Turkey's Goals in Supporting Takfiri Groups in Syria

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Abstract

After the unrest in Syria and actions of Takfiri groups in the region, neigbouring countries, depending on their regional interests and objectives, tend to specific positions and a policy to face them, control them, or as Turkey does, support them to take some strategic advantages from these groups. At the beginning of the internal events of Syria and in order to minimizing the tensions with the neighbors, the diplomatic system in Turkey tried to support the government of Syria. However, this position then changed to support the Takfiri groups. This change in Turkish foreign policy happened to create a balance of power especially against Iran, aiming to make the desirable regional changes. Therefore, the present paper is going to study the objectives of the Republic of Turkey to support the Takfiri group of ISIS in Syria, using an analytic-descriptive method. The findings show that the main goal of Turkey is to decrease the impacts of its rivals, including Iran and its alliances, in the region also to elevate its own weight. In the other word, it tends to regional balancing, both in software and hardware, especially versus Iran. The suitable research method in this article is the descriptive analysis.

Keywords: Republic of Turkey, Takfiries, ISIS, Syria, Foreign policy

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Introduction

The Republic of Turkey has experienced several strategic changes in its diplomatic system and foreign policy, in the past decades, which had some effects on the changes in Turkey and other countries of the district. After the rise of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, some new positions can be seen about their west orientations, minimizing the regional tensions and removing any problems with the neighboring countries which have resulted into the close relationship of Turkey with the moderate Islamic political groups in the region. In addition, the crisis in Syria and Turkey's support of the oppositions of Bashar al-Assad's government have influenced on the developing relationships of Turkey and its neighboring countries; Iran, Syria and Iraq.

The Turkish Islamists have looked for a close relationship with the global powers, also at the same time they have tried to have a new attitude in their regional and trans-regional relations. One of the approaches in their foreign policy was some interventions in its neighbor countries' affair to achieve a benefitting regional position. Thus, after the Arab revolutions, Turkey tried to start activism in these countries in a diplomatic way. It has been more active after the fundamentalist movements of Takfiris in Bahrain, Syria, Iraq and other countries, as Turkey has provided supports to the fundamentalist and Takfiri currents. Syria is one of the countries in which Turkey has tried to have an impact there. The most important terrorist group at the moment called ISIS which the present article has focused on it.

Initially, Turkey was looking for a peaceful solution to the Syria's crisis through some internal reforms by the Syrian regime. However, after a while, some of the regional and trans-regional factors led it to take away from the mediation position and support the oppositions of the regime of Syria, openly also asking to change the political system in the country. It seems the Turkey's worries about the future of political system in Syria comes along with its affords to take advantages from the changes in the country to power balancing in the region also to develop its relation with the west in order to get the membership of the European Union sooner, and there are the main reasons of Turkey's support for the oppositions of Syria. Therefore, the present article is going to study the role of Turkey in supporting the Takfiri groups in Syria.

1. **Theoretical and conceptual basis**
    1.1 **Problem statement**

Turkey has been known as a country with powering and empowering background in the region which placed the secularism in its agenda after the collapse of Ottoman Empire to start being a modern country. The

obvious result of this tendency would be a dominant trend toward the west and the western symbols and achievements. Therefore, the political tendency of the government has been described as the west oriented. With Islamists getting into the power, especially from the Justice and Development party, diversification of the orientation of Turkey's foreign policy has been a significant issue. It means, considering its eventful background, Turkey put the retrieval of its advance position in the past among the Islamic countries in the priority. Thus, Turkey has appealed the natural and religious teaching points to retrieve its traditional power to be able to transform to the dominant power of the region. This is why it is significant wheatear it contrasts or interacts with the neighboring countries including Syria. In addition to the previous relationship full of ups and downs between Turkey and Syria, the emergence of nongovernmental activists such as, ISIS, the contradictory positions of the government of Ankara needs to be studied, academically. The main issue in the present study is to find out what are the goals of Turkey to support ISIS as a Takfiri group? In order to answer this question, the assumption would be tested in the following; the main goal of Turkey is to decrease the influence of Iran and its alliance in the region and elevate its own weight. In other words, it is going to balance the regional power versus Iran. Also, the methodology of present study is descriptive analysis, and the analysis of the findings has conducted with qualitative method.

1.2 Background and the theoretical framework of research

There have been some articles about the Takfiri groups, in particular about ISIS, including 'the cultural impacts of ISIS in the cultural geography of Iraq and Syria' (Ahmadi 2015: 150-176), 'the psychology of ISIS' (Mustafa 2014: 119-152), 'The doctrine of ISIS and the doctrine of controlling it' (Nasri 2014: 99-117), 'The typology of ISIS' (Abbasi 2014: 93-120), 'The feasibility of the presence of ISIS in Afqanistan and its influence' (Jamali 2014: 153-160) and etc. However, there are few studies about the philosophy of the support of the Takfiri group in Syria and the damages of the foreign policy of Turkey. For instance, Masoodnia et al. have studied the Syrian crisis and the role of Turkey in the country in 'Turkey and the crisis of Syria; from mediation to support the opposition'. It focuses on the changes in Syria mainly from a social perspective and does not mention the Takfiri groups and the positions of Turkey about them. Bayat (2011: 161-178) in ' the role of Turkey in the changes of the Middle East with an emphasis on the changes of Syria' has focused on the humanity intervention and it suggested that the reason of Turkey's intervention in Syria is about supporting the human rights, reform and

democracy. There was no explanation about the role of Turkey on the religious crisis. There are also some other articles about the role of Turkey in Syria in which they do not pay attention to the Takfiri currents. Therefore, to our knowledge this is the first time that this issue has been studied.

1.3 Theoretical basis; the theory of balance of power

Considering the nature of subject, one appropriate theory as an analytic framework to the present study is the balance of power theory which takes place in conflict theories. In addition, the theory has been presented to explain the historical period based on the balance of power also to offer the politicians as a foreign policy pattern; a recommendation to a policy on the basis of the balance of power.

- **The hardware balance of power**

The mechanism of balance of power has dominated in Europe since 1648-1789 and 1815-1914. The peace of Westphalia (1648) has been recognized as the beginning of the balance of power in the Europe; the contract resulted in 'independence and equality of the countries', 'stop the intervention of the pope and the church in the foreign affairs of European governments', 'the genesis and regarding to the international rights' and 'the balance of power'. The balance of power was a solution which prevented to develop the wide wars and the emergence of a superior power till 1789. As a consequence of the French revolution in this year, the expansionism of Napoleon Bonaparte, who had the desire for the Europe under the domination of France, led to disturb the balance of power. After the failure of Napoleon in waterloo and taking place the congress of Vienna in 1815, the balance of power held again and it had continued until WWI, in 1914 (Behzadi, 1988: 250).

The balance of power has different meanings and the researchers could not come to one single concept about the issue. Some recognized it as a situation or condition in which there is a quite wide satisfaction on the distribution of the power. In other words, the main powers are satisfy with the distribution of the power. Some others advocate the idea that the balance of power mentions the system that the main players may provide and save their identity and independent through the balancing process. According to another group of researchers, the balance of power is the rule of governments' behavior. It means that in the case of facing an aggressor and unbalancing power, they establish a balancing coalition to stop a superior and dominant power (Doherty and Faltzgraph 1997: 67). The concept of the balance of power has had some different interpretations, depending on the different situations of international

affairs, including; the distribution of power, the balance of power among two hostile powers or more. For example, there have been 8 different meanings suggested by Ernst Haas, 9 meanings by Martin White and finally 10 meanings by Comte Waltz. However, there has been some sort of agreement about the existence of power in all of them. It means the balance of power theory implies that all of the international relationships have their routes in the national interests which have been earned by the power (Safezadeh 1988: 42). The definition presented by Ernst Haas included: 1. any kind of the power distribution, 2. A kind of equilibrium or balancing process, 3. Superiority or taking advantages, 4. The stability and peace during the coalition of the powers, 5. Instability and war, 6. The policy based on the power in its general concept, 7. A kind of global historical concept, 8. A system and guideline for the policy makers. According to Einese L. Cloud. J 'the problem with the balance of power is not the lack of concept; it is to have too many meanings' (Doherty and Faltzgraph, 1988: 66).

Morgenta and other classic realists have recognized the balance of power as a foreign policy strategy and the result of the politics and voluntary behavior of the independent countries, who try to prevent the dominance and superiority of one single country and military alliance on the international system. According to Morgenta the balance of power theory is the stability factor in the international relationship which means 'the enthusiasm of some countries to take the power in which each of them tries to disturb or stay in the current situation. It would lead to the formation of power, so called the balance of power' (Morgenta 1995: 287). The balance of power may work in group, national and international levels to provide and assure a balance among the elements. The balance of power, as Morgenta believes, would be a result of power of countries, and at the same time can be due to the agreement between the superpowers. As there is a non-written contract between the superpowers to avoid trying to achieve the exclusive international power; also take an action to stop any country or group who is going to do so. In fact, the superpowers pledge some kind of voluntary consideration because they know that every try to disturb the balance of power would result in the uncontrollable consequences (Morgenta 1995: 301).

- **The software balance of power**

The soft balancing consists of the non-military moves and actions to prevent, weakening and neutralization its political and military actions. Therefore, the soft balancing implies the moves and actions which will not challenge the military superior power, directly but it uses the non-military means to delay and disappoint the on-way marital invasion and

policies, and weaken and destroy in gradually. Thus, the soft balancing tends to imply the balancing. However, it does not imply to form the formal union, it may provide an opportunity and background for it. This balancing happens when a general agreement takes place among the countries to balance the power versus a threatening country or a new forming power. The soft balancing usually is based on the limit arm force, the collaborative trends and actions, coordination in the regional and international institutions. These policies may transform to the hard balancing strategies when the security competition increases and the powerful country become a serious threat. The existence balancing reasoning in the theory and the threat in the soft balancing also may be preserved. Since the balancing means balancing the differences and inequality during an encounter between the weak and the powerful, so the balancing means the actions and movements which make the use of armed force by the superior country difficult. The aim of these actions is to prevent and stop the military invasion of the more powerful country or even minimize the chance of victory for it. It does not need to use the military strategies or instruments directly, to achieve these goals. Nevertheless, the countries may balance the inequalities, using the non-military strategies and appliances indirectly and achieve their objectives. The most important soft balancing set up is included: not to permit to use the field and land[1], the entangling diplomacy[2], the reinforcement of the economic power, not to strategic collaboration, increasing the expenses of war and invasion, losing the alliances and sending the signals implying the probability of hard balance choice by the formation of a military coalition as the final choice. All of these may weaken and reduce the military force which the superpower could use in a war. Therefore, the soft balance is different from the common diplomacy. The common diplomacy aims to resolve the conflicts and problems between the countries through the compromise and reconciliation. While the soft balancing seeks a change in the balance of power through the soft means and the policies in which the power of strong countries would be limited (Nay and Pipe 2013, 2012).

2 Principles and objectives of Turkish foreign policy

The main goal in the foreign policy of Turkey is to provide security, stability and welfare in the region and provide the conditions to develop the collaboration and human resources (NK: Ataee, 1999: 117-122). Traditionally, the principles and objectives of Turkey is to guarantee the

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[1] Territorial denial
[2] Entangling diplomacy

national interests toward the future and save the external resources to provide the development and national defense through the establishment of a government and new alliances, also to save and strength the position of the country in the contemporary world.

Considering the philosophy of the founders of Republic of Turkey, the tendency toward the west has been known as the first point of Kamalism, which has influenced on the foreign policy in the region (Perthes, 2010: 4). So, after the WWII, the Middle East came to the second place in their foreign policy. The west orientation policy has been continued along with the low level of attention to the regional issues until the early 1960s. At that time, the turkey's political system faced some new national and international variables which resulted in the regional orientations in its foreign policy. After the Justice and Development Party got into the power, the attention to the Middle East issues came into priority and the party tried to play more active role in the region. It does not mean they have the high level of focusing on the Middle East affairs led to turning away from its western alliances. Turkey has had a significant place in the western organizations, NATO in specific. Also, with Islamists in the power in the recent years, the westerns have accepted the point that there were some structural changes in the security environment of Turkey, after ending the cold war. Nowadays, it is undeniable that Turkey faces many security problems and challenges which mostly come from the southern areas (Yavooz 2010: 328-335). It could be one issue to make Ankara having more intervention in the changes of the Middle East, also support the oppositions of Arab countries and the Takfiri group. The foreign policy of Turkey has been depended on the west for the recent decades, as it was defined in the western strategic environment. In the other words, this country did not have any innovation in the eastern area, especially the Middle East. Thus, it led to a fundamental challenge in its regional identity (NK: Goleh 2007).

 Therefore, the one-sided, west-oriented foreign policy of Turkey has changed to a multi-dimension policy, after the Justice and development party came into power. The new leaders of Turkey are wondering how to take advantage from their regional power to enhance their global prestige. However, the new Ottomanism of the elites of Turkey has formed based on saving its identity, there are two main goals: First, the retrieval of the regional role makes it the pivotal actor in the area, so that, all of the countries of the region; including Iran, Hamas and the Arab countries, would try to resolve their problems with the world through the diplomacy of Turkey. The enhancement of the global role of Turkey is the second consequence of foreign policy. The country was a member of NATO in one hand, and on the other hand it became too close to Israel but, at the

moment, it tries to develop its role and through it achieve a way to take advantage in its relation with the U.S and Europe. Thus, due to its stable function, the western opinion is positive about Turkey to resolve the regional affairs (hoseini et al. 2012: 73-74 and Gorsell 2007L 30-38).

3 The Relations of the Republic of Turkey and Syria, from the Cold War to the activism of the Takfiri currents

Syria is one of the reasons that make Turkey to adopt its interest with the interests of the U.S and the West. The mutual relationship of Turkey and Syria has been experienced different changes until the early 21st century based on three main problems; including; the Kurds, the water distribution of Dijla and Furat and the territorial dispute. Even the countries were closed to the military conflict (Aras et al. 2007). After the Justice and Development party got into power in 2002 and a change in its trend on the foreign policy, its relationship with Syria improved. However, Syria faced the civil crisis and unrests, since 2011. The foreign policy of Turkey about the crisis has changed from mediating to intervention (Asadi 2011: 13-14). The relationship with Syria and its management have been one of the main concerns in the domestic and foreign policy of Turkey (House, 2009: p 4). Territorial disputes and possession of Hatay from Ankara was the most important problem between two countries before the cold war. The recognition of Israel and the cold war caused some new problems in their relationships. The problem of water (Dijla and Furat) also was another significant issue in their relations. In addition, the problem with Kurds and PKK was one of the effective cases on the relationship of the two countries in which the presence of the leader of PKK Kurds, Ocalan led these countries to be close to the military conflict (vaezi 2008: 58-69).

Due to the pressure from Turkey and the threat to a military act, Damascus agreed in October 1998 to recognize Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK) as a terrorist organization and cut all the funds to the group, also return their leader, Abdullah Ocalan. All of these were agreed by Syria in October 1998 in ADANA agreement. So, the first step toward the normal relationship between two countries took place. After the American attack to Iraq the situation got worse and the American supports for Iraqi Kurds, influenced on the relationship between Turkey and the U.S. Turkey has had deep strategic concerns about any independence movement in Iraqi Kurdistan. Since the problem may lead to the threat to territorial integrity and an increase in the expectations of Kurds in Turkey. In this condition, the close relationship with Syria had two main reasons; First, controlling Syria and stop this country to come in to the conflict which could change the balance of power against

Turkey. Second, a notice to the U.S. which showed that if they support the Kurds, Turkey would be closer to Syria. In parallel with the development of political relations, the cultural and economic relations were developed and, at the late 2000s, it could be seen that there was almost no problem in the relationship between two countries according the 'Zero tension with the neighboring countries' doctrine (Barkey,2011).

However, after the crisis and civil war in Syria, Turkish leaders expected that the government of Bashar Assad can stop the unrest, due to the security concerns about the presence of Kurds around the borders, then, their initial positions adopted a cautious policy. However, worsening situation in Turkey, they came into the conclusion that these movements are pervasive in the Middle East and there is a probability that the Syrian regime would not be able to resist against them. Therefore, Turkey changed its position (NK: Banihashemi 2012: 180-182) and let the opposition leaders to have some meetings in Turkey (Masoudnia et al. 2012:83). Thus, it can be concluded that the doctrine of zero tension with the neighboring countries has another aspect if it is necessary and it is about the national interest. There could be a number of reasons for the position of Turkey. One of them is the change in the orientation of Turkey's foreign policy and put the Middle East at the center of attention in the new policy. The main goal of foreign policy of Turkey is to be the central power in the region and to create the system of balance of power, and in this case Iran would be the most significant rival. Therefore, considering the type of relationship between Iran and Syria and the role of the country in the regional policies for Iran, Turkey suggests eliminating Syria from the list of Iran's alliances and sees a new western oriented government get into power in Syria as a way to weaken Iran (Binam, 2014: 1).

Thus, the policy of Turkey about the changes in Syria is to defense from oppositions and push to regime change there. In this respect, the presence of the Syrian National Council, Free Syrian Army and other opposition groups can be seen in Turkey also their regional and international meetings in this country to coordinate and organize the policies and actions of these groups. However, Ankara follows the overthrow of the regime of Bashar Assad; it never came to the direct military intervention due to the political and security expenses and it has always been avoided it. In case, the conflicts continue and resulted in a war between Alavis and Sunnis, and on the other side between Arabs and Kurds, there would be a possibility to repeat what happened in Iraq will happen in Syria; the country would be divided to the semi-independent groups. However, the Kurds in Syria are important, as well. The Kurds in this country are ready to get their independency, in assistant with their alliances in Iraq and

other intervention countries. Generally, the Kurds of Syria try to have Turkey's support. These people see Ankara as a balance power versus the Arab nationalism. That is why Turkey has faced a paradox situation and a big dilemma. This country has been against any Kurdish country or institution, anywhere, as it could be a threat that the Kurds of Turkey try to do the same. However, if Turkey sees the permanent instability of its Sunny neighbors and goes to face Iran, the Sheea side (from Baghdad to Assad and Lebanon Hizb-ol-allah), may forget about its traditional worries.

There are also some short-term reasons which can justify the Turkey's support of the Kurds of Syria. Turkey takes advantage from the relations with the small countries more than the independent and bigger countries among the neighboring. Turkey prefers that the government of Syria transform from Damascus to Aleppo, and then Ankara may be saved from the Kurds' threat. In addition, it seems Assad who is losing his control on the north west of Syria would not trend to prevent PKK to use the Syrian fields. PKK is the leader of war to the Kurdish independency from Turkey and is responsible for the terrorist attacks in the country. Therefore, Turkey should support an independent government in Aleppo; a government who seeks the stability in its area and take the responsibility; such as, the regional state in the Iraqi Kurdistan who faces PKK in the north of the country. In addition, in case of the overthrow of Assad and a Kurdish state, the economic companies of Turkey would have some great opportunities. These are all some reasonable issues for Turkey to support an independent Kurdish state in Syria, and even Ankara may forget about its long disagreement to the Kurds' independency which is a significant issue (Abbasi Sarmadi, 2013). Probabely, the next step in the development chain in the Middle East would be more organized Kurds in Syria, and following the trend of peace between Kurds and Turkey may reduce the negative consequences for Turkey.

4 Turkey's objectives in supporting Takfiri groups (ISIS) in Syria

4.1 The hardware balancing in the region

Turkey in its foreign policy has been tried to take advantage from all of the regional events to enhance its regional and international position, and create an appropriate balance of power. In this respect, it has come to support the Takfiri group of ISIS which there are different analyzes about it. Our analysis in the present study relies on the interests of Turkey in the crisis of Syria in order to regional balancing, versus Iran in particular. In general, considering the Ankara's destructive role in Syria crisis in the

recent years, also the changes in Syria including, the Russian air military operations against terrorists, the most important reasons of the political supports of Ankara for the Takfiris in Syria could be analyzed.

As it has been mentioned before, the political regime of Turkey has been founded since 1923 on a secular basis, and the ideology of Ataturk in its foreign policy was based on the minimum tension and intervention in other countries' affairs which was concluded in the slogan 'Peace in the world, peace in the country'. He also tried to make a distance with the region (the eastern world and Islam) and be a part of the European world. However, after 2008 the political trend turned to a way of 'the Turkey's support of sunny fundamentalism'. Turkey was looking for deep strategies in the Middle East and the close area around the Arab countries, especially Syria, Iraq and philistine.

Therefore, the problem between the west and Turkey has had an impact on the destiny of the two alliances, after the claim about Assad using the chemical weapons. Tayyip Erdogan in the country announced him as a dictator, to justify his disagreements. Turkey has found the Scenes of chemical weapons the best opportunity to discuss the problem of Syria as a military attack. However, the agreement between Russia and America was obviously against the balancing policy in the region, and then support ISIS. The CNN report in November 2013 was one of the first and most important reports among the western media about the Turkey's support for Jihadists. The report said that Turkey proceed to enter the flocks of several hundred Salafīyan people through the Hatay border (in the south) to Syria.

The political divorce of the Justice and Development Party and the Gulen population was a significant point in which some important revelations by the Gülen community happened about the official, economic corruptions also the help of Turkey to the opposition forces, particularly jabhat al-nusra (JAN). The effective relationships of Turkey with Tariq al-Hashemi, the opponents of Maliki, made the situation of Turkey worse. The Turk references say that he has found an international armed organization in Turkey and put two Turkish generals named "Kurkmaz Taghma" and "Verdi Adnan Tanner» in charge. In this respect, the representatives of the Republican Party and the nationalist movement in Turkey parliament have repeated that ISIS has the supports of Turkey. On March 27, 2014 Bond Fathullah Gülen published a voice record which was about a meeting of the senior security officials in Turkey about the Syrian events. One of the important discussed issues in the meeting was about an artificial missile attacks into Turkish territory by force by the Syrian army dependent on Assad, and then the public opinions may assume it is from Assad. However, it is not the all. The Republican

newspaper in Turkey published about the membership of close to 3000 Turkish citizens in ISIS and made a deep shock. The secular currents have recognized Erdogan government responsible to these social problems, as they believe that leaving aside the secular values led to the tendency of youngesters to religious radicalism (Safoddini 2014).

During the recent years, the terrorist groups have been the Turkey's most important tool to advance their cause in Syria, even the greater area in the region. Ankara has been planned to achieve its strategic goals, overthrow of Assad and replacing it with a dependent regime, during the last four years, by equipping and arming these groups and helping the Takfiri terrorists to pass the Arabic countries to Syria. However, the resistance of the government and the people of Syria in one hand and the effective support of special resistance movement, especially Islamic Republic of Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah movement on the other hand could stop Turkey and other players such as, The Saudis, the Zionist regime and some Western governments. In addition, Russian air strikes to the terrorist groups, ISIS in particular, has weakened the situation of these groups strongly in Syria. Turkey hoped that falling Russian Sukhoi aircraft may lead to a review from Moscow in its military attitude against the terrorists, and brought down the plane. In fact, anything which may strength the political system in Syria would be a factor against the policy of balance system of Ankara, especially as Damascus has made a traditional strategic alliance with Iran. In addition, Turkey is one of the most important players of the oil business which takes place in Iraq and Syria by ISIS. ISIS extracts the petroleum and exports it through the markets of Turkey to other parts of the world. This gives the ISIS a large amount of money to afford its expenses in Iraq and Syria also pay a salary to some terrorist from other countries who came there. Turkey is the other side of the business which may achieve a large amount of petroleum under the market price.

Greatness and confidence are some other aspects of new-Ottomanism in the foreign policy, since it considers Turkey as a superior power in the region (Heidari and Rahnavard 2011: 143). Therefore, there is a direct relationship between the Turkey's support of the terrorist groups and new-Ottomanism which can be seen in both crisis in Iraq and Syria, clearly. Davutoglu believes that the foreign policy of Turkey has been unbalance and too much emphasis on the relations with the Europe and the US has led to make a distance with the north African countries and the Middle East, and as Turkey belongs to all these parts, it may be a leader in these areas or to be the central power of the region. He mentioned about the main streamlines in his book 'The strategic depth' (Reynolds, 2012:11) including; Turkey should have the active role as it used to do in the past;

it should cooperate with other countries in some economic, political and security areas, then there would be no need to an intervention from the foreigners; Turkey should invest on other countries instead of put the high level of expenses to join the E.U (Omidi and Rezaee 201:241).

According to Davutoglu, Turkey should improve its relations with its neighboring countries to achieve the success. So, the important strategic aspect of his work, meaning the zero tension with the neighboring country would be done (NK: Hoseini et al. 2012: 76-80). In this respect, Turkey had started its relations with Syria. After the recent changes in Syria, Turkey had a mediatory role initially, and advocated the reforms in Syria, even invite Assad to do the reforms to control the situation, and asked both parties to peace. However, after a short time turkey called the changes in Syria against the humanity and asked Bashar Assad to leave the power. At that time, Turkey found the 'zero tension with the neighboring countries' unsuccessful and came into changing its position with Syria, and then a full support of Salafiyah became a part of Erdogan's government security diplomacy while it was against the Turkey's national security document which states Islamic Fundamentalism and Kurdish separatism are two pivotal threats to Turkey's security. Since 2011, in the security diplomatic discourse of Turkey, the theory has been raised that playing a role in the region will not be possible without the armed forces (Binam 2014: 1). Therefore, supporting the armed terrorist groups took place in the foreign policy agenda. At the moment, in the Iraq crisis, Turkey is looking for the dysfunctional political system of Shee'as in Iraq and distribution the power among the players and religious-ethnic minorities, using also supporting ISIS. Furthermore, Turkey tries to reduce the position of Iran and Iraq in the relative alignment with Saudi Arabia.

To sum up, it can be said that Turkey is going to make the Brotherhood Crescent versus the Shee'a Crescent, which its leader is the Islamic Republic. In this regard, it should provide the situation for the friends of Turkey to get into the power in the countries of the region, and it means to weaken the alliances of Iran; Iraq and Syria. Turkey then put it in its agenda to support the terrorist group to be able to overthrow the Shee'a government of Iraq and Alavi government of Syria. So, it can be said that Turkey has found its possibility to achieve the central position in the region only in the situation that the government with a different foreign policy such as, Iraq and Syria have changed (NK: Ahmadi 2015: 150-169) and in the conditions that the terrorist groups have the responsibility for it, it would be obvious for Turkey to protect them.

Turkey and Saudi Arabia have been the main theme of conflict against Syria. These two countries are placed in the balance of threat

environment. According to Stephan Walt, the balance of threat means collaboration among the actors who have a common enemy. In the geopolitical perspective of the U.S. and the Saudi Arabia's ideological approach, Islamic Republic of Iran has seen as a security threat. Syria also would be an actor who has an effective political role in the regional collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, Turkey, following the regional policies of the U.S., takes advantage of the facing pattern of the regime of Bashar Assad to reduce the regional power of Islamic Republic of Iran. In case, the capability of preventing Iran in the regional policy has reduced, then there would be a ground to do the invasive actions against the vital and security system of Syria. The strategic capabilities of Iran in Syria and Lebanon could be recognized as the pivotal preventing power of Iran in the East Mediterranean areas. The conflicts in Syria and support of the Takfiri groups of ISIS have a wide range of regional consequences. Some of them which can be mentioned might be the position of the international public opinions against the policies of Ankara, the reaction of the Islam world about the intervention of Ankara in Syria, the distrust of the Syrian people toward this country etc.

That is why Turkey tries to reduce the power of strategic policy of Iran. Turkey is one of the countries in the region which support the incorporation with the US pattern. On the other words, Turkey is a part of the North Atlantic agreement which has considered the Anti-American policies in the Middle East in the Istanbul initiative framework, since 2004. The main reason of Turkey's disagreement with Bashar Assad may be the regional role of Syria as a resistance front. Syria is the geopolitical link of Iran from Iraq to the east Mediterranean, and has the necessary capabilities to protect the forces of the resistance front versus Zionist regime and the global domination system (Kooh Khalil 2012: 27).

4.2 The software balancing in the region

After the changes in Arab countries, Turkey was looking for the enhancement of its soft power and in this path has tried to resolve the regional conflicts, zero tension with the neighboring countries, improve the relations with the Islamic world, and develop the business relation in the area, using the active foreign policy (Harseage and Rahimi 2014: 104). As the evidence shows Ankara know the issue and the role of the soft power in the future political equations, well, especially in the recent changes in the world of Islam. Since there have been the trans-regional actors such as, the US in the region and the hard power of Turkey cannot be compared to them, this country tries to increase its soft power. In this respect, the first thing it is going to use its strategic situation where is a

link between the East and the West. Moreover, Turkey with establishment of a stable democracy and the level of development has been known as a Muslim country with a stable democracy and modernization. Third, Turkey has had old relations with the countries of the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia to Afghanistan and other Islamic countries, back in the history. It also has a close situation in order to the ethnic, racial and linguistic aspects. Therefore, the tools and assets of Turkey has made it in a unique situation to its soft power (Bayat 2011: 167).

On the other hand, starting the protest currents and the movements of Arab people, Turkey tries to play the role of big brother, and then change the Arabs' attitude and the public opinions in a positive way to assure there would be no problem to accept its leader role from the Arab people (Cornell,2012:13-24). It would be more important when the impact of the public opinion about the foreign policy comes to the center of attention, in case the democratic states get into power. In this respect, Turkey in assistant of the US and the West is looking for to present the governmental structure of Turkey as a pattern in the Arab world, using the soft power, through the cinema and television products, since the early 2000s, and the Erdogan supports of philistine and the issues with Israel with the position of Turkey to the Arab countries changes are all parts of the scene (Binam 2014:1). Turkey also tries to replace 'the mediate Islam of Turkey pattern' with the regional pattern, especially the pattern of Islamic Republic of Iran and the resistance discourse, with supporting the Takfiri groups and Assad's opposition. So, it may increase its power and leadership in Syria and consequently in the Islamic world. At the same time, as Turkey guess that the religious democratic pattern of Islamic Republic of Iran would get into power in Syria, support the oppositions of Assad and the Takfiri groups to replace its own pattern.

Conclusion

Turkey is one of the regional actors which always have organized the wide security connections with the superpowers. Turkey prefers to put the geopolitical and regional pattern as its pivotal strategic act. Along with the international processing actions, the development of strategic and economic relations of Turkey with the countries of the region has been in the priority of Ankara, in the recent years. In this respect the international collaboration of Turkey with the superpowers such as, the US should be considered as the basis to the specific relations in this country in a secure environment. In this condition, the brokers of foreign policy prefer to use the regional balance strategy and the crisis management to control the effective process in the secure environment of the region. It leads to

transition from 'the strategy of zero point of the security problem' of Davutoglu in the control of the process of regional developments. According to the findings of the present study, there is a direct relation between the strategic depth policy and new ottomanism in the foreign policy of Turkey with the intervention in the regional crisis, in particular is supporting the Takfiri and terrorist groups in Syria such as, ISIS; because according to these two policies Turkey tries to become a regional power and to do so it has to face the regional powers such as, Iran and Saudi Arabia. As Syria is one of the alliances of Islamic Republic of Iran and a resistant basis, supporting the oppositions of Syria as a strategy which can help to change the political regime of Syria and a political system get into power which is depended on Turkey. At the same time, Turkey is going to intervene in the religious and civil wars in Syria, prevent the formation of any ethnic conflict in the country because it may lead to stimulate ethnic tensions in Turkey. Therefore, Turkey goes further from the regional traditional balancing frameworks, trying to hardware balancing in the region, is going to present a pattern from a Muslim country to have the approval of the public opinions.

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