

# Turkey, the Caspian Region, & the Clash of Civilizations

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper argues that Turkey’s contemporary role in the Caspian Sea region directly challenges Samuel P. Huntington’s civilizational paradigm. While his work *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) is now a rather dated contribution to International Relations Theory, Huntington’s ideas have continued to reverberate in the post-9/11 world. As the conflict between the US and the Islamic world drags on in Iraq and the Middle East, the allure of Huntingtonesque arguments may be all the stronger.

The civilization that most conforms to Huntington’s paradigm is the Islamic civilization. Within the geographical area of this civilization, the Caspian Sea presents an ideal region for study. Historically, this region has been an arena for the struggles of major global powers. In the nineteenth century, this pattern of conflict was dubbed The Great Game. Russia, China, and the US constitute the global powers now engaged in this pattern of competition. Therefore, the region provides possible support for those who endorse a clash of civilizations paradigm.

However, analysis of Turkey’s interaction in this region undermines this case. Turkey is an historically integral part of the Islamic world and cannot easily be dismissed by Huntington as an anomaly. This paper employs historical event data analysis across global, regional, and state levels. The conclusion of this research is that Turkey’s international relationships do not reflect a growing trend toward a clash of civilizations. This examination, then, may be a timely reminder that the civilizational approach lacks utility in International Relations Theory.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the post 9/11 world, questions linger about the conflict between the United States, Islamic countries, and extremists. One popular explanation of this conflict is Samuel P. Huntington's "clashing civilizations." While Huntington's book *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) is now a rather dated contribution to International Relations Theory, the allure of his arguments is still strong. Even the US congress has entertained his ideas. On September 14, 2006, the House of Representatives Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia held a hearing entitled, "Is there a clash of civilizations?: Islam, democracy, and U.S.-Middle East and Central Asia Policy."<sup>1</sup>

The Islamic civilization appears at the center of debates over the clash of civilizations. Within the geographical bounds of the Islamic civilization, the Caspian Sea area presents an ideal region for study. The Caspian is the largest inland body of water in the world, bordering Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Iran. Historically, this region has hosted the struggles of major global powers. In the nineteenth century, this pattern of conflict came to be known as The Great Game. Today, Russia, China, and the US are the powers competing for regional influence. Therefore, Caspian Sea history possibly provides support for a clash of civilizations paradigm.

However, within the region lies the secular Republic of Turkey. The intimate ties between Turkey and Western states do not conform to Huntington's paradigm. Historically an essential part of the Islamic civilization, Turkey also cannot easily be dismissed as an anomaly.

The purpose of this paper is to challenge Huntingtongesque explanations of foreign affairs. The hypothesis is that Turkey's foreign relations with the global powers (Russia, China, and the US) and the states of the Caspian Sea region (Iran, Caucasus, and Central Asia), cannot be explained by Huntington. To evaluate Huntington's theory, this research paper will employ historical event data analysis at the global and regional levels.

## BACKGROUND Huntington's Argument

Huntington argues that contemporary international relations are best understood through a civilizational approach. He posits that conflict between civilizations will drive the conflicts of modern states. His approach requires grouping the world's states into several civilizations,

considering the dominant religious background of each.<sup>2</sup> In *Restructuring of World Peace: On the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, Johan Galtung develops a theory similar to *Clash of Civilizations*.<sup>3</sup> Published also in the same year, was Joel Kotkin's *Tribes*. Kotkin also attempts to divide the world into civilizational groupings, which he calls "tribes."<sup>4</sup>

## Civilization as a Concept

Scholars who have found Huntington's proposal valid appear to be few in number. After *Foreign Affairs* published Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations," one of the first scholars to respond was Albert Weeks. Weeks dismissed the utility of civilizations as a useful concept, citing the Persian Gulf War. In that conflict, Arab-Muslim states allied against each other with states from other civilizations. Weeks's argument suggested that the states of the Islamic civilization did not behave in a similar enough manner for Huntington's theory to possess any descriptive or predictive utility (an argument to which this paper contributes).<sup>5</sup>

Other scholars have noted the difficulty of defining civilizations.<sup>6</sup> If any of Huntington's religiously defined civilizations conform to his assumptions, however, it would be the Islamic civilization. Jonathan Fox develops this argument in "Two Civilizations and Ethnic Conflict: Islam and the West." He too notes the difficulty of defining civilizations and attempts to supplement Huntington's broad demarcations with ethnic considerations.<sup>7</sup>

## Salience of the Islamic Civilization

In general, Fox's quantitative examination of ethnic conflict does not support Huntington. However, Fox's examination does provide a basis for explaining why Huntingtongesque ideas might ring true in the Western mind. First, Fox notes a slight increase in post-Cold War conflicts between Islamic groups and the West. Second, the majority of all inter-civilizational ethnic conflicts involve Islamic groups. Third, the majority of ethnic conflicts which involve Islamic groups are inter-civilizational conflicts.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the Islamic civilization appears to provide salient support for Huntington.

## The Caspian Region, The Great Game, & Global Competition

Within the geographic area of Huntington's Islamic civilization lies the Caspian Sea region. Literature on this region's history reveals that global powers have consistently competed for power and influence in the region since the era of The Great Game. The Great

Game refers to nineteenth century competition between the British, Tsarist, and Ottoman empires. Some credit the term to Arthur Conolly but it was popularized by Kipling.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the British Empire expanded northward through India, while the Tsarist Russian Empire moved southward into Central Asia, converging on the borders of the Ottoman Empire. After Britain made several unsuccessful attempts to subdue Afghanistan, The Great Game was eventually forgotten as the world entered World War II.<sup>9</sup> Following World War II, the world saw the Cold War development of a bi-polar balance of power between the Soviet Union (USSR) and the US. Of the Caspian Sea region, Maggie Gallagher noted that the Cold War standoff assumed characteristics of The Great Game.<sup>10</sup> Afghanistan found itself threatened again when it was invaded by the Soviets in late 1979. With Pakistani and American support, the invasion was repulsed. The USSR began to disintegrate soon after.

Today, the geopolitical vacuum left by the USSR has begun to dissipate as Russia, China, and the US approach new levels of engagement in the region. The two primary motivations driving these states to greater involvement are their respective energy and security interests.

**Energy interests.** Caspian oil production accounts for 2.8 percent of the world's oil supply, while gas production accounts for 5 percent.<sup>11</sup> Russia controls the majority of Caspian energy transportation routes.<sup>12</sup> Russia and the US have begun to compete for control of these routes in a manner that has been characterized as a zero-sum game concerned with relative gains.<sup>13</sup> China has also been compelled to join the energy competition due to soaring energy requirements.<sup>14</sup>

**Security interests.** All three powers have security interests in the region. Russian concerns include conflicts in Chechnya and Abkhazia.<sup>15</sup> China is concerned with the stability of its Xingjian province, undermined by Islamic movements.<sup>16</sup> US security interest is a direct result of 9/11. In response, the US has established several military bases in the region as it pursues the War on Terror.

Thus, it can be argued that the era of a New Great Game has arrived (a term coined by Ahmed Rashid).<sup>17</sup> This perspective has been advocated not only by Western scholars but by scholars such as Vladimir Radyuhin, who

has written on Russia's role in the Great Game.<sup>18</sup> Once again these powers fit into Huntington's divisions of civilizations, reinforcing the Caspian's relevance to this paper's research.

### Turkey's Pivotal Role

The Republic of Turkey is a major state in the Caspian Sea region. It straddles the Sea of Marmara, bridges Europe and the Middle East, and controls access between the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Further, it sits directly adjacent to Iran and has a population of more than 70 million. Huntington notes Turkey's importance himself, arguing that it is the state best prepared, militarily and economically, to lead the Islamic civilization.<sup>19</sup>

However, Turkey also challenges Huntington's theory. With a predominantly Sunni Muslim population but a secular government, Turkey is unique from most other states in Huntington's Islamic civilization. In spite of his praise for Turkey, Huntington argues that Turkey's secular-Western bent will prohibit it from assuming the lead of its civilization. He characterizes Turkey as a "torn country," a special theoretical category he has created. Huntington defines torn countries as those that belong to one civilization but whose leaders desire to adopt another. Turkey's secular government, Western allies, and its attempts to join the EU all bolster Huntington's case.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it is vital to analyze Turkey. Either the Turkish case serves to demonstrate Huntington's assumptions, or reveals shortcomings in his theory that he disguises in a superfluous theoretical category.

Turkey has long been an integral part of the Islamic civilization. During The Great Game, Turkey was the heart of the Ottoman Empire. Erik-Jan Zürcher argues that Turkey is the direct heir of this empire, receiving its dominant ethnic and cultural elements, as well as its cultural and administrative centers.<sup>21</sup> If Turkey can "westernize" despite such ties to its civilization, then what worth is civilizational identity in determining state behavior?

### GLOBAL COMPETITION

To place Turkey's relations with Russia, China, and the US in perspective, a brief analysis of the New Great Game is necessary, as is a summary of the post-Cold War history of each power. An in-depth examination of each power after 2000 is provided to complete analysis of today's global competition.

**Russia**

Russia has the longest history of involvement in the Caspian Sea region. It has had vested regional interests since The Great Game. Even after the collapse of the USSR, Russia did not, nor has it yet, ever completely lost its stake in the region. Control in the Caspian is not just an issue of regional security, or the energy market, but one of pride.<sup>22</sup>

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the end of the Cold War. As the USSR disintegrated, Soviet treaties came into question. To ensure the stability of the Caspian region, the Minsk Agreement was signed on December 21, 1991. The Russian Federation and the former Soviet republics of the region agreed to guarantee all treaties signed with the former USSR. Iranian and Soviet agreements regarding control of the Caspian Sea, however, were invalidated. The fledgling states of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan wanted to share the sea's resources.

In 1994, Kazakhstan drafted a proposal on the legal status of the Caspian Sea, prompting other states to advocate their own interpretations. Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan signed the Ashgabat Declaration two years later. This agreement laid out a plan for the division of the Caspian, and Azerbaijan was in danger of being locked out of negotiations. In 1997, oil disputes broke out between Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Iran. Russia intervened and, as a result, Azerbaijan began working bilaterally with Russia to officially settle these disputes. In April 1998, both states also established a formal agreement to divide the seabed on their coasts.

Following 9/11, Russia cooperated with the new US military presence in the region. Both states share an interest in combating terrorism. However, Russia is concerned with the length of the US presence.<sup>23</sup> Increased US involvement has changed the military power balance in the region. Previously, Russia and China were providing security through entities such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Now, Russia is working to reinvigorate these regional security structures. In 2002, Russia formed the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSO) with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus, and Armenia.<sup>24</sup>

Russia also has an economic interest in the Caspian region. One of the greatest issues is the rancorous debate over the division of the Caspian Sea. Russia has labored to develop an agreement that would be mutually beneficial

for all the littoral states while maintaining Russian hegemony.<sup>25</sup> In sum, Russia is working to prevent its role as a regional hegemon from being undermined militarily or economically. Indeed, economic advantages appear just as essential to Russia as military dominance.

**China**

China's entry into The New Great Game indicates that it can no longer be considered just an East-Asian power. It has established trade missions in every Central Asian state and begun to enter the Caspian oil industry.<sup>26</sup> China has turned its Xinjiang province into an economic hub. This region shares its border with Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.<sup>27</sup> Demographically, China's presence is being felt as well, with more than 100,000 Chinese now living in Kazakhstan.<sup>28</sup>

As China engages this region, it has an interest in balancing the influence of the US and Russia. US bases in Central Asia place US military forces uncomfortably close to China's western border. China, Russia, and the other members of the SCO have called for the United States to set a deadline to withdraw from military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. While Russian and Chinese relations have been relatively cooperative since 2000, it would be a mistake to forget that they are competing for oil. Cooperation on security issues may prove secondary to China's demand for oil (particularly if the US threat fades). Economic growth in China has fueled voracious consumption of energy. The growing demand for oil is probably one of the most important factors driving Chinese foreign policy in the region.<sup>29</sup>

**United States**

The US has a unique position in the New Great Game, as a power half-way around the globe. After the demise of the USSR, the US began to engage the region. The US provided approximately 1.9 billion dollars to Caspian states between 1992 and 1999. By 1994, the Clinton administration had established an agency devoted to Caspian policy. In 1998, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright traveled to the region. Also in that year, President Clinton appointed a special advisor for Caspian affairs.<sup>30</sup>

The region's oil supplies are one of the United States' leading interests but should not be considered a lone driver of US policy. Currently, the Bush administration appears to place counter-terrorism above economic priorities. Strong US financial and military involvement

quickly followed 9/11, including the establishment of the military bases that have concerned China. As a result of its financial and military commitment, the US has become a major player in the Caspian. However, because the US lacks geographical proximity, Russia and China may ultimately have more regional influence.

While US aid is attractive to Caspian states, the US presence can be uncomfortable. A commitment to unilateralism is one cause for unease. US normative goals have also unsettled the region's authoritarian leaders, who feel endangered by US promotion of democracy. Uzbekistan illustrates this point. Uzbekistan was a significant recipient of new US aid, but turned toward Russia and China as the West criticized its human rights violations. Still, the US has experienced successes beyond the military realm. In December of 2006, the new US-supported South Caucasus pipeline began carrying natural gas to Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey (bypassing Russia). This pipeline is planned to extend to Europe, limiting Russian and Iranian control of Caspian oil.<sup>31</sup>

### **TURKEY IN THE REGION**

With an overview of competition at the global level complete, attention will now be focused on the regional level. A brief history of the Republic of Turkey will be followed by a discussion of Turkish foreign relations with (a) the three global powers, (b) the Caucasus states, (c) the Central Asian states, and (d) the Islamic Republic of Iran. Utilizing qualitative analysis of Turkey's foreign relations since 2000, this paper's hypothesis will be tested against the historical trends in Turkey's relationships.

#### **Republic of Turkey**

The Republic of Turkey was declared in 1923, after Mustafa Kemal Pasha led the War of Independence. Under Kemal, Turkey began pursuing modernization and westernization by secularizing its government. Kemal's Republican People's Party introduced sweeping changes in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1926, the Turkish parliament repealed Islamic Holy Law, and the Romanized alphabet was adopted two years later. A second round of reforms followed in the 1930s. In 1934, women were granted suffrage. During that era, the Turkish state required that all citizens register family names. It was at this time that Kemal had the family name Ataturk ("Father Turk") granted to him.

Since Kemal, the Republic of Turkey has experienced periods of turmoil but remained committed to secular,

modern government. In 1960, junior Turkish officers staged a military coup, ushering in the Second Republic. A new constitution established a bicameral legislature and a Constitutional Court. Then in 1980, the Turkish military again seized control of the government. Two years later, a national referendum was held on another constitution and the Third Republic officially began. The Turkish military has maintained its determination to protect Turkey's secular government, as evidenced when Prime Minister Erbakan was forced to continue limitations on Islam in public life in 1997.

The beginning of Turkey's modern relationship with the West can be traced to World War II. Just before the war concluded, Turkey officially entered the conflict on the side of the Allies in order to receive a place in the new United Nations. During the Cold War, Turkey maintained its Western alliances, joining NATO in 1952. By 1959, Turkey had applied for associate membership in the European Economic Community. During the 1960s, however, the Cyprus Crisis began to simmer. In 1974, Turkey launched an invasion of Cyprus, damaging its relationship with the US and Europe. The US cut aid to Turkey, and Turkey retaliated by closing US bases. It was not until July of 1978 that these actions were rescinded.

Turkey's attempts to become economically integrated with Europe appear to have hit a wall. In 1978, Turkey's application for membership in the European Economic Community was refused due to the state's lack of political freedom. In 1997, Turkey found itself snubbed again when the EU rejected Turkey's bid for membership. This stunned Turkey, which had held associate membership since 1964. It wasn't until 1999 that the EU readmitted Turkey as a candidate.

However, with the US, Turkey found a significant ally. Relations recovered from the Cyprus Crisis and, during the Kuwait Crisis and the Persian Gulf War, Turkey served as a critical partner in the coalition against Iraq. Considering this reconciliation, the positive US-Turkey Cold War relationship, the negative Russia-Turkey Cold War relationship, and Turkey's weaker ties with China (which will be examined later), it was safe to say that Turkey's strongest relationship with a global power was with the United States.

#### **Turkey and the United States**

The degree of cooperation between Ankara and Washington has been an example of the positive relations that can occur between diverse civilizations.

However, since 2000, there has been new tension in this relationship. The following analysis will attempt to determine if this tension could be indicative of a growing trend toward civilizational conflict or if it is merely one of the up and downs that has historically occurred in Turkey's relationship with the West.

In 2000, the US Congress considered a bill declaring that the Ottoman Empire had committed genocide against the Armenian people. This raised a negative response from Turkey. Sharper disagreement followed with the war in Iraq. As early as December 2, 2002, the US was pressuring Turkey for assistance. Reluctant, Turkey requested promises of significant economic aid and US support for its EU candidacy.<sup>32</sup> Later, it was reported that Turkey had again not been accepted for EU membership. Some EU officials even disclosed that US support had actually negatively impacted Turkey's application.<sup>33</sup> The negativity of association with the US provides reason for the Turks to be cautious. While Turkey was negotiating with the US over Iraq, the Turkish Prime Minister was trying to repair Turkey's image with its neighbors by visiting Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Arab League members.<sup>34</sup>

Despite these tensions, the US has continued to express how valuable Turkey is as an ally. In 2003, President Bush praised Turkey for its commitment to secular governance.<sup>35</sup> The Turkish Foreign Minister reciprocated, expressing desire for reconciliation. In 2005, President Bush and Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan held a meeting to redefine and repair the relationship – a relationship the US has qualified as vital.<sup>36</sup> The Turkish Foreign Minister and the US Secretary of State then met on July 5th and announced a “shared vision” on a number of international issues.<sup>37</sup> Since then, another genocide bill in the US Congress has stirred tensions, but neither side appears to see any end to a close diplomatic relationship.

Though the Iraq war may have strained relations, cooperation on military and security issues has persisted over the past six years. In 2000, the Turkish government allowed US aircraft to extend their use of Turkish bases.<sup>38</sup> In November of 2001, Turkey (the only Muslim state in NATO) announced it would send forces to join the US-led invasion of Afghanistan. US officials placed Turkey at the head of a multinational force consisting of Muslim troops. Since 2004, Turkey has been allowing the US to use an airbase in the south.<sup>39</sup> The creation of Kurdistan in northern Iraq has exacerbated Turkey's fears

that its Kurdish population will try to gain independence. To prevent the Kurdish issue from weakening the relationship, the US Ambassador to Turkey agreed to join the fight against members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (a Kurdish terrorist organization committed to the creation of an independent Kurdistan).<sup>40</sup>

In the realm of economics as well, some tension has emerged as Turkey has begun to expand its dealings with Iran. In August of 2000, Turkey signed a deal to import Iranian natural gas in spite of US protests.<sup>41</sup> Still, economic ties between the US and Turkey have continued. On November 28, 2000, Turkey signed a \$1.5 billion contract with Boeing.<sup>42</sup> On April 18, 2001, President Bush made it clear that the US would continue supporting Turkey's economic reforms.<sup>43</sup> In 2002, the US hosted the Turkish Prime Minister as Turkey pursued loans from the International Monetary Fund.<sup>44</sup> By 2005, the US was praising the development of the Turkish economy.<sup>45</sup>

### Turkey and Russia

Historically, Russia and Turkey have had antagonistic ties which date back to the nineteenth century when Tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire were engaged in The Great Game. Competition between the two countries emerged again in the Cold War era when Turkey allied itself with the West against the aggression of the USSR. Today the barriers to a closer Turkey-Russia relationship may be disappearing.

In 2001, Russia and Turkey signed “Eurasian Partnership Blueprints” affirming state sovereignty and a commitment to the UN and other international organizations.<sup>46</sup> After 9/11, Russia and Turkey realized a shared concern for terrorism as they cooperated with the US-led War on Terror. On Iraq, however, both opposed a US invasion. These agreements may have played a role in Russian President Putin's visit to Ankara in 2004 (the first visit by a Russian president). The Turkish Prime Minister soon visited Russia in turn. Regarding Iran and its nuclear program, Turkey has also exhibited willingness to collaborate with Russia. Both states argue that isolating Iran might foster conflict that will damage regional trade and stir chaos in the Middle East.

Still, relations remain touchy on security issues. Armenia and Turkey have hostile relations and, thus, Turkey has found Russia's military support of that state troubling. Russia, anxious to regain control of Chechnya has suspected Turkish support for Chechen fighters. In

November 2001, Russia and Turkey began to address their differences when they signed a plan for enhanced bilateral cooperation (including efforts to fight terrorism).<sup>47</sup> Two months later, both signed a framework of agreements for cooperation and training also designed to relieve these concerns.<sup>48</sup> Russia has also courted Turkey as a potential arms consumer. In 2005, Turkey was reported to be constructing new anti-aircraft complexes with Russia.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps the greatest remaining security related barrier between the two is Turkey's status as a NATO member.

Since the collapse of the USSR, Turkey and Russia have been developing closer economic ties. One of the best examples is the construction of the Blue Stream pipeline. In 2000, the Turkish Minister of Energy announced that Russia had gained the lead in the race to deliver natural gas to Turkey.<sup>50</sup> Russia is currently Turkey's top gas supplier, delivering two-thirds of its imports. Total bilateral trade in 2004 exceeded 10 billion dollars, making Russia Turkey's second largest commercial partner after Germany. In 2007, total bilateral trade reached 25 billion dollars.<sup>51</sup>

### Turkey and China

Ties between China and Turkey remain friendly but weak. In April of 2000, Turkey and China signed a joint communiqué on bilateral ties.<sup>52</sup> In 2002, the Chinese communicated interest in Turkish foreign affairs when it diplomatically entered the Cyprus controversy.<sup>53</sup> In 2004, Turkish and Chinese justice ministers dialogued on how to improve bi-lateral relations, and Turkey reminded China that it values mutual friendship.<sup>54</sup> Both states have also served as ambassadors to Iran and advocate negotiation regarding Iran's nuclear program.

On February 14, 2000, the first bilateral security cooperation agreement between Turkey and China was signed.<sup>55</sup> By 2003, China and Turkey met specifically to discuss cooperation on counterterrorism, and two years later Turkey indicated plans to work with the Chinese air force on air defense development.<sup>56</sup> Discussions of military exchanges continued through 2006.<sup>57</sup>

In 2000, the communiqué on bi-lateral affairs also signaled growing economic ties. Plans to reinvigorate the old Silk Road was one example.<sup>58</sup> The following year, China promised to increase imports from Turkey by ten times.<sup>59</sup> In 2003, Turkish State Minister Kursad Tuzmen said that exports to China would increase up to \$500 million by the end of the year.<sup>60</sup> And in 2006, Turkey sent a delegation to China to investigate opportunities to

increase the penetration of Chinese markets.<sup>61</sup>

In summary, Turkey appears to desire stable, cooperative relationships with all three global powers. It also seems to be achieving these ends. As an Islamic state, however, such cooperation with powers of three different civilizations is surprising. In the following investigation of Turkey's relations with the Caspian states, the possibility that Turkey is a "torn country" will be explored.

### Turkey and the Caspian States

Now that examination of Turkey's relationship with the global powers is complete, it is time to analyze Turkey's relationship with other states in the region. Turkish relations with these so-called Caspian States will be discussed in three sections: (1) the Caucasus States of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia; (2) the Central Asian States of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan; and (3) Turkish ties to Iran. Iran is considered separately because it is a major Caspian state of equal status with Turkey and because of the contrast that Iranian foreign relations present.

### The Caucasus States

**Armenia.** In regard to Turkey's relations with Armenia, historical enmity has created a nearly insurmountable wall of tension. This stems from the history of violent treatment Armenians suffered in the waning days of the Ottoman Empire. The antagonism between the Christian Armenians and Muslim Turks could be perceived as a clash between civilizations.

Some efforts have been made since 2000 to reconcile these two states. In 2002, Armenia agreed to open relations with Turkey without preconditions. Turkey remained aloof, demanding that Armenia halt invasions into Azerbaijan and drop claims to Turkish territory.<sup>62</sup> In 2003, renewed effort emerged as Armenia began to consider concessions to Turkey.<sup>63</sup> Later that year, Turkey announced it would consider renewing ties with Armenia.<sup>64</sup> When Armenia appeared in 2004 to have failed to honor the agreed-upon concessions, Turkey announced that it would again suspend relations.<sup>65</sup> The fact that the EU has suggested it wants to see resolution might continue to prompt Turkey to consider renewing its relations with Armenia. So far, however, progress has stalled.

**Azerbaijan.** The relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan is quite a contrast to tension with Armenia.

Although Azerbaijan is primarily populated by Sh'ia Muslims, and Turkey by Sunni Muslims, both have had close relations over the past six years. Azerbaijan has appreciated Turkish support against Armenian aggression. In 2003, Turkish President Erdogan asserted his commitment to expanding bi-lateral relations with Azerbaijan.<sup>66</sup> In 2004, Azerbaijan expressed the feeling that Turkey is one of the only states that understands its situation with Armenia.<sup>67</sup>

Turkey's ties to Azerbaijan are also economic. In 2000, Azerbaijani President Aliyev announced a concession on tariffs for the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.<sup>68</sup> The next year, Aliyev signed a 15-year deal with Turkish President Sezer to sell natural gas from the Shah Denis field in the Caspian Sea.<sup>69</sup> In May of 2005, this new oil pipeline opened, leading the way for a strong economic link between these two states.

**Georgia.** The relationship between Turkey and Georgia, which has a large Christian population, has been rather positive as well. On September 30, 2001, Azerbaijan and Georgia signed an agreement to transport Azeri oil across Georgian territory and into Turkey.<sup>70</sup> Georgia's agreement meant that Turkey could now access Azerbaijani oil. Since this agreement, Georgia and Turkey have issued much praise for the success of their relationship.<sup>71</sup> Since 2000, both militaries have engaged in joint training.<sup>72</sup> In 2002, the Georgian government was working with the Turks on mutual security concerns regarding the Russians and the Caucasus.<sup>73</sup> Just before the year ended in 2006, Turkey signed an agreement to supply Georgia with natural gas.<sup>74</sup>

### The Central Asian States

**Kazakhstan.** Turkey and Kazakhstan share cordial relations and, since 2000, these two states have been hammering out plans on trade.<sup>75</sup> In April, the Caspian Pipeline Consortium awarded Turkey a \$45 million contract to build a pipeline from Kazakhstan's Tengiz oil field to the Black Sea.<sup>76</sup> In 2001, Turkey donated a Coast Guard boat for Kazakhstan's use in the Caspian Sea. At that time, Turkey was also training Kazakh pilots.<sup>77</sup> By March 4, 2002, Kazakhstan and Turkey could mark ten years of friendly diplomatic ties. That year, Turkey granted one million dollars worth of military supplies to Kazakhstan.<sup>78</sup> These two states also held a joint program to facilitate cooperation on economic and social issues.<sup>79</sup> In 2003, the Turkish military made another grant to Kazakhstan for of 1.5 million dollars.<sup>80</sup> Turkey and Kazakhstan also signed a Commercial and Economical

Cooperation Treaty. Another donation of over a million dollars was made by Turkey to Kazakhstan's military in 2005.<sup>81</sup> By 2007, trade volume between these two states had exceeded 1.5 billion dollars.<sup>82</sup>

**Turkmenistan.** Turkey and Turkmenistan share a close cultural and ethnic history. Early in 2000, Turkmenistan and Turkey signed an energy agreement.<sup>83</sup> The next year, it was reported that Turkey had donated a language lab for Turkmen military students.<sup>84</sup> In 2002, as Turkish military aid continued, ties were described as "brotherly."<sup>85</sup> Through 2003, Turkish President Erdogan urged deeper cooperation on energy.<sup>86</sup> On November 25, 2003, however, there was an assassination attempt on the life of Turkmen President Niyazov. In this plot, several Turkish citizens were arrested, creating a scandal that shook diplomatic relations. Since that time, there has been little to report on Turkish-Turkmen relations, beyond possible shipments of Turkmen natural gas in a deal that Iran and Turkey have worked on.

**Uzbekistan.** Ties between Turkey and Uzbekistan have been strained in the past. The source of this conflict originated in 1999, when Uzbekistan accused Turkey of harboring Islamic extremists who were plotting to assassinate Uzbek President Karimov. Uzbekistan then shut down Turkish schools, prompting Turkey to recall its ambassador. The next year, Turkey reached out for a diplomatic solution and the Uzbeks reciprocated.<sup>87</sup> In 2001, the first Joint Economic Council meeting was held between Turkey and Uzbekistan. Though delayed due to diplomatic tensions, this meeting signaled an effort to resume cooperation. Until this meeting, these two states had only three agreements on trade.<sup>88</sup> By 2003, the Uzbek Foreign Minister Sadyk Safayev was visiting Ankara to sign a number of cooperation accords.<sup>89</sup> Cooperation has continued, and Turkey has waived visa requirements for limited visits by Uzbek citizens.<sup>90</sup>

### Turkey and Iran

Iran is a major state in Huntington's Islamic Civilization. Huntington argues that Iran is a prime example of the trouble states found in the Islamic civilization, and that the rivalry between Iran and the US provides a good example for a clash of civilizations.<sup>91</sup> Strategically located between Central Asia and the Arabian Peninsula, Iran borders the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea. With a population of nearly 70 million people, Iran is roughly the same size as Turkey. Iran possesses a strong pre-Islamic culture and Sh'ia Muslim heritage. About 51% of Iranians are Persian and approximately 89% are

Sh'ia Muslims.

Turkey and Iran have a complicated, often strained, relationship. Turkey's alliance with the US is one reason for this. Turkey also has a secular government, which sets it apart from Iran and its theocratic Islamic government. An indicator of the historical separation in this relationship can be found in the levels of trade between the two states. Iranian-Turkish bilateral trade stood at 2.3 billion dollars in 1985 but, over the following 15 years, fell to the level of 800 million dollars.<sup>92</sup> In 2002, trade disputes were still very much an issue, and Turkey suspended Iran's first natural gas exports since the Iranian revolution. Iran protested, accusing Turkey of backing out because of the slowing Turkish economy.<sup>93</sup> By 2004, economic ties looked brighter and projections put bilateral trade at 2.4 billion dollars for 2003 (a 90 percent increase over 2002). At the same time, Turkey and Iran signed a security agreement concerning Kurdish rebels and Iranian opposition fighters.<sup>94</sup>

Still, both sides failed to address a plethora of bitter trade disputes, and several business deals were cancelled. International displeasure over Iran's nuclear program has also strained Iranian-Turkish relations. When Iran decided to resume uranium enrichment early in 2006, Turkey issued a strongly worded statement condemning the action.<sup>95</sup> Turkey also urged Iran to accept an offer by the US to join European-led talks on Tehran's nuclear program.<sup>96</sup>

The final distinction between Iran and Turkey emerges from Iran's relationships with Azerbaijan and Armenia. In fact, Iran's relationship with the two countries is exactly the opposite from Turkey's. While Iran shares a Sh'ia heritage with Azerbaijan, the two states have disputes over the division of the Caspian Sea's oil reserves and Azerbaijan's cooperation with the US. Scholar Cameron Brown notes this conflict relationship, when he explores Iranian-Azeri tension in relation to Azerbaijan's disputes with Armenia.<sup>97</sup> Relations with Christian Armenia, on the other hand, have included cooperation diplomatically, economically, and on security. If Turkey is a "torn country," then we should expect it to have friendly ties with Armenia and tension with Azerbaijan. Instead, this is the pattern that Iran exhibits.

## CONCLUSION

Analysis of Turkey's global and regional relations is now complete. At the global level, there is a New Great Game between the global powers. This Great Game pattern

could be construed to fit Huntington's conception of clashing civilizations. However, Turkey's relations with the global powers suggest that Turkey is not engaged in any inter-civilizational struggle. Instead, Turkey appears to desire constructive relationships with all three states. While new strains in Turkey's post 9/11 relationship with the US could be framed as a growing trend toward civilizational conflict, Turkey's ties with Russia have been growing simultaneously. Fox's observation that a clash of civilizations is only a Western perspective appears to still hold true. Huntington's theory, therefore, would seem to be undermined.

In light of these findings, those who support Huntingtongesque arguments must explain the Turkish exception to the rule. Huntington attempts to do this by classifying Turkey as a "torn country." One of the first objections that can be raised to this argument is that, if states like Turkey can leave their civilizations behind, then civilizational factors cannot entirely explain state behavior. This argument relates directly to Weeks's denegation of the utility of the civilization concept. It is a remarkable challenge for Huntington to explain how a state like Turkey, historically an integral part of its civilization, could deviate so widely from the normal pattern of state behavior assumed in his theory.

From the analysis of Turkey's relations with Caspian states, criticism may also be found for Huntington's "torn state" category. Turkey's most positive regional relations are with Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Kazakhstan. These states are remarkably diverse, Azerbaijan possessing a mostly Sh'ia population, Georgia being primarily Christian, and Kazakhstan being divided between both Muslims and Christians. Turkey's most strained ties are with Iran, Armenia, and Uzbekistan. In the international system that Huntington presents, it is remarkable that the most secular state in the Islamic civilization would have such dismal relations with a Christian nation like Armenia. Negative relationships with Christian states, and possibly even Sh'ia states, is a pattern that Huntington's theory would normally predict for a state with a Sunni Muslim population. The sum of Turkey's foreign relations with states in the Caspian Sea region, then, defy explanations based solely on considerations of civilizational identity. When Turkey's relations are compared to Iran's, this assertion is only further strengthened. Further historical analysis of Iran's foreign relations in the region would be a valuable place to begin further research.

At both the global and regional levels, then, Turkey's

foreign policy decisions do not appear to support Huntingtonesque assumptions. Such findings restrict the utility that Huntington's theory possesses in International Relations Theory and provide reason to refrain from assuming a similar approach in the practice of foreign policy. Indeed, to practice foreign policy informed by Huntington's paradigm could create a dangerous self-fulfilling prophecy – increasing ethnic and religious tensions world-wide. Shahram Akbarzadeh specifically examines the possibility of a self-fulfilling prophecy if the West begins to associate terrorism with the beliefs of Muslim people.<sup>98</sup> Instead, policy makers and scholars should focus on unearthing more substantial factors influencing the behavior of states. Turkey's example appears to indicate that political, economic, and security considerations are factors that override the ties a state might have with its civilization.

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