5, 2007, p. 1040.

Pakistan. Turkey would like to enhance relations, yet if security in Afghanistan deteriorates, regional rivalries might intensify. Thus, Turkey has expanded its diplomatic energy in the recent years for reconstruction of politically and economically stabilized Afghanistan. Fourthly, Turkey believes that for a long time in history the Afghan people have gone through a lot of very difficult challenges, and in fact is concerned about them.

An analysis of Turkey's role in Afghanistan in the post-9/11 era shows that Turkey has both military and non-military contributions to Afghanistan. Turkey's role in Afghanistan is unique compared to many other nations, because though Turkey does not share a border with Afghanistan, over the years has built close ties.<sup>29</sup> While global attention turned to Afghanistan after the recent events, Turkey had developed relations since the 1920's. In fact, Afghanistan has been among the first countries that recognized the Turkish Republic. Afghanistan has got its independence in 1919 when Amanuallah Khan was the king of Afghanistan. King Amanuallah Khan introduced social, political and judicial reforms to modernize his country, while taking Turkey as a model.<sup>30</sup> The close relations which started at the early years of the Republic have been kept.<sup>31</sup>

Secondly, Turkey has been consistently welcomed in Afghanistan. In other words, there is a positive attitude of the Afghan people towards Turkey, which is also related with friendly historical ties. Turkey tries to keep this positive attitude. In this regard, recently, Turkey is worried that too much emphasis on more militaristic approach would complicate the situation in Afghanistan and thus would in the end undermine the Afghanistan government. As highlighted by Aydemir Erman, Turkey's special coordinator for Afghanistan from 1991 to 2003, the Turkish officials say that 'winning the hearts and minds of Afghans' is important.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, according to the Turkish officials, in order to be successful in a strategy of Afghanistan, trust and support of the Afghans is required so that the Afghans would not perceive the security forces as occupiers.<sup>33</sup> In this regard Ambassador Baki Bilkin, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the UN, in November 2005, told that 'Afghanistan for Afghans' has been the motto of Turkey.<sup>34</sup> President Gul also expressed this perception when he stated in December 2009;

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<sup>29</sup> For the history of Turkey-Afghanistan relations see ([http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afghanistan\\_siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afghanistan_siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa)).

<sup>30</sup> Fahir Armaoglu, 20. *Yuzyil Siyasi Tarifi: 1914-1980*, (Ankara: Türkiye Is Bankasi Yayinlari, 1984), pp. 210-11.

<sup>31</sup> Salih Dogan, "Turkey's Presence and Importance in Afghanistan", *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 23 August 2010, (<http://www.turkishweekly.net/op-ed/2742/turkey-39-s-presence-and-importance-in-afghanistan.html>)

<sup>32</sup> Aydemir Erman, "How Turkey's Soft Power can Aid NATO in Afghanistan", *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2010, p. 41.

<sup>33</sup> "NATO Making Mistakes in Afghanistan, Warns Turkish Minister", *Telegraph*, 16 April 2008.

<sup>34</sup> "Statement by H. E. Ambassador Baki Ilkin, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations, at the joint debate of the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly on Agenda items 17 and 73 (e) on Afghanistan", 28 November 2005, (<http://www.un.int/turkey/page39.html>).

*"Afghanistan is not an issue that can be solved only by means of military and its methods. This problem cannot be concluded regardless of Afghan people's sympathy... In fact, Afghans say, "train our soldiers, trust us, provide clothes and equipment, we do our job by ourselves, your children should not sacrifice themselves for us."*<sup>35</sup>

President Gul restated in January 2010 the Turkish view that "military instruments are not adequate alone to overcome the problems facing Afghanistan."<sup>36</sup>

Thirdly, being concerned for bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan, Turkish military contributions to Afghanistan have been channeled through ISAF. Turkey sent troops to Afghanistan after 9/11 on the condition that they would not take part in combat operations. Turkey twice has taken the commandership of ISAF, first between June 2002 and February 2003, and then between February and August 2005. According to Vamvakas, Turkey's role is very important to the overall Afghanistan mission of ISAF.<sup>37</sup> In December 2009 Turkey also took over the Regional Commandership of Kabul for the second time, which was created in 2006 as part of ISAF in Afghanistan.<sup>38</sup> As a result, Turkey proved to be a responsible member of the international community with its contributions to security.

The current troop contribution of Turkey in Afghanistan is about 1,700. As indicated by Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu, at a NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels, Turkey is not planning to send more troops, but it is willing to help the Afghans in the development of their security forces.<sup>39</sup> In addition, former Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan stressed that focusing on only the use of military means to resolve the Afghanistan problem has been a mistake.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it seems that the Turkish government is cautious about the level of military involvement. This reluctance to increase the number of troops appears to have connected with its concern that it might well disturb the Afghans' positive opinion and trust about the Turkish military.<sup>41</sup> In this regard, Turkey prefers to contribute by training the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Police

<sup>35</sup> Turkish President Abdullah Gul's Lecture on "Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Era", 16 December 2009, (<http://www.usak.org.tr>).

<sup>36</sup> "Afghan President Gains Regional Support at Istanbul Summit", *Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the UN in New York*, 27 January 2010, (<http://www.afghanistan-un.org/2010/01/afghan-president-gains-regional-support-at-istanbul-summit/>).

<sup>37</sup> Petros Vamvakas, "NATO and Turkey in Afghanistan and Central Asia: Possibilities and Blind Spots", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2009, pp. 57-74.

<sup>38</sup> "Turkiye-Afganistan Siyasi İlişkileri", T.C. Disisleri Bakanligi, ([http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afganistan\\_siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afganistan_siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa)).

<sup>39</sup> "Davutoglu Net Konustu: Turkiye Afganistan'a Savasci Yollamaz", *Euractiv*, 4 December 2009, (<http://www.euractiv.com.tr/abnin-gelecegi/artide/davutoglu-net-konustu-turkiye-afganistana-savasci-yollamaz-007998>).

<sup>40</sup> M. K. Bhadrakumar, "Afghanistan Moves to Center Stage", *Asia Times*, 19 April 2008, ([http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/1D19Df02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/1D19Df02.html)).

<sup>41</sup> "US's Afghan Strategy Review on Agenda of Turkish-US Relations", *Today's Zaman*, 22 February 2009, (<http://www.todayzaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=167642>); "Afghan President Gains Regional Support at Istanbul Summit", *Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the UN in New York*, 27 January 2010, (<http://www.afghanistan-un.org/2010/01/afghan-president-gains-regional-support-at-istanbul-summit/>).

(ANP). Turkey is training the Afghan security forces in Turkey and sending them back while also training hundreds of the Afghan soldiers in Kabul.<sup>42</sup> In short, whilst NATO emphasizes on the need to train the Afghan security forces, Turkey supports by training the Afghan security personnel.

Furthermore, there is a civilian-led Turkish Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Wardak Province, located 40 kilometers west of Kabul, established in November 2006, which extends its contributions to reconstruction and development.<sup>43</sup> Its mixed civilian and military personnel train the Afghan Police, improve judicial administration, develop infrastructure, and support projects such as health and education which aimed at raising the quality of life of the local population.<sup>44</sup>

Halim Fedai, the governor of Wardak province, has said: "The Turkish programs are very well received and readily accepted by Afghans because they work within Afghan culture. They are sensitive to Afghan values. We have very good, strong, historical relationships with Turkey."<sup>45</sup>

Recently, Turkey launched its second PRT in the northern province of Jowzjan on July 21, 2010, a day after the Kabul Conference. The Jowzjan PRT is built on the same model of the Wardak PRT; thus, it will provide same contributions for reconstruction and development. During the opening ceremony of the Jowzjan PRT, Foreign Minister Davutoglu said, "securing Afghanistan is no different than serving Turkey", indicating the sincerity of the Turkish efforts in reconstruction of Afghanistan.<sup>46</sup> Whilst NATO has adopted a strategy in which military and civilian teams operate together in Afghanistan's provinces, Turkey has given support.

Fourthly, Turkey has launched, in coordination with the government of Afghanistan, a comprehensive sustainable assistance program. In support of development and reconstruction, projects are accomplished by the Turkish agencies, including the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA), the Turkish General Staff and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. TIKA is very active in Afghanistan. Turkish Ministry has announced that it has provided its most comprehensive development assistance program ever.<sup>47</sup> Also, Turkey assists

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<sup>42</sup> Fulya Ozerkan, "Turkish Army Begins Training Afghan Officers in Kabul", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 20 June 2010, (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkish-army-begins-training-afghan-leaders-senior-nato-commander-2010-06-19>).

<sup>43</sup> "Turkiye-Afganistan Siyasi İlişkileri", T.C. Disisleri Bakanligi, ([http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afganistan\\_siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afganistan_siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa)).

<sup>44</sup> Richard Weitz, "Turkey's Efforts to Support Afghanistan Reconstruction", *Turkey Analyst*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 15 February 2010, (<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2010/100215B.html>). This article was first published in the *Turkey Analyst* ([www.turkeyanalyst.org](http://www.turkeyanalyst.org)), a biweekly publication of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center.

<sup>45</sup> Aydemir Erman, "How Turkey's Soft Power can Aid NATO in Afghanistan", p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> "Turkey Steps up Reconstruction to Afghanistan", *Dunya Online*, 22 July 2010, (<http://www.dunya.com/turkey-steps-up-reconstruction-assistance-to-afghanistan>).

<sup>47</sup> "Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Afghanistan", Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ([http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-afghanistan.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-afghanistan.en.mfa)).

health and education projects to help to improve the lives of the Afghani people. Turkey is establishing schools in Afghanistan for increasing level of education with a view of promoting social development.<sup>48</sup> Due to importance given to reconstruction of Afghanistan, Turkey allocated highest official financial aid to Afghanistan in the last year.

Hence, although Turkey is not willing to increase its troop commitment soon, it plays important role for stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan with its assistance projects. The official and diplomatic level discourses demonstrate that Turkey feels responsible for improvement of conditions in Afghanistan considering that these efforts would provide long-term stability in the country. Remarkably, according to former NATO civilian representative Hikmet Cetin, if Turkey gives assistance in training security forces, as well as economic and social projects, its contribution to Afghanistan and the NATO mission will be more valuable.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Weitz states:

*"Encouraging the Turkish government to continue its training efforts, along with its regional diplomatic initiatives aimed at reconciling Afghanistan and Pakistan and its economic reconstruction projects designed to promote political stability through economic growth and development, would offer a superior means by which Turkey can continue to promote Afghanistan's post-conflict reconstruction."<sup>50</sup>*

Last but not least, Turkey has diplomatic efforts to increase regional cooperation.<sup>51</sup> Under proactive foreign policy Turkey also adapted active diplomacy. Turkey wants to be among those together with Pakistan who lead other regional nations in building a better cooperation. It has long and good relations with Pakistan. In the recent years, the AK party government is engaged in further improvement of these bilateral relations. This has strengthened Ankara's policy over Afghanistan, because as well known a stable Afghanistan requires collaboration and cooperation of Pakistan. As Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu stated Pakistan's Muslim identity and long standing historical ties are seen as the starting point for development of mutual relations.<sup>52</sup> At a meeting with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on August 26-27, 2009 Davutoglu indicated that the friendship between the two countries was strategic, historical and permanent.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, as indicated by President Gul during his recent visit to Pakistan, Turkey desires to translate the historic association to economic and strategic partnership, which is welcomed by

<sup>48</sup> "Türkiye-Afganistan Siyasi İlişkileri", T.C. Disisleri Bakanligi, ([http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afganistan\\_siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afganistan_siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa)).

<sup>49</sup> Former NATO Envoy Hikmet Cetin, "Turkey can do more in Afghanistan", *Today's Zaman*, 11 December 2009, (<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-195209-100-former-nato-envoy-cetin-turkey-can-do-more-in-afghanistan.html>).

<sup>50</sup> Richard Weitz, "Turkey's Efforts to Support Afghanistan Reconstruction", *Turkey Analyst*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 15 February 2010, (<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2010/100215B.html>).

<sup>51</sup> Bulent Aras, "Afganistan Diplomasisi", *Sabah*, 20 January 2010, ([http://www.sabah.com.tr/Yazarlar/bulent\\_aras/2010/01/20/afganistan\\_diplomasisi](http://www.sabah.com.tr/Yazarlar/bulent_aras/2010/01/20/afganistan_diplomasisi)).

<sup>52</sup> Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, pp. 272-3.

<sup>53</sup> "Turkey, Pakistan Relations 'Strong and Getting Stronger'", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 27 August 2009, (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-pakistan-relations-to-be-improved-2009-08-27>).

Pakistan.<sup>54</sup> In August 2009, the two countries decided to establish a regular strategic cooperation and coordination mechanism for particularly regarding Asian regional issues, including Afghanistan.<sup>55</sup> Lately, during President Gul's visit to Pakistan between March 30 and April 2 2010 the two countries signed three memoranda of understanding in the areas of economic cooperation, agriculture and investment that will enhance economic and trade cooperation.<sup>56</sup> President Gul held meetings with President Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who have described Turkey as a committed and consistent friend.<sup>57</sup> President Zardari said that the two countries have identical views on Afghanistan.<sup>58</sup>

In addition, there have been numerous high level visits to Afghanistan including President Gul's visit in February 2007 and Foreign Minister Davutoglu's visit in June 2009.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, Turkey has been engaged in intensive diplomatic efforts to help building cooperation in support of Afghanistan.

Accordingly, under the Turkish leadership, trilateral meetings between Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan are continuing since 2008. Turkey hosted four Trilateral Summits with the participation of the Presidents of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to negotiate on how to work more efficiently for bringing peace, security and stability to Afghanistan. Enhanced regional cooperation has been an underlying theme of these Trilateral Summits. Each summit had a particular focus; first in Ankara, April 29-30 2007 on dialogue, second in Istanbul, December 5 2008 on economic cooperation, third in Ankara, April 1 2009 on security and last one in Istanbul, January 25 2010 on education. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, parliamentarians, chiefs of general staff and army staff and highest intelligence officials as well as the business community took part in the multidimensional work of Ankara. Within these meetings cooperation between three countries has increased on issues such as coordinated action on terrorism, and training of military and police in Afghanistan. Yet, Turkey also declares that they support mutually interlocking and complementary regional initiatives and mechanisms such as Iran's efforts for regional cooperation. As Turkey's former special coordinator for Afghanistan Aydemir Erman states,

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<sup>54</sup> "Pak-Turkish Ties Based on Shared Values, Common Interests: Zardari", *Daily Times Islamabad*, 1 April 2010, ([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/print.asp?page=2010%5C04%5C01%5Cstory\\_1-4-2010\\_pg7\\_37](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/print.asp?page=2010%5C04%5C01%5Cstory_1-4-2010_pg7_37)).

<sup>55</sup> "Turkey, Pakistan Relations 'Strong and Getting Stronger'", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 27 August 2009.

<sup>56</sup> "Joint Press Statement on Pakistan-Turkey Special Relationship", Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 April 2010, (<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/joint-press-statement-on-pakistan-turkey-special-relationship.en.mfa>).

<sup>57</sup> "Ankara a Time-tested Ally: Nawaz", *The Nation Lahore*, 2 April 2010, <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/02-Apr-2010/Ankara-a-timetested-ally-Nawaz>.

<sup>58</sup> "Pakistan, Turkey to Upgrade Strategic Partnership, Jointly Defeat Terrorism", *Daily Times Islamabad*, 1 April 2010, ([http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C04%5C01%5Cstory\\_1-4-2010\\_pg1\\_5](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C04%5C01%5Cstory_1-4-2010_pg1_5)).

<sup>59</sup> Muharrem Eksi, "Turkiye'nin Afganistan'da Artan Rolü", *Newsweek Turkey*, 15-21 June 2009, (<http://www.setavakfi.org.tr/public/HaberDetay.aspx?Dil=tr&hid=6104>).

*"For many of these same reasons—our historical relationships in the region and deep understanding of local values and cultures—Turkey may be one of the few countries, if not the only country, that can bring Afghanistan and Pakistan together to sort out their differences."<sup>60</sup>*

Besides trilateral meetings, collaboration for a regional meeting is launched. Turkish President Abdullah Gul hosted the preparatory meeting of the Regional Summit of Afghanistan and its Neighbors on November 9 2009 in Istanbul. Accordingly, "the Istanbul Summit on Friendship and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia" has been held on January 26 2010. Presidents from the regional countries, namely Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and ministers from China and Tajikistan attended the meeting and signed the concluding Istanbul statement on Friendship and Cooperation.<sup>61</sup> Under this framework, these countries accept that they should take determined and coordinated action against challenges such as terrorism, extremism and illicit narcotic drugs. Both the Istanbul Regional Summit and concluding statement was welcomed by the London Conference participants in January 28, 2010 on Afghan Leadership, Regional Cooperation, International partnership, and by the UN Security Council in Resolution 1917 (2010) on the Situation in Afghanistan. What is also important is that the Friendship and Cooperation Statement has underlined that regional cooperation starts from the region. Therefore, regional cooperation should be stronger regarding regional challenges. In this framework, as the regional countries have agreed to cooperate for supporting Afghanistan on its quest for peace, security and prosperity, they have agreed to establish a Mind Platform that would bring together selected members of academia, media and think-tanks. Turkey has offered to host the first meeting of the Minds Platform in 2010, which would involve discussion on issues such as security and economic cooperation, improvement of regional dialogue on cooperation.<sup>62</sup> Recently on June 7, 2010, foreign ministers of Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan met in Istanbul, based on the decisions taken in the Third trilateral summit.

Regarding Turkish regional cooperation efforts, at the London Conference the Afghan President Karzai said, "I am greatly thankful to our brother country, the Republic of Turkey, for its persistent efforts to serve as a venue for our trilateral and regional talks."<sup>63</sup> The US also values the Turkish leadership and initiatives in the development of the region.<sup>64</sup> US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke speaking in a session at US

<sup>60</sup> Aydemir Erman, "How Turkey's Soft Power can Aid NATO in Afghanistan", p. 41.

<sup>61</sup> "Asya'nın Kalbi'nde Dostluk ve İşbirliği için İstanbul Bildirgesi", T.C. Disisleri Bakanligi, ([http://www.mfa.gov.tr/\\_asya\\_nin-kalbi\\_nde-dostluk-ve-isbirligi-icin-istanbul-bildirisi](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/_asya_nin-kalbi_nde-dostluk-ve-isbirligi-icin-istanbul-bildirisi)).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> "Statement by His Excellency Hamid Karzai President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan at the London International Conference on Afghanistan", Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Office of the President, 28 January 2010, ([http://www.president.gov.af/root\\_eng.aspx?id=72](http://www.president.gov.af/root_eng.aspx?id=72)).

<sup>64</sup> "US Official Praises Turkey's Role in Afghanistan", *Today's Zaman*, 8 January 2010, (<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-197942-102-us-official-praises-turkeys-role-in-afghanistan.html>).

Congress said, 'the US had coordination with Turkey regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan issues in the past one year.'<sup>65</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Soon after the Bonn Conference ISAF and UNAMA were established which have significant role on reconstruction of Afghanistan. Nevertheless, ISAF plans to leave more responsibility to the Afghan forces while taking a supportive role. Thus, they are training the Afghans for the army and police. Yet, the international community is also aware that military support alone cannot solve the problems of Afghanistan, thus military action is combined by civilian reconstruction and development efforts. Yet, an important dilemma that faces the international community in Afghanistan is how to better assist state-building while leaving more responsibility to the Afghans since the West has made up its mind to exit from Afghanistan.

Though Turkey is a new actor among the other key regional actors who pays high attention to reconstruction in Afghanistan, with diplomatic initiatives, training efforts of the Afghan forces and economic, social, health and educational projects the role of Turkey in post-conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan is constructive. Besides it has potential to contribute to the regional cooperation, which has been welcomed in Afghanistan. The Turkish officials argue that any long-term solution to Afghanistan will involve better relations and effective communication between Afghanistan and Pakistan. As stated recently in the Istanbul statement of January 26 2010 Turkish strategy accepts that 'Regional cooperation starts from the region'. Accordingly, Turkey underlines that there is need to include the neighboring and regional states in solving the Afghan issue with a joint vision. Pakistan shares the view that there is need for a broad regional coalition of nations to help Afghanistan.

Recently, a consultation process has been initiated between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey on most of the regional issues and challenges. Indeed, already several trilateral meetings have been held in the last two years and preparations for a regional summit of Afghanistan and its neighbors has also started with Turkey's leadership. Moreover, the Turkish high officials are aware that the institutionalization of democracy in Pakistan and improvement of economic relations between the two countries would contribute to stability of the country as well as the region.

In light of the above discussion one is led to the conclusion that Turkey's role in reconstruction of Afghanistan and enhanced regional cooperation, with both its hard and soft power assets and its eagerness to be a significant actor, should not be underestimated. Particularly, the latest Turkey's diplomatic attempts for cooperation could be regarded as a positive step for a joint regional effort.

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<sup>65</sup> "US Special Envoy Says US has Coordination with Turkey in Afghanistan, Pakistan", *Today's Zaman*, 22 January 2010, (<http://www.todayzaman.com/tz-web/news-199337-102-us-special-envoy-says-us-has-coordination-with-turkey-in-afghanistan-pakistan.html>).

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