

OPINION

On the PhD thesis titled “The Middle East policy of Turkey (2002–2011)” prepared by Marian Dimitrov Karagyozev, doctoral student with Department “Contemporary Balkans” of the Institute of Balkan Studies and Centre of Tracology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IBSCT) for award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 2. Human sciences, professional field 2.2. History and Archeology, by Prof. Dimitar Ionchev, Ph.D. in Economics, NBU (New Bulgarian University).

The thesis elaborated by Marian Karagyozev is focused on the study of Turkey with its foreign policy in the Middle East region, placing main emphasis on the decade from 2002 to 2011, as indicated in the subject.

The focal matter has been unfolded as an interpretation of past events, nonetheless its significance lies in its inherent relation to the ongoing processes in that specific part of the world, the understanding of which is essential for all countries neighboring Turkey, among which is the Republic of Bulgaria.

In general terms, the dissertation study is organized on and around major historical events of interest throughout the period, however it manages to avoid the limitations of a typical chronological review, with its primary effort centred on highlighting the specific significance of the selected period, with a view to understanding Turkish policy in regional and global perspective. The author is also driven by the ambition to fill in a critical deficiency in existing monographic studies expanding on Turkish foreign policy.

The theoretical toolkit of the dissertation has been thoroughly scrutinized and selected allowing for the use of a combined approach to analysis with a main emphasis on historical survey.

On that basis, Marian Karagyzov has outlined several sub-periods, each notable with different, but distinctive features. It is my opinion that also, due to the well construed toolkit, he has developed a well-grounded approach towards presenting a picture of the region by grouping the studied countries based on the neighboring criterion, resulting in the outcome that Turkish policy towards each group has become more visible featuring both its intangible strengths and weaknesses.

The successful attempt of the dissertation student should be noted in terms of justifying the fluctuations in Turkish policy towards countries in the Middle East, by examining these subtle modalities from three different perspectives, allowing to bring to the fore the impact of both individual and cultural aspects, as well as local and global processes reflecting on the foreign policy decision making by the Republic of Turkey during the reviewed period (2002-2011).

Marian Karagyzov states in a fair and correct manner that he has made an attempt, which I find successful, to estimate the influence of Prof. Ahmet Davutoglu by exploring his biographic landmarks and main ideas, outlined in Prof. Davutoglu's fundamental work "Strategic depth: Turkey's international position". In the first chapter of the study, the dissertation student conducts a multidisciplinary analysis of these ideas which significantly facilitates the understanding of Turkish foreign policy in the region discussed throughout the next chapters.

As early as in the first Chapter, the author addresses key issues pertaining to Turkish policy, as for example the so-called "Kurdish Issue", in its essence denoting

in terms of regional foreign policy the meaning Turkey attributes to its relations with Iraq and Syria. The dynamics of these relations reveals explicitly the attempt of the Republic of Turkey to master and counter balance trends in the region by adopting its national interest as a key principle in its foreign policy. These issues are discussed in the second chapter of the dissertation.

The third and fourth chapters are dedicated to relations with the next circle of countries, whereas the fifth focuses on policy making within multilateral formats, with Turkey playing the active part.

Marian Karagyozev's study is useful in understanding the regional Turkish policy with neighboring countries, as well as the processes of importance for us, those unfolding in the Middle East region.

Decision-makers in the sphere of foreign policy in the Republic of Bulgaria would benefit from the methodology and conclusions, drawn by the author. If this study is published, it would introduce to the Bulgarian public the opinions of various Turkish authors and experts, otherwise unknown in our country.

I would like to point out with satisfaction that a substantial part of the comments made during the discussions of the thesis have been taken in account by the author.

The abstract reflects the content of the study with sufficient accuracy, as does the reference to scientific contributions.

Marian Karagyozev has submitted five separate publications, all directly related to the dissertation study.

In conclusion, I recommend the presented by the PhD student in Department "Contemporary Balkans" at IBSC T Marian Dimitrov Karagyozev thesis with topic "The Middle East policy of Turkey (2002–2011)" be granted admission by the scientific jury to the procedure for award of the scientific and educational degree

“Doctor” in the field of higher education 2. Human sciences, professional field 2.2.
History and Archeology.

Prof. Dimitar Ionchev, Ph.D. in Economics

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