

# Turkish

**Sphere  
OF  
Influence**





## INTRODUCTION

Strategic intelligence on Turkey's geopolitical ambitions examines the frameworks and strategies shaping its role in regional and global politics. Turkey's evolution from Kemalism to Neo-Ottomanism reflects a shift towards leadership aspirations among Turkic-speaking nations in Eurasia. This report delves into the historical, geographical, and contemporary factors underpinning Turkey's strategic posture while analyzing its challenges and opportunities.





# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## **Ottoman Legacy**

The Ottoman Empire (13th Century–1922) significantly influenced the Mediterranean, Europe, and Asia. At its height, it controlled vast trade routes, including Constantinople (now Istanbul), a crucial link between continents. Following its dissolution, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk led Turkey into modernity through secular and nationalist reforms, forming the bedrock of Turkey's geopolitical identity.

## **Transition to Neo-Ottomanism**

Post-Cold War, Turkey's policy shifted from Kemalist secularism to Neo-Ottomanism under the Justice and Development Party (AKP). This shift aimed to reconnect with Turkic and Muslim nations across Central Asia and the Middle East, balancing historical legacy with contemporary ambitions.





# GEOPOLITICAL AND

# STRATEGIC DEPTH



## Geographical Advantage

Robert Kaplan's maxim that "geography is destiny" aptly describes Turkey's position. Turkey's control of critical waterways like the Bosphorus and Dardanelles grants it leverage over global trade routes. These strategic chokepoints have historically enabled Turkey to exert regional influence.

## Strategic Depth Doctrine

Articulated by Ahmet Davutoğlu, this doctrine emphasizes Turkey's geopolitical centrality in resolving conflicts and projecting power across Asia, Europe, and North Africa.





# STRATEGIC INTERESTS AND MILITARY POSTURE

## Strategic Autonomy

Turkey seeks self-reliance in defense, energy security, and trade, reflecting its limited natural resources and pressing trade imbalances.

## Military Interventions

Turkey's proactive military doctrine includes rapid, decisive operations across borders, evident in interventions in Syria, Iraq, and Libya. The Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) prioritize readiness and innovation, adapting to hybrid warfare scenarios through advanced technological integration.

## Regional Alliances and Rivalries

- Support for Azerbaijan: In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Turkey's backing underscores its alignment with Turkic solidarity.
- Strained EU Relations: Human rights concerns and Cyprus-related tensions hinder Turkey's EU aspirations.
- NATO Dilemmas: Balancing NATO commitments with relations with Russia and China reflects Turkey's precarious geopolitical balancing act.



# ECONOMIC ASPIRATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

## East Asia Focus

Turkey's defense industry aims to penetrate East Asian markets, with significant trade partnerships developing with China, Japan, and South Korea.

## Economic Goals for 2023

Turkey aspires to be among the top 15 global economies, increase exports to \$226.6 billion, and stabilize inflation at single-digit levels. Achieving these targets depends on diplomatic stability and economic reforms.





# TOOLS OF STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE

## Technological Integration

The Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT) employs advanced tools like AI and data analytics to gather and process intelligence. Cyber capabilities play a vital role in Turkey's strategic operations.

## Intelligence Collaboration

NATO partnerships and regional alliances enhance intelligence-sharing capabilities, enabling Turkey to address common security threats effectively.





# CHALLENGES AND CONTROVERSIES

## Geopolitical Antagonism

- Turkey's aggressive foreign policies strain relations with neighbors and global powers, particularly over Cyprus and Kurdish autonomy.
- Its alignment with Qatar contrasts with tensions against Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

## Domestic Political Dynamics

- Domestic discontent and electoral setbacks challenge President Erdoğan's political base.
- Nationalistic and populist policies bolster short-term unity but risk long-term economic stability.

## Interdependence in the Middle East

Regional dynamics in the Middle East reflect complex interdependence, with Turkey's policies influencing broader stability. Despite rivalries, economic cooperation could foster regional peace.







## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Diplomatic Recalibration:** Balancing aggressive foreign policy with soft power initiatives can strengthen Turkey's global image.

**Economic Diversification:** Focusing on renewable energy and technology can reduce dependency on external resources.

**Enhanced Intelligence Cooperation:** Leveraging NATO ties while fostering regional intelligence-sharing frameworks can mitigate regional threats.

**Cultural Diplomacy:** Leveraging shared Turkic heritage through cultural and educational programs could enhance Turkey's soft power in Central Asia.



# CONCLUSION

Turkey's strategic influence is shaped by its historical legacy, geographic advantages, and evolving foreign policy. While its ambitions to reclaim a Neo-Ottoman identity enhance its regional role, addressing domestic and international challenges will be crucial for sustained geopolitical relevance.

