

The Role of Turkey in consolidating state Rebuilding in Somalia:

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Introduction:

Turkey has recently started a number of economic activities in the African continent regions where it was not active before the Justice and Development (AK) Party period. The success of the new policies, which have been introduced as «African expansion», can be measured with statistical data.

Although the success of the increasing volume of relations that have been built up in the African continent by Ankara is beyond debate, the reasons for this growing interest should be explained. With its population around one billion and its efficient location in terms of world energy reserves, the African continent continues to be the center of political and commercial attention.

Furthermore, the ultimate goal of Turkey, who tries to be active in this dynamic geography, is to build and maintain a consistent and prosperous network of relations that recognizes the importance of mutual freedom of movement while easing and supporting socio-economic development in Africa and Somalia in particular.

It should be noted that this presentation is also an article and part of my research in African studies. However, the lack of research concerning the subject was the main motive behind my intention to write this article. It is a case study, which attempts to assess the Turkish policy in Somalia. This study casts light on the following questions:

**Why Turkey's opening to Africa came into existence only in 2005
? What are the main mechanisms of Turkey's engagement in Somalia?
And Why Turkish aid model is proving to be a success in Somalia?**

1 - Historical background:

Turkish involvement with Africa date back to 1863 when Ali pasha the foreign minister of the Ottoman Empire contacted the British foreign minister in order to accept the nomination of De Roubaix as the Ottoman general consul in Cape Town. However, the Ottoman state through its general consul played an essential role in supporting the Muslim community in South Africa in general and Cape Town in particular.

However, The Ottoman state contributed financially in the building of many mosques in South Africa such as the mosque of port Elisabeth that was inaugurated in 1866 as well as sending an Imam, called Abu Bakr Effendi, to the Muslims of the Cape of Good Hope in 1863 on the request of the Muslim Community there⁽¹⁾. Moreover, it should be noted that the Muslim community in Cape Town celebrated the Sultan's birthday in 1864 ⁽²⁾.

As we know , Turkey's involvement with African Affairs goes back to the year 1998 when policy makers in Turkey tried to open up to African policy but In 1999, however, earthquakes and a financial crisis caused Turkey to postponement of its goals regarding Africa⁽³⁾.

However, Turkey's opening to Africa truly came into existence only in 2005 when Turkey announced «the year of Africa». Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Ethiopia and South Africa in

(1) Selim Argun, The life and contribution of the Osmanli scholar, Abu Bakr Effendi : Towards Islamic Thought and Culture in South Africa, Unpublished MA thesis, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, 2005.

(2) Public Record Office. Colonial Office.48/444

(3) Tom Wheeler. «Ankara to Africa : Turkey's outreach since 2005» South Africa Journal of international Affairs , vol.18,No 1(April 2011) pp 45-46.

March 2005, becoming the first Turkish prime minister to officially visit a country under the equator line. During this same year, Turkey enhanced its relations with Africa on an institutional level. Turkey obtained «observer status» in the African Union on 12 April 2005, and accredited its embassy in Addis Ababa to the African Union on 5 May 2005. The African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa in January 2008 declared Turkey as a «strategic partner».

2 - Turkey's Engagement in Somalia:

Turkey's engagement with Africa in general and Somalia in particular has expanded since 2005 in many fields such as diplomacy trade , investment, education, cultural , security and military cooperation.

Due to spiritual links between Turkey and Somalia, Turkey is paying increasing attention to Somalia in order to help this African country in state rebuilding and promoting a strategic partnership.

It is worth mentioning that Turkey has been Somalia's biggest donor since 2011, when the Turkish Prime Minister Racep Tayyib Erdogan paid a surprise visit to the capital Mogadishu in a bid to draw the world's attention to Somalia, which was experiencing the worst droughts for decades.

The Federal Government of Somalia was later established on August 20, 2012, representing the first permanent central government in the country since the start of the conflict. The following month, Hassan Sheikh Mohamed was elected as the new government's first President. The Turkish authorities, who re-affirmed Turkey has continued support for Somalia's government, its territorial integrity and sovereignty, welcomed the election⁽¹⁾.

In order to tackle the security problems facing the Somali government, Turkish authorities helped Somalia to establish political

(1) «Somalia: UN Envoy Says Inauguration of New Parliament in Somalia Historic Moment»

stability in Somalia. Turkey has provided \$8.84 million for the restructuring of the Somali army and police force, and trains Somalis in military academies in Turkey⁽¹⁾.

Furthermore, The Turkish government offered to mediate between the TFG and al-Shabaab Terrorist organization, but the latter rejected this proposal. Thus al-Shabaab has been strongly condemned by the international community.

It should be noted that Turkish aid to Somalia is through the elaboration of programmes which are often funded by business figures. Turkey's health ministry, in coordination with the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), manages the largest hospital complex in Somalia, and the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) is in the process of constructing an orphanage, which will be the largest in the Horn of Africa.

Moreover, Turkey is also building schools and clinics, and it is currently involved in a project to improve Mogadishu's water supply. In 2012 Turkish Airlines became the first major carrier to serve the Somali capital in over 20 years; it now operates four flights there a week. Prior to the resumption of services, the Turkish government undertook work to secure the airport and installed air traffic control equipment. As well as repairing mosques damaged by war. There is also an active Turkish–Somali business organization. Somalis have been impressed that, unlike other expatriates, most Turks in Mogadishu live among the Somali people, rather than in secure walled compounds.

Turkey believes that the construction of national unity is a precondition for building statehood in Somalia and establishing regional stability in the Horn of Africa and Turkey attaches great

(1) A total of 110 Somali military personnel have ended a military training course in Turkey. The training program for the Somali soldiers was part of the bilateral military cooperation pact between the federal government of Somalia and the Turkish government.

significance to Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. During the 2012 Istanbul II Conference on Somalia, Turkey took an active role by inviting international partners to invest in initiatives that will ultimately strengthen economic development in Somalia while at the same time develop vitally needed infrastructures such as:

- access to energy,
- Drinkable water, repair of roads, and capacity building within governing institutions.

It is worth noting that The Ministry of Foreign Affairs encouraged a participatory and comprehensive approach to economic reconstruction and social development between the public and private sectors because it believes this will contribute to national cohesion and regional stability.

NGOs that are active in Somalia include Doctors Worldwide, TIKa, Kimse Yok Mu, the Turkish Red Crescent, Humanitarian Relief Foundation, Islamic Relief, and the Physicians for Hope Foundation. Turkish NGOs operate refugee camps in Mogadishu. The Turkish government through TIKa is playing a determinant role in reforming the education system in Somalia over a 49-year period and has opened the first Turkish high school in Somalia.

It is worth noting that The Turkish role in Somalia have concentrated on capacity building in governmental institutions, assisting civil society and local leadership in defining priorities for their respective regions, developing a vocational training school, initiating investments in access to energy, potable water, treatment of over 200,000 Somalis at Turkish field hospitals and clinics. Other projects include building schools, installation of streetlights, a 400-bed hospital, and a waste-disposal facility. Thus, currently, there are 500 aid workers working in Somalia. These workers included doctors, nurses, midwives, engineers, and even personnel from Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs.

In October 2013, Somalia's federal government endorsed an agreement with the Turkish firm Al-Bayrak to manage the Port of Mogadishu for a 20-year period. According to the Prime Minister's Office, the deal was secured by the Ministry of Ports and Public Works, and also assigns Al-Bayrak responsibility for rebuilding and modernizing the port. In September 2014, the Federal Government of Somalia officially delegated management of the Mogadishu Port to Al-Bayrak. The Turkish company's head Ahmed Salim indicated that under the terms of the agreement, 55% of revenue generated at the seaport will go to the Somali authorities and the remaining 45% is earmarked for the firm⁽¹⁾.

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3 - The Future Perspectives of Turkey - Somalia Relations:

In order to achieve the state rebuilding in Somalia, Turkey should take into consideration the main following recommendations:

1 - Turkey can help Somalia in exploring conflict resolution approaches, provide understanding of peace and security issues, and find the main solutions of dealing with the rise of terrorism and extremism.

2 - Enhance cooperation, in the fight against terrorism, transnational organized crime, through collaboration among the African Centre for

(1) *World Bulletin*. 25 January 2015. Retrieved 25 January 2015.

(2) Ozakan, M. and Orakci, S. (2015) «Viewpoint: Turkey as a «political» actor in Africa – an assessment of Turkish involvement in Somalia, Journal of Eastern African Studies, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2015, pp. 343–352.

the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSTR)(1), the Turkish Centre of Excellence Defense against Terrorism (COEDAT) based in Ankara.

3 - Share information, experiences, research and initiate capacity building through training and exchange.

4 - Provide logistical and financial support to Somalia as well as training and exchange programs.

5 - Increase cooperation in the field of maritime security, in order to make an end to piracy in the Indian Ocean

6 - Encourage initiation and conclusion of Framework Agreements on Cooperation in Military Fields of Training, Technology and Science, as well as Military and Police Training Cooperation Agreements.

7 - Encourage the exchange of visits by Ministers, Military Staff, and Technical Experts to explore military cooperation in various defense and security areas;

8 - Establish with Somalia joint mechanisms to counter terrorism and to suppress the finance of terrorism.

9 - Providing technical support and cooperation on the issues of food safety practices, general hygiene, food safety inspection procedures;

10- Exchanging information, experts, mutual visits, and meetings between Small and Medium Enterprises through the initiative of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Turkey and its counterparts in Somalia.

(1) The inauguration of the African Center for Studies and Research on Terrorism was conducted on 13 October 2004, by the Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and Alpha Oumar Konaré Chairperson of the AU Commission, in the presence of several African Ministers and many personalities representing the African Union partners in the field of prevention and fight against terrorism. The Center is a structure of the African Union Commission. Its goals consist of Complementing international efforts by strengthening cooperation between African countries to prevent and combat terrorism, assisting in the full implementation of international conventions relating to terrorism and playing the role of a monitoring and alerting tool by incorporating in its approach the concept of preventive management of terrorism matters.

11 - Somalia can benefit from the rich experience of the Rural Development Investments Support Programme of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of Turkey.

12 - Training experts and cooperating on seed sowing and seedling cultivation, combat desertification, the impact of climate changes on soil and water resources and drought and erosion and desertification in Somalia.

13 - Sharing knowledge and best practices of women's projects and experiences on agriculture;

14 - Cooperate in the area of organic farming techniques specifically in the field of herbal and animal production;

15 – Turkey should Provide Somalia technical support and cooperation on the issues of food safety practices, general hygiene, food safety inspection procedures.

16 - In order to tackle the challenges of unemployment in Somalia , Turkey can play an essential role in training young Somali on Information and communication technology. Thus, Turkey can transform teaching with new technology , and this kind of teaching requires the development of infrastructure , creation of contents and training of a new generation of teachers.

Conclusion:

It could be said that Rebuilding Somalia, bringing peace and security, and helping establish a stable government are top Turkey's goals in the horn of Africa.. With its thriving economy, Ankara is also looking at future trade possibilities in the energy, construction and agricultural sectors.

Nevertheless, Turkey's lack of a colonial history in the continent and its emphasis on an equal partnership with African countries has spread optimism about the future of the relationship among African leaders.

Turkish foreign policy toward Africa in general and Somalia in particular should be sustainable and should continue to enhance the country's relationship with Africa through the coordinated efforts of officials, institutions, NGOs, and business people.

Finally, Turkey is at an opportune crossroads to increase its civilian capacity and provide more value-added assistance to conflict affected countries such as Somalia. It has great potential to initiate civilian projects on political reforms, democratization, ensuring basic government functionality and Jump-starting their economies.