



AN ANALYSIS OF KOREAN-TURKISH RELATIONS: RISING TRADE PARTNERSHIP AND DEEPENING INTEGRATION*

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Abstract

South Korea and Turkey have long been friendly countries over the past six decades. During the 1950s, the participation of Turkish troops in the Korean War led to the formation of an alliance between the two countries. This article focuses on the history of Korea-Turkey relations. This relationship can be divided into three stages at twenty-year intervals. The first stage (1950-1970) deals with military-based relations. Two major aspects in this section are discussed: the participation of Turkish troops in the Korean War and the presence of Turkish troops in the Korean peninsula after the Korean War. The second stage (1970-1990) sets out to outline the process of founding cooperation. This part briefly examines the two countries' endeavors to lay an institutional arrangement for bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade and investment. The last stage (1990-2010) covers their deepening and diversifying relations. This section emphasizes the broadening progress in other fields of bilateral relations including political, cultural, and social exchanges on the basis of close economic ties. In the last part, this study ends with concluding remarks and suggests a future-oriented strategic partnership that contains strategic depth.

Keywords: *Foreign Policy Analysis, Korea-Turkey Relations, Korean War, Diplomacy, Foreign Trade*

INTRODUCTION

South Korea and Turkey are two countries geographically far apart. However, Turkey retains a special relationship with Korea since the participation of Turkish troops in the 1950-1953 Korean War. This provides

* Separation of Korea occurred in 1945 following the end of World War II. However, Korea mentioned in the article represents solely South Korea.

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a strong impetus to friendly ties between the two countries. For this reason, despite the geographical distance of both countries, their people feel close to one another. It is also why Korea and Turkey are called two countries that are so far yet so close.¹

Similar to Korea being located almost at the same latitude of 33-42 degrees, both Korea and Turkey topographically have important strategic positions. With Korea in the far east of Asia and Turkey in the far west, they serve as natural boundary markers on the Asian continent.

After the government of the Republic of Korea was proclaimed to the world on August 15, 1948, Turkey was the tenth country to recognize the Korean government in 1949 as the only legitimate government on the Korean peninsula, following the United States, United Kingdom, France, Spain, and Germany, and others quickly establishing diplomatic relations with Korea. Turkey was the third country to have a permanent diplomatic mission at the ambassadorial level with Korea, after the United States and Taiwan. In the meantime, Korea had established permanent diplomatic missions in France, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines at the ministerial level. Taking this into account, Korea established its seventh diplomatic mission in Turkey. This reflected how the Korean government put greater emphasis on Turkey after the Korean War.

2007 was the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Korea and Turkey, and 2010 marks the 60th anniversary of the participation of Turkish troops in the Korean War, the same year it broke out. The Republic of Turkey which was established after World War I in 1923 and the Republic of Korea which was established after World War II in 1948 have developed their relations in various areas such as politics, economy, military, and culture whilst pursuing universal ideals, namely peace, freedom, welfare, and human rights. *Hwangap* in Korea marks the end and the beginning of a sixty-year life cycle, and the relation between Korea and Turkey has reached its *Hwangap*. Now it is time to study the history of relations spanning the last sixty years, examine yet another sixty-year Korea-Turkey relationship to be embedded in history, and seek a new direction geographically and functionally to expand the relations.

1 Historically, the relations between Korean tribes and the Hsiung-nu and later Tūjué – a group of nomadic tribes from the steppes of northern Asia – are unusual. In the ancient period, the Hsiung-nu were neighbors in ancient Joseon or Gojoseon, which is the oldest kingdom of Korea. Because Koreans and Turkic people originated from Central Asia, there are many morphological similarities between Korean and Turkish languages. Turkish like Korean is linguistically affiliated with the Altaic language family. The ancient Turkic language utilized the runic script used by Göktürk Empire (552-945), and is the oldest written language of the Altaic family. Modern Turkish is a branch of such Turkic languages. With the Turkish and Korean languages belonging to similar groups, nationals of both countries retained similarities in their ways of thinking, traditional customs, and practices.

This article focuses on the sixty-year chronological history of Korea-Turkey relations. This relationship can be divided into three stages at twenty-year intervals. The first stage (1950-1970) deals with military-based relations. Two major aspects in this section are discussed: the participation of Turkish troops in the Korean War and the presence of Turkish troops in the Korean peninsula after the Korean War. The second stage (1970-1990) sets out to outline the process of founding cooperation. This part briefly examines the two countries' endeavors to establish an institutional arrangement for bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade and investment. The last stage (1990-2010) covers their deepening and diversifying relations. This section emphasizes the broadening progress in other fields of bilateral relations including political, cultural, and social exchanges on the basis of close economic ties. In the last part, this study ends with concluding remarks and suggests a future-oriented strategic partnership that contains strategic depth.

MILITARY-ORIENTED RELATIONS (1950-1970)

The Participation of Turkish Troops in the Korean War

Supposing the periods of the Huns and Gojoseon, and the Göktürks and Goguryeo were when the first contacts between Koreans and Turkic people occurred, the recent contacts between the two groups of people took place in the 1950s. Following a request for Turkish ground troops from the U.N. Secretary General in mid-July, the Turkish National Assembly voted unanimously to dispatch troops. During the three years of the Korean War, 14,936 Turkish soldiers took part. Among them numerous soldiers were injured or went missing, including 741 killed in the battle. The Turkish army made a significant contribution in the battles of Kunuri and Kumyangjangni, and spilled blood for freedom and democracy of Korea.²

As the news of Turkish troops being deployed in Korean War spread through the radio and newspapers, the Turkish people got to know about Korea. The Turks, having an Islamic faith, saw people fighting in the same war as brothers, and came to call Koreans as their "brothers." The Turks' perspective on Koreans had surpassed simply being an ally to a "brother country." Turkish veterans of the Korean War were called "Koreli" (Korean) instead of their names when they returned.³ The joining of forces in the Korean War not only became the cornerstone for the relations of both countries, but also an important element in building friendly relations between the two governments.

2 *The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War Vol.4*, the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea, 1973, p. 452.

3 Heechul Lee, *Türkiye-Kore İlişkileri: 1950-1960*, Gazi University, Ankara, Unpublished MA Thesis, 1988, pp. 20-21.

The 1950s included the joining of the Turkish army in the Korean War and an era of establishing diplomatic relations. After the Korean War, both countries established diplomatic relations in March 1957. With the conclusion of diplomatic relations, the first Korean Ambassador to Turkey Chung Il-Kwon was assigned to Ankara on June of the same year. The first Turkish Ambassador to Korea Dr. Kamil Idil then assumed his position in November. The next year in April 1958, Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes's official visit to Korea, following an invitation from Korean President Syngman Rhee, became the springboard for the official development of bilateral relations. In addition, the Turkish media continued reporting news about Korea from 1953, when the Korean War ended with a call for a ceasefire, until 1960, reminding Turks of Korea.⁴

The Presence of Turkish Troops in Korea: A Crucial Diplomatic Task

When the Korean War was over, the issue of Turkish troops remaining in Korea became a crucial matter for Korea and the United States. By the late 1960s, all forces except the U.S., Turkey, and Thailand had evacuated. Turkey and Thailand each kept a squadron of troops stationed. The Turkish and Thai troops remained as a symbol of the United Nations Command. For Korea, which carried out a strict anti-communist policy, the concern regarding an evacuation of Turkish and Thai forces was essential to both domestic and international diplomatic tasks, especially for the Turkish soldiers who fought with their legendary bravery and spirit of sacrifice. The matter of Turkish soldiers being deployed in Korea is noteworthy in the sixty-year development of Korea and Turkey relations.⁵

During the Korean War, the Turkish government dispatched one brigade (5,086 soldiers) as part of a U.N. force and one brigade affiliated with the U.N. was constantly stationed in Korea each year. Immediately after the military coup in May 1960, the Turkish military brought up the question of replacing its brigade forces in June. The Turkish government announced a phased withdrawal plan of troops from Korea until 1962. However, upon the serious requests of the Korean and U.S. governments, Turkish troops remained in Korea in the form of agreeing to extensions of the Turkish troops' presence on a yearly basis. Finally, the Turkish government went forward with its plan to scale its brigade all the way down to a company and then an honor guard. Even though the Turkish honor guard consisted of only eleven members, it was a great symbol of the U.N. Command in Korea. The

4 Ibid., pp. 21-22.

5 Heechul Lee, *Korea-Turkey Relation on the Turkish Troops' Withdrawal from Korea* (Korean), Seoul, Foreign Relations, April 2008, Korean Council on Foreign Relations, pp. 120-121.

Turkish honor guard was eventually withdrawn from Korea in June 1971, leaving only two liaison officers 21 years after Turkish troops were sent to the Korean War.⁶

The governments of Korea and the U.S. did not spare any means of diplomatic efforts to maintain a Turkish military presence in Korea. They had a general awareness that the Turkish troops' withdrawal was viewed as a serious threat to the peace and security of the free world, which opposed the communist camp. They understood that the Turkish troops' withdrawal, in turn, could lead to Thai soldiers withdrawing from Korea which would make it very difficult to maintain the U.N. Command in Korea. In this context, they also concluded that the Turkish forces' presence in Korea was essential not only to build up a united front of anti-communism but also to represent the force of the U.N. Command in Korea. In that aspect, the question of whether the symbolic meaning of the Turkish presence in Korea represented the U.N. Command after other member countries of the U.N. withdrew their combat units remained a very important issue for both Korea and the U.S. Under such circumstances, it was assumed that the Turkish withdrawal was an unavoidable measure in the mood of reconciliation regarding the tension between the East and West.⁷

PREPARING THE FOUNDATION OF COOPERATION (1970-1990)

During the 1970s, after the Turkish troops withdrew from Korea, the focus of exchange moved from military to economy and commerce. In 1971, a sister city agreement was reached between Seoul and Ankara, and consecutive agreements such as the cultural agreement in 1974, agreement on trade promotion and economic technical cooperation in 1977, and air service agreement in 1979 laid out a foundation for the economic and personal exchange for both countries. The Korea Trade Center or KOTRA office in Istanbul was also opened in 1974. In particular, a Korean Park was built in Ankara in August 1971, following the establishment of Seoul and Ankara as sister cities. In November 1973, the Korean War Memorial Monument was erected in the compound of the Korean Park. This monument became a symbolic representation of the friendly bonds of both countries.

In the following years after the war, the official visits of Turkish President Kenan Evren to Korea in December 1982,⁸ and the visit of Prime Minister

6 Hee-soo Lee, *İslam ve Türk Kültürünün Uzak Doğu'ya Yayılması*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1988), p. 291; *Facts about Turkey*, (Korean), Seoul, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Republic of Korea, 2010, p.69.

7 Heechul Lee, *Korea-Turkey Relation on the Turkish Troops' Withdrawal from Korea* (Korean), pp. 120-127.

8 Turkish President Kenan Evren's state visit to Korea was doubly significant. It was

Turgut Özal on November 1986, added important momentum to advancing the relations of the two countries. When Lieutenant Major Evren worked in the Turkish Ninth Brigade staff between 1958 and 1959, he was especially concerned with the postwar development of Korea. Right after being elected President, he decided to visit Korea in order to advance the solid, amicable alliance established during the Korean War to a relationship of economic cooperation.⁹ Prime Minister Özal, who visited Korea in 1986, had experienced working for the World Bank and enforced a policy to change Turkey's economic structure to a free-market economy. He was especially concerned with Korea's path to economic development. This marked the change of the relationship between the two countries from military-oriented to economic cooperation.

In the 1980s, Turkey's general opinion was that the economic and trade relations with Korea had to be developed. With President Kenan Evren's visit to Korea, Turkey found a new curiosity for the Far East countries and gave great importance to economic cooperation with Korea after Korea's accelerated economic growth. Voices were raised stressing the need to learn export-oriented industrialization and development strategies, which were the driving force of Korea's economic growth. Turkey had chosen Korea's economic model as its model and called it the "Korea Model."¹⁰ During this time, many visits occurred from the Turkish government and from businesses to learn about Korea's economic development.

In order to actualize the cooperation according to the agreement on trade promotion and economic technical cooperation that was signed in 1977, the attempts to reinforce the economic cooperation at the government level began with the first Korea-Turkey Joint Economic Committee meeting in Ankara in 1981. Coincidentally, at the private level, the Korea-Turkey Business Council was established in 1987 and the first meeting was held in Istanbul in June 1989. The reason that both countries became interested in economic cooperation at that time was because of the significance of a complementary nature of the economic development in both economies.¹¹ During this period, Korea was searching for a new market. On the other hand, Turkey dis-

the first visit to Korea by a Turkish President. Besides, it provided President Evren with a renewed recollection of his staying in Korea as staff of the Turkish brigade in Korea. See, "New Chapter in Korean-Turkish Ties", *Diplomacy*, 25 January 1983, Seoul, p. 4.

9 Sang-ki Paik, *Half a Century with Turkish People* (Korean), Seoul, Sam-kwa-ggum (Life and Dream), 2007, p. 181.

10 Veysi Seviğ, "Güney Kore Modeli (South Korea Model)", *Dünya*, 15 September 1984; and "Ankara Applying Seoul Model", *Turkish Daily News*, 12 December 1986.

11 Please see for a complementary nature of the economy between Turkey and Korea, Hang Koo Lee and Jeong Cheol Han (Ed.), *New Opportunities for a Strategic Partnership between Korea and Turkey*, (Seoul: November 1999).

continued the import substitution industrialization strategy that was carried out since the 1970s, and instead implemented the export promotion strategy in 1980s, along with the establishment of the Undersecretariat of Trade. As a result, Turkey established an institutional framework for export promotion and overseas business activities.¹²

In the mid-1980s, Korean companies began showing an interest in investing in Turkey. Turkey's large population and domestic market, being gateway to Europe and the Middle East, the export promotion policy for Turkish businesses, and the Turkish government's initiative to attract foreign investments were all favorable to Korean entrepreneurs. The first investment from a Korean business in Turkey was realized in 1987, when Goldstar created a joint investment company with Vestel and began manufacturing microwaves and color TVs at a factory in Manisa in June 1988. In the same year, Samsung Electronics collaborated with Tatus Holding and manufactured color TVs and videos at a factory in Izmir. Beginning with Samsung Electronics in December 1984, and followed by LG Electronics, Hyundai, Daewoo, Samsung, Sunkyung, etc., most of Korea's main conglomerates had opened branch offices in Turkey in the 1980s. Hyundai Motors began to export their automobiles to Turkey in 1990, and constructed an automobile factory in Izmit in November 1995, consequently improving the image of Korean goods and products in Turkey.¹³

EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF COOPERATION (1990-2010)

Trade and Investment

Korea and Turkey have maintained good economic relations for decades. For Turkey, Korea is its second largest trade partner after China in the Far East.¹⁴ When Turkey began announcing statistics regarding trade with Korea in 1965, the trade was only \$8,000 and shortly after it increased to \$59,000 in 1970; \$63.19 million in 1980; \$514.8 million in 1990, and soared to \$1.265 billion in 2000. Looking at the statistics of the two countries' trade volume up until 2007, the highest record both had ever achieved, their trade steadily increased. By then, it had grown to approximately three times the level of 2000. Korea's trade surplus is steadily on the rise as well. In 2007,

12 Heechul Lee, *History of Ottoman Empire and Turkey* (Korean), (Seoul: Pyenegi, 2001), pp. 220-221.

13 Heechul Lee, *Türkiye-Kore İlişkileri (Turkey-Korea Relations): 1950-1960*, pp.70-71.

14 Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with South Korea, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, 22 May 2010, (www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-south-korea.en.mfa)

two-way trade between Korea and Turkey amounted to \$4.3 billion, with Korea exporting \$4.08 billion and importing \$280 million, reaching its highest record ever. However, during 2008 and 2009, affected by the global economic recession especially in 2009, Korea's exports to Turkey experienced drastic decline. Despite the economic slump, Turkey's export level to Korea preserved an increasing trend and provided some relief for the period's trade imbalance. Until the early 1990s, Korea and Turkey had maintained a trade balance. However, from 1993 onward, the balance of trade between Korea and Turkey had begun to tilt in Korea's favor. The root of the trade imbalance between Korea and Turkey was their industrial structures, in which Korea, a country that had an advanced components and materials industry, was exporting raw materials, semi-processed goods, and intermediate products, needed in industrial production through which Turkey then exported to other countries.

Korea's Trade with Turkey

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Exp.	Amount (1,000 USD)	697,085	865,920	1,374,736	2,356,221	2,782,025	3,035,803	4,087,436	3,772,570	2,660,688	3,752,906
	Growth Rate	-42.2	24.2	58.8	71.4	18.1	9.1	34.6	-7.7	-29.5	41.1
Imp.	Amount (1,000 USD)	130,332	125,342	78,126	104,044	127,408	194,333	281,570	361,913	434,435	516,290
	Growth Rate	156.5	-3.8	-37.7	33.2	22.5	52.5	44.9	28.5	20.0	18.8

Source: The Korea International Trade Association

Korean conglomerates' expansions into Turkey increased rapidly after the signing of an agreement for the reciprocal promotion and protection of investment, which was signed in May 1991, in order to remove obstacles in the trade between the two countries. As of 2010, Korea's investment in Turkey is worth \$510 million. Korea's investment in Turkey, which was \$19 million in 1991, displayed a 26-fold increase in twenty years,¹⁵ but is a modest increase compared to the complementary industrial structure of the two economies and the economic power of both countries. Korea's major firms such as Hyundai Motors, Hyundai Rotem, LG Electronics, KT&G, and POSCO invested in Turkey, and other leading businesses are planning on building factories and taking part in large-scale projects. In particular,

15 Korea's direct investment makes it the 11th largest investor in Turkey. Currently, 114 Korean companies operate in various cities, with a special interest in sectors such as production, tourism, transportation, and communication.

Korean entrepreneurs focus their investment on manufacturing, such as steel, electronics, and automobiles instead of consumer and service areas. In this respect, the fact that as a result Korea is contributing to Turkey's economic growth cannot be disregarded. The investment relations consist of one-sided investment by Korea in Turkey, while Turkey's investment in Korea is valued at merely \$7 million. Still, as Korea's technological prowess became known to the Turkish business community, the interest by Turkish companies in joint ventures with Korean firms is increasing.

Meanwhile, the two countries' traditional relations in military cooperation are advancing to defense industry cooperation, an aspect of high technology industries. The defense industry cooperation, which became a subject of discussion in the 1980s, provided the opportunity to advance in new dimensions, beginning with the joint manufacturing of self-propelled howitzers (Firtina in Turkish).¹⁶ Both Korea and Turkey have defense systems based on U.S. and NATO standards, facilitating their defense cooperation. The defense industry relations between the two countries have increased in recent years. In deals worth billions of dollars, Korean firms lead several Turkish defense programs, including the manufacturing of howitzers and training aircraft. At the same time, a Korean company is providing technology transfer for Turkey's efforts to build a main battle tank.¹⁷ The cooperation between the two countries in the defense industry is highly expected to improve reciprocally, based on Korea's technical skills and Turkey's manufacturing know-how, and both countries' marketing capabilities. Such cooperation is also happening in private sectors apart from the defense industry. Beginning with the joint air conditioner factory between LG and Arçelik in 2000, and the Eurotem factory by Hyundai Rotem and Turkish State Railways (TCDD) in 2007, the economic cooperation between both countries went on to comprise nationally strategic projects, the partnership allowing for discussions regarding cooperation in large-scale national projects.

People-to-People Exchanges

There are many potential cooperation areas related to culture due to the cultural similarities in both countries, including the Korean and Turkish languages belonging to the Altai family. After the cultural agreement signed in August 1972, a Turkish Department was established at the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Korea and a Department of Korean Language and Letters was established at Ankara University in February 1989. These

16 "Korea and Turkey are Developing as a Partner of Technology Cooperation" (Korean), *Defense Daily*, Seoul, 4 August 2008; Ümit Enginsoy, "Turkey and Korea Aim to up Business", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 13 April 2010.

17 Ümit Enginsoy, "Turkey, S. Korea to Mark War's 60th Year", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 18 May 2010.

two different language departments both play a significant role in enhancing both countries' academic and people-to-people exchanges. Another department of Korean Languages and Letters was also established at Erciyes University in September 2003, in Kayseri, a city located in central Turkey.

On the basis of the close economic ties, the number of Koreans visiting Turkey is also disclosing an increasing trend. Although only 22,000 Koreans traveled to Turkey in 2000, the number increased to 135,000 in 2007, increasing five-fold compared to 2000 in less than a decade. The number of visitors decreased in 2008 and 2009 compared to 2007 due to the economic crisis, but is expected to increase after 2010. On the other hand, the number of Turkish nationals traveling Korea was 8,900 in 2005 and increased to 12,500 in 2008. Despite the global economic crisis, the number of travelers in 2009 was similar to that of 2008, suggesting the potential number of Turkish visitors to Korea may increase in the coming future.

The Number of Visitors of Korea-Turkey

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Koreans to Turkey	22,266	29,274	42,574	46,405	56,926	91,597	108,140	135,124	119,500	89,148	123,315
Turkish Citizens to Korea	5,891	6,227	10,325	7,987	8,645	8,976	8,969	11,625	12,574	12,409	16,320

Source: Korea Tourism Organization, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Turkey

Meanwhile, in May 2006, Korean Air began a regular route to and from Incheon to Istanbul, and since October 2009, Asian Airlines has operated joint flights through code-sharing with Turkish Airlines. The regular services from both countries play a large role in the vitalization of human and material exchange by shortening the geographical distance.

In the field of culture, given their traditional cultural similarities, the cultural phenomenon "Korea Wave" or Korean fever is now spreading in Turkey. Inspired by the Korean historical movies and TV dramas such as *Dae Jang Geum*, which have been aired through state-run or private broadcasting stations, the avid fans of Korean culture have organized dozens of online fan groups. They love Korean films, TV dramas, music, cuisine, fashion, and Korean brands, and some operate a website¹⁸ that is filled with information on Korean culture and entertainment. The Korean Wave has made a significant impact on Turkey and is influencing young Turkish people. This

18 For instance see, (<http://www.korea-fans.com/>).

movement of pro-Korean sentiment is expected to lay the foundation for continuous and comprehensive cultural exchanges, and to promote cooperation and forge closer bonds between the two nations.

High-Level Diplomacy

In the history of the relations between Korea and Turkey, there were two historical events that brought the two people together. One event was the earthquake in Istanbul and Izmit in August 1997. The concern of Korean people was raised when a voluntary organization named “People Who Share Turkey’s Suffering,” which was made up of leading people from all parts of Korean society, began raising funds when *Dong-A Ilbo*, Korea’s leading newspaper, initiated a campaign to aid Turkey.¹⁹ With reports of the earthquake-stricken area, rescue activities, forgotten stories on the Korean War alongside news stories on Turkey, all became a chance to newly recognize an old ally, Turkey. Another event was the 2002 World Cup, which was co-hosted between Korea and Japan. During the 2002 World Cup, the Korean people ardently cheered for Turkey, and the support from the Korean people at the semi-finals between Korea and Turkey and the manner of encouragement between the players after the game especially showed the world how deep the friendly relations between Korea and Turkey are.²⁰ Amidst more forging of natural affinity between the two nations at the World Cup, the Korean President paid a visit to Turkey in April 2005, consolidating half a century between the two countries. It had been 48 years since a Korean President officially visited Turkey, the first time since the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Above all, the active visits of high-level dignitaries between the two countries since 2002 are worth special mention. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made a visit to Korea and had a summit meeting with the Korean President Roh Moo-hyun in February 2004. Subsequently, Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon²¹ officially visited Turkey in February in the same year. Though Korean Foreign Minister Hong Soon-young

19 After the earthquake disaster in Turkey in 1999, The *Dong-A Ilbo* Newspaper started a campaign as of 24 August 1999; to help and provide humanitarian assistance to Turkey and donated around US\$ 1 million in cash and relief supplies for earthquake victims. See “10th Anniversary of Earthquake Aid”, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 25 August 2009.

20 The friendship between the two countries was displayed very vividly during the 2002 World Cup in Korea. The behavior of both sportsman and spectators of Turkey and Korea during and after the 3rd place march in Daegu, Korea was exemplary in terms of friendship, fair play, and sportsmanship. Turkey’s Political Relations with Republic of Korea, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, 5 May 2010, (www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-republic-of-korea.en.mfa)

21 Ban Ki-moon is the eighth and current Secretary General of the United Nations, after succeeding Kofi Annan in 2007. Before becoming Secretary-General, Ban was a career diplomat and Foreign Minister of Korea.

visited Istanbul in order to participate in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) meeting, Ban Ki-moon's visit to Turkey was a historic event in that it registered the first official visit to Ankara, Turkey's capital, by the head of Korea's foreign diplomacy. This visit was realized 47 years after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Korea and Turkey.

In 2005 alone, two more important visits from Korea to Turkey were carried out; Korean President Roh Moo-hyun's visit in April and Mayor of Seoul Lee Myung-bak's²² visit in June. President Roh had a summit meeting with Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer during his visit to Turkey from April 14 to 17, 2005. This was the first state visit from Korea since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1957. The two leaders strengthened the friendly relations and formed the basis to promote exchanges between the two nations by concluding the Treaty on Tourism and agreeing to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Korea-Turkey diplomatic relations in 2007.²³ In the following years, in December 2008, Korean Prime Minister Han Seung-soo's visit to Turkey was followed by the visit of the Korean National Assembly Speaker in January 2009. In other words, high-level official Korean visits to Turkey were continued in recent years.

More specifically, Turkish President Abdullah Gül's visit to Korea during June 14-16, 2010 has a special meaning for the bolstering of bilateral relations as Korea marks the 60th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25. The Turkish leader visited Korea for a three-day trip and it was his first visit to Korea since taking office in 2007.²⁴

The areas of cooperation between the two countries have been gradually diversifying. The Joint Economic Committee Meeting was one of the major mechanisms between the two governments. However, in recent years the two governments held several meetings in various spheres such as policy consultation meeting and consular affairs. Both countries are expanding their cooperation areas from transportation, construction, shipping, and shipbuilding to energy and the defense industry, beyond the plain trade of goods. In parallel, the width of cooperation and exchanges is growing in all fields of politics, economy, culture, military, etc. In the largest effort, Korea is seeking to build Turkey's second nuclear power plant in the Black Sea province of Sinop. Korea Electric Power or KEPCO, Korea's state-run power utility, signed in March 2010 a cooperation protocol or preliminary agreement with

22 Lee Myung-bak has been the 17th President of Republic of Korea since February 25, 2008. Prior to his Presidency, he was the CEO of Hyundai Engineering and Construction, and the Mayor of Seoul.

23 *2006 Diplomatic White Paper*, Ministry Foreign Affairs and Trade, Seoul, p. 89.

24 Na Jeong-ju, "South Korea, Turkey Agree to Boost Ties", *Korea Times*, 15 June 2010.

Ankara for Turkey's second planned nuclear power plant project.²⁵ Most recently, during the Turkish President's visit to Korea in June 2010, the two governments signed a memorandum of understanding to cooperate for the building of two nuclear power plants in Turkey's northern region.²⁶

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

Korea-Turkey relations are entering a new orbit by evolving through the rise of national strength and economic growth in both countries. The Korea-Turkey Business Forum was successfully held at the Çırağan Palace Hotel in Istanbul in March 2010 and was attended by key members, including Prime Minister Erdoğan, of the governments and heads of the leading conglomerates of both countries. The Korea-Turkey Business Forum was a significant point in the search for a new direction of cooperation for the next sixty years, based on the past sixty years of friendly relations. As discussed in the Business Forum, the cooperation between Korea and Turkey has been further deepening in various areas, such as the defense industry, nuclear power plants, construction, IT, shipbuilding, etc. In line with such growing ties, negotiations over a free trade agreement are underway, which if implemented, would greatly contribute to boosting their ties.²⁷

The rapid growth of emerging economies, including Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), is changing the landscape of international politics and economy at a fast rate. Also, new national security threats against peace and security, development, human rights, environment, disarmament, nonproliferation, etc. are surfacing in the post-Cold War era. Among the global changes, Korea-Turkey relations, which play important roles, will also change and advance rapidly. In order to enhance their mutually beneficial partnership, both countries should actively cooperate in not only bilateral issues but also in the global issues.

Turkey is an important country both geographically and strategically, because it is the transition point for energy projects in the area. Furthermore, because of its geographical location, Turkey is playing its important role in a series of issues that currently preoccupy the international community. Turkey, as a member of G-20, is actively participating in the ranks of in-

25 Ümit Enginsoy, "Turkey, S. Korea to Mark War's 60th Year", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 18 May 2010.

26 Na Jeong-ju, "South Korea, Turkey Agree to Boost Ties", *Korea Times*, 15 June 2010.

27 Taking into consideration the geographical location of Turkey which links Europe and Asia, an FTA with Turkey could serve as a springboard for Korea, helping to create an investment base in the region, secure energy resources in Central Asia and contribute bilateral trade and investment. See, *2009 Diplomatic White Paper*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Seoul, p. 130.

ternational cooperation for solutions to the global economic crisis and the reorganization of economic order, and has the goal of standing as one of the world's ten largest economies by 2023. Korea's international role and contribution will become larger as the host nation for the G-20 Summit in 2010 and the Nuclear Security Summit in 2012, with rising international prestige and under the government policy aiming for Global Korea.²⁸ Now that Korea and Turkey are facing a chance to fully grow in quantity and quality, they should devote the efforts to improve each other's strategic value. This is because a future-oriented strategic partnership is possible between the two countries considering the similarities in history and culture, the complementary nature of both economies' structures, intimacy between both countries' people, and the visions of both governments. The bilateral cooperation will be more important than ever in the framework of multilateral diplomacy in dealing with the global economy, trade, and other international issues as well. That is why the two countries have to try to establish methods of cooperation that contain strategic depth.

28 Global Korea represents that Republic of Korea not only cooperates actively, but also offers solution for dealing with common issues facing the world community. It implies a global actor with broad horizons that engages proactively with the international community in the service of peace and development in the world. Cheong Wa Dae, *Global Korea: The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Korea*, Office of the President, Seoul, June 2009, p. 12.

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