

TURKEY

Party Portrait

Kemalism and the common Muslim identity have been the pivotal points around which the Turkish State and society have revolved during the last century. Turkey has remained non-interventionist as long as states are politically stable and turns interventionist when states go through political transition. A large part of this interventionism stems from its threat perception of Kurdish separatism, which in turn has its roots in Kemalist. The transnational political networks of PKK in Syria and Iraq are seen as a direct threat to territorial integrity. Post WWI events also have likely had a lasting impact on Turkey's policy formulation. At the end of the war, the allied powers signed the Treaty of Sevres, dividing the Anatolian region. Turks launched an armed struggle to drive out the foreigners and scrap the treaty of Sevres. After several years of struggle, Turks did succeed, but the legacy of Sevres continues in resistance to imperialist policies.

Key Interests

- Extend area of influence to Syria, Iraq, and beyond
- Have supportive Syrian government that can limit autonomy of YPG (considered a franchise of PKK). Establish buffer zone in Syria close to Turkish border to create bulwark between Kurd populations in Turkey and Syria
- Push back ISIS through direct military intervention in Syria
- Strengthen KRG in northern Iraq
- Take part in any military offensive launched against ISIS in Mosul.

Sources of Leverage

Soft Power - The greatest source of leverage to Turkey are its historical ties with Arabs, which make it easier to forge relationships. This is reflected in the way Turkey was readily accepted by the Arab countries under AKP, despite the fact that it had turned its back on the region after WWI.

Geography- Turkey's geo-strategic location allows it to influence decisions in Middle East.

Economic/ Military - Turkey has an advantage in the region in aggregate economic, military and geo-strategic strengths

Regional Strategy

Turkey is using its own military alongside Arab militias in Syria against ISIS and YPG. It was also supporting Jabhat al Fatah al Sham to fight Syrian government forces. Currently, its strategy is to keep northern Syria under its influence. Turkey is using its ties with Russia to limit the influence of YPG. In Iraq, it has established a mutually beneficial, economic relationship with the KRG. It also supports Turkmen and Sunni Arabs in northern Iraq.

Powerful Individuals

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (AKP), Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly Ismail Kahraman

Potential Negotiation Moves

Syrian Solution - In the short term, agree to the proposal that would keep Assad in power during the transition period in Syria, with the caveat that Assad will be replaced eventually. Aim for a loose federal structure in Syria with areas of influence of different countries.

Balance Powers - Keep a balance in its relations with the US and Russia to have more flexibility in its decisions in the region.

Ceasefire with Kurds - Negotiate a ceasefire with Abdullah Ocalan in order to focus exclusively on ISIS.

Internal Conflicts

The conflict between the Turkish State and the PKK is the most prominent cleavage in the Turkish society. The PKK engaged in a devastating guerilla war with the Turkish State during the 1990s, resulting in deaths of over 40,000 people. Between 2013-2015, a ceasefire was enforced after an understanding was reached between PKK and Turkish government. But in June 2015, Erdogan's reluctance to extend military support to Syrian Kurds in Kobane against the Islamic State forces in Syria led to the truce breaking down. 2015-16 was one of the deadliest years in the history of Turkey's PKK conflict. The impact of Kemalist policies were limited to urban centers, while rural Anatolia remained aloof of these policies and conservative. A number of recent attacks in Turkish cities were claimed by the PKK.

Memberships

IAEA, NATO, OIC, OECD, OSCE, UN

Allies

UNITED STATES, TUNISIA, GERMANY, PALESTINE Hamas

Partners

SAUDI ARABIA, ISRAEL, EGYPT Muslim Brotherhood, LIBYA Government of National Accord, KURDS of Iraq, JAPAN, JORDAN, PALESTINE Fatah, IRAQ Secular Nationalist Parties, SYRIA Other Opposition Groups, IRAN, UNITED STATES, HOLY SEE, TUNISIA, QATAR, EUROPEAN UNION, RUSSIA, HUMANITARIAN ACTORS, SOMALIA Government

Rivals

IRAN, EGYPT Government, KURDS of Iran

Adversaries

N/A

Active Armed Opponents

ISIS, KURDS of Turkey, SYRIA Government

Proxy

SYRIA Other Opposition Groups

External Sponsor

PALESTINE Fatah

Aid Recipient

N/A

Aid Donor

N/A