

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS



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CAPPADOCIA
UNIVERSITY
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Hasan Ali KARASAR
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Public Diplomacy in Foreign Affairs

Hasan Ali KARASAR, Mehmet Seyfettin EROL and Şafak OĞUZ (Editors)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations..... VII

PrefaceIX

List of Contributors.....XI

AcknowledgementXIII

Strengthening Pakistan-Türkiye Ties through Shared Values
and Cultural Affinity: A Public Diplomacy Perspective 1

Dr. Yousaf Junaid

Public Diplomacy in Foreign Affairs: Bangladesh Perspective..... 14

M. Amanul Haq

Paraguay-Türkiye Relations: Historical, Cultural, and Tourism Ties..... 28

Caferino Adrian Valdez Peralta

Diplomacy and Foreign Policy36

Rodrigo Arcos

Palestinian Public Diplomacy and Its Importance in Advancing the
Palestinian Cause 45

Dr. Faed Mustafa

India And Türkiye in the Quest of a New World Order..... 57

M.J. Akbar

Kyrgyzstan in the Process of Change and Transformation and
Public Diplomacy66

Dr. Baktygul Kalambekova

The Return to West Azerbaijan and the Peace Process in the Caucasus.....	82
--	----

Dr. Nagif Hamzayev

Kazakhstan's Soft Power Approach, Potential, and Performance in Foreign Policy	99
--	----

Assoc. Prof. Zhanat Momynkulov

Hungary's Foreign Policy and Public Diplomacy.....	111
--	-----

Prof. Dr. László Vasa

The Future of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in a Changing Global Geopolitics.....	122
---	-----

Dr. Ahmet Zeki Bulunç

Conclusion.....	143
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List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EU	European Union
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OIC	The Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OTC	Organization of Turkic States
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
USD	US Dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

Preface

Humanity and our planet have been going through hard times. We have been witnessing state-level warfare with the involvement of global forces that included nuclear threat which the world had forgotten. We have been witnessing civil wars, based either on religious or ethnic rivalry, that resulted in mass murders and internal and international mass immigration. We are talking about 100 million displaced people in the world which is regarded as the record level in history. Economic crises reshape the economic state and income distribution in favor of rich people or rich states while aggravating economic conditions for poorer. According to the UN World Food Programme, a record 349 million people across 79 countries are facing acute food insecurity while more than 900,000 people worldwide are fighting to survive in famine-like conditions.

Respect and tolerance for diversities, such as ethnicity or religion, has been decreased to great extent where discrimination, hatred and intolerance have become normal all around the world. Provocateurs are burning holy books to instigate social disorders that might lead to new crises. We have been witnessing a new form of slavery in the 21st century and it seems it is worsening. Even in developed states, women are suffering although “motherhood” has been regarded one of the most important statuses and value in the world. Despite international agreements and efforts, children are driven into work which are not suitable for them, and they are working under miserable conditions. Many children, especially young girls, are deprived of education they deserve. We do not provide a common and proper horizon for them.

Based on the existing data, the Earth is the only planet that hosts living creatures. Unfortunately, we have been experiencing a huge Climate Change crisis we, human beings, have caused. None of the living creatures harm nature and the environment than the humans who is regarded as the only intelligent living creatures. Human actions are resulting in the extinction of other species. Neither regional nor international efforts remain insufficient to curb the crisis.

Recent development clearly highlighted that borders are not able to contain local or regional crises. We should work all together to cope with all problems we have been witnessing and suffering. We need to imagine a Common Horizon for Humanity and the Planet for ours and especially for our children's future. The project titled "Imagining a *Common Horizon for Humanity and the Planet*" organized by Cappadocia University which brought distinguished scholars together is a very important and valued step to remind international community that the future of the Humanity and the Planet is bound to a global perspective. We hope more steps and efforts will follow suit.

Alev Alath
Founder Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees
Cappadocia University

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Acknowledgement

Cappadocia University embarked on an international and interdisciplinary project on the future of humanity and our planet titled “**Imagining A Common Horizon for Humanity and the Planet**”.

The Project convened intellectuals and thinkers from across the arts and sciences to consider one of the most fundamental issues of contemporary philosophy: **How can we build a common horizon for the future of the humanity and the planet?** It aimed to bring together the leading thinkers of the world, to create an international intellectual platform that draws its strength from human dignity, and that aims to build for the future of humanity and the planet with a holistic synergy with a view to offering humanity a common horizon. As Cappadocia University, our vision in this regard is to provide an academic platform from where esteemed intellectuals from around the world can share their visions for the common future of humanity and our planet, and to comment on the challenges and opportunities they envisage.

We believe that **Public Diplomacy** and its application in **Foreign Affairs** are crucial tools to achieve this vision. This book is a product of this project contributed by distinguished diplomats and scholars who discussed and analyzed the topic from their expertise and perspectives.

Dr. Yousaf JUNAID, Ambassador of Pakistan to Türkiye, discusses the relation between Pakistan and Türkiye and analyses how public diplomacy based on shared values and cultural affinity helped to strengthening Pakistan-Türkiye ties.

M. Amanul HAQ, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Türkiye, discusses the effect of Public Diplomacy in Foreign Affairs from the perspective of Bangladesh.

Caferino Adrian Valdez PERALTA, Ambassador of Paraguay to Türkiye, analyses the relationship between Paraguay and Türkiye focusing on historical, cultural, and tourism ties and explains the role of public diplomacy in this relationship.

Rodrigo ARCOS, Ambassador of Chile to Türkiye, discuss how the diplomacy and foreign policy is interrelated with public diplomacy and underlines the importance of public diplomacy for the enhancing the relationship between Paraguay and Türkiye.

Dr. Faed MUSTAFA, Ambassador of Palestine to Türkiye, states struggle of Palestine to convey their messages to the world and explains Palestine's efforts in public diplomacy.

M.J. AKBAR, former Foreign Minister of India, analyses the status and importance of India and Türkiye in the new world order and discusses the relation of India and Türkiye from a historical perspective.

Dr. Baktygul KALAMBEKOVA, served as Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic for a long time, discussess public diplomacy efforts of Kyrgyzstan since its independence.

Dr. Nagif HAMZAYEV, Member of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan discusses the process of return to West Azerbaijan and analyses the new peace atmosphere in Caucasia.

Zhanat MOMYNKULOV, Assoc. Prof. at Lev Gumilyov Eurasian National University of Kazakhstan, focuses on the Kazakhstan's understanding of soft power in Foreign Policy and discusses its potential and performance.

László VASA, Professor at Széchenyi István University, discusses the public diplomacy efforts in foreign policy of Hungary.

Ahmet Zeki BULUNÇ who served as ambassador of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) discusses the public diplomacy efforts of TRNC from a historical perspective.

Cappadocia University will continue to provide a platform to discuss and analyze international crises and to offer solutions to mitigate the effects of the problems we face. Cappadocia University is determined to urge international community to **Imagine a Common Horizon for Humanity and the Planet.**

Prof. Hasan Ali Karasar
Rector of Cappadocia University

Strengthening Pakistan-Türkiye Ties through Shared Values and Cultural Affinity: A Public Diplomacy Perspective

Dr. Yousaf Junaid

Ambassador of Pakistan to Türkiye

Introduction

The fraternal relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye has long been encapsulated in the phrases “One Nation, Two States” and “heart-to-heart ties.” These expressions are not merely rhetorical flourishes but reflect a deep-rooted and historically sustained connection, grounded in shared history, religious and cultural commonalities, and mutual respect.

Türkiye was among the earliest nations to recognize Pakistan following its independence in 1947. Since then, diplomatic and political relations have remained consistently strong, enduring leadership transitions in both countries. Nevertheless, despite longstanding goodwill, bilateral trade remains modest—hovering around USD 1.2 billion—falling short of its potential. Structural trade complementarities and tariff barriers have historically constrained economic growth, although the bilateral trade agreement signed in 2022 seeks to address these challenges through tariff reductions and new facilitative measures.

Bilateral solidarity has been especially evident in times of humanitarian crises. Both countries have extended swift and substantial assistance to one another during natural disasters, including earthquakes and floods. The spirit of mutual support also manifests in youth engagement, cultural exchange, and educational collaboration—sectors increasingly recognized as pillars of long-term connectivity and trust.

Despite geographical distance, Pakistan and Türkiye continue to deepen their partnership through multidimensional cooperation. Looking ahead, collaboration in education, innovation, defense, and economic integration presents significant opportunities. At its core, the Pakistan-Türkiye relationship is anchored in a unique blend of historical consciousness and

forward-looking public diplomacy that emphasises empathy, mutual understanding, and unwavering support in times of need.

1. Historical Perspective

The relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye is best described not as a typical bilateral partnership, but as a profound fraternity—one rooted in centuries-old cultural and spiritual affinity. For many across both nations, particularly those who have lived beyond their fifth decade, this bond has been evidenced through countless shared moments of solidarity and kinship. The phrase “One Nation, Two States” is not a recent diplomatic construction, but rather an encapsulation of an enduring emotional and civilizational connection.

The Indian subcontinent—homeland to the majority of Pakistan’s population—was historically dominated by Hindu traditions until the arrival of Muslim dynasties, among them the Mughal Empire, which stood preeminent. Founded by Zahir-ud-Din Babur, a Turkic leader of Central Asian origin from the Khwarezm region, the Mughal Empire not only established political dominance but also introduced cultural and linguistic elements that transformed the subcontinent. Governing a vast and diverse populace, Babur recognized the need for a unifying medium of communication and governance. The result was the development of a new lingua franca—Urdu—whose name is derived from the Turkish word *ordu*, meaning “army” or “camp.”

Urdu emerged as a vehicle of cultural synthesis, integrating elements from Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and local languages. It became a symbol of Muslim identity and administrative cohesion in the region. The deep cultural penetration of Turkish influence is evident in Urdu’s vocabulary, which retains over 6,500 words of Turkish origin—terms such as *çet* (troop), *duvar* (wall), *zemin* (ground), *masa* (table), *aşk* (love), *tercüme* (translation), and *müteferrik* (various) continue to be widely used. This linguistic inheritance is not incidental, but rather the outcome of sustained civilizational exchange that dates back to the early Mughal period.

Cuisine, too, became a medium of cultural fusion. Dishes such as *kebab* and *pilav* (locally known as *pulao*) were assimilated into South Asian gastronomy, albeit with regional adaptations. For example, the extensive use of spices in Pakistani cuisine reflects not only local preferences but also

historical necessities related to food preservation in a hotter climate—necessities less relevant in the temperate Turkish environment.

Such exchanges are emblematic of a broader pattern of cultural evolution that binds the two societies. Contrary to the common assumption that bilateral solidarity began during Türkiye's War of Independence, historical records reveal much earlier interactions. Khan Bahadur Hassan Ali, a distinguished scholar from Karachi, was awarded the title *Effendi* by Sultan Abdulhamid II for his contributions during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877. This act of recognition reflects the depth and longevity of mutual respect between the peoples.

Support during Türkiye's struggle for independence was not merely political—it was emotional, spiritual, and collective. The reverence for the Ottoman Caliphate, which embodied Muslim unity, catalyzed widespread support from the subcontinent. Figures like Abdul Rahman Peshawari, who led a medical mission to Türkiye in 1912 and eventually became its first ambassador to Afghanistan, exemplify this spirit of service and sacrifice.

Poetry, the literary soul of both nations, played a critical role in articulating solidarity. Even before Pakistan's formation, poets such as Allama Muhammad Iqbal galvanized public sentiment in support of Türkiye. Unable to contribute financially, Iqbal organized public poetry recitals to raise funds for the Turkish cause. His celebrated poem on the martyrs of Tripoli—in which a young girl offers a vial of martyr's blood to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)—resonated deeply across the subcontinent and was recited widely in literary gatherings (*mushairas*), becoming a rallying cry for pan-Islamic solidarity.

Iqbal's intellectual affinity with Mehmet Akif Ersoy—the Turkish national poet and author of the Turkish national anthem—further enriched this cultural bridge. Their mutual admiration and frequent exchanges embodied a shared vision: the revival of the Islamic world, resistance to imperialism, and the pursuit of intellectual and spiritual awakening.

2. Evolution of Bilateral Relations

The foundations of the Pakistan-Türkiye relationship were laid long before Pakistan's formal creation in 1947. Nonetheless, the post-independence era witnessed the immediate consolidation of these historical ties into a modern diplomatic framework. Türkiye was among the first countries to

formally recognize Pakistan's independence, and the appointment of one of Türkiye's most distinguished statesmen as its first ambassador to Islamabad reflected the importance Türkiye attached to this new relationship.

Unlike many bilateral relationships that ebb and flow with changing political climates or leadership transitions, the Pakistan-Türkiye bond has remained unwavering. Since 1947, the relationship has been characterized by mutual priority, underscored by shared values, mutual trust, and consistent diplomatic alignment. At no point has this partnership descended into mere formality or indifference; rather, it has consistently reflected warmth, respect, and fraternity.

High-level exchanges have continued to play a vital role in reinforcing this bond. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has visited Türkiye twice during his current tenure, and leaders from both countries regularly engage on the sidelines of international forums—be it the UN, the D-8, or summits such as those held in Cairo. These interactions serve not only to reaffirm the strength of the bilateral relationship but also to synchronize strategic outlooks on regional and global affairs.

The commemoration of seventy years of diplomatic relations through a commemorative postal stamp—featuring the eminent poets Allama Iqbal and Mehmet Akif—symbolizes the cultural and philosophical depth of this alliance.

Structurally, the Pakistan-Türkiye partnership has evolved into a highly institutionalized framework. From the outset, the two countries have supported each other on core political issues and maintained convergent positions in international forums. There has never been a period marked by strategic divergence or dissonance. Mutual consultations and coordinated stances have been hallmarks of this enduring collaboration.

One of the most defining characteristics of this bilateral relationship is its immunity from fluctuations in political leadership. Whether in Islamabad or Ankara, successive governments have preserved the same level of engagement and commitment. While personal rapport among leaders—such as the longstanding ties between President Erdoğan and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif—has enhanced mutual understanding, the essence of the relationship lies in its foundation on shared cultural, religious, and ideological principles rather than personal diplomacy alone.

This enduring nature has been most visible in moments of international scrutiny or challenge. When Pakistan faced scrutiny by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Türkiye was among the first nations to offer robust diplomatic support. Conversely, when Türkiye encountered similar challenges, Pakistan reciprocated with equal solidarity, demonstrating that this relationship transcends transactional diplomacy and is rooted in principled allegiance.

In the realm of defence cooperation, the partnership has grown substantially. The joint production of four MILGEM-class corvettes exemplifies this synergy. Two ships were constructed in Pakistan and two in Türkiye, reflecting a balanced and strategic collaboration. One has already been inducted into the Pakistan Navy, and others are at various stages of completion. These projects not only enhance military capabilities but also signify mutual strides toward self-reliance.

Similarly, Pakistan has developed and supplied 52 Mushshak trainer aircraft to Türkiye. These platforms serve as an important symbol of indigenous capability and bilateral trust. The collaboration extends to regular joint training exercises and defense knowledge exchange, further institutionalizing the security partnership.

Economically, however, the relationship has yet to fulfill its potential. Despite the scale and complementarity of both economies, bilateral trade remains modest, at around USD 1.2 billion. Structural challenges have hindered growth, particularly the lack of complementary export baskets. Pakistan's exports are heavily textile-based, while Türkiye's needs in this sector are comparatively limited. Additionally, a general protective tariff on yarn imposed by Türkiye affected Pakistan's textile exports, though it was not specifically targeted.

Recognizing the need to overcome these limitations, both sides signed a Trade and Goods Agreement in 2022. Under this framework, Türkiye offered tariff reductions or eliminations on 261 items, while Pakistan reciprocated with reductions on 159 items. This initiative, while not exhaustive, constitutes a meaningful foundation for expanded trade relations. Products such as Pakistani mangoes—which are now increasingly recognized in Türkiye for their unique quality—illustrate the scope for niche market growth. Similarly, Turkish products are entering the Pakistani market at competitive rates, benefiting from reduced tariffs. Talks are now underway to increase the scope of this agreement.

The shared ambition, articulated by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to elevate bilateral trade to USD 5 billion within a defined timeframe, remains a focal point of economic diplomacy. The implementation of the 2022 agreement offers an opportunity to transform ambition into achievement.

Solidarity during humanitarian crises remains another defining feature of Pakistan-Türkiye relations. When Türkiye experienced the devastating Marmara earthquake in 1999, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was the first foreign leader to visit the disaster site within hours of the quake. Conversely, following the catastrophic 2005 earthquake in Muzaffarabad, Türkiye's President Erdoğan (then Prime Minister) led the international response, dispatching the first medical team and critical aid to Pakistan.

Again in 2020, following the Elazığ earthquake, Pakistan mobilized one of the largest logistical operations in recent memory, dispatching over 70,000 winter tents within 17 days. This required unprecedented coordination between state institutions, national airlines, and the armed forces. The urgency and scale of the response reflected the depth of emotional solidarity shared by both peoples.

Such acts of mutual assistance underscore a simple yet powerful principle: when tragedy strikes one, the other responds as though it were its own.

3. Cultural and Educational Exchange

Cultural and educational linkages have long served as essential conduits for deepening the Pakistan-Türkiye relationship. Historically, these domains have played a critical role in fostering mutual understanding, people-to-people connectivity, and long-term affinity between the two nations. Over the years, this exchange has not only endured but has also evolved to reflect new dynamics and opportunities.

In earlier decades, the flow of students and scholars primarily originated in Türkiye and headed to Pakistan. Turkish students and intellectuals often found academic homes in Pakistani universities, benefiting from shared Islamic traditions and linguistic familiarity. Today, this dynamic has broadened significantly. With the expansion of Türkiye's higher education sector, a growing number of Pakistani students are now pursuing university degrees at Turkish institutions. It is estimated that between 3,600 and 4,000 Pakistani students are currently enrolled in various universities across Türkiye, especially in major cities such as Ankara, Istanbul, and Konya.

This academic engagement has been further strengthened through institutional collaborations. The Maarif Foundation, in particular, has played an instrumental role in expanding educational infrastructure in Pakistan. The recent establishment of a school in Multan—formally inaugurated by the Turkish Minister of Education, His Excellency Mr. Yusuf Tekin—exemplifies the impact of civil society initiatives in reinforcing bilateral educational ties. Such institutions function as bridges between the two societies, cultivating a new generation of students who, having experienced the other culture first-hand, become natural ambassadors of goodwill and mutual understanding.

The cultural connection is even more evident in media and entertainment. Turkish television dramas have enjoyed unprecedented popularity in Pakistan. Productions such as *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* (Resurrection: Ertuğrul), *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (The Magnificent Century), and *Aşk-ı Memnu* (Forbidden Love) have captivated Pakistani audiences and generated immense interest in Turkish history, language, and values. These serials are not merely forms of entertainment but also cultural artifacts that offer powerful narratives of identity, faith, resilience, and shared heritage. In recent years, several Pakistani television channels have begun airing Turkish content regularly, while discussions are underway for joint content production ventures—an initiative that could enrich both cultural spheres.

In parallel, Pakistani drama and literature are also gaining traction in Türkiye, albeit at a smaller scale. This cultural reciprocity has the potential to deepen mutual empathy. As visual media becomes one of the most potent tools for cultural transmission in the digital age, the two countries are increasingly exploring collaborative opportunities in film, television, and documentary production.

Academic institutions have also played an essential role in sustaining cultural and linguistic ties. Urdu departments have been established in several leading Turkish universities, including Ankara University, Istanbul University, and Selçuk University. These departments serve not only as sites of language instruction but also as platforms for deeper exploration of Indo-Muslim history, Sufi philosophy, and the literary traditions that unite both cultures. The teaching of Urdu in Türkiye and the growing interest in Turkish language and literature in Pakistan underscore the desire to preserve and cultivate cultural intimacy at the academic level.

Generational transmission of these values is key. The older generations in both countries—those who recall the sacrifices made by their ancestors for each other's independence movements—carry a natural sense of affinity. However, in the contemporary era, where individuals are constantly inundated with information through digital platforms, there is a risk of losing historical consciousness. The ease of accessing vast amounts of content online can lead to intellectual overstimulation and confusion, especially among younger audiences. In such an environment, it becomes even more important to ensure that the next generation remains anchored in shared values and historical knowledge.

Cultural and educational engagement must therefore be seen not as supplementary, but as central to the diplomatic architecture between Pakistan and Türkiye. As the world grows increasingly complex and polarized, it is these people-centered exchanges that sustain the emotional and intellectual foundations of long-term bilateral cooperation.

Geographically, the two nations may be separated by over 6,000 kilometers, yet in terms of sentiment, they remain remarkably close. It is through the sustained transmission of cultural memory, academic collaboration, and media engagement that this closeness can be preserved and deepened across generations.

4. Public Diplomacy and the Digital Era

In today's complex and multi-layered international environment, public diplomacy has emerged as a vital dimension of statecraft. For countries such as Pakistan and Türkiye—both strategically located and historically embedded in regional turbulence—public diplomacy is not simply about external communication; it is a means of articulating national identity, shaping global perceptions, and fostering meaningful international partnerships. In this context, the Pakistan-Türkiye relationship stands as a compelling example of how shared values, emotional affinity, and cultural depth can be mobilized to enhance bilateral engagement in a rapidly evolving world.

Modern diplomacy—whether traditional or public—must be both sincere and strategic. The essence of Pakistan-Türkiye public diplomacy lies in mutual development, shared defense interests, and the collective pursuit of cultural, linguistic, and ethical cohesion. This is not a transactional relationship based on ephemeral gains, but a moral and emotional commitment that transcends material considerations.

Genuine support, when given in times of need, acquires value far beyond its material worth. A contribution, however modest in monetary terms, carries immense symbolic significance when it stems from solidarity and compassion. While Pakistan and Türkiye have both received international aid in times of crisis, what distinguishes their bilateral support is the presence of heartfelt intent—an element often absent in conventional aid. This is what elevates public diplomacy beyond mere diplomacy: it becomes an expression of brotherhood and shared destiny.

In this context, public diplomacy also entails safeguarding the cognitive space of the younger generation. Today, social media and digital platforms serve as both enablers and disruptors. While they facilitate global communication, they also generate curated narratives, often driven by political agendas, misinformation, and ideological manipulation. These narratives are particularly potent in shaping the minds of young people seeking identity, belonging, and direction.

It is therefore imperative for the youth of Pakistan and Türkiye to remain vigilant and discerning. Pride in one's heritage, confidence in shared civilizational values, and critical engagement with information must form the core of their digital citizenship. Public diplomacy in the digital era is not limited to embassies and foreign ministries; it is now practiced by individuals—especially the young—through every post, comment, and click.

The survival and success of Pakistan and Türkiye in the international system are increasingly interdependent. The global order is undergoing fragmentation, with competing power centers, unpredictable alliances, and intensifying ideological polarization. Amid this uncertainty, the harmony between Pakistan and Türkiye remains a rare example of principled consistency. Their partnership, rooted in shared perspectives and reciprocal trust, provides a model of cooperation that is both resilient and forward-looking.

Public diplomacy must therefore be reimagined not only as a strategic tool of influence but also as a reaffirmation of values—trust, respect, historical consciousness, and cultural confidence. The enduring Pakistan-Türkiye relationship is not a product of chance; it is a manifestation of these values in action. By strengthening their people-to-people ties, preserving cultural memory, and jointly confronting digital disinformation, the two countries can ensure that their diplomatic legacy continues to inspire future generations.

5. Institutionalization of Pakistan-Türkiye Friendship

Over the years, public discourse in both Pakistan and Türkiye has occasionally raised the prospect of a deeper regional integration mechanism, perhaps akin to the EU, involving both countries—either bilaterally or within a broader regional framework. While such aspirations reflect the depth of mutual goodwill, practical constraints such as geographical distance—over 6,000 kilometers—pose limitations to any EU-style integration. Nonetheless, both countries have successfully developed a robust institutional framework to manage and advance their cooperation across a broad range of sectors.

At the heart of this framework is the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), which brings together the heads of government and state from both sides each year. Within this structure, multiple joint working groups operate across priority areas, including defense, education, health, trade, and culture. Some of these domains—particularly education and defense—have witnessed notable success, while others, such as trade, are progressing more gradually.

While the physical realities may preclude a supranational integration model akin to the EU or ASEAN, the existing HLSCC mechanism ensures structured, high-level engagement and provides a platform for resolving issues, sharing expertise, and coordinating regional and international positions. Importantly, this system also institutionalizes continuity, ensuring that bilateral cooperation is sustained regardless of changes in political leadership.

Beyond bilateral mechanisms, multilateral forums also play a role in shaping cooperation. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), for instance, remains a key platform for articulating shared positions on issues affecting the Islamic world. However, the absence of a strong economic integration component has limited the OIC's operational impact, rendering it more representational than transformative. Still, its symbolic and diplomatic value remains significant, and both Pakistan and Türkiye continue to advocate for stronger coordination within this forum.

A historical precedent for regional collaboration can be found in the establishment of the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) in 1964 by Türkiye, Pakistan, and Iran. This early initiative aimed to foster socio-economic development through shared infrastructure and commercial cooperation. Although its momentum was disrupted by political

upheavals—particularly the fall of the Shah in Iran—the underlying vision remained valid. With the eventual formation of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the scope of the original RCD was broadened to include other regional states, including the Central Asian republics and Afghanistan. The ECO Bank, headquartered in Istanbul, was established to support small and medium-sized enterprises across member countries, with equal capital contributions from Pakistan, Türkiye, and Iran.

While the political dimension of ECO was scaled down, its economic focus provided renewed momentum for practical collaboration. However, the challenge remains to translate these platforms into vehicles for meaningful intra-regional trade. The Muslim world continues to rely disproportionately on external trade partners, despite the presence of vast internal markets and complementary resources. Organizations such as the ECO and the D-8 (Developing Eight) must therefore be revitalized to unlock their full potential.

Efforts toward institutionalizing bilateral cooperation also intersect with broader global and regional dynamics. For instance, Pakistan's membership in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)—of which Türkiye is not a member—has been constrained by longstanding geopolitical tensions. In contrast, the D-8, of which both Pakistan and Türkiye are founding members, offers more promise. Although initially hampered by regional challenges, the D-8 has recently gained renewed momentum.

Institutional development must also align with economic priorities. A key challenge lies in harmonizing private sector interests with national strategic objectives. Short-term profit considerations often drive business decisions, whereas state diplomacy must focus on long-term mutual benefit. Bridging this gap requires both governments to develop regulatory frameworks and incentives that guide commercial actors toward mutually advantageous cooperation.

Student exchange remains one of the most successful forms of institutional engagement. A growing number of students from both countries pursue academic opportunities in each other's institutions. The International Islamic University in Islamabad, for example, remains a preferred destination for Turkish students seeking Islamic theological education, while thousands of Pakistani students pursue higher education in Türkiye's leading universities.

In the current phase of national development, both Türkiye and Pakistan have made significant strides in infrastructure and institutional maturity. The focus, therefore, must shift from physical connectivity to intellectual, economic, and technological integration. In this regard, institutional mechanisms are not merely bureaucratic arrangements; they are strategic tools for aligning national visions, mobilizing people-to-people connectivity, and safeguarding shared values in an increasingly fragmented global order.

Pakistan's foreign policy approach continues to emphasize non-interference, cooperative engagement, and regional peace. This principle governs its interactions not only with Türkiye but with all neighboring countries. Even in challenging geopolitical contexts—such as hosting millions of Afghan refugees in the 1970s despite limited resources—Pakistan has prioritized humanitarian responsibility and regional stability. This posture is reflected in Pakistan's diplomatic behavior at international forums, where it has consistently supported consensus-based resolutions promoting sovereignty, self-determination, and peaceful coexistence.

The institutionalization of the Pakistan-Türkiye relationship is, therefore, not only a reflection of their mutual trust and historical affinity but also a strategic necessity. It allows both nations to navigate global uncertainties with cohesion, adaptability, and purpose.

Conclusion

The relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye transcends the conventional parameters of diplomatic engagement. It is a fraternal bond, anchored in a deep reservoir of shared historical memory, cultural affinity, and spiritual solidarity. Often described as “One Nation, Two States,” this partnership is not merely a reflection of political alignment but a manifestation of enduring people-to-people connections and a common civilizational ethos.

Rooted in early 20th-century solidarity—long before Pakistan emerged as an independent state in 1947—the bilateral relationship has been marked by consistent support on matters of national and international significance. Türkiye was among the earliest to recognize Pakistan's sovereignty, and since then, both countries have reliably championed each other's causes in multilateral forums. Whether confronting natural disasters, diplomatic challenges, or developmental needs, Pakistan and Türkiye have repeatedly demonstrated unwavering support and mutual advocacy.

This solidarity is perhaps most visible in moments of adversity. Both nations have stood by each other during earthquakes, floods, and other crises, with their responses characterized by immediacy, sincerity, and empathy. These acts of compassion are not mere gestures of goodwill; they reflect the emotional infrastructure of a relationship carefully nurtured over decades.

Cultural and educational exchanges have further deepened this foundation. Thousands of students, language learners, and cultural practitioners have contributed to an evolving narrative of mutual understanding. Shared literary traditions, common linguistic elements, and a vibrant exchange of artistic expressions have fostered a deep familiarity between societies. Media, academia, and civil society continue to serve as the bridges that sustain this closeness across generations.

The strategic dimension of the relationship is equally robust. Defence collaboration, joint military production, and coordinated diplomatic efforts underscore a shared vision for regional stability and self-reliance. In the economic sphere, despite some structural limitations, both sides have made significant strides toward realizing greater trade and investment potential. Recent initiatives, including preferential trade agreements and targeted sectoral cooperation, signal a renewed commitment to unlocking this promise.

However, the full potential of this relationship is yet to be realized. Economic integration remains below its true potential, and multilateral platforms have yet to harness the combined strength of Pakistan and Türkiye fully. The road ahead requires sustained investment in institutional coordination, private-sector alignment, and youth engagement—areas where both states have made progress but where much more remains to be done.

In a world marked by rising polarization, ideological contestation, and strategic fragmentation, the Pakistan-Türkiye partnership offers a rare model of consistency, mutual trust, and principled diplomacy. It is not a relationship based on shifting alliances or immediate gains, but on enduring values, historical loyalty, and a vision of shared progress.

The future trajectory of this relationship must therefore prioritize inclusive development, joint innovation, and resilient cooperation in the face of global challenges. At its heart, this partnership is anchored in an unspoken yet deeply felt commitment to one another's success and security. It is this ethos that will continue to guide Pakistan and Türkiye as they shape a shared future—one defined not by geography alone, but by brotherhood, purpose, and mutual destiny.

Public Diplomacy in Foreign Affairs: Bangladesh Perspective

M. Amanul Haq
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Introduction

Historical solidarity is a cornerstone of modern Bangladesh-Türkiye relations, often referenced in diplomatic and cultural exchanges. The legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is deeply respected in Bangladesh. School curricula include poems and essays honouring his leadership and vision. His modernist and secular ideals resonate with Bangladesh's own aspirations for progressive governance and societal development.

The mutual cultural respect has been sustained over decades through academic, artistic, and linguistic collaborations. Bangladeshi ambassadors prioritize direct interactions with Turkish academia and think tanks. These engagements foster dialogue, dispel misconceptions, and highlight opportunities for collaboration. Universities serve as key platforms for educating younger generations about each other's histories, cultures, and shared interests.

Celebrating Water Lily Day in Türkiye showcased Bangladesh's national flower and its symbolic importance during the liberation war. Turkish locals, including municipal officials, enthusiastically participated, fostering a shared sense of pride. Such events provide avenues for mutual learning, generate goodwill, and deepen emotional ties.

Bangladesh has chosen Türkiye as a trusted partner for defence procurement due to its emphasis on technology transfer and sustainable systems. Unlike Western countries, which often supply outdated technology, Türkiye ensures that Bangladesh receives modern, high-quality equipment that remains operational in the long term.

Türkiye's balanced approach to international conflicts, such as its mediation between Russia and Ukraine, highlights its growing geopolitical

influence. The country's technological advancements, independent foreign policy, and proactive diplomacy position it as a rising global power.

Public diplomacy emphasizes cultural exchange, fostering emotional connections between citizens of both nations. Digital platforms, cultural festivals, educational collaborations, and media projects serve as critical tools for projecting soft power. By focusing on people-to-people connections, public diplomacy ensures that the bilateral relationship is rooted in mutual respect and understanding. These initiatives create a strong foundation for addressing future challenges and seizing opportunities in an interconnected world.

1. Historical and Modern Perspectives of Diplomacy

Bangladesh and Türkiye share a unique closeness, a heart-to-heart connection that transcends physical distance. Thus, Bangladesh and Türkiye refer to each other as brotherly countries. The reason for this connection goes back to Türkiye's independence struggle. At that time, there was no Bangladesh - it was part of the Indian subcontinent. However, the region of Bengal, which includes modern-day Bangladesh, played a significant role. Bengali Muslims, in particular, supported Türkiye wholeheartedly - emotionally, physically, and materially.

For example, Bengali Muslim women, who culturally wore many gold ornaments, would remove their jewellery and donate it when volunteers came door-to-door with clothes to collect funds for Türkiye's independence struggle. This was a profound gesture of solidarity. You can even find references to this historical connection on the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website.

Bangladeshis grew up learning about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk through poems and stories. One of the most famous poems about him was written by our national poet and featured in our school textbooks. These connections are what we call public diplomacy. They are not about government-to-government interactions, trade agreements, or formal diplomatic relations. Instead, they are about people-to-people connections that strengthen the bond between two nations. This is the essence of public diplomacy.

Diplomacy is often described as the art of negotiation. It is a very old concept, but the way we understand it today is not the same as it was 300 or 400 years ago. Specifically, modern diplomatic practices are said to have

originated in Europe, particularly France. It is generally accepted that the French formalized the ceremonial aspects of diplomacy.

In earlier times, diplomacy was primarily about envoys or representatives of one country traveling to another to maintain formal relationships and address specific issues. It was often limited to government-level interactions and formal exchanges. Over time, however, diplomacy has evolved to include a broader range of practices, such as public diplomacy, which focuses on connecting people across nations.

In Europe during the medieval era, it was often the royals who fought each other. And sometimes, diplomacy back then could be a dangerous game. For example, an envoy from France was sent to England. If he spoke to the king in a tone that was considered offensive or disrespectful, the king could simply say, "Cut off his head." That is how it was.

At that time, there was no concept of structured diplomacy or "hard diplomacy" as we know it today. To prevent such incidents, certain norms and etiquette were gradually established. We could not call them "rules" because they were not formalized yet, but these norms dictated that an envoy could not simply be killed or harmed, no matter what. This was the very first step in developing what we now consider modern diplomacy.

These envoys, over time, came to be known as *diplomats*. Their primary role was to foster better relationships between nations, often to avoid war. Back then, diplomacy was not about trade or cultural exchange - it was mostly about peacekeeping and preventing unnecessary conflicts. This was from a Western perspective.

What diplomats did was often referred to as the art of lying. The idea was to craft a lie that sounded like the truth. That was the initial concept of diplomacy. Over time, thankfully, it evolved, and the term shifted to what we now call the art of negotiation. Professional lying became professional negotiation.

However, if we view diplomacy through an Islamic historical lens, another dimension emerges. For example, during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), envoys were also sent to different regions, even during times of war. These envoys adhered to a set of moral and ethical norms, including refraining from harming women, children, or civilians during conflict.

This historical approach highlights that, while the West was developing its own version of diplomacy, Islamic traditions also had established norms that emphasized ethics and humanity, even in the face of war.

These are the norms. Sometimes these are the rules of war, but at the same time, they fall under the purview of the relationship between two entities, such as two states or countries, or even royalty. Diplomacy has been a very old profession in politics. We could refer to it as the “art of lying” in the past. Nowadays, it is not just about the “art of lying” or the “art of negotiation.” It is about the art of presenting facts in a way that strengthens or cements the relationship between two nations. There are other definitions, such as bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

2. Bilateral Relations: Türkiye and Bangladesh

Bilateral diplomacy refers to the relationship between two countries, while *multilateral diplomacy* involves three or more countries or international organizations. In public diplomacy, this also works in the multilateral context by focusing on bilateral diplomacy, particularly the relationship between Türkiye and Bangladesh at this moment. Public diplomacy, as the name suggests, focuses on the public. There are formal, protocol-based relationships between two countries, but there are also informal, people-to-people contacts, which fall under public diplomacy.

To illustrate this, I joined my post in Ankara, Türkiye, on 27th February 2023. And I am sure you all know about the devastating earthquake that occurred on 6th February. The Turkish government, along with many other countries around the world, worked tirelessly to address the situation. Think about Bangladesh, a small country that is one-seventh the size of Türkiye. Türkiye is seven times the size of Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh has a population of 185 million, which is double that of Türkiye. It is a country with very few significant natural resources, many mouths to feed, and various challenges. In terms of development, it was on the path to becoming a developing country, but had not yet reached that stage.

Despite its limited capacity, the government did not hesitate for a moment to send whatever aid they could to help our Turkish brothers and sisters. At the government level, this is known as *government-to-government (G2G) diplomacy*, which typically involves official channels. However, it did not stop there because, while the government has limited capacity, the people do not. On March 26th, I read in the *Daily Sabah* that the people

of Bangladesh and Pakistan continued to send support, both in cash and in kind, to help the Turkish people. This is what we call *public diplomacy*.

2.1. People-to-People Relations

It is stronger when people know each other, even if they are 5,400 kilometers apart. They feel for one another and take action. Shortly after, I received a call from the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. They invited me to a ceremony where countries that helped Türkiye were planting trees. I attended and planted a tree, but the difference is this: Many European countries, the U.S., and others were also present, providing significant support. However, when the minister heard that I was the ambassador of Bangladesh, he took me by the hand and led me to plant the tree first. This is the strength of public diplomacy - bringing people together. Such actions also help smooth the way to achieve government-to-government objectives between these two countries.

I have two daughters. They study at a Turkish school. I attend almost all of their programs as a parent. One day, the school approached me and asked, "What can we do to help the students here learn about Bangladesh?" Bangladesh has a very specific date, February 21st. On this day, Bangladeshis commemorate Language Martyrs' Day. In 1952, an attempt was made to make Urdu the sole national language of Bangladesh. The people did not accept this, and students protested in the streets. The police opened fire, and many students were killed on February 21st. Since then, this day has been observed as Language Martyrs' Day in Bangladesh. In 1999, UNESCO declared February 21st as International Mother Language Day to celebrate and observe all mother languages. You might be surprised to learn that every day, at least three to four languages die out worldwide. Only one person speaks some of these languages, and once that person passes away, the language disappears.

So, the day chosen to celebrate languages is significant. It commemorates the bloodshed of Bangladeshis who gave their lives to protect their language. When the school approached me, we discussed how we could bring the story of Bangladesh to the students. We decided to celebrate this day, not just for Bangladesh, but as International Mother Language Day. All the students participated, and we explained how we observe the day in Bangladesh.

What was the result? Students across all age groups learned the name of Bangladesh. That is what public diplomacy is. Without struggling with protocol or formalities, I successfully introduced Bangladesh to a young group of people in Türkiye.

2.2. Adapting Diplomacy in the Digital Age

It is more important now than ever, given the changing global landscape and technological developments. And particularly now, we are in the age of artificial intelligence. Nowadays, the traditional way of conducting diplomacy is quite different. Diplomats, for example, an ambassador, would have done the following: when there was a presidential election in Türkiye, we would have analysed it by watching the election, reading various newspaper reports, and gathering information. Then, as an ambassador, I would write a report about the election and send it to the Bangladeshi foreign office. There, a Director-General (DG) who was responsible for Türkiye would read it, present it to the foreign minister, and explain, “Sir, this is what happened in the Turkish election, and our ambassador has sent this report. Do you think this is still valid?” However, by the time I would have finished typing that report, it would already be on the minister’s phone if they were interested. They would have looked it up immediately to see what happened in the Turkish election.

This leads us to a crucial question: Is traditional diplomacy still relevant? What is the role of diplomats now? We can engage in business-to-business transactions and communicate directly with people without relying on traditional diplomatic channels. However, to survive and earn our bread and butter as diplomats, we need to make our work relevant. Moreover, this is where public diplomacy comes in.

2.3. Bangladesh’s Unique Position and Diplomacy

In Bangladesh, we actually moved away from traditional diplomatic practices in the 1990s. Bangladesh, due to its unique geographical location, needed a more dynamic approach. It is situated between two major powers in Asia: India, which surrounds Bangladesh on three sides, and China, which, although it does not share a direct border, is only 10-12 kilometers away from certain areas in Bangladesh.

Both India and China are recognized powers in Asia, while Bangladesh is a smaller country with limited resources. To maintain its strength and ensure its continued development, Bangladesh needed to use diplomacy wisely.

There is a saying in Bengali that “If you do not have strength, you must be sharp.” This means that, for a country like the USA, a diplomat might still succeed despite lacking exceptional skills, simply because their country is so powerful. However, Bangladesh cannot afford this. Bangladesh’s diplomats must be sharp and intelligent in order to make a meaningful impact in diplomacy. This is why we have maintained our relevance. Diplomats are still crucial, and building and strengthening relations with countries like Türkiye while avoiding suspicion from larger powers requires skill.

And that is how, instead of sticking to traditional diplomatic practices, we started focusing on another term: economic diplomacy. During the 1970s and 1980s, in the Cold War era, which was defined by two superpowers: the Soviet Union and the U.S., they had their own blocs, and although they did not engage in physical war, there was a psychological battle between the two. Countries aligned with either the Soviet or U.S. camp would receive support from their respective side.

For example, during that time, if a least developed country sought foreign aid, it would typically need to align with one of these superpowers. If you wanted assistance, you would indicate your alignment with one of the blocs. If you did not receive help, you could threaten to switch allegiance. However, once the Cold War ended in the early 1990s, countries lost this leverage. The rich countries began reducing their foreign aid, leaving many nations in a precarious situation. How could they survive?

No one was going to give you free money anymore, so the solution became economic diplomacy. Countries started building economic relationships with others. However, as the saying goes, “Do not put all your eggs in one basket,” because that would put you at risk. For example, Bangladesh is surrounded by India on three sides and a small part of Myanmar. If Bangladesh relied solely on India for trade, India could easily exert control over the country. Therefore, Bangladesh needed to look for other opportunities and resources, and that is where Türkiye came in.

Türkiye has always been considered a “brotherly country” to Bangladesh. However, our economic relationship did not develop as we had hoped because Bangladesh was still at an early stage of development. Still,

economic diplomacy started to take shape, focusing on investment, business, and trade. However, the real challenge is when these relationships do not generate the expected profits. How do you handle that?

The solution lies in building people-to-people relationships. Once people genuinely like and understand each other, the impact on government decisions becomes more positive. For example, when discussing this concept, we often refer to Chett Mazulu's idea of building relationships that transcend just governmental ties.

2.4. Shifts in Relations: Post-2016 Developments

Türkiye and Bangladesh faced some difficult stages in their relationship at certain points. Before 2016, Bangladesh made some controversial decisions, like trying war criminals who were supported by some neighbouring countries. These countries managed to convince Türkiye that Bangladesh was acting under the influence of other nations. As a result, Türkiye's relationship with Bangladesh cooled for a period. However, after the military coup attempt in Türkiye on July 15, 2016, things started to change.

There was a shift in Türkiye's attitude towards Bangladesh when Bangladesh immediately supported the government, stating that it did not support any military interference in democratic practices. Türkiye viewed this as a sign of solidarity, recognizing Bangladesh as a country that stood by Türkiye through thick and thin. This led to a rethinking of relations and a more positive perspective. As a result, people-to-people contact between the two countries began to increase, especially with Bangladesh focusing on public diplomacy at the time.

Turkish ambassadors became more active, visiting universities, engaging in discussions about the countries, and talking about the personal relationships between the peoples of Türkiye and Bangladesh. Gradually, this led to stronger ties. Now, if you visit Istanbul, you will see that it is a melting pot for both tourists and businesspeople. İstanbul controls 60 to 70 percent of Türkiye's economic activities. Bangladeshis who visit and live in Istanbul tend to have a strong connection with Türkiye, often referring to Turks as their brothers.

Turkish Airlines did not initially fly directly to Dhaka. There was no direct flight from Jeddah to Istanbul; flights stopped in Adana before

continuing to Istanbul. However, Turkish Airlines gradually expanded its reach, first flying via Pakistan to Bangladesh, and now offering direct flights.

Turkish Airlines aired a documentary series titled *Aina*, which means “mirror” in Bengali. It is a word shared in Turkish as well, a reminder of the cultural connections stemming from Islamic heritage. I had never seen such a positive documentary on Bangladesh before. In it, the interviewer navigated through traffic and noise but still conveyed an optimistic view of Bangladesh. This is a perfect example of public diplomacy. The interviewer was not engaging in formal diplomacy but presented Bangladesh in a way that resonated positively with people, especially Bangladeshis who might never have flown on Turkish Airlines. Many Bangladeshis, even if they do not travel, feel proud and positive about Türkiye’s portrayal of their country. These are just a few examples.

2.5. Public Diplomacy in Defense, Education and Culture

The most flourishing sector in the relationship between Bangladesh and Türkiye is the defense sector. Many countries produce defense products, particularly NATO members. As a NATO member, Türkiye has similar interests in producing and selling defense products as Western countries do. These countries often focus on selling their products to countries like Bangladesh, especially in the Middle East.

However, Bangladesh decided to purchase defense products from a friendly country such as Türkiye. Why? Because Türkiye provides advanced, home-grown technology, its products remain up to date. In contrast, NATO often provides Bangladesh with outdated equipment, which becomes difficult to maintain over time due to a lack of spare parts or technical know-how.

Türkiye not only provides products but also shares technology, which is crucial for long-term sustainability. Many other countries do not prioritize technology transfer in the same way. Türkiye has been extremely generous, offering free defense support through training programs, consultations, and technology sharing. We hold Türkiye’s defense sector in high regard and believe we are benefiting greatly from this cooperation.

On the other hand, it is needed to address the role of education. The water lily is the national flower of Bangladesh. And there is also a municipality called *Beyşehir* in Konya, and it has a lake that produces water lilies in abundance. We contacted the municipality and proposed celebrating

Water Lily Day in Türkiye. You cannot imagine how this was received in Bangladesh. The entire embassy staff travelled to Beyşehir. We went to the lake, where they arranged boats for us. We took pictures, played songs about the water lily, and explained to the people the significance of this flower. It is not just a national symbol; it was also an emblem of strength and encouragement during our liberation war.

Once we shared this event on social media, it had two positive outcomes. First, the people in Bangladesh were very touched. Second, other embassies, like my ambassador in Nigeria, noticed it and found similar water lilies in their area. They copied the idea, and at the same time, the people of Beyşehir, after seeing it on social media, became interested in Bangladesh and agreed to establish a Bangladesh Cultural Center in the region. This is another example of public diplomacy.

Now, regarding education and cultural exchange, we have a famous song written by our national poet, and the tune of this song was actually taken from Türkiye. The song is very popular in Bangladesh. The Turkish song is *Üsküdar'a Gider İken* and the melody of this song was used for our song. *Üsküdar'a Gider İken* is very well-known in Türkiye, and the tune has been adopted in Bangladesh. This kind of cultural affinity fosters people-to-people connections, and education plays a key role in this process. When we try to portray the image of Muslims in different countries, Türkiye always ranks number one in Bangladesh.

It is not the Middle East. We have a similar, though not identical, approach to Islam. The English term “secular” might not fully capture it, but it is a form of moderate Islam. We do not align with extremist ideas. This is why we look toward Türkiye and its practices. In Bangladesh, the Sufism of Mevlana Jalal ad-Din Rumi is highly respected. He is one of the most popular philosophers in Bangladesh. While his teachings have a religious dimension, he is primarily admired for the depth and richness of his philosophical ideas. This connection to Sufism represents another cultural bond between Türkiye and Bangladesh.

Regarding education, we are establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between our universities. Ankara University has an MOU with a university in Chittagong, facilitating student and faculty exchanges. Additionally, we have the Noakhali Science and Technology Institute, which has an MOU with NIDA University. These exchanges are part of a regular procedure that helps strengthen our educational and cultural ties.

It is a regular procedure. Students from both countries go to each other's universities, and there are also faculty exchanges. During their time abroad, the students immerse themselves in the local culture, learn about the people, and gain an understanding of the education system. This process is essential in building mutual respect and understanding.

We also proposed that two universities were interested in collaborating with us, specifically Cappadocia University. After discussions, we agreed to exchange documents and identify specific areas of cooperation. These are concrete examples of how we are advancing public diplomacy.

In the cultural sector, countless exchanges occur, though they are not always at the government-to-government level. A great example of this is the TV series *Magnificent Century* (*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*), also known as *Sultan Suleiman* in Bangladesh. The series was dubbed in Bengali and has been the most popular TV show in the country for the last 10 years.

The impact of this show on public diplomacy is remarkable. After *Sultan Suleiman*, other Turkish series have also gained popularity in Bangladesh, further strengthening our cultural ties. Turkish TV series are also popular in the Western world, not just in the Middle East. Because we Muslims, whether secular or liberal-minded, always feel a sense of pride when these shows speak about our glorious past. However, I have a problem with this because it keeps us focused on the past. We need to look forward as well.

We often talk about how we invented chemistry, astrology, and medical science, and while these are indeed significant achievements, we must ask ourselves, "What are we doing for the future?" So, while people feel good when we discuss historical figures like Saladin (Salah ad-Din), who resonates with people in a remote village in Bangladesh just as much as here, we must also look ahead. This is the essence of public communication. This is one concrete example of how cultural diplomacy works.

3. Future Outlook: Bangladesh's Progress and Türkiye's Rising Global Role

Bangladesh has gone through a major transformation. We had a government in power for 16 years, and there were grievances among the people. People protested, but it was a mild protest. The issue was simple: getting access to government services. Students took to the streets to protest against the quota system. To join government services, we have quotas for

different categories, such as a women's quota, a freedom fighter quota, a tribal quota, and more.

Because of this quota system, meritorious students who perform well academically may not be able to access government positions. I can give you an example from 1999, 26 years ago: we had about 108,000 applicants for a position, and only 12 were selected for the Foreign Service. Of these 12, only 5 were selected by merit, and the remaining 7 were chosen under the quota system.

So, the students were upset because, even if they qualified, they could not get the job because of the quotas. They wanted reform of the quota system. To cut a long story short, when students protested in the streets, the government responded with excessive force. They eventually opened fire, and young students, some as young as 16, 17, or 18, were killed.

The police acted as if they were terrorists, and it felt like they were from a foreign country, killing their own people. Eventually, it was not just the students protesting; the general public joined in as well. To summarize, on August 5th, the previous government resigned and left the country. On August 8th, a new interim government was formed. This government is not permanent; elections will be held to form a permanent government, but the interim government is still trying to implement reforms.

There are some challenges on its path to development, but since the 1990s, Bangladesh has been progressing. We have moved off the list of least developed countries and are now classified as a developing country. That is a significant improvement, and with the current interim government's efforts, we will continue on this path.

On the other hand, Türkiye has strong principles on certain issues. For example, Türkiye has firmly taken positions on issues like Gaza. The issue with Gaza has nothing to do with religion. It is about human rights, it is about occupation, and it is about the use of brutal force, among other things. Israel is not a country in the traditional sense, though it is a reality, which is fine. However, it was created through a political plot - a plot by the British Empire at the time, under the "divide and rule" policy. We were victims of that policy in the Indian subcontinent. Nevertheless, Türkiye is playing an important role.

Türkiye's role is again a balancing act in the region. The way you are dealing with both Russia and Ukraine, for example, shows a political

strategy that balances interests. At the same time, Türkiye is also known for its economy. We often refer to it as the “Mini China” of Eastern Europe. Do you know why? What does that mean? It means that Türkiye’s technology - across various sectors, not just defense - may not be as advanced as the West’s, but it is cheaper and not tied to any strict conditions when exported. Whether in Eastern European countries or Bangladesh, Türkiye does not impose conditions such as requiring a Turkish expert to accompany the project.

This approach creates a positive impression and suggests that Türkiye is heading in a better direction. Leadership plays a crucial role in this process, and it is the same for Bangladesh. From an outside perspective, we believe this leadership will guide you to maintain your position in the region and likely in the global arena. For a long time, Türkiye was not a major global player.

But now, Türkiye is very proud of its history, including the Ottoman Empire, and how we made our way into Europe. We consider it part of our legacy. But that’s no longer the reality. However, seeing Türkiye in a position of power, able to play a global role, is something we would welcome.

Conclusion

Although Türkiye and Bangladesh are geographically distant, they share a strong spiritual connection. A deep sense of brotherhood unites these two nations. During the Turkish War of Independence, Bangladesh did not yet exist as a country; instead, there were Bengal Muslims in India. These Muslims supported Türkiye wholeheartedly during its struggle. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is well known in Bangladesh, and this historical connection is a significant aspect of public diplomacy.

Diplomacy traditionally refers to the process in which representatives of one country, known as envoys, engage with other nations to address issues and strengthen relations. Today, these envoys are known as diplomats, and their primary goal is to foster good relations, often to prevent conflict. In contemporary times, diplomacy involves presenting facts and ideas in ways that help maintain positive relationships between nations. It encompasses various actors and practices, including international organizations.

Public diplomacy is not only about formal exchanges but also about spreading ideas, influencing others, and facilitating cross-cultural communication.

Traditional methods of diplomacy have evolved in the digital age. Information is now easily accessible, and communication takes place across various platforms. This raises the question of whether traditional diplomacy remains relevant. To remain effective, diplomacy must adapt to new contexts. This is where the role of public diplomacy becomes crucial - it allows countries to engage in more dynamic, real-time, and people-centered diplomacy.

Bangladesh's geographical location between two giant countries, India and China, gives it a unique position in global affairs. While Bangladesh has limited resources, it has used diplomacy effectively to secure support. This resource scarcity means that Bangladesh's diplomats must be especially sharp, skilled, and informed to represent their country on the world stage. After the Cold War, economic diplomacy became increasingly important. Bangladesh, like many other countries, sought to diversify its sources of financial aid, and Türkiye was one of the countries that extended support. Despite challenges, such as political tensions and external influences, Türkiye and Bangladesh's diplomatic relationship continued to grow.

There are strong government-to-government diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Bangladesh. For example, heads of state send condolences and engage in high-level diplomatic communication during and after a tragic event. However, public diplomacy between the two countries is even more robust.

Bangladesh has made significant strides across various sectors and is currently transitioning from a less developed to a more developed country. The interim government is focused on implementing reforms, and there is optimism about the country's future. The Ambassador of Bangladesh believes that Bangladesh's future is bright and that the relationship with Türkiye will continue to thrive. As Türkiye rises to a leadership role on the global stage, Bangladesh will be proud of its connection with Türkiye.

Paraguay-Türkiye Relations: Historical, Cultural, and Tourism Ties

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Introduction

Paraguay is a country where both Spanish and Guaraní are spoken, and both languages are integral to the formation of Paraguayan identity. When the Spanish first arrived in these lands, unlike in some other Latin American countries, there were no conflicts with the indigenous population. Instead, they peacefully intermarried with the Guaraní people, leading to a cultural synthesis that shapes Paraguayan identity today. This cultural synthesis has transformed the Paraguayan people into peaceful, hard-working individuals with a deep love for nature.

Paraguay was once underrepresented in Türkiye, but this cooperation is steadily growing. In addition to the embassy's activities, many Paraguayan youths are now receiving education in Türkiye. Relations between Türkiye and Paraguay have a history spanning over 70 years, gaining significant momentum with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Paraguay in 2018. This historic visit led to the opening of a Turkish Embassy in Paraguay, and in return, the Paraguayan Embassy in Türkiye began operations in February 2019.

Since then, significant visits have taken place between the two countries, both at the state level and in terms of individual relations. Today, Türkiye is highly recognized in Paraguay, not only at an academic level but also through literature and the media.

1. History of Bilateral Relations

Paraguay is a country where both Spanish and Guaraní are spoken, with the roots of Paraguayan identity lying in the use of both languages. When the Spanish first arrived in these lands, unlike in some other Latin American countries, there were no conflicts with the indigenous people.

Instead, upon reaching the current capital, Asunción, they intermarried with the Guaraní Indians rather than engaging in conflict. This cultural synthesis forms the basis of present-day Paraguayan citizenship, transforming the Paraguayan people into peaceful, hard-working individuals with a deep love for nature.

Paraguayan identity emerged from a peaceful fusion of indigenous and European elements, unlike many Latin American national identities. This unique identity resulted from interaction and cultural fusion, rather than conflict. Beginning in the 16th century, intermarriage and missionary activities with the indigenous Guaraní people, along with Spanish settlement in the region, brought about not only a demographic mix but also a cultural synthesis. As a result, Paraguay is one of the few Latin American countries to have incorporated its indigenous language, Guaraní, alongside with Spanish into its national identity. Guaraní is recognized as an official language alongside Spanish in the Paraguayan Constitution and is actively used in daily life by the majority of the population. This demonstrates the language's role not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of national belonging. Today, the identity of "Paraguayan" is shaped by a commitment to the Guaraní language, bilingualism, cultural synthesis, and the interweaving of indigenous traditions with modern life, placing Paraguay in a culturally unique position within Latin America and globally.

Various missionary groups, including Franciscans, Jesuits, and mercedaries, arrived in the region later on. These groups were integral to the structure known as the "Jesuit Communities." To understand that period and the relationships between the indigenous people and the missionaries, the film "The Mission" is recommended, as it portrays the arrival of the Spanish in the region, their relations with the indigenous people, and the process of evangelization. Peaceful coexistence is essential for society.

Paraguay was once underrepresented in Türkiye, but these ties and collaborations are strengthening daily. In addition to the embassy's activities, many young Paraguayan people are now receiving education in Türkiye, allowing Türkiye to learn more about Paraguay. Turkish-Paraguayan relations have a history spanning over 70 years, gaining significant momentum with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Paraguay in 2018. This historic visit led to the opening of a Turkish Embassy in Paraguay, and in return, the Paraguayan Embassy in Türkiye began operating in February 2019. Since then, significant visits have taken place between

the two countries, both at the state and individual levels. Today, Türkiye is highly recognized in Paraguay, not only academically but also through literature and the media.

For example, the Türkiye-Paraguay Parliamentary Friendship Commission's visit to Paraguay and the contacts held at the commission level are highly valuable. Furthermore, Paraguayan ministers of sports and culture, as well as various members of parliament, have made official visits to Türkiye. It is well known that evaluation meetings on political, economic, cultural, and other areas are held periodically between the two countries. Annual meetings between Türkiye and Paraguay are also held regularly.

2. Cultural Similarities

Today, Türkiye is a highly recognized country in Paraguay. This recognition is not only achieved at an academic level but also through literature and the media. Turkish TV series and novels are highly sought after in Paraguay. The first question many visitors to Paraguay ask is, "Where are popular TV series or the latest movies filmed?" Reflecting this interest, a group of prominent Turkish television actors will soon visit Paraguay.

There are also similarities between Paraguay and Türkiye's cultures. For example, one of Paraguay's traditional dishes, "Chipagazú," or more commonly known as "Çorba," is very similar to some local dishes made with corn in the Black Sea region. The Turkish dish called "Alinazik" is almost identical to the Paraguayan dish "Polenta." Paraguay's most traditional dessert is also very familiar to the Turks: "Süt pudding." Such shared tastes facilitate cultural rapprochement.

There are currently seven Paraguayan students studying in cities such as Izmir, Istanbul, Samsun, Eskişehir, and Çanakkale. These students never feel isolated in Türkiye. While the language barrier may initially seem like an obstacle, it can be overcome quickly. Paraguayan students learn Turkish in as little as three to four months and easily integrate into society. Similarly, Turkish citizens can begin speaking Spanish within three months of arriving in Paraguay.

The reason for discussing the origins of Paraguayan identity stems from the affinity to Turkish culture. In this context, Guaraní is not only a language for Paraguay but also a cultural heritage. Turkish also has a pronounced nasal-throated pronunciation. Guaraní is notable for this

characteristic. For example, the word “water” in the Guarani language is pronounced with this nasal tone. Therefore, if you are of Turkish descent, pronouncing Guarani is not at all difficult. Similarly, Paraguayans are quite apt to learn both Spanish and Guarani, and even Turkish.

Culturally, there are very unique elements that unite Paraguay and Türkiye. One of Paraguay’s most important traditional handicrafts, “Ñandutí,” or “lace embroidery,” shares significant similarities with Turkish culture. But perhaps one of the most universal and unifying aspects of culture is sports. For Paraguayans, football is not just a sport; it is a way of life. Today, Paraguayan footballers also play in Türkiye. One of the most well-known names is Óscar Cardozo, nicknamed “Tacuara (Big Cane). As can be seen, football also brings Paraguay and Türkiye together.

Football is considered one of the most powerful tools of intercultural interaction. More than just a sporting event, it also encompasses multidimensional processes such as identity construction, social belonging, and cultural representation. In Paraguay, football is an important part of national identity. In this context, established clubs like Club Olimpia and Club Cerro Porteño hold a significant place at the societal level not only for their sporting success but also for the symbolic meaning they carry. The identification of Turkish football club colors with those of Paraguayan teams facilitates the formation of symbolic bonds at the individual level. Such examples demonstrate how sports function as a tool of cultural diplomacy.

Furthermore, the participation of Paraguayan footballers in the Turkish Super League strengthens social interaction between the two countries. Examples such as Óscar Cardozo’s playing for Trabzonspor, in particular, support the sociocultural transmission created by sports-based migration and the rapprochement between the two societies. This can also be considered within the context of “Soft Power,” as defined by Joseph Nye, because interactions in cultural spheres contribute to the establishment of lasting bonds between peoples.

However, the role played by young people in this process is critical. Sustainability in international relations is possible not only through state-level contacts, but also through one-on-one relationships at the academic, cultural, and societal levels. In this context, the academic collaboration between Cappadocia University and the University of San Sebastián in Paraguay contributes to strengthening intercultural understanding at the higher

education level. Student and faculty exchanges not only transfer knowledge but also transform cultural perceptions.

Latin American countries offer not only trade partners for Türkiye but also new avenues of cultural and academic interaction. In the age of globalization, the concept of geographical distance is increasingly losing its meaning; strong ties can be established between distant lands through digital communication, academic collaborations, and cultural projects. In this regard, students' individual initiative and their active participation in international platforms are crucial.

The limited interest in theology in Paraguay is closely related to the country's historical development and the secular foundations of its cultural identity. Paraguayan society has been built on a hybrid cultural structure, shaped by peaceful relations with the Guaraní indigenous people since the Spanish colonial period. This structure has led to national identity being shaped by language, tradition, and social consensus rather than religious affiliation. The Guaraní language, which gained official language status alongside Spanish, is one of the clearest examples of this synthesis.

Younger generations are expected not only to acquire knowledge but also to transform this knowledge and forge new partnerships. Developing interactions with culturally diverse countries like Paraguay will have a lasting impact not only on the diplomatic but also on the societal level. In this context, Türkiye's young population's opening to Latin America can be seen as part of a strategic cultural diplomacy vision.

3. Tourism Relations and Public Diplomacy

Intensive efforts are being made to develop tourism between the two countries. For example, a festival promoting Türkiye was held in Paraguay, and a Paraguayan Tourism Festival is planned for Türkiye soon. Above all, the most important thing is for people to get to know each other better. Therefore, great importance is given to academic collaborations to increase the interest of both Paraguayan and Turkish students in learning about each other's countries. The primary need is for the two countries to get to know each other. Both countries have strong tourism infrastructures. Furthermore, the visa requirement between the two countries has been abolished. Increasing Turkish Airlines flights to Asunción is on the agenda. Direct flights between Istanbul, Madrid, and Asunción began on

May 12, 2025 by Air Europa. Of course, the most valuable promotion is for visitors to share their impressions and experiences.

The most frequently visited cities by Paraguayan tourists in Türkiye are Istanbul, Cappadocia, and Izmir. For example, Izmir is often visited to see the House of the Virgin Mary. Consequently, a significant portion of Paraguayan tourism to Türkiye falls under the umbrella of faith tourism. The majority of Paraguayans are Catholic, and important Catholic pilgrimage sites are also located in Anatolia. Beyond these sites, Türkiye undoubtedly boasts countless other beautiful places worth seeing. Just a few steps from Cappadocia University lies a magnificent church. This church is breathtaking with its art, craftsmanship, and history. Such places also deserve to be promoted. A cooperation agreement has been signed between the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Paraguayan Ministry of Tourism, and work in this direction is ongoing.

4. Energy and Agriculture in Paraguay-Türkiye Relations

There are also significant opportunities for cooperation between the two countries in the agricultural sector. Türkiye offers products and technologies that could greatly benefit the Paraguayan people. Paraguay, on the other hand, is also a strong agricultural and livestock farming country. Many agricultural products, such as rice, soybeans, and sesame, are exported to Türkiye. Additionally, Türkiye's exceptional agricultural machinery could greatly enhance production in Paraguay. If Turkish food products reach Paraguay and Turkish agricultural entrepreneurs begin production there, the country's production could double within three years. Despite having a population of 7 million, Paraguay has the capacity to produce enough food for 100 million people. Paraguay boasts fertile land, clean water resources, renewable energy infrastructure, and a hard-working and eager young population.

Paraguay's energy policy is at the heart of energy diplomacy, which is increasingly important in the country's foreign relations. Hydroelectric power plants constructed on the Paraná River, one of South America's largest river systems—including the Itaipú, Yacyretá, and Acaray dams—have made Paraguay a country that produces and exports surplus energy. The Itaipú Dam, operated jointly with Brazil, is among the world's largest hydroelectric production projects. Paraguay's energy production capacity generates not only economic but also diplomatic value, offering opportunities

for regional and global partnerships. From Türkiye's perspective, this energy capacity lays the groundwork for sustainable development-based cooperation between the two countries. Technical collaborations in energy production offer Türkiye a strategic opportunity to expand its green energy investments into Latin America. Joint R&D efforts, particularly in green hydrogen, renewable energy technologies, and energy efficiency, will deepen the economic dimension of Turkish-Paraguayan relations.

On the other hand, there is a complementary relationship between Paraguay's agricultural and livestock production capacity and Türkiye's advanced agricultural technologies, food processing industry, and logistics infrastructure. Paraguay's fertile soil, low population density, and high agricultural export potential offer significant investment opportunities for Turkish entrepreneurs and agricultural machinery manufacturers. Collaborations, particularly on sustainable agriculture, organic production, and climate-friendly practices, have the potential to generate both commercial and environmental benefits.

Academic diplomacy plays a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of these relationships not only economically but also at social and cultural levels. The presence of students from Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in Paraguay demonstrates how international educational diplomacy is used as an effective tool in the country's foreign policy. Türkiye's integration into this structure requires the systematic development of academic exchange programs and the establishment of joint research centers between the two countries. Indeed, the leadership of higher education institutions and embassies in this process is a key dynamic that enhances the effectiveness of public diplomacy. In conclusion, energy and agricultural cooperation in Paraguay-Türkiye relations plays a strategic role not only in building economic capacity but also in fostering long-term cultural rapprochement and mutual understanding. The cornerstone of this process is the younger generation and academics. The bonds established by students and researchers solidify the friendship between the two countries, building a multifaceted partnership that transcends traditional diplomatic channels.

Conclusion

In fact, these two individuals are very similar, finding many common grounds and successfully realizing projects together. For instance, steps are being taken to establish cooperation between Cappadocia University

and the University of San Sebastián in Paraguay. Not only Paraguay, but all Latin American countries offer open doors for Turks. Similarly, Turks are not only hospitable but also possess an authentic, unique culture, as evidenced by the sincere affection Turks show towards Paraguayans, who love to showcase their history and culture.

It is recommended to start working with Paraguay and building connections. Paraguay is a youthful country, with 70% of its population under 30. With a population of 7 million, the country has abundant resources, including two large hydroelectric power plants that produce clean energy. Collaborations are being formed with Türkiye in various sectors such as green hydrogen production, the textile industry, tahini production, and small livestock farming. At the heart of these efforts lies Cappadocia, a melting pot of Türkiye's and the world's diverse cultures. This unique landscape serves as a gateway to the world, offering a rich history, culture, and sense of belonging.

There is still much work to be done to enhance bilateral relations. Distance should not be viewed solely in geographic terms, as technological and transportation advancements have effectively bridged this gap. Paraguay and Türkiye are no longer worlds apart. Academic exchanges and business interactions occur regularly, marking significant progress. What remains crucial is for both parties to introduce themselves and showcase their mutual potential.

It is essential to widen further the doors opened by academics. While embassies in both countries have primarily welcomed academics, it is now up to businesspeople and students to step through these doors. This process will cultivate enduring progress, mutual exchange, and strong friendships between our nations. The role of students in fostering relations with Latin America is invaluable, with young people leading the way.

Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

Rodrigo Arcos

Ambassador of Chile to Türkiye

Introduction

Chile, known for its long coastline and rich cultural, historical, and natural heritage, was the first Latin American country to recognize Türkiye, open an embassy in Ankara, and sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Türkiye.

The concepts of “foreign policy” and “diplomacy” are fundamentally different, although interconnected. Specific rules govern diplomacy and are primarily conducted between diplomats and their foreign counterparts, while foreign policy encompasses objectives, strategies, and general tactics. Diplomacy is the primary tool for achieving these goals.

The fundamental principles of Chilean foreign policy include respect for international law, the rule of law, the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights, and responsibility for cooperation. Chile’s approach is focused on fostering dialogue and supporting a growth agenda that benefits all countries. Recent efforts have been made to revitalize relations between Türkiye and Chile, with significant potential to develop political, economic, defense-security, and cultural ties within a mutual partnership framework.

1. General Information About Chile

Chile is one of the longest countries in the world. Stretching approximately 4,000 kilometers from north to south, Chile’s surface area is quite similar to Türkiye’s. Türkiye has an area of approximately 780,000 square kilometers, while Chile has 756,000 square kilometers. Chile, with a coastline exceeding 6,000 kilometers, is located in the southwest of South America. Its main neighbor is Argentina, and it also shares borders with Bolivia and Peru.

Approximately 10% of Chile’s population consists of indigenous peoples, including the Mapuche, Rapa Nui (Easter Islanders), and Aymara. The

Rapa Nui people, known for their Moai statues, live on Easter Island. The remaining population is a mix of European immigrants, including Spaniards, English, Italians, French, and Germans, from the 16th century onward. There was a large wave of immigration from Germany at the end of the 19th century. Today, there are also communities of immigrants from Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, and Colombia. Chile is a multicultural society comprised of immigrants.

Human settlement in Chile dates back over 18,000 years. Ferdinand Magellan, who crossed the Strait of Magellan in 1520, became the first European to see the Chilean coast. In this context, it also has an indirect historical connection with Türkiye. After the Ottoman Empire conquered Istanbul, Europeans began searching for new trade routes as routes to India and the East were closed. During this period, Magellan, seeking a new passage through the West, reached the Chilean coast and named the Pacific Ocean. The waters he encountered after passing through the Strait of Magellan were remarkably calm (*pacífico*). The Spanish colonial period lasted until 1810, when the struggle for independence began. Chile declared full independence in 1818, transitioning to a republic and remaining an independent state for over 200 years. Chile, which is also strongly committed to combating climate change and protecting its oceans, possesses some of the world's largest marine protected areas. It is also proposing a city on the Chilean coast as the Secretariat of the Agreement for the Protection of Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), a part of international environmental law. This agreement aims to ensure that the high seas and seabeds not belonging to any state are protected as a common heritage of humankind. Each country is responsible for protecting its own Exclusive Economic Zone. However, areas beyond this boundary must also be protected through collective responsibility. Chile is ready to assume this responsibility and is committed to it.

Chile is a “tri-continental” state, with its mainland in South America, some islands in Oceania, and sovereignty claims over Antarctica. Furthermore, Chile is often described as an “island” due to its surrounding natural barriers. For example, the Atacama Desert, the driest desert in the world, is located in northern Chile. In some places in this region, it has not received a single drop of rain for 30 years. Therefore, this natural barrier prevents any economic or agricultural threats to the country. To the east lie the Andes, with peaks over 6,000 meters. These mountains make physical passage

extremely difficult. To the south lie Antarctica and glaciers, while the Pacific Ocean borders the west. These natural boundaries (desert, mountains, ice, and sea) make Chile virtually isolated from the outside world. This is why Chile is often compared to an “island.”

As a significant consequence of this geographical isolation, Chile has developed a strong identity as a food producer. It assumes a significant responsibility in the area of food security. Chile, a leading global market, produces high-quality, safe food for markets in Europe, Türkiye, Asia-Pacific, the US, Canada, and Latin America. Chile also exports fruits, vegetables, seafood, especially fish, walnuts, hazelnuts, and many other agricultural products. Macroeconomic indicators indicate that Chile’s population is approximately 20 million. Türkiye’s population is four times Chile’s. As of 2023, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to be approximately \$280 billion, with per capita income exceeding \$17,000. Adjusted for purchasing power parity, this figure exceeds \$28,000. This represents a very high level on a regional scale. The inflation rate is 4%, and the unemployment rate is around 8.4%. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has exceeded \$11 billion. All these indicators (income level, education level, health care, and life expectancy) place Chile among the leading countries in Latin America in terms of human development.

2. Chile’s Foreign Policy

Chile’s foreign policy is directly determined by the President and implemented through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries. The fundamental principles of Chile’s foreign policy are respect for international law, the rule of law, the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights, and the responsibility for cooperation. Acting in accordance with these principles forms the basis for Chile’s decisions in international relations.

Chile’s foreign policy priorities include:

- Developing new alliances,
- Promoting values,
- Maintaining political dialogue to the fullest extent,
- Supporting a growth-oriented agenda,
- Combating climate change,
- Protecting the oceans and preserving Antarctica.

Strengthening political dialogue is crucial, especially in Latin America. Collaboration among countries in the region on foreign policy would be an extremely beneficial strategy. However, this process can sometimes be challenging due to differing perspectives and political positions. Despite this, Chile's fundamental approach is to foster dialogue and support a growth agenda that benefits all countries.

Chile is a country highly dependent on foreign trade and open to the global economy. As one of the countries with the most FTAs in the world, 80% of Chile's exports are covered by these agreements. The first and currently valid FTA was signed with Türkiye in 2009 and entered into force in 2011. In this respect, Chile is the first country in the Americas with which Türkiye signed a full-scale FTA. The importance of such agreements in shaping global trade is increasingly growing.

Chile's foreign policy is closely linked to the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and free trade. These concepts are at the center of foreign policy debates amid current global developments. In the latest Human Development Index (HDI) published by the UN, Chile was ranked in the "very high human development" category, ranking 45th in the world. One of the main reasons behind this success is that Chile's average life expectancy exceeds 80 years. This rate is among the highest in Latin America. It is also prominent in education. The average length of education in Chile exceeds 11 years. Compulsory education totals 12 years, covering both primary and secondary education. This contributes to Chile being one of the countries with the highest education rates, not only in Latin America but also globally.

Chile's greatest concern is the destabilization of the international system. Chile conducts 80% of its foreign trade through FTAs. In this context, the fundamental elements of the country's foreign policy are democracy, the rule of law, and free trade. Trade with the US accounts for 16% of total trade, while trade with China is around 40%. Therefore, Chile strives to maintain a stable international system without taking sides. Because most of its products are food, maintaining an open market and balanced trade is vital for Chile. For example, the Trump administration in the US imposed a 10% tariff on Chile, but received no response, as preventing trade harm is Chile's priority.

3. Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

The concepts of “foreign policy” and “diplomacy,” while related, are fundamentally different. Diplomacy is governed by specific rules and is primarily conducted between diplomats and their interlocutors, the foreign officials they represent. While terms such as “defense diplomacy,” “cultural diplomacy,” or “foreign policy diplomacy” are frequently used, these terms can be conceptually misleading.

Diplomacy is based on four fundamental principles: “negotiation,” “communication,” “relationship-building,” and “promotion of interests.” These principles form the basis of effective diplomatic interactions that ensure the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the development of international cooperation.

Although diplomacy is often conflated with foreign policy, the two are not synonymous. Foreign policy is determined by political leaders and carried out by diplomats. While goals, strategies, and general tactics fall within the scope of foreign policy, diplomacy is the primary tool used to achieve them. In other words, foreign policy is a state activity, but its implementers are diplomats.

Diplomacy is generally conducted in secrecy, but the results and process are often disclosed to the public. This creates conceptual confusion. Diplomats operate based on trust, not secrecy. Only when the negotiation process concludes are the results shared with the public. For example, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov made the following statement regarding the peace process negotiations: “We are conducting negotiations directly with our interlocutors. You will know when everything is agreed upon. But not before that. Because nothing is agreed upon until everything is agreed upon.” Foreign policy (whether that of Russia, Chile, or the US) is essentially a set of objectives, and these objectives are generally shared with the public. However, how these objectives are achieved, how negotiations are conducted, with whom and when, and how national interests are conveyed and promoted fall within the domain of diplomacy. These processes are not conducted publicly. Only the results achieved are shared with the public, and this is called foreign policy.

The term “public diplomacy” is often incorrectly used to describe government-sponsored programs. The purpose of these programs may be to promote countries or inform the public. However, these activities (even if conducted through media such as publications, films, exchange programs,

radio, and television) are not diplomacy but rather public relations or public awareness-raising efforts.

The term “public diplomacy” was developed in the 1960s to distance itself from the negative connotations of “propaganda.” Therefore, public diplomacy has taken on a different meaning from public relations. While public relations primarily aims to convey messages to the domestic public, public diplomacy aims to inform and influence target audiences abroad in line with foreign policy objectives. In this respect, public diplomacy can be defined as the “public face” of foreign policy.

Today, the meaning of this concept is shifting, and it is used extensively by various actors (non-governmental organizations, corporations, and even supranational organizations). Everyone claims to be conducting some form of “public diplomacy.” However, this is actually merely an attempt to promote their own interests or the goals of their institutions. These activities are not diplomacy.

4. Chile-Türkiye Relations

Chile was one of the first countries in the Americas, and even the world, to recognize the Republic of Türkiye. This recognition took place in February 1926, and today it organizes various events to commemorate the 100th anniversary of this historic event. The representative image used in this context is the “100th Anniversary of Chile-Türkiye Diplomatic Relations.” The beginnings of bilateral relations date back to earlier periods, with Ottoman citizens migrating to Chile in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For example, the largest Palestinian diaspora outside the Middle East today is in Chile. Furthermore, many people from Ottoman territories such as Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan migrated to Chile during that period. Consequently, during the final years of the Ottoman Empire, before the Republic was declared, a consular agreement was signed between the two countries. Subsequently, in 1926, Chile became the first Latin American country to establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of Türkiye.

Türkiye’s first embassy in South America was opened in Santiago in 1930. Chile established an embassy in Ankara in 1941, becoming the first Latin American country to establish a diplomatic mission in Türkiye. In this context, it has maintained an uninterrupted diplomatic presence in Ankara for 84 years.

Chile was the first Latin American country to recognize Türkiye, open an embassy in Ankara, sign a free trade agreement (FTA), and implement it. These are, in fact, concrete reflections of Chile's foreign policy and diplomacy toward Türkiye. In 1970, "Chile Square" was built in Ankara, and the Chilean Republic School began operating. The first Cooperation Committee Agreement and then a preliminary FTA were signed with Türkiye, laying the groundwork for multidimensional cooperation between the two countries. Following lengthy negotiations and business evaluations, Turkish Airlines (THY) will commence operations in December 2024. The decision to launch direct flights to Santiago has been made.

Turkish Airlines (THY) is currently the airline that flies to the most countries in the world. Chile became the 131st country to which THY operates flights. Guinness World Records officials were present at the inaugural flight in Santiago and presented THY with a certificate for "the airline that flies to the most destinations worldwide." This is a significant development, as air travel not only facilitates human mobility but also enables trade, investment, and cultural interaction.

This decision is a direct result of diplomatic initiatives initiated in 2024. These flights are fully booked, and the number of Turkish passengers arriving in Chile has doubled compared to 2024. This has even surpassed pre-pandemic figures and represents a win-win situation for both countries.

Chile has small-scale, local defense industry companies with ties to the army and navy. Small vessels are being built for naval, coastal surveillance, and research purposes. In this sense, Chile is engaged in knowledge transfer and technological cooperation with Türkiye in the field of defense technologies. Rather than purchasing weapons, Chile is modernizing and repairing existing systems. This cooperation is progressing quite productively.

The number of companies investing in Chile from Türkiye increased between 2022 and 2025. For example, a Turkish company assumed the operation of Chilean airports. Balsu produces hazelnuts in southern Chile. It opened a store in Waikiki, Chile. ASELSAN opened an office in Chile to operate in the defense industry. Further development of these investments and the expansion of joint production opportunities in Türkiye are on the agenda.

Although bilateral trade volume has increased since 2009, trade declined significantly between 2016 and 2021 particularly due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. There are two main reasons for this: the international

economic recession and Türkiye's ability to procure copper, one of its main import items, from Central Asia at lower costs.

However, in recent years, steps have been taken to diversify this trade by introducing a range of products, including food, wine, and seafood. As in all countries, Türkiye and Chile aim to export more and import less. The two countries' governments maintain strong relations and are working together to identify potential areas of cooperation.

To further strengthen bilateral relations, promotional events were held in Chile as part of "Turkish Cuisine Week," which showcased Turkish cuisine. These events provide opportunities to take a closer look at Turkish cuisine and to learn more about Chile. These promotional processes are conducted within the framework of a mutual partnership, enabling a truly win-win relationship.

Furthermore, particular emphasis is placed on promoting Chilean writers and literary works. Chile has two Nobel Prize-winning authors in literature: Gabriela Mistral (1945) and Pablo Neruda (1971). These two authors are significant not only for their literary prowess but also for their diplomatic credentials, having served as consulates and ambassadors.

In this context, Chile is promoting the works of these world-renowned authors by translating them into both Turkish and Spanish. Chile supported the "No School Left Without a Library" project launched in Türkiye in 2021-2022 and donated more than 1,200 books of Chilean literature to schools in Türkiye. Each year, Chile continues to strive to promote its language and culture.

Conclusion

Chile plans to move forward with a comprehensive agenda that includes expanding bilateral mechanisms with Türkiye, further developing relations, modernizing the existing FTA, and promoting mutual cultural exchange. The "100th Anniversary of Chile-Türkiye Diplomatic Relations" will be celebrated in 2026. The flower featured in the visual theme "Chile-Türkiye: 100 Years" is Türkiye's national flower, while the Chilean national flower, the copihue, represents Chile. The copihue grows in the cold forests of southern Chile and is culturally significant to the Mapuche, one of the country's most important indigenous peoples. These two national flowers symbolize the 100-year friendship between Türkiye and Chile.

It is hoped that the 100-year friendship between Türkiye and Chile will be further strengthened by increasing mutual political, economic, defense and security, and cultural activities between the two countries. For instance, Chile collaborates with Türkiye in knowledge transfer and technological cooperation in defense technologies. Additionally, Chilean Foreign Minister Alberto van Klaveren visited Türkiye on April 9, 2025, holding meetings in Ankara and Istanbul. The second meeting of the Bilateral Cooperation Committee, which had not occurred in years, took place during this visit, marking a new era for relations between the two countries. This marks a significant milestone in revitalizing the relationship between Chile and Türkiye, with great potential for the development of political, economic, defense and security, and cultural ties within a mutual partnership.

Palestinian Public Diplomacy and Its Importance in Advancing the Palestinian Cause

Dr. Faed Mustafa

Ambassador of Palestine to Türkiye

Introduction

The State of Palestine and its people have long struggled not only against physical occupation and systemic injustice but also in the realm of international public opinion. In this context, public diplomacy has become an essential tool for Palestinians to communicate their just cause to the world. Public diplomacy, often described as the practice of promoting national interests and narratives through communication with foreign publics, has become increasingly important for nations and non-state actors alike. For Palestine, it serves not merely as a supplementary effort but as a strategic necessity in the face of occupation, misrepresentation, and limited access to traditional diplomatic channels.

Despite numerous obstacles, the Palestinian people, both at home and in the diaspora, continue their efforts to raise global awareness about their struggle for freedom, justice, and self-determination. In this endeavor, the solidarity of friendly nations and societies—especially the Turkish people, and in particular Turkish youth—can make a significant impact. Their active participation in public diplomacy initiatives can help amplify Palestinian voices and contribute to the broader movement for justice in the region.

Palestine's public diplomacy activities are diverse and often intertwined with its political and social goals, aiming to build a positive international image, garner support for its cause, and challenge the Israeli narrative. These activities are undertaken by both official bodies, such as the Palestinian Authority, and a wide network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots movements.

1. The Role and Importance of Palestinian Public Diplomacy

In a world dominated by media influence, international narratives, and perception politics, public diplomacy has become one of the most important means through which the Palestinian people can assert their national identity and challenge prevailing misconceptions.

Palestinian public diplomacy serves multiple strategic objectives:

- Raising international awareness of the Palestinian people's plight under occupation.
- Reinforcing the legitimacy of Palestinian claims to statehood and sovereignty.
- Exposing violations of human rights committed against Palestinians.
- Mobilizing global solidarity movements to support Palestinian rights.
- Fostering partnerships with international civil society organizations, academic institutions, and cultural platforms.

To achieve these goals, various Palestinian institutions and individuals implement a range of public diplomacy strategies:

a. Engagement with the Diaspora

Palestinian and Arab communities abroad are not only symbolic extensions of the homeland but also effective agents of influence in host countries. Palestinian diplomats and representatives work closely with diaspora communities to organize campaigns, events, and lobbying activities. These communities play a vital role in shaping public opinion and promoting the Palestinian narrative in various regions.

The relationship is rooted in the rise of Arab nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which fostered a sense of a shared Arab identity. The Palestinian cause became a central issue for the broader Arab World, especially after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, or what Palestinians call the Nakba (catastrophe), which resulted in the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians.

The Arab League has historically been a key platform for expressing official support for the Palestinian cause. It has passed resolutions, organized boycotts against Israel, and formally recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian

people. Arab states have also provided financial aid and hosted Palestinian refugees.

Beyond politics, the solidarity is deeply ingrained in social and cultural ties. Palestinians are an integral part of the larger Arab community, sharing a Levantine dialect of Arabic, cuisine, music, and traditions. Arab media outlets and artists have played a crucial role in amplifying Palestinian voices and narratives. Palestinian artists and writers, like Mahmoud Darwish and Ghassan Kanafani, are celebrated across the Arab world, with their works often seen as symbols of the wider Arab struggle for freedom and dignity.

Protests and demonstrations in solidarity with Palestinians are common across the Arab world, especially during periods of increased conflict. Social media has become a powerful tool for these movements, enabling rapid information dissemination and mobilization.

The presence of large Palestinian refugee communities in countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria has created strong bonds, with familial and social networks stretching across borders. However, these communities also face challenges, including restrictions on work and property ownership in some host countries.

In recent years, some Arab states have moved towards normalizing relations with Israel through the Abraham Accords, signaling a potential shift in official policy away from a unified, hardline stance on the Palestinian issue. This has been met with criticism from Palestinians and many Arab citizens who view it as a betrayal of the cause.

b. Cultural Initiatives

Cultural diplomacy plays a significant role in public diplomacy. Art exhibitions, film screenings, music festivals, and literature are tools used to showcase the richness of Palestinian identity and history. These initiatives aim to humanize the Palestinian experience and convey the realities of displacement, resistance, and resilience.

Palestinian cultural initiatives are a key aspect of what is known as “cultural resistance.” Led by artists, writers, musicians, and civil society organizations, these initiatives seek to assert and celebrate Palestinian identity in the face of displacement and occupation.

Arts, Literature, and Sports: The arts, including poetry, visual art, and film, are utilized to document the Palestinian experience, from the Nakba (catastrophe of 1948) to the daily challenges of occupation. Renowned poets like Mahmoud Darwish and writers like Ghassan Kanafani are celebrated throughout the Arab world and play a central role in Palestinian identity. Palestinian artists, writers, musicians, and athletes contribute to public diplomacy by representing their culture globally. Activities range from traditional and contemporary art exhibitions to theater performances and national sports teams (such as the national football team) participating in international events.

- Heritage Preservation: Efforts are concentrated on preserving traditional Palestinian heritage, including cuisine, folk music, and embroidery (tatreez). These traditions are showcased in cultural festivals, exhibitions, and educational programs worldwide, serving as a tangible connection to the land and countering Israeli claims of cultural appropriation. However, political and security challenges often hinder these activities, as many sites are located in areas under Israeli control. Through cultural diplomacy, Palestine aims to highlight its rich history and heritage, as recognized by international bodies such as UNESCO. This includes traditional art forms such as embroidery (Tatreez) and storytelling (Hikaye), as well as folk traditions, showcasing cultural wealth to assert its unique identity on the global stage.

- Theatre and Film: The Freedom Theatre in Jenin and Palestinian films featured at the Palestine Film Festival use art as a catalyst for social change, providing young people with a creative platform to address local issues. These platforms offer authentic storytelling and reach a broader international audience.

c. Strategic Use of Media and Social Platforms

Social media has democratized information dissemination, allowing Palestinian voices to bypass traditional media filters. Platforms such as X (Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become critical spaces for Palestinians to share real-time updates, personal stories, and eyewitness accounts of events on the ground. This form of digital diplomacy enables rapid dissemination of information and bypasses traditional media gatekeepers, often influencing global public opinion. They are instrumental in countering misinformation and bringing attention to issues often ignored by mainstream outlets.

· **Narrative Building:** A significant focus of Palestinian public diplomacy is the use of digital platforms to disseminate the Palestinian narrative. This involves sharing information, images, and videos to raise global awareness about the lived experiences of Palestinians, including issues related to the occupation, human rights, and daily life. Palestinian media outlets, journalists, and activists use various platforms to provide a direct account of events. This is especially critical during periods of conflict to counter what Palestinians and their supporters see as biased or incomplete reporting.

- **Countering Narratives:** This digital strategy also aims to refute the Israeli narrative and what is perceived as its “disinformation.” Pages and accounts like “Eye on Palestine” are cited as successful examples of leveraging social media to spread the Palestinian perspective and influence global public opinion.
- **Direct Engagement:** Some initiatives, such as the “Palestine in Hebrew” Facebook page, have been created to engage directly with the Israeli public, promoting understanding and dialogue. These efforts often focus on positive themes, such as a shared future and the values of a future Palestinian state.
- **Exposing Human Rights Issues:** Journalists and media groups play a crucial role in documenting and exposing human rights violations. They highlight the impact of the occupation on civilians, providing a continuous record of events for international human rights organizations and legal bodies. The safety of these journalists is a major concern, as they often operate in dangerous conditions.

Thus, Palestinian media initiatives aim to challenge the dominant narratives often found in Western media and to ensure that the Palestinian voice is heard. They range from official news agencies to independent, grassroots social media campaigns.

d. Academic and Civic Partnerships

Collaborations with international universities, research centers, and NGOs help promote academic discourse around the Palestinian cause. Student exchanges, seminars, panel discussions, and research partnerships create opportunities to influence young minds and future decision-makers.

- **Grassroots Advocacy:** Palestinian and international NGOs play a crucial role in public diplomacy. They work to raise awareness about

the humanitarian situation, human rights abuses, and the impact of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people.

- **BDS Movement and Lawfare:** Organizations are central to movements like the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, which aims to pressure Israel to comply with international law. They also engage in “lawfare”, using international legal frameworks to challenge Israeli policies in venues such as the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- **Collaboration with International Bodies:** Many NGOs cooperate with UN agencies and other international organizations to provide humanitarian aid, monitor developments on the ground, and advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people. This network of cooperation is a vital component of Palestinian public diplomacy.
- **Educational Exchange and Support:** Universities and academic institutions around the world partner with Palestinian universities to provide support, resources, and educational opportunities. This includes student and faculty exchange programs, joint research projects, and specialized courses tailored to the needs of Palestinian students, particularly in fields such as engineering and reconstruction.
- **Advocacy and Awareness:** Students and academics organize campaigns, teach-ins, and conferences to raise awareness about the Palestinian struggle. These efforts highlight issues like academic freedom and the systematic destruction of Palestinian educational institutions. The academic boycott of complicit Israeli institutions, as part of the broader BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement, is a key tactic used to pressure Israel to comply with international law.
- **Research and Documentation:** Scholars and researchers contribute to the cause by conducting studies and documenting human rights violations, land expropriation, and the impact of the occupation on Palestinian society. This work provides critical, evidence-based information that informs advocacy and policy debates at international forums.

Civic partnerships also involve collaboration between pro-Palestinian organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society

groups worldwide. These partnerships are critical for grassroots mobilization and direct action.

- **Humanitarian and Development Aid:** Many civic partnerships focus on providing humanitarian aid and supporting development projects in Palestine. Organizations work on the ground to deliver essential services, support community initiatives, and build the capacity of local Palestinian institutions.
- **International Advocacy and Lobbying:** Civic groups engage in lobbying and advocacy at international bodies, including the United Nations and national governments. They work to hold Israel accountable for its actions under international law and to build public support for pro-Palestinian policies. This often includes campaigns against the normalization of relations with Israel.
- **Building Solidarity Coalitions:** Civic partnerships are vital for creating broad-based solidarity movements. They connect the Palestinian cause to other global struggles for justice and liberation, such as the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. This intersectional approach attracts a wider range of allies, including student groups, labor unions, and religious organizations, thereby strengthening the movement's overall impact.

2. Challenges Facing Palestinian Public Diplomacy

Despite these proactive efforts, Palestinian public diplomacy faces numerous structural and political challenges that hinder its effectiveness:

- **Asymmetrical Power Dynamics:** The single most significant challenge is the asymmetrical power dynamic between Palestine and Israel. Israel possesses a well-funded, coordinated, and influential public diplomacy apparatus, known as *hasbara*, which includes government offices, think tanks, and media relations specialists. This infrastructure allows Israel to dominate the information space, particularly in Western media. In contrast, Palestinian efforts are often grassroots, fragmented, and lack the same level of institutional support and funding. This makes it difficult to achieve equal footing in a global media landscape.
- **Manipulation by Biased Media Outlets:** In many parts of the world, mainstream media outlets portray the Palestinian issue through a

biased or one-dimensional lens. This misrepresentation often undermines Palestinian legitimacy and portrays their resistance as aggression, while ignoring the realities of occupation and systemic oppression.

- **Censorship and Digital Suppression:** Palestinians heavily rely on social media to share their lived experiences and counter dominant narratives. However, these digital efforts are frequently met with censorship and content suppression. Social media platforms, including Meta (Facebook, Instagram) and X (formerly Twitter), have been widely criticized by human rights organizations for disproportionately removing or restricting pro-Palestinian content. This is often done under the guise of “hate speech” or “dangerous organizations” policies, leading to what is known as “digital Nakba”, a term used to describe the digital erasure of Palestinian content and voices. This censorship limits the reach of their message and makes it harder to mobilize global solidarity.
- **Limited International Recognition:** Although over 130 countries recognize the State of Palestine, several key global actors continue to withhold official recognition. This hinders Palestine’s ability to effectively engage in international diplomacy and influence global policy-making bodies.
- **Political Division within Palestine:** The ongoing political fragmentation between the West Bank and Gaza has weakened the coherence of the Palestinian message. Divergent political agendas and a lack of unified leadership dilute efforts to present a consolidated diplomatic front. Thus, Palestinian public diplomacy is not a single, unified effort. The political split between the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza complicates messaging and coordination. The PA’s official diplomatic efforts are often seen as separate from the grassroots activism and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that drive public opinion. This lack of a unified strategy can lead to inconsistent messaging and a less effective overall approach.
- **The Reality of Israeli Occupation:** The physical and political constraints imposed by the Israeli occupation pose a daily challenge. Restrictions on movement, access to communication infrastructure, and the threat of violence severely limit the ability of Palestinians

to freely engage in public diplomacy, both inside and outside their homeland.

- **Resource and Funding Constraints:** Palestinian public diplomacy initiatives, whether official or grassroots, operate with severe financial and logistical limitations. Many Palestinian NGOs and civil society organizations are highly dependent on external funding, which is often subject to political conditions and “counter-terror” clauses imposed by foreign donors. These restrictions can limit what organizations can do, create a climate of fear, and prevent the development of a sustainable, long-term public diplomacy infrastructure. Additionally, the constant instability and physical barriers of the occupation further disrupt daily operations and limit the ability to build and maintain stable organizations.

3. Opportunities and Potential for Growth

Despite the many challenges, there are also numerous opportunities that can be harnessed to strengthen and expand Palestinian public diplomacy:

- **Digital Diplomacy and Social Media Activism:** With the rise of global internet access, Palestinians and their supporters can now reach millions worldwide. Well-structured campaigns, digital storytelling, and real-time documentation of events on the ground can shift public opinion and counter disinformation.
- **Cultural and Artistic Expression:** Art, literature, music, and film transcend political and linguistic barriers. Cultural works can emotionally engage global audiences, evoke empathy, and encourage deeper understanding of the Palestinian struggle.
- **Educational Outreach and Academic Engagement:** Collaborating with universities and youth organizations across the world—especially in friendly countries like Türkiye—can help build long-term awareness and advocacy. Educational efforts can demystify the history and complexity of the conflict and encourage critical thinking among younger generations.

4. Building International Solidarity Networks

By fostering partnerships with international human rights groups, women’s organizations, and grassroots movements, Palestine can broaden the

base of its supporters. These alliances can lead to coordinated campaigns, policy advocacy, and stronger representation in international forums. Seeking International Recognition: The Palestinian leadership, through the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), has long pursued a strategy of gaining international recognition for the State of Palestine. This was a major goal of the 2012 UN vote to grant Palestine non-member observer state status.

Palestinian officials actively engage with international bodies like the UN, presenting their case and advocating for resolutions that support their cause. This diplomatic engagement is a formal component of their public diplomacy strategy, aimed at shaping international political and legal discourse surrounding the conflict. In short, Palestinians work with a wide range of grassroots and civil society organizations (CSOs) to build solidarity. This includes forming partnerships with international NGOs, human rights groups, and social justice movements.

- **Activist Coalitions:** Groups like the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and others create coalitions to organize protests, marches, and awareness campaigns. These are often decentralized efforts that can quickly mobilize large numbers of people in response to events on the ground in Palestine.
- **Humanitarian and Development Aid:** Partnerships with humanitarian organizations like SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE provide direct aid and support for development projects in Palestine. These collaborations are crucial for building trust and tangible connections with international communities.
- **Intersectionality:** A key strategy is to connect the Palestinian struggle with other global issues, such as racial justice, anti-colonialism, and human rights. By framing the Palestinian cause as part of a broader fight against oppression, activists can build alliances with movements like Black Lives Matter and indigenous rights groups, thereby expanding their base of support.
- **Digital Diplomacy:** The digital sphere is a critical space for building solidarity networks, especially in the face of censorship from traditional media. Organizations use digital public diplomacy to promote Palestinian culture and arts, countering attempts to erase Palestinian identity. This includes producing videos, podcasts, and online exhibitions that highlight Palestinian history, art, and resilience.

- Academic Boycott: The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, for example, includes a call for an academic boycott of Israeli institutions. This has helped build alliances with students and faculty on campuses worldwide, who organize protests, teach-ins, and other events to raise awareness of the Palestinian struggle.

5. The Role of Turkish Youth in Supporting Palestinian Public Diplomacy

Türkiye has historically maintained strong cultural, political, and humanitarian ties with the Palestinian people. In recent years, Turkish youth have shown increasing interest in global justice movements, including the Palestinian cause. This growing awareness creates a valuable opportunity to build a new generation of global advocates for Palestine.

Turkish students and youth can:

- Participate in academic research and publish articles that highlight the Palestinian perspective.
- Organize cultural events, exhibitions, and discussions at universities.
- Utilize social media to amplify Palestinian voices and counter misinformation.
- Engage in internships or volunteer work with NGOs and advocacy groups supporting Palestinian rights.
- Build bridges between Palestinian and Turkish youth through intercultural exchange and cooperation.

By acquiring public diplomacy skills and actively participating in these efforts, Turkish youth can become effective ambassadors of justice, helping to reshape international perception and support the future of the Palestinian people.

Conclusion

In a world where narratives shape policy, public diplomacy has become a vital tool in advancing the Palestinian cause. It is not merely about broadcasting grievances but about strategically shaping international discourse, forging alliances, and mobilizing global action. While the challenges

are formidable, the opportunities—especially in the digital and cultural spheres—are equally vast.

The role of international supporters, particularly Turkish youth, cannot be overstated. Their energy, creativity, and access to global platforms position them as key allies in the struggle for justice. As public diplomacy continues to evolve, the collective voice of Palestinians and their allies will play a decisive role in achieving freedom, dignity, and peace for future generations.

Palestinian public diplomacy has emerged as a critical instrument in the broader struggle for national self-determination and international legitimacy. Through a combination of official diplomatic efforts, legal engagement, cultural representation, and grassroots mobilization, Palestinian actors have sought to influence global public opinion, secure international recognition, and challenge prevailing power asymmetries in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the campaign has achieved notable milestones—such as observer state status at the UN and increasing international awareness of Palestinian rights—it continues to face significant structural and political obstacles, including internal fragmentation and limited access to global diplomatic arenas.

Nonetheless, Palestinian public diplomacy demonstrates a strategic adaptation to evolving global norms, particularly through its emphasis on international law, human rights discourse, and digital communication. Its effectiveness will depend not only on its ability to project a coherent, unified narrative but also on its capacity to engage diverse global constituencies in a rapidly shifting geopolitical environment. As such, Palestinian public diplomacy remains a dynamic and evolving field, central to the broader contest over legitimacy, narrative, and justice in the international system.

India And Türkiye in the Quest of a New World Order

M.J. Akbar

Former Foreign Minister of India

India and Türkiye emerged from vastly different historical antecedents in the 20th century to establish themselves as major nation states of the 21st.

The world wars of the 20th century led to the collapse of the age of empires. The Tsarist, Ottoman, Hungarian and German empires crumbled in 1918; European colonialism became unsustainable when India won freedom after the Second World War; and the Cold War ended with the disintegration of the Communist empire of the Soviet Union. The substantive consequence was a restructuring of the world into nation states which became the building blocks of a new international architecture.

In separate geographies and through different political impulses India and Türkiye are now assuming a more active regional and international role. With democracy as their ideological foundation, they offer centres of stability in regions that have become zones of volatile conflict because of a disturbed history.

In 1918 Türkiye not only lost her ancient empire but was in danger of being partitioned into insignificance by the victorious powers, Britain and France, who coveted not only her colonies but also her mainland. Türkiye was fortunate to find a secular leader like Mustafa Kemal Atatürk during the cataclysmic First World War, who protected and then preserved Türkiye's territorial integrity against direct aggression sponsored by Britain and France.

In 1919 India launched an extraordinary mass struggle against British colonialism under the visionary leadership of the unique Mahatma Gandhi, who introduced the concept of non-violence in the dialectic of change and proved its power by bringing down British colonialism by 1947. In 1919 supporters of British rule scoffed that the British empire would last for centuries. Once Gandhi began his mass movement, it did not last for even three decades. Remarkably, in just another thirty years after 1947 the British had

lost what was once touted as the biggest empire in history. British colonization flourished globally after it took root in India and withered once it was uprooted in India.

The power of non-violence has been underestimated by conventional historians, who often dismiss it as an unworldly ideology that succeeded in India because of British weakness rather than Gandhian strength. Even a cursory glance proves that some of the greatest changes of the 20th century were achieved by non-violence: decolonization; the end of apartheid in South Africa; the ebb of racism in America; the fall of the Soviet Union. Gandhi and Lenin began their revolutions at around the same time, with contrasting philosophies on how to create a new world order. Communism sought a class war; Gandhi believed that violence was destructive as well as self-destructive. Lenin's model collapsed by 1990. Apart from Algeria and partly the Mau Mau rebellion, the whole of Africa was liberated from European rule and apartheid by non-violence. Neither violence nor non-violence offers a complete answer applicable to all cases, but the success of the second is astounding because it was unprecedented.

Türkiye's resilience under Atatürk was a model for protecting sovereignty against external pressures. By 1922, Atatürk had defeated an invasion led by Greece and saved Türkiye from partition. India could not prevent the horrific fate of partition in 1947. Gandhi defied British deceit and manipulation to try and save India's unity till the very end, but was unable to prevent his party, Congress, from accepting partition and the creation of a new state based on religion as the price of freedom. India, which continues to have a minority population of 17%, primarily Muslim, despite partition, stood by the secular ideals of democracy, equality and freedom of speech and faith.

If we consider what the map of the world would have been without the creation of Pakistan on the Indian subcontinent, geopolitics moves into a different dimension. An undivided India would have been a world power whose geography stretched from Iran, Afghanistan and the Gulf to Burma. What is remarkable is how India shrugged off this strategic diminution to rediscover its true place in world affairs despite the continued efforts of many powers to disrupt its advance through implicit and sometimes explicit support for conflict and terrorism in the region.

In their different ways, and perhaps with different route maps, India and Türkiye have become key players in a multi-polar 21st century. Their

geographical and cultural strengths enable them to address global challenges while safeguarding regional stability. Both nations prioritize security, acutely aware of the need for forward defense. The Indian Navy's activities in the Red Sea and Türkiye's presence to its south highlight their proactive approach to security.

India and Türkiye are active, in their different spheres, in fostering regional and global partnerships. Türkiye's historical ties to Central Asia and India's Indo-Pacific outreach enhance their influence. But their bilateral bridge is inadequate given their existing and potential capacities. This can be resolved by a common approach to the principal curse of our times, the evil of terrorism. It is surprising when Türkiye, which has been a victim of terrorism, deviates from unconditional condemnation of this curse. No cause justifies terrorism or its sponsorship.

Both nations aim to prevent power-bloc interference by asserting their presence and leadership. Collaboration in trade, education, and infrastructure development offers tangible benefits. Cultural exchanges can enhance mutual understanding and long-term cooperation in areas such as energy security, climate change, and technological innovation, supplemented by joint initiatives that can strengthen bilateral ties.

There is potential for collaboration in stabilizing volatile regions through frameworks which address humanitarian challenges and promote economic growth on a foundation of shared values and respect for sovereignty. This approach also ensures adaptability to future geopolitical shifts.

India and Türkiye were kept on the sidelines of the 20th century, but the narrative has changed in the last 25 years. Both nations are poised to become dynamic forces in the 21st century. But the management of the emerging future needs care and understanding.

There is a useful dictum of diplomacy: what I say is less important than what you hear. If you and I do not attribute the same meaning to an expression or terminology, our dialogue will be affected. Let me provide two examples. The first pertains to what the West calls the "Middle East".

Which East is the Middle East in the middle of? If any country can claim to be geographically in the middle of the East, it is India. West Asia was converted into the Middle East by theorists of European empires, to serve a European purpose. The objective was not a simple semantic diversion. It nuanced the way in which we think of regions and their geopolitics;

much of the “Middle East” lies on the shores of the Mediterranean, a thoroughly European sea. Syria, Lebanon and the nations of north Africa are on the rim of the Mediterranean, and it would be more appropriate to describe them as Mediterranean nations.

Türkiye is Eurasia; the Ottoman Empire was Eurasian. Till today Europe refuses Türkiye a place in the EU, possibly because of its Muslim population. Atatürk’s greatest achievement was resisting Anglo-French designs and then establishing a modern identity for his country.

The post-colonial era demands a new future of strategic equity and economic welfare, rooted in national aspirations. We all understand this. We also recognize that regions must have the capacity to defend themselves against the subtle or brash encroachment of foreign powers and superpowers who perforce pursue their own economic and strategic interests.

Who cared about the deserts of Persia or Arabia before the discovery of oil? Nobody. Once oil was discovered, the control of wells made it a battlefield for surrogate powers. Dialectics turned into an instrument of aggression. The French encouraged notions that Syria was never a country. The British said the same about India when they ruled the subcontinent; that was their rationale for breaking it up. Indeed, they had multiple partitions in the mind before they were evicted by mass anger. They dismissed India as the land of over 550 kingdoms. By that logic Europe should become hundreds of independent realms.

Disputes are inflated to create war when war is in the interest of manipulators. I want to underscore one crucial truth about war: war becomes contagious. War spreads and becomes a conflagration with the infection of parallel causes. The Vietnam war was not about Vietnam alone; the entirety of Southeast Asia was involved directly or indirectly.

World war is a series of wars that have conflated into one another. Look at the war map beginning from Ukraine to the east, and you will discover that we are already amid a contagion. How far is Chechnya, with its bitter history, from Ukraine? Why are Chechens fighting on both sides of the Ukraine conflict? How far is Crimea from the Caucasus? How far is the Caucasus from Syria? Syria borders Israel, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and the Kurdish conflict zone: how many wars do we want to count there? The Houthis of Yemen are now activists in the Israel-Palestine war, which takes us to Aden and the Red Sea. The Indian Navy is operational in the Red Sea. Why? Forward security.

Every nation must address its own security challenges, if it wants to remain safe. Regional stability requires cooperation; it cannot be achieved unilaterally. India and Türkiye have an exceptionally important geopolitical role to play from their perspectives for they lie on the western and eastern frontiers of this inflammatory warzone. If they help with a peace process in the region, they also protect themselves. But I repeat, they cannot do so until they recognize that there is no justification for the greatest destabilizer of stability, terrorism, particularly when it acquires fascist dimensions like ethnic cleansing.

The 20th century was dominated by three transformative world wars, the Cold War being the third. The Cold War, often extremely hot outside Europe, has not ended; witness Ukraine.

The future defies prediction. There were many in 1914 who thought that the First Great War would end by the winter of 1914-15. Who, in 1910, could have predicted a war within five years so devastating that it decimated two generations of men, the destruction of ancient empires leaving quicksand in the wake, and the rise of Communism? Stand on the edge of 1920. Could anyone has foreseen the catastrophic crash of financial systems in the capitalist world, forcing the entire system to be reimaged?

In 1930, who predicted the rise to ultimate power of Hitler and German, and a Second World War more destructive than the First, ending with Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Who imagined in 1940 that by 1947 not only would India be free, but that India's freedom would catalyze the liberation of countless nations from European colonialism? European colonialism, which began in India, effectively ended there. Once India gained its freedom, colonialism could no longer sustain itself elsewhere. The French were brutal in Algeria but not victorious. In 1980 who foresaw the fall of the Soviet Union on the battlefields of Afghanistan? Reality often surpasses even the boldest imagination. On a different note, did anyone see the mobile phone coming?

Today's impossible is tomorrows mundane. We need to prepare ourselves for another cycle of the unimaginable. We must cultivate intellectual flexibility and develop tools to manage the unpredictable. The unthinkable will happen. Therefore, we must begin to think about the unthinkable.

Foreign policy is both rules-based and transactional. While ideology may provide the stable foundation of a nation's worldview, real-world

engagements require pragmatic engineering in bridge-building, negotiating outcomes.

Asia has three stable democracies, India, Türkiye, and Japan. Türkiye has faced its problems, not least the attempt to destabilize democracy by external forces. In an already complex world, our responsibility is to maximize our strengths and adapt to an even more challenging future. If a crisis does not help us understand one another, we will not have answered the demand of history, nor the demand of our own people. It is not important that both nations agree on everything. Türkiye has a role to play to its south and south-east neighborhood. Nature and politics abhor a vacuum. A vacuum will be filled, if not by you, then by others.

In the last ten years India has made an innovative departure in regional policy: a neighbor is no longer defined only by distance. A neighbor is defined by reach. If I can't reach you, you are not my neighbor. You are only a presence.

Today, there are 1,000 flights every week between India and the Gulf, and you can't get a seat. There is a country to our west, to which you cannot fill a single flight from India. For us, the Gulf is a neighbor. Indonesia is both a geographical and a strategic neighbor; Indonesia, people forget, is less than 100 nautical miles from the Andaman Islands. India has created a new arc of neighborhood from the Gulf to Indonesia, and from there extended its strategic reach into the Pacific. It is called the Indo-Pacific now, and with very good reason. The Indian Navy sits at both the choke points of the world: the Malacca Straits and the Red Sea.

When Prime Minister Modi asserts that war is not a solution, he reflects a strong philosophical conviction of the Indian philosophy. But this is not meek pacifism; this is realism. It does not mean that India will never confront a warmonger. India has not abandoned its military strength, far from it, as anyone who has tested the Indian armed forces now knows. As a philosophy we believe in the immense power of peace, but that does not mean that we believe that the state can be protected against the malevolence of enemies by non-violence. Even the apostle of non-violence, Gandhi, did not think so.

In the last week of October 1947, within just ten weeks of freedom from British rule, Pakistan suddenly, arbitrarily, sent 5000 terrorists to seize the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir by force: it is not commonly known that the status of Kashmir was indeterminate when India won its

freedom. Talks were scheduled for a resolution through negotiations. Pakistan sabotaged negotiations through a terrorist invasion by “irregulars” in 1947 and continues to repeat a failed pattern.

Gandhi was asked if non-violence was the appropriate response to this aggression. He was categorical. The state had to defend itself with the Army, and he gave a call to the armed forces to die like heroes if required to defeat brutal aggression.

India’s most difficult military confrontation has been with China, but the prevalence of good sense has enabled India and China to develop an ingenious mechanism for dispute resolution that has ensured peace on the border and the near-elimination of cross-border terrorism to India’s North-eastern states. The agreement between India and China, first signed in 1988 and strengthened into a pact by 1993 should be recognized as a great achievement of international diplomacy. It is built on the principle that peace today is more practical than searching for peace forever; that good is better than perfect. There have been occasions when Indian and Chinese troops have slid back into confrontation, but not a single bullet has been fired across the ceasefire line for over three decades. India has displayed the will for peace and proven this on the Himalaya.

India understands the corrosive debilitation inflicted by war; the objective of the present government of Prime Minister Modi is to transform a nation, once impoverished by harsh British colonization, into a major economic power of the 21st century. A significant achievement of the last decade has been the reduction of harsh poverty to less than 5%, according to the latest statistics of the World Bank; the figure was near 70% when the British left, with hundreds of millions at starvation levels. For the first time in recorded Indian history, there is no hunger, because 800 million people are guaranteed sufficient food as a fundamental right by a special scheme designed and implemented by Prime Minister Modi.

India and China continue to prove that neighbors do not have to be all-weather allies to cooperate across a range of issues; and that differences do not have to reach the bitterness of enmity. But there is a critical element in the positive part of the equation: China refused to open a Himalayan front during Pakistan’s war against India in 1965 or during the 1971 war in Bangladesh, despite desperate pleas from Pakistan’s military leaders to do so. Nor does China condone terrorism through inflammatory language.

The purpose of diplomacy and institutional cooperation is bridge-building. I am happy that your university is helping to build an intellectual bridge on which ideas and solutions can travel.

The 21st century will see radical changes in geopolitics; the map of the new world order will not be recognizable by the norms of the 20th century. In a sense, geography has become fluid. What do I mean by that? There are new continents being created. The new continents are welfare, economic and security alliances. NATO and the Warsaw Pact were the two strategic alliances that defined world power after the Second World War, but NATO is losing its relevance after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact. Only the US remains as powerful as it used to be out of the four “uniteds” of the 20th century: US, UK [till the empire lasted], EU, and the Soviet Union.

The new alliances or unions are based on free will, like BRICS, SCO, QUAD, ASEAN, NAU/USMCA; they are the new continents emphasizing economic prosperity rather than Big Power alliances as the leitmotif. These groupings stress shared responsibility and mutual benefit. Türkiye remains a member of NATO to reap the advantages inherent in an American umbrella but shows the readiness to strike out on its own in pursuit of national interest.

Old terminologies are defunct: the First, Second and Third Worlds have been buried. The First World is struggling with challenges; the Second World, codename of the Soviet sphere, is a bare memory; the Third World has disappeared as a phrase from international discourse. Even the new verbiage of Global South is becoming passe.

In September 2022, Prime Minister Modi and President Erdogan met at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in Samarkand, and shared thoughts on developing Türkiye-India relations. In the absence of dialogue, misunderstanding will inevitably replace understanding, particularly at a time when barbaric terrorism triggers powerful sentiments. We need to accept one non-negotiable fact: terrorism has no place in the 21st century.

There is an old story from central Asia which might be useful. A child entered a *madrassa* at the age of four. When he was 14, his teacher told him that it was time to leave school, because there was nothing more that he could teach. It was time to face the world. The student, apprehensive and afraid, asked: “Master: What shall I do next?”

The teacher replied, "Go out of the door."

"What should I do after that?"

"Stand still and look."

The boy stood, looked, and called out: "Master, I see nothing."

"Keep looking," said the teacher.

Finally, the boy said, "Master, I have seen something. I've seen the horizon."

"Very good," the teacher replied. "Now walk toward that horizon and stand still again. You will see another horizon."

Let us pursue one horizon at a time.

Kyrgyzstan in the Process of Change and Transformation and Public Diplomacy

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Introduction

Public diplomacy is a method that allows a state to promote itself in the international arena not only through official channels but also through people-to-people relations. Compared to traditional diplomacy, this form of diplomacy encourages direct communication between people and strengthens cultural ties. For young independent states such as Kyrgyzstan, public diplomacy plays a crucial role in increasing international recognition and ensuring effectiveness in foreign policy.

Public diplomacy has become an important element of Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy since gaining independence. Indeed, the fundamental objective of public diplomacy is to ensure that Kyrgyzstan is recognized as a peaceful country rich in cultural diversity. For instance, the Manas Epic is not only a literary work but also a heritage that reflects the history, culture, and values of the Kyrgyz people. This epic serves as a symbol of Kyrgyz identity and a bridge to international recognition.

Chingiz Aitmatov's works play a crucial role in enhancing Kyrgyzstan's presence on the global stage. His ideas are a vital source of inspiration for establishing a culture of peace and transforming the culture of war. His works are a unique tool for introducing the intellectual and cultural depth of the Kyrgyz people to the world. To sum up, Aitmatov's legacy is a fundamental component of Kyrgyzstan's soft power capability.

The formation of a Public Diplomacy Institute named after Chingiz Aitmatov could be a valuable initiative for Kyrgyzstan. This institute could serve as an important platform for developing cultural and diplomatic cooperation among the Turkic countries. Furthermore, the Issyk-Kul Forum could be utilized more effectively as an international public diplomacy

platform. A shared history and cultural heritage should be the foundation of diplomatic relations among the Turkic countries.

We need to effectively promote our shared values and historical heritage within the Turkic World. Through collaborative projects and regional cooperation, the Turkic World can attain a stronger position in international diplomacy. When the soft power elements of the Turkic states are combined, this coalition of forces will have a significant impact in the international arena. Our cultural heritage should serve as a unifying factor in diplomatic initiatives. Kyrgyzstan and the Turkic World can achieve a stronger diplomatic position by utilizing their common history and cultural heritage.

1. The Basis of Public Diplomacy in Kyrgyzstan

Public diplomacy is a multidimensional concept that incorporates theories from international relations, communication, and public relations. Although the term was initially introduced in literature in 1965, the practice of public diplomacy has a long history dating back to even further. The focus on such approaches grew significantly during the Cold War era when the world was divided into two power blocks. In the following stages, these concepts became more widely accepted and were implemented across different sectors.

Kyrgyzstan declared independence, determined its foreign policy as a sovereign state, and implemented this policy in the international arena during the years that coincided with the collapse of the bipolar system. During this period, Kyrgyzstan sought to adapt to new global dynamics and aimed to act in accordance with the current trend. This period also marked the beginning of the nation-state's building process.

Countries that were previously part of a larger system, especially those that seceded from the USSR, like Kyrgyzstan, found themselves needing to establish international public opinion and present themselves to the outside world under new conditions of sovereignty. In this process, it was necessary to redefine relations with neighboring countries and adapt them to the new context.

Public diplomacy has become an essential component of state foreign policy and has played a crucial role, particularly for newly independent countries. For countries transitioning from the old system to the new, this

process occurred at a time when the concept of the nation-state was being debated globally. As the existence of nation states was being challenged as a result of globalization, newly independent republics felt the urgency to establish themselves as nation states and were able to do so. In this context, public diplomacy has been utilized as a powerful tool of foreign policy and remains relevant today.

Public diplomacy has become a strategic tool for all states, not just newly independent countries like Kyrgyzstan. However, Kyrgyzstan has a unique advantage in this process. Historically, it has not faced any serious political issues with its neighboring countries. As a result, Kyrgyzstan has been able to focus on promoting the country, growing its economy, and increasing its attractiveness in areas such as tourism, culture, science, and education. These historically smooth relations have provided a strong foundation for building friendships and partnerships that prioritize mutual interests and provide mutual benefits.

At the same time, it was necessary to continue this process and implement systematic institutionalization under new conditions in order to fill it with meaningful projects. Many established traditions and practices were based on these initiatives. Cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy were as important as economic diplomacy for Kyrgyzstan. Bishkek also focused on these areas. Kyrgyzstan shares many commonalities with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. These countries originated from the same system, and their geography, histories, languages, and cultures are shared. Even their state traditions exhibit similar characteristics.

Kyrgyzstan contributed to the achievements made within the Soviet Union sharing common values. After leaving the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan's unique characteristics emerged alongside its shared ones. With independence, new opportunities emerged to preserve and revitalize national identity. Many factors set Kyrgyzstan apart from its neighbors. For instance, it lacked serious political issues that were either frozen or ongoing which was fortunate for the country. This also facilitated Kyrgyzstan's integration into the international community and its introduction to the world.

Being the first has its proud moments, but it also has its challenges. For example, in the post-independence period, commercial and economic relations, especially with neighboring countries, were still tied to the Soviet system. This situation created new challenges with the introduction of the national currency. The introduction of the national currency directly

affected commercial and economic relations, so it was necessary to explain this process not only to neighboring countries but also to citizens. This is because Kyrgyzstan had lived within a tight network of relations with other republics during the Soviet era. Areas such as economic and industrial distribution operated within this system. Therefore, breaking away from the system was not easy. However, Kyrgyzstan introduced its national currency with great determination. Today, despite all the challenges, the Kyrgyz som maintains its value when compared to other national currencies.

In short, Kyrgyzstan has placed great importance on these foundations while establishing sovereignty within the framework of its natural, statehood, historical heritage, and its economic conditions. These developments have paved the way for the advancement of public diplomacy and the strengthening of its use and practical aspects. At the beginning of the independent development, Kyrgyzstan acted dynamically, determined its priorities, and implemented them. In the subsequent years, significant progress was observed in Kyrgyzstan's engagement with the international cooperation. Kyrgyzstan entered the international arena by deciding to establish an open economy, a democratic, secular, and unitary state and it announced and stood by this decision. It is important to highlight Türkiye's role in particular. The Republic of Türkiye was the first country to open an embassy in Kyrgyzstan. Türkiye provided substantial assistance to Kyrgyzstan not only in diplomatic terms, but also in terms of transitioning to a market economy and establishing relations with the international community during the transition period.

The role of public diplomacy in this process can be seen as a paradigm shift. The diplomacy of countries that regained their independence at the end of the bipolar world was shaped in conjunction with the process of establishing their national diplomacy. In this context, **the** progress of building a national state and the structure of diplomatic service can be better understood. Within this framework, major reforms were implemented, drawing inspiration from the Polish model of so called "shock therapy". These reforms encompassed the fields of economics and politics with significant strides taken towards privatization. In 1995-1996, Kyrgyzstan underwent a historic transition to privatization processes, even privatizing land, a move unprecedented in its history. These steps were facilitated by the support and assistance of the international community. In fostering Kyrgyzstan's

relations with the world, there was a strong emphasis on adopting successful models that could be replicated in various parts of the world.

Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country that faces geographical challenges, lacking direct access to the sea, and having limited areas suitable for agriculture. Furthermore, compared to its neighbors, rich in oil and gas resources, Kyrgyzstan has more limited resources. Due to these factors, the country finds itself in a position that demands strategic acumen in its relations with the international community and in diplomacy. The foundations of Kyrgyzstan's success in foreign policy is primarily shaped by its values and goals.

2. Main Goals of Kyrgyzstan

- *International Recognition and Acceptance:* After declaring its independence, Kyrgyzstan has placed great importance on the process of gaining recognition and acceptance in the outside world. Taking its place in international platforms and playing a more active role in global relations have been the main goals of the country's public diplomacy.
- *Peaceful Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution:* Located in the heart of Asia, Kyrgyzstan has successfully achieved a balance between various ethnic groups and cultures and relying on peaceful diplomacy. This approach has been crucial in fostering relations with other countries in Central Asia. For instance, Kyrgyzstan played a key role in facilitating peace talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia, resulting in a ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Additionally, the Bishkek Agreement and the initial discussions that led to the Bishkek Protocol, were instrumental in laying the groundwork for ending the civil war in Tajikistan. These instances highlight Kyrgyzstan's commitment to peaceful resolutions and diplomacy.
- *Economic Independence and Development:* Despite lacking rich natural resources such as oil and natural gas, Kyrgyzstan has taken steps to develop agriculture and industry in particular. Attracting foreign investment, strengthening trade relations, and integrating into the market economy are factors that reinforce the long-term goal of economic independence.

3. Core Values and Soft Power Instruments of Kyrgyzstan

- *Historical and Cultural Heritage:* Kyrgyzstan is a nation renowned for the Manas Epic, which dates back centuries. This epic is recognized not only as a cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people but also as a significant cultural legacy across the entire Turkic World and former Soviet republics. The Manas Epic is not only a literary work, but also a source of the history, culture, and diplomatic heritage of the Kyrgyz people, and has been used as a tool of public diplomacy. This epic is an important diplomatic tool used to promote the cultural identity and historical contributions of the Kyrgyz people to the world.
- *Ties with the Turkic World:* As a part of the Turkic World, Kyrgyzstan has a significant advantage due to its historical ties. These ties play a crucial role in strengthening Kyrgyzstan's cultural identity and diplomatic relations. The Epic of Manas and the deep connections with the Turkic World serve as powerful cultural diplomacy tools in international relations.
- *Peaceful Statism and Perception of Sovereignty:* After declaring its independence, Kyrgyzstan pursued a peaceful foreign policy and presented this value as an example to other states in Central Asia. This is an important diplomatic tool for ensuring regional stability.
- *Economic Diplomacy and Opening Up:* Kyrgyzstan, a country lacking oil and gas resources, aims to address this deficiency through international economic diplomacy. One of its key strategies to strengthen foreign economic relations and enhance trade, investment, and economic cooperation opportunities, particularly with Türkiye and neighboring countries. This approach is considered crucial for Kyrgyzstan in its international relations.

To commemorate the 1000th anniversary of the Manas Epic, Kyrgyzstan proposed an initiative to the UN on behalf of the country from 1993 to 1995. This initiative garnered approval from 190 countries, including Türkiye with their backing, the UN signated 1995 as the “1000th Anniversary of the Manas Epic.” Consequently, the milestone anniversary was celebrated in 60 countries, including Türkiye.

In addition to the Manas Epic, Chingiz Aitmatov's legacy also held significant importance during the Soviet era. Aitmatov was not only a novelist

but also a diplomat, statesman, journalist, and a multifaceted personality. Serving as the president of the cinema institution, he was profound thinker who made a lasting impact on the literary world. Aitmatov promoted the cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people globally through his works which have been translated into hundreds of languages and enjoyed by readers worldwide. Particularly popular among intellectuals and young people, his works have been widely discussed in Türkiye. Aitmatov visited Türkiye multiple times and took part in important events there.

Chingiz Aitmatov introduced the Manas Epic, Kyrgyzstan, and the Kyrgyz people not only to our immediate neighbors but also to more distant places and countries with which we had not yet established diplomatic relations. This was truly a great opportunity and became a starting point for Kyrgyzstan. He was a very valuable figure who shed light on the development of public diplomacy and official diplomacy while also creating a beautiful umbrella.

It is the responsibility of the Kyrgyz people to uphold, preserve, and further this legacy. Chingiz Aitmatov's influence extends beyond literature. His interviews and journalistic articles, presentations, and speeches at meetings contain valuable insights that should be shared with the public. This legacy serves as a significant resource, a powerful tool and a valuable asset for public diplomacy.

The concept of public diplomacy can also be seen as an instrument of soft power. The soft power of each country consists of several elements. The first element comes from its culture, the second from politics, the third from its economic situation and the level of development of its economy. This includes not only its current potential, but also its potential that can be realized in the future. From this perspective, soft power is an important tool that can also leverage the cultural values of Kyrgyzstan.

Through the Issyk-Kul Forum, which was established by Chingiz Aitmatov as a club for intellectuals from around the world and plays a significant role, Kyrgyzstan is seen as having embraced a peaceful and pacifist approach to the culture of dialogue and foreign policy. With the contributions of epic ceremonies like the Manas Epic and Chingiz Aitmatov's works to our national identity, Kyrgyz foreign policy presents itself as that of a country that advocates for peace.

Education is a prominent soft power factor in Kyrgyzstan. Students who study abroad at universities can promote Kyrgyzstan wherever they

go. Many individuals, from journalists to scientists, serve as examples who embody Kyrgyz identity. Sometimes when Kyrgyzstan is mentioned, people struggle to identify which country it is. However, when they hear the names Chingiz Aitmatov and the Manas Epic, they proudly recognize it. This not only brings pride but also helps in Kyrgyzstan's efforts and shapes its foreign policy. This should be considered one of the core principles of Kyrgyz diplomacy.

Chingiz Aitmatov, a diplomat, has made significant contributions to the field of public diplomacy over many years. His legacy extends beyond literature; his institutional contributions and initiatives such as the Issyk-Kul Forum have left a lasting mark on the diplomatic world. Similarly, the poetic standards and high criteria of the Manas Epic, as well as the high standards of his prose works, have set a benchmark that every Kyrgyz person aims to achieve. To not only meet but exceed this benchmark, every Kyrgyz citizen actively participates in public diplomacy.

Kyrgyzstan possesses values that support, guide, and illuminate its work. With these values, the country has the opportunity to showcase its national identity to the international community in a way that does it justice and enhances understanding. This is crucial for enhancing the country's appeal and making it a more attractive destination.

4. The Future of Kyrgyzstan's Public Diplomacy

During this transitional period, it would be beneficial to offer concrete examples of Kyrgyzstan's public diplomacy development. Each country possesses its own distinct advantages and characteristics which can be maximized through proper institutionalization and organization. Kyrgyzstan has yet to fully capitalize on its public diplomacy potential, highlighting the need to assess opportunities presented by a rapidly changing and innovative landscape.

In fact, there have been at least three important revolutions in the development of public diplomacy. The first is the changes in international relations and the international system.

Secondly, the rapid development of technology is significantly impacting the field of mass media. For instance, the transformation of media, radio, and television through the internet, the new opportunities presented to the press, and the growth of social networks have led to a major revolution.

Technological advancements in communication tools have played a significant role in driving this process.

The third change that has occurred in politics. Politics is no longer solely the domain of politicians. What has been termed the “third wave of democratization,” politics has become accessible to a much broader audience. This has resulted in the emergence of participatory and representative governance. These advancements have directly influenced public diplomacy and created new opportunities.

Public diplomacy emerged and began to develop thanks to the opportunities provided by the three important revolutions mentioned above. However, it also faced challenges brought about by these revolutions. Nevertheless, public diplomacy remains very important for countries like Kyrgyzstan, which have been searching for their own path for 30 years and are undergoing a process of social transformation. These countries were not just in a transition period but also navigating a process of social transformation. At this point, the role of public diplomacy is of great significance.

One of the challenges Kyrgyzstan faces in terms of public diplomacy is the three constitutional crises it has experienced. The events that led to changes in power in 2005, 2010, and 2020 have significantly altered the impact of society on public opinion. Although the difficulties experienced by the public during these processes have increased diversity in society, there have also been traumas that have made social life difficult. In such situations, public diplomacy must first communicate with the domestic public, explain what happened during this period, and clarify the effects of its relations with the world. This is seen as one of the prerequisites for working with the international public.

It is crucial to understand and address Kyrgyzstan's border issues, transboundary water issues, migration issues, and questions that may arise regarding membership in international economic institutions. Being able to explain these issues to the public and raise awareness among society will play a significant role in the success of public diplomacy.

4.1. The Importance of the Issyk-Kul Forum

It is worth mentioning in detail the contribution of the Issyk-Kul Forum to public diplomacy in the context of institutionalization. This forum can also be referred to as a public diplomacy forum. At this point, proposals

for the establishment of a structure such as the Chingiz Aitmatov Public Diplomacy Institute are also being discussed. Currently, there is a foundation for the Chingiz Aitmatov-Issyk-Kul Forum.

The history of the Issyk-Kul Forum is truly unique. The first forum was held in Bishkek, followed by another in Issyk-Kul. The forum brings together participants from various countries around the world, as well as highly respected intellectuals. The forum serves as a platform where intellectuals from around the world come together. This forum can be utilized not only as a tool for Kyrgyzstan's soft power in its foreign policy but also for interaction and integration within the Turkic World. The Turkic States Organization (TSO) could consider this proposal. Many participants have attended this forum as guests of Chingiz Aitmatov. While some participants have passed away, most are still actively participating in these events. This forum continues in Kyrgyzstan. If there is interest and more focus on this topic, it could lead to truly productive and beneficial work.

The fundamental question is: "What kind of message can we convey to the world? Can this forum be a platform that has a global impact?" After all, the first forums were created with the idea of promoting "new thinking." This movement laid the foundation for Perestroika (Restructuring) and led to significant change. It is widely recognized that such forums play a crucial role. It is essential to review and evaluate these experiences. Therefore, it is worth considering taking such a forum to the next level.

An Institute of Public Diplomacy named after Chingiz Aitmatov could be created within the framework of the Issyk-Kul Forum or in cooperation with it. Such an institute could be created under platforms such as the International Turkic Academy. This type of establishment would be more comprehensive and effective.

4.2. Roadmap for the Turkic World

A more effective roadmap can be developed within the framework of the Turkish Academy. Moreover, an institutional structure can be established within the framework of the TDT. This initiative would represent a significant step towards the unity and institutionalization of the Turkic World.

Currently, participants are acting solely based on their own individual thoughts. This situation needs to evolve further. In this context, seriousness and cooperation between states are essential. If something significant

arises, a platform that can be presented to the global public opinion can be created.

It is especially important to emphasize that intellectuals working internationally should develop ideas and projects that are beneficial not only to their own countries but to all of humanity. Such a vision can make significant contributions to the Turkic World and the world as a whole.

The leadership of such projects by the Turkish Academy in cooperation with the TDT could lead to much more effective results.

The support of institutions such as Cappadocia University and the Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Research (ANKASAM) for such a project, the establishment of the Chingiz Aitmatov Public Diplomacy Institute, and the initiation of a process within the Turkish Academy could be a truly valuable step. This forum to be held in Cappadocia could be an important turning point as a project that can be presented to the TDT. Such a project will create a critical opportunity to strengthen cooperation among the Turkic countries and contribute to the development of public diplomacy. The vision and efforts that the teams at Cappadocia University and ANKASAM have made in this process could be a significant step towards contributing to the Turkic World.

The Turkic World has not only institutionalized itself but also has a spirit and identity. Discovering and shaping this spirit can unite the Turkic World more strongly. In this sense, there is a serious process of reflection underway on the current infrastructure. It is definitely the right approach to solidify these projects and present them in a suitable format. Accomplishing this could have an impact not only on the Turkic World but also on the world as a whole.

The projects offered by the Turkic World may extend beyond Turkic states to the UN. These steps can create significant awareness internationally and contribute to the dissemination of values such as a culture of peace. In particular, the example of Kyrgyzstan's initiatives accepted by the UN demonstrates how such initiatives can resonate at the international level.

Chingiz Aitmatov's concept of "mutual understanding based on fundamental values" is indeed a crucial point. Establishing a global culture of peace may present challenges, but building upon these principles can encourage global cooperation.

More thought needs to be given to how to strengthen public diplomacy in the Turkic World. Bringing together epics, cultures, and peoples could be a crucial aspect of this process. Discussing these projects will enhance their productivity with the contributions of participants. Observing the interest of participants who wish to take part in such projects presents a great opportunity for the success of the process. Such a vision and effort will make significant contributions to the Turkic World and can serve as a powerful example for peace and cooperation on a global scale. If more steps are taken to implement these projects, it will be possible for the Turkic World to become a stronger platform.

Formulating and sharing ideas will be extremely valuable in the development of such projects. It is essential for participants to express their own views and suggestions to reach common ground. Each participant's contribution can play a significant role in creating a stronger public diplomacy for the Turkic World. The process of mutual recognition within the Turkic World can be further explored. It is crucial to emphasize common values that strengthen unity and solidarity, in line with the legacy of our ancestors. Understanding and preserving our cultural and historical heritage will fortify the pillars of public diplomacy.

The Turkic World can only increase its visibility and influence in the wider world by creating more platforms and dialogues. This entails establishing connections not only between states but also between peoples. In this regard, it is crucial to delve deeper into the cultural codes of the Turkic World and to share them with one another in to foster stronger solidarity at both individual and societal levels.

Epic poems and folk culture play a significant role in this context. Traditional forms of greeting among the Kyrgyz, such as “sak salamatsızbl,” “kutman tan,” and “aribanız,” carry deeper meanings. The concept of peace and security also helps establish social bonds. These cultural elements enhance communication between people and strengthen mutual understanding. The transfer and promotion of such cultural expressions will be a crucial tool of public diplomacy. In conclusion, keeping these cultural and social values on the agenda for a stronger union of kindred peoples and effective public diplomacy is a valuable step in highlighting the unique identity and common ground of each people.

Public diplomacy plays a crucial role in Kyrgyzstan, especially in its efforts towards peacebuilding and dialogue. These experiences can be

incredibly valuable and inspiring for public diplomacy within the Turkic World. The peacebuilding initiatives led by Kyrgyzstan, such as the cease-fire agreements in Karabakh since 1994 and the dialogue processes during the civil war in Tajikistan, have set a solid foundation for enhancing peace and dialogue in the Turkic World.

Increasing initiatives in the Turkic World and showcasing Kyrgyzstan's efforts in these areas on a broader platform can enhance understanding and cooperation between peoples. Kyrgyzstan has taken part in peacekeeping missions in numerous conflict zones worldwide with the approval of the UN gain valuable experience in the process. This experience serves as a crucial asset in establishing the groundwork for public diplomacy in the Turkic World.

In this context, it is crucial to share the public diplomacy experiences of every country in the Turkic World, with a focus on Türkiye. Türkiye's successful public diplomacy efforts abroad can serve as a model for other Turkic countries. By collaborating Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye, and other Turkic countries can develop a unified public diplomacy strategy, making these process more effective.

Kyrgyzstan's achievements in this area can serve as a guide for other countries in the Turkic World. Integrating Kyrgyzstan's experience in peacebuilding processes into public diplomacy in a way that strengthens social and cultural ties in the Turkic World will be an important step in spreading a culture of peace. If all resources and accumulated knowledge are made available for common use, they can have an impact both regionally and globally.

4.3. Diplomacy: The Importance of Fairy Tales and Epics

One of the most important elements that hold societies together is cultural elements. Developed countries share stories and epics from their history with their children. So, how should our history be told? This is something we need to think about.

Fairy tales and epics are only a form of storytelling; they also serve as the living memory of a society. Epics hold significant value in Kyrgyzstan and the Turkic World. The Kyrgyz Academy of Sciences currently possesses eighty different variants of the Manas Epic in manuscript form and

is digitizing them in Arabic, Latin, and old script formats. Additionally, there are numerous smaller epics as well.

As is well known, there is a scientific field called “mnemonics” which refers to both memorization and transmission from generation to generation. Kyrgyz epics have not remained dogmatic; they have not been preserved in a static form. The Manas Epic is an epic that is constantly renewed, enriched, and refined. In other words, it is an epic that is always evolving. These works contain a profound philosophy and embody wisdom that has been distilled over the centuries. They convey messages that they wish to impart to us.

The Turkic World boasts a rich cultural history. A nation with a strong culture ensures a more secure and promising future. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize cultural diplomacy and strategies.

What matters is preserving and keeping alive the legacy we have been given, and passing it on to future generations, to younger generations, in a manner befitting them. Diplomacy is not just something that is directed outward. Public diplomacy is multidimensional. One of its most important aspects is the domestic public. This is very important in terms of keeping alive the creative spirit of the nation.

Conclusion

Kyrgyzstan was the first Central Asian republic to declare independence on August 31, 1991. The recognition of Kyrgyz as the official language in 1989 was a first in the USSR. Additionally, the constitution adopted on May 5, 1993, remains in effect today with some amendments. In the same year, Kyrgyzstan became the first Central Asian country to adopt an independent currency after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Kyrgyz som, which came into circulation in 1993, is still used today as a strong national currency. This marks a proud milestone for Kyrgyzstan.

These steps were taken not only with the goal of “being the first,” but also in response to the necessities and opportunities presented by the conditions and possibilities of that period. These first steps strengthened Kyrgyzstan’s independence and autonomy. Kyrgyzstan, considering its relations with countries such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which share historical and cultural ties, has emphasized not only its similarities but also its unique characteristics in the post-independence period.

Since gaining independence, Kyrgyzstan has been striving to utilize diplomacy. As a sovereign state, Kyrgyzstan aims to make decisions that align with global dynamics, freely determining its foreign policy. Simultaneously, the process of building a modern nation-state is still in progress.

Kyrgyzstan aims to position itself as a secular, modern, and open economy-focused country in foreign policy. It has undergone radical reforms by adopting Poland's "shock therapy" model of economic reforms, and privatization was carried out in 1995-1996. Türkiye, as the first country to recognize Kyrgyzstan's independence, provided significant assistance during this transition period. Türkiye's support in promoting Kyrgyzstan to the world has also been substantial.

Despite facing challenges such as its mountainous terrain, lack of access to the sea, limited agricultural land, and scarcity of natural resources, Kyrgyzstan's public diplomacy aims to establish an important position based on its cultural and historical values. The Manas Epic is a significant value that reflects the Kyrgyz people's contributions to humanity. These values are fundamental elements that shape the Kyrgyz people's sense of statehood and diplomacy. Chingiz Aitmatov, an important figure of the Soviet era, stood out not only as a writer but also as a diplomat, journalist, and statesman. Aytmatov's thoughts on the culture of peace have been quoted in the UN's declaration on culture and hold a critical place in the history of Kyrgyz diplomacy.

Kyrgyzstan embraces the concept of "soft power" in public diplomacy. The country aims to establish a culture of peaceful dialogue and position itself as a peace-loving nation in the international arena. Kyrgyzstan's public diplomacy involves the active participation of not only the government but also its citizens. Scientists, students, and the entire population should embrace Kyrgyzstan's national identity and represent the country in the best possible way on the international stage promoting it when necessary. In this context, it is also crucial to increase the number of studies on public diplomacy in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan's public diplomacy is evolving with its own unique characteristics. Today, not only politicians but also citizens and various other actors are actively participating in this process. The multi-stakeholder nature of public diplomacy ensures that multiple parties are engaged in the process. Events like constitutional crises and revolutions in Kyrgyzstan have had a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of public diplomacy. The traumas

endured by the people have further complicated communication, making it crucial for public diplomacy to focus on enlightening the population.

Geographically, Kyrgyzstan faces challenges such as migration, border issues, and underground resources. This situation makes it difficult to achieve the goals of sustainable development and creates an issue that requires attention in foreign relations. Strengthening relations with the Turkic World is also an important strategy. Kyrgyzstan can strengthen public diplomacy with the Turkic World by following the examples of developed countries.

The Return to West Azerbaijan and the Peace Process in the Caucasus

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Introduction

It is extremely important to address the calamities and genocides that West Azerbaijani Turks have suffered throughout history, and the problems they face in the regions they currently inhabit. These massacres were partially halted with the declaration of independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on May 28, 1918. An Armenian state was established in Yerevan and an area of approximately 9,000 square kilometers surrounding it, without any approval or input from the West Azerbaijani Turks, and the administration was left entirely to the Armenians.

In the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan recaptured its historical lands, namely Karabakh and East Zangezur. Following this, a new era began to protect the rights of West Azerbaijanis, and the West Azerbaijan Association was reestablished. The search for a peaceful solution, not a war, to achieve the return of West Azerbaijanis continues.

Azerbaijan does not desire war in any way. The Baku administration aims for the peaceful return of West Azerbaijanis to their homeland, ancestral lands, and villages; they desire them to live there and continue their lives in peaceful coexistence with existing Armenian citizens.

The brotherhood and strategic alliance between Azerbaijan and Türkiye have enabled Baku to attain a strong position. This does not mean that it can now relax. On the contrary, much more effort is needed in this period to avoid recurring the problems encountered repeatedly throughout history. Historically, genocides have been committed repeatedly not only in Azerbaijan but also against Turks and Muslims living in Türkiye. Unfortunately, in the face of these genocides and massacres, major powers and some states have either remained silent or have completely failed to acknowledge these tragedies.

It is extremely important to address the calamities and genocides suffered by West Azerbaijani Turks, and the problems they face in the regions they live in today. Furthermore, considering what has been done to date to protect the rights and rights of these people and what can be done in the future will be extremely beneficial for developing successful strategies.

1. History of Western Azerbaijan

Following the weakening of the Ottoman Empire and Russia's occupation of the Azerbaijani khanates, an independent state could not be established on Azerbaijani territory. However, Azerbaijan established an independent republic in 1918. Until 1918, more than 70% of the population in present-day Armenia (80% in some regions) consisted of Muslim Azerbaijani Turks. These lands were already historically part of Azerbaijan. The Irevan Khanate, in particular, was a region largely populated by Turkic Muslims until the Russian occupation in 1826. Unfortunately, massacres and ethnic cleansing began in these regions from 1905 onward.

In March 1918, a major genocide was committed not only in Northern Azerbaijan (the borders of the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan), but also in Southern Azerbaijan, within the borders of present-day Iran, and in the Azerbaijani territories within the borders of present-day Armenia. Following Russia's withdrawal from World War I in 1917, the surrender of all its weapons to the Dashnak, Hunchakian, and other Armenian terrorist organizations, coupled with the crossing of Armenian troops fighting against the Ottoman Empire into Azerbaijani territory, led to these genocides and massacres.

These massacres were partially halted with the declaration of independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on May 28, 1918. During the same period, with the dissolution of the Transcaucasian Federation, Georgia and Azerbaijan established their own independent states, while Armenian efforts to establish a state also came to the fore. The failure to prevent the establishment of the State of Armenia (then known as the Republic of Ararat) during that period laid the foundation for many problems that persist to this day. The Ottoman Empire supported the Armenians, believing that establishing a republic would solve the problems in the region. Azerbaijani intellectuals similarly harbored the hope that "with the establishment of the Armenian state, they would no longer be able to maintain their claims over Karabakh or other Azerbaijani territories."

The establishment of the Republic of Ararat neither brought peace to the region nor resolved the issue. On the contrary, the tragedy facing West Azerbaijani Turks today dates back to this period. An Armenian state was established in an area of approximately 9,000 square kilometers around Yerevan, without the West Azerbaijani Turks' approval or consultation, and the administration was left entirely to the Armenians. Even then, only a small Armenian population existed in certain regions. Later, under the administration of the USSR and with Armenian support, the territory of today's Armenian State was gradually formed by seizing Azerbaijani territory. The lands of Azerbaijan were annexed to Armenia, and the lands inherited from the ancestors of the West Azerbaijani Turks began to be called Armenia.

In 1988, as the USSR began to disintegrate, a third major wave of migration occurred. The first migration occurred between 1918 and 1920, and the second between 1948 and 1953. These migrations were forced from the lands of present-day Armenia, that is, from the regions where West Azerbaijanis lived. The final wave of migration occurred between 1988 and 1991. During this period, the last Azerbaijani Turks, including the village of Nüvadi, were completely expelled from the lands of West Azerbaijan. Thus, not a single Azerbaijani Turk remained within the borders of present-day Armenia. The last wave of migration also occurred in a time period parallel to the Karabakh issue. The First Karabakh War, which began in 1991, limited Azerbaijan's ability to defend the rights of West Azerbaijanis. Azerbaijan focused all its might on the Karabakh issue. For this reason, the problems of West Azerbaijani Turks received insufficient attention between 1991 and 1994. The USSR administration and the authorities of the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic did not want the West Azerbaijanis expelled from Armenian territory to be settled in Karabakh. Unfortunately, the officials in power at the time maintained close ties with the Armenians and were influenced by them. If 250,000-300,000 West Azerbaijani Turks had been settled in Karabakh at that time, the Karabakh conflict today might never have occurred. The presence of such a large population in Karabakh could have prevented Armenians from carrying out massacres or ethnic cleansing there. However, this opportunity was not taken advantage of.

Thus, the West Azerbaijani migrants were dispersed throughout Azerbaijan. In this context, they migrated to many other regions, particularly Ganja, Baku, Shamakhi, Sheki, Lankaran, Barda, and Tartar. However, very few West Azerbaijanis were settled in the Karabakh region. The majority

of them were deported to Khojaly. Unfortunately, during the 1992 Khojaly Massacre, these West Azerbaijanis were also massacred, and the survivors were forced to migrate a second time. During that period, no concrete steps were taken on important issues such as keeping West Azerbaijanis together, protecting their rights and legal rights, or granting them international refugee status. This was because the people who had migrated from Karabakh had to deal with their housing, livelihood, and security needs. Tent cities were established, and efforts were made to meet their basic needs. During the war, all efforts were focused on Karabakh, and action was not taken for the West Azerbaijanis.

2. The Second Karabakh War and the Return to West Azerbaijan

In the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan recaptured its historical territories, namely Karabakh and East Zangezur. After this, a new era began to protect the rights of West Azerbaijanis, and the West Azerbaijan Association was reestablished.

Azerbaijan also prepared and presented its own program for coexistence with Armenians. Currently, more than 30,000 Armenian citizens live peacefully in Azerbaijan in the city of Baku alone. However, not a single Azerbaijani Turk lives in Armenia. However, Azerbaijani Turks have historically lived in regions such as Irevan, Gökçe, Basargeçer, Zengezur, Zengibasar, Dede, and Kafan; they have lived in those lands for centuries. Today, it has become imperative to defend the right of West Azerbaijani Turks, the true owners of these lands, to return to their ancestral lands and live there.

Türkiye's political and moral support to Azerbaijan during the Second Karabakh War is invaluable. The Shusha Declaration, signed after the war (June 15, 2021), served as the official and historical document of this solidarity. The historical, spiritual, and cultural unity that already existed between the peoples of Türkiye and Azerbaijan was cemented by the Shusha Declaration. This declaration is an extremely valuable and strategic document, as it guided Türkiye and Azerbaijan not only as allies but also to act as "one state." The "Two States, One Nation" mentality began to transform into a true "One Nation, One State" unity. Therefore, Türkiye's support is needed to protect the rights of West Azerbaijani Turks, and Türkiye is providing the necessary support. Unlike Turkish intellectuals and academics, the public is not sufficiently informed about West Azerbaijan.

Armenian research institutes operate at many universities in Türkiye. These institutes conduct extensive research on the Armenian issue and the alleged genocides. Therefore, a similar scientific effort is necessary regarding West Azerbaijan. Numerous documents on the subject are available in Ottoman, Russian, and Azerbaijani and Georgian archives. The Georgian archives are particularly important because, at the time, the documents of the Transcaucasian Seym were collected in Tbilisi, and a significant portion of them still exists today.

However, these documents must be supported by academic research. The loss of these lands cannot be explained solely by the developments of 1918-1920. It dates back much further.

There were dreams of establishing a "Great Armenia from sea to sea" in Ottoman lands, which were supported by the Western great powers. When these dreams failed to materialize, the State of Armenia was established on Azerbaijani lands, granting Armenians a "new homeland." Established in 1918 with Ottoman and Azerbaijani support, the State of Armenia encompassed only 9,000 square kilometers. However, today, this area has surpassed 21,000 square kilometers. This is because, with the establishment of the Soviet Union after 1920, the borders in this region became blurred, and Azerbaijani lands were annexed piecemeal to Armenia. Furthermore, these decisions were not made by the Azerbaijani people or the parliament; they were implemented directly by the Soviet administration.

Thus, the basis for the displacement of West Azerbaijani Turks from those lands was laid. Armenians and Armenian historians know these facts very well, but they conceal them from the world. Unfortunately, the world public remains unaware of most of these facts. Thanks to the public diplomacy efforts under the leadership of President İlham Aliyev after the First Karabakh War, Azerbaijan's just struggle was better explained to the world. Great Leader Heydar Aliyev, in every international meeting he attended during his presidency, drew a map of Azerbaijan and attempted to explain that Armenians had not historically lived in Karabakh and that only a small number had been brought from Türkiye, Iran, and Russia and settled in these regions. The Karabakh conflict began in the 1990s and was only resolved in 2020. Finally, in 2023, the Azerbaijani flag began flying over the Karabakh territory. Today, the Azerbaijani State is rebuilding Karabakh and Şarqi Zəngəzur, and the refugees are returning to their ancestral lands. Armenians have not only destroyed Karabakh, but

have also destroyed houses, buildings, and even cemeteries. Despite this, Azerbaijan is revitalizing these lands and ensuring the return of its compatriots. It is desired that West Azerbaijanis return to these lands as well. Indeed, in the period leading up to the First Karabakh War, West Azerbaijanis who remained in the region were forcibly displaced. Even further back, the massacres of 1918-1920 and the forced migrations of 1948-1953 are still vivid memories. During those times, the villages in West Azerbaijan were evacuated, and their inhabitants were forcibly relocated to the hot, different climates of the interior of Azerbaijan. This persecution resumed in 1987 and ended in 1991.

As Turkic states grow stronger and support the Azerbaijani state, West Azerbaijani Turks will be able to defend their rights and return to their ancestral lands. President Ilkhan Aliyev's promises have been realized. The President has always stated that he would definitely return to Karabakh, and he has achieved this. The unity between Türkiye and Azerbaijan has strengthened Baku's resolve in every field, and this unity will further strengthen both countries. Other Turkic republics are also taking the necessary steps to support this Turkic unity. West Azerbaijanis live in large numbers not only in Türkiye but also in other Turkic republics such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In 1948, the vast majority of West Azerbaijanis were forced to migrate to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. During the same period, some Meskhetian Turks from Georgia were settled in these regions. Consequently, West Azerbaijanis also live in the Turkic republics, and their descendants eagerly await their return to West Azerbaijan, their ancestral homeland.

3. Armenian Destruction in West Azerbaijan

Three significant waves of migration have occurred over the course of a century: forced migrations against West Azerbaijanis were carried out in 1918-1920, 1948-1953, and 1987-1991. As a result of these migrations, the vast majority of West Azerbaijanis live in Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Iran. In particular, some of those who migrated to Iran returned, while others remained there. Furthermore, on Stalin's orders, between 1948 and 1953, West Azerbaijanis were deported to the Turkic republics of Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Today, significant numbers of West Azerbaijanis live there.

West Azerbaijanis are also found in many parts of the world, including Europe and America. For example, the grandson of Iravan Khan currently lives in Stuttgart, Germany. During the three major waves of migration in the last century, at least 250,000-350,000 Azerbaijani Turks were forced to migrate between 1987 and 1991. It is estimated that there were at least 100,000-200,000 Azerbaijani Turks between 1948 and 1953. Many people were massacred during these migrations, and many died due to their inability to adapt to the harsh conditions. In total, Approximately 2 million descendants of West Azerbaijanis are scattered around the world. At worst, 250,000-350,000 people forced to flee during the last wave of migration wish to return.

According to the latest statistics, over 30,000 Armenians live in Baku alone. The Azerbaijani state fully supports the Armenian Church and the Armenian community in Baku, providing the necessary conditions for them to practice their religion in a safe environment. In contrast, there are almost no Azerbaijani Turks in Yerevan and other regions of Armenia. 99 percent of the population there is Armenian, and there is no trace of Azerbaijani Turks. While structures like the Armenian Church in Baku are protected by the state, mosques, cemeteries, and other Azerbaijani historical artifacts in Armenia have unfortunately been damaged or destroyed. The events in Karabakh, in particular, clearly demonstrate this. Not only mosques, but even churches founded by German Christian missionaries have been vandalized and used for their own purposes.

In some places, both mosques and these churches have even been used as animal shelters. The only remaining mosque, which had been used as a defensive tower, remained unharmed. While every neighborhood once boasted a mosque, today very few remain. These are being restored and protected with the support of the Haydariye Foundation and the Azerbaijani government. However, the only mosque in Yerevan, a Shia mosque built during the Safavid period, has been restored by Iran. Azerbaijan's historic neighborhoods, palaces, and cultural structures there have been extensively destroyed. Unfortunately, some of these mosques are now used as drinking establishments or restaurants. This demonstrates the extent to which cultural and religious values are being disregarded. These neighborhoods and areas are being almost destroyed, attempting to sever the region's connection to its Azerbaijani and Turkish roots.

Numerous applications have been made to UNESCO and other international organizations to address this situation, but they have not received sufficient support. Despite this, anti-Turkish rhetoric from Armenia continues, and even unjust accusations are being made against Türkiye and Azerbaijan. Yet, the Turks living in the region have been almost annihilated, and the traces of Turkish civilization are being erased. Mine clearance in Karabakh also poses significant challenges. Armenians have mined many areas in the region, harming both people and animals. Even fruit-bearing trees have been cut down, preventing agriculture from continuing. Photographs taken in this regard clearly show mosques being used as pigsties, and these images are also being used for propaganda purposes. Unfortunately, the tolerance of the Turks has been brutally tested in the face of this destruction. No matter how innocent the Armenians try to appear, the truth will one day emerge. Lobbying activities may provide temporary advantages, but the truth will eventually emerge.

4. The Geopolitical Importance of West Azerbaijan in the Future of the Turkic World

A look at the map reveals that a dagger was thrust between Türkiye and Azerbaijan during the establishment of the Armenian State. The Russian Tsardom at the time, and later the Soviet Union, sought to establish a Christian state on the border between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, completely separating the oil-rich Azerbaijani lands from Türkiye and the Turkic World. Given West Azerbaijan's geopolitical position, the reclaiming of West Azerbaijan and the continued existence of West Azerbaijanis in those lands are crucial to the unification of the Turkic World. The Zangezur Corridor, in particular, would enable West Azerbaijanis to live in those regions, establish peace, and secure road routes. Vehicles originating in Türkiye can easily reach other Turkic states via Azerbaijan. The Zangezur Corridor should not be considered solely as a highway or railway. It could also serve as an energy pipeline. Resources such as natural gas, electricity, and green energy could pass through this corridor. The Zangezur Corridor is expected to come into operation soon. Furthermore, Armenia cannot directly access Russia or other regions through its own railways. Due to its mountainous terrain, it must use train and highway routes via Nakhchivan, which were active during the Soviet era.

For Armenia, the operationalization of the Zangezur Corridor will also provide a significant opportunity for economic development. Currently, between 350,000 and 500,000 Azerbaijani Turks are expected to return to Armenia and live in their ancestral lands. This will strengthen the Armenian state both politically and economically. Azerbaijan recognizes the existence of the Armenian state and has no problem with this. However, the presence of Azerbaijani Turks is essential to Armenia's development and to the strengthening of relations among Türkiye, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. Türkiye and Azerbaijan can play a guarantor role in this process.

Regarding the return of West Azerbaijanis to their homeland, Armenians are fluent in both Azerbaijani and Turkish. This is because they came to Turkish lands and learned Turkish and Azerbaijani to earn their living there. Therefore, there are no language or communication problems. However, the Dashnak and other revanchist Armenian political leaders must accept this reality. No problem can be solved through war. Peace is only possible through mutual understanding. Bringing the West Azerbaijan region to West Azerbaijanis will ultimately contribute significantly to the Turkic World. This will facilitate access not only to the Zangezur Corridor but also to all other regions passing through Armenian territory.

5. Pashinyan's Approach to Karabakh and West Azerbaijan

Pashinyan, who has backtracked on the Karabakh issue, appears to be considering amendments to the Armenian Constitution as part of efforts to reestablish relations with Türkiye and Azerbaijan. If Pashinyan can even preserve Armenia's existing territories, this will be a significant achievement. Historically, there has been no Armenian state. This is an Armenian state established on Azerbaijani and Turkish lands. Initially covering approximately 9,000 square kilometers, the territory was expanded to over 21,000 square kilometers during the Soviet era. With the occupation of Karabakh, Armenians effectively took control of these lands through the displacement of West Azerbaijanis.

Considering the Yerevan region and its surrounding areas, until the late Soviet era, for example, until 1988, there were numerous Azerbaijani villages in these regions. However, the Armenians largely depopulated these villages and completely transformed their settlements. Today, in those villages, for example, where a thousand families once lived, only

10-15 households live. This clearly demonstrates the extent of the population and settlement decline.

Pashinyan clearly believes that the Karabakh conflict was resolved through Azerbaijan's military might. Azerbaijan has ensured its territorial integrity and gained control of all of Karabakh. Azerbaijan demands that Armenia renounce not only Karabakh but all its territorial claims and implement constitutional amendments. Armenia holds territorial claims not only against Azerbaijan but also against Türkiye. For example, Armenia uses Mount Ararat in its official emblem and considers Eastern Anatolia its own territory. Therefore, its dreams of a "Greater Armenia" remain alive.

Azerbaijan's first condition is: "Armenia must abandon these claims and amend its constitution." Furthermore, for the Zangezur Corridor to be opened, Armenia must accept Azerbaijan's conditions. While Pashinyan has expressed positive intentions on this matter, constitutional amendments and a referendum have not yet taken place. Unfortunately, the West Azerbaijan issue is even more challenging. Pashinyan has not yet taken any positive steps regarding the West Azerbaijan issue and is avoiding meeting with officials of the West Azerbaijan Association. Dialogue and progress in this area are essential.

The West Azerbaijan Association has repeatedly submitted official applications and requested recognition as a non-governmental organization. Approximately two million West Azerbaijanis live worldwide, the vast majority of whom reside in Azerbaijan. West Azerbaijanis have been displaced from their lands numerous times, and although a long time has passed since the last displacement, they are unable to return. Living in the lands where they were born and raised and visiting the graves of their ancestors and grandfathers is a fundamental human right. They demand that these rights be recognized.

Unfortunately, however, Pashinyan and the Armenian government have not taken any positive steps in this regard, nor do they appear to intend to do so. Perhaps, with the 2026 elections approaching, Pashinyan is avoiding these sensitive issues and is sending different messages to the public. Positive developments may occur in the West Azerbaijan issue in the future, especially after the elections and the completion of the peace process. The Azerbaijani government is also making significant efforts to protect the rights of West Azerbaijanis.

Currently, there is no concrete statement or development that would please Azerbaijanis. However, it is hoped that Armenia will come to its senses and accept this issue after peace is achieved. The return and resettlement of West Azerbaijanis to their homelands will strengthen Armenia. This will be beneficial, not detrimental, to Armenia. This will require some time.

6. Russia's Approach to the West Azerbaijan Issue

Russia generally recognizes Azerbaijan's independence and territorial integrity but is a strategic ally of Armenia. The Russian Empire and the Soviet Union played significant roles in the establishment and maintenance of Armenia. Therefore, Russia supports the continuity of the Armenian state. However, the Soviet administration and political leaders also bear significant responsibility for the exile of West Azerbaijanis from their lands. The Soviets decided to cede West Azerbaijani lands to Armenia.

Areas that can be described as the east, west, and heart of Zangezur were included within Armenian borders during the Soviet era. Furthermore, most of the Turkish villages around Lake Gölçe are located in this region. Maps of the Republic of Azerbaijan from 1918-1920 showed the borders passing through the middle of this lake. However, the Soviets ceded these lands to Armenia.

Russia has not yet made an official positive statement regarding the rights of West Azerbaijanis. However, Russia recognizes Azerbaijan's independence and accepts its territorial integrity. Armenia, however, still does not recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. However, Azerbaijan will resolve this issue at its own discretion over time. This is because Azerbaijan carried out the recapture of the villages of the Kazakh province in Kazakhstan and the clarification of the borders on its own, without needing any external intermediaries with Armenia. Currently, bilateral commissions composed of government officials continue negotiations to determine the borders.

Similarly, regarding the West Azerbaijan issue, it is hoped that Armenian and Azerbaijani officials will meet directly and take the necessary steps to resolve the issue. Both sides must demonstrate their will. Azerbaijan has demonstrated this will. It is essential that Armenia demonstrates the same will. This way, within the next 10-15 years, Armenians will be able to travel freely to Azerbaijan, and Azerbaijanis to Armenia safely. This will foster an atmosphere of trust.

The intervention of external actors such as Russia, the US, and France in this matter can sometimes complicate the search for a solution. The best way forward is for the parties to engage in direct dialogue and resolve the issue themselves. The OSCE Minsk Group is also an example before us. However, Azerbaijan and the regional states must develop their own solutions.

7. Activities of the West Azerbaijan Association

The West Azerbaijan Association conducts intensive work on this issue and produces numerous publications. Many West Azerbaijanis living in Türkiye can also easily contact the association. Some West Azerbaijanis living in Türkiye have submitted documents and photographs from their ancestors to the association's archives. The association maintains these documents. These documents would be much more beneficial if preserved in the archives and museums of the West Azerbaijani community rather than remaining at home. Therefore, the association's website contains all the information about the West Azerbaijani community. Those traveling to Azerbaijan should definitely visit the association.

Those conducting academic research and writing theses can also receive support through the association. International conferences are held annually in Azerbaijan and around the world. For example, international conferences are held on December 5-6, the date of the exile of the West Azerbaijanis. As ANKASAM, it would be very beneficial for you to support West Azerbaijanis and serve as a consultative hub on this issue. Thanks to ANKASAM's strong connections in international relations, research and articles can be delivered to the necessary consultative hubs. If such an initiative is initiated, the West Azerbaijani Association will support it.

8. The Future of Returns to West Azerbaijan

Regarding the issue of returns to West Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan is focusing on political negotiations. The possibility of Armenia's consent is being discussed. Furthermore, Türkiye's support to Azerbaijan is significant. West Azerbaijani Turks desire a peaceful and peaceful return to their lands. From a political perspective, it is believed that once peace is achieved, this process will not end with the signing of an agreement. This is a long process that will continue with the establishment of dialogue among political institutions, associations, and academics, and the development of inter-people

relations. This process could take between 5 and 20 years. However, if the Armenian side is sincere and genuinely seeks peace, and if they can forget past hostilities, this process can be accelerated. Thus, peace not only between states but also between peoples will be possible.

This is a very difficult process. Throughout history, they have been subjected to genocides and massacres numerous times. West Azerbaijanis, who favor peace, do not abandon their history. Because when history is forgotten, suffering recurs. For example, without the documents and images of the 1992 Khojaly Massacre, proving this fact would be difficult. Similarly, it is possible to document other massacres from the 1918-1920 period. As Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has stated, Armenia does not open its archives because these documents are against them. If the Armenian side sincerely wants peace and the Zangezur Corridor and other communication lines are opened, trade relations will develop over time and Western Azerbaijanis will be able to visit their ancestors at least as tourists.

They can visit their lands. They can see the villages and cemeteries where their ancestors lived. West Azerbaijanis are even ready to repurchase their homes and live there. Their property remains intact. A solution will undoubtedly be found in the future. They will return to their lands through peaceful and political dialogue. Türkiye, on the other hand, has always shown its moral and political support and will continue to do so.

Universities are also conducting important research on this issue. Conferences are being held at the universities of Cappadocia, Ankara, Selçuk, Istanbul, Bayburt, Erzincan, and the Caucasus-Kars region. However, such events need to be held more frequently. When these issues are discussed more frequently, Armenians living in Türkiye will also understand the need to support West Azerbaijanis. There are some Armenians living in Türkiye. In fact, most have converted to Islam. Some are not even known to be Armenian. There are 54 Armenian churches in Istanbul, where they practice their religion freely. Just as Azerbaijanis once supported Armenians, it is hoped that Armenians will also approach the peaceful return of Azerbaijani Turks, that is, West Azerbaijanis, to their ancestral lands.

9. The Future of Caucasian Geopolitics

At this point, Azerbaijan has achieved significant success in its just cause. A similar outcome will be achieved in the West Azerbaijan issue.

The “3+3 formula” was also brought to the forefront during the war. Despite the clear course of the war, Azerbaijan extended its hand for peace. This was discussed at the diplomatic table as a formula that would benefit not only Azerbaijan, but also Armenia and the entire region. Issues such as corridor security and the protection of energy and logistical resources occupy a significant place in President Aliyev’s peace vision.

Armenia, especially Pashinyan and other politicians, as well as the Armenian people, largely recognize this reality. If the Armenian lobbies recognize this sincerity and reach out, the Caucasus region will become a “house of peace” where true peace and prosperity are shared, not a place of conflict. Turkish history already bears witness to this. If one seeks reference, there is strong evidence from both Azerbaijan and Türkiye. The process of division of this region is particularly evident on the West Azerbaijan Association website. When you examine this site, you will see how Azerbaijan, and the Caucasus in general, was fragmented by demographic movements, who were responsible, and the policies pursued during the 19th-century Tsarist Russia and the 20th-century Soviet Union.

One of the most important elements of this issue is the region’s own initiative. It is desired that this issue be resolved between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Unfortunately, many states outside the region are trying to sow discord and stir up trouble in this region. While these countries were prominent in the past, today countries like France and India are trying to play a role in this. States that claim to be great powers, unfortunately, are not performing well.

Post-Karabakh diplomacy is still active. Various solutions to the West Azerbaijan issue, including the “3+3 format,” can be implemented. This is a very positive approach. Furthermore, there is no need for states from other regions to solve problems in the Caucasus. Within the 3+3 format, these problems can be resolved among regional states. Armenia’s search for Western support and the introduction of external powers into the region are major problems.

Currently, there are EU observers on the Azerbaijan-Armenia border. However, they are not former members of civil society. Armenia, with France’s support, brought these individuals there and extended their stay until 2027. This makes the region important for external powers. However, Azerbaijan and Türkiye do not want Western powers to enter the region. Türkiye, as a NATO member, is already present there. There is no need for

another NATO member state to enter the region. Even the US has begun to understand this and is giving Türkiye more support. It is unclear what will happen in the post-Trump era, but Azerbaijan does not want other powers in the region.

Today, the vast majority of the world's aircraft operate on the east-west route over Türkiye and Azerbaijan. The region is geopolitically very strategic. Amid the Russia-Ukraine War and Iran-Israel tensions, the Caucasus remains the only safe zone. Azerbaijan and Türkiye have ensured this. China also seeks to leverage its strategic location. Azerbaijan is in a multi-lateral strategic alliance, including the Middle Corridor. The second Türkiye-Azerbaijan-Pakistan summit was held in Lachin. Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Pakistan are developing projects together. Other Turkic states such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan are expected to participate in these summits soon. The 3+3 format, meaning a union including Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and Iran, will ensure peace in the region.

Foreign powers are unwelcome to enter the region. This will not be allowed either. They were not allowed in the past. However, because this could not be prevented, they entered the region. However, they do not want to leave the region at this time.

These external powers have maintained a presence in the region since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Their influence continues to linger in Iraq and Syria. If the Ottoman Empire had been stronger at the time, these regions would have remained under Turkish control, and such a situation would not be encountered today.

Armenia must draw the right conclusions from the developments. Because without friendship and brotherhood with Azerbaijan and Türkiye, no economic development is possible in this region. No state can achieve success. Georgia, however, has made the right decision. The Tbilisi government has been a partner in the national and international projects of Baku and Ankara from the very beginning. Azerbaijani oil, natural gas, and other energy resources reach the world via Georgia, the Black Sea, and Türkiye. Georgia also derives significant economic benefits from this, and the prosperity of the Georgian people increases.

If Armenia seizes this opportunity, it can become a significant part of trade and logistics through Zangezur. Because the cargo transported through Georgia is insufficient. The Zangezur Corridor and other routes must also be utilized. These routes will significantly contribute to logistics between

Türkiye and Azerbaijan. As global order is reshaping, borders and maps may also change within the next 5-10 years. Armenia understands this well.

Conclusion

West Azerbaijan is not only referring to West Azerbaijanis living in Azerbaijan. Thousands of West Azerbaijanis were displaced from present-day Armenia and settled in Türkiye between 1918 and 1920 and during the Soviet era. Today, many West Azerbaijanis live in provinces such as Kars, Iğdır, Erzurum, and Erzincan in Türkiye. They also have the right to return to the lands inherited from their ancestors and live there.

West Azerbaijanis living in Türkiye must also do their part to demonstrate unity under the West Azerbaijan Association's umbrella and make their demands more clearly known to the world. At the same time, the international community must also support the West Azerbaijani Turks. The West Azerbaijan Association currently organizes conferences worldwide and works to strengthen ties among West Azerbaijanis living in various countries and the Azerbaijani diaspora. It is also crucial for universities to conduct academic studies defending the rights of West Azerbaijani Turks.

Historically, there has never been an Armenian state in Karabakh or the territory of present-day Armenia. However, Armenia occupied not only Karabakh but also seven surrounding provinces. Azerbaijan, however, succeeded in recapturing its own territory from occupation during the Second Karabakh War. At this point, West Azerbaijanis have united under the West Azerbaijan Association. However, to convince Armenians and the Armenian state, the leadership and officials of the West Azerbaijan Association needs to meet with officials from the Republic of Armenia.

Azerbaijan's President, Mr. Ilkhan Aliyev, has repeatedly called for this. West Azerbaijanis absolutely must be accepted in Armenia by Armenian political leadership. For West Azerbaijanis to return to their ancestral lands, the Armenian state must establish its will and facilitate this process. Armenia must provide a guarantee that will ensure the peaceful coexistence of West Azerbaijanis. If the peoples of the Caucasus are to live in peace, the return of West Azerbaijanis to their ancestral lands is inevitable. If this is achieved, lasting peace can be established not only in Karabakh, but throughout the Caucasus.

Following the signing of the peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the Armenian side is expected to take the necessary steps to restore the rights of West Azerbaijanis. The Azerbaijani side is doing its part in this regard. It is desired that West Azerbaijanis return to their ancestral lands without war or problems, in lasting peace.

Kazakhstan's Soft Power Approach, Potential, and Performance in Foreign Policy

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Introduction

Kazakhstan has recently positioned itself as a “Middle Power” and is shaping a profile accordingly. This vision defines Kazakhstan's place in the international arena. As a medium-sized state, Kazakhstan must develop its public diplomacy through peaceful, soft, and dynamic communication. Public diplomacy is an important strategy aimed at promoting its interests in cultural and humanitarian spheres to foreign publics through direct communication.

In public diplomacy, Kazakhstan seeks to strengthen its image through cultural events, conferences, and humanitarian engagement by collaborating with various actors, including international media, experts, and civil society organizations. Kazakhstan has established good relations with its major neighbors and other countries through its openness to the world, its dialogue with diverse cultures and religions.

Kazakhstan's historical heritage, educational opportunities, peaceful foreign policy, energy resources, and international connections and achievements enable it to pursue pragmatic policies in a multipolar world. Kazakhstan's greatest asset and appeal is its people; its multinational, cosmopolitan cultural structure. Kazakhstan has achieved significant success by establishing the Kazakh national state by uniting people from different ethnic groups and religions, and by preserving this diversity and internal stability. This is a long-term strategy and one of the fundamental elements that strengthens Kazakhstan's identity.

1. Kazakhstan's Position in the World

Kazakhstan is the world's ninth-largest country by area and one of the most important states in the Turkic World, as well as the richest in natural

resources. Kazakhstan's soft power is a relatively new topic. While the soft power policies of regional powers such as Türkiye, South Korea, and some European countries are well known, the soft power of Kazakhstan, a medium-sized state, raises various questions and intrigues.

Especially today, at a time when the realism school is gaining ground in international relations and the tendency towards hard power rather than soft power is increasing, it is crucial to address Kazakhstan's public diplomacy and soft power performance in foreign policy. Kazakhstan is a rising middle power, situated between the West and the East, and surrounded by major powers such as China, Russia, and Iran. Under President Qasem-Jomart Tokayev, Kazakhstan has distinguished itself by adopting a flexible, lenient approach to international diplomacy.

As a medium-sized country, Kazakhstan cannot wield hard power. The main reasons for this are its proximity to large neighbors like China and Russia and its peaceful foreign policy. When Uzbekistan is mentioned, cultural elements such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Uzbek clothing come to mind; when Kazakhstan is mentioned, its vast geography, status as the world's ninth-largest country, and strong Kazakh identity come to mind. Kazakh identity is one of the fundamental drivers of its soft power.

The Kazakh nation has been shaped under Russian influence over the last two or three centuries and has learned a great deal from Russia in many areas during and after the Soviet era. However, like every country, Kazakhstan strives to cultivate a positive image in the international arena. When Kazakhstan is mentioned, images of Turkestan, Asia, its post-Soviet identity, the 2017 EXPO Fair, its rich energy resources, oil, or the city of Astana come to mind. Astana is not just a change of capital, but also a symbol of a new nation-building project. Prominent figures like boxer Gennady Golovkin and the humanitarian aid Kazakhstan provides to countries like Afghanistan and Tajikistan through the international aid agency "KazAID" are integral parts of this image.

Compared to the previous era of President Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan is striving to project a more Asian, hybrid, softer, and more complex international image under President Tokayev. In the 1990s and 2000s, with revenues from energy resources, it collaborated with international promotion companies to gain Western support, particularly in democratization and liberalization. Kazakhstan's goal is to strengthen its international standing through various ties and to stand out as a nation.

During Nazarbayev's presidency, Kazakhstan positioned itself as a "buffer state" between Russia and China, striving to become a "golden bridge" between West and East by taking an active role in platforms such as the OSCE, the Conference on Cooperation and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), and the UN. As a pragmatic, open, and responsible actor, it has aimed to establish itself in the international community. Thus, soft power is a factor that influences the policies of major powers toward Kazakhstan. While Kazakhstan has sometimes been very successful in shaping its international image, it has also faced challenges.

This has been a common problem. Especially in relations with the West, criticism of democratization and the political system, as well as negative media coverage, are among the primary problems. However, overall, Kazakhstan has successfully built its international image and proven its presence.

2. Kazakhstan's Soft Power Elements and Public Diplomacy

Kazakhstan has striven to establish good and flexible relations with all states and has successfully positioned itself as a serious and responsible actor in this regard. Since gaining independence in the 1990s, Kazakhstan's public diplomacy has been conducted in three main areas:

- Creating a positive image globally,
- Being seen as a reliable and impartial partner,
- Contributing to economic development by attracting foreign investment.

These goals are pursued in the political, economic, and cultural spheres through official and unofficial channels, media, and humanitarian relations. According to Joseph Nye, soft power is the ability to create attraction to persuade others to act in accordance with one's wishes. Kazakhstan's appeal, however, is shaped not by hard power, that is, military might, but rather by its smart power and flexibility. As a country sandwiched between China, Russia, and other major powers, Kazakhstan strives to survive and progress by pursuing a multi-vector foreign policy. While it succeeds in some areas, it faces challenges in others. However, its fundamental goal is to maintain its existence and develop as a state.

Culture is one of the cornerstones of Kazakhstan's soft power. Kazakh identity, nomadic culture, Kipchak openness, and Asian and Turkic values are important elements of this identity. Education, media, diaspora

diplomacy, prominent figures, and Kazakhstan's geopolitical location also enable it to serve as a strategic bridge between the West and the East. The "Middle Power" vision, particularly put forward by young Kazakh experts, defines Kazakhstan's place in the new international arena. While countries such as Türkiye, South Korea, and Poland are known in this category, Kazakhstan is also striving to survive and be effective in diplomacy by positioning itself as a "Middle Power." According to President Tokayev, in today's age of realism, middle powers can bring greater peace to the world by pursuing a balanced policy with all. Multi-vector foreign policy can sometimes be evaluated from a critical perspective, as while this policy is successful, it also faces challenges. However, the most important point is to take forward steps despite obstacles. Kazakhstan plays an active role in international platforms such as the UN, OSCE, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and strives to pursue a balanced policy in its relations with Russia.

During the Nazarbayev era, Kazakhstan invested significantly to strengthen its international image. Due to its geographical location, image, and promotion are crucial to its survival and to strengthening the state's foundations. From a diaspora diplomacy perspective, approximately five million Kazakhs live abroad. However, Kazakhstan does not yet have a structure like Türkiye's Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). Efforts are underway to establish a similar institution. Attention is paid to strengthening cultural and educational ties with the Kazakh diaspora in Germany, the US, European countries, China, Russia, and Iran.

When soft power is mentioned, education is the first thing that comes to mind. Kazakhstan has made significant strides in education. For example, thanks to the "Bolashak" scholarship program, approximately 15,000 Kazakh youth have studied at leading universities in the US, the UK, and around the world. This has raised Kazakhstan's international profile. Türkiye's contributions are also invaluable in this regard. The Ahmet Yesevi Turkish-Kazakh University and other educational projects have provided significant support for Kazakhstan's development. Nazarbayev University and its schools have also achieved significant success in this area.

Culturally, Kazakhstan possesses a unique heritage. In Almaty, a more traditional or national Kazakh culture, blended with the Soviet era, thrives, while in Astana, a more cosmopolitan, modern culture, led by young people, is developing. Symbols such as the Dombra, nomadic dances, the Golden

Man, the Alatau Mountains, and the Caspian Sea are integral to Kazakhstan's cultural identity. Traditional beverages like kumiss and Kazakh meat dishes are also representative of this identity. Furthermore, as part of aid diplomacy, more than 2,000 students from Afghanistan have been enrolled in Kazakh universities at no cost. Humanitarian aid has been provided to approximately five million people. This has led to Kazakhstan transitioning to donor status.

2.1. Challenges in Kazakhstan's Public Diplomacy

There are also some challenges in public diplomacy. This concept has not yet been clearly defined in Kazakhstan's official documents. Effectively working with the diaspora to collaborate, Kazakhstan is establishing a "Citizens Fund" inspired by Türkiye's model. This is a relatively new initiative, and the learning process is ongoing. Studies in information diplomacy, media, and digital fields are also ongoing.

Projects related to the Turkic World are of great potential. The concept of "creative industries," which Tokayev frequently emphasizes, supports common alphabets, shared history, and cultural ties. Kazakh pop culture is rapidly developing under the influence of YouTube channels and social media. The process of decolonization and nation-building in Kazakhstan has accelerated, particularly since the Ukrainian War. Consequently, the country is experiencing a cultural and intellectual revival. This is a very important developmental process. Overall, Kazakhstan has significant potential in culture and youth.

Russia is among the leading actors exerting soft power over Kazakhstan. Russian culture has historically had a strong influence through language and media. However, after the Ukrainian War, this influence has significantly diminished due to a shift in perception. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that Russia remains an influential actor due to media, language, and geographic proximity. However, this influence is gradually weakening.

Secondly, China exerts soft power through its investments, scholarship programs, and Confucius Institutes. While there used to be a "China phobia" within society, Chinese investors and workers have become more active in Kazakhstan recently with the visa liberalization. Thousands of Chinese citizens are involved in various projects. China's growing influence in

economic and other areas is a sensitive issue, and it could also shape future policies.

From a Western perspective, while America's influence is limited, Europe's cultural influence is quite strong. While Kazakhstani society has historically been influenced by Russian language and culture, European culture also holds a significant place in the country. European influence is particularly felt in areas such as democracy, liberalization, human rights, and education. Thousands of young people studying abroad through the "Bolashak" scholarship program have created a new intellectual elite. On the other hand, it can be argued that Türkiye exerts emotional soft power through language, history, and culture. Particularly after the Karabakh War, the emergence of Türkiye's military power and the ideals of the Turkic World have generated considerable sympathy in Kazakhstan. This is felt not only among nationalist segments but also in the general public.

2.2. Weaknesses and Strengths of Kazakhstan's Soft Power

It is also worthwhile to address the weaknesses of Kazakhstan's soft power. First, its lack of institutionalization is noticeable. Soft power projection requires significant investments and experience to generate cultural and educational influence abroad. With a population of 20 million, Kazakhstan is a relatively new country in terms of "Middle Power" status and does not yet have sufficient experience in this area. Furthermore, ethno-political processes, such as the shift from Russian to Kazakh, are underway in domestic politics. The increasing national consciousness, particularly with recent geopolitical developments, could lead to changes in the political model, and this, combined with pressure from neighboring countries, is a source of concern.

Kazakhstan's soft power is nourished not only by traditional Kazakh culture but also by its post-Soviet and Asian identity. The rapidly developing relationship with China in recent years is particularly noteworthy across the economic, security, and political spheres. However, these relationships also bring with them differing perspectives. Because Kazakhstan cannot project hard power, it should focus on soft and smart power strategies. It strives to establish a positive national identity through efforts in equality, education, technology, humanitarian aid, and denuclearization. For example, the "KazAID" project stands out as a humanitarian aid initiative similar to Türkiye's TİKA. Institutions such as the Turkic Academy also have

the potential to be a significant soft-power tool for generating intellectual and ideological influence.

Kazakhstan was introduced to the world at the EXPO fair held in Astana in 2017, with a \$2 billion investment. Events such as the 2010 OSCE Summit are indicators of Kazakhstan's efforts at global integration during the Nazarbayev era. These efforts, which continue under Tokayev, aim to strengthen Kazakhstan's independence and reduce its external dependence. Nomadic civilization, Turkic history, and cultural heritage are presented to the outside world as soft power. Turkic World integration projects, the positioning of Turkestan as the center of the Turkic World, and cultural symbols such as the Golden Man, nomadic dances, and the Dombra are important components of these efforts.

Relations with the diaspora and the Turkic World can be effectively used in cultural diplomacy. As one of the historical and cultural centers of the Turkic World, Kazakhstan reinforces this role through symbols such as the Altai Mountains.

Kazakhstan is developing its relations with the EU and simultaneously attracting investments from Arab countries. However, its biggest challenge is balance. The recent conflicts in Iran and Ukraine could negatively impact the regional order and the security and independence of Central Asian countries. This is a serious concern in the region.

Kazakhstan is striving to expand and promote its influence through both its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other channels. During Nazarbayev's presidency, the goal of becoming a donor country for humanitarian aid was a prominent one. While this effort appears to have diminished somewhat today, it continues and is a significant component of the country's soft power.

From a cultural diplomacy perspective, educational projects related to Kazakhstan's identity, particularly the "Bolashak" program, as well as joint initiatives with Nazarbayev University and the Turkic World, are of great importance. For example, projects such as the Ahmet Yesevi Turkish-Kazakh University have supported Kazakhstan's development with Türkiye's contributions. Today, approximately 40,000 foreign students study at Kazakh universities, and approximately 10 percent, or 4,500, receive scholarships from the government of Kazakhstan. This is a significant indicator of Kazakhstan's soft power.

Kazakhstan aims to become a hub and center in education. Branches of world-leading universities are opening in various regions of Kazakhstan, and this number has now reached nearly 15. Students from countries such as India and Pakistan benefit from these opportunities. Education is a soft power tool that strengthens Kazakhstan's potential as a center focused on intelligence and reason.

Religious and cultural tolerance is also a cornerstone of Kazakhstan's soft power. Since 2003, Kazakhstan has held the 15th "Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions." This event brought together numerous leaders, from the Pope to leading Muslim scholars, in Astana, emphasizing a tolerant, unifying Muslim identity.

Astana is a significant symbol in Kazakhstan's branding. From a broader perspective, the city of Turkestan has been highlighted as the center of the Turkic World, and cultural elements such as the Golden Man, nomadic dances, and the Dombra are valuable projects that promote Kazakhstan's identity. In this dynamic process, intercultural interaction is two-way.

Lack of institutionalization, inadequate diaspora policies, and the rapid evolution of the international order pose certain risks. For Central Asia and the Turkic World, these changes could pose significant threats to security and independence. Kazakhstan's soft power is a complementary and strategic tool in a realistic international environment. Educational projects, cultural initiatives, and humanitarian aid are the cornerstones of this power. However, these projects are not yet being implemented in a sufficiently planned and systematic manner in Kazakhstan. A national strategy is conspicuous. Therefore, a strategy encompassing all areas must be developed and systematically implemented.

As a Central Asian and Turkic World country, Kazakhstan continues to pursue its own policies. Kazakhstan also has ideas to offer in relations with major powers such as Russia and China. For example, President Tokayev's ability to resolve certain issues by speaking Chinese demonstrates an Asian understanding of diplomacy. As a leader who speaks six languages, Tokayev has become a symbol of Kazakhstan's balanced policy.

2.3. The Importance of Energy in Kazakhstan's Soft Power

Energy and energy diplomacy, as a soft power element, are among the topics of interest in Kazakhstan's foreign policy. Indeed, energy forms the

foundation of the Kazakh and Central Asian economies and offers significant opportunities. This factor has played a significant role in Kazakhstan's development and independence. American oil companies' investments in the Caspian region are crucial for Kazakhstan's balanced foreign policy. Indeed, Kazakh diplomats work with all parties involved in the energy sector, including the US, Russia, China, and the Gulf States. Therefore, the energy factor plays a significant role in Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

There are significant projects related to logistics and energy supply. Kazakhstan is a rich energy region, particularly in uranium and rare earths. Central Asia offers significant opportunities in this regard. The US, the EU, and other major powers are holding important negotiations and cooperating with Kazakhstan on this issue. Therefore, energy is a highly important and strategic issue.

Kazakhstan's oil and natural gas resources, particularly in strengthening relations with Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in Central Asia, play a crucial role in the region's shared development. Therefore, energy plays a significant role not only in Kazakhstan's relations with major powers but also in its regional policies, particularly in its immediate region. Furthermore, Kazakhstan is developing nuclear power plants with China and Russia.

An agreement has also been signed regarding its construction and future use. Therefore, a cooperation process centered on energy diplomacy, along with nuclear energy, is currently underway. Following Russia, these collaborations could also be developed in the medium and long term with China, South Korea, and similar actors.

Energy is one of Kazakhstan's most powerful geopolitical and diplomatic tools. Kazakhstan can build its soft power through energy, addressing mutual needs. Another issue is the ecological problems arising from the Aral Sea. To overcome this problem, Kazakhstan is working to address this issue both internationally and at the Central Asian level. It is discussing this issue through clubs and platforms and developing projects. From an objective perspective, the Aral Sea is shrinking. This is because the Earth's ecosystem was destroyed during the Soviet era, and restoring it is nearly impossible.

The water issue is poised to become one of Central Asia's most complex and challenging problems. Experts offer varying predictions on this matter. Some argue that conflicts may arise over water sharing, while others

suggest it could lead to social and demographic problems and to migration. In this context, the Aral Sea is one of the region's most important ecological problems. Kazakhstan, through platforms such as the "Aral Sea Rescue Organization," established in collaboration with Central Asian countries, is working to reduce desertification. Kazakhstan continues to discuss this issue at the UN level. However, to date, the issue remains unresolved.

3. The Construction of a New Identity in the Turkic World and the Importance of Kazakhstan

The place and importance of Yesevi and the Golden Horde in the construction of a new identity in the Turkic World are among the topics of interest. Yesevi is a prominent figure in the Turkic World. He is one of Kazakhstan's important ancestors who ensured the spiritual connection between all Turkic peoples in the region, from the Balkans to Tatarstan.

It is Turkestan and Yesevism that unite the Turkic peoples culturally, spiritually, and historically. Everyone agrees on this unifying point and recognizes the importance of these fundamental elements. Yesevi is a spiritual figure who significantly contributed to the Turkic peoples' acceptance of Islam. Therefore, Yesevi is deeply respected in the Turkic World.

On the other hand, the Kazakhs and Uzbeks descended from the Golden Hordes. Kazakhstan, as the heir of the Golden Horde, currently pursues an ideological policy. This policy is historically and culturally sound. This is too important to ignore for Kazakh identity. The Golden Horde was a powerful and traditional state that united all ethnic groups and gave rise to new nations. Ultimately, within the context of our shared history, the Golden Horde represents a period of rise for the Turkic World. It was a common Turkic Empire that dominated the Eurasian region. Therefore, it is a significant reference point for a shared future. The Golden Horde and the Yesevi Spirit will complement each other in this region in the near future and will be highly influential in the re-emergence of a strong Turkestan national consciousness.

4. Kazakhstan's New Political Model and Foreign Policy

In recent years, Kazakhstan has been transitioning to a new political model, adopting a more flexible, hybrid approach to foreign policy through new reforms. A search for a new balance has been observed in Kazakhstan's

foreign policy, particularly during the Tokayev era. Kazakhstan, which has somewhat distanced itself from Russia, is also striving to develop relations with China, the West, the Turkic World, and Arab countries. Under Tokayev's leadership, Kazakhstan operates with the understanding that "regardless of what the West thinks of us, we must focus on our national interests." This reflects the transition to a more complex era. Having previously made intense efforts to cultivate a positive image, Kazakhstan is now pursuing a clearer, more decisive, and more national security-based foreign policy. Kazakhstan is striving to establish a balanced position in this new era by strengthening its relations with China, Central Asia, the West, the Turkic World, and Arab countries.

Kazakhstan occupies a critical geopolitical position. The increasing wars and international problems in its neighborhood necessitate a more pragmatic, hybrid, and unrealistic approach in Kazakhstan's foreign policy. In the post-Soviet era, Kazakhstan was one of the few Central Asian states to maintain stability. This is a significant achievement. Despite its heterogeneous population, a strong political experience has kept Kazakhstan on its feet in the post-Soviet era.

Kazakhstan plays a significant role not only within its own borders but also within the Central Asian region and the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). Kazakhstan's current foreign policy toward the Turkic World and Central Asia is a concrete manifestation of this role. Drawing on centuries of historical experience, Kazakhstan is undergoing a restructuring of its domestic and foreign policies.

In this process, an approach that could be called the "Tokayev Model" is emerging. Only history and developments will reveal the extent to which Tokayev was a visionary leader, a strong geopolitician, and an effective diplomat. The Kazakhstani state is pursuing a multidimensional policy based on balance with Türkiye, the Central Asian countries, and the countries of the Turkic World. The current international climate necessitates such a policy. This is the most rational and intelligent policy for the Turkic World and Central Asia. Multidimensionality in soft power and smart power policies, openness to different cultures, beliefs, and civilizations, is the only option that can ensure stability in this region. Otherwise, even great powers can be dragged into the swamp of instability and conflict.

Conclusion

Kazakhstan's soft power elements include its national identity, national culture, post-Soviet heritage, Asian influences, energy resources, logistics capabilities, and balanced relations with all states.

Central Asia has begun to take shape as a regional power center, parallel to the Turkic World. Kazakhstan must and does use all its power to pursue a balanced policy. In this context, Astana aims to exert influence on multinational platforms through international organizations. Due to its geographical location and cultural identity, Kazakhstan maintains close relations with Russia, China, the West, the Islamic world, and the Turkic World. These relations shape Kazakhstan's identity and enable it to pursue soft power policies in a realistic world.

What makes Kazakhstan significant is its location at the intersection of China, Russia, the West, the Islamic world, and the Turkic World, right in the heart of the continent. In this respect, Kazakhs see themselves as part of both the European, Asian, Muslim, and Eurasian worlds. In this challenging geography, Kazakhstan stands as a shield between Russia and China, as well as the Turkic and Islamic worlds.

Kazakhstan, which is slowly but surely building its soft power, must maintain balanced relations with the major powers surrounding it. Ultimately, Kazakhstan has the potential to become a "Smart Central Asian country." Kazakhstan is expected to maintain its balance and achieve significant success in soft power through cooperation with the Turkic World, Central Asia, Türkiye, and other friendly countries.

Hungary, Foreign Policy and Public Diplomacy

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Introduction

Historical evidence shows that Hungarian ancestors lived and migrated together across the steppes, maintaining connections over time. Hungary strives to foster strong relations with nations that share an understanding of our history, habits, and national character. Hungary is the “most Western Asian nation”, even though our appearance may no longer reflect those Asian origins.

The Hungarian government offered to host the first and only diplomatic representation of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) in Budapest, functioning as a quasi-embassy and fully financed by Hungary. This initiative opens new opportunities for cultural, scientific, educational, and economic cooperation with the Turkic World. It allows Hungary to initiate projects that benefit our nations, encapsulating our public diplomacy approach.

Hungary shares similar concerns with the Turkic World regarding the European Union's (EU) approach to democracy and values, observing a lack of positive developments. Instead of leveraging Hungary as a bridge and facilitator between the Turkic World and the EU, the EU tends to overlook this opportunity. Political motivations often overshadow rational necessities. Hungary is uniquely positioned to understand the Turkic World better than any other EU member state.

1. Hungary's Position in International Politics

We are living in a time when international cooperation is no longer a luxury but a necessity. That is why we talk so much about connectivity. We face global challenges (economic uncertainties, climate change, digital transformation, and social inequality) but we also see global opportunities such as new technologies, global learning, cultural creativity, and scientific discovery.

In this complex world, it is clear that countries must understand each other better, not only in business or politics but also in how we learn, innovate, and tell our national stories. This is essentially what public diplomacy is about. It is also evident that countries must foster better mutual understanding. Hungary strongly believes that friendship, mutual respect, and strategic cooperation should last longer than election cycles or annual reports. More than fifteen years ago, our politicians decided to adopt a fundamentally new and different foreign policy approach.

These are not mere political slogans for us; they form the foundation of how we think about diplomacy. When we look at the Turkic World (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan), we do not see just partners in a formal sense. We see something more personal.

In connection with the Turkic World, we see a shared story of cultural memory, deep linguistic ties, and people who once travelled the same steppes, lived similar traditions, and preserved values of honor, family, and knowledge. As many Hungarian historians and linguists have written for centuries, the Hungarian people carry cultural and linguistic links to the East. Some of these are symbolic, some are scientific, but all remind us that our story is connected to yours.

In Hungary, there is a saying that we are distant relatives but close friends. Over the past decade, Hungary has transformed this symbolic idea into a strategic policy called the Eastern Opening, launched more than eleven years ago. This is not just about trade or infrastructure; it is about rebalancing our attention, looking more seriously to the East-Central Asia and the Turkic World as key partners for the future. Because we believe these relationships are not only natural but also strategic, full of opportunities, and built on deep cultural trust.

It is an excellent tool, not only for building roads or railways, or signing economic agreements, but for creating bridges of knowledge, innovation, and human understanding. Hungary and the Turkic World are partners where progress is being made, not just economically but also culturally through people-to-people programs and related projects.

We share common values such as genuine friendship, family, mutual respect, and cooperation based on trust. Within the framework of Hungary's Eastern Opening, or rather our broader opening to the East, we have expanded our networks and increased the frequency of our relations with Central Asian countries and the Turkic World. This doctrine focuses not only on

Central Asia, the Southern Caucasus, and Türkiye but also on the broader post-Soviet area and China. Later, Hungary began opening to the South, covering Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This reflects a completely new approach to Hungary's foreign policy.

2. Hungary's New Foreign Policy Dimensions

Thirty-five years ago, after the political changes, Hungary chose to follow the Euro-Atlantic track, which was a wise decision. We still believe that Hungary belongs to the Western World. However, twenty-five years later, it became clear that we were overly dependent on the West, not just economically but also, to some extent, culturally. This dependency created potential conflicts of interest within our tradition-based society when it came to Western values, which were sometimes perceived as excessive. Economically, our trade was very one-sided more than 80% of our exports were oriented toward the Western World.

When the economies of Western countries, such as Germany, the US, or Western Europe, weaken, Hungary's economy suffers as well. Therefore, the main idea was to reconnect with our traditional partners in the East, where we have always found mutual understanding, even during Soviet times. We had a strong foundation for new collaborations. We began increasing our cultural, scientific, higher education, and economic presence in the region.

Hungary's public diplomacy has served this idea. We opened new embassies, such as the one in Bishkek, and increased the number of our diplomats, particularly cultural and commercial attachés, in the region. Several high-level visits have taken place between our countries and regions, including multilateral talks. Although Hungary is an observer member of the OTS, it is as active as any full member. Hungary initiates projects, such as the Drought Prevention Institute to combat desertification in our lands. Additionally, Hungary participates in the Turkic Investment Fund and all professional bodies of the OTS, including the Turkic Academy and the official think tank network of the Turkic States.

3. Hungary's Soft Power Diplomacy

As for the Hungary's hard and soft power perspectives, it can be said that Hungary is not a hard power. There were times when the Hungarian Kingdom was one of the strongest in Europe, but now we are a small country. We

have endured significant historical challenges, and our territory is relatively small, ranking around 100th in the world.

Hungary's population is less than 10 million, and we do not believe that migration, particularly mass migration, can solve our demographic challenges. Instead, we focus on the values of family and supporting families to have more children. This is a key part of Hungarian public policy, though it is not directly related to foreign policy. However, several countries are very interested in studying the Hungarian model of family support. Our economy is close to that of the most developed countries, but we are not yet among them. We strive to reach the average living standard of the European Union, but this will require time and effort.

When it comes to hard power, our military is not large, but we have begun significantly strengthening our military capabilities and equipment, partly with the help of our friends from Türkiye, such as through the acquisition of Gidran vehicles. This reflects the excellent cooperation between our countries. However, there are fields where Hungary is overrepresented relative to its hard power, particularly in culture. In music, for example, Hungary has given the world-famous composers like Bartók and Liszt, and Hungarian folk music is widely recognized.

3.1. Science and Knowledge Diplomacy

In science, we are proud of 12 Nobel laureates of Hungarian origin. Although most received their awards abroad, they were educated in Hungary. In technology, several Hungarian inventions are well-known. Our education system, particularly in technical universities, is of a very high standard. In sports, Hungary ranks among the top 20 countries globally in terms of Olympic gold medals and overall achievements.

The quality of life in Hungary is quite high, even compared to the Western World, as we preserve our natural sites and societal values. In tourism, Hungary is widely known, especially among Turkic tourists. Budapest is a magnificent and highly attractive city. We hope that more direct flights will be established between our countries to facilitate mutual visits. Our cuisine, including dishes like goulash and fish soup, is also famous. However, we need to make greater efforts to strengthen our gastronomy diplomacy and establish more Hungarian restaurants abroad, as Türkiye and other Central Asian countries have done successfully.

Hungary's public diplomacy is a key aspect of our soft power. In line with the Eastern Opening foreign policy, launched in the same year, Hungary decided to offer thousands of university seats for foreign students through scholarships. These studies are fully funded by the Hungarian government. Through this initiative, we aim to attract talented students from the emerging world, including Central Asia, the Southern Caucasus, and Türkiye, to study in Hungary, primarily in English. However, students who wish to study in Hungarian can do so after completing a one-year Hungarian language course.

Hungary's soft power approach centers on knowledge-based partnerships involving ministries, higher education institutions, and international networks. The focus is on joint capacity building, including university cooperation networks, bilateral connections for double degrees, student and staff mobility, and scholarship programs, some of which are reciprocal. Hungarian students also have opportunities to study in partner countries. The scholarship program, called *Stipendium Hungaricum*, involves 28 Hungarian higher education institutions offering academic programs and scholarships. Currently, over 10,000 students are studying in Hungary under this program, with many more having already graduated.

Importantly, this program covers not only bachelor's and master's degrees but also PhD studies, including medicine and music studies at the renowned Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. Over 600-degree programs are included. According to a survey, 93% of *Stipendium Hungaricum* scholarship holders would likely choose Hungary again for their studies. This strengthens not only our reputation but also our universities by attracting talented students from abroad. Some of these students stay in Hungary to pursue academic careers, while others return to their home countries, often taking up high-level positions in academia or state administration.

Over 60 countries participate in this program, including some of the poorest nations as well as Japan, one of the richest. This is not an aid program but a partnership with respected countries. Notably, we offer these scholarships even to countries whose governments do not provide reciprocal scholarships for Hungarian students, as our goal is not reciprocity but to provide opportunities to study in an EU member state with EU-accredited diplomas. This is a significant benefit for thousands of students.

Last year, 1,436 students from six Turkic states studied in Hungary through the *Stipendium Hungaricum* scholarship program. However, the total number of students from the Turkic World (including Türkiye, Central Asia, and

Azerbaijan) is significantly higher, likely around 5,000. Many of these students pay tuition fees to study at our renowned engineering, medical, or economic faculties. This makes the program quite successful. These programs are EU-accredited, primarily taught in English, with less than 1% of students studying in Hungarian. We now have over 9,000 active Stipendium Hungaricum alumni worldwide.

We often say that these graduates are our best ambassadors, as they share stories about Hungary and promote our country. Surveys show that over 90% of them would choose Hungary again for their studies, indicating that they enjoyed their time and education here. This serves as excellent promotion and public relations for Hungary, making the program a powerful soft diplomacy tool.

Collaboration with Central Eurasian higher education institutions is ongoing and increasingly active. Several double-degree programs are under development and set to begin as early as September. This is a great opportunity, as it also allows Hungarian students to study in the region. There is significant potential for further cooperation in research, co-resource centers, dual degrees, and even joint PhD programs, which could greatly benefit our countries. Innovation hubs and joint publications are also essential, particularly for improving university rankings, as both Central Eurasian and Turkish universities are highly motivated to climb global university ranking lists. International cooperation is critical for this goal.

For example, a Hungarian university recently launched an innovation hub and science park in Uzbekistan, entirely on a business basis without state support. This is an excellent opportunity to leverage not only capital investment but also knowledge, creating a perfect synergy between expertise, management, and investment. This approach fosters a better future and business success. Additionally, we utilize the Diaspora Scholarship for public diplomacy, reconnecting with individuals of Hungarian heritage. This includes not only those who still speak Hungarian but also those whose grandparents spoke the language, such as in the United States or South America, even if they no longer do.

We operate a guest lecturer network, with over 70 scholars in 36 countries, funded by the Hungarian government. This program spans from Japan to the Americas, including Türkiye, and we plan to expand it due to its success. It is our sincere interest to promote Hungarian culture and language. The Hungarian Diplomatic Academy also invites foreign participants to its

training programs through various scholarships. This is an effective tool for training experts who return to their home countries to work in foreign ministries. Knowing someone who has studied in Hungary through a scholarship fosters better understanding and simplifies cooperation, especially compared to working with partners from Western Europe or the Far East.

Knowledge diplomacy is closely tied to science diplomacy, which focuses on networking and supporting projects abroad. It leverages the value of knowledge in science, science organization, and science management for diplomatic and bilateral or multilateral purposes. The Drought Prevention Institute, established by Hungary in the arid Central Asian region, is one example. Another is the Potato Research Institute in Uzbekistan, which we funded in recent years. The science park in Uzbekistan is another instance of science diplomacy. Such collaborations stimulate professional discussions, joint publications, and policymaking in science and academia.

In Hungary, we have established facilities that attract foreign scientists, such as the European Light Infrastructure facility in Szeged, Southern Hungary, a key laser infrastructure for physicists. The ZalaZone is an automated vehicle testing track that serves not only carmakers but also military vehicle producers. Additionally, we have established a national laboratory system and deployed 15 science and technology attachés worldwide, including in New York.

We have science and technology attachés in Berlin, Seoul, New Delhi, Japan, South Africa, and several other countries. These attachés play a crucial role in identifying suitable partners for international scientific projects. Hungary has a rich history of innovation, with notable inventions such as the Rubik's Cube, vitamin C, and the ballpoint pen, among others.

The poster of Oppenheimer is relevant here because not only was J. Robert Oppenheimer a key figure in nuclear technology, but Hungarian scientists like Edward Teller also made significant contributions. These iconic names of Hungarian origin have left a mark in America. Additionally, we take pride in our recent Nobel Prize laureates, such as Katalin Karikó, who played a pivotal role in developing the COVID-19 vaccine. These scientific achievements are a source of national pride, and we strive to leverage them in our public diplomacy efforts.

3.2. Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy is a traditional and vital tool of public diplomacy, focusing on showcasing national identity through culture. To this end, Hungary has established cultural institutes in 26 countries, located in major capitals and cities worldwide. These institutes, often branded with the name of our famous composer Franz Liszt, promote Hungarian culture.

Hungary supports festivals, exhibitions, and national celebrations, collaborating with partner institutions in the country to promote Hungarian music, folklore, and dance. Hungarian folk-dance houses, for instance, are a unique cultural asset, and we aim to share them through international folklore festivals where people naturally enjoy these traditions. Through our institutional network, we tell Hungary's story through culture.

These cultural institutes, operating in 26 locations, do an excellent job of promoting Hungarian performing arts, folklore, and classical music. Sports is another closely related field. As mentioned, Hungary ranks eighth globally in total Olympic medals, a remarkable achievement given our country's size. We have won approximately 181 gold medals in the history of the modern Olympic Games. Budapest has hosted major international sporting events, reflecting our active role in sports diplomacy, much like Central Asia and Türkiye. We have invested in infrastructure, including stadiums, sports halls, swimming pools, and complexes, as well as utilizing the Danube and other rivers and lakes for water sports.

Hungary co-hosted the UEFA Euro Championship in 2020, the World Aquatics Championship in 2017, and the World Athletics Championship in 2023, all in Budapest. These experiences demonstrate that sports is one of the best tools for fostering bilateral and multilateral connections. A uniquely Hungarian invention, teqball, combines elements of table tennis and soccer, played with a football on a specialized table, as shown in the bottom left corner. It's an exciting and engaging game.

Tourism is another obvious tool for soft diplomacy. A well-managed visa regime can significantly boost tourist numbers. To this end, we have strengthened our consular presence in the Turkic world to attract more visitors from Central Asia, the Southern Caucasus, and Türkiye. Currently, there are five daily direct flights to Istanbul alone, alongside other direct flights to cities in the Turkic region. Tourism fosters people-to-people connections, promoting our values and cultural and historical appeal. It also shapes how we perceive ourselves and how the world perceives us.

Tourism contributes nearly 10% to Hungary's GDP, making it a significant economic driver. It's an effective tool for spreading our culture and language globally. While we may not yet match the global influence of K-pop or other East Asian cultural phenomena, we are working toward it. Wellness tourism is particularly popular in Hungary, offering opportunities to showcase modern Hungary alongside its historical charm. Our cuisine, though famous, is not promoted enough. Dishes like *lángos* (a fried dough), *kürtőskalács* (chimney cake), and chicken *paprikash* provide a strong foundation for promoting traditional practices and national products. Gastronomy diplomacy, through chef training and international food events, is an excellent way to build international relationships.

Humanitarian aid is another key soft diplomacy tool. Through the Hungary Helps program, over the past five years, we have supported more than 270 projects in over 50 countries, providing nearly \$100 million in humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance, improving the lives of almost one million people. Notably, we have opened consular offices, and in some cases embassies or diplomatic representations, in countries like Uganda and Chad to facilitate these humanitarian projects. These efforts involve not only the Hungarian government but also NGOs, particularly those linked to religious organizations like the Baptist or Ecumenical Help Foundation. In times of global emergencies, these organizations collaborate to provide aid.

4. Hungary's Public Diplomacy in the Turkic World

Hungary can also strengthen relations between Europe and the Turkic world through the OTS. This organization held its informal summit in Budapest, marking one of the largest diplomatic events in Hungary's history. In the context of the OTS, Hungary can further increase cooperation in the field of education. The Hungarian government has initiatives encouraging our universities to establish meaningful cooperation with universities in the Turkic World, particularly through double-degree programs. These are not just memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for show but real programs enabling Hungarian students to study in Turkic states and students from Turkic states to study in Hungary for extended periods, not just full degree programs but also part-time exchanges. Staff exchanges are equally important.

Joint research projects are also critical. Successful research, especially for commercialization or high-impact publications, often requires international collaboration. The most essential aspect is mobility both for students

and academic staff. Extending this to think tanks is also key. We should visit each other more frequently, co-author publications and policy papers, and raise awareness of critical issues to provide joint advice to our governments on complex matters.

As shown in the figures, we have around 1,500 students from the Turkic World in the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Program, with approximately three times that number (around 5,000) paying tuition fees because they recognize the value of earning a competitive, EU-accredited diploma in Hungary. To increase these numbers, we should expand the number of scholarship seats allocated for students from the Turkic World.

We should enhance and upgrade bilateral educational cooperation. We can focus on specific areas of need. For example, knowing that Uzbekistan requires agricultural experts, we should offer more seats at our agricultural universities. Part-time study programs could be particularly effective. Providing scholarships not only for full-time studies but also for part-time studies would be beneficial.

Hungarian universities have opportunities to invite students from the Turkic World for part-time studies and double-degree programs. However, there is a gap in staff exchanges and specialized programs. For instance, we could develop short-term certificate programs (lasting a few days to one or two weeks) for our Turkic colleagues. These could focus on contemporary European higher education, global higher education trends, Hungarian opportunities, or methodological issues. Such programs would allow Turkic academics to visit Hungary, participate in educational and social activities, and establish new connections among staff members. This could spark new research projects, publications, journal initiatives, and other forms of networking, which is now the most essential part of academia. Returning to students, part-time studies and double-degree programs are key to increasing engagement.

Conclusion

Hungary's soft power vision is built on trust, excellence, and vision. We aim to co-create lasting partnerships in knowledge and culture. We need not just partners around the world, but friends, because friendships form the foundation for initiating and realizing projects. Through these relationships, our goal of improving the world can be achieved more effectively.

Hungary shares deep historical and cultural ties with the Turkic World. These ties are not rooted in the 150-year Ottoman occupation, as that would not be a sufficient reason. Instead, our common roots trace back to the Southern Urals and Northern Central Asia, where Hungarian and other Turkic peoples originated.

Indeed, the ancient Hungarians migrated westward from Central Asia. There is an ongoing debate about whether the Hungarian language is purely Finno-Ugric or also has Turkic influences. We have several hundred ancient words in our language that predate the Ottoman period, suggesting a partial Turkic background. This shared heritage provides a strong foundation for public diplomacy. Hungary's participation in the OTS reflects this connection.

Hungary pursues pragmatic relations with Russia and China, free from ideological or value-based politics, much like Italy, Germany, or even the United States. Hungary has the lowest perception of a Russian threat among Central European countries, for several reasons. The Hungarian government has consistently and openly expressed its interest in maintaining good relations with Russia, primarily due to practical needs. On the other hand, Hungary is often seen as the "black sheep" of the European Union. We hold firm to certain values that we believe should not be overridden by so-called European values.

Hungary faces ongoing debates with the EU on fundamental issues. This creates a challenging situation, both economically and politically. While EU subsidies account for only about 2% of Hungary's annual GDP, their absence creates liquidity issues. Despite these challenges, the Hungarian government remains committed to its principles. Public perception of the EU in Hungary is generally negative, influenced by the government's sovereigntist and patriotic stance. From Hungary's perspective, the EU's future is uncertain in this new political atmosphere.

The EU sometimes criticizes Hungary's engagement, but not harshly. The real issue is that the EU lacks a coherent strategy for Central Asia. While the EU still perceives itself as a major power in the region, it lacks a unified foreign policy. Member states compete with one another in the Turkic World, each pursuing their own business interests. Hungary's position is clear: we seek strong, positive relations with the Turkic world without interfering in their domestic politics, a stance not always shared by other European countries.

The Future of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in a Changing Global Geopolitics

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Introduction

The Republic of Cyprus was a state established on 16 August 1960 on the basis of the founding partnership of the Turkish Cypriot people and the Greek Cypriot people, in accordance with the 1959 Zurich and London Treaties and the 1960 Nicosia Treaties. One of the principal characteristics of the 1960 Republic of Cyprus was its functional federal and confederal state structure.

However, the Partnership Republic of Cyprus collapsed as a result of massacres and ethnic cleansing attacks initiated on 21 December 1963 against the Turkish Cypriot people, within the framework of the **Akritis Genocide Plan** prepared by the **secret Akritis Organization** established by Minister of Interior Polikarpos Yorgacis under the instructions of President Makarios.

The Makarios administration (the Greek Cypriot side), in violation of the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus and the international Cyprus treaties, forcibly removed Turkish Cypriots from the House of Representatives, the Government, and all state institutions, and unilaterally amended the Constitution and fundamental laws in contradiction to the Constitution. It established a state structure and government composed entirely of Greek Cypriots.

For these reasons, referring to the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC) as the legitimate 1960 Republic of Cyprus is neither correct nor constitutional. This is because the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus defines two founding peoples: the Turkish Cypriot people and the Greek Cypriot people.

From this perspective, the present-day “Republic of Cyprus,” under the control of the Greek Cypriot side, is not a legitimate state established by the two founding peoples under the international Cyprus treaties.

Taking into account historical developments, the Turkish Cypriot people have established their own constitutional order and, through democratic elections, have effectively maintained for more than forty years the characteristics of a legitimate state under international law.

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is a democratic and legitimate state governed by the rule of law, founded on international law, contemporary international developments, and human rights, with significant geopolitical and strategic importance.

The geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean has evolved to a very different level since the beginning of the Cyprus dispute. Located at the crossroads of three continents, directly opposite the Suez Canal—which opens to the Indian and Pacific Oceans—the island of Cyprus has been gaining increasing importance in global and regional geopolitics. Cyprus is approximately 45 nautical miles from Türkiye and constitutes a part of Türkiye’s national security.

1. Historical and Political Background of Cyprus

In the context of changing global and regional geopolitics, it is useful to examine and evaluate the future of the island of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. While the Turkish side (the TRNC and the Republic of Türkiye) defines the island as one based on the existence of two sovereign peoples and two sovereign states, the Greek side considers the island solely as its own sovereign state.

In this context, the Greek–Greek Cypriot side does not regard the TRNC as an independent and sovereign state, and considers the Turkish Cypriot people merely as a minority “community.” This reveals a significant reality and perspective for understanding the Cyprus dispute.

The importance of Cyprus lies in the presence of the sovereign Turkish people on the island and their historical struggle for national existence. As a result of this prolonged struggle, Greek Cypriots—supported and directed by Greece—initiated acts of terrorism beginning in the 1950s through the “National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA).”

The Greek–Greek Cypriot side destroyed the 1960 Republic of Cyprus on 21 December 1963 through genocidal attacks and massacres, effectively occupying Southern Cyprus. In all negotiations and talks conducted since then, the Greek–Greek Cypriot side has demonstrated a political will based on intransigence. No settlement/treaty has been reached due to the Greek side's unwillingness to share anything with the Turkish people.

As a result of the rigidly uncompromising stance of the Greek–Greek Cypriot side, on 15 November 1983 the Turkish Cypriot people exercised their right to self-determination and proclaimed to the world the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The Republic of Türkiye recognized the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus shortly thereafter and established diplomatic relations.

Beyond diplomatic relations, there exist special ties between Türkiye and the Turkish Cypriot state, including legal, historical, and cultural bonds. However, due to the politically driven positions and influence of dominant states within the international system, based on calculations of political interest, widespread diplomatic recognition has still not been achieved.

The Greek side defines Northern Cyprus as an “occupied territory” and acts on the basis of this characterization. In contrast, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is regarded as an important and legitimate state, considered a zone of peace and stability within the framework of international law, democratic and constitutional order, contemporary developments, and human rights. According to the Turkish side, the party that lacks true legitimacy is the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC). This is because the Greek side equates the concept of “Cyprus” with the “Republic of Cyprus” established on 16 August 1960.

However, the 1960 Republic of Cyprus was a state established—under the auspices of the United Nations—on the basis of international Cyprus treaties and, above all, the founding partnership of two peoples, within a functional federal–confederal structure. Nevertheless, beginning on 21 December 1963, Greek Cypriots attempted to eliminate (in their own words, to annihilate) the Turkish Cypriot people within the framework of the Akritas Plan, which clearly constituted a genocide plan under the 1948 Genocide Convention. In light of this, it is not possible to regard the GCASC as a legitimate state under the name “Republic of Cyprus.”

This is because, according to the constitutional structure of that period, the 1960 Republic of Cyprus had two founding partners of equal status:

the Turkish Cypriot people and the Greek Cypriot people. Sovereignty in the 1960 Republic of Cyprus derived from these two peoples. However, the Greek side does not recognize the Turkish Cypriot people as a people entitled to self-determination, but rather as a minority community. In their fundamental positions repeatedly expressed during negotiation processes, they assert that Turkish Cypriots are not a people but a religious minority or community.

In contrast to this claim, the Turkish Cypriot people have established their own constitutional order, conducted democratic elections, and continue to exist as an independent and sovereign state. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has effectively maintained its status as an independent and sovereign state for more than forty years.

When examining why Greek Cypriots sought to establish a separate state in Cyprus and their objectives, it is evident that they initially attempted to present this as a movement for independence. However, the true aim of this movement was the annexation of the island of Cyprus to Greece—namely, “Enosis.” While pursuing this objective, an agreement was reached in 1960 on a republican model based on the founding partnership of two peoples and the shared exercise of sovereignty. This republic was established not merely on a geographical basis, but on a functional distribution of powers. However, this structure lasted only three years.

In 1963, the then President Makarios, Minister of Interior Yorgacis, and other high-ranking officials (such as the President of the House of Representatives Klerides and Minister of Labor Papadopoulos) put the Akritas Plan into effect. According to this plan, the Turkish Cypriot people were to be eliminated (annihilated) within 48 hours, and the island would be annexed to Greece, as in the case of Crete. However, the Turkish Cypriot people, with the support of Türkiye and through the measures taken as well as the establishment of the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT), succeeded in resisting this plan and exercising their fundamental human right of resistance.

Until 1974, the Turkish Cypriot people endured great suffering under embargoes, economic restrictions, forced migration, and attacks by Greek Cypriots. Turks were detained and killed on the roads, villages were raided, massacres were carried out, and they resisted practices of ethnic cleansing. However, with the Turkish Peace Operation of 20 July 1974, a structure emerged on the island in which two separate states with defined political

boundaries could exist. Today, one of these states is the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC), and the other is the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

2. Recognition Problems and Legitimacy Debates of the TRNC

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has continued its existence as an independent and sovereign state since November 1983. During this period, various negotiation platforms have been established; however, no sustainable peace treaty compatible with the realities of Cyprus has ever been reached within these frameworks.

At present, at least following the Peace Operation, there exists a strong environment of peace within the political borders of the TRNC. In other words, it continues to exist as a sovereign and independent state capable of resisting Greek Cypriot attacks, with defined borders and military power. However, the Greek side attempts to reduce the Turkish people to minority status, claiming that Turks in Cyprus constitute merely a minority community. They assert that the “real people of Cyprus” consist solely of Greek Cypriots.

When the concept of “people” is taken into account, a crucial determining factor emerges in the process of the Cyprus dispute. This is because the right to self-determination is a right granted exclusively to peoples. Therefore, by attempting to keep Turkish Cypriots at the level of a community and within minority status, the Greek side seeks to deprive the Turkish people of their right to self-determination. What must be emphasized here is that the Turkish Cypriots, as a distinct people, continue to maintain the existence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a state established in accordance with all necessary conditions and principles of international law.

On the other hand, the Greek side adopts maximalist approaches aimed at reducing the Turkish Cypriot people to minority status without offering anything or making any concessions. As in the case of the Annan Plan (Annan Document), they have defined Turks not as a people but as a minority. However, they have failed to achieve this objective.

Another important point to note here is the concept of the “Cyprus Problem.” It is more realistic and accurate to use the term “Cyprus Dispute” instead. The reason is that the Greek side deliberately uses the term “Cyprus Problem” to frame the issue as an internal matter. They portray

the Turkish people as a minority rebelling against the state and seeking rights. From this perspective, they regard the disagreement in Cyprus as a domestic and constitutional issue. Indeed, the Annan Plan was also based on the notion of resolving a constitutional problem.

However, since the 1974 Peace Operation, two states have existed in Cyprus, each progressively strengthening and developing its legal framework. One of these is the internationally recognized GCASC, and the other is the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Nevertheless, the TRNC is unjustly regarded as an unrecognized state without legal basis and is treated merely as a minority seeking equality and sovereignty rights from the “Republic of Cyprus.” Therefore, the current situation constitutes a “problem.”

From the perspective of international law and in light of the decisions of the International Court of Justice, when issues related to sovereignty—such as borders, sovereignty itself, property, and territory—are concerned, these matters are evaluated not merely as a problem but, when addressed within the fundamental context of sovereignty, as a dispute between two states. The International Court of Justice has issued rulings in this direction. Therefore, the concept of a “dispute” constitutes a more accurate and appropriate approach within the framework of the Turkish side’s position. This is because the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is an independent and sovereign state. Given that the Greek-Cypriot side also acknowledges itself as a state, there exists a political boundary between two states. Violations of these boundaries give rise to incidents that occur in the same manner as in other countries. Considering the current situation, this matter is essentially one of non-compromise.

3. Negotiations on the Resolution of the Cyprus Dispute

From past to present, various initiatives have been undertaken to resolve the Cyprus dispute. For example, a former Greek Cypriot Foreign Minister, Rolandis, stated in his articles and public remarks that all 18 plans or negotiation frameworks proposed up to that time had been rejected by the Greek Cypriots, whereas the Turkish side had consistently demonstrated a constructive attitude. Rolandis criticized the then Greek Cypriot leader Kyprianou, believing that he did not genuinely seek peace in Cyprus, and resigned from his position as Foreign Minister for this reason.

The Annan Plan process also constitutes an important example. This plan was intended to be accepted by the Turkish Cypriot people due to

pressure from the international community, particularly the European Union (EU), on Türkiye. In the referendum, the Turkish Cypriot people voted “yes” to the Annan Plan by a large majority, whereas the Greek Cypriots voted “no” by an even larger margin. The reason for this was their unwillingness to accept even the possibility of granting the Turkish Cypriot people any rights, however limited. Therefore, although the Annan Plan represented an important turning point in the Cyprus dispute, it ultimately failed to produce a result.

The negotiations held in Crans-Montana in 2017, despite containing even more far-reaching concessions than the Annan Plan, ended in failure when the Greek Cypriot leader walked away from the table. Proposals that would have significantly weakened the legal rights and status of both the Turkish Cypriot people and Türkiye on the island—secured through international Cyprus treaties—were brought to the table, yet it was once again the Greek side that abandoned the negotiations.

From that point onward, the Republic of Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have clearly stated, since the end of 2019, that the Greek Cypriot side maintains a maximalist approach, unwilling to grant any rights to the Turkish Cypriot people or share anything, and continues to view them as a subordinate minority community. Mustafa Akıncı, the then President of the TRNC, who strongly supported reaching a comprehensive agreement and had introduced very significant concessions, including territorial compromises, stated unequivocally during this process that it would not be possible to reach an agreement with the Greek side.

At the present stage, despite more than fifty years of negotiation processes and plans, the Greek Cypriot side has not demonstrated a constructive approach. They have not accepted the Turkish Cypriot people as an equal partner despite international Cyprus agreements. Türkiye and the TRNC have now entered a new phase and have declared their readiness to negotiate a settlement based on the existence of two separate independent sovereign states and international equal status. However, initiating any negotiation process outside this framework would contradict the fundamental policy of the Turkish side.

Looking back, the statements of Klerides regarding the negotiations are particularly noteworthy. In his memoirs, Klerides admitted that an agreement had been reached in the early 1970s, that the Turkish side had

accepted certain proposals, but that Makarios made a grave mistake by rejecting this agreement.

4. The Geopolitical Importance of the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus

The changing geopolitical position of the Eastern Mediterranean has reached a significantly different and critical stage from the period when the Cyprus dispute first began to the present day. The new geopolitical conditions make it necessary to reassess evaluations regarding the resolution of the Cyprus dispute in light of past experiences and existing realities. Indeed, the new geopolitical environment itself dictates this necessity.

Due to its geographical location, the Island of Cyprus has always held strategic and geopolitical importance. Previously described as an “unsinkable aircraft carrier,” Cyprus today draws attention not only with this metaphor but also, as expressed by retired Rear Admiral Cem Gürdeniz, through the “effect of a second navy” created by the Turkish military presence on the island. This situation further enhances the importance of Cyprus, particularly in the context of global geopolitics and developments in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean.

From a geographical perspective, Cyprus lies approximately 40-45 nautical miles from Türkiye. This places the island in a strategic and geopolitical position—especially in connection with the Gulf of İskenderun—that is incomparable to the past. Cyprus plays a crucial role in Türkiye’s security, almost like the “tip of a dagger.” At the same time, its location opposite the Suez Canal makes it a gateway to the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Furthermore, as an island providing strategic control via the Straits, Cyprus holds a critical role for the security of both the Eastern and Western Mediterranean. Particularly, the new balance of power in which the United States, the European Union, and Israel are involved against Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus further increases the island’s critical role and its special importance for the Turkish side.

The geopolitical importance of Cyprus has been further strengthened by new dynamics. In particular, the existence of hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean and the geopolitical shifts created by these resources have made Cyprus indispensable for Türkiye, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and the Turkish Cypriot people. The existence of the TRNC and the length of its coastlines are extremely important in terms of maritime jurisdiction areas (continental shelf and exclusive economic

zones). In this context, it has become a necessity to reassess a new process in light of Cyprus's geopolitical importance.

On the other hand, Israel's attacks against Palestine, actions reaching the level of crimes against humanity and even genocide, its cooperation with the Greek Cypriot Administration, and Greece's involvement in this alliance with U.S. support are noteworthy. Israel and the Greek Cypriot Administration are developing new strategic partnerships in the region through various protocols and agreements, particularly under the framework of humanitarian aid. The United States' efforts to establish dominance in the region through its bases in Greece, along with attempts to use Cyprus—alongside British bases—as a kind of American base, pose serious risks for Türkiye's security and future.

The geopolitical importance of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, particularly in terms of maritime geopolitics, is steadily increasing. In this context, Türkiye must carefully evaluate these critical developments and reassess its strategic planning.

Considering the theses put forward by both the TRNC and the Republic of Türkiye as two independent states, it is of utmost importance to maintain the sovereign existence of the TRNC within the framework of the "Blue Homeland" concept, particularly in terms of exclusive economic zones and continental shelf boundaries. If an agreement is to be reached, the TRNC must preserve its existence as a separate, independent, and sovereign state.

As of today, the TRNC possesses maritime jurisdiction areas based on its own coastlines and borders. These maritime zones combine with Türkiye's maritime jurisdiction areas to form the entirety of the "Blue Homeland." However, if a new sovereign Cyprus state were to be established in which the TRNC does not exist as an independent and sovereign entity—regardless of its name or the rights granted to the Turkish Cypriot people—the principles of equity in the sharing and delimitation of maritime jurisdictions around the island would pose serious risks for the Turkish side.

If such a proposed unified state structure were realized, there is a risk that a significant portion of the areas defined by Türkiye as the "Blue Homeland" would come under the control of a Greek Cypriot-dominated Cyprus. Therefore, the geopolitical and strategic importance of Cyprus has increased to an extent incomparable with the past.

Considering Israel's ambitions to expand into the Eastern Mediterranean, its regional activities, and its attacks against Palestinians reaching genocidal levels, it is evident that Israel seeks to strengthen its interests in the region. When all these factors are taken into account—including the lifting of the U.S. arms embargo on the Greek Cypriot side, joint military exercises between Israel and the Greek Cypriot Administration, and the expansion of cooperation through new protocols, including in the defense sector—it becomes clear that an approach based on the existence of the TRNC and the sovereign equality of two equal peoples is both necessary and essential for the Turkish side and for regional stability.

5. A New Phase in Negotiations and Current Debates

Within the context of negotiations, it is observed that new ideas and approaches are being brought to the forefront. In an environment where backchannel activities and secret diplomacy are being conducted, there are increasing initiatives aimed at launching a new negotiation process between the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Greek Cypriot side. It appears that these initiatives will gain momentum and that efforts are being made to bring the Turkish side back to the negotiating table in one way or another.

A key issue here is the insistence of the Greek Cypriot side on continuing negotiations from the point where they left off in Crans-Montana. If talks are to resume from that point, the issues to be discussed would include the constitutional structure of the state and territorial arrangements—matters that had already been accepted to a certain extent. The unresolved issue, however, concerns the demands for the immediate abolition of the Treaty of Guarantee and the Treaty of Alliance, and the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the island upon reaching an agreement. The Greek Cypriot side seeks the rapid and phased withdrawal of Turkish troops shortly after an agreement, along with the elimination of these treaties.

Therefore, discussions starting from the current point would focus more on territorial and security issues rather than property matters. The main objective of these negotiations would include arrangements such as the return of Greek Cypriots to lands they left in Northern Cyprus, the deportation to Türkiye of TRNC citizens referred to as “settlers” who came from Türkiye, and the return of Greek Cypriots to all abandoned settlements. More critically, however, the removal of the Treaty of Guarantee

and the Treaty of Alliance—directly related to the presence and future of the Turkish Cypriot people in Cyprus—and the rapid and complete withdrawal of Turkish troops immediately following an agreement are among the primary goals.

In such a scenario, if a new negotiation process is initiated, it is evident that it would likely result in the establishment of a structure unfavorable to Türkiye and the TRNC, leading to the emergence of an “Independent Cyprus State” under Greek and Greek Cypriot influence. If such a treaty were realized, the issue of NATO membership—recently raised openly by the Greek Cypriot Administration—would most likely also be implemented. A NATO-member Cyprus would operate under Greek Cypriot dominance. In this context, considering how Greece has used its EU membership status against the Turkish presence in Western Thrace, it is possible that similar inhumane practices could occur in a NATO-member Cyprus.

A NATO-member Cyprus under Greek Cypriot control would significantly restrict Türkiye’s room for maneuver. As seen in the 1974 coup and similar militarization efforts, it would be a natural consequence that Türkiye would not be able to intervene in a NATO-member state under such circumstances. Therefore, at this stage, issues must be addressed on the basis of maintaining the TRNC as an independent and sovereign state, and negotiations should only be entered into once these conditions are secured.

However, new ideas that could weaken this stance and introduce flexibility are being put forward. One such proposal comes from certain groups within the TRNC who advocate for a federal solution. These groups argue: “We are open to both federation and two independent states, but let us try federation one last time. If it fails again, then independence should definitely come onto the agenda.” This is, in essence, a trap and a strategic ploy. If negotiations begin under current conditions, it is clear that the Turkish side would emerge from the talks with a minority status. In that case, both the TRNC and the entire island of Cyprus would fall under Greek Cypriot dominance. Moreover, the maritime jurisdiction areas referred to as the “Blue Homeland,” including those covered by the 2011 Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement between Türkiye and the TRNC, would come under the authority of the newly established “Cyprus state.”

Such a development would result in significant losses for Türkiye in geopolitical, security, and economic terms, as well as in terms of maintaining a separate Turkish state in Cyprus. Therefore, this issue must be approached

not with short-term perspectives but with a long-term and in-depth strategic understanding. Various proposals are being presented to the Turkish side through different channels—for example, opening ports under EU control or maintaining embargoes while offering so-called new initiatives.

Both Türkiye and the Turkish Cypriot people in the TRNC must carefully consider these risks. It is now necessary to adopt approaches that will ensure the continuation of genuine stability and peace in Cyprus based on existing foundations and to act with determination accordingly. In an environment where Türkiye is experiencing adverse effects from ongoing geopolitical developments, it should also be taken into account that various pressures may be exerted on the Turkish Cypriot people.

In light of these pressures, it is extremely important to make both technical and strategic preparations before entering any negotiation process—such as defining the framework of the talks, determining which issues will be discussed, identifying the parties involved, and deciding where the negotiations will take place. Otherwise, there is a risk that certain conditions may be imposed or that the process may be directed through pressure under the pretext of “continuing from where we left off in Crans-Montana.” It is both necessary and prudent for the Turkish side to take this into consideration.

The key point for the Turkish side is this: the people of the TRNC have established a system that determines their own future and have gone through a great struggle to reach this stage. Indeed, over an eleven-year period, the Turkish Cypriot people were subjected to complete embargoes, confined to just three percent of the island, and forced to struggle for survival under conditions of violence, massacres, and attempted annihilation.

Today, the Turkish Cypriot people possess land within the borders of an independent and sovereign state, and this land is their own. It is not land acquired through war, but land that dates back to the Ottoman period and originates from Turkish ownership. Therefore, approaches that simply claim “the Greeks migrated and land was taken from them” should not be accepted without challenge; rather, strong counterarguments must be presented. According to assessments, approximately 94 percent of the area known today as Varosha (Maraş) consists of lands belonging to Turkish foundations dating back to the Ottoman period.

However, some of these foundation (waqf) lands were, during the British colonial period, effectively handed over to the Greek Cypriots and occupied by them. Today, within this framework, the Greek Cypriots are demanding

these lands. Yet, in an environment dominated by the Greek Cypriot side, disputes arose among Greek Cypriots within the so-called “Republic of Cyprus” concerning certain properties, and these disputes were brought before Cypriot courts. The courts ruled that these lands were in fact properties belonging to Turkish foundations. Thus, it has been officially registered that these lands are Turkish property. Moreover, during the British period, the British administration paid compensation to the foundations for the use and economic value of these lands—essentially in the form of rent.

For this reason, the Turkish side must protect its land both in terms of sovereignty and in terms of territorial integrity as a state. Without taking these facts into account and without resolving these issues, negotiations should not be entered into. Indeed, following Crans-Montana, Greek Cypriots themselves have been seriously discussing among themselves that they made mistakes and miscalculations; these debates have also been reflected in the public sphere.

At this stage, for the Turkish side to return to the negotiating table would mean that it would not be able to leave the table without an agreement aligned with the opposing side’s terms. This would imply accepting a situation in which the sovereign rights and lands of the Turkish people would be lost, and where Greek Cypriots would attempt to incorporate Turks into their newly altered constitutional framework. The Turkish people exist as a sovereign people, and this sovereignty must be preserved. Therefore, it must be recognized that there is a Turkish presence in Cyprus living under sovereignty and absolute security, that this presence constitutes a people, and that a people who have established a state have now reached the level of a nation.

Just as states have separated through similar processes elsewhere—such as in Czechoslovakia, where Czechs and Slovaks mutually agreed to establish separate states—the Turkish people must preserve their existence within their own independent and sovereign state. However, if a solution in Cyprus is pursued without sovereignty rights, the Turkish Cypriot presence on the island will gradually erode, and Cyprus will eventually become entirely a Greek island. This would lead to a situation in which Türkiye is effectively encircled from the south and its maritime jurisdiction areas are largely eliminated.

At present, the Greek Cypriots, as in the Annan Plan period, have experienced a successful phase both in conventional propaganda and in

the field of public diplomacy. Therefore, at this stage, the Turkish Cypriot people must effectively utilize public diplomacy and conduct their policies within this framework. However, while adopting such an approach, it is important to take into account the new geopolitical realities emerging in the region. A new geopolitical layer has been added to the existing one, and effective public diplomacy must be conducted toward the publics of other countries with this new context in mind.

Within this framework, public diplomacy should not only target third countries but should also be directed toward Türkiye itself. This is because certain practices in Türkiye are being carried out in a misleading manner, creating influences that may misinform Turkish public opinion.

6. United States Policies in the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus During the Trump Era

The possible effects of the policies of Donald Trump, who assumed office as President of the United States, on the Eastern Mediterranean and the Cyprus issue have also become a subject of discussion. First of all, the Greek Cypriot Administration and the United States developed a notably close relationship during this period. So much so that the President of the Greek Cypriot Administration was received in the United States as the leader of an independent and powerful state, and various agreements and protocols signed there addressed security, military, as well as political and economic geopolitical issues concerning Cyprus.

In the past, during the Annan Plan period, proposals had even been made to grant the United States a base in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus if necessary. However, at that time, the American response was: “We do not need a new base here; we already have İncirlik Air Base.” Today, however, the United States is openly pursuing a policy of establishing a base in Southern Cyprus. There are also plans within the framework of a new negotiation process to allocate a small base to Türkiye in the south, toward the Gulf of Famagusta. It is even suggested that this base could be granted sovereign status similar to British bases.

The Turkish side must not fall into such a trap. Because if such a development occurs, Türkiye will eventually be forced to withdraw from the island, and the Turkish Cypriot people would likely emigrate over time if such an agreement were implemented. From the Turkish perspective, the

security of Türkiye and that of the Turkish Cypriot people are inseparable; where Türkiye is not secure, the Turkish Cypriots cannot be secure either.

The Treaties of Guarantee and Alliance must never be abolished, and under no circumstances should the sovereignty of the TRNC be relinquished. If these were removed, it would mean that the Greek-Greek Cypriot side could act without restraint. In a geopolitical environment involving the United States, the situation becomes extremely risky, as the U.S. presence has always functioned as a factor of intervention—not only militarily, but also politically.

For instance, Türkiye had been conducting systematic research in its maritime jurisdiction areas in the Eastern Mediterranean, including those declared to the United Nations. However, due to threats and pressure from the European Union regarding sanctions, the Turkish side is now unable even to carry out seismic exploration in its own maritime zones. In fact, seismic research vessels have had to be withdrawn to ports and assigned different functions.

The Greek Cypriot side is aware of activities that Türkiye is expected to carry out in the near future. It is anticipated that seismic research and drilling operations will begin in what is referred to as the fifth block within Türkiye's continental shelf. At present, however, the Greek Cypriot side is planning to conduct research in areas declared by Türkiye as part of its own continental shelf, while Türkiye has not taken an effective counteraction, as other issues appear to have taken precedence.

In light of these considerations, it is essential to adopt policies that will prevent the initiation of such a process. As retired Admiral Cem Gürdeniz stated: "If the Turkish flag on the Five Fingers mountains comes down, Anatolia cannot sleep in peace." In short, policy should not be based solely on the existence of the Turkish Cypriot people, but on that existence together with Türkiye. In this context, it is critically important to take into account current developments, particularly the situation involving Israel.

Israel continues its territorial expansion. In such a context, the Turkish side must take action in a manner that ensures it does not lose its existing legal and lawful rights. Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus must now bring forward a new initiative in Cyprus. It is essential that an agreement on an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) be concluded between Türkiye and the TRNC in Cyprus. This has not been done to date, which creates a vulnerability that allows for potential encroachments into these

areas. This is also one of the underlying reasons why the Greek Cypriot side is conducting research in Block 5 of the EEZ that it has unilaterally declared. Therefore, it is imperative that an EEZ agreement be concluded as soon as possible.

Another issue is that Türkiye should carry out certain preliminary measures in Cyprus. For example, the use of Geçitkale Airport as a base for unmanned aerial vehicles has already begun. Türkiye must establish both an air base and a naval base in Cyprus. This is because the Greek Cypriot side is already taking such steps. The United States is currently seeking to establish a base on the island, France is already present and utilizing ports but also seeks a base, and the United Kingdom neither has abandoned nor will abandon its bases. Expecting the UK to withdraw is unrealistic unless there is concrete action against it. While the Greek Cypriots may have the capacity to initiate such action, the Turkish side cannot undertake operations against British bases. The Greek Cypriots, within their own capabilities, could initiate a new process against British bases, similar to the way agreements were imposed on Britain during the EOKA period in Cyprus.

Therefore, it is crucial for the Turkish side to evaluate these matters from another dimension and to counter the strategies being implemented. For instance, the Turkish side's participation in the Crans-Montana talks can be viewed as part of a broader strategic game played by the Greek Cypriots and the United States. Had the Greek Cypriot side maintained its position at the table, refrained from walking away, and avoided interrupting the negotiations through protest-like actions, all the concessions made during the presidency of Mustafa Akıncı would have been secured by the Greek side. In that case, they would have achieved gains on both fronts. This risk must also be taken into account.

7. The Greek Cypriot Administration's Relations with the West and the TRNC's Position

There are frequent discussions in public discourse suggesting that, due to the Greek Cypriot Administration's membership in the European Union, Türkiye might be able to engage in closer negotiations with the United States, and that the U.S. could align more closely with Türkiye's positions and support the TRNC. This argument is based on the assumption that U.S.-EU relations might become strained during the era of Donald Trump, potentially leading the new American administration to adopt a different

approach. As a result, it is suggested that the EU and the Greek Cypriot Administration might move closer to reconciliation with Türkiye.

However, for any meaningful settlement, the primary actor that needs to be persuaded is not the EU or the Greek Cypriot Administration, but the United States. It is not feasible to open a pathway by offering certain concessions or facilities to the U.S. in the TRNC, because the Greek Cypriot Administration already serves as an available partner. Indeed, it is claimed that prior to and during the Annan Plan period, proposals were made by the Turkish side to grant the United States a base in the TRNC, but these were rejected.

At present, the United States has established a strong presence in Greece, to the extent that some commentators even describe Greece as a “new state” of the U.S. Therefore, under current conditions, it is not possible for the Turkish side to secure support by offering concessions to the United States.

The United States has published a security strategy document in which it explicitly states: “Our issue in Cyprus is not limited to hydrocarbon resources; we have broader national objectives concerning Cyprus and the region, and we will pursue policies to achieve these objectives.” Notably, statements regarding the meetings held between the Greek Cypriot Administration and Joe Biden during his tenure as U.S. Vice President, particularly during his visit to Southern Cyprus, have been widely reported in the media.

There has been a consistent structure exerting significant pressure on Türkiye since the early 2000s (2002-2003). This pressure became particularly evident during the Annan Plan period, and similar developments are likely to occur in the future. By way of comparison, in 1878, following the Treaty of Ayastefanos, the Ottoman Empire temporarily transferred the administration of Cyprus to Britain, which subsequently established its presence on the island. In 1914, Britain formally annexed Cyprus. Today, the United States’ desire to establish a base in Cyprus—driven by developments in the Middle East—can be likened to Britain’s earlier approach to acquiring the island. In short, just as there was once a British version, an American version now appears to be emerging.

8. Debates on Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot Identities in Cyprus

The emergence of different political options and changing power structures in the 2000s has also influenced the symbolic elites in the Turkish Republic

of Northern Cyprus, leading to a shift in the frameworks of newspapers that shape political legitimacy. As a result of the reciprocal relationship between power and knowledge, a consciously and deliberately promoted definition of a “Cypriot identity” has emerged, in which the term “Turkish” has been removed from the definition of Turkish Cypriot identity. In this way, a lifestyle has been symbolically constructed in which migrants from Türkiye are portrayed as “the other,” while Greek Cypriots and the European Union are framed as “us.”

Before and during the Annan Plan process, there were initiatives and published assessments by the International Crisis Group aimed specifically at excluding Türkiye. One of the concepts they introduced was: “There must be an immediate solution in Cyprus’a Cypriot solution.” By a “Cypriot solution,” they meant setting aside the so-called motherlands, Greece and Türkiye, and advocating an approach of “a solution by Cypriots, for Cypriots.”

This approach continues in the same way today. An effort is being made to promote the idea that there is a single homogeneous people in Cyprus—as if there are not two distinct peoples, the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots, but simply “Cypriots.” Accordingly, there is an attempt to construct something akin to a “Cypriot nation.” This approach was also central to the Annan Plan. By advocating a “Cypriot solution,” the aim was to propose “a bi-zonal Cypriot agreement” instead of recognizing two independent sovereign entities or two separate sovereign peoples. Within this framework, the terms “Turkish Cypriot Community” and “Greek Cypriot Community” were replaced with “Turkish Cypriots” and “Greek Cypriots.” Thus, the concepts of “people” and “community” were effectively removed. Ethnic identity definitions such as “Turkish Cypriot” and “Greek Cypriot” were introduced—similar to expressions like “I am American, but Polish” or “I am American, but German” in the United States. In short, by emphasizing the notion of “Cypriotness,” an attempt was made to create a so-called “Cypriot nation.” This, however, is seen as a trap for the Turkish Cypriot people, and the concept of “Cypriot identity” is neither sound nor consistent with the realities of Cyprus.

Despite all this, a small but active group in public opinion tends to be more vocal. However, a recent survey conducted in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus revealed that, in response to a question about whether Turkish troops should withdraw from the island, 94% of respondents

believed that “Turkish troops should never leave Cyprus.” In other words, while the public may at times feel overwhelmed by certain problems and constraints and thus desire an agreement to overcome the difficulties they face—particularly their inability to act freely in the international arena—they do not wish to abandon their identity.

This influence is also observed among younger generations. Nevertheless, the Turkish Cypriot people have not abandoned their identity, nor have they given up their security concerns. At this point, it should be emphasized that the term “Turkish Cypriot people” is far more accurate than simply “Cypriot.” The consistent use of the term “people” is crucial and necessary. This is because the fundamental objective of the Greek Cypriot side is to move beyond the concept of “people” and reduce the Turkish side to the status of a religious community or minority, thereby establishing a single Greek-dominated authority capable of acting unilaterally. The Greek Cypriot side claims, “We will grant rights to the Turks if necessary.” But which rights, and to what extent? The answer is already evident from past experiences and serious incidents.

This represents a significant danger, one that is also being actively pursued within the Turkish Cypriot community through fifth-column activities. This must be countered. In connection with this, it is essential that the Turkish Cypriot people do not find themselves in a position where they might abandon their own identity.

It is a reality that the Turkish Cypriot people occasionally feel overwhelmed by the difficult conditions they face. The negative effects of embargoes and isolation are evident, and naturally, there are reactions and criticisms in response to these challenges. It would be a valuable strategy for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot people to plan and implement counter-fifth column activities against those carried out by the Greek Cypriot side, the EU, and the United States. In other words, in response to the public diplomacy conducted by the Greek Cypriot side against the Turkish Cypriot people, the Turkish side should also develop a form of public diplomacy directed toward the Greek Cypriot public. This is particularly relevant as the number of Greek Cypriots who support the idea of two independent states has increased compared to the past, reaching levels of up to 40%.

Therefore, through public diplomacy, the Turkish side must communicate what genuine peace entails—not only to the peoples of the region and other countries, but also to the Greek Cypriot Administration and Greece.

What is meant by real peace is the following: There is already a de facto peace in Cyprus today; however, for a sustainable peace to endure, it is essential—first and foremost—that, on the basis of the existence of two separate, independent, sovereign states, there be strong relations of friendship and good neighborliness, solidarity between the two countries, joint action in the region, and the continuation of their sovereignty and distinct state structures on the basis of equal status. Such a status should be established through an interstate international agreement. In this context, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus must pursue a structured and programmatic public diplomacy. This is because, even today, we have not fully succeeded in explaining to Türkiye and even to the Turkish public the true foundations and underlying realities of the Cyprus dispute.

To give another example, when asked in the United States where you are from, if you say “I am a Turkish Cypriot,” “I am from Cyprus,” or “I am Cypriot,” people generally assume that you are Greek Cypriot. We know very well why this is the case: it is due to a deeply rooted perception and long-standing narrative. Therefore, the Turkish Cypriot people—and the Turkish side more broadly—must make far more effective use of public diplomacy.

9. The Annan Plan and Future Perspectives

The outcomes of the public diplomacy pursued by the Greek Cypriot side and the European Union during the Annan Plan process should also be examined. The rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriot population can, in fact, be regarded as a failure in terms of public diplomacy for both the Greek Cypriot Administration and the EU, as they were unable to sustain an effective public diplomacy campaign.

For the Turkish side, the Annan Plan was essentially a plan of disappearance. Nevertheless, due to the impact of public diplomacy and sustained propaganda, the Turkish side voted “yes” by a large margin. Moreover, many of those who voted “yes” expressed their position as follows:

“We do not believe we will be able to live under these conditions, but we have no other way out.”

This illustrates the powerful influence of public diplomacy.

Therefore, public diplomacy is extremely important for the Turkish side in the eyes of third countries, particularly as a tool to help secure international recognition for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. At the same time, it is also crucial for strengthening the social and economic balance of the Turkish Cypriot people, as well as their hope for the future.

Indeed, had the Greek Cypriots voted “yes” in the 2004 referendum, it could be argued that Türkiye would have lost Cyprus under current conditions, and the Turkish Cypriot people would have lost their ability to live on the island. This is a definitive conclusion that does not require further debate. The Annan Plan process has, in fact, provided many lessons for the Turkish side in terms of public diplomacy. However, the key question remains: have these lessons been sufficiently learned?

In answering this question, it is important—especially within the context of changing global and regional geopolitics—to assess what needs to be done by drawing on past mistakes and shortcomings. It is clear that a more effective, systematic, and strategic approach to public diplomacy is required. For instance, the example of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) is quite effective. Similar efforts are being carried out on the Turkish side, but are they sufficient? They are not. Lessons have been learned, but they must be fully internalized and applied.

The order that the Annan Plan sought to establish in Cyprus and the messages it attempted to convey are still not fully understood by many people. This itself represents a striking example of public diplomacy.

Rather than emphasizing the despair and limited prospects of the Turkish Cypriot people, public diplomacy should highlight that their horizon is broad, their future is open, and that the current struggle can be carried much further—with the support and guidance of Türkiye.

In this process, even if only one or two states were to recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, it would constitute a major breakthrough. For example, efforts could be pursued within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) and, if possible, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), along with the development of various forms of cooperation. In this regard, the acceptance of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as an observer member of the OTS has provided significant moral support to the Turkish Cypriot people. Moreover, this marked

the first time that the name “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” was formally recognized in such a context. Although some member states within the OTS may not fully support this development, observer status remains highly significant.

This policy should be advanced and defended further. The gateway for Turkic states to access the Eastern Mediterranean is through the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In this way, a pathway for these states to reach the sea can be created. Recognizing the TRNC, maintaining activities there, and developing economic, political, and tourism relations would pave the way for its eventual acceptance as a full member of the OTS. This, in turn, would enable Turkic states to expand into the Eastern Mediterranean and, from there, into Europe much more effectively—producing significant geopolitical outcomes.

Within the framework of the OIC, however, this process is more difficult, particularly due to opposition from Egypt. For this reason, strengthening cooperation with Arab countries is also of great importance. It should not be forgotten that Egypt provided the most significant logistical support to Makarios in terms of arms and ammunition. Other states did not recognize this formation to the same extent. Therefore, closer engagement with Arab countries would be beneficial. In this context, an effective diplomatic and public diplomacy strategy directed toward these countries must be pursued.

Conclusion

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was proclaimed in 1983, marking a significant turning point in the Cyprus dispute. Although Türkiye recognized the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and established diplomatic relations with it, the entity has not been widely recognized by the international community and is often referred to merely as the “northern part of Cyprus” in geographical terms. While the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus maintains that it is a legitimate state from its own perspective, the Greek Cypriot Administration does not consider it legally or politically legitimate.

In 1960, the Republic of Cyprus was established under the auspices of the United Nations, with Türkiye, Greece, and the United Kingdom acting as guarantor powers. The primary objective of this state was to ensure political equality between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots and to establish a joint administration. However, this structure lasted only three

years. The crisis that began in 1963 with constitutional amendment proposals by President Makarios deepened when Greek Cypriots attempted to exclude the Turkish Cypriot people from the state. Acting in line with the goal of Enosis (the annexation of Cyprus to Greece), the Greek-Greek Cypriot bloc regarded Turkish Cypriots as a minority and forcibly removed them from governance.

Since 1963, the Turkish Cypriot people have been subjected to severe pressure, resisting genocide, massacres, and acts of ethnic cleansing, while being forced to live in enclaves. In 1974, a coup supported by the military junta in Greece and effectively carried out by Greek forces in Cyprus aimed to annex the island to Greece. Türkiye exercised its rights as a guarantor power under the international Cyprus treaties and launched the Cyprus Peace Operation on 20 July 1974. This intervention defined the island's political geography as north and south and paved the way for the emergence of two separate entities.

The post-1974 period was characterized by efforts to reach a bi-communal, bi-zonal federal solution. In this context, the "Annan Plan," named after then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, was put to referendum in 2004. While the Turkish Cypriot people approved the plan, the Greek Cypriots overwhelmingly rejected it. This rejection led to the continuation of the status quo on the island.

The challenges faced by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus regarding international recognition stem from fundamental disagreements over the status of the island. The Greek Cypriot side defines the Cyprus issue as an internal matter. According to this approach, the Turkish Cypriot people are considered a constitutional minority or community. Consequently, the situation in Cyprus is portrayed as a "constitutional dispute" rather than being recognized as an international conflict.

Following the failure of the Crans-Montana talks in 2021, new negotiation processes concerning the Cyprus dispute have been discussed. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus advocates for an international treaty based on the existence of two separate, independent, sovereign states with equal international status. The Greek Cypriot side, however, seeks to return to the negotiating table on the basis of a federation with a strong central government. Nevertheless, deep disagreements persist on critical issues such as the guarantorship system and Türkiye's military presence on the island.

Today, in response to claims by the Greek Cypriot side that Turkish Cypriots constitute a “minority,” the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus continues to pursue a settlement based on the principles of sovereign equality and equal status as an independent state. Supported by the EU and the United States, the Greek Cypriot Administration maintains its uncompromising stance. This situation weakens hopes for resolving the Cyprus issue through an international treaty and increases tensions in the region. The Cyprus dispute remains a current international conflict that directly affects not only the peoples of the island but also the strategic and geopolitical balances in the Eastern Mediterranean.

While the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus continues its struggle for sovereignty and independence—maintaining its importance for Türkiye's regional security and energy policies—it also persists in advocating the thesis of two independent sovereign states in the face of international “solution” efforts.

Conclusion

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Regional and international crises are worsening every day, impacting both humanity and the planet. The international system established after the WWII is now in jeopardy due to the erosion of international law and respect for norms.

Despite warnings from officials of international organizations such as the Secretary-General of the UN, Israel continues to commit genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, disregarding international law and order. This has resulted in people being condemned to starvation in the first quarter of the 21st century, as states and international organizations have failed to prevent this crisis. Basic principles of the UN system, like respecting territorial integrity, state sovereignty, and human dignity, are now at risk, with the erosion of these principles growing like a snowball.

History has shown that diplomacy is the primary and most effective way to overcome crises and improve relations between states. Diplomats, politicians, statesmen, and scholars have played crucial roles in preventing wars and finding solutions to crises between states, sometimes at the last minute.

Public diplomacy plays a vital role in preventing international crises and is a critical tool for diplomats, statesmen, and politicians to enhance relations between states. It helps promote understanding of other states' goals, improve diplomatic relations, prevent misunderstandings between societies, and strengthen ties between people to foster cooperation and peace among nations. Additionally, public diplomacy is essential for preventing crises caused by misunderstandings, misperceptions, and miscalculations.

Cappadocia University is dedicated to providing a platform for envisioning a common future for humanity and the planet. In collaboration with ANKASAM, it has brought together acting ambassadors in Türkiye, current and former politicians and ambassadors, as well as scholars to present a shared vision for humanity and the planet. These individuals have outlined public diplomacy initiatives of their nations to promote interaction and mutual understanding between states and communities, contributing to global peace.

Shaping the perceptions of societies has been one of the most fundamental elements of domestic and foreign policy since the earliest times in history. With the widespread adoption of the nation-state structure and nation-states becoming the main actors in international relations, public diplomacy began to play crucial role in international relations and diplomacy.

Diplomats, such as Ambassadors and Consuls, are responsible for conducting diplomatic relations between states. These diplomats also engage in public diplomacy, which plays a vital role in interstate relations. Public diplomacy activities have a significant impact on the leaders and citizens of that state. Public diplomacy is essential in shaping relations between states in addition to other diplomatic activities.

The “Public Diplomacy in Foreign Affairs” project conducted in collaboration with Cappadocia University and the Ankara Crisis and Politics Research Center (ANKASAM), aims to establish the principles for implementing public diplomacy, identify key activities and showcase first-hand the public diplomacy efforts undertaken in Turkey. The goal is to contribute to shaping Turkish foreign policy and the decision-making process.



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