
Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey

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Abstract

Turkey's soft power capacity comes from its history, culture and geography. Rather than seeing them as obstacles or burdens, the Turks are now turning them into strategic assets in both domestic and foreign policy. The new Turkish public diplomacy is building on Turkey's expanding soft power in the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus. As Turkey engages new regions and emerging actors as well as continues relations with its old allies, it develops new capacities for the various elements of soft power and strategic communication in regional and global contexts. The new Turkey that is emerging is also creating a new Turkish narrative with multiple dimensions and faces. The task of the new Turkish public diplomacy is to tell the story of the new Turkey to a wide ranging audience across the globe. As Turkey overcomes its old fears and builds a new identity for itself, the process of change transforming the country will have a deep impact on Turkish domestic and foreign policy.

Key Words

Public diplomacy, soft power, Turkish foreign policy, Office of Public Diplomacy, smart power.

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Introduction

The rapid transformation of Turkey's internal and external dynamics manifests itself in a wide range of fields and presents new risks and opportunities. Reconnecting with its history and geography, Turkey ascribes strategic value to time and place in a globalized world, and is leaving behind the one-dimensional and reductionist perspectives of the Cold War era. From foreign policy, economy and public policy to education, media, arts and sciences, Turkey's newly emerging actors position themselves as active players demanding the global transformation of centre-periphery relations in order to create a more democratic and fair world-system.

Political legitimacy has become an integral part of international relations in the 21st century. It is impossible to implement a policy that does not stand on legitimate grounds in a globalized system. In cases where there is lack of legitimacy, crises are inevitable and the cost is often too high. International public opinion has become a key point

of reference for countries to define and implement their foreign policy. The legitimacy crisis of modernity, to a large degree, stemmed from the attitude of placing oneself at the centre and failing to provide any convincing explanations for doing so. Today one of the legitimacy problems of the global system is the lack of a consensus as to its priorities and methods by the majority of the world community. The foremost condition for legitimacy is a fair sharing of resources; and this also applies to the international system. The legitimacy crisis of the global system can only end if the world's economic, political and cultural resources are shared fairly, and ethnocentric hierarchies are overcome.

The growing relationships of interdependency necessitated by the global economic system, the rising cost of centrally controlling the global political system and the experience of multiple modernities affect national and regional dynamics and provide opportunities for the formation of new patterns of relationship. The state of “chaotic order” emerging after September 11 makes it possible for centrifugal forces to influence regional systems. Such new actors as international courts, media, public opinion, human rights organizations and non-governmental organizations are being added to the main actors of the Cold War era, and this forces the global system to be more dynamic, multidimensional and less controllable.

One of the most important results of this dizzying chain of developments is the overcoming of the Eurocentric notions of history and society. The ruptures of modernity within Western civilization, and the zigzagged paths it followed in non-western societies, both necessitate and make possible the idea of a new global order. It is no longer possible in the 21st century to say that the narrative of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution is the only force shaping the dynamic relationships between history and geography, time and place, individual and society, reason and faith, self and other, and centre and periphery. A new “geographic imagination” is emerging and making itself more palpable by the day.¹

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This new idea of time and place makes it possible for Turkey to produce its own concepts and build a new vocabulary. From a semiotic perspective, even the new vocabulary and concepts of Turkish politics and foreign policy should be noted as indicators of a profound mental transformation. This new platform of imagination and

comprehension provides opportunities for Turkish scholars, intellectuals and policy makers to produce their own concepts and theories, and expands the horizons of Turkish intellectual life. The “open horizon” provided by this process of transformation also enables the reconsideration of Turkey’s main issues from a fresh perspective. The narrative pertaining to the effort to see the world from a non-Euro-centric perspective that Ahmet Davutoğlu fleshed out in his work “Strategic Depth: Turkey’s International Position” is becoming commonplace, and is giving way to a new set of conceptualizations.² Far from being just another version of “third-worldism”, Turkey’s new intellectual and political horizon, deserves serious attention.

The changes taking place in Turkish society and foreign policy are as much triggered by ruptures in the regional and global system as they are by those taking place within Turkey itself. Turkey, which has become one of the important actors in the regional order and the global system, is experiencing this transformation in tandem with its unique conditions. It is thus correct to say a “new Turkish story” is emerging. The changes born out of Turkey’s internal dynamics, and its consequent effects on foreign policy, are seen through a wide swath from Europe to America, the Middle East to Asia, and prompt a new discussion about Turkey on different

platforms, ranging from international relations to political science and cultural studies.³ These new dynamics which have emerged in the recent episodes of Turkish modernization are also adding new dimensions to Turkey’s traditional relations with Europe and the United States.⁴ As I have discussed elsewhere, the new Turkey is emerging as a result of a new geopolitical imagination on the one hand, and Turkey’s economic and security-based priorities on the other. The tectonic changes in Turkish foreign policy can be reduced neither to ideological considerations, nor to *Realpolitik* anxieties.⁵

This article takes a look at two core elements of Turkish foreign policy: “soft power” and “public diplomacy.” Turkey’s soft power capacity will be explained as a confluence of the country’s history, geography, cultural depth, economic strength and democracy, and its place in Turkish foreign policy will be highlighted. Public diplomacy, which is a platform for the implementation of soft power, is a new concept in Turkey and is increasingly being discussed especially since the launching of the Office of Public Diplomacy within the Turkish Prime Ministry. Since the publication of decree 27478 announcing its launch on January 30, 2010 in the Official Gazette, the Office of Public Diplomacy has been pursuing various public diplomacy activities. The following excerpt describes how the decree explained the need for

the creation of the Office of Public Diplomacy:

Globalization has rendered the conduct of international relations more complicated in today's world, according an increasingly important role to public diplomacy in influencing and directing the international community alongside traditional diplomacy. In order for us to achieve success in explaining Turkey's position in the face of accusations and problems our country has long endured in the international arena, it is necessary to use public diplomacy tools and methods to inform accurately the international community.

As noted in the decree, certain public institutions and foundations have been assigned tasks to provide information about Turkey abroad in such a way as to increase Turkey's respectability in the international community. However, in today's world, where national and regional problems can easily take on a global dimension, a more efficient coordination, cooperation, and decision making mechanism is necessary among public policy institutions in regard to developments in the information and communication technologies, opportunities and threats emerging in the international arena.

In light of these observations, the foundation of an Office of Public Diplomacy has been decided upon under the supervision of a senior advisor to the Prime Minister, charged with conducting public diplomacy activities and securing cooperation and coordination between public institutions and non-governmental organizations.⁶

Applied by many countries as an active political communication tool, public diplomacy is a country's effort to share a coherent and convincing account

of its own story with the rest of the world. In the second part of the article, we will provide a conceptual framework for public diplomacy as well as brief examples of other countries' practices and observations on Turkey's concept of public diplomacy.

Turkey's Soft Power

The concept of "soft power", which Joseph Nye first began to use in the 1980s, is rooted in the idea that alternative power structures exist in international relations alongside economic and military power. According to Nye, there are three ways to achieve one's goal: threatening the other party and going to war if necessary; "buying out" the other party; and persuading the other party through the use of "soft power." Soft power is "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments." This is possible through *persuading* the other party through *convincing* arguments and rational policies. Here, *credibility* and the *ability to persuade* constitute the main elements of soft power. These elements also provide legitimacy to the use of power.

A country's soft power capacity defines the success of its public diplomacy as much as does the integrity and efficacy of its policies. Soft power, which is rooted in a "value-based" definition of power, explains how much a

country is deemed attractive and worthy of being designated as an exemplar for others. According to Nye, soft power explains “the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political notions and policies.”⁷ The acceptance of a country’s policies as legitimate by others also defines that country’s soft power capacity.

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Nye contends that the United States has lost its credibility, persuasion power and attractiveness after September 11, and that no economic indicator can measure this cost. America’s ability to continue the successful paradigm it achieved during the Cold War era depends not on invading countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, but on regaining the soft power which it has lost. In a world where anti-Americanism has become a global phenomenon, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the United States to be a trustworthy political power and a centre of attraction. The election of Barack Hussein Obama in 2008 brought about a significant change in the global public perception of America but fell short of eradicating anti-Americanism.⁸

Unlike “hard power,” soft power explains fields of influence and attraction beyond military and economic indicators.

Various factors feed soft power: Culture, education, arts, print and visual media, film, poetry, literature, architecture, higher education (universities, research centres, etc.), non-governmental organizations, science and technology, the capacity for innovation, tourism, platforms for economic cooperation and diplomacy. Soft power emerges as a combination of these elements and gives us an idea about a country’s cultural richness and social capital.

Another key factor that defines a country’s soft power capacity is its political system. The most important among those elements which pave the way for a country to achieve a soft power status and make it a centre for attraction is a political system which prioritizes freedoms and liberties, guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms, and which is also just, transparent and democratic. In this regard, one of the main pillars of Turkey’s soft power is its democratic experience. Despite the ups and downs in its history, the strengthening of Turkish democracy and its gaining of legitimacy among the public play a significant role in Turkey’s position as a regional and global actor. For instance, the “Arab Spring” which began with popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011 highlighted Turkey’s democratic experience in the Middle East. Turkey’s democratization efforts and success in economic development have been an inspiration for the newly

emerging social and political movements in the Arab world.

The values Turkey represents, as well as its history and cultural depth, have mobilized regional dynamics and provided opportunities for the creation of new spheres of influence.

Soft power refers to a country's social-human capital apart from its military and economic power. There is no necessary asymmetrical relationship between hard and soft power. The existence of hard power does not guarantee soft power. Nye points to Canada, Holland and the Scandinavian countries as examples of countries that have soft power despite their limited economic and military capabilities. Through their values, organizational capacities, education, innovation, international stance and mediation efforts, these countries enjoy a sphere of influence disproportionate to their military and economic power.

Turkey's soft power is different from that of other countries in its form and content. Turkey's soft power potential, which extends from the Balkans and the Middle East to inner parts of Central Asia, emerges from the cultural and historical experience it has inherited. The values Turkey represents, as well as its history and cultural depth, have

mobilized regional dynamics and provided opportunities for the creation of new spheres of influence. In the larger Euro-Asian landmass, the common denominator for Turks, Kurds, Bosnians, Albanians, Circassians, Abkhazians, Arabs, Azeris, Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, Turkmens and other ethnic groups, as well as Armenian, Greek, Jewish and Assyrian communities is the Ottoman experience they have shared and built together. It is this Ottoman heritage that brings together these diverse groups and enables them to relate to a shared experience in time and place. Today, Turkey represents the pivotal point of this heritage. This is not a new imperial adventure, termed by some as "Neo-Ottomanism." Rather, this is a process whereby Turkey's new geopolitical imagination and the new possibilities in the global political system allow the people of the region to reconcile with their history and geography. Remembering this experience plays an important role in defining the spheres of soft power in Turkey.⁹ Furthermore, Turkey's regional and global engagements are expanding in other regions, such as Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In addition, Turkish democracy and its vibrant civil society form the most important pillars of Turkey's soft power. Ever since the introduction of the multi-party system in the 1950s, Turkey has gone through different experiences.

Demands for fair sharing, participation, representation, transparency and accountability by various groups within Turkish society have nurtured and encouraged the growth of Turkish democracy. Turkey's transformation into a centre of attraction in its geographic hinterland, such as the Balkans and the Middle East, depends on its ability to define the freedom-security balance in a coherent manner, and on expanding its spheres of democratic influence.

At this point, Turkey possesses important resources and values unique to itself. The concept of soft power depends upon the "carrot and stick" dialectic of American power. However, it is not always possible or even desirable to use the carrot-stick dialectic in the geopolitical environment of a country like Turkey. Rather, a new geopolitical imagination and a notion of common memory, conscience and cultural depth shape soft-power relations.

Turkey's achievement of an effective soft power status depends on its ability to mobilize these dynamics. As a result of the changes it has been going through, Turkey today has a 'new story' and a 'new narrative'. As I shall discuss below, this story is rich, multi-layered and multidimensional. The purpose of public diplomacy is to tell this story in the most effective, credible and comprehensive manner.

Public Diplomacy

As a strategic communication tool, public diplomacy comprises "understanding, informing and influencing the public."¹⁰ Political communication, which constitutes an important part of this process, is defined as "the production, distribution, control, use and processing of information by the states, organizations, or individuals."¹¹ The purpose of public diplomacy is not propaganda, but building a strategic language of communication based on objective facts and truth.

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Public diplomacy activities are conducted within two main frameworks: "State-to-public," and "public-to-public." State-to-public activities aim to explain the state's policies and activities through the use of official tools and channels to the public. In public-to-public activities, however, civil elements such as NGOs, research centres, public opinion polls, media, opinion leaders, universities, exchange programs, associations and foundations are employed. In this regard, public diplomacy goes beyond official communication between officials,

diplomats and foreign communities.¹² Public diplomacy encompasses a larger field than “diplomatic communication.”

Public diplomacy envisages mutual communication and interaction. Listening to target groups and defining their priorities, public diplomacy constitutes one of the core elements of this multifaceted communication process. In this sense, public diplomacy is a dynamic and multidimensional communication process. Its key elements are listening as much as talking, understanding as much as explaining, and communicating as much as informing.

Soft power is one of the most important components for public diplomacy. Another important element is public opinion, which assumes an increasingly central role in shaping national and global policies. National and international political processes are closely watched and made available to the world community through the media. It is not possible to implement a policy with regard to the economy, foreign policy, energy or the environment without the approval of the public. A fundamental condition for successful public diplomacy is to follow rational, persuasive and defensible policies. It is impossible to espouse or explain to the world community policies that are unjust, ignore universal rules of law, or encourage illegitimate methods such as threats, violence and occupation. For instance, it is impossible for a country

that systematically violates human rights or keeps another country under occupation to follow a successful public policy. China’s policies in East Turkestan, Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories, the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq under George W. Bush and scandals such as Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, make it impossible for these countries, with different political and geographical characteristics, to conduct a successful public diplomacy.

As I shall briefly discuss below, Turkey has acquired a negative image due to past mistakes, and was prevented from conducting an effective public diplomacy because of those failed and misguided government policies. Turkey’s new narrative is more than creating a new image. Rather, it reflects the new identity which the country wants to embrace to overcome its past mistakes and chart a new course for its social and political future.

Public Diplomacy Practices From Around the World

Different countries around the world have different styles of conducting public diplomacy, and explain their positions, policies and theses to national and international communities in various ways. Every country uses a unique language and tool set. Such differences are due to the policies which

a specific country follows as much as to its historical and cultural heritage. As the following examples demonstrate, Europe's public diplomacy is different from that of China or Israel because of its priorities and cultural/societal codes.

European Union

According to a report by the German Foreign Ministry in 2002, "public diplomacy is assigned utmost priority alongside all other European matters."¹³ The European Union (EU), which positions itself as an effective "soft power", focuses on European public opinion as well as on those neighbouring regions such as the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Africa. The EU has developed an effective internal and external communication policy as a result of the new regulations of 1999.

The European Union allocates considerable resources for its external communications and deems communication and diplomacy with non-EU states as a strategic element of its foreign policy

This communication strategy yielded its first fruit on January 1, 2002, when the new Euro currency was launched. Founded in 1999, the EU

Director-General Press has developed programs to eliminate EU-scepticism in certain European countries. The EU Director-General Press involves various news organizations and communications agencies in member and non-member states, and benefits from their resources.¹⁴

The European Union allocates considerable resources for its external communications and deems communication and diplomacy with non-EU states as a strategic element of its foreign policy. Despite difficulties encountered in formulating a common EU foreign policy, the European Commission and its affiliated communication units work effectively to explain EU foreign policy in Europe and beyond. The EU has sped up its efforts to formulate a common foreign policy vision after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which deeply divided European public opinion. This led to the implementation of the "European Security Strategy" in November 2003.

United Kingdom

Once known as "the empire on which the sun never sets," the United Kingdom is actively pursuing a public diplomacy and strategic communication, despite its waning economic and political power. British public diplomacy mixes elements such as politics, foreign policy, trade, culture, language, education, tourism and "brand management" in a successful

and balanced manner. The fact that the English language is the most popular *lingua franca* in today's world provides a significant advantage to British public diplomacy, and allows for cultural diplomacy and social empathy through language instruction.

Britain's public diplomacy efforts are carried out mainly through three institutions: the British Foreign Ministry, the British Council, and the BBC World Service. The last two institutions, despite their official status and use of public resources, maintain an autonomous character and are not subject to government control. There is an effective division of labour among them: The Foreign Ministry is responsible for diplomatic communication, whereas the British Council handles cultural communication, and the BBC is tasked with worldwide media communication. Aside from these three, there are several other institutions that support British public diplomacy efforts.¹⁵ Effective use of these institutions plays an important role in the success of British public diplomacy.

The People's Republic of China

The People's Republic of China seeks to employ an effective public diplomacy. Despite the fact that "public diplomacy" as a concept is not widely used in the Chinese political literature, the Chinese

government pays special attention to it. China aims to present itself as "a country that is peaceful, developing, reliable, open to collaboration and able to serve its massive population." In order to buttress this image, China increased its activity in the biggest economic alliance, ASEAN. It acted as a mediator in the North Korean nuclear weapons crisis and used it as a PR strategy in the 2008 World Olympics. Moreover, China has efficiently used all possible diplomatic tools in calming its neighbours that are anxious about China's fast economic growth and political power.

China's historical and cultural richness is certainly one of the most prominent elements of Chinese public diplomacy.

Considering the single-party communist rule in the country, the difficulties of presenting a positive image of China are obvious. Human rights, freedom of the press, and the issues around Tibet and the Uyghur Autonomous Region demonstrate how fragile modern China's image can be. Having placed economic growth at the centre of its foreign policy and public diplomacy, the Chinese officials indirectly respond to the Western criticism that, "economic growth is not possible without internalizing liberal-democratic values."

Notwithstanding such criticisms, China's activities in the area of public diplomacy and propaganda are effective in the neighbouring territories. Despite the communist regime, China focuses on an image around economy, trade, and diplomacy, drawing from its traditional cultural resources. To this point, Chinese artists, literary figures, and especially Chinese cinema play a major role in establishing and popularizing a new image of China. Even before modern times, China has used its rich historical and cultural heritage to impress foreign visitors.¹⁶ China's historical and cultural richness is certainly one of the most prominent elements of Chinese public diplomacy.

The United States

With a long experience and a wide range of resources at its disposal for public diplomacy, the United States has carried out a comprehensive public diplomacy program in order to make itself a centre of attraction during and after the Cold War era. Known as the only superpower of the world, the U.S. has used countless strategies from diplomacy to cultural and artistic activities to display its diplomatic power in various parts of the world.¹⁷

From Europe to the Middle East, Latin America to Asia and Africa, the attitude towards the United States fluctuates between love and hate. On the one hand, the US is a country that offers

freedom and opportunities, is a leader in the areas of science and technology, appreciated for its flexible cultural and immigration policies, whose educational system is replicated and organizational skills applied in various areas. On the other hand, its crude individualism, consumption and entertainment habits, hegemonic foreign policy, military bases, and its disproportionate use of power in the international arena invite harsh criticisms. The public diplomacy activities aspire to encompass all these areas in building the American image.

The U.S. carries out its public diplomacy activities through five major institutions: Broadcasting Board of Governors (which produces all non-military programs such as the Voice of America), The State Department, the White House, USAID, and the Department of Defense. There is no organization that liaises between these institutions. However, all the activities are coordinated collaboratively during the planning and implementation processes.

The estimated amount of financial resources the US Government allocated for public diplomacy in 2008 was 1.6 billion USD. For the year 2003, this amount was around 1.3 billion USD.¹⁸ The estimated amount spent on diplomatic activities focusing on Muslim countries is about 400 million. This budget does not include such programs as the Fulbright university and research

scholarships, exchange programs and media campaigns.

Although the United States carries out the largest public diplomacy activities in the world, the main issues regarding its image and credibility continue to persist in the post-9/11 world. The US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mike Mullen, underlined the strong connection between policies and public diplomacy when he said that “unless we change our policies, no communication will prove successful.” This declaration confirms that successful public diplomacy is possible only through following policies deemed fair and acceptable by others.

Turkey, Identity and Public Diplomacy

The processes of making foreign policies in a globalised world undergo restructuring and generate new dynamics through public opinion, legitimacy, and acceptance. Turkish foreign policy is not exempt from these processes. Thus Turkish public diplomacy must take into consideration global factors as well as particular realities born out of its own story.

Turkish public diplomacy can be discussed around three major questions. Is public diplomacy a priority for Turkey? What are the conceptual outlines, content and priorities of the type of

public diplomacy Turkey should follow? Finally, what are the tools of Turkish public diplomacy?

Before answering these questions, a couple of points about the perception of Turkey must be stated. Negative perceptions about Turkey have come about not only due to propaganda activities against Turkey but also because of imprudent policies that Turkish governments have followed in the past. Extra-judicial killings, torture in prisons, following ill-advised policies on the Kurdish issue, human rights abuses, religious minorities, freedom of thought and belief and similar problems have all reinforced a highly negative image for Turkey both domestically and internationally. In some circles abroad, Turkey is presented as a country invading Cyprus, murdering Armenians, and executing military operations in neighbouring territories in the name of fighting against the PKK.

Turkey has come a long way in changing these perceptions. Apart from some diaspora communities, only a few circles still label Turkey as an invader, oppressor, denier, etc. From East to West, the world focuses on the social change and economic growth that Turkey is undergoing and their impact on foreign policy. In a world where the line between national and international politics is blurred, changing these misperceptions to a success story depends on a well-

advised domestic and foreign policy, and on explaining it effectively.

We live in a day and age in which image shapes reality. The image of a country and its policies, the choice of key words used in their analysis and the framework in which it is placed is more important than the objective reality of that country. The phrase “image is everything,” frequently used in the fashion industry to attract individuals, is indeed applicable to societies, territories and countries as well.

However, what really matters is not image but identity. The determinant of a community’s true qualities is not its appearance. This aspect undoubtedly holds considerable significance in forming perceptions.

Nonetheless, in the final analysis, what counts in the long term are the choices of identity and the political stances and policies that a nation develops through its identity. In this regard, public diplomacy is not a battle between images, a propaganda tool or window dressing.

Changing deep-rooted perceptions overnight is not possible. For instance, reshaping the Turkish-Ottoman image, or updating it in accordance with today’s realities is a difficult task. Despite the many efforts of the two-century

long experience of modernization, the new communication tools which globalization provides, the presence of almost five million Turks living in Europe and all the efforts Turkey has made to join the EU, and the images of the Turk, Ottoman, Muslim and Middle Easterners in many European countries are still shaped by perceptions inherited from the Middle Ages. As the German philosopher Gadamer points out, history lives in and through language, words, symbols, imageries, and stories. These factors continue to play a major role in Europe’s perception of Turkey.¹⁹

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On this point, the new dynamism and growth of Turkey as a regional power and a global actor must be communicated in an efficient

and realistic manner to national and international audiences. Strategically, this is as significant as following well-advised policies. The way the world reads and perceives these policies often overshadows reality. No country, regardless of its being small or big, open or closed, democratic or autocratic, eastern or western, can remain indifferent to the force of public opinion. The role of national and international public opinion increases everyday in determining matters regarding a large portion of world politics, their

implementation and positive or negative results, from economic policies to the use of energy resources, environmental issues to migration policies, and media to regional conflicts. Countries, international organizations, NGOs and other institutions that are aware of the power of public opinion use public diplomacy in an efficacious manner.

Turkey has been playing a major role in such international platforms as the G-20, the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, the European Council, NATO and OSCE, and has been at the centre of decision making processes regionally and internationally. Recent developments regarding Turkey's domestic and foreign affairs point to the birth of a unique "Turkish story" which increasingly draws the world's attention. This story reflects the multi-layered and dynamic qualities of the country. It is not possible to dwell on a single discourse or story to talk about Turkey's new identities, self image, vision, horizon, internal struggles, problems and resolutions, multi-dimensional social and political transformations, and successes and failures, joys and sorrows, thrills and disappointments.

Turkey's new identities offer multiplicity, diversity and distinctness simultaneously with the processes of multi-centred globalization and multiple modernities. This increases and diversifies the attention that Turkey receives. In the past ten years, Turkey's

increasingly respected profile and visibility in the international media, the proliferation of resident foreign journalists, multiplication of academic studies on Turkey, high-level visits and their impacts on the world public opinion, and many similar aspects have made the "story of Turkey" a significant one from east to west.²⁰ It is important to convey this dynamic process in national and international platforms. As a rising power, Turkey's success in the areas of strategic communication and public diplomacy is indispensable for the sustainability of its national interests, regional effectiveness, and global responsibilities. Taking these aspects into consideration, it is clear that public diplomacy is a strategic priority for Turkey.

The Instruments of Turkish Public Diplomacy

As mentioned above, public diplomacy entails the comprehensive communication of the new "Turkish story" effectively to the world. What determines the content of this activity is the construction of a new political and social imagination derived from the country's democratic background, its history and geography. The depth of Turkish foreign policy is in direct correlation with the transformation of this accumulation into a strategic value. Justice, legitimacy, equality

in representation, transparency, accountability, respect for differences, a virtuous society, moral and religious freedom, the protection of dignity and the reassurance of basic rights and freedoms under the constitution are the pillars of Turkey's new social imagery. These aspects not only make Turkey a centre of attraction for both East and West but also grant Turkish foreign policy and public diplomacy a competitive edge in international relations.

Turkey is perceived as a country that is able successfully to fuse traditional Islamic-Ottoman culture with socio-economic modernization.

In recent years, the debate concerning Turkey, which has been taken up and expanded by the international media, think tanks, economic platforms and academic studies, has taken shape around these values and extends beyond Turkey's borders, allowing for the formation of a comprehensive and more dynamic discourse on modernity and the global order. For instance, in relation to the tradition versus modernity debate, Turkey is perceived as a country that is able successfully to fuse traditional Islamic-Ottoman culture with socio-economic modernization. Turkish modernization is taken up in debates about classical modernity, multiple modernities, multiculturalism and

globalism, and this carries the discussions about Turkey beyond its borders. The relationship between tradition and modernity simultaneously includes the ideal of a balance between conservative values and modern means. Turkey is perceived as a country that transforms modernity through the preservation of its conservative values.

Turkey entered the 21st century with great dynamism; no longer finding the role ascribed to it as a peripheral element in the international system during the Cold War era sufficient, Turkey is gradually becoming a central force in the region. Instead of determining its national and regional priorities in relation to the structural preferences or tensions of a polarized world system, Turkey adopts a point of view that is based on its own geographical and historical background.

This deep change at the centre of Turkey's public diplomacy takes place within the internal dynamics and self-image of the country. The Turkish public no longer sees itself as a problematic and small footnote in the Euro-centric historical narrative. Like all societies that are able to produce their own values within history, Turkish society desires to see itself as an active agent in the formation of its own history. We have before us a subject that is able and courageous enough to intervene in the flow of history, not a subject that observes the course of history from a distance with apprehension.

The great transformation in the self-image of Turkey also determines how the internal problems of the country are dealt with. Most problems that were considered taboo or unresolvable are no longer conundrums. Despite the confusion that continues here and there, the questions over identity that are integral to Turkey are now being discussed openly and freely. Concepts such as religion, state, individual, society, community, identity, politics, culture, art, the Kurdish problem, the Alevi, non-Muslim citizens, democracy, human rights and transparency that constitute the “big Turkey debate” allow for an integration of local and global, individual and community, self and other, and provide space for new opportunities.

The new social capital and mobility in Turkey rejects models of globalization that deny cultural values and identity, and dismisses an identity formation and sense of belonging closed to the rest of the world.

This internal transformation and process of normalization is also visible in foreign policy. One of the milestones of the new Turkish imagination is the fact that Turkey is executing an effective foreign policy based on its historical

background. Turkey’s descent from the Ottoman experience results in genuine familiarity with a large geographic area extending from the Balkans to the Middle East. Consequently, the emotional and political distance between Turkey and the Arab world is diminishing, and those relations are normalizing after a long hiatus. Considering the checkered relationship between Turks and Arabs in much of the 20th century, Turkey’s rise to significance for the Arab world is a fascinating development. This is noted not only by Arabs, but also by Europeans, Russians, Americans, Africans, Japanese and other Asian nations.

Another important aspect of the new image of Turkey is the relations that surface along the axis of change and continuity. In Turkey, the relationships between the centre and the periphery are being re-defined. New social classes and elites are emerging, the gap between different social classes is closing and a multiplicity of experiences is beginning to co-exist. Subjects that were once considered taboo are now openly discussed. This social and political transformation does not completely do away with traditional values and relationships, but carries them to a new level, rendering them the new pillars of locally owned modernization. In this sense, continuity and change have co-existed within the course of Turkish modernism over the past few years.

Finally, we have the new dynamic relationship between locality and globalization. The new social capital and mobility in Turkey rejects models of globalization that deny cultural values and identity, and dismisses an identity formation and sense of belonging closed to the rest of the world. In the last decade under AK Party governments, actors of modernization and globalization in Turkey have diversified, and begun to include very different social groups. These actors are no longer drawn only from the bureaucratic elite or the managerial class. People from very different social networks and identities are now extremely active in this process. In terms of the debates around globalization versus locality, this is a unique condition.

This conceptual framework should be considered as the backdrop for the public diplomacy that Turkey is implementing via its various institutions. Many public institutions perform this role directly or indirectly. TİKA (Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency), Kızılay (The Turkish Red Crescent), the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TRT (The Turkish National TV), the Yunus Emre Foundation, the Agency for Investment and Support, the Press Information Office and other institutions are all active in public diplomacy through political, diplomatic, economic and cultural activities. In order to increase the effectiveness of

these efforts, these institutions need to have a well-coordinated relationship among themselves. This task is currently undertaken by the Office of Public Diplomacy under the Prime Minister's Office.

However, by definition, public diplomacy should not be undertaken solely by government institutions. NGOs, aid organizations, human rights organizations, foundations, universities, civilian platforms, media and other civil society actors have become indispensable to public diplomacy efforts. Parallel to the growing proximity between public institutions and non-governmental organizations, public institutions and NGOs should collaborate more in the field of public diplomacy.

The issues that we discussed briefly are the basis of the new concept of public diplomacy in Turkey. The success of Turkish foreign policy and public diplomacy depends upon the effective implementation of these goals, and on continued public diplomacy centred on future policies. The actors involved in this process should range from public institutions to non-governmental organizations, from business to academia, the arts, the media, the sciences, humanitarian aid organizations and human rights institutions. The effective communication of the new "Turkish story" as a rising power is only possible through the participation of these actors that function in the public, private and non-governmental sectors.

Endnotes

- 1 Bülent Aras and Hakan Fidan, “Turkey and Eurasia: Frontiers of a New Geographic Imagination”, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 40 (Fall 2009), pp. 195–217.
- 2 The Turkish academic community has yet to reach the much-desired level where it can build original concepts and theories pertaining to history, politics, sociology, international relations, philosophy or anthropology. Suffice it to say that this issue needs to be treated from an interdisciplinary perspective in a separate work. The following references are cited as examples focusing on this issue: İsmail Kara, *Bir Felsefe Dili Kurmak: Modern Felsefe ve Bilim Terimlerinin Türkiye’ye Girişi*, İstanbul, Dergah Yayınları, 2001; Cüneyt Kaya (ed.), *Türkiye’de/Türkçede Felsefe Üzerine Konuşmalar*, İstanbul, Küre Yayınları, 2009; and Ersel Aydınli, Erol Kurubaş, and Haluk Özdemir (eds.), *Yöntem, Kuram, Komplo: Türk Uluslararası İlişkiler Disiplininde Vizyon Arayışları*, Ankara, Asil Yayın Dağıtım, 2009.
- 3 İbrahim Kalın, “Debating Turkey in the Middle East: The Dawn of a New Geopolitical Imagination”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2009), pp. 83-96.
- 4 İbrahim Kalın, “US-Turkish Relations under Obama: Promise, Challenge and Opportunity in the 21st Century”, *Journal of Balkan and Near East Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2010), pp.93-108.
- 5 İbrahim Kalın, “Turkey and the Middle East: Ideology or Geopolitics?” *Private View*, No.13 (Autumn 2008), pp.26-35.
- 6 For full text of the decree and more information about Institute of Public Diplomacy activities, visit the official website of the Office of Public Diplomacy: <http://kdk.gov.tr/>.
- 7 Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Succeed in World Politics*, New York, Public Affairs, 2004.
- 8 For Joseph Nye and Richard Armitage’s smart power project, available at <http://www.csis.org/smartpower>.
- 9 For the concept of soft power in international literature and its meaning for Turkey, see the essays by Bilgin, Elis, Beng, Altunışık and Altunay in the special soft power issue of *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (April-June 2008).
- 10 Peter Krause and Stephen Van Evera, *Public Diplomacy: Ideas for the War of Ideas*, Discussion Paper 09-10, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, 2009.
- 11 Jarol B. Manheim, “The War of Images: Strategic Communication in the Gulf Conflict,” in Stanley A. Renshon (ed.), *The Political Psychology of the Gulf War. Leaders, Publics, and the Process of Conflict*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993, pp.155-171.
- 12 Jan Melissen, “The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice”, in Jan Melissen (ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005, pp. 3-25.
- 13 K.T. Paschke, K. T., *Report on the Special Inspection of 14 German Embassies in the Countries of the European Union*, Berlin, Auswärtiges Amt, 2002.
- 14 Anna Michalski, “The EU as a Soft Power: The Force of Persuasion”, in Jan Melissen (ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005, pp. 124-144.
- 15 Ali Fisher, “Four Seasons in One Day: The Crowded House of Public Diplomacy in the UK”, in Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, New York, Routledge, 2009, pp.251-261.

- 16 Gary Rawnsley, "China Talks Back: Public Diplomacy and Soft Power for the Chinese Century", in Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, New York, Routledge, 2009, p.284.
- 17 The U.S. has used numerous strategies for propaganda purposes during the Cold War. For a comprehensive study of this matter, see Frances Stonor Saunders, *Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, New York, The New Press, 1999.
- 18 Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye, "A Smart Funding Strategy?" 24 April 2009, available at www.csis.org.
- 19 For more on this, see İbrahim Kalın, *İslam ve Batı*, İstanbul, İSAM Yayınları, 2007.
- 20 For example, the number of registered journalists residing in Turkey in 2002 was 36, whereas this number has increased to 265 by 2009. The diversity in foreign media agencies by region and nation demonstrate the shared interest in various parts of the world. Moreover, the attention paid to national and local elections taking place in Turkey since 2002 confirms the increasing political profile of Turkey.