

TURKEY'S DILEMMA AND STRATEGIC STABILITY¹

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Introduction

This article deals with Turkey's International Relations and the impact of its choices in the International System (IS) in this new era, marked by the return of competition between land powers (Visentini 2021). It is important to set forth, for the purposes of this analysis, that the Turkish quandary is intentionally reduced to two possible lines of conduct — viewed here as pure ideal types (Mills and Geerth 1982, 78). They are defined as being between adherence to revolutionary behavior, and association with the institutions of the Emerging Industrial Axis (Visentini 2019, 14; Vizontini 1995, 261)⁴. In

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⁴ Emerging Industrial Axis and Agrarian, Mineral and Peripheral Demographic Axis — The first refers to the semi-periphery and China; includes Russia, Turkey, Iran, India, Brazil, and eventually South Africa. The second, as the name suggests, peripheral countries (VISENTINI, 2019, p. 11). Originally these two axes were called the South-South and South-East Axis. It was a construct designed to describe Brazil's international insertion around three vectors: the South-South, South-North and South-East Axes. And, in this way, describe the diplomatic bargaining of the Vargas (1951-54), Kubitschek (1956-61), Quadros (1961) and Goulart (1961-64) governments with the aim of promoting development. Industrialization “could only be implemented

relation to strategic stability, it should be noted that this is understood as the set of elements that conform the 'rules' of the game within the scope of a multipolar world⁵.

This dilemma is faced by Turkey's trajectory since the end of the Ottoman Empire, in an effort that is characterized as historical explanation, in the terms proposed by Van Evera (2002, 106). The underlying question is: how will Turkey's international inclusion take place? The hypothesis in the present text is that, unlike other times, when Turkey found itself subjugated by international constraints, this time it can choose its form of inclusion in the IS.

This choice will arise through the Foreign Policy that Turkey will adopt in the following years — as Erdogan has already announced his retirement from public life in 2028 (Reuters 2024). Naturally, this study cannot answer what Turkey will choose. Nevertheless, it was possible to determine that Turkey's oscillation can be measured empirically based on three conditions: (01) predominance of balance, engagement or bargain; (02) coercion or adherence to institutions; (03) a logic guided by strict or institutional territorialism.

The social relevance of this analytical effort is justified by the growing global protagonism shown by Turkey. Furthermore, it is a country that maintains defense cooperation agreements with Brazil for twenty years. In 2003, the Agreement on Cooperation in Defense Related Matter (Brazil 2003) was signed, which addresses the exchange of experiences and knowledge, in the civil and military sphere, for topics related to National Defense. In 2010, the cooperation between Brazil and Turkey increased with a Strategic

by obtaining relative autonomy from the USA. To this end, it was necessary to introduce into Brazilian foreign policy the horizontal South-South multilaterality, increasing relations with Latin America and the Afro-Asian world. At the same time, the possible benefits were taken from a 'diagonal' South-East multilaterality, through cooperation with socialist countries" (VIZENTINI, 1995, p. 261). Despite being about Brazil's Foreign Policy, it was considered convenient to mention the original axes given that in the past as now, in the case of Brazil or Turkey, industrial development is central to their international insertion.

5 Strategic Stability — This is a topic extensively explored within the scope of bipolarity. It concerned the correlation of nuclear and conventional forces and wars on the periphery (WALTZ 1964, p. 882-887). But which, within the scope of a multipolar world, have not yet been adequately explored in literature. Immediately, it can be seen that, given the asymmetry of capabilities between the Great Powers, it is counterproductive to consider it in exclusively military terms. In this way, a holistic approach is proposed that, in addition to military themes, also includes Political Economy — insertion in the Fourth Industrial Revolution and infrastructure; and multilateral Political Institutions — integration processes and consultation forums (LOPES, 2024, p. 13).

Partnership Action Plan (Brazil 2010). Also, recently, in March 2022, an Agreement on Defense Industry Cooperation was signed (Brazil 2022). Therefore, the relationship is based on strategic themes and, thus, can affect the national insertion of both countries.

This bias expresses itself also in the methodological choices. As Robert Cox highlighted, every “Theory is always for someone and for some purpose. All theories have a perspective” (Cox 1981, 128). In short, theories are made according to the object and purpose of each research - they must adjust to reality, and not the other way around. Due to this understanding, we sought to operationalize and to make compatible different, and even competing, approaches to International Relations (IR) theories.

The starting point was finding the ‘place’ of Turkey’s ‘choice’ and its impact on the IS. Pursuant to this, we resorted to the “dialectical synthesis” proposed by Wendt, which seeks to correlate Agent (Units) and Structure (SI). In this manner, we “overcome the subordination of one to another” (Wendt 1987, 356), based either on the freedom of the agent, or on the inexorability of the conditioning, which is established by the structure. It is about recognizing that under certain circumstances, agents can modify structures. Additionally, the author highlights that the actor’s course of action will be informed by the perception of their trajectory, identity or interests, as well as that of their counterparts, partners and competitors (Wendt 2014, 227). This last understanding justifies the approach of historical explanation adopted herein.

From the theory of realism (structural and offensive) we take these ideas: (a) the IS is anarchic (Mearsheimer 2007, 35); (b) relationships are regulated through capabilities (Waltz 1979, 99, 181); and (c) balancing is the privileged way in which interactions occur. In this regard, it should be pointed that Turkey is NATO’s largest Land Force in Europe, the third largest in the Middle East and the seventh largest globally (excluding the USA) (IISS 2024)⁶. Shortly, realism serves to justify why Turkey has a prominent role in the IS and, at the same time, why it can allow itself the revolutionary option. However, the analysis is forced to distance itself from realism, as its principles present themselves as absolute notions.

6 Effective Eurasian and Middle Eastern Land Forces — India: 1,237,000 (IISS, 2024, p. 265); North Korea: 1,100,000 (IISS, 2024, p. 282); China: 965,000 (IISS, 2024, p. 254); Russia: 500,000 (IISS, 2024, p. 191); Will: 350,000 (IISS, 2024, p. 352); Egypt 310,000 (IISS, 2024, p. 347); Türkiye 260,000 (IISS, 2024, p. 147). Although Turkey’s position may seem unfavorable, it must be considered that from a qualitative point of view, it is at a level that, in some aspects, can be compared to that of China and Russia. For example, Turkey is the sixth largest attack helicopter force in the world, while Egypt, India, North Korea and Iran are in seventh, seventeenth, thirty-fourth and forty-fourth position respectively (GFP, 2024, online).

Such contingency is carried out from five additional analytical perspectives: (i) the role of institutions; (ii) the engagement; (iii) the bargain; (iv) the territorial logic; and (v) from the Economic Decision Center.

Firstly, what justifies the option of adhering to South-South Axis's institutions is the neo-institutionalist approach. This perspective proposes that countries' behavior, under certain conditions, can be shaped or conditioned by multilateral institutions and international regimes (Krasner 1982, 185-186; Keohane and Nye 1977, 19).

Secondly, the concept of engagement in the terms proposed by Resnick (2001)⁷. It is a multidimensional relationship - which includes military interactions - aimed at subduing an adversary using the intensification of interdependence - and not just economic.

For the author, there are three conditions for engagement: (a) the original level of interaction between countries must be low; (b) the 'engaged' country must possess significant ambitions; (c) the 'engager' must have sufficient capacity to create the expectation of effectively contributing to these objectives. Therefore, Resnick's theory serves to justify the importance of Turkey - but it could also be Brazil's - of joining the institutions of the South-South Axis. Except for Russia and China - countries with which a long history of interactions is maintained - the other BRICS members, especially the new ones, meet all of Resnick's requirements. But there is a catch: engagement does not work under any circumstances, with countries that adopt revolutionary behavior - of challenging institutions or international order (Resnick 2011, 560-561).

⁷ Engagement — the term in English has at least three distinct meanings: engagement; other types of commitments, but with some degree of solemnity; in military jargon, in the sphere of tactics, it indicates the act of entering into combat. In its categorical meaning, as explained by Resnick (2001), it was originally a category of Foreign Policy Analysis. However, the criticism made by the author, both regarding the lack of a reductionist approach and on the other, allows its operationalization for the study of IR. Since, according to the author: engagement is "the attempt to influence the political behavior of a target state through the establishment, comprehensive and enhanced, of contacts with that state in various thematic areas, i.e. diplomatic, military, economic, cultural" (RESNICK, 2001, p. 559). As it can be seen, the proposed definition, when covering military interactions, acquires citizenship in international relations, since these are based on the correlation of forces. Furthermore, engagement for the author can be used for purposes of subduing a recalcitrant competitor who is reluctant to adhere to the status quo. This is clearly deduced from the passage in which the author describes that the sending state can achieve its objectives "by manipulating or reinforcing the target states' domestic balance of political power between competing factions advocating divergent policies; or changing preferences at the local level, in the hope that this will precipitate bottom-up political change within the target state" (RESNICK, 2001, p. 560). Therefore, something that goes far beyond diplomacy, or even foreign policy.

Nonetheless, it is not possible to fully subscribe to the author's point of view, for whom conduct is typified in three forms: containment, appeasement and engagement - being the first two antipodes, and the third, the superior synthesis of both. In fact, here it is necessary to agree with realism, which argues that containment is a form of strict balancing carried out only by Great Powers. Thereby, balancing is more universal, as it presupposes milder levels of coercion and the possibility of being practiced by virtually any State. Moreover, Resnick emphasizes - rightly - that engagement with Great Powers is not possible. This does not happen due to the asymmetry of capabilities, but because of long-standing relationships. Yet, in this case, the author does not offer any alternative other than the obvious one: appeasement.

Hence, thirdly, understanding the role of bargaining becomes necessary. It would be the preferred way for semi-peripheral countries (Brazil and Turkey) to relate to the Great Powers, since appeasement involves giving up their own interests, and containment is clearly counterproductive. Although balancing in some cases is not possible, it certainly is for Turkey.

Thus, once again, Brazilian foreign policy is used in relation to bargain. Paulo Visentini points out two types of bargaining: pragmatic and diplomatic. In the case of pragmatic, the aim is to explore gains in a competition context between emerging powers. Such was the case of the maneuver carried out by Brazil between Germany and the United States (in a time when England was a hegemonic power in the IS). This bargain culminated in the achievement of the Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional⁸, in Volta Redonda, and in Brazil's entry into World War II alongside the allies. The diplomatic bargain, however, consists of aligning oneself in a negotiated way with the hegemonic power - as the USA after World War II - which allows a lesser latitude of maneuver, due to the unfavorable correlation of forces to the other Great Powers (Vizentini 1995, 33, 63).

In Turkey's case, despite its long-term relationship with the USA, engagement appeared viable because of an exceptional circumstance: the overstretch of American forces (Cordesman 2007) and the need for delegation - *buck-passing* and *burden-sharing* (Mearsheimer 2007, 160-161). Afterward, in the fifth section of this paper, which deals with the role of the Middle East (ME) for Turkey, we try to explain why this did not happen. By virtue of this, the Turkish option revolves around balancing the USA in the Middle East or bargaining with them - approaching Russia and China. However, what can compel Turkey to bargain or balance? Its territorial logic.

8 Translator's note: The company's name can be literally translated as 'National Steel Industry Company'.

So, fourthly, it is essential to recognize that the conduct of countries waver between the predominance of territorialism or capitalism. These notions are due to Giovanni Arrighi, according to whom, it can be said that the capitalist logic concerns the cross-border network, and the territorial logic pertains to the control of the territory. Such logics do not operate in isolation from each other, but rather in close correlation with each other (Arrighi 2013, 34). Therefore, Arrighi uses this characterization more as pure types - to indicate predominance - than as empirically descriptive categories.

In Michael Mann's approach, they take on an explanatory historical contour. Also, they appear in succession: the capitalist networks, dating back to medieval times, structure capitalism, which ultimately assume the appearance of industrial capitalism (Mann 2020, 450-452). This, in turn, is protected by customs barriers, therefore territorial. Mann recognizes that, in the end, the logic of capital subsumes under the control of territory (Mann 2022, 356). Finally, David Harvey, in a position closer to Mann than to Arrighi, relates territorial expansion to the demands for enlarged reproduction of capital (Harvey 2014, 32-34, 88-91, 117).

Although all of these approaches are useful to describe Turkey's wavering condition, none of them is fully helpful to clarify the Turkish dilemma. After all, in Arrighi's work (2013), the two logics coexist, and the "capitalist" preponderance, at last, is a prerogative of the hegemon. In the approaches made by Harvey (2014) and Mann (2022), capital ends up subsumed in the territory and the tension is not maintained. Capital accumulation becomes an end in itself. Once again, the agent is included into the structure. Accordingly, as seen below, it is necessary to create a particular shade to describe Turkey's swing in relation to the territory. Anyhow, first, it is important to address the role of the Economic Decision Center.

Thereby, fifth and lastly, it is worth highlighting the concept of the Economic Decision Center, formulated by Celso Furtado (1962, 109-112; 2013 [1961], 137-139). In fact, even if he did not intend to, through this concept, Furtado created a new definition of sovereignty: a society is only capable of self-determination if it can endogenize its center of economic decisions. The criterion for this is to "have in our hands the instruments of self-determination that until recently were the prerogative of a few privileged peoples"⁹ (Furtado 1962, 115). Obviously, Furtado (1962) refers to the industry, or what can be added nowadays, to the capacity of a country to produce endogenously, an element that defines the ultimate innovation that allows capital accumulation.

⁹ Translator's note - In the original: "te[nha-se] em nossas mãos os instrumentos de autodeterminação que até há pouco eram apanágio de uns quantos povos privilegiados" (Furtado 1962, 115).

There is a need to recognize that the dyad proposed by Arrighi (2013) - territorialism or capitalism - serves more to explain the dynamics of the hegemon in high finance than the behavior of countries that do not find themselves in, or even aspire to, this position. Mann (2022) and Harvey (2014) associate territory with the demand for capital accumulation, which explains, at least in part, the imperative of scale for industrialization. Yet, only with Furtado, the subject's intentionality and the mediation of politics are inserted, which may tinge the degree of control of the territory. Thus, a distinction is made with the sole purpose of 'measuring' Turkey's conduct: strict and institutional territorialism. In the first case, control of territory would have priority over other relations, so much so that it would be necessary to make use of internal and external coercion, and consequently, accept confrontation - the antithesis of strategic stability.

In accordance with this approach, this article is divided into five parts. The first concerns the predominance of need in the trajectory of IR in Turkey. The second part deals with the legacy of extra-economic coercion, utilized by the USA during unipolarity, and the challenges this poses for strategic stability - which must be focused on a multidimensional perspective (Lopes 2024, 13). The third part is about Turkey's insertion into the South-South Axis - it remains open to know whether there will also be an adhesion to its institutions. Part four handles revolutionary conduct. Lastly, the fifth and final part presents the role of the Middle East in the outcome of the Turkish dilemma.

1 Turkey: a prisoner of need

Taking Turkey's trajectory - and, even before the Ottoman Empire - one can aspire to synthesize its objectives into three elements: (a) the search for economic development with stability; (b) the endogenization of technologies, mainly those related to military employment, but not only these; (c) the maintenance of territorial integrity and control.

In pursuit of these goals, Turkey has rarely been free to make choices. Certainly, individuals, classes or countries are not free - at least not completely - to write their own history. They do so, as already observed by Marx (2007, 19), under historically determined circumstances¹⁰. That is, the choices always take place under the mantle of necessity. An equivalent reasoning

¹⁰ In the original — "Men make their own history, but they don't make it as they want; They do not do so under circumstances of their own choosing, but rather under those they directly encounter, bequeathed and transmitted by the past" (MARX, 2007, p. 19).

can be made using the concept of the third image - international system and war - by Waltz (1979). Likewise, for the American theorist, the third image determines, ultimately, the behavior of countries (Waltz 1979, 92; Cepik and Schneider 2010, 95).

Nonetheless, in Turkey's case, the necessity or the constraints. However, in the case of Turkey, the need or the conditions of the third image took on a more pressing aspect: a more acute forcefulness. The country has always found itself pressured by its powerful neighbors: Europe, Russia and Iran. Opposing what one might think, Europe has early unified against Turkey - such as the Holy League case, between 1684 and 1699 (Palmer 2013, 17). Russia, for its part, has always been a formidable adversary. Russia, in turn, has always been a formidable adversary. Furthermore, the Shiites of Iran prevented the Ottoman Caliphate (1517 - 1924) from achieving the greatness of its predecessors, the Umayyads (661-750) and the Abbasids (750-1258).

Afterwards, France, England and the United States of America (USA) entered the picture. France's emergence happened during the Napoleonic Wars that followed the French Revolution and dragged behind them the Industrial Revolution - discussed later on. Its symbolic moment is Napoleon's victory (and the Ottoman defeat) in the Battle of the Pyramids¹¹ in 1798. Hereafter, the Middle East would be forever inscribed within the framework of the International System and would suffer the jolts resulting from changes in the power balance in Europe.

Still, even the European presence did not prevent Turkey, Russia and Iran (Persia) from continuing their confrontation. It was the jadedness of these, during the Russo-Turkish¹² (1828 - 1829) and Russo-Persian (1826 - 1828) Wars, that strengthened the Europeans and contributed to the gradual opening of the Greater Middle East to them. However, it was the confrontation between Persians and the Durrani Empire (Pashto) in Herat (1837 - 1838), the last straw that allowed England to penetrate Central Asia. Until then, the region remained undebauched, despite the Western presence in Egypt and, for a long period, in India. Regardless of their initial defeat in the First Anglo-Afghan War (1838 - 1842), from then on, the British established themselves firmly in Central Asia - what is described as the "Great Game", as being fought only between Russia and England.

The USA presence in the region initially occurred in a mild and indirect way. The region became aware of its existence due to Theodore Roosevelt's Great White Fleet (1907-1909), which circumnavigated the globe covering the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aden. Later

¹¹ Translator's note: Also known as the 'Battle of Embabeh'.

¹² Translator's note: Also known as the 'Russo-Ottoman Wars'.

on, Wilson's "Fourteen Points" (1918) had a dramatic impact on the history of the region, since they proposed the defense of political independence and territorial integrity of "large" and "small" states (point fourteen). This was cunningly used at the Paris Conference (1919) by Clemenceau and Lloyd George, both respectively Prime Ministers of France and England, to consummate the partition of Turkish Anatolia. Foreseen since 1916, in the Sykes-Picot Agreement (Macmillan 2004, 418), the Paris partition was in flagrant opposition to what Wilson had expressed in his twelfth point. Turkey's invasion by the allies was followed by the fierce War of Independence (1919 - 1923). The outcome of the internal conflagration was to overthrow the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) and to assert the Turkish right of sovereignty over Anatolia, enshrined in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). These themes will be discussed later, in more detail.

Despite their bravery and intrepidity, which allowed the Turkish people to defeat the European powers, this tenacious struggle is an expression of necessity, not choice. As with other countries in the region, forging one's destiny was not a viable option.

This scenery changed after the First World War ("I WW" as referred herein), which promoted the decline of Europe (Visentini 2014). As Alexis de Tocqueville (2001, 476-477) had already anticipated, the USA and Russia were destined to "one day hold the fate of half the world in their hands"¹³. In fact, the Fordist industrialism and the Soviet Revolution presented themselves as civilizing alternatives to Europe, opposing not only colonialism, but reactionarism, conservatism and European anachronisms. Indeed, "the emergence of the USSR altered, although not immediately, the very essence of international relations"¹⁴ (Vizentini 1985, 86). Nevertheless, the emergence of these two titans brought the possibility of freedom (sovereignty) in an epochal and virtual sense. This materialized, on the one hand, in the Baku Conference of 1920, in which the soviets, by approaching the Muslims, laid the foundations that would later become Arab nationalism. For its part, the USA in the years 1932 and 1933, with the creation of Saudi Arabia and the "Arabian-American Oil Company" (ARAMCO) (Vizentini 1998, 56-57) embodied a model of dependent development that would lead other countries from the region to the condition of semi-periphery. The entire second half of the 20th century, from the creation of Israel (1948) to the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), will be marked by the confrontation between these two projects.

Turkey, for its turn, knew how to take advantage of this. Nonetheless,

¹³ In the original: "a ter um dia em suas mãos o destino de metade do mundo" (de Tocqueville 2001, 476-477).

¹⁴ In the original: "o surgimento da URSS alterou, ainda que não imediatamente, a própria essência das relações internacionais" (Vizentini 1985, 86).

using others' strength to increase your position is not the same as being free - historical freedom depends on capabilities. And, today, the Turkish people have them - or are in the process of acquiring them. This condition, precisely, puts them on the threshold of a difficult decision for. On the one hand, adopting the behavior of a revolutionary power, defying rules of the system - a feasible option taking into account the void left by USA wars in the Middle East (1991 - 2021). On the other hand, there is a possibility of joining the effort to rebuild the multilateral system - which, in the authors' opinion, is the net result of the action of the BRICS¹⁵.

2 Turkey, Extra-Economic Coercion and Strategic Stability

When the Cold War started, one of the main concerns of International Relations literature was classifying powers accordingly with their behavior in the IS. In 1948, Hans Morgenthau classified them as: (a) of status quo; (b) revolutionary; (c) of prestige policies (Morgenthau 2003, 89, 98, 148). Afterwards, in 1958, when he established his theory of the Transition of Power, Abramo Organski subdivided them into satisfied and dissatisfied, with a few Great Powers belonging to the latter type. The author defined these as challenging (Kugler and Organski 2011, 174-175). Both authors shared the understanding that International Politics was just an extension of domestic politics. The visible difference was that Organski focused his analysis on governance, that is, on the distribution of benefits (Kugler and Organski 2011, 172-173). In turn, Morgenthau focused on the dispute for power (Morgenthau 2003, 49).

Later, in 1962, Raymond Aron — for whom IR was born only after the end of the Second World War with a different logic regarding domestic politics — also classified the Great Powers as or supporters of the status quo or revolutionary (Aron 2022, 141- 143). Yet, in establishing the latter, he proposed a definition that unites the internal situation and the international politics: revolutions are the phenomena that establish revolutionary powers. Posterior literature followed these canonical definitions, with slight modifications, depending on the taste or model adopted by the author. There was a reason for this: in the Cold War it was obvious that the challengers were the USSR and China, with additional abstraction efforts supervening.

¹⁵ BRICS — The concept was originally created by Jeffrey O'Neill, Goldman Sachs chief-economist in 2001, to designate the group of countries that was most inclined to economic growth due to the age group of their population. Soon after it had become a real G4 State movement and gained its identity as a forum for South-South relations, institutionalized as an economic group that has, in the center of its agenda, multilateralism and development (VISENTINI, 2015a, p. 149-151).

Today, however, with the emergence of the multipolar world, this debate is once again relevant. Even though there are minor differences between the authors' understandings regarding the definition of the behavior of the Great Powers, there is a common understanding that they are those encountered at the top of the hierarchy of wealth, power and prestige. And that, precisely for this reason, they are interested in stability and order - in the maintenance of the status quo. It would be obvious if the proposition were true. But it is not. Still in 1979, the USA - even in bipolarity was clearly the power that exercised greater dominance - violated the status quo of détente (1972) to trigger the Second Cold War (1979 - 1991). The initial milestone of this movement was the announcement of the Carter Doctrine, which stated that the USA would protect the Arabian Peninsula with all the means at its disposal - including obviously its nuclear weapons.

Hereof, Mike Davis called this behavior extensive deterrence (Davis 1985, 84-87). It was about the USA ending its nuclear umbrella to others. Nevertheless, after this, Davis drew consequences that went beyond the strategic plan, unfolding within the scope of the international division of labor. According to this conception, the New Cold War, regardless of being fought between the Great Powers, was directed against the Third World (Davis 1985, 68, 77).

Davis's understanding was considerably expanded by Paulo Visentini (1992), when he identified the New Cold War with the spread of counterrevolutionary movements - Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, etc. Furthermore, in the economic scope, this new phase was represented by the establishment of neoliberalism (deregulation and privatization) and leverage (search for liquidity) to enable the Third Industrial Revolution — microelectronics, computers and networks (Visentini 1992, 20- 21). Davis and Visentini were prescient: after September 11, 2001, particularly after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, force went from being a governing element to the exclusive foundation of interactional relations — as can be seen in the Bush Doctrine and the unilateral unipolarity of the USA.

Once the War on Terror began, disorder spread, materialized in Springs, Color Revolutions and the continuous occurrence of civil wars that resulted in NATO interventions. From 2003 to 2013, wars took place in Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Syria — all championed by the USA or its European and regional allies. The American conduct shocked analysts, because for the first time the leading power of the IS assumed a revolutionary conduct, subverting the rules written by itself at the end of the Second World War (Arrighi 2008, 174, 264).

David Harvey (2014) expressed the understanding that “accumulation

by spoliation” and “consensual coercion” were part of the particular dynamics of capital accumulation, in a situation where force makes up for the lack of investments caused by overaccumulation (Harvey 2014, 116). This perception had already been stated in works that sought to unite different designations to describe the role of the use of force in the accumulation of capital, as “extra-economic coercion” (Martins 2004, 31; Hahn 2006, 165-166).

In 2021, in a short period of time, the world witnessed the completion of the many times promised (and many times postponed) USA withdrawal from Afghanistan and Iraq. Even though the USA had, obliquely, recognized the predominance of the multipolar balance since 2018 (USA 2017; 2018), it was only three years later that they managed to disengage from the “overstretch” (Cordesman 2007, 32-33) — the presence of contingents on multiple fronts around the globe. This withdrawal was a condition *sine qua non* so that the country could face competition from the Great Powers - or the peer competitors, as stated in American strategic documents.

Despite that, the end of unilateral unipolarity, which represented the pinnacle of the use of extra-economic coercion, and the advent of multipolarity, did not lead to Strategic Stability. This is due to, as previously argued, politics and war had entered the terrain of society’s infrastructure. In other words, the means by which the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of social life take place. This conclusion has notable implications for the reconstruction of the concept of Strategic Stability, adapting it to the conditions of the multipolar world. As well as, in particular, to elucidate the Turkish dilemma. Next, the alternatives are examined in the proposed terms: (a) the insertion into the South-South Axis; and (b) the revolutionary conduct.

3 Insertion in the South-South Axis

From the outset, it is worth highlighting that the South-South Axis is understood as what other authors designate as the Global South — the mention is necessary, given that the term ended up becoming widespread in the literature on Foreign Policy and International Relations. This last classification is not without difficulties; it suggests a counter position to the ‘North’ and dissociates itself from development and neutralism (Visentini 2015b, 07). Anyhow, the name South-South Axis establishes a substantive meaning, as it associates its genesis with the formation of the Third World, whose movement has as its pinnacle the prominence now enjoyed by the BRICS.

The expression “Third World” was coined by Alfred Sauvy, in 1952, to designate the countries, which, like the “Third State” in France, brought together those without privileges (Visentini 2015b, 07). The precursor to the

Non-Aligned Movement was the Bandung Conference (1955). In the Conference, the Asian governments defeated in the Second World War (Japan and Thailand) met with those from the first generation of national liberation (China and India). The meeting in the Indonesian city also brought together leaders of Pan-Arabism, such as the Egyptian Nasser, and of Pan-Africanism, such as the Ghanaian Kwame Nkrumah. The goal was a common development agenda, which would allow for the establishment of a dialogue that went beyond the automatic alignment of the Cold War period. Six years later, the rapprochement that began in Bandung culminated in the formalization of the Non-Aligned Movement, at the Belgrade Conference of 1961 (Bissio 2015, 62-63).

The venture was successful. After all, China and Japan — although the latter did not join the Non-Aligned — dominate the economic decision-making center; the central production processes (Wallerstein 2005, 46). And, in this path, they can be considered an integral part of the organic core of capitalism (Arrighi 2013, 344). India seems to be on the way to doing so and a considerable part of the others have entered the semi-periphery — have begun industrialization.

However, added to the economic successes, institutional gains matter. Third World countries created, or shaped, the multilateral institutions to the development agenda. From this perspective, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (1960)¹⁶, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (1969)¹⁷, and even the ASEAN Regional Forum (1994)¹⁸, and more recently, the IBSA Dialogue Forum (2003) and the BRICS (2009), can be considered repositories of Bandung's ideals — committed to multilateralism and the development agenda (Bissio 2015, 75-76).

¹⁶ Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) — International organization, founded in 1960, with the aim of coordinating and promoting the policies of the main oil exporting countries. Acting as a cartel, the organization is responsible for articulating production quotas, increasing or decreasing reserves, as well as other measures that influence the determination of the price of oil. It is made up of 13 member countries, which together represent 44% of world oil production, and around 80% of the proven reserves of this energy source. In 2016, OPEC+ was created, an informal group that brings together OPEC members as well as eleven other countries prominent in oil production.

¹⁷ Organization for Islamic Cooperation- Founded in 1969, it is an intergovernmental organization, composed of 57 countries, in which most of the population is of the Islamic religion.

¹⁸ ASEAN Regional Forum — The forum was created in 1994, within the framework of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) with the purpose of bringing together other countries in the region, in particular, China, Japan, South Korea and the United States. Nowadays, it has a total of 27 members, that gather every year to deal with security and stability related issues in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Certainly, the BRICS — and other forums of the South-South Axis — inherited the heterogeneity inherent to this type of movement, which seeks to compose varied and possibly contradictory interests. Nevertheless, such bodies cease to play a systemic role in global governance. This happens to the extent that they strain the diplomacy of the G7¹⁹ countries, towards the refoundation of the multilateral system — compromised by unilateralism and the de facto US exit from the WTO (2018). Therefore, despite housing US competitors, these spaces do not constitute anti-US fronts. On the contrary, it is precisely the presence of US competitors, which enhances the role of the neutral nations in coordinating positions, in the pursuit of retaking the development²⁰ agenda and in the affirmation of multilateralism. In this sense, Duggan and Azalia (2020, 13), Duggan et al (2022, 507-508) and Ungaretti (2023, 02) appear to be right in their views of the BRICS as a body whose agenda is identified with the refoundation of Bretton Woods, in a context of multipolarity.

The commitment of BRICS member countries to a new multilateral agenda, based on the role of economic development, can be observed, for example, in different regional infrastructure integration initiatives. This is the case of projects launched in the 2000s and 2010s, such as the North-South Corridor²¹ — Russia, Iran and India (2002); the Initiative for the Integration of South American Regional Infrastructure (IIRSA) — Brazil (2000) — and the Belt and Road Initiative — China (2013). Furthermore, the USA and Europe response regarding infrastructure projects came late, only after the COVID-19 pandemic, with the Build Back Better (USA 2021) and the Next Generation EU (Buti and Messori 2020), launched in 2020 by then-candidate

19 G7 — An intergovernmental group composed by Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States. It emerged unofficially in the 1970s decade, as the member os the group gathered through shared values, such as liberal representative democracy, and as the most developed economies in the IMF agenda.

20 Wolfowitz Doctrine- the dismissal of the USA development agenda was due to the Wolfowitz Doctrine, published in 1992. It was an informal doctrine, as its contents were a byproduct of the leak of the Defense Planning Guidance 1994-1999 document that was being elaborated by Paul Wolfowitz, then Under Secretary of Defense Politics, and future President of the World Bank (2005-2007). In this document, Wolfowitz subverts the security logic in place since Bretton Woods, based on the economic development as a basis for peace. From then on, the USA would be conducting its leadership sustained in the defense of moral values, human rights promotion and liberal democracy.

21 North-South Corridor- Officially called the International North—South Transport Corridor (INSTC), is a multimodal infrastructure project, composed of highways, railways, and ports, with almost 7.2000 km, interconnecting Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Central Asia and India, to the countries of Central Europe. The project was proposed in 2002 and enlarged after 2011, with the signature of the Ashgabat Agreement, that brought together Central Asian countries.

Joe Biden and the European Commission, respectively.

As far as Turkey is concerned, it is also virtuously inserted into this competition around infrastructure projects. The Middle Corridor²² project, originally proposed as a way to integrate Turkey with Turkic-speaking countries (Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan), currently has double potential. On the one hand, it has gained prominence among Europeans, as it overtakes Russia (IISS 2023; World Bank 2023). On the other hand, it can bring together the initiatives of Russia (North-South Corridor) and China (BRI), through their intersections along the Caspian Sea (Duffy 2023).

More recently (April 22, 2024), Turkey in a partnership with Iraq – and support from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – launched its own global interconnectivity project. It is the Iraq Development Road²³, an initiative that competes with the Suez Canal, the North-South Corridor and the Belt and Road Initiative, in the interconnection between Europe and Asia. Due to the War in Ukraine, other interconnection projects are compromised – with the exception of the Suez Canal. Thus, the two remaining options for connecting Europe and Asia are the Middle Corridor and the Iraqi Development Road. It is important to note that both depend directly on Turkey.

In fact, the institutional arrangement has already been designed in the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (2002), a forum created with the purpose of promoting cooperation between different regional organizations and integration projects across the Asian continent. This time, geography has undoubtedly benefited Turkey, as it could become the hub that connects these different infrastructure and interconnectivity projects. As a result, it gives Turkish diplomacy its own weight, projecting it beyond the country's capabilities, since it allows benefits in the dispute between Europe and Russia, besides reducing its exclusive dependence on the Chinese (Bahçecik 2017, 54).

Hence, the most general bases for freedom of action in the region are given. Recently (December 07, 2023), Erdogan concluded an agreement with the Greeks — who have always been the thermometer of the relationship with the European front. The Turks have also become essential for the Russians

22 The Middle Corridor- Name given to the new route of the Silk Road that passes through Türkiye. The name is borrowed from the oldest Turkish regional infrastructure project (BAHÇECİK, 2017, p. 55-56).

23 Iraq Development Road – Proposed in May 2023 by the Iraqi government, the project envisions a modernized network of ports, highways and railways. Its estimated cost amounts 17 billion dollars (AZHARI, 2023, online). The corridor will connect the port of Al Faw in Southern Iraq to the Turkish port of Mersin on the northwest Mediterranean coast, across Iraq and along Turkey's Southern border. The agreement was signed in April 2024, between Iraq, Turkey, Qatar and the UAE, and will make investments for the project viable, which should be completed by 2029 (ALACA; KARALP, 2023, online).

regarding the export of hydrocarbons to Europe, a role that is not expected to slow down even with the end of the Ukrainian War — which is not considered as imminent.

Finally, they also became essential to the Iranians — their toughest historical rivals and most resistant to their expansion in Asia — due to their governance of the wars in Syria, Libya, Iraq, Yemen and Gaza. Given the American unwillingness to maintain greater involvement in the Middle East, and the Chinese interest in the Middle Corridor, it is possible that the Turks — possibly in a hasty manner — believe that they can represent the interest of these Great Powers in the region, even if it goes against their declaratory external policy and its immediate interests. Preferring action to concertation would be a huge mistake. At any rate, as we tried to demonstrate, this time Turkey has a choice.

As will be seen, because of the Iraqi Civil War, the Arab Spring and the emergence of the Islamic State, Turkey needed to develop a series of defense mechanisms, which today play an important role in its international relations. However, these circumstances, if associated with certain systemic conditions, can push Erdogan's country towards the revolutionary alternative. From what can be anticipated, these conditions are: (i) the void left by the “war on terror”; (ii) the pressure of Silk Road interconnectivity; (iii) the legacy of extra-economic coercion; and (iv) Turkish territorial tradition.

To understand the process that made this path possible, we will try to identify some patterns that guided the International Relations of republican Turkey — although today's Turkey is more similar to the Ottoman Empire than the country founded by Atatürk (1923).

4 Revolutionary Conduct

It was the revolution that knocked on Turkey's door. At any point, the people and the State have never revealed any type of inclination or proclivity in this direction. However, after repeatedly being attacked by it, Turkey enthroned defense mechanisms whose palette it became part of. In this matter, too, Turkey appears to have had little or no choice.

The Ottoman Empire had its foundations deeply shaken by the double revolution: the French and the Industrial (Mondaini 2015, 190). As it turned out, anachronistically, it tried to obtain political centralization (Cleveland and Bunton 2009, 59) and promote manufacturing at a time when even Egypt was already more advanced in textiles and shipbuilding (Parker 2021, 242). Due to the Egyptian-Ottoman Wars (1828 - 1829) and the pressure from Rus-

sia (1853 - 1856), Turkey ended up strengthening its ties with England. In 1878, it surrendered control of Cyprus to the British. In 1911, Italy invaded Libya, which was part of the Ottoman Empire. Even the signing of the first Treaty of Lausanne²⁴ (1912) did not prevent contagion of the Balkans. In the same year, the First Balkan War broke out. Therefore, within months, Ottoman rule in Europe, which extended to the Adriatic Sea, eroded. The Balkan League, composed of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, divided the spoils, leaving Turkey with only eastern Thrace.

The following year, in 1913, the Second Balkan War ensued, this time fought between the newly independent countries and Turkey, against Bulgaria. The result was the defeat of the Bulgarians, supported by Germany. The British's attitude, at least ambiguous, caused its considerable erosion among the Turkish people and its elites. After all, in 1911 they ostensibly supported the Italians; in 1912 they secretly provided a powerful impulse to the Balkan independence by supporting Greece and Bulgaria. Only in 1913, to counter the Russians and hinder the German project for a railway connection between Berlin and Baghdad, did England support Turkey.

Thus, on the eve of the First War, the country found itself divided between modernizing pro-Germany Young Turks, and the other forces divided between a return to the past and pro-British sentiment (Visentini 2014, 20). The epic of the cruiser Goeben²⁵ and the dramatic gesture of raising the Turkish pavilion upon entering the Black Sea, ended up kidnapping minds and hearts, leading Turkey to ally itself on the side of the Central Powers. Accordingly, in the First World War, the country faced, at the same time, its greatest ally, Great Britain, and its greatest enemy, the Tsarist Empire (Visentini 2014, 59).

Still in 1914, England formalized its domain over Cyprus. In 1915, the British made two decisive moves, failing ignominiously in both. The first was

24 Translator's note: Also called "Treaty of Ouchy".

25 Epic of the Goeben Cruiser — Close to the outbreak of the war, Turkey had acquired two Dreadnought-class battleships from England. Due to British's concern about the proximity of the conflagration, despite payments, the ships were never delivered. When hostilities broke out, the German cruiser Goeben and her pair Moltke, which were in the Mediterranean, were targets of intense attacks. Already seriously damaged and without their escorts, they were forced to enter the Black Sea. At that time, Turkey remained neutral and, as the legislation stipulated, the ships would have to be interned until the end of the armed conflict. So, the unexpected gesture of raising the Turkish flag and saying that from now on, the cruiser would become part of the Ottoman fleet had a devastating political impact (VISENTINI, 2014, p. 59). The Young Turks, due to British fluctuations in the two Balkan wars (1912-1913; 1913) (VISENTINI, 2014, 40), already defended alignment with Germany. Later, the Sultan gave in to the public outcry and Turkey declared war on the Entente.

the attempt to capture the Turkish Straits using the landing at Gallipoli, aiming to supply the main ally at that time, Imperial Russia. The second consisted of the attack on Iraq, intending to prevent Germany from benefiting from the vast resources of the Ottoman Empire, and access to the Indies (Visentini 2014, 60). Defeated in both theaters (Mediterranean and Middle East), the British launched the Arab Revolt in 1916. The creation of this “Arab nation”, engineered by T.E. Lawrence and Gertrude Bell, set the region on fire as the French Revolution had done in the Balkans (1811) and Europe (1848). Along this path, the British anticipated the Bolsheviks and Mao Zedong in mastering the art of the Revolutionary War. In the Middle East, the action of insurgents eroded communication and transport routes in the region (Visentini 2014, 60-61; Volkman 2013, 197-199). The extent of the success of Lawrence and Bell’s revolt prefigured, a century in advance, what would later become the Islamic State.

Therefore, notwithstanding the Ottoman failures in the war against the Russians — in 1915 alone, the Turkish Third Army had suffered around 77 thousand losses (Keegan 2004, 251) — the British situation did not improve. It was only in 1917, benefiting from the effects of the Arab revolt, that they resumed the offensive in Iraq, capturing Baghdad in March. But for the Ottomans, the loss of Baghdad and Jerusalem (December 1917) was just the beginning. Nationalism, initially mobilized towards the Arabs, was later extended to the Georgians, Armenians, Kurds and other peoples in Anatolia.

As a result, the Arab Revolt, which began in 1916, only ended for the Turks in 1923. At that time, they finally expelled the foreign troops and defeated the separatists, ensuring control of Anatolia. To a considerable extent, this occurred because Turkey allied itself with the declared Great Revolutionary Power of the time: the Soviet Union (Visentini 2022, 15). Briefly, despite centuries of conflagrations, it was the revolutionary war that came close to ending not only to the Ottoman Empire, but also to Turkey itself.

In 1945, by virtue of Soviet intentions to internationalize the straits, Turkey was forced to move closer to the USA (Friedrich 2011, 30; Cleveland and Bunton 2008, 276; Seydi 2006, 126-127). With the creation of NATO in 1949, Turkey claimed membership in the organization. Approval only came after a Turkish contingent was sent to the Korean War (1951) (Aydin 2000, 107, 112), which took place in 1952, also coinciding with its entry into Operation Gladio²⁶ — organization of joint covert operations by NATO countries

²⁶ Operation Gladio — Joint Intelligence Organization created by the CIA and MI6, as part of a secret and clandestine NATO army. Its existence became public in the 1990s when the Italian Prime Minister, Giulio Andreotti, revealed the existence of a secret anti-communist army that operated within NATO countries during the Cold War (GANSER, 2005, p. 01). The name

(Ganser 2005, 01). Since 1948, Turkey had already provided assistance to the CIA in assembling a secret army to intervene in the Greek Civil War (Ganser 2005, 226).

Turkey's entry into NATO (and its secret army) coincided with the beginning of the endogenization of the Second Industrial Revolution in the country. Urbanization and massification had their costs: rural exodus and pauperization. Both were accompanied by the emergence of middle classes and urban wage workers. All of this impacted national political life. A strong Communist Party emerged in Turkey. As a reaction, the "Grey Wolves" emerged, seeking to signal the union between the cities (white wolves) and the countryside (black wolves). Domestically, they began to fight against the advance of communism, based on a far-right nationalist discourse, which served as the basis for carrying out clandestine political repression (Ganser 2005, 228; Shimatsu 2009). Externally, it expressed itself through Pan-Turkism, which ended up constituting itself as the remote foreshadowing of neo-Ottomanism.

Turkey's participation in Operation Gladio was only possible through the establishment of the Special Warfare Department, financed and organized by the CIA (Ganser 2005, 226, 230). Thereafter, the Turks inserted themselves in the joint efforts to keep communist parties out of power on the European continent. In practical terms, the Turkish Gladio operated by hiring its staff within the Gray Wolves organization to carry out secret operations (Söyler 2015, 136; Ganser 2005, 229).

Although a Gladio was never installed in the Middle East, from the 1960s onwards, Turkey began to carry out covert operations jointly with the Mossad in the region (Ganser 2005, 232; Lefevbre 2005, 118). Also in this case, it was a reaction to the alliance between the USSR and Arab nationalists from Egypt, Syria, Iraq and, finally, Libya.

Even so, in the 1970s the Turks registered a rapprochement with the Arabs. Due to the Cyprus Crisis (1963-1974) they withdrew with NATO, and even with the USA. They went so far as to prevent the use of facilities in the country to aid Israel in 1973, yet they facilitated the Soviet airlift to Syria and Iraq (Bishku 2012, 42).

of this ad hoc clandestine arrangement varied from country to country, in Italy it was Gladio, but its range of operations covered a considerable part of the Mediterranean. In any case, the clandestine structure maintained a unified command, control and supervision relationship, carried out by NATO intelligence, CIA and MI6. Always concerned with its sovereignty and specific interests, Turkey has developed its own secret army. This was *Kontrguerrilla*, linked to the Armed Forces Tactical Mobilization Group — which maintained bilateral relations with the CIA and joint relations with NATO. From 1965 onwards, it began to operate under the aegis of the Department of Special Warfare (GANSER, 2005, p. 226).

Hence, the Turks were left in the sidelines of the two major events in their strategic surroundings, the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and the Syrian Civil War (1976-1982). Concerning the second, it should be noted that it was intense, although still little-known today. The estimate is that, only in the Hamah massacre (1982), there were between 25 and 40 thousand deaths (Lefèvre 2013). It was the first time that the Assads faced the Muslim Brotherhood — supported by Iraq, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon, countries that converted their territories into sanctuaries to support the insurgents (Conduit 2019, 134; Seale 1990, 334- 335). The absence of effective protagonism from Turkey may, eventually, have been decisive for the rebellion's failure. Hafez al-Assad's son, Bashar, did not have the same luck – since the Spring in 2011, Syria has remained divided.

It is important to address the Cyprus Crisis (1963-1974), given its subsequent role in shaping the revolutionary alternative — after all, the northern portion of the island claims integration with Turkey to this day. In 1960, Cyprus was granted independence. It enshrined the maintenance of British bases but made little or no provision for the claims of Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Keefe and Solsten 1993, 33; Dodd 2010, 41). As a result, in 1963, the Cypriot Crisis began. The case became more complicated when in 1971, when the Cypriot national guard carried out a coup d'état, installing a pro-Enosis government (Mallinson 2005, 80). In 1974, all US and NATO mediations failed, therefore Turkey found itself compelled to intervene militarily. Initially, the Turks demanded a federated State, in which Turkish Cypriots would own 34% of the island. The proposal was refused, and the Turks resumed the offensive (Dodd 2010, 114-119). When a ceasefire occurred, they controlled 36% of the island. The division between communities was accomplished with the creation of the "Green Line" (Tartter 1993, 219-221). After several attempts at federalization, the Turkish Cypriots declared their independence without, however, achieving recognition from States other than Turkey. The Greek Cypriot position holds the country's seat at the United Nations.

In this instance, Turkey's actions cost the support of Europe, which, resentful, would never allow them to join the future EU. At the time, the crisis only did not escalate to a direct confrontation between Turkey and NATO, as a result of Henry Kissinger's efforts. US Secretary of State at the time, Kissinger was perfectly aware of Turkey's importance for the southern flank of the alliance and the Middle East (Mallinson 2005, 81). To appease the Europeans, the US imposed an arms embargo on the Turks – which would later increase the indigenous development of the Turkish arms industry. But, on the other hand, this mediation made the Turkish action not appear as an overt challenge to the international order. And, therefore, it was not recognized in systemic

terms as revolutionary behavior.

However, in retrospect, it seems the action was exactly that. It was an attempt to expand the spirit of Lausanne (1923) and bury the remains of the humiliation of Sèvres (1920). Cyprus and the Greek Islands situated in the Western coast of Turkey remain a perennial point of tension between the two states. Thus, in the eventual absence of the American presence in Europe, it tends to assume unusual proportions: more than beautiful landscapes, it is about obtaining the rights to explore gas and oil deposits on the island's continental shelf.

Still in the 1970s, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) took place. As a result, it was responsible for revealing to the Turks the full potential of revolutionary war — in this case counterrevolutionary. Once again, its ability to erode a Great Power was revealed. It did not go unnoticed by the Turks that the Pakistanis intended to acquire, through Afghanistan, strategic depth in their confrontation with India. For this objective, they used proxy groups (mainly Pashto) to call into question the Soviet presence in the country (Tanner 2009, 244).

During this same period, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) led to the deepening of Turkey's ties with the Middle East and gave life to the import substitution model. Turkish neutrality in the face of the conflagration allowed the general increase in Turkish exports to the region, as well as the growth of exchanges between Turkey and the two belligerents (Künü and Hopoglu 2016, 112). Therefore, it favored the maintenance of national industry. Whereas, in the case of Brazil, and other similar countries (Argentina and Mexico), the Gulf War (1980-1988) brought inflation, high interest rates and recession that penalized industry and began the reprimarization of the economy.

In 1991, because of the importance that Iraq had assumed for Turkey's foreign trade, it was not without some reluctance that the Turks joined the coalition against Saddam Hussein. Even so, they restricted their participation to logistical support, allowing the use of the Incirlik (Gulbay 2022, 1050-1052). Anyhow, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait served as an example that Turkey — whether because of its capabilities or its geographic position — continued to be important for the USA and NATO — which would only increase with the 'War on Terror' (2001-2021).

Nonetheless, problems soon arose. Also in 1991, the US established no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq. At the same time, they encouraged Kurdish rebellions in the North — in the region adjacent to Turkey — and in the South, among Shiites, along the border with Iran. The idea was that the rebellions, associated with sanctions, would lead to the downfall of the regime.

In fact, a similar phenomenon would also occur in Afghanistan. In 1993, after the extinction of the USSR (1991), the Pakistanis decided to directly control Afghanistan, invading it under the guise of a new group called “Theology Students” — Taliban. At that time, the Taliban were a little more than an extension of the Pakistani intelligence service, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), often commanded by uncharacterized Pakistani troops (Visentini 2022, 66).

Such occurrences appeared to be register as a warning. Turkey was afraid that the American plan in Iraq would work, and that an autonomous Kurdistan in the north would encourage Kurdish separatism in Turkey through elements such as the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK). After all, they had already experienced the Arab Revolt (1916).

In both cases (Iraq and Afghanistan), the proxy war served as a prelude to the invasion. That is why Turkey acted again — the first was in Cyprus in 1974 — contrary to the interests of other NATO member states: between 1992 and 1997, the country undertook at least four incursions against the Kurds in Northern Iraq (Marcou 2022). In fact, this type of fighting was not completely foreign to the Turks. With the dissolution of the USSR, the Turkish organization “Grey Wolves” built a training center in Central Asia and provided material support to the East Turkestan Independence Movement in Xinjiang (Shimatsu 2009). Even in the ex-Soviet space and within Russia, according to Russian allegations, the Gray Wolves supplied weapons and technological assistance to the Chechens during the Chechen War (1994-1996) (Cornell 1999, 92).

However, despite all previous experiences, the Revolutionary War would hardly have been included in Turkey’s palette of instruments for projecting strength and power if not for the Second Iraq War. In 2003, the US invasion of Iraq took place, alleging that it possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD/WMD) and that it had been an accomplice of Al-Qaeda in the attacks carried out in 2001 — which turned out to be incorrect (Powell 2005). Initially, Turkey agreed that the invasion would also take place in its territory — to also take place in Northern Iraq —, but the executive’s decisions were blocked by parliament. Indeed, the legislature proved prescient.

5 The Middle East in the Turkish Dilemma

Once occupied, Iraq was divided into four zones, whose autonomy bordered, in fact, on independence. The Turks were shocked to realize that, as a result, Iraqi Kurdistan would become a sanctuary for the separatist forces, which they had been fighting intermittently since the War of Independence.

But even worse was the realization that the US took advantage of sectarian violence (2006-2008). Besides, allegedly, they had connived at the creation of the Islamic State (Hersh 2016). Thus, the model used by Pakistan to control Afghanistan was used to solve the problem of Iraq: keeping the country divided, powerless – but under control (Nasser 2015, 24). The initial purpose was to prepare for an eventual invasion of Iran.

In parallel to the invasion of Iraq, the US Military Transformation process took place (Wolfowitz 1992; Rumsfeld 2002). For the Americans, they had to adjust the Forces to the reality of network warfare. And, equally, in the immediate post-Cold War world, in which it was believed that the USA's main adversaries would be non-state groups (Lind 2005, 14). Thus, Military Transformation, in its original restrictive version²⁷, had the consequence of adjusting the Preparation and Profile of Forces for Irregular War²⁸. Nonetheless, its excessive emphasis on strategic mobility led to the disregard of the principle of mass warfare and presence and control of the territory.

A serious problem proven since the disorder that followed the fall of Saddam Hussein was the lack of personnel (Cordesman and Davies 2008, 25-26, 39-40). In 2004, regardless of the USA having 135 thousand troops stationed in the country (CBS 2004), which added to 20 thousand private contractors (Singer 2004, 2), the lack of troops became evident once again in the Battle of Fallujah (2004) — highlighting the problem of border control.

27 Restrictive and Holistic Military Transformation — Restrictive Military Transformation (WOLFOWITZ, 1992; RUMSFELD, 2002; LIND, 2005) presents Transformation as a purely military process, without implications within the scope of the State and society — hence classifying it as 'restrictive' —, as it is restricted to the military sphere. Holistic Military Transformation considers that there are Pillars, Expressions and Dimensions of transformation, which must be considered. Originally described by Covarrubias, the pillars can be identified with the Forces ("Capabilities"); State ("Legal Structure"); and Society ("Nature"). Derived expressions are: (i) adaptation, (ii) modernization and (iii) transformation itself. For its turn, Rodrigues focus in the theme of 'expressions', seeking to unveil the broader implications of the transformation related to civil-military integration. As this last approach assumes changes that affect broader spheres than the military, it is called 'holistic' (COVARRUBIAS, 2007; RODRIGUES, 2022). As will be further argued, Turkey followed the holistic model of transformation (YESILTAS, 2016, Online).

28 Preparation and Profile of US Forces — This perception would be modified later on. However, too late, to influence the direction of the intervention in Iraq. The turning point was the publication of the National Security Strategy (NSS) in 2017, which diagnosed the return of the competition between Great Powers (USA, 2017, p. 27). This doctrinal change only occurred with the publication of the FM 3-0 (Operations) manual, which established the Multidomain Battle (US Army 2022) — which indicates a type of preparation in which the use of force involves forms of irregular warfare and not conventional, including nuclear, combined with conventional operations — in any case, implicitly recovers the principle of mass. Back in 2018, the then Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, had already removed the mechanized assets (Bradley and Abrams) from storage.

Initially, the Command considered two thousand soldiers sufficient. James Mattis — later Secretary of Defense (2017-2019) — won it using almost thirteen thousand combatants (Ricks 2007, 399).

In an article written in 2002, Eliot Cohen had already drawn attention to the limitations of Rumsfeld's transformational model. According to the author, it raised difficulties regarding "mobilization and professional education" and the "production of crucial ammunition and platforms" for combat (Cohen 2002, 32). Cohen's words show that what happened in Iraq was predictable. And it is frightening that even today — the Ukrainian War — they are absolutely current.

In 2005, the Battle of Tal Afar took place, a city populated by Turkmen and close to Iraqi Kurdistan. It was won by the then Colonel MacMaster — later, National Security advisor (2017-2018) — employing the strategies of presence and control (Packer 2006). The success was such that the experience was recognized as an example for the reformulation of American strategy in Iraq. An attempt was made to incorporate the experience of real war into the Doctrine, in the revision of the Army Operations Manual (FM 3-0 Operations). Carried out in 2008, this review established the concept of Full Spectrum Operations (Operations), precursor of the Multidomain Battle (Baker 2009, 68). But, even so, Donald Rumsfeld found himself deterred from his transformative impetus. Between January and October 2005 — while the Battle of Tal Afar (September) was still raging — there was another drastic reduction in personnel: from 640,000 (Harvey and Schoomaker 2005, 4) to 492,728; around 148 thousand people (USA 2006, 01).

Ironically, in Iraq, in light of the experiences of Fallujah and Tal Afar, it was once again considered that the appropriate contingent for the occupation of the country would be around 450 thousand men (Gordon and Trainor 2010, 629). The situation became critical again due to the multiplication of attacks in Baghdad and the Battle of Anbar — both in 2007. It was then that then President George W. Bush decided to strengthen the contingent — especially in Baghdad —, sending five additional brigades (20,000 soldiers). It was the 'Surge', a term used by the press to avoid the word 'escalation' and the evocation of the memory of Vietnam. Even with the reinforcement, the contingent proved to be insufficient to apply the successful model in Tal Afar. Rumsfeld's Force Profile made the application of the US Army's new doctrine unfeasible, even though it was designed to combat irregular warfare.

In parallel, the Subprime real estate crisis unfolded (2007), which affected banks and reached Europe the following year — once again, the specter of Vietnam returned: the Tet offensive (1968) preceded the gold-dollar decoupling, overthrowing Bretton Woods (1944-1971). In 2008, Israel asked the US

for authorization to attack Iran — which was denied and leaked to the press (Sanger 2009). Considering the situation in the American economy and in Iraq, one could infer the reason.

However, the following year, the reason for the US denial of Israel was ostensibly publicized through the prestigious Brookings Institution²⁹. A study was published that predicted that 1.5 million soldiers would be needed to occupy Iran — for which it would be necessary to resort to conscription (Pollack et al 2009, 69). Between the return to the Welfare State — a necessary counterpart to mandatory military service (Giddens 2001, 249; Tilly 1996, 144-145) — and accommodation with Iran and its nuclear program, the USA preferred the second alternative. They then resorted to mediation from Brazil and Turkey to reach an understanding with the Persians on the last topic (Amorim 2018, 28, 38; Barrionuevo 2009).

To the perplexity of Brazilians, after the agreement was concluded, the USA dispensed with the good offices of Brazil and Turkey (Amorim 2018, 63-64). Previously, in 2008, the USA had been saved in Baghdad by the outbreak of a sectarian clash — promoted by the Islamic State — which led to the outbreak of a civil war in the country. Faced with the savagery of the new conflagration, the American presence became a lesser evil. In the coming years something similar would happen, this time within the entire OM — the rise of the Islamic State.

In 2011, the Arab Spring broke out in Tunisia. Soon, it would spread to Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Syria. They were the result of a youth that had its basic needs met but was unhappy with its consumption patterns and political rights. Foreign to the discipline of the world of work, the sociability of these groups took place, predominantly, through social networks. In response, some governments began processes of political opening. In Egypt, in 2011, he brought the Muslim Brotherhood — allies of Turkey and Qatar — to power. In Libya (2011) and Syria (2012), it resulted in civil wars. From now on, the dynamics of the springs would establish a system of communicating vessels between the security dynamics of the OM, Europe and Asia — given by the springs of China (2011)³⁰ and Ukraine (2014), which is discussed below.

29 Brookings Institution — A bipartisan Think-Tank, created still in 1916, and that was recognized by The Economist as USA's most prestigious one (The Economist, 2017, Online)

30 China Spring (Jasmin) — It took place from February to March 2011. The overlapping of the agenda, and not repression (which certainly took place), was the main reason for its suppression. The prospect of Democracy was eclipsed by the nationalism raised by the episode of the sale of the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands (04/16/2012), claimed by China but controlled by Japan. Anti-Japanese demonstrations took over the mass movement in China. Even so, through this indirect route, the Chinese spring contributed to the fall of the Harmony Faction in China (Hu Jintao) and the DPJ in Japan. Both leaders had the commitment to build an East Asian

In 2013 (11/09), the Russians prevented a US attack on Syria (Putin 2013). It was the beginning of the 21st century, as for the first time since the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), the USA saw its freedom of action being restricted by another Great Power. In the same month, the Russians announced the creation of a permanent Naval Task Force in the Mediterranean, based in the Port of Tartus — in 2017, they obtained a fifty-year lease of the facility. In November 2013, protests began against Yanukovych's pro-Russian government in Ukraine — in which the presence of Vítória Nulland, at the time US Secretary of State for European Affairs, stood out — which culminated in the overthrow of the government (February 24, 2014). In response, just under a month later, the Russians annexed Crimea. In August of the same year, the US intervention in Syria began, through the use of missiles Tomahawk and Special Forces.

But, at this point (2015), it had become clear to the Americans that Rumsfeld's "Creative Chaos" (Whitney 2005) was not a viable alternative for the governance of the region. After all, the vacuum caused by the erosion of governments brought the Russian presence to the OM — under conditions that they had never before managed to obtain, neither in the Tsarist Empire nor in the Soviet Era. Thus, in 2015 the US signed a nuclear agreement with Iran, which Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA — Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action). It also had the signatures of the United Kingdom, France, England, China and the European Union, but contained much more unfavorable aspects than those negotiated between Brazil, Turkey and Iran in 2010.³¹

However, the success of negotiated counter-proliferation did not mitigate the US difficulties with financing interventions and overstretching. An alternative to delegation was needed. The US needed to pass the buck (buckpassing) for someone who was capable of undertaking at least three

Community, which did not prosper to their demise (SILVA, 2023, p. 201).

³¹ Iran Nuclear Agreement- Brazil and Turkey had negotiated an agreement, through which Iran would benefit from nuclear fuel and energy, but the production of the former would take place outside Iranian territory (BBC, 2010, Online). The agreement signed by Obama, in 2015, was based on uranium enrichment quotas, and the processing would be made by Iran itself. This gave rise to the distance between the USA and Israel, as the latter rarely endorsed the reports that demonstrated that the Persians were acting in accordance with the agreement. The enrichment carried out in the country also opened up space for the existence of clandestine nuclear installations to be considered which, supposedly, had military application. On May 8, 2018, Trump's break with the Nuclear Agreement did not serve to mitigate the situation. Freed from the agreement, the Iranians raised the coefficient — even openly — for uranium enrichment. Nor was any type of military action taken against the country. Economic sanctions, reintroduced unilaterally by the US, did not have a binding effect on Europeans, Russians or Chinese.

tasks: (a) to stabilize the region, (b) contain the Russians and (c) balance Iran — if it violated the terms of the Agreement.

This alternative ended up being envisioned in November 2016, by General Michael Flynn (2016): it was Turkey. Previously, on the occasion of the Syrian Spring, the Turks were already paying attention to developments in the situation in the neighboring country which, like Iraq, also had a significant Kurdish population. Thus, despite having robust capabilities and forces, the Turks did not hesitate to organize their own proxies. In addition to supporting the Free Syrian Army, Turkey offered support to other opposition movements to Bashar al Assad, sheltering and mobilizing dissidents, arming rebels and allowing free passage along the Syrian-Turkish border. In this context, authors such as Tahiroglu and Schanzer (2017, 12) went so far as to state that the Turks were, at the very least, complicit in the activities of groups jihadists and insurgents like the Jabhat al Nusra — Al-Qaeda in Syria — and even the Islamic State (IS). The explanation for this was simple: shortly before, the extension of Kurdish rule in Syria and Iraq had reached its zenith and it had become viable to advocate an independent Kurdistan — Westerners even had a name for it: Rojava. And, for the Turks, the priority has always been to combat separatism in Turkey itself — and the Islamic State was expanding in Syria and Iraq at the expense of the Kurds.

But whatever Turkish relations with armed opposition groups in Syria may have been, they have never represented more than an ancillary resource. Turkey relied on its own forces, to a considerable extent, because they had War Mass, capable of withstanding friction, maintaining a presence in conquered territories, and thus effectively establishing control over the terrain. For comparison purposes, Assad's Army, which had undertaken a Restrictive Military Transformation, could never take advantage of this — having to resort to foreign fighters — compromising the country's unity and sovereignty. In turn, Turkey carried out a Holistic Military Transformation, with an emphasis on the role of society (industry) and the State (consortia). Furthermore, Turkish regular forces, even across the border, could count on police and constable forces from subnational entities.

In fact, the Turks adjusted the imperative of Transformation³², both

32 Turkish Military Transformation- Turkey appropriated the assets of the Third Industrial Revolution- computers and networks- as a result. For example, since 2005, the country has developed its own tactical datalink, not depending on the NATO network (AKALIN, 2014, p. 54). In 2019 it would be declared fully operational (NATIONAL, 2019 Online). And, as their advances in the development of sixth-generation aircraft are proof (ÖZER, 2024, online), they are positioned to do the same with the Fourth Industrial Revolution — endogenizing quantum computing and artificial intelligence.

to its condition as a semi-peripheral country and to the objectives of its foreign policy. Thus, they did not fail to make a nuclear agreement with Russia (Erdogan 2023; Difiglio, Güray and Merdan 2020, 394; Russian 2010), they began to incorporate their own command, control, communication and network warfare computers (C4) and developed indigenous surveillance and reconnaissance systems. And, apparently, they also increased their already vast intelligence network.

The Obama administration clearly leaned towards the Kurds. At the time, Turkish support for IS was also commonplace in the government. In fact, initially, in January 2016, Michael Flynn himself had already accused the Turks of leniency towards the Islamic State (Hersh 2016). Thus, in the perception of the Turks, it was the divergences surrounding the future of Syria – and indeed, the Middle East – that supposedly made the Americans promote an attempted coup against Erdogan on July 15, 2016. The attempt was thwarted, as we know, due to a warning given by the Russians.

The Turkish reaction was quick: they turned against the Islamic State. This happened just a month after the coup attempt. Which suggests that it was already in preparation previously. In this assumption, the Turks would emulate the model of extra-economic coercion, developed by Pakistan and the USA, promoting insurgency and then carrying out intervention. Whatever the case, the fact is that Operation Euphrates Shield (August 24, 2016) was a success. The contingent was made up of regular troops from the Turkish army and proxies from the Free Syrian Army. The Operation aimed to eliminate the Islamic State and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) — the latter composed of Kurds and proxy clients from NATO Member States. Turkey managed to occupy the regions of Aleppo and Afrin (Bechev 2022, 163).

The Turkish offensive had a double meaning: in addition to being the first official conventional operation conducted autonomously by Turkey in the context of the Syrian Civil War, it also marked a diplomatic bargain, suggesting a rapprochement with Russia³³. This interpretation by analysts at the time — that Syria was becoming an element of concertation between the two historical enemies — Turkey and Russia (Bechev 2022, 168) — also did not go unnoticed by Flynn.

33 Indicators of the Turkish-Russian rapprochement — After the coup attempt in Turkey, Erdogan made several signs of rapprochement with Russia. On August 9, 2016, Putin and Erdogan met in Saint Petersburg, defining Syria as the new axis of their bilateral relationship (DW, 2016). A few months later, in October, an agreement was signed to create Turkstream, a network of gas pipelines that would transport gas from Russia without the need to pass through Ukraine (REUTERS, 2016). Finally, on July 25, 2017, Erdogan announced that Turkey would acquire S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems from Russia (KEŞVELIOĞLU et al, 2019, p. 7).

Concerned about the possibility of Turkey becoming a Russian asset, or a new opponent as formidable as Iran, as mentioned, Michael Flynn began to defend — based on the facts on the ground established by Operation Euphrates Shield — that Turkey it was the USA's main ally in the fight against the Islamic State (Flynn 2016). This was evident in the January 2017 altercation between Flynn and Obama over US involvement in the Battle of Raqqa³⁴ (Afkhami 2017).

So, Flynn embarked on a titanic effort to repair US relations with Turkey. Previously, just one day after the start of the Turkish operation in Syria, then Vice President Biden visited Turkey, without success. In an attempt to establish an agreement that would dispel Turkish fears, Flynn considered handing over the cleric Fethullah Gullen — who lived in the US and was seen by the Turks as the main mastermind of the coup. And, naturally, move the US away from the agenda of an independent Kurdistan, whether in Iraq or Syria.

The reaction of the establishment didn't take long. The director of the CIA during the Obama administration, John Brennan, accused Trump of collusion with the Russians (Brennan 2019). This led to the opening of an impeachment process, with an investigation led by special prosecutor Robert Mueller, former director of the FBI (2001-2013). At the same time, Flynn was accused by another former CIA director, James Woolsey (1993-1995), of receiving bribes from the Turks (Munsil 2017). Faced with this situation, Trump preferred to get rid of the rings (Flynn), to keep his fingers (his own mandate): the National Security Advisor was fired just 23 days into his term (January 22 - February 13, 2017). More than that, later, on June 6, 2017, Trump accused Qatar — Turkey's main ally in the Persian Gulf — of promoting terrorism in the Middle East (Smith, Siddiqui and Beaumont 2017).

The result of this enclosure was the end of US policy towards the Middle East at a critical moment. Subsequently, the two initiatives undertaken by Trump were cosmetic or failed. The first was the rupture of the JCPOA with Iran, in May 2018. Freed from the agreement, the Iranians reportedly began to increase their uranium enrichment coefficients — thus getting closer to the capacity to manufacture a nuclear device than before. Nor did the US carry out, or allow, military action against the country. The economic sanc-

34 Flynn and the Battle of Raqqa – Already appointed as National Security Advisor, Flynn, on January 17th, did not approve an Obama administration plan to arm Kurds for a mission against the Islamic State in Raqqa (Syria) (AFKHAMI, 2017, online). The city of Raqqa had been taken by Islamists on March 6th, 2013, even before the founding of the Islamic State – at the time, the group was an aggregate of Syrian Sunni jihadist forces, including the ISI (Islamic State of Iraq), the Al-Nusrah and the Free Syrian Army. From that date until October 2017, Raqqa was the capital of IS in Syria. It was retaken on October 17th, 2017, by the Syrian Democratic Forces, whose main groups are Kurds, with support from the US coalition.

tions, reintroduced unilaterally by the USA, had no binding legal effect on Europeans, Russians or Chinese — it was up to their convenience whether to respect them or not.

The second initiative was led by his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and consisted of an attempt at peace with the Palestinians (Spetalnick and Holland 2019). Once again, due to the action of establishment, the plan failed. This time, thanks to the action of his vice president, Mike Pence, and the US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley. They proposed to Netanyahu the resumption of the project — which was never abandoned, even if left aside — of transforming Jerusalem into the one and indivisible capital of Israel (Ahren 2018). Netanyahu embraced the proposal, seeing it as the key to remaining in office upon his return to power. In addition to Trump's defeat, this act gave rise to the crisis surrounding the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which culminated in the Eleven Day War, in May 2021 (Cordesman 2021).

In the midst of these events, in 2021, under Biden's administration, the ignominious withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan (August 2021) and Iraq (December 2021) took place. The region was left without leadership — in a multipolar world, the Middle East is non-polar (Carlstrom 2024). According to David Petraeus, the way the US withdrew from the region in 2021 may have encouraged the Russians to invade Ukraine in February 2022 (IAI 2024, 11min10s). To which we can add, this same route encouraged the Hamas terrorist attack against Israel on October 7, 2023.

In this way, Turkey proposes to fill this void and impose order on the chaos — otherwise, the vacuum will be occupied by extra-regional powers. Furthermore, the Middle East has become the vertex that unites the impasses of US foreign (and internal) policy and the balance in the scales of Europe and Asia.

6 Final Thoughts

An attempt was made to develop a possibilist approach. This understanding was affirmed from the formulation of the problem, through the theoretical framework, until arriving at the explanatory historical content. Intentionally, a question was formulated that, beforehand, it was known that the research could not answer: what will be the path adopted by Turkey? However, it is hoped that, to some extent, it has been possible to list the components that allow policy makers and decision makers to provide minimal guidance. It is believed that, eventually, other researchers will be able to group these components in the form of variables, creating a model for analyzing Turkey's For-

eign Policy. Are they: (01) balancing, engagement or bargaining; (02) coercion and adherence to institutions; (03) strict territorial or institutional logic. They constitute the main result of the effort undertaken. Therefore, it is important to revisit them soon.

Turkey engaged, bargained and balanced appropriately. Engaged the Turkic States of Central Asia Organization³⁵, creating an organization that could become a Customs Union. And therefore, institutionally provide scale, financial and energy resources for Turkey to face the challenges of Industrial Revolutions. In the case of the bargain, the Turks executed it with professionalism between the USA, Russia and China. Finally, Turkey balanced England and France when there was no alternative: it prevented the creation of the Kurdish State in Syria, east of the Euphrates — “Rojava”.

The country positioned itself well. I was ready to “get the bucket” (buckpassing) of the USA, in order to enable their planned and gradual withdrawal from the Middle East. As seen in the immediately previous session, this did not happen, due to palace intrigues in Washington — and not due to indisposition on the Turkish side. Now, Turkey appears to be grappling with one of the boldest initiatives in its history: engaging Egypt and Pakistan. Although the procedure goes against Resnick’s rule — according to which the original level of interaction between countries must be low — in this case, engagement appears possible thanks to the confrontation between Israel and Palestine. This seems to be the main meaning of Erdogan’s support for Hamas: to consolidate a prominent and undisputed leadership position in the Islamic world.

Egypt has always been the key, not just to North Africa, but to the entire Sahel. Turkey has opened diplomatic legations across the continent. And, it has been accused, by its detractors, of supporting Islamic groups from Somalia to Mali, passing through Niger, Chad and Sudan. The fact is that Somalia is today, for all intents and purposes, a Turkish protectorate — a robust base in proximity to Mogadishu proves this beyond any reasonable doubt.

In turn, Pakistan is the strategic key to accessing the Indian Ocean, which borders some of the most densely populated Muslim countries in the world (Bangladesh) and the one with the largest Muslim population in the world (Indonesia). Although Turkish success may be modest, it will be enough to extend Republican Turkey’s influence beyond any other era of Ottoman rule.

³⁵ Turkic States of Central Asia Organization — Created in 2009, its founding members were Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. Uzbekistan joined the organization in 2019, while Hungary was accepted as an observer state in 2018.

So far, the Turks seem to have been happy to combine balancing, bargaining and engagement. It is now necessary to know how the combination between the exercise of coercion and adherence to institutions will occur. So far, the artificial confrontation with Israel has not compromised Turkey's position, since it is the Hebrew state — and not the Turkish one — that has challenged the multilateral institutions of the international order. However, given the possibility of the war expanding into Lebanon, the apparent Turkish willingness to prevent the island of Cyprus from being used for operations against the Middle East could force the Turks to balance the US — which is not the same as to do it with the Europeans.

In the assumption of a new Turkish intervention in Cyprus, it must be recognized that it would constitute revolutionary conduct. And, in this case, given Turkey's capabilities and the extent of its influence, it is reasonable to assume that this behavior would undermine the stability of the IS itself. In any case, the Turks seem, beforehand, to seek to mitigate the effects of a more assertive action, expressing adherence to the institutions. Recently (April 06, 2024), the Turkish Foreign Minister declared the country's intention to join the BRICS, receiving enthusiastic support from Russia and China. Therefore, also in this regard, the tension between the use of coercion and adherence to institutions, Turkey strives to strike a delicate balance.

It remains to be seen whether it will be successful. Success in this endeavor conditions to a considerable extent the last aspect: the predominance of institutional or strict territorial logic. This is because, if subjected to sanctions — that is, under the aegis of extra-economic coercion —, Turkey would find itself impelled to a strict territorial logic. On the other hand, to date, the main form of 'acquisition' of territory by the country — at least in Asia — has been the institutional route, it remains to be seen how it will behave in Africa.

The institutional territorial logic is expressed above all in the already mentioned Organization of Turkic States (OET). But, to a considerable extent, this conduct is due to the correlation of forces, as Iran, Russia and China can be formidable adversaries if their vital interests are contradicted. Furthermore, to establish the OET, civilizational reasons — linguistic, cultural, and religious — were invoked to proceed with integration, so that it can present itself as something that is not aimed against any country in the region.

Still, there are at least three bottlenecks that could antagonize Turkey with Russia, China or Iran. The first is Kazakhstan, which is a founding member of the OET, but is seen by Russia as being historically attached to its zone of influence. exclusive. Xinjiang is called East Turkestan by the Gray Wolves but, admittedly, it belongs to China. Finally, Iran could go to war in defense of Armenia if Azerbaijan, which has Turkish support, seizes the Zangezur

corridor³⁶. These bottlenecks can, even in Asia, force Turkey to adopt a strict territorial logic. Also in this case, with serious implications for the International Order.

It is important to know how Turkey will behave in Africa. Despite its historical ties to the Maghreb and the Horn of Africa, Turkey has extended its influence on the Sahel. Between 2002 and 2022, Turkey expanded the number of embassies in Africa from 12 to 44 — an increase of 267%. Although the gateway is usually technical cooperation of a military nature — training, war material and even bases — institutional territorialism also appears in Africa. In the Sahel, it is expressed by Turkey's support for the projected regional Confederation, whose proponents are Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso (November 12, 2023). As well as Turkey's willingness to join the BRICS, after the group gave membership to Egypt and Ethiopia.

In Africa, the main chokepoints are France, Egypt and Ethiopia. With France, by virtue of the CFA Franc and its West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). It was the expression of French dominance in the region, and through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), it managed to obtain the support of Nigeria — which, in turn, is investigating Turkey's alleged ties with Boko Haram³⁷. In the case of Egypt, there is the dispute over Libya. And, eventually, with Ethiopia — with whom Turkey currently has good relations — due to its dispute with Somalia (a Turkish protectorate). The Ethiopians obtained the concession of a port on the Red Sea, in Somaliland, a region that the Somalis claim as an integral part of their territory. Therefore, in Africa too, it remains an open question which Turkish logic of territorialization will be dominant — whether institutional or strict.

After all, Egypt, Ethiopia and Nigeria are countries endowed with resources that have not yet been fully used for the benefit of their people. And which are eagerly disputed, not only by the USA, Russia, China, Turkey and Europe, but even by Brazil. The decision to place Egypt and Ethiopia in the BRICS — which have serious controversies between them —, and the visit of the Brazilian President to these two countries, clearly indicates Brazil's willingness to engage with the region. It remains to be seen whether, beyond

36 Zangezur Corridor - Located in Southern extreme of Armenia, through which the Yeraskh-Ordubad-Meghri-Horadiz-Baku railway passes, built in Soviet times, which importance increased as it allowed Turkey access to the Caspian Sea.

37 Boko Haram — Islamic fundamentalist group, with a Sunni branch, which operates in Northern Nigeria, Chad and Niger. Since 2015, affiliated itself with the Islamic State. In 2017, the Nigerian government reportedly seized a shipment of weapons coming from Turkey, for Boko Haram. Two years later, again, the African country's armed forces claimed to be investigating the terrorist group's connection with the Turks (BAGUDU, 2019, online).

Africa, Brazil will use the opportunity of the void in the Middle East for its own international insertion purposes.

Finally, the question remains: is Turkey's apparently erratic behavior not establishing a standard of conduct for emerging countries in a multipolar world? After all, Turkey cooperates directly and indirectly with the US. In the case of the first, offering security for American companies and investments (e.g. Somalia). In the second, exacerbating competition between land powers. As a member of NATO, Turkey competes with France and England (Rojava). And, as a candidate for BRICS membership, it competes with China (Xinjiang) and India (Pakistan).

Perhaps what seems obscure about Turkish behavior is precisely the fact that it anticipates the flexibility of alliances and independent conduct in foreign policy, required by multipolarity. As always, the purpose is to bring together the conditions to endogenize the Economic Decision Center, promote development and, in this way, pave the way for Turkey's entry into the organic core of capitalism.

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with Turkey's international relations and the impact of its choices in the International System (IS) in this new era marked by the return of competition between the world powers. Specifically, it discusses the Turkish dilemma, reduced to two possible courses of action: between adherence to revolutionary behavior, or association with the institutions of the Emerging Industrial Axis. This dilemma is confronted with Turkey's trajectory since the end of the Ottoman Empire, in an explanatory historical effort. As for strategic stability, it should be clarified that it is understood as the set of elements that shape the 'rules' of the game in a multipolar world. The question that guides the research is how will Turkey's international insertion take place? The hypothesis that runs through the text is that, unlike other times when Turkey has been subjugated by international constraints, this time it will be able to choose its form of insertion into the IS. The article is divided into five parts. The first concerns the predominance of necessity in Turkey's IR trajectory. The second deals with the legacy of extra-economic coercion, which the US used during unipolarity, and the challenges this poses for strategic stability - which must be approached from a multidimensional perspective. The third part deals with Turkey's insertion into the South-South Axis - it remains to be seen whether it will also join its institutions. The fourth part deals with revolutionary behavior. Finally, the fifth and last part deals with the role of the Middle East in the outcome of the Turkish dilemma.

KEYWORDS

Turkey's Foreign Policy; Strategic Stability; International Insertion; Revolutionary Behavior; South-South Axis.

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