

OPINION

by Prof. Nadia Boyadjieva, Ph.D., Doctor of Sciences (International Law and International Relations) at the Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology "Prof. Alexander Fol" of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,

a member of the Scientific Committee for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in the Field of higher education: 2. Humanitarian sciences, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archeology

Ph.D. Candidate: Marian Dimitrov Karagyozev

Title of dissertation: "Turkish Policy toward the Middle East, 2002-2011"

Scientific consultant: correspondent member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Dr. Alexandre Kostov, Dr. Habil

1. Presentation of the procedure.

I have been appointed by Order No 84 RD-16/07.07.2023 by the Director of the Institute of Balkan Studies & Centre of Thracology "Prof. Alexander Fol" at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IBCT-BAS) as a member of the scientific jury in the procedure for the defense of a doctoral thesis on the topic: "Turkish Near-East Policy 2002-2011" in connection with the procedure for the defense of the doctoral thesis of Marian Karagyozev, a PhD student at the "Recent Balkans" Department at IBCT -BAS.

At the first meeting of the Scientific committee, I was assigned to prepare an Opinion. Pursuant to the Order of the Director of the IBCT-BAS and the decision of the first meeting of the Scientific Committee, being guided by the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria (LADB), its Implementing Regulations (IRAS), the Regulations for the work of the Scientific Council of the IBCT-BAS and the Annex to the Regulations of the Scientific Council of the IBCT-BAS on the conditions and procedure for awarding scientific degrees and for holding academic positions, I offer to the attention of the distinguished members of the Scientific Jury my findings and conclusions, as well as the reasoned conclusion.

I accept the set of administrative documents submitted by Marian Karagyozev /CV European format, certificates certifying the successful completion of 2 pcs. lecture courses in the field of doctoral studies from the Training Centre (TC)-BAS /2 pcs./, certificate for

passing the foreign language exam /1 pcs./, Certificate №114/19.12.2022 for acquired presentation skills /2022/; dissertation and abstract for the award of PhD in the field of higher education 2. Humanitarian sciences, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archeology; declaration of authenticity and the required declaration; order for enrolment in a doctoral free-form, order for enrolment, order for Department's Council meeting, report on contributions, minutes of a meeting of the Departments' Council with a proposal for enrolment in a doctoral programme. No other reference to compliance with national requirements is attached, except the annual report of the candidate with activities performed and points earned.

PhD student Karagyozev was enrolled as a doctoral student with Order №9 RD-10/07.01.2022 of the Director of IBCT-BAS. He submitted his completed doctoral thesis to his supervisor on 20.02.2023 and successfully underwent an internal discussion at a Meeting of the Department Council of the "Recent Balkans" Department held on 04.07.2023.

All required documents, the doctoral thesis, and the abstract were submitted within the legal timeframe. During his studies, PhD student Karagyozev successfully completed all activities in accordance with the individual curriculum, as well as the minimum national requirements according to Article 2b of Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA) for the scientific field 2. Humanitarian Studies, professional field 2.2. History and Archeology.

2. Presentation of the doctoral candidate

The PhD student Marian Dimitrov Karagyozev graduated from the National High School for Ancient Languages and Cultures "Sv. Konstantin – Kiril Filosof" at Sofia (2005). He graduated with a Master's degree of Law from Sofia University St. "Kliment Ohridski" (2012) with a specialization in Public Administration, and a Bachelor's degree in Oriental Studies with Turkish Language from New Bulgarian University (2012).

He is enrolled as a PhD student in independent training at IBRC-BAS with scientific consultant correspondent member of BAS, Prof. Dr.Alexandre Kostov, Dr.Habil. During his PhD study, he completed two courses in the specialty at the Training Center at the BAS (TS-BAS), as well as a course for qualification in presentation skills at the TS-BAS

/attached 2 pcs., and a certificate for language skills exam of and 1 pcs. Certificate №114/19.12.2022 for acquired presentation skills.

On 04.07.2023 a Seminar of the Department "Contemporary Balkans" is held in an extended composition, which takes a unanimous decision on the readiness for defence before a scientific jury and a proposal for enrolment with the right to defence. The Scientific Council of the IBST-BAS decides on the dismissal with the right to defence. The above-mentioned training courses, as well as his active participation in academic events at the IBCT-BAS and beyond, allowed him to obtain the necessary points, thus meeting the criteria for graduation with the right to defence. Karagyozev has also practical and expert experience in the country that becomes the subject of the dissertation – Republic of Turkey, where has worked as a correspondent in Turkey of the Bulgarian National Radio, as an editor at the Bulgarian National Radio, as well as in other media. He participates in scientific and expert forums, summer schools in different countries, and various projects in the field of the dissertation topic. He is the author of 1 monograph, book chapters and several academic articles in scientific journals and edited volumes, and in periodicals.

3. Presentation of the doctoral thesis.

Today's dynamic international environment raises a number of questions for scholars in the humanities and social sciences who apply interdisciplinary methods and approaches to answer these questions. Such a task was set by Marian Karagyozev in his dissertation proposed for review. The author chose as the subject of his and scholarly interpretations the complex issues of Turkey's foreign policy objectives and strategy in relation to the Middle East region, justifying the chosen period of research, almost covering the first decade of the XXI century - 2002-2011. The topic is suitable for a dissertation, topical and significant for research in Bulgarian science. Apart from theoretical, historical, and international legal perspectives, the topic is also important for Bulgarian historiography due to geopolitical considerations - our common border with the regional power Turkey. The topic is significant and suitable for research by a scholar from the Institute of Balkan Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The dissertation has a classical structure, containing introduction, five chapters /each chapter has several sub-chapters logically connected/, conclusion, sources and bibliography, in total 256 standard typed pages, of which 231 pages of exposition and 24 pages of bibliography. The sources and literature used are diverse, in Bulgarian and foreign languages /Russian, Turkish, English, Bosnian/.

In the introduction, the Karagyozev indicates the relevance of the problem addressed in the doctoral thesis, the extent of its scientific development, and defines the aim and objectives of the research. The PhD student has used research methods that are specific to historical science as well as methods inherent in other humanities and social sciences. The choice of specific methods and methodology is justified by the author. It successfully copes with the set scientific research tasks.

The research aims set by the author are fulfilled in the dissertation research. Without going into details on the structure of the individual chapters of the thesis, I will note here the following general assessment:

The first 40 percent of the dissertation consists of an introduction and a discussion of Turkish policy toward the Middle East during the 20th century, especially during the Cold War. The time frame chosen for the remainder of the dissertation (2002-2011) is driven by the first victory of the newly formed Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 2002 and the second AKP victory in 2011. Karagyozev is right to devote considerable space to a discussion of Turkey's evolution in the roughly 80 years after the breakup of the Ottoman empire until the start of his main focus. The narrative occasionally jumps around a little, but overall, it is fairly easy to follow. His discussion of Turkey in the Cold War is brief but competent, touching quickly on all the major events relating to Turkey. His findings are clearly derived from the scientific problems discussed in each respective chapter.

Karagyozev also discusses, albeit more briefly, Turkey's relations with key Arab countries, including the Gulf Cooperation Council.

4. Evaluation of the Contributions of the Dissertation.

1. I accept the contributions in the dissertation, as I find that they are broadly researched, and the author presented them honestly.

2. The choice of this topical and significant topic for research in Bulgarian science deserves admiration precisely because of its complexity. Moreover, Karagyozev examines it not only from a historical, but also from a theoretical, international legal and political science perspective, which makes the dissertation an interdisciplinary study.

3. The dissertation represents the first rich and complete study of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East in the author's limited period. The dissertation thus fills a gap in the Bulgarian specialized literature in the chosen chronological period 2002-2011.

4. The periodization of Turkey's Middle East policy /of two periods/ is useful, with an exploration of the specifics using a problem-based and chronological approach:

5. Another contribution is the study of regional political and economic initiatives initiated by Turkey, such as the idea of "shamgen", around which Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey are united, highlighting Turkey's desire to play the role of "leader" in regional cooperation.

6. Karagyozev focuses mostly on Turkey's policies toward neighboring countries, especially Syria and Iraq, both of which, like Turkey, have large Kurdish communities. The role of the Kurds plays a large role in the dissertation, and Karagyozev is correct in doing this. Turkey's policies toward these countries are driven by Erdoğan's efforts to keep the Kurds subjugated at home.

5. Critical remarks and comments.

Karagyozev's discussion of IR theories is superficial and lackluster. Instead of setting forth a hypothesis (or hypotheses) based on each IR theory regarding Turkey's policies toward the Middle East and then testing each hypothesis to see which theory fares the best, he superficially discusses the theories and then leaves them aside for most of the dissertation. They serve as a mere ornament on his dissertation rather than an integral component that helps conceptualize Turkish foreign policy and move the dissertation along.

Karagyozev's discussion about terminology is a bit confused. In English, the terms Middle East and Near East are equivalent. The British have always used Near East, whereas in the United States the term Middle East is used. These terms, as Karagyozev notes, are geographically imprecise. The terms usually encompass part of North Africa

(esp. Egypt) and all of the Levant over to the Arabian peninsula, but in the work of some scholars the term may refer to the “wider Middle East,” encompassing all Arab countries, Israel, Turkey, and Iran. The term “Central Asia” usually refers solely to the five countries that were once part of the Soviet Union (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan), but sometimes it also includes Pakistan and Afghanistan. The term “Southwest Asia” usually refers to Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan, but some authors will also use it to refer to a few other countries. The term “Indian subcontinent” refers to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, though it can sometimes also refer to Sri Lanka and Burma.

1. Although his discussion of Turkey in the Cold War is acceptable, he makes only one very brief mention (on p. 68) of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in July-August 1974 and the crisis that resulted. He refers to it as having occurred in August 1974, whereas it began in July.
2. Also, his mention of the Cuban missile crisis is surprisingly superficial, given that the resolution of the crisis directly pertained to Turkey (though initially without the knowledge of Turkish policymakers).
3. Karagaozov’s discussion about terminology is a bit confused. In English, the terms Middle East and Near East are equivalent. The British have always used Near East, whereas in the United States the term Middle East is used. These terms, as Karagaozov notes, are geographically imprecise. The terms usually encompass part of North Africa (esp. Egypt) and all of the Levant over to the Arabian Peninsula, but in the work of some scholars the term may refer to the “wider Middle East,” encompassing all Arab countries, Israel, Turkey, and Iran. The term “Central Asia” usually refers solely to the five countries that were once part of the Soviet Union (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan), but sometimes it also includes Pakistan and Afghanistan. The term “Southwest Asia” usually refers to Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan, but some authors will also use it to refer to a few other countries. The term “Indian subcontinent” refers to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, though it can sometimes also refer to Sri Lanka and Burma.
4. Karagaozov made almost no use of any archival materials, not even the Bulgarian archives aside from one citation of a very useful for disclosing the documents and announcing affiliation of Bulgarian citizens to the Committee on State Security and

intelligence services of the Bulgarian National Army (COMDOS) volume on p. 77. He does not make use of online collections of declassified U.S. documents such as the U.S. State Department's *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, nor does he make use of online collections of declassified British, French, and West German documents. He also does not draw on archival materials from Turkey that some other scholars, especially those at the Institute of Slavic Studies in Moscow, have used. Nor does he draw on the extremely useful declassified documents relating to Turkey in the NATO Archives, which are freely accessible (and some have been scanned and posted online).

5. Except when discussing the U.S. resupply of weapons to Israel during the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, he makes almost no mention of Soviet policy in the Middle East and how it affected Turkish policy. The Institute of Slavic Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow has produced several studies that are relevant to this dissertation and would have been good to draw on. He also could have drawn on Cengiz Günay's work in both English and Turkish to gain a sense of competing Turkish and Soviet interests and actions in the Middle East. He could also draw on Evgeny Primakov's detailed study of Soviet relations with Arab countries, which also discusses Turkey a bit (Евгений Примаков, «Конфиденциально: Ближний Восток на сцене и за кулисами» (2006, 2-е изд. 2012) which was translated and published in English (Primakov, Yevgeny. *Russia and the Arabs: Behind the Scenes in the Middle East from the Cold War to the Present*). Primakov's book is very important. Not only did he know the subject extremely well firsthand, but he also (as former Russian prime minister and former head of foreign intelligence) had full access to Politburo and foreign intelligence records when writing his book.
6. Karagyzov also should have looked at numerous articles in the *Journal of Cold War Studies* (MIT PRESS) relating to Turkish politics and foreign policy during the Cold War.
7. Karagyzov's discussion of the AKP and Erdoğan specifically is illuminating, but I would have been harsher. Erdoğan has taken a secular, partly free country and turned it into an Islamist authoritarian state. This trend began in the period

covered by the dissertation, and it accelerated in the period after the failed military coup in July 2016. The Islamicization of the country has been a dismaying trend for a country that had stood out in the Islamic world as resisting the allures of Islamist sooth-sayers.

The *abstract* of the dissertation (19 pages) faithfully reflects the author's structure, aims and main conclusions and meets the requirements. The three scientific articles attached to the documents (out of four in total, mentioned as titles on the topic of the dissertation) are a testimony to the long-lasting interest of the candidate in the researched topic. These are in-depth analytical articles that have been published in prestigious academic journals and contribute to the positive evaluation of the candidate.

The above-mentioned dubious points and gaps could be overcome by conducting further research, supplementing the sources, and expanding on some insufficiently thoroughly addressed issues. They are of a wishful nature and do not overshadow the overall very good impression of the study. I wish the author, after necessary additions and edits, to present his book to a wider audience.

Based on the above, I accept that Marian Dimitrov Karagyozev submits for evaluation a thesis meets the academic criteria for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree of "Doctor".

6. Personal impressions

I have positive impressions of his overall work as a political scientist and a PhD student in the Department "Recent Balkans" during his training period. I believe that he has fulfilled the tasks rigorously and with responsibility and has established himself as a respected young scientist in the scientific team of IBCT - BAS.

7. Conclusion

The candidate has demonstrated in-depth theoretical knowledge of contemporary political history, political science, international relations, and international politics. His scientific interest is long-lasting and permanent, as evidenced by the titles of scientific articles on the topic of the dissertation, as well as articles published in periodicals.

The dissertation contains scientific results that constitute a contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LADASB), the Regulations for the Application of the LADASB, as well as the Regulations of the IBCT-BAS and other relevant legal regulations. The dissertation shows that Marian Karagyozev possesses the theoretical knowledge and professional skills to independently conduct scientific research.

Based on the above, I have grounds to confidently provide my **positive evaluation** of the conducted research and propose to the respected members of the Scientific committee to award Marian Dimitrov Karagyozev the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in the field of higher education the scientific field 2. Humanitarian Studies, professional field 2.2. History and Archeology.

Sofia, 29 September, 2023

Prepared by: _____

/Prof. Nadia Boyadjieva, D.Sc./