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Turkey and Taiwan: The Relationship Seeking its Ground



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POLICY BRIEF

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TURKEY AND TAIWAN: THE RELATIONSHIP SEEKING ITS GROUND

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ABSTRACT

In the pre-1971 period, "One China" for Turkey was the Republic of China in Taiwan and the two countries were in cooperation against communist expansion. However, in 1971, though being reluctant for the expulsion of Taiwan from the United Nations, Turkey recognized People's Republic of China as the sole legal representative of China and pursued the "One China" policy in that respect. Thus, in the post-1971 period, Turkey's relations with Taiwan have continued only in terms of economy, trade and culture without recognizing it as an independent political unit. Beginning from early 1990s, Turkey began to take initiatives to increase its trade cooperation with Taiwan.

However, Turkey should consider its relations with China, while expanding its economic relations with Taiwan. Thus, the economic relations between Turkey and Taiwan may advance further, only if objections of China can be overcome. In this respect, this study has two main aims. Firstly, all aspects of bilateral relations were examined from 1950s until today. Secondly, policy recommendations for improving bilateral economic relations without leaving Turkey's "One China" policy aside were suggested.

Keywords: Turkey, Taiwan, China, Foreign Relations

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Table-1) Taiwan and Turkey in Comparison in 2010

		
Official Name	Republic of China	Republic of Turkey
Form of Government	Semi-Presidential Republic	Parliamentary Republic
Head of State and Government	MA Ying-jeou (Since May 2008) Wu Den-yih (Since September 2009)	Abdullah GÜL (Since August 2007) Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN (Since July 2003–reelected in June 2011)
Official Language	Chinese	Turkish
Capital	Taipei	Ankara
Area	36,191 km ²	783,562 km ²
Population (2009)	23.1 million	73.7 million
Currency	New Taiwan Dollar (TWD)	Turkish Lira (TL)
Parity	1 \$ = 32.86 TWD (2010)	1 \$ = 1.5 TL (2010)
GDP (\$)	378.95 Billion (2009) (24 th)	735.8 Billion (2010) (16 th)
GDP Per Capita (\$)	16,442 (2009)	10,079 (2010)
Total Foreign Trade (\$)	378.04 Billion (2009)	299.427 Billion (2010)
Annual Economic Growth (%)	7.7 (2010)	8.9 (2010)
Source: Ministry of Economy of Turkey and Taiwan Government Information Office		

Introduction

Taiwan, officially named the “Republic of China” (ROC), had occupied China’s permanent membership seat in the United Nations (UN) Security Council until 1971.

After 1971, a major policy shift in the Western bloc resulted in recognition of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as the sole legitimate government representing “One China”, and caused the expulsion of Taiwan from the UN. Nevertheless, Taiwan preserved its existence by legally remaining a part of China, but as a de facto independent state with unique status. Taiwan’s embassies in many countries still continued to function under the name “Taipei Economic and Cultural Office.” Moreover, with its rapid economic development in the 1970s and 80s, Taiwan became known as one of the four “Asian Tigers” along with South Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong, and gained an international reputation.

Ankara acted in accordance with its NATO allies and recognized the PRC instead of the ROC as the sole legal representative of all China. However, though being recognized as an independent state only by 23 relatively small countries in the world, Taiwan, in practice, can conduct any sort of diplomacy a truly independent state can. In this regard, Taiwan constitutes an exceptional case to be examined by the researchers of international relations and international law.

Table-2) 23 Countries Having Diplomatic Relations with the ROC (Taiwan)

Belize	The Gambia	Honduras	Nicaragua	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Solomon Islands
Burkina Faso	Guatemala	Kiribati	Palau	Saint Lucia	Swaziland
Dominican Republic	Haiti	Marshall Islands	Panama	Saint Vincent and the Grendines	Tuvalu
El Salvador	Holy See	Nauru	Paraguay	São Tomé and Príncipe	
Source: Taiwan Government Information Office					

The Pro-Taiwan Policy of Turkey (1949-1971)

Until 1971, the Republic of China had been recognized by all Western countries and occupied a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

Turkey was one of those countries preferring to recognize the ROC over the PRC, aiming to pursue a positive policy of developing economic and cultural relations with Taiwan. Thus, in the period between 1949 and 1971, the “One China” for Turkey was the ROC in Taiwan, and the two countries were in cooperation against communist expansion.

In 1956, there was a significant bilateral exchange of visits and an expansion of relations with the aim of strengthening ties between Turkey and the ROC. In April 1956, an ROC government delegation of five officials visited Turkey to boost bilateral trade relations.¹ In November 1956, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, with a parliamentary delegation of five members, visited Taiwan to strengthen political and economic relations, and cooperate against communist expansion.² In February 1957, Yeh, the Taiwanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Permanent Representative to the UN, visited Ankara and signed an agreement of cultural exchange between the two countries.³ The agreement foresaw the exchange of athletes, students, scholarships, and the establishment of a Chinese department in a Turkish university and a Turkish department in a Taiwanese university to increase cultural cooperation.⁴ In addition, the ROC ambassador to Turkey, Shao

1 “Bir Milliyetçi Çin heyeti Türkiye’ye geliyor”, *Milliyet*, April 16, 1956.

2 Leyla Umar, “Bangkok’a giden heyetimizin bir kısmı döndü”, *Milliyet*, November 25, 1956.

3 “Milliyetçi Çin Hariciye Vekili geliyor”, *Milliyet*, February 4, 1957.

4 “Türkiye-Çin Kültür Anlaşması imzalandı”, *Milliyet*, February 13, 1957.

Yu-Line, emphasized the necessity of opening in Turkey an institution equivalent to the Turkish-Chinese Cultural Foundation in Taiwan, revealing the importance given by the ROC to the bilateral relations with Turkey.⁵

In the Cold War atmosphere, Turkey established close relations with the Republic of China not only for increasing bilateral trade volume, but also for common political and security aims. Accordingly, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, on the way back from his visit to South Korea, visited the ROC and made several contacts for economic and cultural collaboration and military cooperation against communism.⁶ Menderes also made a speech to Taiwan's Legislative Yuan regarding the importance of cooperation against the threat of communism.⁷

Within the framework of flourishing relations between Turkey and the ROC in 1959, a Turkish parliamentary delegation of twelve members under chaired by Refik Koraltan visited Taiwan and expressed Turkey's support for "Nationalist China" against Communist China.⁸ Thus, between the years 1966 and 1970, Turkey voted against the resolution to recognize the PRC as the sole legal representative of China to the UN.⁹ In other words, it wouldn't be inaccurate to state that Turkey and Taiwan had nearly perfect political relations between the years 1949 and 1971. Turkey as a NATO member and Taiwan as an ally of the United States displayed strong solidarity against the communist world. However, during this period, economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries remained relatively weak.

5 "Türkiye-Milliyetçi Çin münasebatı sıkılaştırılıyor", *Milliyet*, September 17, 1957.

6 "Milliyetçi Çin'i ziyaret", *Milliyet*, April 26, 1958.

7 "Başvekil Milliyetçi Çin Meclisinde konuştu", *Milliyet*, April 30, 1958.

8 "Koraltan dönüyor", *Milliyet*, February, 10 1959.

9 Uygur Mustafa Sertel, *Türk Dış Politikasında Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti ile İşbirliği Olanaklarının Analizi*, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, Atılım Üniversitesi, 2008, p.32.

Recognition of the PRC and Dismissal of the ROC in the post-1971 Era

In the beginning of 1970s, international relations witnessed a remarkable change. The US began to pursue a policy of rapprochement with the PRC, seeking a containment policy in Asia toward the Soviet Union.

The rapprochement between Washington and Beijing was a relatively easy task due to the problematic Chinese relations with Moscow. As per the agreement between Washington and Beijing, the US recognized the PRC as the sole legal representative of China and the ROC as a part of China instead of an independent state. Thus, this agreement required the transfer of the Chinese seat in the UN Security Council from the ROC to the PRC, as well as the expulsion of the ROC from the UN. The PRC also explicitly stated that the states which continued their diplomatic relations with the ROC could not establish any diplomatic relations with the PRC.

Turkey voted against the PRC's membership in the UN since it was reluctant to see the expulsion of the ROC from the UN.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Turkey recognized the PRC on August 5, 1971, right after the passing of the resolution and established diplomatic relations with Communist China. Since 1971, Turkey has recognized the PRC as the sole legal representative of China and pursued a "One China" policy.¹¹ As a result, Turkey has not established diplomatic relations with Taiwan since August 1971, and has not recognized it as an independent political unit. The Taiwanese have continued to pursue its diplomatic mission in Ankara and the bilateral relations have continued only in terms of economic, trade, and cultural relations.¹² In this new period, Turkey began to use the word Taiwan instead of "Republic of China" or "Nationalist China" as a sign of its acceptance of Taiwan as a part of China.

¹⁰ "Çin'le ilişki", *Milliyet*, August 6, 1971.

¹¹ "Turkey's Political Relations with China", Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-china.en.mfa (16 April 2011).

¹² Selçuk Çolakoğlu, "Taiwan's Four Demands from Turkey", *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, March 21, 2011.

Still, Turkey politically supports the reunification of China by way of peaceful negotiations.¹³

Following the severing of relations with Taiwan and establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC based on the “One China” policy, Turkey and the PRC exchanged diplomatic representatives and their bilateral relations improved constantly. The relationship was based on mutual trust, respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, and mutual benefit.¹⁴ Besides diplomatic relations, bilateral economic relations were also established through the legal framework of agreements such as the Agreement on Trade (1974), the Agreement Concerning the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments (1990), the Cooperation Agreement in Tourism (1991), and the Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation (1995).¹⁵

In this period, bilateral high-level official visits between Turkey and the PRC constituted an important role in boosting bilateral relations. Bilateral visits were conducted at the level of President in 1982 and 1984, and at the level of Prime Minister in 1985 and 1986.¹⁶ Such intensive contacts provided an opportunity for friendly and cooperative relations, which enabled the two countries to get to know each other in an international atmosphere determined by the Cold War context.¹⁷ During this period, Turkey pursued a policy which dismissed Taiwan completely.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Turkey began to take initiatives to increase its trade cooperation with Taiwan, which had already developed an important economy. In early 1992, Minister of Public Works and Settlement Onur Kumbaracıbaşı conducted an unofficial high-level visit to Taiwan after many years. Right after this visit, Minister of Foreign Economic Relations in Taiwan Chang Hsio-Yen came to Turkey and visited Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel.¹⁸ During this visit, Demirel stated that it was still possible to develop economic cooperation with Taiwan without recognizing it as an independent state. Indeed, economic relations between Turkey and Taiwan witnessed considerable expansion during the 1990s, while real progress for the bilateral economic and trade relations was observed during 2000s.

13 “The Recent Elections in Taiwan and Relations Between Turkey and People’s Republic of China”, Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 22, 2000, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/.....> (21 January 2011).

14 “Turkey’s Political Relations with China”, Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-china.en.mfa (16 April 2011).

15 “Turkey-People’s Republic of China Economic and Trade Relations”, Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-china.en.mfa (16 April 2011).

16 *Türkiye-Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti Siyasi İlişkileri*, Ankara.

17 Uygur Mustafa Sertel, s.36.

18 “Taiwan’la ekonomik yakınlaşma”, *Milliyet*, April 11, 1992.

Seeking a Turkish-Taiwanese Economic Partnership in the 2000s

The legal status of Taiwan also became an obstacle for the further development of Turkish-Taiwanese economic relations.

The legal status of Taiwan also became an obstacle for the further development of Turkish-Taiwanese economic relations. Due to the lack of diplomatic recognition, no treaties have been signed since 1971. However, in order to secure the future of economic and trade relations, the diplomatic missions continued to function under the “Taipei Economic and Cultural Office” in Ankara, and “Turkish Trade Office” in Taipei.¹⁹

The rapid economic development of Turkey in the 2000s stimulated its search for entering new markets. In this regard, as one of the most important economies in East Asia, Turkey could not ignore Taiwan. As a matter of fact, throughout the 2000s, Ankara searched for ways to develop its trade relations with Taipei. Similarly, Taiwan sought opportunities to increase its cooperation with Turkey. However, without the PRC’s consent, it was difficult for both countries to boost their economic relations. Thus, in the last ten years, Turkey increased its search for ways to further economic cooperation with Taiwan without evoking any reaction from the PRC.

The visit of the representatives of 62 large Taiwanese enterprises in February 2001 stimulated the economic relations between the two countries. Meeting Turkish businessmen in the Taiwan Expo, Director of the Taiwan Trade Center Peter W.J. Huyang stressed the importance

¹⁹ “Tayvan”, T.C. Başbakanlık Dış ticaret müsteşarlığı, <http://www.dtm.gov.tr> (26 January 2010).

of large scale Taiwanese products for Turkish businessmen, and mentioned their intention to increase the bilateral trade volume.²⁰

Mainly due to the rise in production costs in textiles, shoe manufacturing, chemistry and electronics industries, Taiwanese enterprises became interested in investing in Turkey. The high volume of iron and steel exports to Taiwan also attracted the attention of Turkish business circles. As a result of the rise in bilateral trade, the Turkish-Taiwanese Business Council, which was first established in 1993, came into action again in 2005 after the reorganization of the Turkish Executive Committee. Redirecting Taiwanese capital toward investing in Turkey became the main function of the Council.²¹

Table-3) Turkey's Trade with Taiwan (1,000 USD)

Years	Export	Import	Volume	Balance
2000	69,012	562,813	631,825	-493,801
2001	67,456	316,326	383,783	-248,869
2002	230,322	521,986	752,308	-291,664
2003	130,160	752,655	882,815	-622,495
2004	162,542	1,206,365	1,368,907	-1,043,822
2005	77,586	1,530,266	1,607,852	-1,452,680
2006	80,030	1,649,209	1,729,239	-1,569,179
2007	94,701	1,884,289	1,978,990	-1,789,588
2008	97,448	1,683,304	1,780,752	-1,585,856
2009	130,156	1,342,410	1,472,567	-1,212,253
2010	136,782	1,842,847	1,979,630	-1,706,064

Source: Ministry of Economy of Turkey

20 "Tayvan'dan İstanbul çıkarması", *Hürriyet*, February 8, 2001.

21 "Türk-Tayvan İş Konseyi", http://www.deik.org.tr/Pages/TR/IK_AnaSayfa.aspx?IKID=57 (20 January 2011).

This progress in economic relations resulted in a significant rise in economic and trade statistics. In 2010, Turkey's imports from Taiwan reached \$1.842 billion, up from \$521 million in 2002, more than doubling itself. On the other hand, exports from Turkey to Taiwan diminished from \$230 million to \$136 million between the years 2002 and 2010. In other words, during these eight years, the Turkish trade deficit with Taiwan became more than five times greater, increasing from \$291 million to \$1.7 billion. The main types of goods Turkey imports from Taiwan are electric machines and tools, stainless steel products, and metal processing machines. Major exports to Taiwan are iron, non-alloy steel carbon, minerals, raw materials for fertilizers, and synthetic textile fibers and products.²²

While expanding its economic relations with Taiwan, Turkey should consider its relations with the PRC, based on its "One China" policy. For example, in 2010, the expected ratification of the agreement for direct flights from Istanbul to Taipei received a negative reaction from Beijing. China protested the draft of the agreement with a diplomatic note. However, diplomatic sources in Turkey revealed that China's anxiety was not voiced harshly and that Foreign Ministry noted the sensitivity of Beijing.²³

Taiwan is quite enthusiastic about developing bilateral economic and trade relations, and calls on Turkish businessmen to invest in Taiwan. Taiwanese representative to Turkey John M.L. Lee says that Turkey can expand the volume of its exports to Taiwan through exporting more minerals, raw materials, hazelnuts, and other high quality agricultural products.²⁴ Similarly, Turkey gives special importance to receiving more Taiwanese direct investment in Turkey. Accordingly, from time to time, meetings and conferences have been held with top-level officials and corporative investors. İbrahim Güder, head of the Turkish-Taiwanese Business World and the Culture-Tourism Platform, has noted their support for directing Taiwanese investment in the area of tourism.²⁵

22 Tayvan (Chinese Taipei), Ministry of Economy of Turkey, <http://www.dtm.gov.tr> (26 January 2010).

23 "Türkiye'nin Tayvan ile anlaşma hazırlığı Pekin'i kızdırdı", *Zaman*, March 19, 2010.

24 "Çin'e yatırımın yolu Tayvan'dan geçiyor", *Ekovitrin*, March 11, 2011.

25 "Tayvan Ekonomiden Sorumlu Bakan Yardımcısı Liang Türkiye'ye geliyor", *Bugün*, April 2, 2011.

Taiwanese investors are, on the other hand, in favor of making investments in Turkey mainly to reach markets in Hungary, Belarus, and Russia to find new export opportunities in these countries. At present, Taiwanese enterprises, especially in communications and technology, hold places in 20 investment projects in Turkey.²⁶ In addition, Taiwan wants to launch direct flights from Turkey and enter a visa waiver agreement, with the aim of boosting bilateral trade and tourism.²⁷

For further development of cooperation between the two countries, Taiwanese Deputy Minister of Economy Sheng-Chung Lin visited Turkey in April 2011. Lin stated that the total amount of direct investment by seven Taiwanese corporations had reached \$3.31 million, and that the trade balance deficit can be overcome by the ongoing collaboration between the two countries in transportation and Taiwanese investments in energy sector.²⁸ At this point, it can be noted that economic relations between Taiwan and Turkey may advance further if the objections of China can be overcome.

²⁶ "Taiwanese firms seek new markets via Turkey", *Hürriyet Daily News*, April 8, 2011.

²⁷ "Taiwan seeks Turkey air links, visa waiver", *Taipei Times*, April 17, 2011.

²⁸ Cazibe Ulutas, "Türkiye yatırım yapmak için önemli bir ülke", April 14, 2011, <http://www.abvizonu.com/ekonomi/turkiye-yatirim-yapmak-icin-onemli-bir-ulke.html> (14.06.2011)

Policy Recommendations

Considering the issue of China and Taiwan from the perspective of Turkey, the following situation has been observed: Based on its “One China” policy, Ankara accepts Taiwan as part of China, just as it does Hong Kong and Macao, and does certainly not recognize Taiwan as a separate independent political unit.

Since 1971, Taiwan’s embassy in Ankara has continued to perform its diplomatic mission under the name “Taipei Economic and Cultural Office”. However, its highest-level correspondent is not the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but instead the Ministry of Economy. Since present conditions do not permit further development of bilateral relations, Turkey may miss some opportunities in further developing its relations with Taiwan, a dynamic economy achieving nearly 16 thousand dollars GDP per capita.

Ankara could build better trade relations with Taiwan without leaving its “One China” policy aside. In this framework, Ankara could develop some policies to improve its trade relations with Taiwan without recognizing it as a separate political unit. Considering current needs, this report suggests initiatives in five basic issue areas to enable an improvement in economic relations between Turkey and Taiwan. However, Ankara should explicitly explain to Beijing that these steps would not negate its recognition of Taiwan as an autonomous part of China, much like Hong Kong. Otherwise, relations between Turkey and China may experience problems due to Turkey’s efforts to improve relations with Taiwan.

1. Opening a Taiwan Economic & Cultural Office in Istanbul

The government in Taipei wishes to open a Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office in Istanbul²⁹ since it is becoming an important trade center in not only Turkey, but also the world. The lack of such a diplomatic mission in Istanbul to guide both Taiwanese tourists and businessmen constitutes a significant obstacle for the development of bilateral relations.

The initiatives between Turkish and Taiwanese officials for opening a new trade mission in Istanbul have been prevented by the reactions from the PRC. However, there exist twelve Taiwan Offices in the US, five in Japan, three in Canada, and two in Germany, though these states have also not recognized Taiwan as an independent state.³⁰ Thus, Beijing's policies to limit Ankara for its relations with Taiwan are not based on reasonable grounds. Moreover, China consists of nearly thirty percent of Taiwan's foreign trade volume. Thus, there is no reasonable explanation for Beijing's efforts to limit Turkey in its economic relations with Taiwan when China itself does not pursue a policy of economic embargo against Taiwan.

2. Operating Direct Flights from Turkey to Taiwan

The lack of direct flights between Turkey and Taiwan forms another obstacle for the development of bilateral trade relations. It is only possible to fly from Istanbul, the gateway of Turkey to the world, to Taiwan via one or two stops which increase the duration of the flight from twelve to twenty hours. Thus, the lack of direct flights makes bilateral visits difficult in terms of both financial and time cost. Considering the scope of both Turkish and Taiwanese economies, launching direct flights between the two countries requires more of a political will rather than an economic one. This is due to the Chinese embassy in Ankara delivering a note of protest to the Turkish Foreign Ministry to state its anxiety toward the Turkish Airlines initiative to launch direct flights from Istanbul to Taiwan.³¹

29 Selçuk Çolakoglu, "Tawan's Four Demands from Turkey", *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, March 21, 2011.

30 Republic of China (Taiwan) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Lists of Embais & Missions Abroad", <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/webapp/lp.asp?ctnode=1864&ctunit=30&basedsd=30&mp=6>. (30 June 2011).

31 Servet Yanatma, "Beijing protests Turkey's Taiwan agreement", *Today's Zaman*, March 20, 2010.

Interestingly enough, there are direct flights from countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, the US, Vietnam, Thailand, the UK, and Germany to various cities in Taiwan. Alongside Turkish Airlines, EVA Airways and China Airlines from Taiwan are also willing to operate direct flights between Istanbul and Taipei.³²

3. Seeking the Visa-Waiver Agreement

Another obstacle for the development of bilateral relations is the visa requirement. Taiwan requires a visa from Turkey for all levels of passports, even Turkish “green passports” which are assigned to various levels of public servants. On the other hand, China does not require visas for Turkish green passports, while Japan and South Korea signed visa waiver agreements with Turkey covering every type of Turkish passport. Though Taiwan is enthusiastic about mutually abolishing visa restrictions,³³ Ankara does not take the initiative in this issue, refraining from upsetting Beijing. The EU, which has not recognized Taiwanese independence, moved toward a visa exemption agreement in November 2010.³⁴ Since Turkey seeks to diversify its trade and cultural relations with many countries through visa waiver agreements, it should also take the initiative to convince China on this issue.

4. Signing a Free Trade Agreement

Another issue that Taiwan emphasizes is the signing of a free trade agreement (FTA) with Turkey. Being an APEC member, Taiwan already signed FTAs with various Pacific-basin countries including China and the US. Even the start of FTA negotiations between Turkey and Taiwan would provide a crucial step in terms of shaping the future of the bilateral trade relations.³⁵ In 2010, Taiwanese investors began to make significant investments in Turkey. Two Taiwanese companies, from the iron and steel and petrochemical industries respectively, invested a total of \$820 million in Turkey.³⁶ It is obvious that an eventual signing of an FTA would mutually increase investments between Turkey and Taiwan.

32 “Gov’t seeking visa waiver program with Turkey”, *The China Post*, April 17, 2011.

33 “Taiwan seeks air links, visa-free status with Turkey”, *Radio Taiwan International*, April 16, 2011, <http://english.rti.org.tw/Content/GetSingleNews.aspx?ContentID=123674>. (20 April 2011).

34 EUROPA, “Visa waiver for Taiwanese passport holders approved”, November 25, 2010, <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/617&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>. (14 July 2011).

35 Selçuk Çolakoğlu, “Looking from Taiwan”, *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, March 28, 2011.

36 Barış Ergin, “Tayvan’dan sürpriz yatırım”, *Hürriyet*, December 24, 2010.

5. Establishing Direct Contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey

The Taiwanese mission in Ankara could not find any correspondent in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is willing to establish direct contact with the Ministry without leading to any conclusion of recognition to be able to negotiate the abolishment of visa requirements, opening of a new Taiwan trade office, and other possible areas of common interest. However, China considers each Turkish step to develop relations with Taiwan in an extremely sensitive way. China was anxious about the visit of two Turkish parliamentary members from the governing Justice and Development Party (AK Party) to Taiwan. In the aftermath of their visit (Vahit Erdem from Kırıkkale and Alaaddin Büyükkaya from Istanbul) in March 2010, the Chinese Embassy officials in Ankara visited the Chair of the Turkey-China Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group and AK Party parliamentarian İhsan Arslan to express their anxiety from this visit.³⁷

At this point, the most practical solution for Turkey is to give Taiwan a status similar to federal states or autonomous regions as defined by international law. Hong Kong and Macau have their own flags, assemblies, and governments. Beijing also offers Taiwan the same status as Hong Kong and Macau, where the model of “One country, two systems” has been implemented. Thus, when an official Taiwanese delegation or group of parliamentary members visits Turkey, the same diplomatic protocol for Hong Kong might also be implemented for Taiwan.

³⁷ “Çin’in Tayvan rahatsızlığı Ankara’da”, *Türkiye*, March 18, 2010.

Concluding Remarks

Considering Turkey's policies toward Taiwan from a general perspective, there is not much to evaluate except bilateral trade relations. Moreover, there seems to be no concrete strategic roadmap for the future of current trade relations.

Considering Turkey's policies toward Taiwan from a general perspective, there is not much to evaluate except bilateral trade relations. Moreover, there seems to be no concrete strategic roadmap for the future of current trade relations. On the one hand, Ankara is willing to develop its relations with Taipei due to economic reasons, but on the other, it shows an inconsistent stance due to the possible reactions from Beijing. However, leading countries such as the US and Japan have strong economic ties with Taiwan, and Taiwanese authorities argue that Turkey could also pursue the same path as the US and Japan in developing its relations with Taiwan.³⁸

The most practical solution for Ankara, Beijing, and Taipei may be for Turkey to give Taiwan the same political status as Hong Kong and Macau. Derived from the strategic partnership between Turkey and China, Turkey has the right to expect China to show the same flexibility it has shown to other states such as the US, Japan, and South Korea in the case of Taiwan. Otherwise, it might create the impression in Turkey that China is reluctant to see Turkey's entrance into the Taiwanese market.

38 Selçuk Çolakoğlu, "Looking from Taiwan", *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, March 28, 2011.



INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

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