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Chapter 9

Navigating Deglobalization in Eurasia: World-Building and Türkiye Amidst Emerging Historical Rupture

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Abstract

This chapter introduces an examination of Türkiye's potential for World-building in Eurasia within the context of deglobalization, which is conceptualized as both a reflection and an accelerator of a historical rupture process in the current international system. Deglobalization affects all three interconnected pillars of it: geopolitics, international political economy, and meaning systems. As the globe fragments into competing 'Worlds,' the chapter proposes that Türkiye's unique identity, position, and other capabilities—along with those of other states of Turks, non-state actors, diasporas, and partners from both Muslim-majority countries and beyond—collectively offer opportunities for fostering a 'World within Worlds,' which may be called 'Türk Eli' or the Turkic Peace Zone. The study also outlines Türkiye's foreign policy trajectory from the early Republican era to the present, introducing key concepts such as World-building nationalism, the Turkic Belt, Co-Worlding, and Roof-Sharing. It highlights both potential obstacles and prospects. While acknowledging hurdles such as limited elite support, resource constraints, and the need for a more coherent ideological framework, this assessment suggests that the reimagined concept of 'Türk Eli' could foster thinking on cooperation and stability. The article aims to set the stage for further exploration of how Türkiye's World-building efforts might shape Eurasia's future in an increasingly divided and dysfunctional global system.

Keywords Historical rupture · Deglobalization · Türk Eli · World-building nationalism · Organization of Turkic States · Turkic World · Co-Worlding · Roof-Sharing

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Introduction

The international system is undergoing a profound transformation characterized by deglobalization, reminiscent of past historical ruptures but unfolding in a unique contemporary context. These developments present both challenges and opportunities for multiple players, including Türkiye. This chapter introduces an examination of Türkiye and its partners' potential for World-building, framed within the context of systemic change, increasing regional instability, and reconfiguring global power dynamics.

The concept of "historical rupture" serves as a foundational framework for understanding current international relations. It has several indicators, with deglobalization, both a natural consequence of previous globalization and a deliberate project of great powers, reshaping the global landscape and fostering widespread disruption. Past experiments suggest that during these ruptures, established powers only selectively maintain international stability, while both they and their rivals may exploit or instigate regional crises to their advantage. In such scenarios, the potential for escalating chaos necessitates a proactive approach to regional security for indigenous actors, highlighting the expanding need for World-building initiatives.

In this context, Türkiye's World-building potential can be assessed through the lens of three interconnected factors: the ongoing shift towards a multi-World order driven by deglobalization trends; Türkiye's non-central position in World-building initiatives of both Western and Eastern powers; and the urgent need to address growing regional instability that could compromise Türkiye's security and vital interests. By leveraging their material capabilities and multilayered ties (including functional-material connections together with kinship, historical, cultural, and religious bonds), Türkiye, other states of Turks, stateless entities and communities, diasporas, and their willing partners from both Muslim-majority countries and others collectively possess the necessary resources and capabilities to build a World within Worlds. This concept envisions a cooperative network that maintains necessary linkages with rival power centers while promoting regional stability and development through converging relations within “Türk Eli”, a Turkic Peace Zone. World-building here refers to cultivating a zone of peace, cooperation, and mutual prosperity among historically and functionally related regions, not to creating a sphere of influence in the 19th-century imperialist sense.

Besides Türk Eli, this study proposes several key concepts such as World-building nationalism, Turkic Belt, Co-Worlding and Roof-Sharing. It also outlines Türkiye's evolving path in international relations within this context. The article highlights not just potential opportunities but also the challenges by acknowledging obstacles such as limited elite support, resource constraints, the hardships in balancing the interests of other major powers vis-à-vis the World-building project, and the necessity of finding ways to keep partners willing and disciplined in a nonhierarchical framework.

The analysis proceeds in four main sections: theoretical/conceptual notes, manifestations of deglobalization across the three pillars of the international system, points on Türkiye's foreign policy course in relation to its World-zone, and prospects for Türkiye’s and its partners' World-building project, including the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). By situating Türkiye's and its allies’ potential within broader systemic changes and the imperative for regional stability, this work contributes to the understanding of emerging security dynamics in Eurasia. It provides insights into how countries with a history of World-leadership might navigate a deglobalizing landscape, fostering cooperation and stability while adapting to great power competition and the fragmentation of the global order.

Like any unfinished project, this article has its limitations. It offers a concise summary of a research agenda and does not cover all the significant debates and empirical data related to the issue. Instead, it sets the stage for further exploration of the historical rupture process, presents and defines key

concepts, explains their significance, and highlights the core parameters of forthcoming upheavals and potential future trajectories for the once-globalizing system, Türkiye, the Turkic World, and broader Eurasia.

Theoretical and Conceptual Notes: Heralding a Change in the Ontological Map of the International System

Historical Rupture and the Three Pillars of the International System

The concept of historical rupture provides a crucial lens for understanding the current transformations taking place in the international system. Unlike routine fluctuations or cyclical changes, historical ruptures represent a sea change that fundamentally alters the structure and functioning of global affairs. These periods are characterized by simultaneous crises across three interconnected pillars: geopolitics, international political economy, and meaning systems.

In the geopolitical realm, we observe a reconfiguration of power dynamics, with the established hegemony being challenged both from within and outside, and new centers of gravity emerging. Meanwhile, the international political economy undergoes substantial restructuring as existing patterns of trade, finance, and production are disrupted and new economic paradigms take shape. Concurrently, meaning systems – encompassing ideologies, religion and belief structures, legitimizing narratives – experience a crisis of credibility, leading to the emergence of new or revived Worldviews.

The concurrent occurrence of crises across these three pillars is crucial. While isolated breakdowns in individual pillars can often be managed or contained, the convergence of crises across all three domains creates a catastrophe that catalyzes fundamental change. This multi-dimensional upheaval produces both challenges and opportunities for actors within the international system, particularly for those with the potential to reshape regional or global dynamics (Okur, 2018).

20th century provides several examples of such historical ruptures. The First World War marked a significant break, leading to the collapse of some empires, the redrawing of maps on the basis of nationality, and the emergence of new ideologies. The Second World War similarly reshaped the global order, giving rise to the bipolar Cold War structure, decolonization, new international institutions, and defeat of Nazism and Fascism as meaning systems. The end of the Cold War in 1989-1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union together with ideological appeal of communism as a meaning system represents another historical rupture, ushering in a period of American unipolarity and accelerated neoliberal globalization. Currently, the effects of deglobalization are escalating the accumulation of tensions that could trigger simultaneous disruptions along the fault lines, threatening the fundamentals of all three systemic pillars.

Given the pivotal role deglobalization plays in the argument as an accelerator of historical rupture, it will be addressed in a standalone section below.

What is a "World"? The Agencies of the Coming Great Rivalry

The escalation of the historical rupture process with deglobalization is giving rise to the emergence of rival Worlds within the international system. The "World", in this sense, refers to a system of material and moral relationships, shared beliefs, norms, principles, solidarity, and governance that transcend individual states. A World denotes a large, cohesive entity with a shared identity, converging interests, and organizational framework. This system is well-defined in its core sections and more flexibly arranged in its loosely connected parts, even when lacking some key aspects of its ideal definition. When we look at historical precedents, it becomes clear that Worlds represent more than mere spheres

of influence or geopolitical blocs; they encompass distinct economic, political, and cultural realms with their own internal logics and external orientations (Okur, 2018). These Worlds can be newly constructed or built upon the legacy of previous historical Worlds. They come into existence under the leadership of a dominant nation-state or leading members of a community of states, which share commonalities such as kinship, religion, a shared past, and various forms of collective material interests, ranging from economics to security. (Okur, 2023).

The formation of Worlds occurs in a multitude of ways, encompassing a spectrum of structures, from empires to alliances among sovereign entities. In the case of the "Russian World" (Russkiy Mir) project, the objective is to integrate Russian-speaking populations and former Soviet territories into a distinct cultural and political sphere (Kazharski, 2019). The strategy around this vision reflects, at least partly, an imperial logic, as evidenced by the use of force against Ukraine, which has produced significant reactions and resistance. However, the Russian World initiative's toolbox extends beyond military interventions, embracing security and economic integration through international institutions like the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union, along with soft power strategies such as the promotion of the Russian language, media influence and cultural programs (Suslov, 2018, Feklyunina, 2015).

As another instance, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), together with other material, cultural, economic and military investments of China aiming to reach the "community with a shared future for mankind" (Xiaochun, 2018), helps a World-building project by creating a vast network of economic and infrastructure connections across Eurasia and beyond. The BRI and other initiatives are not merely an economic endeavor but a comprehensive geoeconomic strategy to reshape global trade routes and geopolitical alignments in China's favor (Okur, 2017). Unlike Russia, Beijing has not yet employed direct, massive military force. Instead, China resorts to geoeconomic policy tools, such as providing assistance with infrastructure development, to extend its influence. This approach is complemented by a meaning system diplomacy that promotes Chinese cultural values, offers an alternative development model, and presents China's governance system as a credible alternative to Western liberal democracy. By integrating material investments with this meaning system, China aims to offer alternatives to Western norms and practices which were globalized. Central to this meaning system is the reconstruction of a traditional Chinese world order, portraying it as uniquely benevolent and harmonious, in contrast to the Western-dominated international system (Zhao, 2019). This multifaceted strategy occasionally raises concerns about debt-trap diplomacy, economic coercion, and challenges to the existing international order (Hiebert, 2020).

The BRICS group (comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates) and its expansion plans illustrate efforts to establish alternative platforms to the Western-dominated global order (Papa & Chaturvedi, 2023). The BRICS serves as an umbrella for "non-Western" powers, some of which have their own World-building projects, while others maintain concurrent memberships with prominent countries of the Western World in various regional organizations. The group's initiatives, such as the New Development Bank (NDB), indicate an effort to establish parallel financial institutions and challenge the primacy of Western-led organizations, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as the structural power of the U.S. dollar (Nach & Ncwadi, 2024).

BRICS, with its "Roof-Sharing" model of solidarity, provides support for non-Western major powers engaged in World-building projects. It enables them to gain visibility and a more prominent voice in international debates, thereby enhancing their symbolic capital. World-building projects necessitate intersubjectivities that value such symbolism, facilitating belief in a future that could shift the balance between the West and the rest in favor of the latter. However, if BRICS fails to achieve tangible success

within a reasonable timeframe, it risks meeting the same fate as the Group of 77 and other similar initiatives.

In this context, multilateral efforts to organize the Turkic World may seek to establish a model of cooperation among sovereign actors, drawing upon the experiences of others. Despite a deficiency in bottom-up, civil society-based input through democratic participation channels, the convergence of Turkic states exemplifies a World-building process based on voluntary collaboration. As will be discussed subsequently, this project has the potential to contribute to stability in Eurasia in a number of ways. At some point, intensified solidarity within the Turkic World could reach a level sufficient to deter potential aggressors, some of whom may pursue imperial ambitions. Such deterrence can contribute to peace and prosperity in Eurasia by reducing the likelihood of miscalculations that could lead to severe conflicts.

Worlds, Civilizations and World-building Nationalism

Worlds across vast geographies organize different spheres of life within a triangle that brings together meaning systems, various needs, and limited material and spiritual resources/opportunities. Their unique solutions to the challenges they face—from economics to security, from education to architecture—give life to civilization. If Worlds are the largest looms weaving different aspects of life, civilizations are the uniquely colored and patterned fabrics produced by these looms. They continue to exist even after the looms that facilitated their creation have been dismantled. When Worlds lose their organized existence and disintegrate due to internal and/or external factors, the civilizations they once produced/weaved become a legacy that influences the new Worlds that arise in the same area, affecting them on various levels. As a result, this heritage gradually loses its function because the system and context in which it was produced no longer exist, depriving it of the possibility of being updated and renewed to meet new needs. Its value is then relegated to that of museum aesthetic objects. A change in this status can only occur when efforts to reorganize in relation to the historical World come to the fore. The heritage then becomes the primary reference for the phase of remembrance necessary for such reconstruction (Okur, 2023).

While civilizations represent the enduring cultural and historical legacies of past Worlds, World-building nationalism seeks to actively shape new geopolitical realities based on these grounds. World-building nationalism represents a foreign policy approach that sees it as both possible and desirable to (re)organize a World in alignment with visions of national identity, especially those deeply rooted in history which covers the memories of a past World. In other words, it seeks to design an operational system whose core codes are based on national foundations. This approach recognizes the challenges of both pure localism and complete assimilation into emulated Worlds, advocating instead for a path that leverages unique material, political, historical, and cultural accumulations to foster intra- and inter-regional cooperation and stability (Okur, 2023).

From the perspective of this vision, Türkiye is perceived as full of potential due to its exceptional historical legacy and current capabilities. As a former leader of a vast World spanning multiple continents, Turkish national identity incorporates values and memories from this period. Türkiye's historical experience creates a distinctive situation where the expansion of national identity toward a broader World-building project does not generate fundamental contradictions at the level of core values. Consequently, it becomes possible to channel the energy of nationalism into a project that transcends national boundaries – a feature not easily replicated in other nationalist contexts. The concept of Türk Eli or "Turkish Peace Zone" embodies this vision of World-building. Drawing on historical linguistic and cultural connections, Türk Eli carries dual meanings of both "peace" and "homeland" in ancient Turkish.

As noted by Serkan Şen (Şen, 2023, p. 35), the word "elçi" (ambassador) is also derived from this root, emphasizing the concept's association with peaceful relations.

In his work, "Türkçülüğün Esasları" (The Principles of Turkism) (Gökalp, 2023), Ziya Gökalp points to the concept of "il," which he defines as "peace," and its pivotal role in Turkish political thought. Gökalp underscores that the fundamental connotation of "il" is peace and that the historical trajectory of Turkish leadership has been oriented towards the establishment and preservation of peace across a vast geographical expanse. He posits that the objective of Turkish wars was the establishment of a permanent region of peace, rather than imperialistic conquest. The contemporary characterization of Türk Eli as a peace zone aligns closely with this great decision[1] of the historical Turkic World, (Okur, 2023).

World-building nationalism doesn't reject multilateral relations with key economic and political centers influential in regions it considers part of Türk Eli. Instead, it seeks to coexist with such relationships while simultaneously developing its own unique institutions in the areas concerned. However, achieving its objectives may still require navigating crises that demand taking risks and showing initiative, even in dealings with major powers. This foreign policy perspective is rooted in the recognition that distrust of the prevailing Western-based system has reached a critical point, and the prospect of joining global initiatives offering alternatives to the West is either unconvincing or inadequate to meet Türkiye's all needs. While World-building is financially burdensome in the short term, the alternative—accepting a marginalized role without having a significant place in World-projects of either the West or East—may prove equally, if not more, costly given the growing systemic turbulence.

This approach accepts that the process of restructuring a World is not a simple undertaking and requires several key elements to be successful. Firstly, the circumstances surrounding the original breakup of the historical World are of great consequence. In cases of external factors, such as invasion or war, the legacy of such events can facilitate future reconstruction if they are perceived as significant historical trauma. Conversely, internal crises that corrupt the foundational principles of the World make rejuvenation far more difficult. The dissolution of the old Turkic World provides a vivid example of the former scenario.

Secondly, the state of other Worlds is a significant factor. The re-emergence of a historical World becomes possible when rival powers experience crises or decline, creating a power vacuum that enables realignment. Such a conjuncture allows the former constituent parts of the old historical World to consider new affiliations based on shared interests, cultural affinities, and collective memory, and to freely discuss the possibility of moving toward a reorganization project.

Thirdly, World-building nationalism must represent a comprehensive and inclusive concept of identity encompassing the proposed World. This approach facilitates the reawakening and reimagining of historical identities and relationships that presumably support the reorganization project. Additionally, a strong social base within the leading country or countries is crucial for generating the intellectual, political, and economic support necessary for the reintegration effort.

Fourthly, it is also necessary for the general context of the international system to be conducive to such revival. A perception of insecurity and dissatisfaction with existing alliances can create a 'push effect,' driving the constituents of the historical World to seek renewed partnerships and look to the

[1] Great decisions are strategic choices made by actors capable of building a World around themselves. These decisions define the broadest security environment for humans and influence the thinking and behavior patterns of others, including rivals, leading them to make similar decisions. Great decisions, products of interactions between power, interests, and values, shape systems in areas like economy, belief, culture, ideology, and communication. They emerge at historical turning points, contributing to the construction of a new era and affecting not only the decision-maker's World but others as well. The emergence and diffusion of nuclear weapons and the Millet system in the historical Turkic World exemplify such great decisions, demonstrating their profound impact on global security landscapes and socio-political structures across vast regions (Okur, 2018).

power centers of their former World. Simultaneously, the World-building project must offer appealing incentives, creating a 'pull effect' through enhanced security, economic prospects, and cultural compatibility.

Fifth, the concept of World-building as a process of reorganization does not imply an abrupt break with existing systems. Rather, it is envisioned as a gradual process of creating a "World within Worlds." This requires careful coordination between the existing systems and the new integrative principles, involving both state-level interactions and civil society engagement. Although strategies for immediate rupture exist, they are generally associated with war and carry costs that are particularly prohibitive for non-nuclear World leaders.

Deglobalization and the Transformation of the International Order

Deglobalization as Process and Project

Deglobalization, much like its predecessor globalization, lacks a consensus definition in academic literature. This ambiguity reflects the complex and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. However, it is evident that deglobalization processes are deeply intertwined with the crisis dynamics characterizing the 'historical rupture' mentioned earlier. These forces actively challenge the prior era's efforts to advance a unified global vision. Rather than progressing toward a singular, cosmopolitan-led global order, the globe is witnessing a fragmentation into multiple Worlds. This disintegration is propelled by a substantial erosion of trust among major powers. The resultant securitization of relationships—once primarily economic or pragmatic—marks a shift from the liberal tenets of free markets and profit-driven globalization toward a paradigm where security considerations predominate, at the expense of global economic integration. Deglobalization, as it manifests, refers to the division of the globe into competing Worlds through the disruption of global institutions and processes in areas such as security, economics, and systems of meaning, with these realms converging at the World level. As a result, the center of gravity in international governance is shifting from global institutions to distinct Worlds, marking a fundamental redirection of the global order with far-reaching implications for international relations, economic structures, and geopolitical alignments.

The phenomenon of deglobalization has manifested as both a process and a project. As a process, it represents the natural consequence of the contradictions and imbalances generated by the previous era of intensified global integration. The advantages of globalization, which initially benefited Western powers to a greater extent, have gradually enabled emerging actors, particularly in the East, to challenge the existing global order (Buzan & Lawson, 2014) (Chivvis & Geaghan-Breiner, 2024). Concurrently, deglobalization has evolved into a conscious initiative undertaken by a multitude of actors, including both established and emerging powers.

For the Westerners, it represents an attempt to recalibrate the global system in their favor, establishing new boundaries and differential rule sets for insiders and outsiders. This shift in Western attitudes is exemplified by the evolving perspectives of prominent politicians, financial figures, and business leaders (Paul, 2023) (Komolov, 2020). For (re)rising powers, deglobalization presents an opportunity to establish autonomous spheres and reduce dependence on Western-dominated international system. In an effort to enhance their free-standing, these actors seek to construct parallel infrastructures, which serve as regional counterparts to global governance institutions, thereby expanding their sovereign zones of action (Gloria, 2024). The dual nature of deglobalization—as both an organic process and a strategic project—adds a further layer of complexity to the contemporary international landscape. This creates a dynamic environment in which the rules of engagement are in a state of flux, presenting both risks and opportunities for those endeavoring to navigate this shifting terrain.

Geopolitical Fragmentation and Conflict: From the "Global World" to the "Globe Dividing into Worlds"

The first pillar of the international system where we trace deglobalization as leading to the historical rupture process is the geopolitical landscape. It is undergoing a fundamental restructuring, characterized by fragmentation and the emergence of competing power centers. This shift marks a departure from both the post-Cold War era of American unipolarity and the more cosmopolitan vision of globalization, previously referred to as "Empire" (Okur, 2007). The current state of affairs reflects an abandonment of the path followed after the West's victory in the Cold War (Okur, 2008).

During the Cold War, the globe was primarily divided into rival parts and became the theater of the enduring conflict between the Western and Eastern Worlds, each based on distinct ideologies and organizations. The dissolution of the Soviet Union inaugurated a period during which the Western World strived to disseminate its system across the entire globe. This process is referred to as neoliberal globalization or hyperglobalization. However, the current trend of deglobalization suggests that the West is disengaging from this enterprise. Instead, it is attempting to redraw the territorial and ideological boundaries of the Western World and its allies. This new orientation can be attributed to two primary factors. The first is the gradual shift in the balance of power from the West to the rest of the globe, resulting in a total shift in favor of the latter under the rule-based liberal order. The second factor is the rising discontent stemming from various issues, such as the accelerated rate of immigration and the decline in well-paid, stable employment opportunities among Western populations as a consequence of globalization.

It is important to note, however, that although old positions have been left behind, the emerging rival Worlds currently lack the capacity for effective and unified action. In Western societies and among states, there is a notable divergence of opinion between those who advocate a more liberal outlook and those with a more nationalistic perspective, with neither group occupying a hegemonic position. Each group holds a distinct vision for the future. While they have shown some degree of unity in their stance against Russia in the context of the Ukrainian war, disagreements persist between the United States and Europe, as well as within Europe itself. These divisions are evident in discussions on economic policies, defense spending, and climate change.

Similarly, while the East shows increased solidarity among Russia, China, and other smaller players, it is not without its own internal divisions. The confluence of historical tensions, divergent regional interests, and varying approaches to global governance has created a complex web of relationships rather than a unified bloc. For instance, the growing partnership between Russia and China is constrained by their differing long-term strategic interests in various regions.

This internal fragmentation within both Western and Eastern spheres indicates that the system is not yet made up of tightly aligned poles but rather consists of multiple Wests and Easts. Nevertheless, the intensifying polarization driven by regional conflicts may help to mitigate these internal differences, thereby fostering greater unity within each side. The rise of security concerns and the intensification of conflicts have the potential to expedite this process of internal consolidation.

The West's reduced willingness to bear the responsibility of sustaining global institutions can be attributed to the recognition that its competitors also benefit from the system it has established. This shift in attitude is exemplified by events such as the Summit for Democracy, convened by Joe Biden, which aimed to redefine potential boundaries for the Western-led world order. At the same time, the rise of a "fortress mentality" regarding immigrant flows is reinforcing physical boundaries. The construction of border walls and the implementation of more stringent immigration policies in Western

countries reflect this tendency towards establishing more clearly defined and defended territorial limits (Winkelmolen, 2024).

In this context, several current and potential flashpoints are emerging that could further delineate the boundaries between rival Worlds of the future through violence. The ongoing war in Ukraine is a clear manifestation of this trajectory. Russia has challenged the post-Cold War order, while the West has supported Ukraine with unprecedented economic and military aid. Potential broader clashes in the Middle East, particularly amid ongoing Israeli attacks in Gaza, Lebanon, Iran and Syria, along with heightened regional tensions, represent another area where geopolitical fault lines are being drawn. This conflict is not solely a matter of local actors; it reflects broader antagonisms between major powers and their respective regional allies. Additionally, mounting tensions over Taiwan and Korea present further hotspots with the potential for dramatic escalation. A conflict over Taiwan would not only pit China against the United States and its allies but could also compel many nations to choose sides, thereby crystallizing divisions in the emerging multi-World order.

As tensions intensify and security concerns mount, internal differences within each World, particularly among those engaged in World-building projects, may be overshadowed by the imperative for unity against perceived external threats. The advent of simultaneous wars in multiple regions has the potential to precipitate a more pronounced disintegration of the once-globalizing system. Despite the long-standing debate over whether mutually beneficial economic ties can mitigate escalating geopolitical tensions, the war in Ukraine has shown that, in the context of military conflict, these relations can either be swiftly severed or repurposed as tools of geoeconomic strategy through the weaponization of finance, trade, and investment.

The Rise of Geoeconomics and Economic Nationalism

The second pillar, which is covered by international political economy, is undergoing a significant transition, marked by the rise of geoeconomics and a resurgence of economic nationalism. This shift represents a major departure from the globalization paradigm that has dominated recent decades, where economic integration and market-driven policies were prioritized. In this new landscape, states are increasingly using economic instruments as tools to advance their geopolitical objectives, and new forms of economic relations arise (Okur & Şahin, 2022).

The weaponization of economic interdependence has become a widespread feature of this new era. The U.S.-China trade war, which began in 2018, exemplifies this trend. As tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of goods were imposed, the average U.S. tariff on Chinese imports skyrocketed from 3.1% in 2017 to 19.3% by 2019. The global ramifications of this conflict have been substantial, with the IMF projecting a potential 0.8% reduction in global GDP by 2020 (Bekkers & Schroeter, 2020).

Indeed, this protectionist trend has been taken to a more radical dimension during Trump's second presidency; this orientation was reinforced by the implementation of a 10% baseline tariff on all imports, alongside punitive rates exceeding 60% against China in particular, and the introduction of a 'reciprocal tax' for other countries.

In this context, it is ironic to see that George Soros, long an advocate of globalization, has criticized investments of BlackRock in China, citing national security concerns over economic considerations (Soros, 2021). This stance marks a significant departure from the globalist paradigm, which prioritized individual interests and corporate profits over state needs. Soros' emphasis on national security over private profits demonstrates a surprising shift toward a statist perspective, particularly coming from one of globalism's most prominent promoters.

Similarly, Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, who has faced criticism from Soros, acknowledged the end of globalization as we know it, citing geopolitical events like Russia's invasion of Ukraine as catalysts for a global reassessment of economic dependencies and production strategies (Fink, 2022). Other business leaders, such as Ken Moelis, have echoed this sentiment, highlighting the trend towards nation-states prioritizing self-sufficiency in critical sectors like food and energy (Moelis, 2022). These statements reflect a remarkable shift in the thinking of Western elites. The emphasis on national security and self-sufficiency over the previously sacred principles of neoliberal globalization indicates a growing recognition of the challenges it presents.

At the same time, the deployment of sanctions as a foreign policy tool has escalated dramatically. For example, the freezing of an estimated $300 billion in Russian central bank assets, the exclusion of major Russian banks from the SWIFT payment system, and the imposition of personal sanctions against Russian oligarchs and officials have demonstrated how economic interdependence can be utilized in geopolitical conflicts (Bhala, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated trends towards reshoring, onshoring, friendshoring and supply chain nationalization. Prioritizing domestic production of critical goods, particularly in sectors deemed essential for national security has become a prevalent practice. The U.S. CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, allocating $52.7 billion for domestic semiconductor manufacturing, exemplifies this shift. Similarly, Japan's 2020 initiative providing $2.2 billion in subsidies for companies relocating production from China, and the European Union's ambition to produce 20% of the world's cutting-edge semiconductors by 2030, underscore the growing emphasis on "strategic autonomy" in key industries (Sutter, Sargent,Jr., & Singh, 2023). These policies mark a significant departure from the globalized production model that has dominated recent decades.

In trade, deglobalization is reshaping the economic terrain too. The proliferation of preferential trade agreements (PTAs) and mega-regional trade deals, coupled with the erosion of multilateral trade rules, is driving a significant shift towards the fragmentation and regionalization of international trade. Countries accounting for approximately 78% of global GDP are now members of mega-regional trade agreements, and PTAs are poised to cover about two-thirds of global trade in the near future. The impact of this shift is evident in the dramatic increase in global exports covered by free trade agreements, rising from 23% in 2010 to 34% in 2020. A significant proportion of the EU's and the United States' exports are covered by PTAs, with 81% of EU exports and 44% of U.S. exports falling under these agreements. Notably, just 8 bilateral trade relationships not covered by PTAs account for 15% of global trade, each representing 1% or more of it. These statistics underscore the argument that the global trading system is likely to fragment into regional blocs centered around World-leading powers or World-zones such as the U.S., EU, and China (Dadush & Prost, 2023).

Additionally, the financial flows are undergoing a transformation, with the appearance of new organizations that challenge the primacy of Western-led institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The New Development Bank (NDB), established by the BRICS countries in 2014, had by 2024 approved approximately 96 projects with a combined value of $32.8 billion (NDB, 2024). Similarly, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), initiated by China in 2016, had by 2024 garnered 109 approved members and committed $53.97 billion to 278 projects (AIIB, 2024). These institutions reflect a broader trend towards a more multi-World financial order, with emerging economies seeking to exert greater influence over global economic governance.

In the digital realm, the concept of sovereignty has taken on new significance. Countries are increasingly asserting control over their digital domains, viewing tech-leadership as crucial for both national security and economic competitiveness. China's Great Firewall and its ban on numerous Western technology platforms are stark examples of this trend. Russia's 2019 "sovereign internet"

law, which requires all internet traffic to be routed through state-controlled nodes, provides further illustration of this push for digital autonomy. The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and its efforts to create European alternatives to U.S. tech giants, along with India's 2020 ban on TikTok and other Chinese applications citing national security concerns, and the U.S. Congress's stance against them, all point to a growing fragmentation of the global digital domain with the rise of "Techno-Nationalism" (Capri, 2024).

These developments highlight the increasing role of states, particularly those with a World-building project or capacity, in shaping the digital economy. As countries seek to safeguard their digital borders and nurture domestic techno-industries, the once-borderless digital zone is becoming increasingly balkanized. This trend not only impacts the flow of information and services but also has crucial implications for transborder trade, innovation, and geopolitical relations.

Even the few examples above demonstrate that the ascendance of geoeconomics and economic nationalism is altering the fabric of the once-globalizing economy, pushing it toward deglobalization. As states increasingly use economic tools for geopolitical gain, prioritize domestic production, and assert control over their digital domains, the previously integrated global economy is fragmenting. The trend toward reciprocity among states is likely to accelerate and deepen this process. To compensate for losses in markets and economies of scale, World-building is beginning to appear more feasible than before. As this process gains momentum, it could become one of the key drivers of future World-building efforts.

Crisis of Liberal Meaning Systems and Values

The third pillar of the international system—meaning systems and values, which we observe to analyze the shift toward deglobalization in the direction of 'historical rupture'—is undergoing a deep transformation. The liberal internationalist ideology, which has long been a foundation of globalization, is now facing a severe crisis of legitimacy. This phenomenon has its roots in a number of factors, affecting both core Western states and other actors situated in non-core and peripheral tiers of globalization. Among these factors are rising inequality, persistent economic instability, and the failure of global institutions to effectively address transnational challenges, such as collective security, international justice, and ecology. Together, these failures have eroded faith in the promises of the globalization project in the eyes of the masses, if not all the elites.

The rise of popular-antiestablishment and nationalist movements across the globe stands as clear evidence of widespread discontent. From Brexit in the UK to the election of leaders like Donald Trump in the U.S. and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, these movements signal a growing disillusionment with the liberal order. Although some of those politicians lost elections after their victories, mainstream figures have retaken their posts by adopting aspects of the anti-establishment agenda. Deglobalizing policies are receiving growing support from both sides of the political spectrum, thereby gaining legitimacy and moving toward becoming the new normal.

The aforementioned erosion of support for liberalism is further evidenced by a corresponding loss of trust in international institutions. In response to the question of whether international organizations (IOs) should assume authority from national governments, a majority of respondents expressed opposition. Additionally, they expressed concern about IOs encroaching upon national sovereignty (Bearce & Scott, 2019). The 2017–2022 World Values Survey and European Values Survey (WVS/EVS), which covered approximately 90 countries and territories across all geographic regions, revealed that net confidence in the UN was positive in only about half of the surveyed countries and territories, with numerous instances of markedly low levels of confidence (Trithart & Case, 2023).

In the wake of the retreat of liberal internationalism, nationalist and popular anti-establishment ideologies have experienced a notable resurgence. These worldviews prioritize national sovereignty and cultural authenticity, while also espousing a pronounced skepticism toward global elites and institutions. The ascendance of such leaders and parties across the globe serves to exemplify this trend. In the 2022-2023 national elections, a record 32% of European voters cast their ballots for anti-establishment parties, marking a significant increase from 20% in the early 2000s and 12% in the early 1990s (Henley, 2023). These winds are also prevalent in non-Western regions of the globe. For example, in India, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) achieved a historic feat by winning consecutive majorities in 2014, 2019, and 2024. This marked the first time a party had done so in over three decades (Ruparelia, 2024).

The crisis in liberal meaning systems is intrinsically linked to the process of deglobalization, as it undermines the ideological foundations that have supported global integration and cooperation in recent decades. There is a reciprocal relationship between these dynamics, evident in the simultaneous rise of dissent both in core regions and in territories previously considered peripheral. This has fostered the emergence of competing World-visions. Intellectual debates on the crisis of the 'rules-based' international order, compounded by growing contradictions and significant credibility loss, are intensifying (Ikenberry, 2023). Amid mounting criticisms, the West's perspective is becoming increasingly exclusionary. Those shaping the post-global face of the Western World(s) appear to be attributing a wide range of issues—from climate change to gender debates—to new "standards of civilization" (Gong, 2002), which reinforce divisions between the inside and outside, and between "us" and "the other."

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East is the latest manifestation of this turmoil in the liberal meaning system. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's characterization of the conflict as "a clash between barbarism and civilization" in his much-applauded U.S. Congress speech (Netanyahu, 2024) epitomizes the "us" versus "other" dichotomy. South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) underscores the Global South's challenge to this narrative. The Western powers' continued support for Netanyahu, coupled with their reluctance to intervene or hold war crimes perpetrators accountable, has once again exposed the contradictions within the liberal order, deepening distrust in the moral authority of Western-led institutions and norms.

Gaza has become a mirror reflecting the selective application of human rights norms, the erosion of international law and its enforcement mechanisms, the growing divide between Western powers and the Global South on issues of global justice, and the challenge to universal values amid competing civilizational narratives. Current polls confirm that this failure has generated strong negative sentiments toward leading actors in the Western World(s), while boosting the credibility of powers that are (re)organizing Worlds, such as China, Russia, and Türkiye (ArabCenter, 2024).

In this context, leaders of World-building projects are promoting alternative concepts. China has advanced the notion of "community of shared future for mankind", though this vision has been the subject of criticism due to Beijing's repressive policies aimed at Sinicizing Islam (Davidson, 2023) and suppressing Uighur and Kazakh Turks (Chotiner, 2022). Russia has advocated for a "multipolar world order", which rejects U.S. hegemony but faces criticism over its actions in Ukraine and Syria. Despite their flaws, these mottos reflect the deglobalization trend and the expectations for a new future in different parts of the globe. Türkiye's emphasis on a world "bigger than the Five" expresses yet another Worldview, demanding change and empathizing with voices marginalized in the previously globalizing system.

The majority of these World-visions, with their universalist expressions, draw on value sets inherited from civilizations that were once central to the respective historical Worlds. As World-building projects gain momentum, we may witness more detailed declarations concerning the relationships

between meaning systems and the international order. However, before any set of values attains hegemonic status within a given World-zone, struggles among elites defending different value sets are likely to arise.

Ultimately, the process of deglobalization is profoundly reshaping all three pillars of the international system. The geopolitical landscape is becoming increasingly fragmented, marked by competing World-building projects. The international political economy is characterized by growing geoeconomic competition and economic nationalism. Meanwhile, the liberal meaning systems that underpinned globalization face a legitimacy crisis, challenged by resurgent nationalist ideologies and competing visions of international order.

Türkiye's Trajectory: From Lost World to World-building?

This section briefly charts the evolution of Turkish foreign policy, analyzing how Türkiye has managed the dual challenges of preserving its Anatolian heartland while grappling with the legacy of its Ottoman past and the possibilities for future World-building.

The focus of the initial years of the Turkish Republic was the consolidation of the nation-state within its Anatolian heartland. This period is marked by the metaphorical description, 'Anatolian Ergenekon,'[2] which represents a forced withdrawal from the historical World of the Ottoman era to a more defensible core territory (Kösoğlu, 2019).

It is, however, important to note that the early Republican leadership did not view the Lausanne settlement as unchangeable. Rather, it was regarded as a red line beyond which no compromise was acceptable. Moreover, there were continuous endeavors to alter specific stipulations in order to circumvent this red line when the opportunity arose. The Montreux Convention of 1936, which restored Turkish sovereignty over the Straits, and the incorporation of Hatay into Türkiye in 1939 exemplify this revisionist approach, constrained by the prevailing international order.

The foreign policy of Türkiye during this period was characterized by a delicate balancing act between the Eastern and Western political and diplomatic spheres. Meanwhile, there were efforts to maintain connections with the geography of the former Ottoman Empire, particularly in the Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East and beyond, with the people of the lost World, including those in the Caucasus and Turkestan (Okur, 2023). The Balkan Entente of 1934 and the Saadabad Pact of 1937 exemplify Türkiye's endeavors to cultivate regional collaboration and stability among former Ottoman territories. Beyond their immediate context, these initiatives were designed with the dual objective of establishing a buffer against potential threats from great powers while simultaneously preserving Türkiye's influence in its near abroad. Türk Eli as a peace zone, though not explicitly articulated in these terms at the time, can be understood as an underlying principle, at least in intent, in Türkiye's regional diplomacy.

The World-building nationalism employs two principal categories for the organization of the geography beyond the official borders of Türkiye. Such territories include those related to the Misâk-ı Milli[3] (National Pact) (Şentop, 2021) and other regions, primarily in the Caucasus, Turkestan, Balkans, and the Middle East. The Misâk-ı Milli can be viewed as a project born out of the pressures of a great defeat in World War I, aimed at achieving sustainable peace across all the territories of Türkiye's former World, which had been directly ruled by Istanbul for centuries, not just within its yet-to-be-delineated

[2] "Anatolian Ergenekon" alludes to the Turkic legend of Ergenekon, where Turks sought refuge in an isolated mountain valley after a devastating defeat, only to later re-emerge and reclaim their power. This metaphor likens the founding of the Turkish Republic to a period of strategic retreat and rebuilding within the Anatolian heartland.

[3] Misak-ı Milli was a set of six crucial resolutions adopted by the Ottoman Parliament on January 28, 1920. These resolutions stipulated the acceptable conditions for an independent Turkish state and addressed the status of territories beyond its proposed boundaries in the aftermath of World War I. The pact became a fundamental cornerstone of the Turkish War of Independence and subsequently played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye.

national boundaries. Sustainable peace, as used here, has three key elements: firstly, the establishment of fair contractual agreements in accordance with the stipulations of international law; secondly, the consideration of the humanitarian needs of affected communities; and thirdly, the pursuit of a long-term vision for the preservation of peace (Okur, 2023b).

In this way, the **Misâk-ı Milli** constitutes a foundational document (National Pact, 1922) that outlines the conditions under which the Turkish state seeks to pursue a future of lasting peace, not only for itself but also for its former citizens, now envisioned as friendly neighbors, whom Türkiye wished well and supported in achieving a bright future based on their free will. The proposed borders and principles are designed to facilitate a transition to a new order in the Middle East that does not perpetuate a memory of conflict in an era where national identities stand out. The document delineated the tenets that would facilitate coexistence with post-Ottoman states within the framework of a new World. By emphasizing the free decision of peoples regarding whether to pursue the path of establishing independent states, it established a legal framework for the countries that emerged in the territory of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century. Given that, in certain regions where the Misâk-ı Millî advocated for independence, the issues of self-determination remain unresolved by the international community—such as in the case of Palestine—it becomes evident why this document continues to serve as a reference point in ongoing debates.

From the perspective of (re)World-building, when we consider territories beyond Türkiye's borders, we can identify three broad zones, each containing several sub-regions.

The initial area of focus is the Ottoman human-geography, extending from the Balkans to the Hejaz and North Africa. The fate of some of these territories was addressed in the Misâk-ı Millî, while the status of others was determined at an earlier point in time. The second area of interest is the Caucasus and Turkestan, which currently consists of Turkic republics and stateless Turkic communities. The third consists of diverse territories at various distances, potentially connected to Türkiye through identity ties, practical interests, or functional relations.

During the early years of the Republic and the Cold War, Türkiye began to recalibrate its relations with territories affected by the Misâk-ı Millî. The advent of the Cold War presented Türkiye with novel challenges and opportunities in its foreign policy orientation. The perceived threat from the Soviet Union, particularly Stalin's territorial and military demands on Türkiye as a price for an alliance in the immediate post-World War II period (FRUS, 1960), led Ankara to gravitate more firmly towards the Western World. Türkiye's accession to NATO in 1952 constituted a pivotal moment in its alignment with the West.

Nevertheless, Türkiye's incorporation into Western institutions during the Cold War was neither straightforward nor unchallenged. The relationship was marked by a persistent pattern of tensions and contradictions. Türkiye sought to leverage its geostrategic location to secure economic and military support from the West while seeking recognition for its interests in its historical World. Meanwhile, Turkish leaders consistently expressed frustration with unequal treatment and a lack of understanding of Türkiye's unique security concerns.

The Cyprus crisis of 1974 and the subsequent U.S. arms embargo revealed the costs of Türkiye's dependencies, prompting discussions on its true position within the Western World. During this period, there was a resurgence of interest in diversifying Türkiye's foreign policy options, including renewed engagement with the Middle East and attempts to improve relations with the Soviet Union.

However, a change of direction for the country was neither a desired outcome nor a viable option. Türkiye's incorporation into a sophisticated network of Western institutions and norms extended beyond the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to contain economic, educational, and cultural dimensions. A significant proportion of Türkiye's elite had received their education in Western institu-

tions or their Turkish counterparts, thereby creating a cadre of leaders and intellectuals deeply familiar with Western systems and World-views. This integration significantly impacted Türkiye's domestic and foreign policy orientations, frequently resulting in tensions between Westernizing impulses and more national perspectives.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the beginning of a new era for Turkish foreign policy, presenting both opportunities and challenges. It opened avenues for engagement with regions that had been largely inaccessible during the Cold War, including those that had once been part of Türkiye's historical World.

During this period, there was a notable resurgence of interest in Türkiye's connections with the newly independent Turkic states. The rise of them in Turkestan and Azerbaijan offered Türkiye the prospect of actualizing a form of the Türk Eli concept. Türkiye's initial enthusiasm for engagement with these regions was evident in the surge of diplomatic, economic, and cultural initiatives. In the preceding three decades, the most significant institutional outcome of World-building nationalism has been the establishment of the OTS in this region.

We observe that the activities surrounding the OTS shine to the extent that they align with the (re)World-building requirements mentioned in the relevant section above. The momentum gained following the Karabakh victory serves as a notable example of successful outcomes. At the bilateral and multilateral summits held after the victory, significant decisions were made in favor of greater integration. However, the implementation of some of these resolutions is still pending.

The current interplay of pull and push effects is visible in recent geopolitical debates. The Turkic World occupies a pivotal geographical position in the context of the most contentious geopolitical struggle of the 21st century. In light of the expected intensification of tensions and conflicts between major powers and rival World-building projects, the region, previously designated the "Turkic Belt" in another study (Okur, 2017), assumes particular significance. A potential conflict between the United States, its allies and Russia-China, their supporters could have considerable implications for China's maritime trade. This suggests that China will require a significantly expanded network of land transportation systems and communication infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of its goods to markets and to ensure the reliable supply of energy and raw materials. It is evident that the substantial investments in the construction of roads and pipelines in Asia, as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, should be viewed in this context. Among the routes connecting China's industrial zones with European markets, the one that is most likely to remain open for the longest time appears to be the Turkic Belt, which originates within China and reaches Europe via East/West Turkestan, the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Türkiye. The value of this route, which will be enhanced with opening of the the Zangezur Corridor, is more fully appreciated in light of the sanctions imposed in response to Russia's occupation of Ukraine, which have placed Chinese cargo transportation via the Russian route at risk. Despite the elevated tensions surrounding the Zangezur Corridor issue and the potential for renewed conflict, the possibility of a peaceful resolution, such as the construction of a 30-40 kilometer transportation tunnel, which would grant Azerbaijan sovereign rights for connecting Nakhichevan with its eastern territories, cannot be discounted (Okur & Şahin, 2022).

Similarly, India, whose population is expected to play a role comparable to that of China in the future of the global economy, also has a route to the Turkic Belt (Mohapatra, 2021). India, unable to access Asia's energy resources through its borders with Pakistan and China, is pursuing alternative ways. One of the most critical of these is the Iran-Caucasus-Russia route to Europe via Russia or Türkiye, which also intersects with the Zangezur Corridor. The second runs across Iran and Afghanistan to Turkestan. A third route is planned to reach Europe via the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Türkiye. The fourth is the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, which was announced at the G20 meeting (Das, 2024). This route

passes over or near Türkiye's waters in the eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean. In the event of a real possibility of a confrontation between the West and China leading to a rupture, India's importance in the global supply chain is likely to increase. It would not be implausible if those seeking to encircle China simultaneously sought to render the Turkic Belt inaccessible to Beijing while facilitating access for Delhi.

These are merely illustrative examples, which allow to examine the implications of the geopolitical meaning of the World-building activities in the zone of the Turkic World in the short and medium term. These states are confronted with two possible courses of action. The first option is to deal with the geopolitical designs of the great powers alone, whose competition is intensifying to the point of near conflict. The second option is for the Turkic Belt states, which control the entire route, to unite, establish common policies, and take advantage of enhanced bargaining opportunities. The first option carries significant risks, as the great powers are likely to intensify their efforts to incorporate the route into their spheres of influence, given its growing geopolitical importance, while these countries face them alone, one by one. The clear benefits of the second option strengthen the rationale for engaging in the reorganization of the Turkic World.

Moreover, although it is beyond the scope of this article to elaborate in detail, this project offers a variety of opportunities beyond the geopolitical implications of the Turkic Belt's strategic location. The facilities, capabilities, complementary resources, and strengths or weaknesses of the states of the Turks are mutually reinforcing. The region is endowed with abundant natural and human resources, as well as robust societies with strong social cohesion, creating favorable conditions for accelerated development and increased prosperity.

In light of these benefits, it is possible to design hybrid strategies that manage risks. Examples of such strategies include 'Co-Worlding' and 'Roof Sharing.' Co-Worlding refers to the simultaneous presence of institutions from different Worlds within a single country. This approach empowers these countries by demonstrating that they have viable alternatives. Over time, as the influence of one World wanes, a newer and more robust World gradually assumes the responsibilities of the old one. Co-Worlding facilitates the emergence of new World-building projects by mitigating negative reactions from the established World’s leader.

Roof Sharing is another hybrid strategy. In this approach, overarching entities, such as the East and the West, provide a framework that accommodates multiple World-building projects. It involves organizing different Worlds around their unique institutions while sharing common infrastructure, access to markets, and technology, as well as standing together against competitors in global politics. In this strategy, it is crucial for the less powerful World to maintain internal coherence to preserve its independent identity while benefiting from the more powerful one as both a protective shield and a supplier of development resources.

While the developments, dynamics, and risk-aversion strategies that support the vision of World-building nationalism are encouraging, significant challenges remain. Despite the integrationist aspirations of a substantial portion of the population and certain political and bureaucratic circles, there is little support for the World-building initiative among influential segments of society, such as academia, business, and cultural elites. One reason for this is that the elites in all Turkic states, including Türkiye, have been educated and positioned with a mindset focused on integration into other Worlds. Their primary role has been to act as intermediaries, facilitating their country's absorption into a larger system they find appealing or in which they possess specialized knowledge. This allows them to gain prestige and status as representatives of a given World (Okur, 2023).

If the majority of elites in the leading countries do not genuinely support a World-building project, the likelihood of its success diminishes. Global crises and geopolitical transformations reaching

historical rupture levels might provide the necessary motivation to back such a project. However, articulating a coherent ideological framework for World-building vision—one that appeals to diverse constituencies both domestically and internationally—remains a significant challenge for Türkiye and its partners. A significant challenge in World-building nationalism is reconciling diverse, often conflicting ideological elements in a manner that resonates across Turkic lands and beyond. Historically, Islam provided an overarching framework that fostered both great civilizational achievements and power struggles for World-leadership among various centers. Consequently, there has been an intensification of discourse on the authentic interpretation of Islam as a meaning system, both within and outside its traditional spheres of influence. This dialogue intersects with Islam's engagement with various schools of thought, predominantly of Western and Eastern origin. These Western and Eastern ideological systems once gained prominence in regions now undergoing (re)World-building efforts and embroiled in novel geopolitical conflicts. Today, these areas have become arenas for dual intellectual contests: internal Muslim examinations of Islam, and exchanges between Islam and competing ideologies. These ideological engagements unfold against a backdrop of multifaceted crises at various levels of human experience, extending beyond geopolitical and identity issues. The outcomes of these complex intellectual confrontations and the eventual consensus to be reached by Turks will inevitably shape (re)World-building endeavors.

The economic difficulties faced by Türkiye and its partners restrict their capacity to project power and exert influence on the international stage. The establishment of a robust economic foundation is a prerequisite for sustainable World-building. Despite the scarcity of available resources, it is critical to the success of the project to increase initiatives aimed at instilling in Turkic individuals of all ages and educational levels, especially the younger generation, a sense of the tangible and intangible benefits of belonging to a broader community beyond their fellow countrymen. It is imperative that these gains are not solely related to security and welfare, but also contribute to fostering a pro-World vision that includes dimensions of good governance and justice.

Another serious problem is that the OTS, which represents a crucial stage in the institutionalization of the Turkic world, has so far only included independent states in its structure. In order to fully realize the potential of this World-building project, it is essential to consider mechanisms for extending interaction to stateless Turkic communities.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the Türk Eli initiative presents a potentially fruitful avenue for Türkiye and its partners in their World-building journey. By prioritizing peace, collaboration, and shared prosperity over domination or imperialism, this approach aligns with the needs and aspirations of potential partner countries. Additionally, it offers a flexible structure that can adapt to the evolving dynamics of the international system. The concept of Türk Eli as a zone of peace extends beyond the Turkic-speaking World to include territories with historical ties to Türkiye, such as parts of the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus, as well as adjacent areas, forming a secure belt around these regions and more distant but still linked lands with various kinds of relations and commonalities. This broader vision addresses the stability of these areas, which is crucial for Türkiye and its partners in preventing mass migration, terrorism, and crime resulting from ongoing conflicts, state failures, and the deepening of divisions and fault lines due to military interventions by outside powers and endless civil strifes. This inclusive approach to regional cooperation could be an effective means of addressing long-standing conflicts and tensions in Eurasia.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined Türkiye's and its partners' potential for World-building amid the upheaval of international relations, characterized by a historical rupture through deglobalization and the

emergence of rival power centers in the form of distinct Worlds. This significant transformation places Türkiye at a pivotal crossroads. The concept of Türk Eli, or Turkic Peace Zone, provides a framework for Türkiye's engagement with its historical and cultural connections, as well as its material capabilities and interests across Eurasia in this rapidly evolving landscape.

The Turkic World's unique historical and civilizational legacy, deep kinship ties, religious and cultural bonds, strategic geopolitical positioning, energy and natural resources, expanding technological and military capabilities, educated population, and shared interests in transportation and energy corridors form a solid foundation for realizing the Türk Eli vision. By leveraging these strengths, Türkiye and its allies can establish a zone of peace and prosperity, not in isolation, but by maintaining connections with other relevant powers and promoting regional integration. While Türkiye is well-positioned to play a leading role, the realization of the Turkic Peace Zone should involve a multi-centered approach, with other partners prepared to share responsibilities and initiatives to ensure sustainable success.

This vision faces several challenges, including complex geopolitical dynamics and the need to manage delicate relations with competing actors. However, through strategic initiatives like enhancing integration within the OTS, Türkiye and its partners have the potential to play a central role in shaping the future of Eurasia. By doing so, Türkiye can not only advance its national interests but also contribute to a more stable and prosperous future for the broader Eurasian region.



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