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## TURKISH FOREIGN AIDS: TIKA CASE

**Abstract:** After World War II, relationship definition between states started to change; during bipolar system based world, interdependence started to be crowned between states. Meanwhile, thanks to ‘the Marshall Plan’ implemented by US, showed ‘foreign aid’ concept could be a tool for diplomacy to states. At that time on, very first steps of ‘foreign aids’ as a concept used as direct financing application by developed countries to underdeveloped or developing countries. After years, ‘foreign aids’ concept got evolved and got diversified, in terms of content and the number of aid providing countries. After dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), new foreign policy opportunities aroused for Turkey; those newly independent Turkic states provided a foreign policy destination for Turkey. Thus, Turkey founded TIKA, in order to claim this opportunity through providing technical assistance primarily to those newly independent Turkic states of the Central Asian and South Caucasian Turkic states via TIKA. Later on, in line with the developments both in domestic politics and in the international arena, Turkish foreign aid started to reach other countries in different parts of the world. Undoubtedly, it is clear that TIKA’s uniqueness and its having a pivotal role in Turkish Foreign Policy braced up from the ‘Soft Power’ concept. In this paper, its aimed to review TIKA’s activities in worldwide.

**Keywords:** TIKA, Turkish Foreign Policy, Foreign Aids, Soft Power.

### INTRODUCTION

Aftermaths of World War II echoed through countries by poverty, starvation and breakdown. Since 1945 in the international system, constituting sustainable peace sought in the concept of interdependency which must arouse on a common agenda for the states and thanks to the success of Marshall Plan that common agenda established between states in the terms of foreign aids. In the literature of International Relations, foreign aid(s) generally explained as; “international transfer of capital, goods, or services from a country or international organization for the benefit of the recipient country or its population”. Through foreign aids, underdeveloped or developing countries overcome their domestic obstacles with the support of donor states for a better future.

However, after the dissolution of USSR, effectiveness of the foreign aids has become more important according to changing nature of the international system; switching from bipolar to unipolar/multipolar world order, many countries suffered more than ever in order to fit into the new world order. Furthermore, foreign aids’ nature also changed from “capital, goods or services” to “development” aids as well. Due to those events in the international system, Turkey also founded her development aid agency at 1992, as “Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA)”.

Since that date, TIKA’s activities can be reviewed under two major periods; from 1992 to 2002 and from 2002 up to today. In the first period, TIKA focused its activities on young Turkic states, in the manner of technical infrastructure aids and TIKA completed 2241 projects during this period. In the second period, TIKA quadrupled its projects between 2003-2011 years, when those projects focused on periphery states such as (1) Afghanistan- %20.61, (2) Bosnia-Herzegovina - %6.76, (3) Palestine- %5.47 and (4) Lebanon- %3.89. Concisely, TIKA has changed the appearance of Turkey’s foreign policy and made it an active efficient actor in various far regions. Hence, TIKA has constituted a unique place for Turkey in this manner. Undoubtedly, it is clear that TIKA’s uniqueness and its having a pivotal role in Turkish Foreign Policy braced up from the ‘Soft Power’ concept. Now TIKA acting as a locomotive institution for Turkish foreign policy and having activities through 150 different locations with 50 project offices; thanks to TIKA’s activities around

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the world, at 2016, Turkey donated more than 6.5 Billion USD as foreign aid/humanitarian assistance and Turkey is 2<sup>nd</sup> of top donors in the world.(TIKA, 2016: 89) In this paper, it's aimed to review Turkish Foreign Policy with perspective of foreign aids in general, and through activities of TIKa in particular. After explaining TIKa's foundation and role in Turkish foreign policy, which is connoted with 'soft power' concept, TIKa's activities around different geographies will be reviewed.

#### **FOUNDATION OF TIKa**

After embracing 'soft power' concept and get to use 'soft power' tools in diplomacy, it widened the horizon of Turkish foreign policy. Considering its status as a peripheral state during the Cold War era, Turkey now has the vision of one of the central states of the international system regarding foreign policy actions in the global arena. This success in foreign policy is boosted by TIKa, one of the executive tools of Turkey's foreign policy in different regions and continents around the globe. In this way, foreign aid and humanitarian diplomacy are becoming key tools in states' foreign policy agenda. Thus, TIKa constitutes a unique institution for Turkey in this manner. It is clear that TIKa's uniqueness and pivotal role in foreign policy has been bestowed via the 'Soft Power' understanding in Turkish foreign policy (Akıllı, 2016a).

Before reviewing TIKa's operations in the Central and Eastern European region, it is essential to consider its roots, which date back to the early 1990s. After the dissolution of the USSR, the international system had to shift and reshape its structure due to the new world order that rose from the ashes of that bipolar world system. During this process, Turkey had to revise her foreign policy destinations according to the new opportunities around the periphery. For sure, this process gained momentum due to the newly emerged, cognate Turkic Republics after the dissolution of the USSR (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan). As a result, Turkey sought out partnership opportunities according to mutual Turkic origin. Prior to the 1990's, Turkey had very poor interactions with those states and their people. Many authors mentioned this type of low profile relationship status as a 'consent to resignation' from the region due to the dominant state identity of Turkey during that period – referred to as 'western' state identity arising from the Kemalist understanding of foreign policy and domestic politics. According to the western state identity understanding, Turkey's sole foreign policy destination must be to the 'west' world only. In other words, regions such as Central Asia, the Middle East, the Far East, Latin America and the Caribbean etc. were intentionally ignored. As mentioned earlier, after the Cold War, Turkey also needed to revise her foreign policy understanding and state identity as well (Akıllı 2016b).

Thus, Turkey expanded her 'helping hand' to cognate Turkic states at first in the manner of social, commercial, economic, educational and cultural projects and then to establish cooperation in various other areas. In order to coordinate and implement those operations in the region, TIKa was founded in 1992. Since then, TIKa's activities can be reviewed under two major periods; from 1992 to 2002 and from 2002 to today. In the first period, TIKa focused its activities on young Turkic states, in the manner of technical infrastructure aid, and TIKa completed 2241 projects during this period. In the second period, TIKa quadrupled its projects between 2003-2011. These projects focused on other periphery states such as (1) Afghanistan- %20.61, (2) Bosnia-Herzegovina - %6.76, (3) Palestine- %5.47 and (4) Lebanon- %3.89 (TIKA 2011a).

On October 24, 2011, with Decree Law Number 656, in order to enhance the technical partnership and coordination process, TIKa was reconstructed with "The Law on the Organization and Tasks of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Administration Directorate", which was put into force on publication in the Official Gazette Edition no. 28103, dated November 2, 2011 (TIKA History). With this reconstruction process, TIKa's activity area was enlarged to the whole globe, not being restricted only to the periphery or Turkic states as it had been before. These new activity areas brought new missions for TIKa: restorations of Ottoman legacies such as mosques, bridges,



caravanserai(s) etc. These new mission changes imply a new general approach in Turkish Foreign Policy as well.

In addition, TİKA's budget was increased nearly 10 times compared to the period between 1992-2002 and in 2011 TİKA provided 1.273.000.000 USD total aid to many countries (TİKA, 2011b). Considering these facts, it is clearly seen that TİKA has a major meaning and role in Turkish Foreign Policy and the ruling of the AK Party. Öktem compared TİKA with its most powerful equivalent in the world: the German International Cooperation Community (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit-GIZ), which has endorsements amounting to 2.6 Billion USD per year. But TİKA has three times this amount according to 2011 data (Öktem, 2012, p. 85). Nonetheless, Öktem implies that according to the 'Pro Active Foreign Policy' understanding of the Turkish Foreign Policy, TİKA widened its activity areas and services. He mentions that TİKA has a wide range of activity areas; from the Middle-East to the Balkans, from Central Asia to Latin America, and also has a wide range of services/aids in education, health, and development etc. (Öktem 2012).

### **SOFT POWER-TİKA-TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY**

Drawing on the conceptualization of soft power given by Joseph Nye Jr, the article studies two linked elements of Turkish soft power: *agents* and *behavior*. Turkey's soft power has gained importance thank to the gradual involvement of new state and non-state actors (*agents*) along with the adoption of novel frameworks, such as cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and humanitarian diplomacy (*behavior*) (Akıllı-Donelli 2016).

Power is one of the most central and yet problematic concepts in political science and international relations (IR), where it has a variety of forms, and features. In the most general sense, power may refer to any kind of influence exercised by objects, individuals, or groups upon each other (Dahl, 1968). One of the most influential definitions of *power* remains that of Max Weber, who defines power as the "probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (Weber 1967). In other words, power is a 'zero-sum' game, either you win or you lose. According to the literature, the best way to materialize national interests is to use military and economic power elements with a view to forcing other actors to undertake a cost-benefit calculation. In summary, most actors pursue a 'carrot and stick' policy in their foreign policies (Oğuzlu 2007). However, in a post-modernist and globalized society, 'soft' power, which is based on a 'value-based' notion of power, become increasingly important compared to 'hard' power military and economic resources. With plenty definitions of *power existing in IR*, this work assumes one definition asserted by Joseph Nye Jr, who argues that power is "the ability to influence the behavior of others to get desired outcomes one want" (Nye 2004). During last two decades Nye's concept of soft power became a widely known notion in International Relations discipline literature and elsewhere; it is now a term used by scholars, policymakers, and others but in many different ways (Akıllı-Donelli, 2016: 162-163). The origin of the concept being deeply related to analysis of US power and foreign policy during the 1980s, when rejectionist theories and interpretation of the international order had strength in mainstream International Relations discipline debates (Nye 2008a). The definition of soft power has been closely linked with Nye who first coined this term. The concept of "soft power", which Nye mentioned in his book, "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power (1990)", strengthened by his Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics (2004)", and further elaborated in "The Powers to Lead (2008)", is rooted in the idea that alternative power structures exist in international relations alongside with economic and military power. Soft power is neither an evolution or involution nor a substitute for hard power, it is simply another form of power. (Akıllı-Donelli 2016).



According to Nye, “the distinction between hard and soft power is one of degree, both in the nature of the *behavior* and in the tangibility of the *resource*” (Parmar-Cox 2010). Unlike the hard power, soft power explains fields of influence and attraction beyond military and economic indicators, it refers to a country’s social human capital. This is the reason why it is different from country to country (Akıllı-Donelli 2016). Soft power is an autonomous form of power, which has its rules, features and characteristics, and “does not depend on hard power” (Nye 1990). According to Nye, soft power could be better seen as a strategy for a country to gain its objectives without coercion or payments, but with attraction founded on culture, political values, and legitimate and moral foreign policy. Moreover, it helps to shape international institutions and policy agenda. To Nye soft power explains the “attractiveness of a country’s *culture*, political notions and policies”, the power of attraction, as opposed to the power derived from military force and economic sanctions. In sum, soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others, without the use of force, coercion or violence. That is co-opt people rather than coerce them (Akıllı-Donelli 2016).

As we have seen, the co-optive or soft power rest on *resources*, *behavior* and *agents* that hold them together. *Resources* are tangible or intangible capabilities, goods, instruments at disposal; *behavior* is the action itself, the manner or way to act, the conduct of *agent*. In terms of resources, soft power resources are the assets that produce attraction; and cooptive power can be seen in the attraction exerted by an agent through a certain behavior (Akıllı-Donelli 2016). According to Nye, soft power of a country rests on three resources: its *culture* (in places where it is attractive to others), its *political values* (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its *foreign policies* (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority). This is because “in international politics, soft power largely produced by resources of an organization or a country that relies on values expressed in its culture; thus, this expression reflects as an outcome both for internal practices and policies as well as relations with others” (Nye 2008b). Culture, education, arts, media, film, literature, higher education (universities, research centers, think tank, etc.), non-governmental organizations, tourism, platforms for economic cooperation and diplomacy are all soft resources to be used to produce and to feed soft power (Seib 2009).

Another important feature of Joseph Nye’s theory, also useful to understand Turkish foreign policy agenda, is about the *agents* or *actors* that really hold soft power. The definition of hard and soft power given by Nye does not differentiate between agents either (Akıllı-Donelli 2016). For many years international affairs has been understood in state-centric terms, and only recent studies consider non-state actors in terms of contributions and challenges to a government’s decision-making process (Snyder-Sapin-Hudson, 2003). Even if Nye is commonly known as one of the fathers of interdependence theory in his works there is a lack of attention given to non-state actors or agents. However, we can argue that institutions, large corporations, civil society’s organizations and movements, and even individual hold soft power (Carlsnaes-Risse-Simmons 2000; Nye-Donahue 2000).

#### **TIKA’S ACTIVITIES IN DIFFERENT REGIONS BY NUMBERS**

In 2016, Turkey provided 7.943,3 Million USD for foreign aids (TIKA 2016); that consists of bilateral development aids, development assistance and humanitarian assistances. Below there are countries that received top bilateral official development aids that Turkey have provided in 2016. Those countries are: Syria (5.851,23 Million USD), Somalia (59,63 Million USD), Palestine (43,12 Million USD), Afghanistan (32,69 Million USD), Bosnia-Herzegovina (30,29 Million USD), Kyrgyzstan (25,39 Million USD), Macedonia (18,96 Million USD), Kazakhstan (18,96 Million USD), Azerbaijan (14,24 Million USD) and Niger (11,91 Million USD).(TIKA, 2016: 19)

As mentioned at above, Turkey have provided foreign aids towards to world in many different regions. Considering to 2015-2016 years, Turkey have almost doubled the amount that have provided in 2015 at 2016. According to the TIKA’s report, mentioned regions are: Europe (2015:

222,9 Million USD-2016: 190,4 Million USD), America (2015: 19 Million USD-2016: 6,5 Million USD), Africa (2015: 183,4 Million USD-2016: -306,2 Million USD), Oceania (2015: 0,2 Million USD-2016: 0,5 Million USD), Middle East (2015: 2988,4 Million USD-2016: 5943,2 Million USD), Far East (2015: 6,1 Million USD-2016: 13,4 Million USD), South and Middle Asia (2015: 256,6 Million USD-2016: 191,5 Million USD), Asia regional (2015: 169,3 Million USD-2016: 0,1 Million USD), undistributed to regions (2015: 0 Million USD-2016: 198,1 Million USD) and total number of (2015: 3845,9 Million USD-2016: 6237,5 Million USD).

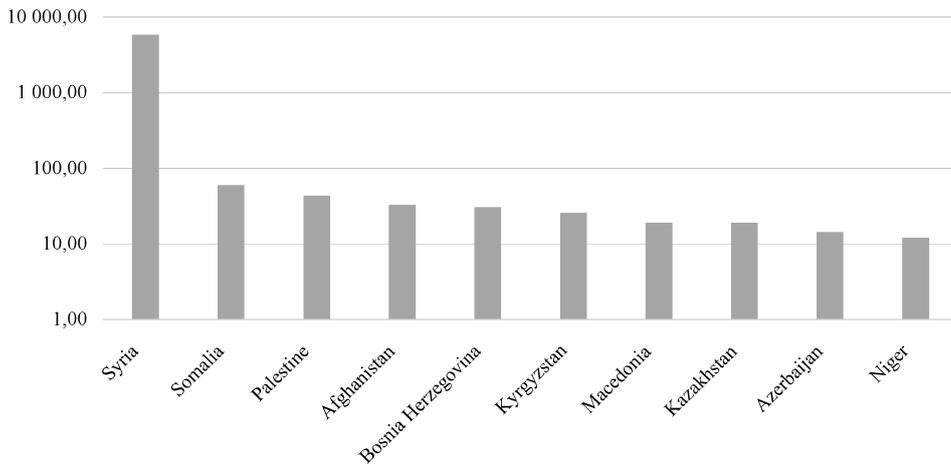


Fig. 1. Countries That Received Top Bilateral Official Development Aids at 2016

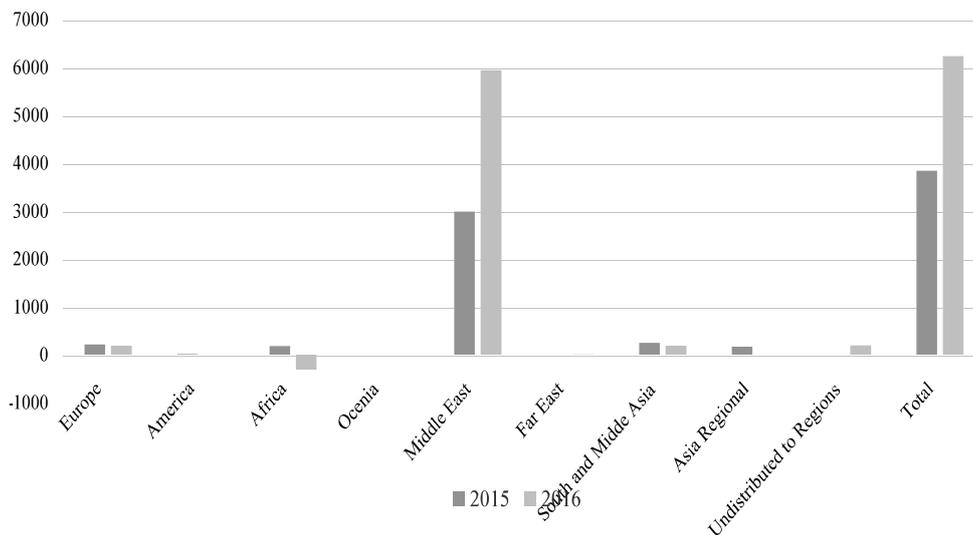


Fig. 2. Regional Distribution of Turkey's Bilateral Official Development Aids



## CONCLUSION

TIKA's foundation was a step towards long forgotten cousins under Soviet regime, a step to empower cultural and state level bonds between newly founded Turkic states after the dissolution of USSR. With that step, it's expected that Turkey could forge close relations with those states through foreign aids and development projects; so, this attempt would open a new foreign policy destination for Turkey. Considering to historical events, indeed that step opened a new destination for Turkish foreign policy for this manner.

Since 1990s, Turkey using foreign aids as a tool for foreign policy. Hence, contrary to its starting origin, Turkish foreign aids, which focused only on Central Asia and South Caucasus towards to newly independent Turkic states, now reaching out all around the world through TIKa. From Bosnia-Herzegovina to Bishkek, from Kabul to Bogota; TIKa carries on activities over 150 different locations with 50 project offices. Thanks to TIKa's activities around the world, at 2016, Turkey donated more than 7 Billion USD as foreign aid/humanitarian assistance and Turkey is 2<sup>nd</sup> of top donors in the world.

Through this reach out, friendship and security circles also grow and wraps around Turkey. Furthermore, being a major donor for foreign aids, also enhances Turkey's positive image abroad and empowers Turkey's 'Soft Power' capacity.

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