

# **Geopolitical Analysis of Iran-Turkey Relations in the AKP Period from the Perspective of Geopolitical Realism**

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**Reposted at RIEAS in 20 December 2025.**

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## **Introduction**

Iran and Turkey are the two most important players in the Middle East and the Islamic world with a long-standing relationship with each other. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey was formed from the remains of the Ottoman Turks as a modern nation. In this new era, Iran-Turkey relations entered a new phase. With the advent of the Islamic Revolution, relations between Turkey and Iran were on the ups and downs. With the rise of Islamists led by Najmuddin Arbakan in the early nineties, relations between Iran and Turkey became very close. Relations fluctuated from 1995 to 2002, when secular power restored. But with the victory of the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) Iran-Turkey relations entered a new phase in their history. In the new era and with the AKP's particular attention to its neighbors, particularly Iran. Many experts, meanwhile, believe that realistic theories provide the best explanation of the relationships and equations in the area. One application of this theory is its use to explain the balance of power in the region and efforts to maintain or change it by regional and international actors. In the discussion of the balance of powers in the region, we will also see how in support of specific hegemony in order to prevent another hegemony. The point is, of course, that this does not mean that they intend to limit their power or their goals for the sake of the system, but rather they seek to maximize their power or security, but in such a way that a balanced distribution of power among them also takes place. This study, using a realistic approach, tries to investigate the geopolitical trend of this period of Iranian-Turkish relations and to identify and analyze the aforementioned factors and areas.

## **Research Methodology**

The research is descriptive-analytic, and tries to explain the relations between Iran and Turkey based on the theory of geopolitical realism in the AKP era. In the present study, the

factors affecting the conflicts, competitions and cooperation between Iran and Turkey during the period of AKP were extracted from library and documentary data and in order to determine the weight of the factors ECHP is used. The matrices were designed as a questionnaire and provided to four scholars in the field of science and three scholars related to the researcher's presence to respond. The software Expert Chase is used to analyze the data.

### **Research findings**

Research findings showed that areas of geopolitical competition between Iran and Turkey are as follows: Competition in Iranian and Turkish Self-Orientation; Competition in the Islamic and Iranian Islamic Model; Competition for leadership in the Islamic world, Iran-Turkey Competition in Syria; Iran-Turkey Competition in Iraq; Competition in the defense of Islam and Hamas. Also, areas of Geopolitical Conflict between Iran and Turkey are as follows: Hydro-politic Conflicts; Conflicts in the economic field; Pan-Turkism Conflicts; Shiite-Sunni Conflict; Conflicts in the field of diplomatic interactions; Conflicts over expanding the area of influence. Also, areas of geopolitical cooperation between Iran and Turkey are as follows: Cooperation on the Kurdish issue; Cooperation in the field of energy; Collaborating on the Nuclear Case; Security Cooperation.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the study indicated that among the factors affecting Iran-Turkey relations, competitive factors such as competition over Syria, Iraq and the sphere of influence are the most important. On the other hand, factors such as cooperation in the nuclear case and cooperation in the field of energy can be effective factors in the dependence of Iran and Turkey over time. In fact, Iranian-Turkish relation is in the context of current geographical and geopolitical realities. This context reflects the type of relations between the two countries, depending on its conditions and characteristics at any time and situation.

Normally, Iran and Turkey are in a state of competition and cooperation. The two countries cooperate in economic cooperation, transit of goods and passengers, security cooperation on the issue of Kurdish separatism, but in cases such as the expansion of influence in geopolitical areas around, Islamic world leadership, religious competition, neighboring markets compete with each other. Today's situation is also highlighted by neo-Ottoman policy in Turkish foreign policy and efforts to expand Turkish influence in the historical territory of the Ottoman Empire in areas such as North Africa, Shamal, Iraq and the Caucasus, as well as Iran's attempt to converge countries such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. It has involved the two countries in a proxy war and has sometimes led to sharp positions by the two countries against each other. This is exacerbated when other regional and transnational powers also play a role in the two countries' relations, which could lead to escalation of tensions between the two countries. Therefore, it can be said that in line with the geopolitical requirements, the relations between the two countries will flow in a range of cooperation and competition, but with the entry of non-geopolitical elements such as ideology and the interference of regional and transnational powers towards them the tension will be increased.

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