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# ANATOLIAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

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THE BLACK SEA INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DIALOGUE



**ANATOLIAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

**ANADOLU ETKİ ALANI**

**ЗОНА ВОЗДЕЙСТВИЯ  
АНАТОЛИИ**

**ORSAM Report No: 73**

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## **PRESENTATION**

Within the period of historical changes, it is very difficult to write about future and to say something accurate about perspectives. The period which was established at the end of World War II and which is called “Cold War/Bipolar World” ended after the Soviet Union collapsed officially in December of 1999. In the meantime, while the United States was being presented as the only winning country, there was a debate about the acceptance of establishment of new world order by the winning country.

Turkey which specified its all policies and attitude according to West Block needed to redetermine its position in the period after 1991. In this period, people started to imply that Turkey was respected because it is a part of the west and that it has lost its value due to the end of the Bipolar World. The ones who exceeded their limit were commenting about the fact that the mission of NATO will finish and that Turkey will become an unimportant country.

During this process, Turkey’s application to accede to the European Union being established was made in 1987 but it was rejected in 1989. In 1992 when EU was established, Turkey was excluded from this union. And some people were alleging that the only solution for Turkey is that it should develop collaboration with Turkish republics which has been established recently.

I wonder if Turkey has autogenous value?. In order to find a response to this question, we carried out an analysis at the end of 1992 and in the beginning of 1993 and we converted this analysis to an article which connects between history and future. Our mental writing that we called “Turkey and Anatolian sphere of influence” was published in “New Forum Journal” (November 1993, in 46-50’s).

20 years before, we wrote clearly that we were expecting for Turkey to be one of the center of attraction in future. Today we see gladly that this expectation has come true partially and we know that there will also be other developments. We wish you to recall our study that we renewed and transformed it into a report without changing its content.

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# ANATOLIAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

## Executive Summary

*With the collapse of the Soviet Union (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics USSR), bipolarization occurred after World War II and it gives its place to unipolarization that the United States represents and to the centers of attraction (Russian Federation, Germany, India, China, Japan, Brazil, South Africa, Iran and Turkey) whose borders, form and structure are not clear certainly.*

*The 21st century loads multidimensional responsibilities on Turkey in a geography outside of its existing borders in present day because of Turkey's history, geography, geopolitical position, young and dynamic human potential, qualified labour force, religion, cultural and ethnic relationships. It obliges Turkey to operate in various fields actively, for instance political, economic and cultural fields. Thus, the more Turkey knows itself and evaluates its identity, history, culture, geography and potential correctly, the more it will understand its responsibilities concerning "Anatolian sphere of influence" and it will also undertake its natural task arising from the sphere of influence.*

*In our day, the sphere of influence that Turkey can create by evaluating its existing potential conflicts with the spheres of influence of Anatolian-based big states. There are "Physical geography of Anatolia and Anatolian sphere of influence" which extend from yesterday to today and from today to future.*

## 1. “Physical geography of Anatolia”

The physical geography of the states which were established in Anatolia is “The physical geography of Anatolia”. The physical geography of the states which were established in Anatolia is not only limited to the Anatolian peninsula (Asia Minor). The boundaries of “The physical geography of Anatolia” are Cyprus-Latakia-Kirkuk line in the south, Nakhchivan-Armenia (former Khanate of Erevan)-Adjara line in the east, Crimean peninsula in the north and Eastern Rumelian of Ottoman Empire-Western Thrace and Aegean islands.

## 2. Anatolian Sphere of Influence

Anatolian-based big states (Hittite, Eastern Roman- Byzantine Empire, Anatolian Seljuks and Ottoman Empire) associated in government fields in terms of history, culture and generally religion. We call the heritage which originated at the end of this association “Anatolian Sphere of Influence”. Nowadays, the first country which is Anatolian-based is Turkey.

### 2.a. First-degree “Anatolian Sphere of Influence”

“The physical geography of Anatolia” that was already described constitutes also First-degree “Anatolian Sphere of Influence”.

### 2.b. Second-degree “Anatolian Sphere of Influence”

The second-degree “Anatolian Sphere of Influence” is the Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and Dobruja) which is limited to the Danube-Black Sea, Una River-Adriatic Sea in the north; Philistine, Israel, Jordan, Syria and Iraq in the south; Iran, Southern Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia) in the east; Ukraina ( Crimea) and Russian Federation (Northern Caucasus/ Circassia, Karachay-Cherkess, Kabardino-

Balkaria, North Ossetia, Chechnia, Republic of Ingushetia and Republic of Dagestan) in the north.

### 2.c. Natural allies of the “Anatolian Sphere of Influence”

Russian Federation as big powers of the east and Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan being squeezed between China and India need “Anatolian Sphere of Influence” which has least interest in the region as an equilibrant and a solution and which is also the closest power to the region. Thus, these 3 muslim countries are natural allies of the “Anatolian Sphere of Influence”.

It has to cooperate with the “Anatolian Sphere of Influence” of Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan to equilibrate Russian Federation and China. It has to collaborate with the “Anatolian Sphere of Influence” of Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan to equilibrate Russian Federation and Iran.

In accordance with the federal agreement signed on 31 March 1992 with Moscow Government that is situated in Russian Federation, federal republics and autonomous regions which are Turkish and Muslim origins and which have not legal personality are open to an cooperation with the “Anatolian Sphere of Influence” having religious, linguistic and ethnic relations.

Against Serbia and Greece in the Balkans; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, Sandžak and Macedonia are natural allies with the “Anatolian Sphere of Influence” which has ethnic, cultural and historical relations with the Balkans and which has also least interest.

Turkish citizens who settle in Western Europe and obtain citizenship of the country they live in, people who live in the Ottoman territories and former Ottoman citizens are open to multi dimensional collaboration with the ‘Anatolian sphere of influence’.

## 2.d. World Powers That Won't Conflict With the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'

The regions that won't have a conflict of interest with Anatolian Sphere of Influence in terms of politics are Far East, Latin America and Africa, which are away from the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence' and which are not one of the world powers.

## 2.e. The Conditions for Dominance in the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'

One of the most important conditions for dominance in Anatolia and around it, is that the political powers who wish to dominate in Anatolia should settle their people on Anatolian territories and adopt a city in Anatolia as their capital.

All the governments who had dominated in 'Anatolian Physical Geography', namely; Hittite, the Eastern Roman-Byzantine Empire, the Anatolian Seljuk Empire and the Ottoman Empire had governed by gaining the support of the masses in the Anatolian Physical Geography. They have been able to dominate in the Anatolian Sphere of Influence by choosing a city in European or Asian part of Anatolia as a capital.

## 2.f. The Conditions for Dominance in The "Anatolian Sphere of Influence" for The Governments That Are Not Anatolian Centered

The governments that are not centered in Anatolia can dominate in "Anatolian Sphere of Influence" by conquering the Anatolia.

Persians, Macedonians and Romans, which are not Anatolian centered but had control over the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence', dominated in the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence' only after dominating the Anatolia.

After Persians came to power in Iran, Persian King Cyrus have conquered the Anatolian

Peninsula by defeating the Lydian King Croesus in Western Anatolia (545-540 B.C.). After having dominated the Anatolia, Croesus conquered the part on the south east of the Caspian Sea (545-540 B.C.), Babylonia (539 B.C.), Syria, Palestine and Egypt (525 B.C.).

Before conquering Babylonia, which is very close to the capital Sousse, Persians turned towards Western Anatolia and it proves the rule "One can not dominate the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence' without dominating the Anatolia." (After Croesus, Emperor Darius invaded Thrace up to Danuba between 513-510 B.C.)

After Persians, the Empire of the Alexander The Great dominated the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'. By observing the expansionism policy of Alexander the Great, it can be seen that Alexander took control of the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence' after conquering the Anatolian Peninsula like the Persians did.

Alexander the Great, who defeated the Persians at the Granicus River after passing the Dardanelles, in 334 B.C., conquered Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Western Iran, the Middle East and progressed all the way till Indian Ocean, after having conquered the Anatolian Peninsula.

By observing the expansion of one of the first super world powers, the Roman Empire, one can see that they had first conquered the Anatolian Peninsula.

After having conquered the Albania, the Macedonia and the Mora in 146 BC, the Romans dominated the Anatolia within thirty years. After having dominated the Anatolia, the Romans have conquered the Caucasus, the Mesopotamia, the Crimea, Bulgaria, Romania, Dalmatia, Serbia, Damascus, Crete, Libya, Egypt, Gaul (France) and Raetia Noricum (Switzerland- Vienna).



## **2.g. A government can only dominate the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence' without conquering the Anatolia by isolating it or making it ineffective.**

The Umayyads and the Abbasids who dominated the South western Middle East, Iran, Mesopotamia, Syria, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, North Africa and Spain, couldn't dominate the Anatolian Peninsula although they had dominated the Eastern Anatolia.

However, they made the Anatolian Peninsula territories and waters ineffective in the region by conquering the islands of strategic importance like Cyprus, Crete and Sicily. They weakened the effect of the Byzantine on the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'.

Tsardom of Russia, England, France, Austro-Hungarian Empire, the countries which wanted to intervene into the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence' during the Decline of the Ottoman Empire, manipulated the Christian elements and Arabs and cornered the Anatolian Peninsula from all the sides in order to render the Ottoman Empire which dominated the Anatolian Peninsula ineffective. With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the victors of the war, England, France and Italy attempted to eliminate the Ottoman Empire completely in order to dominate the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence' fully.

After the foundation of Turkish Republic, Anatolian Peninsula was surrounded by the USSR in the north and by France and England in the south thus restraining Turkey, an Anatolian-centered country, from being effective in the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'. After the Second World War, Turkey was rendered ineffective in the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence' by being dragged to constant conflicts with its neighbours except for Israel.

## **3. The Area of Dominance for the Anatolian Centered Countries.**

Since the beginning of history all the Anatolian centered great powers have aimed to

dominate or dominated the same areas due to the 'Anatolian Physical Geography' and the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'.

### **3.a. Hittite Empire**

Hittite Empire is the first great power that is Anatolian centered. It was founded in Kızılırmak basin as a heterogeneous ethnic structured country. Centered at Hattusa, the Hittite Empire had a foreign policy that aimed at expanding the territories via army and diplomacy towards the end of the 15th century BC.

As a result of this foreign policy, the empire gained reputation and it became one of the widest and the strongest country of the Middle East. The Hittite Empire created a region in which they are effective apart from their sovereignty boundaries. The Hittite Empire, which overtook Syria with its strong army, caused Egypt to lose its power over the region by provoking local kings of Syria and Phoenicia to rebel against Egypt.

### **3.b. The Eastern Roman-Byzantine Empire**

Roman Emperor Theodosius died in 395 after dividing the empire between two sons. The Empire was divided into Western and Eastern parts in a line lying from the Gulf of Sidra in Africa to the Una River in Balkans. The geographical area forming the Anatolian-Istanbul centered Eastern Roman Empire is in the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Byzantine (Eastern Empire) captured the coasts of the Adriatic Sea, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and the Balearic Islands, Southern Spain, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria coasts, which are other regions in the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'.

### **3.c. The Sultanate of Rum**

When the Sultanate of Rum dominated the Anatolian Peninsula up to Iznik without solving the conflict of its dependence on the



Great Seljuq Empire, it started to act like a great power. The Sultanate of Rum, which wanted to dominate the 'Anatolian Physical Geography' and reach the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence', tried to proceed in three main directions.

- In the South: Syria was invaded.
- In the North: Crimea was invaded.
- In the West: Byzantium was interfered in the internal affairs. (Suleyman Shah helped Botaneiates to be the Emperor. Kilij Arslan I's father-in-law Chaka Bey invaded Lesbos and Chios).

### 3.d. Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire which was established as a beylik along the coast, expended geographically in four main directions. Thus, it dominated the 'Anatolian Physical Geography' and later 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'.

- In Osman Bey period (1299-1326), Iznik, Bursa and Eskisehir were captured.
- In Orhan Bey period (1326-1359), the region extending to Canakkale was captured and Thrace which was situated in the 'Anatolian Physical Geography' was invaded.
- In Mehmed II period (1451-1481), the region extending from Crimea to the Mediterranean and from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Trebizond (Trabzon) was captured. The Eastern Anatolia was added to the sphere of influence.
- At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Ottoman Empire dominated much of the 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence', which indicates the region extending from the Caspian Sea to the Adriatic Sea, from Poland to the inlands of Africa.

### 3.f. The Republic of Turkey

The Republic of Turkey which was established in even narrower borders than the National Pact borders which have the smallest geographical borders in the history of Anatolia, is a natural heir to the 'Anatolian Physical Geography' and 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence'. That's why after less than a century of its establishment, it constantly had to remain and still remains in the geography and the sphere of influence in question which are out of its national borders.

The Republic of Turkey has strengthened its sovereignty in the Straits in the tenth years of its establishment with the Montreux Convention. It added Hatay (except for the Bayir-Bucak region) to the borders of the republic. It intervened militarily to Cyprus in the fiftieth years. In the seventieth years, it began to increase its relations in every extent with the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the Balkans, the Turkic republics and those of related origin. In the eightieth years, it began to develop relations, starting with the Middle East, with Africa, Latin Africa and Far East.

Because of its position, Turkey is a European, Asian, Balkan, Eastern Mediterranean, Caucasian, Black Sea and Middle East country. That's why Turkey has to combine the Eastern and Western, Northern and Southern values in its melting pot and reach a new synthesis.

Turkey has extended naturally its sphere of influence thanks to its ethnic, cultural, religious and historical structure after the world balances which have been restructured in the last decade.

So we are faced with a new geography covering the 'Anatolian Physical Geography' and 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence', which starts to become the sphere of Turkey's primary interest and influence and which has ethnic, cultural and historical origins. It's a geography which hasn't been able to refind its natu-

ral balance that it lost as a result of imperialist interventions for nearly a century. That's why, after the fall of USSR, with the rapid and constant change of world balances, it's been a geography where most states appeared. Every state which gained its independence in this geography has turned its eyes towards Turkey, waiting for its support and assistance. In the decades to come, there might appear new states in this geography.

Among the Turkish and other ethnic originated people in this geography, Islam has emerged as an identity against the sovereign people. (In almost all the brother states in this geography, we can see a crescent and/or a star motive, the color green and/or red and/or blue, double-headed eagle as the symbol of state).

It is not right to consider Turkey's increasing relations in every aspect with the geography extending from west to east (from Balkans to the Central Asia) and from north to south (from Ukraine to the Middle East) which also covers the 'Anatolian Physical Geography' and 'Anatolian Sphere of Influence' as a retrospective longing, an expansionist policy, an attempt to revive the Ottoman geography and Neo-Ottomanism. Rapid increasing of relations with the geography in question is due to the end of external pressures on the ethnic, cultural, social, geographical and historical ties and the start of dissolution of Jacobin governments by the people. Whether it likes it or not, Turkey will not be able to escape from its responsibilities as it will not get rid of the problems in this region. Because each problem arising in this wide geography has an impact in Turkey.

The political consequences of the economic and cultural relations which have been developed quickly after a long time for human life, but a short time for history, between the surrounding geography and Turkey, which is the only heir to the states which constantly ruled for thousands of years the Balkans, the Black Sea basin, the Middle East, the East and

South Mediterranean in the past and also the most fundamental state of the Turkic area from past to present, will surely be revealed in the following decades with a heavy step.

## Conclusion

The change in the balance of power in the north as a result of the dissolution of USSR which was a major neighbor of Turkey in the north deeply affected the geopolitical position of Turkey. After the dissolution of USSR, the common border between the Anatolian geography and the Tsardom of Russia-USSR geography, which existed for centuries, has come to an end. Turkey has met new border neighbors (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia). The official heir to the USSR and to the Tsardom of Russia after USSR, Russia has turned into a federation and most of the federation and the federal republics which constitute the federation have been comprised of Turkic or related people.

Turkey was a peninsula during the Cold War era surrounded by Iran and Arab countries among the Islamic world. After the Cold War, with the establishment of countries that are close to himself in the Balkans, Caucasia and Central Asia, Turkey started to take a strong position in the middle of and behind the Islamic world. So the period when the Arab countries determined the agenda and the future of the Islamic world by themselves came to an end. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Turkey's isolation not only in the Islamic world but also in the UN was brought to an end thanks to the establishment of new countries.

Since the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the main axis of Turkey's foreign policy has been determined by the West. There has been no clear reaction to this by the Turkish public opinion. However, the Turkish people who have strengthened, become conscious and opened up to the world, have started to get more and more interested in Turkey's foreign policy. As a result of this consciousness, it's

been to procure acceptance of one-dimensional policies to the Turkish public opinion. And also have the Governments had less ground to form foreign policies against the public opinion. Thus, the influences of individuals and foreign great powers on the forming of Turkey's foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Foreign policy has become a natural extension of the Turkish internal policy and Turkish people.

When we think of Turkey's past, present and future, it wouldn't be possible to reach a straight conclusion without analyzing the 'Anatolian Physical Geography' and the Anatolian Sphere of Influence' properly. Analyzing the past will enable us to analyze the present better, and analyzing the past and present, the future.

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