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The UN factor in the "regional power role" and the Turkish case in the 2000s

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Abstract *This article aims to explore the relationship between regional powers and the United Nations (UN) with respect to regional issues by examining UN-Turkish ties concerning the Middle East during the 2000s. Bidding for a leading regional role in the Middle East, especially in the 2000s, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government in Turkey has increasingly used international platforms, including the UN, to gain a significant regional position in the Middle East. Turkey's relationship with the UN in this respect could provide a relevant example to explore multilateralism and multilateral instruments in Turkey's perceived regional power role during the last decade. The term "regional power" will be used as a conceptual framework to explore Turkey's behavioural pattern with respect to the UN in view of the regional-global linkage, as global activism is nearly a standard behaviour of any state with a leading regional power role/claim. In view of this, the period during which Turkey held a temporary seat on the UN Security Council between 2009 and 2010 will be given particular attention in order to identify any significant link or at least any tentative correlations between Turkey's then-closer involvement in the UN and its regional power role/claim in the Middle East. Moreover, fluctuations recorded in Turkey's relations with the UN with respect to the Middle East during the last decade will be taken into account to examine a variety of challenges involved in any regional state's relations with the UN regarding regional issues. Conducting a periodical analysis of Turkey-UN relations with respect to the Middle East could provide some provisional answers regarding both limitations and opportunities related to the future state of relations between any regional power and the most universal organization of world politics.*

Introduction

Regions and regional powers are gaining importance in global politics as a level of analysis and global actors, respectively. Regional powers generally view their regional leadership as "a springboard" to their future influential global role (Malamud 2011, 1). This paper conceptualizes Turkey as a potential regional power, focusing on its role perception at "the regional-global nexus" via its role at the United Nations (UN; Kardaş 2013, 637). Since the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government came into power in Turkey in 2002, Turkey's new position vis-à-vis the Middle East has been widely discussed in reference to its potential status as a role model, its ability to use its soft power and its growing efforts to exert influence in regional affairs (Altunışık 2005; Kirişci 2011). However, few serious

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attempts have been made so far to analyse the role of multilateralism and multilateral instruments in Turkey's perceived regional power role in the Middle East during the last decade (Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner 2013). In this context, this article represents a modest attempt to explore the relationship between *regional powers* and *the UN* with respect to *regional issues* through an examination of UN-Turkish relations in the Middle East during the 2000s.

Instead of focusing on how close Turkey has come to fulfilling the expectations of regional power role (for example: having hard and soft power, a claim to leadership, acceptance by regional and other powers, great influence over regional affairs), this article uses the term "regional power" as a conceptual framework in which to explore Turkey's behavioural pattern with respect to the UN in view of the regional-global linkage, as global activism is nearly a standard behaviour of any state with a leading regional power role/claim. To elaborate on this, three characteristics of regional powerhood will be put into use in positioning Turkey's performance in the UN:

(1) Turkey's *willingness to lead* and bring a regional issue under the UN platform.
(2) The *degree of acceptance of this leading position by regional states* and global powers, as reflected in UN voting patterns on regional issues.
(3) Turkey's *regional political influence* and the *number of UN resolutions* on issues concerning the Middle East that Turkey promoted and supported.

In this context, this article aims to elaborate a possible two-way linkage between Turkey's prevalent "regional power role" in the 2000s and its UN performance regarding certain Middle Eastern issues, in reference to the present literature on the assessment and definition of regional powerhood.

Conceptualization of "regional power" and Turkey

The modern history of regional-level theorizing and regional security dynamics falls mainly into three stages: the modern era from 1500 to 1945; the Cold War and decolonization period from 1945 to 1989; and the post-Cold War period since 1990. Until 1945, some type of regional security existed, yet it was defined much more by global rivalries among the European powers than by security interdependence among regional units. Thus, numerous regional "great games" were being played by rival external powers. During the second stage, 1945–1989, the Cold War paved the way for the formation of several regional security dynamics in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. However, the Cold War was also the mechanism that led to the organization and promotion of extensive intervention in and penetration into the economic and political functioning of these new regions. The end of the Cold War marked the opening of a third stage, the post-Cold War period since 1990, in which regions and regional roles have become crucial (Buzan and Weaver 2003, 15). Without the superpower rivalries that characterized the Cold War, global-level explanations have become less predominant than regional-level conceptualizations, such as "regional power" (Frazier and Stewart-Ingersoll 2010; Stewart-Ingersoll and Frazier 2012). Furthermore, the end of the Cold War arguably created space for regional powers to emerge as key actors that assume important (but currently underspecified and understudied) roles with respect to questions of regional and global governance (Prys 2010, 480).

Regional power is a non-agreed upon complicated and multifaceted term, as are many other types of power (Nolte 2010, 883). In fact, the lack of agreement is not surprising considering the variation and differences in the definitions of "region" and "power". No international relations (IR) theory itself is sufficient to overcome the complexity of this subject matter. It is therefore necessary to combine different IR approaches in order to elaborate on the "regional power" concept. Accordingly, there is a dynamic academic literature on being a regional power or having a particular power within the international system (for example: an emerging power, middle power, regional great power), which is enriched ever increasingly. In this regard, a series of studies present Turkey as a regional power, an emerging power or a middle power (Öniş and Kutlay 2013, 1409; Parlar Dal 2016). Indeed, a specific state may be the subject of several power definitions. For instance, Brazil is defined as both a regional power and an emerging power in the world. IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa) states are better characterized as occupying a dual role, as both regional and rising powers (Stephan 2012, 289). Regional powers are crucial actors in their regions; they also 'occupy a certain hierarchic position in the global power distribution' (Kardas, 2013, 639) They are regarded by Nolte as 'nodes between the global and the regional power hierarchies' (Nolte 2010, 889).

A comparison of Turkey in the Middle East with some regional powers, such as Brazil and South Africa in their sub-regions, reveals some differences in terms of their level of acceptance as regional powers. A "regional power" is a country that is influential and powerful in a certain geographic region or sub-region (especially in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East) (Nolte 2010, 893). In other words, regional powers define the polarity of a given regional security complex (RSC):[1] unipolar in Southern Africa, bipolar in South Asia and multipolar as in the Middle East, South America and Southeast Africa (Buzan and Weaver 2003, 37). Compared with Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa or East Asia—regions with acknowledged regional powers, such as Brazil, South Africa and China, since the end of the Cold War—the Middle East seems to represent a "deviant" case because several contenders for regional leadership (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel and Turkey) have aspired to gain such a leadership role (Fürtig 2014, 209). Therefore, some have proposed the concept of "potential regional power" role for countries such as Turkey in the Middle East (Beck 2010, 128–136). There are some states that 'articulate the pretension (self-conception) of a leading position in the Middle East: Iran (particularly since 1979), Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt (particularly between 1952 and 1967 but also thereafter), Israel (particularly in the 1990s) and Iraq (particularly in the 1980s)' (Beck 2014, 4). In fact, between the Suez crises of 1956 and its devastating defeat in the Six-Day War of 1967, Egypt came very close to assuming the position of a regional power. Egypt's position did not affect Turkey, Israel and Iran, but within the Arab world at least, Egypt's hegemony experienced its ultimate demise only with President Nasser's death in 1970. There is competition in almost every region, but it seems more obvious in the Middle East (Fürtig 2014, 210).

[1] Regional security complex theory focuses on the importance of regional powers. A regional security complex (RSC) is an analytical concept defined and applied by Buzan and Weaver (2003) for security and polarity at the regional level; specifically, the term is defined as 'a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot be reasonably analysed or resolved apart from one another' (Buzan and Weaver 2003, 44). Regional security complex theory focuses on the importance of regional powers.

For a long time in its Republican history, Turkey did not identify itself as a Middle Eastern actor; rather, it aimed to be a part of the Western state system. Even when Turkey has accepted its Middle Eastern identity, such acceptance has always occurred in the context of defining Turkey as having multiple identities (Altunışık 2014a, 124). Accordingly, it is also important to recall that Turkey operates semi-regionally, meaning that Turkey operates in more than one region without dominating one of them. Turkey is a country with multiple regional identities in terms of geographical and physical closeness, culture, history, political and economic relations. There is no coherent and consistent perception that puts Turkey at the centre of the Middle East, as is the case of Brazil's position in South America or the Republic of South Africa's position in Africa. Even the governing Turkish elite refrains from defining Turkey as a regional power in the Middle East in order to avoid restricting itself in world politics by defining its position within only one region. Although Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (2009–2014) defined the Middle East as 'an unavoidable hinterland', he preferred to refer to Turkey as a 'center country' by accentuating Turkey's membership in more than one region simultaneously (Davutoglu 2008, 78).

The characterization of Turkey as existing between several regions, especially between Europe and the Middle East, has brought about some new conceptualizations, such as the "cusp state".[2] In choosing to analyse Turkey as a cusp state, Philip Robins notes that 'Turkey lies adjacent to two important sub-systems, where the values and norms governing political conduct among states are distinct and contrasting', and that Turkey is therefore subject to the gravitational pull of two regional sub-systems (Robins 2006, 204). Alternative conceptualizations regarding Turkey's in-between position have also been proposed by other scholars. For example, Barry Buzan conceptualizes Turkey as an insular state because it remains on the periphery and does not fit any of its neighbouring regions properly. As a consequence, it does not have the advantage of having a clear regional basis from which to operate (Barrinha 2014, 179).[3]

This situation is not necessarily a disadvantage for Turkey, since it provides the country with both opportunities and flexibilities (Altunışık 2014b). In other words, because Turkey does not belong to a particular regional security complex, even though it shares many cultural and geopolitical ties with most of its neighbours, it is favourably positioned to play a potential leading role in its immediate neighbouring region. This favourable position has been made possible by the shift in Turkey's self-assessment regarding the security dynamics that have surrounded it during the 2000s. Rather than attempt to avoid them, Turkey changed to a proactive policy that attempts to turn obstacles into opportunities. This is particularly evident in the economic area, where its economic growth has directly translated into the development of much stronger ties with its neighbouring region (Barrinha

[2] The concept of "cusp state" is extensively discussed in the book *The role, position and agency of cusp states in international relations* by Marc Herzog and Philip Robins (2014).

[3] There are other alternative terms to refer to Turkey's in-between position. For example, Lerna Yanık prefers the term "liminal state" to elaborate how 'the hybridization of geography is constructed by various discursive practices that portray Turkey as a meeting place of different regions and continents' and thereby how Turkey is 'presented as exceptional in world politics' (Yanık 2011, 80). On the other hand, Ziya Öniş and Mustafa Kutlay present Turkey as a striking example of a 'near-BRICS (Brazil, Russia, Indonesia, China, South Africa) power', as a country that has adopted an increasingly assertive and independent style of foreign policy with aspirations to establish itself as a major regional actor (Öniş and Kutlay 2013, 1409).

2014, 178). Therefore, although Turkey has long been an "insulator" state, it has come very close to playing a regional role in the Middle East during the 2000s. In this context, although there are difficulties involved in defining Turkey's leading regional role in the Middle East, this paper tentatively treats Turkey as a "potential regional power", especially during the 2002–2011 period, and consequently focuses on identifying any significant link or at least a meaningful connection between Turkey's then-closer involvement in the UN and its regional power role in the Middle East. As Prys argues, regional powerhood comes in different forms and with different features, and a regional power's contribution to the regional and global order is neither always positive nor always negative; rather, it can also be indifferent or insignificant (Prys 2010, 483).

After choosing "regional power" as an umbrella term, it could be of avail to remember some well-accepted features of regional powerhood even if there is no standard definition of regional power. One can encounter some overlapping points across various definitions of regional power despite certain nuances among them, such as the possession of material and soft power *capabilities* to assume the role of regional leader; the *willingness* to adopt the role of a regional leader; and the *acceptance* of this leading role by third parties, and the capacity to *influence* regional events.[4]Although the criteria reflected in several conceptualizations of regional power are mostly similar, Detlef Nolte's (2010) definition is selected as the basis of our use of regional power as a general framework. Among many criteria combining both material and ideational factors, Nolte particularly underscores three points:

(1) *self-conception* of a leading position in a region (leading role definition);
(2) recognition and *acceptance* of this leading position in the region or at least respect by other states inside and outside the region (power over ideas);
(3) ability to have great *influence* in regional affairs (power over outcomes) (Schrim 2009; Nolte 2010, 892–893).

In addition to delineating the foregoing three components, Nolte deepens his definition of regional power: a regional power exerts its influence through not only regional governance structures but also integration into *interregional and global forums* and multilateral institutions, where it acts as a representative of regional interests (Nolte 2010, 893). Nolte's last point, regional powers' expected foreign policy behaviour through *multilateralism*, especially regarding a regional power's foreign policy pattern in *global forums*, will be the centre of attention in this study.

[4] Within this framework, references to some commonly accepted criteria for a regional power by authors such as Maxi Schoeman, Detlef Nolte and Daniel Flames could be enlightening. Schoeman describes the requirements for being a regional power and taking the lead in a particular region as follows: internal dynamics (having an economic and political system for fulfilling a stabilizing and leading role in the region), willingness (assuming the role of a peacekeeper and stabilizer), capacity (having the capacity and ability to assume the role of regional leader) and being acceptable to others for its role (being accountable to countries of the region for regional security) (Schoemen 2000). On the other hand, according to Flemes, regional powers can be distinguished based on four pivotal criteria: claim to leadership, possession of power resources, employment of foreign policy instruments and acceptance of leadership by third countries (Flemes 2007a, 11). Nolte, another notable author of studies on regional power, defines a regional power as a state that articulates the pretension (self-conception) of a leading position in a region that is geographically, economically and political-ideationally delimited; that possesses the material (military, economic, demographic), organizational (political) and ideological resources for regional power projection; and that truly has great influence in regional affairs (activities and results) (Nolte 2010).

Regional power role, multilateralism and the UN

Although the strong connection between *multilateralism* and *middle powers* has received some recognition in the IR literature, the interplay between *regional powers* and *multilateral* institutions has only recently gained some recognition in the field (Keohane 1969, 295; Alden and Vieira 2005, 1078; Flemes 2007a, 8–9; Hurrell 2000, 4). Moreover, the role of the UN in developing leading regional power roles is still under-theorized, and there is no clear pre-existing theoretical framework or explanation for understanding the linkage between regional powers and the UN with respect to regional issues. Some recent studies have examined China and India's performance in the UN. In their study, Cooper and Fuer suggest that China, existing at the 'center stage of global politics' (Cooper and Fues 2008, 304), chose to act a 'system stabilizer' (Cooper and Fues 2008, 304), strategically deciding when and how to act at the UN. India, on the other hand, became an 'agenda mover' (Cooper and Fues 2008, 305) on various issues, reflecting its newfound role as a bridge between North and South (Cooper and Fues 2008). In his study on Brazil, Hurrell examines the diplomacy of Brazil on multilateral platforms by specifically focusing on its quest for non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (Hurrell 2010a). In another study on IBSA states, Matthew D. Stephen analyses and compares different strategies of rising regional powers by focusing on their insistence on 'UN reform' for an inter-governmental, UN-based vision for the future world order (Stephen 2012, 307). The existing literature generally narrowly focuses on the effects of the presence of a regional power on regional institutionalization, which remains a largely European phenomenon (Prys 2012).

Regional powers are "multilateral activists" that are strongly involved in international institutions. They not only influence the regional balance of power politics but also have a "growing presence" in international organizations. The UN platform has been particularly significant in aspiring regional powers' effort to play larger roles in global governance institutions. In this regard, Brazil, India and South Africa's campaign for a permanent seat on the council are illustrative of this increasing preoccupation with the UN platform. Fonseca mentions the UN as 'the core of Brazilian multilateral ideology' (Fonseca 2011, 376). Brazil has taken on a higher global profile by holding a nonpermanent seat on the UNSC, exhibiting leadership within the Group of 20 (G20), increasing its activity within the World Trade Organization (WTO), and participating in the annual Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) meeting and the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) Forum (Fontaine and Kliman 2013, 99). Similarly, South Africa sought a recurrence of its holding a non-permanent seat at the UNSC in 2007–2008 by applying for membership in the same body for the period 2010–2012, which eventually materialized. Turkey's UNSC temporary membership in 2009–2010 and its application for the period 2015–2016, which has not materialized, is also illustrative of its increased preoccupation with the UN platform in the 2000s. An enhanced role for the UN and an enhanced place for themselves within it are particular objectives for all these states. (Ferdinand 2014, 379). As Hurell suggests, the ideas and interest of regional powers can rarely be understood solely within a domestic and regional context (Hurrell 2010b). Regional powers' (or potential regional powers') pivotal role in the construction and maintenance of the regional governance structure involves them in international governance in several ways. According to Nolte (2010), regional powers could be measured, among other things;

by the "means of influence" they bring to bear on the structure of international institutions. This goes well with the following suggestion by Hurrell:

> Institutions are not just concerned with liberal purposes of solving common problems or promoting shared values. They are also *sites of power* and reflect and entrench power hierarchies and the interest of powerful states. Indeed, sovereignty may be increasingly defined not by power to insulate one's state from external influences but by the *power to participate effectively* in international institutions of all kinds. (Hurrell 2010a, 3–4, emphasis added)

Regional powers take on dual roles vis-à-vis international institutions. Regional states are 'co-opted into existing international organizations', but at the same time wish to 'balance the influence of the established powers' and reform these organizations (Stephan 2012, 289). Regional powers have chosen a "soft balancing" approach that calls for coalition building and the pursuit of a common interest in international institutions (Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner 2013, 3; Stephan 2012, 297). Thus, both rising regional powers and traditional middle powers have been credited with having a "special interest" in *international institutions* or with forming coalitions in such institutions, both of which serve the objective of *constraining* the power of stronger states, by *integrating* themselves into the global governance structure in order to get *recognition* (Nel 2010, 951) while at the same time trying *to revise* at least some of its fundamental features (Nolte 2010, 891).

Yet the degree of regional powers' influence on international institutions is *not without its limits*. The capacity of existing institutions to effectively constrain the autonomy and unilateralist impulses of major states remains highly questionable. Many institutions continue to be hierarchically organized with decision-making restricted to a small group of major states (Hurrell 2000, 6). This is particularly evident in platforms like the UNSC in which the final decision is in the hands of five veto powers. Furthermore, as Nel (2010) and Stephan (2012) note, there may be a contradiction between the dual role of a regional leader based on its hierarchical relationship within the region and a revisionist position with regard to the global power hierarchy. Regional powers are like actors that have to play rather different roles in two plays showing in the same theatre. From time to time, the combination of both roles may create problems of credibility and coherence, for both the spectators and the actors (Nolte 2010, 901).

Turkey's regional power role and the UN in perspective: analysing Turkish Foreign Policy (TFP) towards the Middle East in the 2000s

Although the linkage between *regional powers* and *multilateral* institutions has only recently gained some recognition in the field, the role of the UN in developing leading regional power roles is still under-theorized. In the context of the regional-global nexus, willingness to take a regional leadership role is related to efforts of aspiring regional powers in terms of "setting the agenda" in multilateral forums like the UN. In fact, the term "entrepreneur leadership" introduced by Oran Young (Young 1991) is useful here in explaining the regional power behaviour in international platforms as efforts directed towards *setting the agenda* in multilateral forums through coalitions, among which the most important platform is the UN (Geldenhuys 2010, 162). Accordingly, aspiring regional powers increasing their efforts towards *setting the agenda* through proposals regarding the region in the UN General Assembly and the UNSC platform is significant in

Table 1. Analytical Framework: The role of the UN in the 'Regional Power Role'

Regional power role	United Nations
Willingness and *bid for leadership* in its region	*Regional issues introduced and promoted* by aspiring regional powers within the *UN General Assembly and United Nations Security Council (UNSC)* platform (agenda-setting efforts)
The *acceptance of this leadership role* by other states in the region and outside the region	*The voting pattern of regional states supporting* the position of leading regional powers (support of followers)
Real political influence to yield results in the region	*UN Resolutions* regarding the issues concerned (power over outcomes)

demonstrating their willingness to adopt a leading regional power role. Regional powers' (or aspiring regional powers') bid for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC platform in the last decade has been particularly important in terms of demonstrating their agenda-setting efforts in the UN platform (Geldenhuys 2010; Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner 2013; Hirst 2012). However, it is widely acknowledged in the literature that successful regional leadership depends not only on "resources" and "ambition-*willingness*", but also crucially upon the *support of followers* in global governance institutions (Ikenberry 2001; Pedersen 2002; Schirm 2009, 212–213). Followership is a necessary condition to give countries the power base for both regional and global power projection (Schirm 2009, 213). Therefore, the support of followers from regional states in the UN platform as reflected in their voting is a crucial factor for a leading regional power role. Furthermore, as Nolte points out, 'the power of leading regional powers could be measured, among other things, through the influence they bring to bear in global governance institutions' (Nolte 2010, 891; see also Flemes and Nolte 2010, 6) Yet the gap between the *aspiration for power* and actual *power over outcome* has not been sufficiently explored (Schirm 2009, 213). Thus, not only the increasing preoccupation with the UN in terms of agenda setting efforts but the "outcome" of these efforts in terms of sound policy implications like UN resolutions are crucial in order to measure whether the aspiring regional powers adopt an effective regional power role. Thus, building on Detlef Nolte's (2010) definition of regional power, we propose the following analytical framework that links the "regional level to the global level" in order to measure the "role of the UN" in states' regional power role with respect to regional issues.

In this part of the paper, the role of the UN in Turkey's perceived regional power role will be scrutinized for the period during the first decade of AKP rule (2002–2011) to identify any significant link or at least any tentative explanations between Turkey's then-closer involvement in the UN and its leading regional power role in the Middle East. Specifically, the following factors will be investigated:

(1) Turkey's *willingness* to lead and bring a regional issue to the UN platform by *sponsoring draft resolutions in the UN General Assembly platform and agenda-setting efforts at the UNSC.*
(2) The *support of followers* in Turkey's leading position by regional states and global powers, as reflected in *UN General Assembly and UNSC voting* on regional issues

(3) The *UN General Assembly and UNSC resolutions* on issues concerning the Middle East that had *real regional political influence.*

Bidding for a leading regional role in the Middle East, especially in the first decade of the 2000s (2002–2011), the AKP government in Turkey has increasingly used international platforms, especially the UN, to gain a significant regional position in the Middle East. The Turkish government and foreign policy decision makers during this period have openly declared their *willingness* to take a *leading role* in Middle Eastern issues as well as diversifying Turkey's relations with multilateral platforms, mainly the UN. Among other examples, Turkey's temporary membership for 2009–2010 and its application for the 2015–2016 periods clearly illustrate the increasing willingness on the side of Ankara to assume a leading role in the UN platform. Turkey's relationship with the UN in this respect could provide a relevant example to explore multilateralism and multilateral instruments in Turkey's perceived regional power role in the first decade of AKP rule.

Several factors laid the foundations for Turkey's increasing willingness to adopt a leading regional power role in the Middle East region during the first decade of the 2000s. First, domestic factors shaped the landscape for the available domestic preconditions for Turkey to adopt a regional power role. In this regard, the growth rate of the Turkish economy has had an impact in increasing *material resources* in Turkey's so called leading regional power role. (Sever 2012, 103–104). Not only Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—the BRICS states—but also Turkey and Indonesia, among others, have become formidable *growth zones* that have attracted the attention of their regional neighbours as well as Western states (Bank and Karadag 2012, 5). Turkey's growth performance increased its "trading state" (Kirisci 2009, 33) potential, and this economic dynamism transformed into a soft power component, as it helped Turkey become a centre of attraction in the eyes of its Middle Eastern neighbours (Dinçer and Kutlay 2012, 19). Second, positive developments in the first half of the 2000s with regard to Turkish democracy and democratic reforms also paved the way for Ankara's more assertive foreign policy concerning regional issues at a global scale. AKP rulers' ideological orientation and close attachment to Islamic values have also substantially contributed to Ankara's growing involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. This has also resulted in cultural demarche towards the region, especially in the pre-Arab Spring period (Sever 2012, 107). In this sense, Andre Bank and Roy Karadag conceptualize Ankara's growing involvement in Middle Eastern affairs as the emergence of an "Ankara Moment" in the first decade of the AKP administration in the Middle East (Bank and Karadag 2013, 288). In fact, Turkish government and foreign policy decision makers during the 2000s have openly declared their *willingness* to take a *leading role* in the issues regarding its region:

> Turkey has in fact become *a leading country* that works to expand the sphere of peace and prosperity *in its region*; generate stability and security; help *establish an order* that paves the way for prosperity, human development and lasting stability (emphasis added).[5]

Multilateral institutions in general and the UN specifically have become a crucial factor—and an instrument—in Turkey's quest for a leading role in both its region and international politics throughout the 2000s. In fact, the role of multilateral

[5] <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa>, accessed 24 July 2014.

institutions in Turkish foreign policymaking is hardly new. Since the early Republican era, Turkish rulers have chosen to act with multilateral institutions such as the League of Nations, the United Nations, the EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Integration with Western institutions both provided "socialization" platforms for Turkey in its quest for Westernization and was a rational choice in the search for security in foreign policy. However, since the early 2000s, Turkish rulers have been using multilateral platforms as a "means" or "foreign policy tool" to increase Turkey's weight as a leading country in issues of both regional and international importance (Coşkun and Ediğ 2012, 343). As Bayer and Keyman (2012, 75) assert, new Turkish globalism is not simply an act of augmenting its power and influence; it also demonstrates its deep commitment to multilateralism. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu's election as the ninth Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation on 31 December 2004 and Ambassador Hüseyin Diriöz's appointment as NATO's Assistant Secretary-General on Defence Policy on 18 October 2010 attest to Turkey's endeavours to attain a growing role in multilateral platforms. Furthermore, Turkish rulers aimed to diversify Turkey's relations with multilateral platforms in the 2000s. Accordingly, Ankara received observation status in the African Union and the Arab League in 2005, became a non-member Strategic Dialogue Partner of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 2008 and signed the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 2010. Turkey's increasing multilateral efforts also include application for Dialogue Partner status with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in 2011 (Coşkun and Ediğ 2012, 342). Among other examples, Turkey's temporary membership for 2009–2010 and its application for the 2015–2016 period clearly illustrate the increasing willingness on the side of Ankara to assume a leading role in multilateral platforms.

In addition to Turkey's UN performance during the period in question, as well as its voting patterns or the number of resolutions it sponsored, its initiative roles in UN summits and conferences and its enthusiasm for the use of available UN mechanisms by various means should be taken into account. The Alliance of Civilizations was launched in 2005 by the Prime Ministers of Turkey and Spain, and was then adopted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to become a UN initiative.[6] Together with Finland, Turkey also launched the Friends of Mediation initiative in the UN in 2010, based on the argument that mediation has become an important component of new Turkish foreign policy (Aras 2012, 10). Turkey began to become active in organizing UN summits and conferences throughout the 2000s on many issues. Turkey hosted the Istanbul Somalia Conference organized within the UN framework on 21–23 May 2010, where UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon underlined that 'Turkey's leadership in world affairs in areas range from UN peacekeeping missions to diplomacy and Turkey has earned the right to speak out, forcefully, on issues of global importance'.[7]

In this vein, Turkey has also taken an initiative in organizing UN conferences and summits regarding issues of global importance. Turkey hosted the Iranian nuclear talks between Iran and permanent members of the UNSC during the second half of the 2000s. Turkey also took part in the organization of the

[6] <http://www.turkey4unsc.org/icerik.php?no=18>, accessed 14 May 2014.

[7] <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34767&Kw1=turkey&Kw2=iran&Kw3=nuclear>, accessed 8 July 2014.

United Nations Seminar on Assistance to Palestinian People in Istanbul during May 2010[8] and hosted a "Palestinian Ambassador's conference" in Istanbul on 23–24 July 2011.[9] Ankara also hosted the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Istanbul on 9–13 May 2011, where Foreign Minister Davutoglu (2009–2014) announced Turkey's ambition to make Istanbul 'a major hub for the United Nations on issues of mediation and peace' in 2012 (quoted in *Hurriyet Daily News*, 27 September 2012). Nuclear negotiations, between Iran and permanent members of the UNSC—the USA, the Russian Federation, China, France, and the UK plus Germany (P5+1)—were also held on 14 April 2012 in Istanbul.[10] The Istanbul Conference on Mediation in February of 2012 also took place in İstanbul. More recently, Turkey hosted the UN's 'International Meeting on the Question of Jerusalem' on 12–13 May 2014.[11] Last but not least, Turkey hosted the first- ever UN World Humanitarian Summit on May, 2016 in Istanbul.[12] Yet there were limitations to Turkey's success. Turkey was not included in the iconic group of emerging markets, the BRICS, because its size did not yet match its ambitions in terms of economic potential and demography. When Turkey made a bid to stage Expo 2020 in İzmir in the fall of 2013, it was unsuccessful, primarily because of the fallout from the Gezi Park protests in May and June of that year (Robins 2014, 330).

Nevertheless, the recent surge in the number of speeches stands as testimony to Turkey's growing "zeal" to play an active role within the UN platform in the last decade, despite the limitations. In all, 12 speeches were recorded before the UN between 1990 and 2002, while this number doubled, reaching 26, during the period 2003–2014.[13] Hence, although Turkey's regional bid has been in a relative decline in the recent period compared with the pre-Arab Spring period, Turkey has continued its efforts to have an active role within the UN platform since 2011.

When Ankara's UN policy during the 2000s is probed, Turkey's acquisition of a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for the 2009–2010 period provides the greatest indication of its attempts to play an active role within the UN platform. In this vein, former Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül (2003–2007) and his successor Ali Babacan (2007–2009) held talks with their counterparts from well over 150 states between 2006 and 2008 to get their support for UNSC membership. Turkey's desire to gain a seat in the UNSC extended to the opening of new Turkish diplomatic missions in Africa and elsewhere. This diplomatic campaign also involved the granting of economic rewards to an extensive list of the least-developed states from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (Kireçci 2009, 4). On 17 October 2008, Turkey was elected to UNSC membership by obtaining the support of 151 states

[8] <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/gapal1157.doc.htm>, accessed 20 October 2014.

[9] Press release regarding the "Palestinian Ambassadors' Conference" to be held in Istanbul on 23–24 July 2011", no. 168, 20 July 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_168_-20-july-2011_-press-release-regarding-the-_palestinian-ambassadors_-conference_-to-be-held-in-istanbul-on-23-24-july-2011.en.mfa>, accessed 10 July 2014.

[10] <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/new-round-of-talks-on-Irans-nuclear-program-between-iran-and-P5-countries-was-held-in-istanbul.en.mfa>, accessed 24 June 2014.

[11] <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/international-meeting-on-the-question-of-jerusalem-kicks-off-in-ankara.en.mfa>, accessed 6 April 2014.

[12] <http://www.turkey4unsc.org/icerik.php?no=20>, accessed 13 September 2014.

[13] Abdullah Gul spoke before the UN 11 times, Davutoglu nine times and Erdogan six. See United Nations Bibliographical Information System, Index to Speeches Database, <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1O12R789S1628.3396&profile=speech&lang=eng&logout=true&startover=true#focus>, accessed 21 October 2014.

in the UN General Assembly, of a total of 192 states (Aral 2009, 151–153). This was a significant outcome since it came almost 50 years after the last vote regarding non-permanent member status was held in 1961.

Turkey had previously held non-permanent seats in 1951–1952, 1954–1955 and 1961 (shared with Poland). In its first term on the Council (1951– 1952), Turkey served as the "Middle Eastern" Council member; it occupied the "Eastern European" seat twice (1954–1955 and 1961) and has run for the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) seat since then.[14] Interestingly, Turkey is the only country to have been elected to the Council, at different times, under the "Middle Eastern", "Eastern European" and "Western European and Others" groups (Sievers and Daws 2014, 138) Compared to the 2000s, Turkey's non-permanent membership in the UNSC during the 1950s and early 1960s coincides with the Cold-War era in which the UN's role was very limited due to US-Soviet rivalry. During the 1950s, on the questions involving "East-West" conflict, Turkey generally sided with the West in the UN platform. Some examples of this posture include its rejection of the inclusion of the problem of Algeria on the UN agenda, its vote against the inclusion in the proposed human rights convenant of the phrase declaring the right of all peoples to self-determination, and its abstention on the questions of French North African protectorates (Gonlubol 1965, 160). The foreign policy of Ankara at the UN in the early 1960s showed a growing rapprochement in the non-Western world as seen in its support for the Algerians on the question of de-colonization and support for Tunusia on the question of the French occupation of Bizerte (Erden 1974, 63). Turkey also acted as a co-sponsor of UN General Assembly Resolution 1514, adopted in 1960 and entitled 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples'. Again, when acting as the president of the UNSC on the basis of the rotating nonpermenant membership in 1961, the Turkish representative worked out a compromise on the problem of the Soviet-backed membership of Outer Mongolia, and the American-supported membership of Mauritania. The compromise arrangement was accepted by all sides and both countries were admitted by the General Assembly (Erden 1974, 64). Turkey generally did not pursue an active role in the varying bodies of the UN during the pre-1961 period (Erden 1974, 43).

Turkey's re-application for UNSC non-permanent membership for the 2015–2016 period epitomizes Turkey's growing enthusiasm to play a bigger role within the UN platform in the 2000s:

> We, after fifty years, first time became member of the UN Security Council in 2009–10. We now again applied for 2015–16. Why? Because if you take the agenda of the United Nations, if you have ten agenda items of United Nations Security Council at least eight or nine of them are directly related to Turkey and Turkey can contribute this way or the other way. This was not the image ten years ago…. Turkey wants to play a much bigger role in the United Nations.[15]

Despite the strong willingness on the side of Turkish rulers for a second term, Ankara failed on 16 October 2015 to win the coveted non-permanent seat at the UNSC for the 2015–2016 period that it hoped would reinforce its influence in

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[14] <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/srr_unsc_elections_2014.pdf> accessed 26 October 2014.

[15] <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-entitled-_vision-2023_-turkey_s-foreign-policy-objectives__-delivered-by-h_e_-ahmet-davutoglu_-minister-of-foreign-af.en.mfa>, accessed 5 May 2014.

regional affairs, which has seriously dwindled in recent years. Turkey was in a race with Spain and New Zealand for the two non-permanent seats for the 2015–2016 period. After several rounds of voting, Turkey ended up receiving the support of only 60 General Assembly members out of 192 countries. The result of the secret ballot held in the UN General Assembly was in stark contrast to the result obtained in 2008 when Turkey received a record 151 votes of 192 and was elected to the UNSC in the first round of voting for 2009–2010. Furthermore, Ankara's campaign within the UN platform received adverse reactions from some of the regional states. Specifically, the intense campaign led by Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the UN platform against Turkey's membership for the 2015–2016 period has been notable in illustrating Ankara's diminishing regional role in recent periods compared with the 2009–2010 period.[16] Since 2013, Turkish-Egyptian relations have suffered following the toppling of the first elected president of Egypt, Mohammed Morsi. Since the AKP government had previously developed very close ties with the Muslim brotherhood, its reaction to the military takeover was very negative and therefore it did not recognize the new military regime in Cairo. This also caused a point of diversity between Riyadh and Ankara given that Saudis recognized the regime change in Egypt. Thus, Turkey's engagement in the Middle East before the Arab Spring was not the same as its involvement in the Middle East after 2011 when tensions with Saudi Arabia and Egypt became untenable. Yet today's troubled state of relations with Egypt is not a totally new phenomenon given that Turkey also experienced similar regional rivalry with Egypt, especially under Arab nationalist leader Gamel Abdel Nasser at the peak of the Cold War as early as the 1950s.

The biggest challenge to the Turkish regional bid has come from the Syrian conflict that began with the outbreak of street protests in Syria during March 2011. Since then, Turkey's call for the downfall of the Assad regime, its efforts to organize a viable opposition in Syria, and its desire to see international intervention in the Syrian war and Syrian refugee crisis have not been accomplished, revealing Ankara's limitations in easing the tension in the Middle East.[17] Erdogan's strongly worded criticism of the Egyptian government in denouncing the current military government further contributed to Ankara's decreasing profile in the regional arena during recent periods compared with the 2009–2010 period, as reflected in the voting patterns regarding UNSC temporary membership (Öniş 2014). Moreover, Turkey's regional power capacity via the UN platform was also downgraded in recent years by shortfalls in domestic politics, as indicated by the Gezi protests; restraints on freedom of expression, as cited in Freedom House reports and suggested by the Press Freedom Index; the lessening belief in the rule of law in view

[16] Semih İdiz, 'UN vote confirms Turkey's waning influence', *Al-Monitor*, 17 October 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ru/contents/articles/originals/2014/10/turkey-united-nations-security-council-vote.html#>, accessed 1 March 2015; Benny Avni, 'Turkey loses UN Security Council seat in huge upset', *Newsweek*, 16 October 2012, <http://europe.newsweek.com/venezuela-malaysia-angola-new-zealand-win-un-council-seats-277962?rm=eu>, accessed 5 December 2015.

[17] Ertugrul Dogan, 'A test for Turkey's foreign policy: the Syrian crisis', TESEV, 2012, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/assets/publications/file/Dogan%20Ertugrul_ENG.pdf>, accessed 14 December 2015; International Crisis Group, 'The rising costs of Turkey's Syrian quagmire', <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/turkey-cyprus/turkey/230-the-rising-costs-of-turkey-s-syrian-quagmire.aspx>, accessed 14 December 2015.

of several judicial misconduct cases; and the failure to write a new constitution that would replace the 1982 constitution written by military rulers.

During its Council membership between 2009 and 2010, Ankara aimed to be an "agenda setter" in the UN by organizing many sessions. Upon its election to the Council, Turkey held term presidency in the Council twice—in June 2009 and September 2010. Turkey held presidency during a formal meeting titled 'Situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian Problem during June 2009 period'.[18]Again during Turkey's first year of membership, in 2009, the Security Council considered 49 resolutions and adopted 48.[19] During the September 2010 term, Turkey pursued an active presidency via organizing high-level meetings regarding the theme 'Ensuring the Security Council's effective role in maintaining international peace and security' under the presidency of Abdullah Gül.[20] During 2010, the UNSC adopted all 59 resolutions, and most of them were unanimously adopted (Aral 2009, 161). Among the issues, the Iranian nuclear issue and Israeli-Palestinian issue were the ones in which Turkey's aspiration to take a leading role are most visible, especially in 2010. The rest of the paper will specifically focus on these two cases in order to critically question whether Turkey has been able to construct a credible regional power role through its policies within the UN platform (see Table 1).

Before focusing on the aforementioned two issues, it is imperative to recall some limitations involved in making use of UN voting patterns or sponsoring UN resolutions in identifying any role definition for any state including Turkey. Since the study of UN roll-call voting flourished in the 1950s, voting behaviour at UN has been accepted as a clear sign of understanding how states translate their policy preferences into voting choices. Nonetheless, the authors have no intention of making use of various data collections available on the issue other than underlining their relevance for a variety of research on UN-related topics. Early studies of Hayward Alker, Robert Keohane, Arendt Lijphart and Bruce Russet made their marks in the field, treating the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) 'as an area in which broader patterns of behaviour in World politics could be observed' (Voeten 2012). Erik Voeten also suggests that 'Although some see voting in the UNGA as largely symbolic, it is the only forum in which a large number of states meet and vote on a regular basis on issues concerning the international community' (Voeten 2000, 185–186). Despite all this, there are methodologically serious shortfalls to overcome for a reliable analysis of voting. For example, Voten draws our attention to confusing absences with abstentions as the same in representations of collected voting data, and therefore their cause of misreading of any given state's real foreign policy preference (Voeten 2012). Bearing this in mind, AKP's sponsoring certain resolutions and its voting patterns at the UN are not treated as the most important indicators of Turkey's desire to assume an influential regional role or its growing interest on regional issues like the Palestinian one. Instead, Turkey's making use of wider instruments of UN platforms and also its significant activeness in the embracement of the issue in both internal and external realms

[18] Letter dated 11 August 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations, addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2009/412.

[19] <http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/>, accessed 12 June 2014.

[20] Letter dated 18 October 2010, from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2010/546.

display Turkey's growing attention to issues like the Palestinian cause in the bid for further regional influence.

Turkey's regional power role and the UN: the Israeli-Palestinian issue in focus

The AKP's Palestinian policy has been formulated in light of some internal (that is, the changes in civil-military relations, the AKP's growing emphasis on its ideational/religious commitment to the Palestinian cause) and regional developments (that is, the rise of Hamas in Palestinian politics, growing relations with the Arab world and intensifying crises in Gaza). Prior to the AKP's election to power, Israeli-Turkish relations had largely been dominated by security cooperation in the military domain on both sides. This did not change overnight; rather, it took a radical turn under the AKP government, with the outcome of a decreasing role for the military in Turkish politics (Balcı and Kardas 2012). The AKP initially made some efforts to seek a solution for the long-running Palestinian problem by making use of its existing ties with both sides. However, Turkey's growing ties with Hamas after the 2005 elections, and particularly Ankara's growing reaction to Israel's attacks on Gaza in 2009, as reflected in Erdogan's harsh criticism of Shimon Peres at Davos, gave the first signals that Ankara was tilting the balance towards Palestine rather than sticking to its earlier attempts to mediate the conflict. The most destructive development in Israeli-Turkish relations was Israel's Mavi Marmara operation, where nine Turkish citizens were killed by Israeli soldiers on their way to dispatch assistance to Gaza via the Marmara flotilla in May 2010. Thereafter, Israeli-Turkish relations have suffered terribly, causing mutual distrust and enmity. Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu called the Mavi Marmara incident 'our 9/11' (quoted in Uzer 2013, 101). In view of all these developments, the Islamic background of the AKP became more evident with respect to the Palestinian question and vice versa. Turkish policymakers considered the Palestinian question to be an area of responsibility and opportunity to claim its constructive and trustworthy role in the region (Aras and KarakayaPolat 2007, 478).

In this context, Turkey's temporary membership on the UNSC during 2009–2010 coincided with the war in Gaza that began on 27 December 2008. The 2008–2009 Gaza war, also known as Operation Cast Lead, became a turning point in the start of serious setbacks in Israeli-Turkish relations, which had implications for the attitude towards Turkey in the UN (Aytürk 2012, 623). In the first official UNSC meeting that Turkey attended as a non-permanent member in January 2009, the title of the Council agenda was 'The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question'. Foreign Minister Ali Babacan, in his address to the UNSC, defined the situation in Gaza as a 'human tragedy' and asked the UNSC to 'play its due role and take responsibility to put an end to human tragedy in Gaza'.[21] During Turkey's first term as a non-permanent member, Security Council Resolution 1860, adopted on 8 January 2009 and endorsed by 14 members of the UNSC, with the abstention of the US, called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and for unimpeded access

[21] Statement by the Foreign Minister Ali Babacan at the Security Council, 6061th Meeting Record, 6 January 2009 (S/PV.6061).

to those delivering humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.[22] In March 2009, in his speech before the UNSC, Turkey's Permanent Representative to the UN, Baki İlgin, underlined the 'readiness of Turkey's willingness to play a mediation role in order to achieve the resumption of the indirect talks between Syria and Israel, if the parties so desire'.[23] Again, in another meeting on the Middle East held in May 2009, Foreign Minister Davutoglu affirmed that 'the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict *are at the top of Turkey's agenda*' (emphasis added).[24] Turkey's stance during the 2009–2010 period elucidates that Turkey raised the question of Palestine on every possible occasion at the UNSC platform.[25]

In addition to the UNSC platform, the Palestinian case has been one of the key regional issues in which Turkey has taken—is still taking—an active stance in UN General Assembly regarding the Middle East. As Aykan (1993, 107) argues, there is a remarkable historical continuity in Turkey's support of the Arab position on the Palestinian question, despite some differences over time on the issue. Turkey's Palestine policy has fluctuated between balancing and tilting the balance towards the Palestinians. In this pendulum, Turkey never took a particular anti-Palestinian attitude apart from condemning acts of some armed radical Palestinian groups in the 1970s. Although Turkey voted against the partition of Palestine in the UN General Assembly in 1947, it became the first Muslim state to recognize Israel, in 1949 (Aral 2004, 141). Especially after the 1967 Arab-Israel war, Turkey has been favourable to the Palestinian cause and has consistently voted for pro-Palestinian resolutions. Turkey acted with the Arabs in supporting UN Resolution 242, which called for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories (Akdevelioglu and Kürkçüoglu 2010, 475). The most tangible support started to be seen in the General Assembly in 1974. Turkey joined the 56 Arab states along with some other countries to ask 'the UN Secretary General to include in the agenda of the General assembly an item titled "Questions of Palestine"' (Aykan 1994, 76–77). The same year it also voted for 'the right for the people of Palestine to national independence and sovereignty and granting observer status to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)' in the General Assembly. On 10 November 1975, Ankara also supported the UN General Assembly Resolution, declaring that Zionism was a form of racism (Aykan 1994, 77).

Ankara asserted its close attachment to the Palestinian issue on every possible occasion in the UN General Assembly platform:

> The question of Palestine is at the very root of the Middle East Problem…. My country has from the very beginning supported the Palestinian cause…. It was in this spirit that Turkey co-sponsored the draft resolution concerning the inclusion of the question of Palestine on our agenda.[26] (Soylemez 1993, 21)

In view of this, it is hard to single out the AKP period as the beginning of the pro-Palestinian period for Turkey or a total reversal in the foreign policy over Palestine.

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[22] <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/96514396E8389A2C852575390051D574>, accessed 16 March 2014.

[23] Statement by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to UN Baki İlgin, at the UN Security Council 6100th Meeting, 25 March 2009 (S/PV.6100).

[24] Statement by the Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu at the UN Security Council 6123th Meeting, 11 May 2009 (S/PV.6123).

[25] In all, 13 speeches were recorded before the UNSC at the foreign ministry and permanent representative level during the 2009–2010 period regarding the Palestinian issue.

[26] Statement made by Mr. Osman Olcay Ambassador, permanent representative, at the Plenary Meeting of the 29th Session of the General Assembly on 20 November 1974, a/pv. 2292

Nevertheless, during the first decade of AKP rule, there is an increase in the number of initiatives taken in the UN platform regarding the Palestinian issue. Among many things, the draft resolutions sponsored by Turkey in the UN General Assembly showcase a gradual increase in the last decade. In fact, Turkey has co-sponsored 56 draft resolutions in the UN General Assembly under the title 'Palestine' since 1945. Between 1945 and 1990, Turkey co-sponsored 13 draft resolutions, while this number reached 19 draft resolutions during the 1990s (1990–2002). Then, from 2003 to 2013, Turkey co-sponsored 24 draft resolutions under the title 'Palestine', 22 in the UN General Assembly, and two in the Human Rights Council and Economic and Social Council. Furthermore, Turkey has co-sponsored 44 draft resolutions under the general title 'Middle East' in the General Assembly since 1945. Nineteen of them were sponsored between 1945–2002, while 25 of them have been sponsored since 2002. These numbers show the gradual increase in Turkey's activism in leading the issues regarding the Middle East in general and the Palestinian issue specifically within the UN platform in the last decade.[27] The numbers do not ultimately justify Turkey's activeness, but at least correspond to a tendency. Hence, it is one of the few cases in which Turkey's increasing willingness to adopt a regional leadership role can be measured with regard to its policies regarding the UN General Assembly in the last decade.

Since 2002, UN General Assembly draft resolutions on the Palestinian issue mostly focused on two main issues: (1) assistance to the Palestinian people, and (2) the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Turkey also co-sponsored draft resolutions on the issues such as illegal Israeli settlements and human rights situations in Palestinian territories. Ankara was quite active in taking the opportunity to assume a leading position on the Palestinian issue within the UN General Assembly platform. One should note here that regional states[28] such as Egypt, Iraq, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudia Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen were also the co-sponsors of the draft resolutions with Turkey regarding the resolutions on the 'Status of Palestine' and 'the Right of Palestinian People to self-determination' in the United Nations General Assembly. Regarding the draft resolutions on the 'Israeli Occupation', Turkey was the only sponsor from the Middle East, together with Algeria (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China). Again, regarding the draft resolutions on 'illegal Israeli actions', Turkey was the only sponsor from Middle East countries, together with many European countries.[29] The voting pattern of regional states, except Israel, was mostly in parallel

[27] This data is obtained from United Nations Bibliographical Information System (UNBISnet). See UN Member States on the Record, Turkey, <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/unms/turkey.shtml>.

[28] In the Turkish view, the Middle East has been perceived as comprising the Arab League states and the two non-Arab states, namely Iran and Israel. Other than Egypt and Libya, North Africa generally has attracted less attention due to a lower level of economic, social and political ties between Turkey and the area. The Turkish foreign and security assessments consider the Middle East a union of complementary micro-regions amonst which the Eastern Mediterranean security challenges have attracted the most attention over the years.

[29] Turkey also sponsored draft resolutions titled 'Assistance to Palestinian People', together with Saudia Arabia and many other countries from Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australia; <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1E5GA14236970.48&menu=search&aspect=subtab124&npp=50&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=bib&ri=&index=.SW&term=Palestine&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&aspect=subtab124&index=.TW&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=.TN&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=.AW&term=Turkey&matchoptbox=0%7C0&limitbox_2=TM01+%3D+tm_b02&ultype=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&ultype=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&sort=&x=11&y=10>, accessed 18 July 2014.

with that of Turkey, while the voting patterns of the US and Israeli were opposites on most occasions, except concerning the "assistance" issue. Moreover, almost all of the draft resolutions sponsored by Turkey on the Palestinian issue were converted to General Assembly resolutions.[30]

As Table 2 illustrates, Turkey has been quite enthusiastic about taking a leading role concerning the Palestinian issue within the UN platform during the 2000s. One should note here that the draft resolutions that Turkey supported on the Palestinian issue have been strongly supported by regional states, except Israel. Concerning the regional reactions to the Palestinian issue with the onset of the Gaza war in 2008–2009, it makes sense to speak of a distinctly Arab context, with Palestine as the major mobilizing force. The voting patterns of the US and Israel also illustrate the widening disparity between Turkey and both Israel and the US regarding the Palestine issue during the 2009–2010 period.

Turkey's active stance within the UN platform on the Palestinian issue reached its peak at the end of May and the beginning of June 2010 when Israeli military forces boarded an international flotilla that was carrying civilian people and humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip in international waters off the coast of Gaza, where nine Turkish civilian passengers were killed (Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner 2013, 7). Turkey immediately requested an emergency meeting of the UNSC after this incident, and in his speech before the Council, Foreign Minister Davutoglu declared that Turkey would like to see the UNSC react strongly with a presidential statement condemning this Israeli act of aggression, also demanding that Israel apologize, and calling for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, compensation to the families of the deceased and wounded and the lifting of the Gaza blockade.[31] The UNSC issued a presidential statement condemning the acts; requested the immediate release of the ships and the civilians; and called for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards.[32] Turkey used these multilateral fora to emphasize the "civilian" aspect of the flotilla. Turkey's concerns were addressed first by the UN Human Rights Council with its independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the Israeli attacks. At the end of the investigation process, the report of the "fact-finding mission" was concluded at the Human Rights Council in 27 September 2010. The Report identified the blockade clearly as 'unlawful' and asserted that it could not be sustained in law.[33] Later, Turkey's concerns were investigated by a Panel of Inquiry established by the UN Secretary-General and chaired by the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, George Palmer (Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner 2013, 8). Known as the Palmer Report,

[30] United Nations Bibliographical Information System (UNBISnet), <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1413U56VF5223.50123&menu=search&aspect=subtab124&npp=50&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=bib&ri=&matchopt=0%7C0&index=.SW&term=Middle+East&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&aspect=subtab124&index=.AW&term=Turkey&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=.TN&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=.AW&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&limitbox_2=TM01+%3D+tm_b02&ultype=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&ultype=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&sort=3100054&x=13&y=14>, accessed 18 July 2014.

[31] Statement by the Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu before the Security Council's 6325th meeting, 31 May 2010 (S/PV.6325).

[32] Statement by the President of the Security Council, 1 June 2010 (S/PRST/2010/9).

[33] Report of the International Fact-finding Mission to Investigate Violations of International Law, Including International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, Resulting from the Israeli Attacks on the Flotilla of Ships Carrying Humanitarian Assistance, paragraph.261, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/15session/A.HRC.15.21_en.pdf>, accessed 25 July 2014.

Table 2. The Voting Patterns of Regional States on Draft Resolutions Sponsored by Turkey in the UN General Assembly on the Palestine Issue

	2003			2004			2005			2007			2008			2009		2010		2011			2012		
	IIA	AP	SOP	AP	RPS	HRS	AP	SOP	AP	AP	RPS	RPS	AP	AP	RPS	AP	RPS	ISP	RPS	PSP	RPS	SPUN	Tot.
Draft resolutions sponsored by Turkey on the Palestine issue in the General Assembly																							
Voting Patterns of Regional States																							
Egypt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Iran	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Iraq	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Saudi Arabia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Yemen	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Syria	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
United Arab Emirates	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Israel	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	8
Jordan	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Palestine	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Lebanon	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Oman	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Kuwait	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Qatar	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Bahrain	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Voting Patterns of Permanent Members																							
USA	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	8
China	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22

(continued)

Table 2. (*Continued*)

	2003		2004			2005			2007		2008			2009		2010		2011			2012		
	IIA	AP	SOP	AP	RPS	HRS	AP	SOP	AP	AP	RPS	RPS	AP	AP	RPS	AP	RPS	ISP	RPS	PSP	RPS	SPUN	Tot.
England	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	AB	21
France	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
Russia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22
GA Res.	Y	Y(WV)	Y	Y(WV)	Y	Y	Y(WV)	Y	Y(WV)	Y(WV)	Y	Y	Y(WV)	Y(WV)	Y	Y(WV)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	22

Note: IIA: illegal Israeli actions; AP: assistance to Palestine; SOP: situation in occupied Palestine; RPS: right of Palestinian people to self-determination; HRS: human rights situation in Palestine; ISP: Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory; PSP: permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory; SPUN: status of Palestine at the United Nations; Y: yes; N: no; AB: abstain; WV: without vote. G.A.Res: General Assembly Resolution.

this report's findings were in sharp contrast to the UN Human Rights Council's fact-finding mission report (Aksar 2012, 25). The existence of two conflicting UN reports regarding the issue further complicated the political and legal dimensions of the UN investigation process. The Palmer Report neither identified the blockade as "unlawful" nor demanded that Israel apologize, two of Turkey's demands. It did, however, condemn Israel for resorting to excessive use of violence that led to the death of nine Turkish citizens, and demanded that Israel pay compensation (Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner 2013, 8).

Turkey's stance has been accepted and supported by regional states. In a letter addressed to the Security Council on 22 June 2010, Egypt, Libya and Syria, on behalf of the Chairs of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group and the Arab Group in New York, asked for the immediate, unconditional and complete lifting of the illegal Israeli blockade imposed on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and a full, impartial, credible, transparent and independent international investigation of the incident.[34] The flotilla incident and international criticism did not induce Israel to completely lift its blockade of Gaza; however, the blockade was eased to increase the flow of goods into Gaza. In addition, the issuance of a UNSC resolution on the illegality of the blockade of Gaza did not motivate Israel to lift the Gaza blockade. Israel's resistance also shows the limitations of Turkey's regional power role with regard to the third criterion (see Table 1) for Turkey's regional power role, to have "policy implications" in a penetrated region such as the Middle East in which regional issues also have a global character.

Another important resolution regarding the Palestine issue in which Turkey took an active stance has been Palestine's application to the UN for full membership. As part of its multilateral diplomacy, Turkey hosted a United Nations Seminar on Assistance to Palestinian People in Istanbul during May 2010.[35] On 23 September 2011, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas submitted his request to the UN for the full recognition of a Palestinian state in the UN. Turkey adamantly supported the recognition of Palestine as a state at the UNSC and launched an international campaign for a UN vote throughout the summer of 2011 (BBC News, 13 September 2011; The Telegraph, 13 September 2011; Today's Zaman, 5 September 2011). On 23–24 July 2011, Turkey hosted a Palestinian Ambassador's conference in Istanbul for the 'campaign on an independent Palestinian state'.[36] In his speech before the General Assembly, Prime Minister Erdogan (2003–2014) also stressed Turkey's willingness and commitment to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue:

> Turkey's support for the recognition of the State of Palestine is unconditional. This commitment is a natural extension of our vision for regional peace and stability and our commitment to international law and justice. It is also the result of the responsibility we feel in this area.[37]

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[34] Letter dated 22 June 2010, from the Permanent Representatives of Egypt, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, 24 June 2010 (A/64/842–S/2010/331).

[35] <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/gapal1157.doc.htm>, accessed 12 May 2014.

[36] 'Press release regarding the "Palestinian Ambassadors' Conference" to be held in Istanbul on 23–24 July 2011", no. 168, 20 July 2011, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/>, accessed 30 July 2014.

[37] Statement by Prime Minister Erdogan on 15th plenary meeting Thursday, 22 September 2011 (A/66/PV.15).

Despite these efforts, Palestine's application for full membership was rejected before it was brought to the UNSC in November 2011 (New York Times, 11 November 2011), since the committee was unable to make a unanimous recommendation to the UNSC.[38] Turkey, on the other hand, continued its diplomatic campaign within the UN platform and supported another campaign in the UN General Assembly for Palestine to attain "non-member observer state status" throughout late 2012. Turkey co-sponsored the draft resolution of the UN General Assembly on the "non-member observer state status" of Palestine within the UN. In his speech before the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Davutoglu asserted that 'Turkey will stand by the Palestinians forever. They are not alone, and we will not abandon them. We will stand by them until there is a free and independent Palestine'.[39] Finally, on 29 November 2012, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to make Palestine a non-member state, with votes from 138 of 193 member states (Hürriyet Daily News, 8 November 2012).

As part of its multilateral diplomacy within the UN platform and its search for a leading role concerning the Palestinian issue, Turkey also hosted the 'International Meeting on the Question of Jerusalem' on 12–13 May 2014 in Ankara, within the framework of the 'International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 2014'. The meeting was organized in coordination with the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).[40]In his speech before the UN Committee meeting, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu called for the UN to play a much more active role to keep the question of Jerusalem on the UN agenda [41] and demonstrated Turkey's commitment to the notion that 'the defence of rights of Jerusalem is not only a political responsibility, but also a duty to human consciousness and historical journey of mankind'. [42]

In conclusion, one should note here that although the Palestinian case has been crucial to Turkey's regional role in general, the ruling party's ideological orientation and domestic policy calculations also shaped Turkey's foreign policy with respect to the Turkey's issue within the UN platform. In this regard, Turkey's shift to a more pro-Palestinian stance, as expressed in its strong UN engagement, could not be easily distanced from its domestic politics. In this vein, the support that extended to the Palestinians gained momentum and had some new characteristics under the AKP government. The new actors such as Hamas started to benefit from this support by the 2000s which was a novelty in Turkey's Palestine policy. Moreover, the domestic sources of the Palestine policy became much more evident and extensive under the AKP rule. Religious values have been consistently underscored and highly regarded among the conservative constituents of the AKP since 2002. There has always been significant public support for the rights of the Palestinians but this became more important under AKP. Even though the

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[38] Report of the Committee on the Admission of New Members concerning the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, 11 November 2011 (S/2011/705).

[39] Statement by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, United Nations General Assembly 44th plenary meeting, 29 November 2012 (A/67/PV.44).

[40] <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/international-meeting-on-the-question-of-jerusalem-kicks-off-in-ankara.en.mfa>, accessed 7 September 2014.

[41] <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.nsf/9330fa5063bb7eff852575f500680f40/ 43262fbe42775ee885257cd60061e0a9?OpenDocument>, accessed 27 May 2014.

[42] <http://yenisafak.com.tr/politika-haber/davutoglu-kudusun-korunmasi-bir-borctur-12.05.2014–645675>, accessed 19 October 2014.

Palestinian-Israeli issue is a foreign policy issue, it has been a frequent point of reference even during the AKP election campaigns. For instance, AKP leaders' highly critical use of discourse in cases such as the flotilla incident within the UN platform also aimed to score points domestically in the run-up to the local elections in Turkey in February 2009. This "domestic context" has been frequently echoed in the election victory speeches of Erdogan, mentioning AKP victory as 'the victory of Baghdad, Islamabad, Beirut, Sarajevo, Skopje, Syria, Damascus and Gaza' (Daily Sabah, 12 August 2014). One should note here that, in the past, both left-oriented parties and conservative parties expressed their support to the Palestinians, but their support had some limits. For example the coalition governments could not agree on the level of support. The Pro-Islamist party, the National Salvation Party or the Welfare Party of Necmettin Erbakan had similar affection to the AKP government for the Palestinian issue but had no powerbase to lead the Palestinian policy in such an embracing fashion. The expression of cultural and religious identification with Palestine, especially Jerusalem, reached a new height under AKP. The leaders of the party, Tayyip Erdoğan and Ahmet Davutoğlu, took personal interest in the Palestinian issue. Erdoğan's confrontation with Shimon Peres over the Gaza crisis at Davos was a robust indication of Turkey's close attachment to the Palestinian cause. This interest became even more evident and outspoken with the unprecented Mavi Marmara crisis, and globally displayed Turkey's commitment to the Palestinian issue. On the other hand, it is important to keep in mind that all the intensity recorded in Turkey's interest in Palestine and therefore condemnation of Israeli policies did not go as far as terminating relations with Israel altogether. This still distances Turkey from the majority of the Islamic world, regardless of its on-going firm support for the Palestinians. All in all, the AKP government's standing on the Palestinian issue confirms one general view, that exploring domestic sources of changing voting patterns in the UN is very complex. As cited in Joe D. Hagan's study, even 'regime change did not account for all of the variance in UN voting behaviour, so presumably additional factors influences voting patterns' (Hagan 1989, 540).

Considering the three factors examined here to assess the role of the UN in Turkey's regional leadership role (see Table 1), Turkey has been largely successful in obtaining the support of regional states within the UN platform, as illustrated by the voting pattern regarding Turkey-sponsored draft resolutions by regional powers of the UN General Assembly. This does not imply that Turkey radically affected the voting behaviour of other regional states regarding Palestine, given their long-accustomed commitment to the Palestinian issue. Rather, it shows Turkey's assumingly greater assertiveness in the UN platform in connection with the Palestinian issue. In other words, one should not ignore the role of the unique characteristics of the Palestinian case as the "common cause" of the region for almost all regional actors in garnering support for Ankara's bid for leadership role in the UN. Since the UN General Assembly resolution of November 1947 that separated Palestine between the Palestinians and Israelis, all the Arab countries—even though diversity of regime has prevented them acting together—have consistently supported the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the region (Aykan 1993, 91). However, the lack of support from both big powers and permanent members of the UNSC, such as the US, illustrates the limitations of Turkey's leadership role within the UN platform. In this vein, Turkish leadership has been able to gain some outcomes in international platforms, as in the case of the resolution on Palestinian

non-member observer status in the UN General Assembly. On the other hand, issues such as the Gaza blockade, which is one of the most prioritized concerns for both Turkey and regional states, remain controversial (Nel 2010, 951).

Turkey's regional power role and the UN: the Iranian nuclear issue in focus

One of the main issues in which Turkey has explicitly shown its eagerness to adopt a leading role in the international arena and UN platform during the 2000s has been the Iranian nuclear issue. Although the Iranian nuclear issue had been a priority on the international agenda since the mid-1990s, Turkey had remained generally indifferent towards it for many years (Gürzel and Ersoy 2012). Although Turkey has always been a part of global nuclear non-proliferation efforts and endorsed international initiatives to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, it was particularly fervent to play a leading regional role specifically on the Iranian nuclear issue during 2009–2010 when it was a member of the UNSC. Turkey co-sponsored 39 draft resolutions in the UN General Assembly on general subjects of nuclear proliferation, and most of them were issued as General Assembly resolutions between 2003 and 2013.[43]

Turkey chose to co-sponsor a draft resolution under the general title of nuclear disarmament instead of the draft resolutions co-sponsored specifically on the *Iranian* nuclear issue, including "sanctions". Between 2006 and 2013, 10 draft resolutions were co-sponsored specifically on Iran regarding issues of 'further measures against Iran' and the 'extension of the mandates of the Panel of Experts', where co-sponsors generally included the United States, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Turkey did not appear on any of these occasions.[44] This policy of the UN General Assembly platform has been in line with the general Turkish view of the issue, which bears the conviction that neither Iran nor any other country in the region should acquire or possess nuclear weapons.[45] By the same token, in his speech before the UNSC on 24 September 2009, former Prime Minister Erdogan asserted Turkey's view on nuclear proliferation in the Middle East by underlining the importance to have nuclear-free zones, especially and starting with the Middle East. Moreover, Turkey is an advocate of the peaceful settlement of the issue and is against any military solution to the problem. In addition to opposing the use of military force against Iran, Turkey has generally been averse to sanctions (Gürzel and Ersoy 2012).

In comparison with Turkey's various draft resolutions specifically on the Palestinian issue in the UN General Assembly during the 2003–2013 period,

[43] <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1CB518662438H.10366&menu=search&aspect=subtab124&npp=50&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=bib&ri=&matchopt=0%7C0&index=.SW&term=nuclear+proliferation&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&aspect=subtab124&index=.AW&term=Turkey&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=.TN&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=.AW&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&limitbox_2=TM01+%3D+tm_b02&ultype=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&ultype=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&sort=3100054&x=14&y=7#focus>, accessed 18 July 2014.

[44] <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?&menu=search&aspect=subtab124&npp= 50&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=bib&ri=9&source=~%21horizon&index=.SW&term=iran+nuclear+b02+AND+.UD%3Ds*&x=0&y=0&aspect=subtab124#focus>, accessed 9 August 2014.

[45] <http://vasington.be.mfa.gov.tr/images/localCache/1/b15prjzpaplfysi5nz31z4qmIrans%20Nuclear%20Program.pdf>, accessed 12 May 2014.

Turkey's commitment to take a "leading" position specifically on the Iranian nuclear issue, which mostly concerned "sanctions" until the second half of the 2000s in the UNSC platform, generally did not manifest. In fact, Turkey's defence of Palestinian interests truly reflects what a Middle Eastern regional power "has to" try to accomplish in order to be accepted as a regional player. However, it is not that easy to develop a neutral position vis-à-vis the Iranian nuclear programme that could similarly reflect "Middle Eastern" or "Muslim Arab" interests, given that a consensus on "how to deal with Iran" in this matter seems to be entirely lacking in the region. In this vein, Turkey chose to be part of the regional disarmament and general non-proliferation initiatives in the UN General Assembly in the 2000s. Turkey's position was supported on most occasions by regional states, as reflected in their voting patterns in the UN General Assembly.[46] The following table (Table 3) illustrates Turkey's stance in sponsoring draft resolutions, as well as the voting patterns of regional states and permanent members of the UNSC regarding nuclear issues in the UN General Assembly between 2003 and 2013.

As Table 3 illustrates, Turkey's position vis-à-vis nuclear proliferation issues has been in parallel with its foreign policy towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and regional disarmament. Accordingly, during the 2000s, Turkey supported the General Assembly resolutions on regional disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, without showing enthusiasm for taking a leading position specifically on the Iranian nuclear programme. Turkey's draft resolutions on regional disarmament were co-sponsored by regional states such as Egypt. Yet, on issues such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Turkey's efforts were not supported by Israel or the US as well as China on some occasions.

Nevertheless, apart from the General Assembly platform, Turkey's willingness to assume a leading position on the Iranian nuclear issue increased considerably during the period of its UNSC membership. Ankara exerted many efforts and allocated ample time to find a "diplomatic solution" to the problem during the 2009–2010 period. In late 2008, during an official visit to the United States, Erdogan proclaimed that Turkey could mediate between Iran and the United States based on its earlier experience of negotiating with Iran (Gürzel 2012, 143). Accordingly, Turkey, together with Brazil, began to play a "mediating role" with respect to the Iranian nuclear issue as a non-permanent member of the UNSC in 2009. During this period, Turkey and Brazil emerged as the key countries aiming to push for an agreement that would replace the need for sanctions on Iran in the UNSC (Ayman 2014, 12). Accordingly, Turkey and Brazil convinced Tehran to sign an agreement on a low-enriched nuclear fuel swap, known as the Tehran Agreement, in May 2010. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu underscored the fact that resolution could be reached through diplomacy.[47]

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[46] <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1417770JQY272.16157&menu= search&aspect=subtab124&npp=50&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=bib&ri=&matchopt=0%7C0&index=.SW&term=nuclear+&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&aspect=subtab124&index=.AW&term=Turkey&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=.TN&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=.AW&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&limitbox_2=TM01+%3D+tm_b02&ultype=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&ultype=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&sort=3100054&x=15&y=11>, accessed 18 July 2014.

[47] <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/17_05_2010-joint-declaration-of-the-ministers-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey_-iran-and-brazil_.en.mfa>, accessed 18 April 2014.

Table 3. The Voting Patterns of Regional States on Draft Resolutions Sponsored by Turkey in the UN General Assembly on Nuclear Issues

	2003				2004			2005				2006			2007				2008					2009				2010			2011					2012				2013		
	CNT	RD	RAE	RAE	CNT	RD	PTW	CNT	RD	RAE	CNT	RD	RD	PTW	CNT	RD	CNT	CND	RAE	PTW	CNT	RD	PTW	RAE	PTW	CNT	RD	RD	TEN	RAE	CNT	RD	PTW	CNT	TEN	RAE	RD	CNT	TEN
Draft resolutions sponsored by Turkey on nuclear issues in the General Assembly																																								
Votes of regional states																																								
Egypt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Iran	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	AB	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	A
Iraq	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
S.Arabia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Yemen	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Syria	A	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	A	A	A	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y	A	A
UAE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Israel	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Jordan	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Palestine	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lebanon	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Oman	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kuwait	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Qatar	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bahrain	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Voting patterns of permanent members																																								
USA	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
China	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
England	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
France	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Russia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
R	Y	Y (WV)	Y	Y	Y	Y (WV)	Y (WV)	Y	Y (WV)	Y	Y	Y	Y (WV)	Y (WV)	Y	Y	Y (WV)	Y	Y (WV)	Y (WV)	Y	Y (WV)	Y (WV(	Y (WV)	Y (WV)	Y	Y (WV)	Y (WV)	Y	Y	Y	Y (WV)	Y (WV)	Y	Y	Y (WV)	Y (WV)	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note: TEN: total elimination of nuclear weapons; WV: without vote; RD: regional disarmament; A: abstain; N: no; AB: absent; Y: yes; CNT: Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; PTW: measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons; RAE: Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency; CND: compliance with non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

The deal was initially met with positive responses within the UN platform, as Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon termed it a 'positive step'.[48] Still, the positive atmosphere did not last long as Iran declared that it would continue its uranium enrichment at a 20 per cent level. Consequently, the deal was regarded as a "tactical move" by the international community, particularly the United States, on the eve of the Security Council's agenda-making, which included possible sanctions. Thus, Resolution 1929 (2010), which imposes additional sanctions on Iran, was adopted by a vote of 12 in favour to two against (Brazil, Turkey), with one abstention (Lebanon)[49]

Turkey, on the other hand, maintained that there was still room for a diplomatic solution. In this respect, in his speech before the UNSC, Turkey's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ertuğrul Apakan, explained Turkey's negative vote as follows: the 'adoption of sanctions would negatively affect the momentum created by the declaration and the overall diplomatic process'. He argued that that there is 'no viable alternative to a diplomatic and peaceful solution'. Apakan further explained that the Turkish vote against the draft resolution 'should not be construed as reflecting indifference to the problems emanating from Iran's nuclear program'. [50]

As the voting on Resolution 1929 clearly illustrates, 12 of 15 members of the UNSC disagreed with Turkey's position on the Iranian nuclear programme. Turkey and Brazil were the only two members that voted against the resolution, with Lebanon abstaining. What is also significant is that Turkey was not able to garner much support from other states or regional organizations (Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner 2013, 15). Therefore, Turkey's attempt to find a final solution to the Iranian dispute that would be palatable to all of the parties mostly failed to yield a satisfactory result (Gürzel and Ersoy 2012). The UNSC ultimately aborted Turkish (and Brazilian) mediation efforts between Iran and the Quartet and voted overwhelmingly to put in place a new set of sanctions against Iran, which expanded the arms embargo and tightened restrictions on financial and shipping enterprises related to 'proliferation-sensitive activities'. In adopting resolution 1929 (2010), the Council also requested that Secretary-General create a panel of experts to monitor the implementation of the sanctions. It also affirmed its determination to apply further measures if Iran continued to defy the just-adopted resolution as well as previous resolutions.[51] In April 2011, Turkey once again tried to mediate multilateral talks in Istanbul on the Iranian nuclear programme. The Istanbul meeting was regarded as a historic opportunity by both Iranian and Turkish officials as well as scholars, but it ended inconclusively (Gürzel and Ersoy 2012).

One should note here that Turkey's increasing activism regarding the Iranian nuclear issue within the UN platform has also been driven by economic considerations. Ankara's opening to new markets in the region, beyond those in the West, also bolstered the Turkish foreign policy approach towards Iran within the UN platform during this period. In addition, energy cooperation, and especially the

[48] <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34741&Kw1=Turkey&Kw2=Iran&Kw3=#.U9Iz3s9rM5s>, accessed 4 August 2014.

[49] <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sc9948.doc.htm>, accessed 22 July 2014.

[50] Statement by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to UN, Ertuğrul Apakan, at the United Nations Security Council's 6335th meeting Wednesday, 9 June 2010 (S/PV.6335).

[51] <http://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sc9948.doc.htm>, accessed 1 March 2015.

availability of reliable and cheap natural gas and oil, have played an important role in Turkey's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. In turn, Turkish companies in Iran have been active in the areas of construction and infrastructure during the 2000s (Bank and Karadag 2012, 12). This foreign policy behaviour of Ankara during the 2000s was hardly unique to Turkey. Similarly, the Brazilian multilateral activism in general and regarding the Iranian nuclear programme also had similarities with Ankara. Brazil opened more than 30 new embassies in Africa in the last decade and the government of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva launched a Middle East policy that includes growing trade and political consultations with Iran, the Arab world and Israel (Spektor 2010). Brazil's diplomacy in the UN platform regarding the Iranian nuclear programme was initiated not only to avoid international sanctions, which would damage Brazilian commercial interests with Iran, but also to consolidate Brazil's position as a crucial actor in resolving disputes in order to strengthen its status in the eyes of the international community (Jesus 2011, 62).

In conclusion, although Turkey has been active within the UN platform with respect to both the Palestinian case and the Iranian nuclear issue, it has also demonstrated its displeasure with the current working methods and structure of the UN order and has criticized the UN quite often for not being an effective and representative organization: 'The *working methods and structures* of the UN are not commensurate with the current realities of the world…. The UN Security Council, with its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, should become *more representative and functional*' (UN News Center, 28 September 2012, emphasis added).

In this regard, Turkey actively urges the UN reform agenda on every occasion, as reflected in President Erdogan's latest remarks at the UN General Assembly: the 'world is bigger than five' (quoted in Hürriyet Daily News, 18 October 2014). Yet Turkey's criticism of the UN order is something different from that of regional powers such as India. Turkey has a long-accustomed policy of having strong ties with Western allies, and Turkey still has strong commitments with these countries as a NATO member. Thus, Turkey's criticism of the UN order could also be hailed as a balancing act towards big powers such as the US in the UN as Turkey strives to *incorporate* itself into the global governance structure in order to gain *recognition* as a leading regional power in the Middle East.

Examining the voting behaviour of regional states and permanent members in the UN General Assembly during the 2000s regarding two Middle Eastern issues, one notices that Turkey's voting agreement with the US and Israel saw sharp drops with respect to the Palestinian issue under the AKP leadership, while quite strong support for Turkey's draft resolutions among regional states is evident. On the Iranian nuclear issue, support from the US and Israel on Turkey-sponsored draft resolutions decreased somewhat, while regional states generally voted in support of Turkish draft resolutions. In terms of our theoretical framework, there is clear manifestation of the increased *willingness* of Turkey to adopt a regional role during the 2000s in terms of introducing many draft resolutions on Middle Eastern issues. Regarding Turkey's *acceptance* of a leadership role, Turkey's bid for a regional role was supported by regional states on the Palestinian issue in light of the 2008–2009 Gaza war and 2010 flotilla incident. However, without support from permanent members, such as the US, Turkey's ability to produce real regional policy outcomes proved to be very limited within the UN platform. In

other words, in terms of producing *real regional policy influences*, Turkey's independent-foreign policy within the UN platform was very limited in the face of the US's veto power, which was clearly seen in the case of the 2010 UN Security Council sanctions towards Iran.

One should note here that these "limitations" regarding aspiring regional powers in the UN platform with regards to their relations with big powers like US are hardly unique to Turkey. Brazil's independent-minded foreign policy in the UNSC platform regarding the Iranian nuclear programme in 2010 faced similar limitation as was clearly manifested in UNSC voting in 2010. Furthermore, as Cervo (2010) argues, Brazil's participation in the UNSC during the 2009–2010 term brought it into conflict with this prevailing order. During the UN response to the conflict in Libya in 2011, Brazil opposed the UN's authorization of the use of force by NATO to justify a prolonged campaign against a broad range of government targets in Libya, leading to the fall of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Brazil, instead, proposed the concept of responsibility while protecting (RWP), arguing that before states deploy military force to protect civilians in humanitarian and human rights crises, they must carefully consider collateral damage. The RWP initiative, while a major Brazilian diplomatic effort, received little support among the UNSC powers, illustrating Brazil's limitation in terms of influencing the core security debates among the major powers in the international system (Trinkuas 2015). Similarly, in its region, Brazil has had limited success in persuading other states in South America to adhere to the new order it purports to have created or to support it in global forums. For example, Brazil's leadership was challenged by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, who used oil diplomacy and relations with leftist and progressive movements around the globe in a bid for global influence (Flemes and Wojczewski 2011). In a similar pattern, one of the problems for South Africa in its efforts to be a leader in Africa is that countries in Africa, like Nigeria, do not necessarily accept this leading South African role, especially in the various global governance settings where South Africa is supposed to represent all of Africa (Alexandroff 2015, 258). Yet, as Legro (2011) argues, the Middle East is an exemplary case where we cannot today even begin to discuss regional leadership without reference to the role of the United States. As Fawcett (2011) asserts, no other region, even Latin America, lying in the shadow of the US, has been so constrained in its leadership options.

It is tentatively possible to say that the Palestinian and Iranian cases have elucidated Ankara's attempts to perpetuate a leading role through its active policies in the Middle East by means of the UN platform in 2000's. The independent foreign policy on regional issues, as mirrored in the UN General Assembly and UNSC platforms, is very much in line with the AKP government's foreign-policy objective of making Turkey a regional power during the 2000s through multilateralism (Yuvacı and Kaplan 2013, 224). In the meantime, Turkey has tested the limits of its independent-minded policy towards the region vis-à-vis the existing UN system.

Conclusion

Turkish foreign policy is hardly new, as Turkey has been strongly involved within the UN platform as a "multilateral activist" state. Since the establishment of the UN, Turkey has unyieldingly favoured a multilateral approach in its foreign

policy, and the UN has always played a key role in Turkey's foreign policy orientation. Yet, Turkey's "cusp status" as having multiple regional identities has made it difficult for the country to join the world's prestigious international organization, the UNSC, given its lack of inclusion in any neighbouring region. This began to change with the AKP government's efforts to "internationalize" Turkey's foreign policy by extending the net of countries with which it had an enduring relationship, as countries have done in Africa and Latin America. In particular, Turkey made a self-conscious attempt to improve its relations with Middle Eastern states and states with Muslim-majority populations (Robins 2014, 329). Accordingly, Turkish foreign policy is attempting to reach a "high time" in the UN in parallel with Turkey's more assertive foreign policy aimed at gaining a leading regional role in its neighbouring region and at global scale during the last decade. This foreign policy has commonalities with other aspiring regional powers like Brazil. As is normally the case with rising regional powers, Brazil has also been redefining its own national interests in ever-expanding terms in the last decade. As US Ambassador to Brasilia Tom Shannon put it, 'As Brazil becomes more assertive globally and begins to assert its influence, we are going to bump into Brazil on new issues and in new places' (quoted in Spektor 2010).

Turkey's willingness to gain non-permanent membership status in the UNSC twice in only 7 years (as indicated by Turkey's acquisition of membership status in the 2009–2010 period and its bid for membership in the Security Council for the 2015–2016 period) is a clear sign of Ankara's enthusiasm for multilateralism via UN politics. There has been a remarkable surge in Turkey's multilateral initiatives concerning issues of regional and global importance within the UN platform during the 2000s. Moreover, the UN has become an important sphere in which Turkey's quest for a leading regional power role could be observed and measured with respect to the degree of its accomplishments as well as failures or limitations. Considering Turkey's overall performance regarding all regional issues in the UN during the 2000s, the Palestinian issue took the lead in bringing Turkey closer to performing a regional power role in the UN. The unique characteristics of the Palestinian issue as the "common cause" of the region for almost all states also created favourable conditions for Ankara to claim a regional power role within the UN platform. In this vein, with or without Turkish support, the Arab countries have traditionally taken a pro-Palestinian stance in UN bodies. Furthermore, a standard view from the perspective of Middle East regional politics would hold that it is Palestine that continues to serve as the major symbol to gain soft power in Middle Eastern politics, and that is why Turkey—aiming for regional powerhood—also adopts such a stance. After all, all other potential regional powers (Egypt previously, Iran, Saudi Arabia and even small Qatar) tried to play a prominent role in the context of the Palestinian issue during the 2000s.

Although strong empirical evidence supports Turkey's increasing willingness to use the UN platform in its foreign policy as well as Turkey's considerable support from regional states, the "actual accomplishments" with regard to Turkey's foreign policy goals have still been controversial. The structure of the UN system in which the veto system has long impeded the effectiveness of the organization remains a limitation itself. In a penetrated region such as the Middle East in which regional issues have a dual global character, having a policy influence strongly depends on a "quite sensitive balance" between the existence of a leadership role at the regional level and the position and relationships between different

actors. In its foreign policy in the 2000s, Turkey manifested its enthusiasm to be recognized as a leading regional power in the Middle East. Turkey's "balancing" behaviour towards the big powers, such as the US, with respect to regional issues while simultaneously "trying" to integrate itself into the global governance structure provides an indication of its will. When Turkey severely criticized the UN for being an ineffective and even illegal organization, it simultaneously and strongly continued its diplomatic campaign for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC platform during 2015–2016. Moreover, Turkey's visibility in global affairs and many of its notorious foreign policy moves vis-á-vis the West are sometimes considered indicators that it has adopted or that it may adopt a revisionist stance towards the international order (Kardas 2013). Some highly inflated rhetorical criticisms aside, Turkey has done little in contravention of the order. Considering the most recent Syrian case, Turkey's stance vis-á-vis Western powers and criticism of the "order" has shifted towards a more moderate and balanced position on Syria. Its relentless commitment to multilateralism and the role of the UN in its foreign policymaking towards regional issues, which is the subject matter of this study, illustrates this point.

However, comparing the two periods in which Turkey competed for a non-permanent seat in the UN (2009–2010 and 2015–2016) yields important conclusions and implications with regard to the relationship between Turkey's regional power role and its global role. During the second term, Ankara's campaign within the UN platform for temporary membership received adverse reactions from some regional states. In particular, Saudi Arabia and Egypt's intense campaign in the UN against Turkey's membership for the 2015–2016 period has been notable. After several rounds of voting, Turkey ended up receiving the support of only 60 General Assembly members, out of 193 countries. Considering the 151 votes that Turkey received in 2008, the assessment of the two periods also shows the strong connection between Turkey's regional power role and its global role. In other words, Turkey's decreasing regional profile in terms of its leadership role in recent years has already had important implications for its global role, as reflected in the recent UN vote for a non-permanent seat. After all, Arab politics remains Arab, and Arab nationalism has been transformed rather than terminated. What may appear as a Shi'i versus Sunni alignment based on sectarian concerns could—according to what may be labelled a Westphalian narrative—be read as nothing but an expectable reaction from regional states attempting to balance a rising regional power (Valbjorn and Bank 2012, 7). Hence, as Turkey adopts a more "cultural" rhetoric and attached stance in its leading role regarding regional issues, it inevitably increases criticism concerning whether Turkey faces a role conflict in its foreign policy between its multilateral, "universal" and "normative" attachments within the UN platform, on one hand, and its "cultural" and therefore "particularistic" aspirations towards the region, on the other.

Given Turkey's performance in the UN during the period 2009–2010, one could go along with the general statement in Prys' article that 'the contribution by regional powers to the regional and global order is neither always positive nor always negative' (Prys 2010, 483); rather, it somehow could be "insufficient or incomplete", as was the case in Turkey's performance regarding the Iranian and Palestinian issues during Turkey's temporary membership on the UN Security Council. This volatility does not squelch regional powers' aspiration for assuming

global roles via international platforms in the view of their commitment to global-regional nexus.

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