The Great Wall of Turkey: From „The Open-Door Policy" to Building Fortress?

Barbora Olejárová[1]

Abstract:

Following outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Turkey recorded an unprecedented inflow of migrants from its southern neighbourhood. The policy of opened borders in the initial years of war contrasted to securitization, the search for international support and other similar policies, which countries usually adopt in cases of migration crises. However, rising numbers of Syrian migrants, the deterioration of Turkish relations with the Assad government and the engagement of the Kurds as another important party in the Syrian conflict resulted in the switch of the Turkish border policy. In 2014, President Erdoğan initiated the construction of over 800 km long barrier on the border with Syria with an aim to build similar fenced walls on the Iraqi and Iranian border in 2017. Main aim of this paper is to analyze the development of the Turkish border policy (particularly concerning the border with Syria) in the aftermath of the 2011 events in the Middle East and identify factors, which led up to the shift from the policy of welcoming to the policy of building „Fortress Turkey".

The first part of the paper will briefly summarize Turkish migration policy and focus on presenting the change of the initial 'open' approach to migration from Syria into the current state of building fences in the borderland. Subsequently, the paper will deal with selected factors, which might have caused this phenomenon. These include spread of terrorism and inflow of the Daesh fighters, who were using soft border regime to diffuse their activities to the Turkish territory; increase in smuggling and cross-border illegal trade; fears from the conflict spillover; but also territorial integrity concerns with regard to revival of the Kurdish activities in the region[2].

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1   Mgr. Barbora Olejárová – PhD candidate, Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Faculty of Political Science and International Relations, Matej Bel University; e-mail: barbora.olejarova@umb.sk.

Introduction

After an outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the Government of Turkey adopted the policy of open-doors towards Syrian refugees[3] and announced that „people approaching Turkey's borders from the conflict in Syria would be allowed to cross the border and admitted to Turkey, as opposed to being intercepted or halted" (AIDA 2017: 1). Yet, already in January 2016, Turkey introduced new visa policy towards Syrians entering Turkish territory from other states and later on that year, the Government initiated construction of the wall along the entire 911 km long border with Syria to stop and control movement of people between the two countries. The wall is a continuation of the barrier already existing in some border regions of Turkey created in 2014 and the government expects completion of the barrier by the end of 2017. It will be three metres high; two metres wide; made of seven tonne concrete blocks topped with a razor wire; with 120 border towers; a security road on the Turkish side with regular military patrols, ditches and surveillance cameras with night vision capability on the most vulnerable sites (Uğurlu 2016: 1). Besides the wall with Syria, Turkey has announced to erect similar constructions along some sections of its border with Iran and along the entire border with Iraq in May 2017. The construction of the barrier with Iran has already begun and in its final stage, it should cover 144 km out of the 499 km Turkey-Iran border. First segments of the barrier have been built in the north-eastern part of the borderline in provinces Iğdır and Ağrı. (MMP 2017a: 9) The

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3   For the purpose of this paper, we will use the term „refugee" and „refugee population" for any person from abroad, who came to Turkey to seek any form of international protection. Yet, in reality, most of these people are not „refugees" according to international law and Turkish domestic legislation. Turkey is a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Convention), but keeps its geographic limitation. This means, that the refugee status can be granted only to asylum applicants fleeing from persecution following events that happened in Europe. Regarding this exception and further domestic legislation, there are four basic types of protection that Turkey grants to the people in need. Individually arriving asylum seekers can be granted (AIDA 2015: 15-18):

refugee status – granted in accordance with the Geneva convention from 1951 and its geographic limitation to the applicants from the European countries

conditional refugee status - granted in accordance with the Geneva convention from 1951 and its geographic limitation to the applicants from the non-European countries

subsidiary protection status - based on subsidiary protection definition as stated in the EU Qualification directive 2011-95-EU to the applicants, who can't return to their home countries because of a threat of violence, torture or death penalty, regardless of geographic limitation of nationality or citizenship.

Mass influx population (meaning asylum seekers with Syrian citizenship) can be granted:

temporary protection - formalized by the Regulation on Temporary Protection from 22 October 2014.

aforementioned development implies a significant turn of both Turkish migration and border policy and marks a change of the meaning and function of borders – from areas of contact to the barrier lines. (Bolečeková 2013: 566-567) Thus, while the Turkish government claims its „open door" policy continues, in practice it has ended.

Main research question of the presented paper is formulated as follows: What are the factors influencing change of the Turkish border policy from the concept of open-borders to building border walls? The paper seeks for answer by applying a selective approach and analysing three dimensions of the topic. First, geopolitical issue and the question of territorial integrity and sovereignty of Turkey, which are closely linked with the Kurdish separatism and territorial claims in the Hatay region. Second, security related issues, particularly spread of terrorism and organized crime in the region; illegal border crossings of the *Daesh* fighters coming to Turkey; but also domestic insurgencies and street clashes between migrants and Turkish population. And third, foreign policy related issues, which include the Turkish relations with Syria; the Turkish NATO membership; terms of the EU-Turkish Statement and activities of international community in the area; which creates a tension between state-centric security concerns on one hand and pressure towards globalization and Europeanization of the Turkish migration policy that tends to be simultaneously progressive and restrictive, on the other hand.

Methodology of the paper is derived from the political metaphor analysis as a type of the figurative discourse tool, which can be anticipated pursuant to the title of the text. Construction of the border walls is a common way of how states react in situations of mass migration inflows (Hungary-Serbia barrier in 2015), border conflicts (Israeli-West Bank barrier) or as a protection of the state's territory against terrorism or organized crime. However, the size and expansion of the Turkish fortification moved several authors, organizations and media (The Daily Express, Sputnik New, Immigration Talk) to refer to this construction as the Great Wall of Turkey, as a parallel to the Great Wall of China (which is surely an exaggeration when comparing the actual range of the Turkish barrier and the Chinese wall). Limitation of the content and selective approach to the dimensions influencing change of the Turkish border policy to the three abovementioned factors was an unavoidable step based upon limited range of the article, as well as the scope of the entire migration related policies in Turkey, which are result of a complex interplay between security, humanitarian, social, political and economic dimensions in the country. There are certainly many other factors shaping the Turkish shift to the more restrictive border policy. These include change in numbers of refugees and people

seeking international protection coming to Turkey between 2011 and nowadays with regard to the capacity swamping and lack of financial resources as potential factors influencing closure of Turkish borders; but also Turkish public opinion, which has shifted from perceiving Turkish open border policy as a manifestation of solidarity and Turkish dominance in the region, to seeing Syrian refugees as a threat to social order, economic growth and security. Analysis of these and other domestic factors influencing Turkish migration is a topic of other already existing articles and studies[4], and therefore will not be included in the presented paper.

Migration and regime in the Turkish borderland, 2011-2017

According to the latest statistics from October 2017, Turkey hosts the world largest refugee population of 3,5 million persons. Most of these people are Syrian nationals (3,2 million), followed by the Afghans (145,000), Iraqis (140,000) and Iranians (32,000; UNHCR 2017: 1) Influx of the Syrian refugees to Turkey, which followed after an outbreak of the Syrian civil war, was markedly supported by the Turkish Government, that reacted in contrary to the usual countries' approach towards foreign population trying to cross the state borders[5]. Turkey did not close its borders, nor did it made any attempts to intercept or halt people from Syria who reached the Turkish territory irregularly. Although the numbers of migrants from Syria in the first group of arrival did not reach more than 300 people, the Government „...characterised the incident as a situation of „mass influx" and took measures to treat the arrivals outside the framework of Turkey's asylum system at

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4   See for example: Memisoglu, F., Ilgit, A. (2016).

5   Two other Middle Eastern countries strongly affected by the inflow of the Syrian migrants in terms of numbers are Lebanon (995 512 persons of concern as of February 2018) and Jordan (657 628 persons of concern as of February 2018; UNHCR 2018:1). Both of them introduced policy of solidarity towards Syrian nationals seeking international protection over the first months of the crisis. Yet, unlike Turkey, after the numbers of fleeing people started to rise, both countries implemented more restrictive migration policy to protect the physical and socio-economical security on their own territories. Jordan, for example, hosted nearly 2000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2011, but already 15000 in August 2012, which resulted in a change of the Jordanian refugee policy towards Syrians between 2012-2013. In 2011, the Syrians seeking „...asylum and access to UNHCR's services in Jordan are automatically recognized as prima facie refugees under the framework of a Jordan-UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1998 - Syrians are not required to undergo a refugee status determination process and are thus afforded protection and access to subsidized primary health care and other essential services. Yet, entries to Jordan were quickly restricted, first for the Palestinian and Iraqi refugees from Syria as of 2012, and later in 2013, for all Syrians" (De Bel Air 2016: 2). In particular, since mid-2013, Jordan has restricted access of Syrians to its territory by not admitting refugees to cross Jordanian official border crossing points Daraa and Nasib at the northwestern borders and informally also the entire Jordan-Syrian border, although this has been denied by the Jordanian officials (Francis 2015: 1).

the time, which was envisioned to process individually arriving protection seekers" (AIDA 2017: 1) The main piece of legislation governing matters of asylum at the time was the 1994 Asylum Regulation. Article 13 of the law stated, that mass influx of refugees was to be „halted at the border line" and „not allowed to reach Turkey's territory", unless there is „Governmental instruction to the contrary". Yet, with regard to the situation in Syria, the Government did provide such instruction as referred to in Article 13. In October 2011, Turkey's Minister of Interior announced during a UNHCR-hosted conference in Geneva that Turkey was implementing a „temporary protection" regime to refugees from Syria loosely inspired by the *EU Temporary Protection Directive*[6]. This policy was based on three core principles (AIDA 2017: 1):

1. Turkey's borders shall remain open to persons seeking safety in Turkey;

2. No persons from Syria shall be sent back to Syria against their will;

3. Basic humanitarian needs of the persons arriving from the conflict in Syria shall be met.

However, temporary protection in Turkey was not based on any existing law in the state. It was an *ad hoc* measure, whose implementation depended solely on political and administrative discretions, leading to changing practices in regards to implementation aspects such as admission to territory, registration, access to shelter or access to health care. The *Temporary Protection Regime* was formalized only on 22 October 2014 by the *Regulation on Temporary Protection*. According to this law, Syrian citizens are granted temporary protection after registration at the Directorate General on Migration Management – DGMM that was established in 2014 in line with *The Law on Foreigners and International Protection* – LRIP. This generous approach towards Syrian migrants was allegedly part of the Turkish intentions to enhance country's regional influence by acting as a democratic and responsible actor, showing off its solidarity with the people in need on one hand, and economic power by giving them shelter and basic needs, on the other hand. Besides, the open-door policy was shaped by the newly introduced

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6   The Temporary Protection Directive 2001/55/EC was adopted as a reaction to the Kosovo migration crisis in 1999. According to Article 1, the purpose of the Directive is „to establish minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons from third countries who are unable to return to their country of origin and to promote a balance of effort between Member States in receiving and bearing the consequences of receiving such persons" (Council Directive 2001/55/EC 2001: 3). The protection is granted for the period of 1 year (with a possibility of prolongation) and is effective in cases of mass influx, when reviewing individual asylum applications would be time-consuming or impossible due to lack of capacities and human sources in the receiving countries. Yet, the Directive has never been implemented in the EU so far.

„zero-problems with neighbours policy" architected by Ahmet Davutoğlu after the Justice and Development Party (AKP) power takeover in 2002. According to Davutoğlu, the zero-problems approach is based on the notion that „Turkey needs to improve its relations with all its neighbours by rescuing itself from the belief that it is constantly surrounded by enemies and the defensive reflex developing thereof" (Yeşiltaş and Balcı 2013: 9). This policy was closely related with changed perception of Turkish borders. They started to be treated as lines of contact instead of barriers – the notion, that brought (among other things) liberalisation of visa policies with the neighbouring countries and softening of the border regimes.

Despite the initial proclamation that Turkish borders shall remain open to persons seeking safety in Turkey and the statements made by President Erdoğan, such as the one from March 13, 2016, that „... Ankara's open-door policy for Syrian refugees will continue due to the responsibility coming from Islamic civilization, contrary to Western hypocrisy" (Daily Sabah 2016: 1), most of the official border crossings at the Turkey-Syria borders in 2017 remain closed. Latest report of The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs from 1 November 2017 shows, that out of 19 crossing points between Syria and Turkey, 13 are closed, 3 are restricted and only 3 are opened (OCHA 2017: 1). Turkey occasionally opens some of the closed border-crossing points, usually at the times of important Muslim festivities[7].

Except of closure of border crossing points and the erection of the wall on the Turkey-Syria border, the third step in the process that led to the creation of what is now known as *Fortress Turkey* was adoption of the new visa regime towards Syria. On 8 January 2016, Turkey reversed its 2009 agreement that allowed visa-free entry of Syrians to Turkey and introduced visa requirements for Syrians arriving in Turkey by air and sea from other countries. Syrians entering Turkey by land from the Syrian territory don't need to apply for visa; yet it does not mean that they are admitted to the Turkish territory automatically, as it was the case before October 2014. *The Regulation on Temporary Protection* „does not explicitly guarantee the right of access to Turkish territory for prospective beneficiaries. As per Article 17 TPR, which governs matters of admission to territory, „persons

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7   For example, on June 30, 2016, Turkey opened the Cilvegozu/Bab al-Hawa border crossing in the province of Hatay to allow Syrians to return home for the Eid al-Fitr festival, which began on July 5. At least 34,000 Syrians used this opportunity to cross into Syria, yet, they were required to return to Turkey by July 8. Moreover, no Syrians who wanted to get to Turkey for the first time or the ones without valid Turkish registration cards were allowed to cross the border during this period (DRC 2016: 15). Similarly, over 47,000 Syrians applied for the permission to leave Turkey temporarily in early September to travel to Syria for the Eid al-Adha holiday. They were obliged to return to Turkey by 15 October (MMP 2017a: 11).

approaching Turkey's borders without a valid travel document may or may not be admitted to territory within the discretion of the provincial Governorate" (AIDA 2018: 1). As further explained in Article 15, the Board of Ministers can limit and suspend admission of temporary protection, or even seal Turkish borders for people seeking temporary protection in case they find it necessary as a matter of national security, public order, public security or public health (AIDA 2018: 1).

Table 1: Turkey/Syria Border Crossings Status (1 November 2017)

Name	Status	Province in Turkey	Province in Syria
Yayladağı/Kasab	Closed	Hatay	Lattakia
Kızılçat/Samira	Closed	Hatay	Lattakia
Topraktutan/Yunesiya	Closed	Hatay	Lattakia
Aşşağıpulluyazı/Einal-Bayda	Restricted	Hatay	Idleb
Güveççi/Kherbet Eljoz	Restricted	Hatay	Idleb
Şanlı/Darkoush	Closed	Hatay	Idleb
Dostluk Köprüsü/Friendship Bridge	Closed	Hatay	Idleb
Cilvegözü/Bab al-Hawa	Opened	Hatay	Idleb
Bükülmez/Atmeh	Restricted	Hatay	Idleb
Islahiye/MaydanAkbis	Closed	Gaziantep	Aleppo
Öncüpınar/Bab al-Salam	Opened	Kilis	Aleppo
Çobanbey/Al-Ra'ee	Closed	Kilis	Aleppo
Karkamış/Jarabulus	Opened	Gaziantep	Aleppo
Mürşitpınar/Ainal Arab	Closed	Sanliurfa	Aleppo
Akçakale/Tell Abyad	Closed	Sanliurfa	Ar-Raqa
Ceylanpınar/Rasal-Ain	Closed	Sanliurfa	Al Hasakeh
Şenyurt/Derbassiyeh	Closed	Mardin	Al Hasakeh
Nusaybin/Qamishly	Closed	Mardin	Al Hasakeh
Çavuşköy/AinDiwar	Closed	Sirnak	Al Hasakeh

Source: (OCHA 2017: 1).

Building "Fortress Turkey": Factors of Change

The concept of „Fortress" has been most commonly used as an allegoric term with regard to the European migration policy and was referring to reluctant attitude and tricky legislative process that third-country nationals had to go through before they were allowed to enter the EU territory. However, construction of the wall at the Turkish borders changed this perception and the metaphor has acquired a physical form. Following part of the paper will debate possible reasons

leading to change of the Turkish open-borders policy by categorizing them into three groups.

Territorial integrity, sovereignty and geopolitics

For a long time, Turkey struggled with border and sovereignty issues regarding the Turkish border province Hatay, but also regarding Kurdish separatism. Hatay has been part of the Ottoman Empire as Sanjak Alexandretta. After dissolution of the empire, the Sévres Treaty from 1921, as well as the Lausanne Treaty from 1923 placed Alexandretta under the French Mandate of Syria. As noted by Khater (2010: 177), the population of Alexandretta in 1921 was composed of 220,000 people – mostly Arabs, and only 87,000 of them were Turks. In November 1937, after complaints over mistreatment of the Turkish population, the League of Nations brokered autonomy of Alexandretta, and the province proclaimed independence on 2 September 1938 following outbreak of the Second World War[8]. The government of the newly established Hatay[9] state was under Turkish supervision and within several months, on 29 June 1939, Hatay became a Turkish province following a referendum. However, Syria never formally recognized Turkish claims. First of all, the 1939 referendum itself was controversial – Turkey trucked citizens originally from Hatay to vote in the referendum, whereas Arabs boycotted the vote because they found it irregular. And second of all, at the times of the Ottoman Empire, Alexandretta has been part of the Vilayet of Aleppo in Syrian part of the land. After the AKP power takeover in Turkey in 2002 and ruling of Bashar al-Assad in Syria since 2000, relations between the two countries normalized and the issue of Hatay was almost solved when the countries agreed on construction of a shared Friendship Dam on the Orontes River. Yet, outbreak of the Syrian civil war reversed the process. Due to its proximity to the Syrian border, most of the Turkish camps for the Syrian migrants are located in the Hatay region, providing shelter to around 402,000 officially registered refugees

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8   Most historians claim, that France agreed to cede Hatay to Turkey despite the fact, that majority of the population was Arabic, to persuade Turkey to join Allies against Germany in the Second World War (Khater 2010: 177).

9   The name Hatay is derived from the „Hittites" – an ancient people living in Anatolia between 1600 B.C. – 1178 B.C. Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and establishment of an independent Republic of Turkey was connected with the process of nation building, searching for the Turkish roots and efforts to justify Turkish territorial claims in Anatolia by pointing to historical tradition of Turkish presence in the region. This led to creation of several pseudoscientific theories. One of them presumed that the Turks are related to some ancient peoples of Anatolia such as the Sumerians and Hittites. In reality, the Turks first appeared in Anatolia after the Muslim conquest in the 7th century and more intensively in the 11th century when the Seljuk Turks captured Baghdad.

(GRI 2017: 1). This changed demographic structure of the 1,5 million population in the area in favour of Syria. Besides, not only inflow of Syrian migrants alone, but also reactions of the domestic population in Hatay to this phenomenon pose risk of separation of the region from Turkey. Most of the Alawites in Hatay are at odds with the ruling AKP party; support opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and carry strong pro-Assad current. Therefore, they are strongly against Turkish support to political and military Syrian opposition - the Syrian National Council and the Free Syrian Army, which established its command in Hatay in October 2011. As noted by Cagaptay (2013: 1): „After Ankara began providing safe haven to Syrian opposition groups and armed rebels in fall 2011, Hatay Alawites grew even more critical of the AKP's policies. They have played a disproportionately large role in anti-AKP rallies, including a March 9 demonstration that drew two thousand people and a late-2012 protest attended by some eight thousand". In order to ease the Alawites-Sunni tension, Turkey responded by transferring some Sunni refugees from the Hatay province to the other regions in September 2012.

Worries about separation of Hatay due to inflow of Syrian migrants are intensified by another separatist group threatening Turkish sovereignty – the Kurds. Hatay borders the Syrian Afrin Canton, which is the far western canton of the resurgent Syrian Kurdish movement's semi-autonomous region Rojava (The Democratic Federation of Northern Syria) established in November 2013. Fragile ceasefire between the Kurds in Turkey represented by The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the government, which was established on 21 March 2013, was abandoned in July 2015 and the Turkey-PKK conflict escalated again to the level of war in 2016 with regard to the alleged lack of engagement of the Turkish government to protect the Kurds in Turkey from the Daesh attacks (bomb attack in Suruc on July 20 which killed 33 mainly Kurdish civilians; UCDP 2017: 1). Radical PKK supporters used the open-door policy to enter Turkey from Syria and Syrian Kurds coming to Turkey encouraged separatist ambitions of the most radical Turkish Kurds and boosted the PKK insurgency in Turkey. This is undermined by the fact, that PKK is composed largely from Syrian nationals as a consequence of the historical development of the organization – in the 1980's Syrian government allowed PKK to operate training camps on Syrian territory and perform attacks on the then adversarial Turkish regime. As noted by Holland-McCowan (2017: 9): „It is estimated that between seven to ten thousand Syrian Kurds joined the PKK during that period and they currently comprise approximately one third of the PKK's forces".

Terrorism and organized crime

The second group of factors explaining change of the Turkish open-borders policy includes increase of organized crime activities and infiltration of terrorists and radical fighters due to the ongoing conflict in Syria to the Turkish territory. Currently, there is no universal list of activities, which fall under the definition of organized crime. However, Interpol defines transnational organized crime as different types of criminal activities spanning several countries. „These activities may include trafficking in humans, illicit goods, weapons and drugs, armed robbery, counterfeiting and money laundering" (Interpol 2015: 1). According to the Turkey's Customs and Trade Ministry, the amount of seized goods in 2014 was valued at over $ 600 million, which is a nearly 50% increase over 2013 figures. Out of the activities listed above, organized crime in Turkey includes mostly money laundering, smuggling of narcotics, gasoline, and tobacco from Syria and Iraq to Turkey. Most of them recorded increase in the last few years due to the migration waves that facilitate illegal transfer of materials, goods and persons via state borders, especially in situations of open-borders regime as introduced by Turkey in 2011. Examples include (GRI 2015: 1):

1. Counterfeiting – which relates most commonly to Syrian nationals, who bring counterfeit American and Turkish currency into Turkey, especially in the southern regions. In February 2015, Turkey recorded largest anti-counterfeit dollar operation in a decade, which netted $11 million in fake money.

2. Smuggling of drugs – in case of narco-trafficking, the drug Captagon – an amphetamine widely consumed in the Persian Gulf, comes to the forefront. Turkey is usually only a transit country used to move this drug from Lebanon into the Gulf countries. The Turkish-Iranian border is also an important transit route of drug smuggling. It is used mostly to transport cannabis and heroin from Afghanistan and Pakistan to Europe.

3. Hydrocarbon and gasoline – Turkish authorities regularly discover newly built pipelines used by the smugglers to move gasoline from Syria into Turkey. It is a lucrative business due to high fuel taxes in Turkey, which opens up black market for illegal imports of gasoline from Syria to Turkey. Daesh members supply Turkish black market with illegal gas from the occupied Syrian regions to finance their activities and construct many pipelines in the territories under their control, mostly leading to the regions of Kilis, Urfa and Gaziantep, Hakkari and Hatay. Only in 2014, 50 million litres of illegal gasoline were confiscated by the Turkish authorities.

However, organized crime in Turkey does not relate only to the afore-mentioned substances and war-related materials, but includes many other goods of broad consumption, as the conflict in Syria completely shut down the land trade between the two countries in the provinces Aleppo and Hatay. As noted by Hikmet Çinçin, President of the Antakya Chamber of Trade and Industry (ATSO): „In 2008 our exports from Hatay to Syria were $123 million, they were $186 million in 2009, $250 million in 2010, $150 million in 2011, but ... they are nearly zero in 2012" (Antakya 2012: 1). Syria was also a transit route for Turkish exports to the Gulf countries. Nowadays, Turkey prefers to use a sea route using ferries from the port of İskenderun to Egypt or further via the Suez Canal to Saudi Arabia, as this is considered to be safer than transfer via Syria (GRI 2017). Closure of official land-trade routes naturally leads up to creation of illegal channels and increase in organized crime activities in the region.

Figure 1: No. of terrorist attacks (with fatalities) in Turkey (2003-2017*)
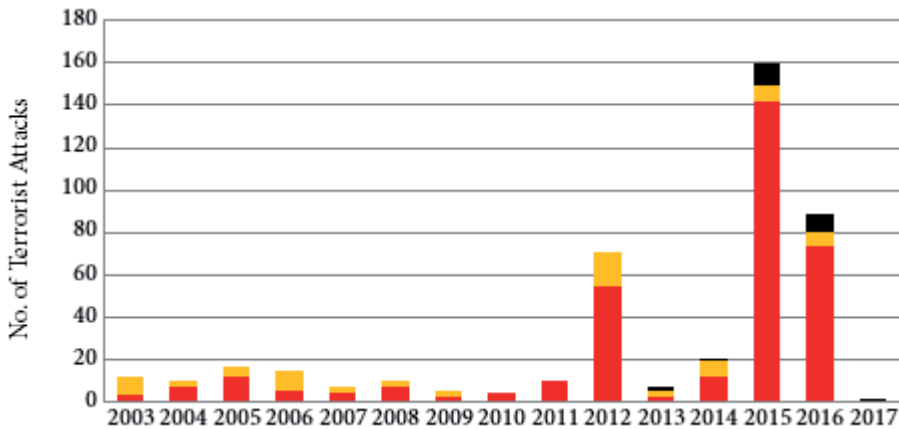
* 2017 data includes only the nightclub incident from 1 January.
Source: (Ser 2016: 1).

Worries from the conflict spillover in terms of infiltration of foreign fighters to the Turkish territory or radicalization of domestic population are another potential factor influencing construction of the border walls. Statistics on terrorism[10] in Turkey show a radical increase in number of terrorist attacks

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10 The Global Terrorism Database defines terrorism as „the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation" (GTD 2017: 1).

in Turkey in 2012, and then in 2015 and 2016 (see Figure 1). However, these are related not only with activities of the *Daesh* fighters or Syrian radicals coming in the migration waves from Syria to Turkey, but also with development of the PKK-Turkey relations. In 2011, number of attacks increased following collapse of the secret talks between the Kurds and the government in Ankara. The figures were low between 2013 and 2015, yet rose again after ceasefire between the two actors was abandoned in July 2015. Thus, it is not possible to link increase in terrorist attacks in Turkey solely and exclusively with the conflict in Syria and terrorism cannot be treated as a decisive factor for build-up of border barriers.

Foreign policy and international pressure

As a NATO member state, Ankara has long been under pressure from its allies to seal off the border with Syrian territories controlled by the Islamic State. In the initial years, Ankara remained reluctant to become a part of a U.S.-led military coalition[11] created in September 2014 to fight the *Daesh* and the government was criticized for its benign border regime and alleged support for *Daesh.* The reason for Turkish aversion to join the fight on the US side was cooperation between the Coalition and the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its military wing the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) with regard to the aforementioned Kurdish issue in Turkey. PYD is considered to be a PKK proxy organization[12] established in Syria after the Adana Agreement from 1998, where Syria agreed to halt sheltering of PKK fighters and the organization was forced to establish offshoot political party under different name to retain its influence in Syria. Turkey was worried by the fact, that the PYD was able to control large parts of territory in the north of Syria, which prompted the PKK in Turkey to start an insurgency against the government after collapse of the ceasefire in July 2015. Instead of joining the US coalition, Turkey continued to support Arab and Turkmen anti-Assad opposition groups, which were deemed as part of the radical Islamist scene in Syria. Cooperation between the Global Coalition and the PYD/YPG has turned into an existential threat to Turkey on 9 May 2017 after President Trump approved a plan to provide the Kurdish fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)[13] with heavy

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11 The Global Coalition; currently composed of 73 states.

12 Despite the claims of the PYD leadership, that their relationship with the PKK is rather ideological than institutional, the original charter of the PYD put Abdullah Öcalan (PKK founder) as PYD's official leader (McCowan 2017: 9).

13 SDF was created in cooperation between the USA and YPG in October 2015 to bypass Turkish pressure on Washington to stop backing the PKK linked YPG, and to alleviate Arab concern about the coalition's reliance on Kurdish troops. SFD was built from the already existing group called Euphrates Volcano, which was created by the YPG in September 2014.

machine guns, mortars, anti-tank weapons, and armoured cars for their assault on Raqqa. Despite US reassurance, that the weapons will be monitored, Turkey feared that they will fall under the control of the PKK militants and will be used against them. This development created a paradoxical situation, where NATO countries, which should protect each other's territorial integrity from armed attack by a third party (Article 4 and 5 of the *Washington Treaty*) started to equip Kurdish groups, who were threatening Turkish sovereignty and territorial integrity, with arms and weaponry (Altunışık 2016: 43; Holland-McCowan 2017: 9-13). In this regard, new Turkish security arrangements in the borderland and erection of a fenced wall can be understood as a Turkish attempt to comply with the demands of its NATO allies to engage in the fight against *Daesh* and in this way remove the US need for further militarization of other US non-state allies adversarial to Turkey, particularly the Kurdish organizations PKK, YPG, PYD and SDF.

Concerning impact of the relations with the EU on creating the *Fortress Turkey*, a critical role has the EU-Turkish Agreement from 18 March 2016 that took effect on the 20 March 2016. A decisive impact on built-up of a border wall has the part stating that irregular migrants, who came from Turkey to Greece after 20 March and won't apply for asylum, or who apply for asylum in the EU, but in the asylum procedure, will be determined as arriving from a country where they had or could have claimed protection – a „safe third country" or „first country of asylum", will be returned to Turkey following the legal provisions of a bilateral readmission agreement between Turkey and Greece that is to be succeeded by the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement from 1 June 2016. In the second half on 2017, numbers of arrivals by sea from Turkey to Greece were increasing, with 9,286 arrivals to Greece in the first six months of 2017 and 10,719 arrivals to Greece only between July and September 2017 (Collett 2016: 1; MMP 2017b: 9). Thus, build-up of a border wall can be seen as an attempt to secure the EU-Turkish border, to comply with the Agreement from 2016 and to avoid inflow of returnees composed of illegitimate asylum seekers sent back to Turkey from the EU member states.

Conclusion

The description that creates a parallel between the Turkish barrier and the Great Wall of China is easy to understand and requires no further explanation. The metaphor is being used as an over-comparison and it is unlikely, that this figurative appeal would turn into reality. What needs to be explained, however, is the process and causes of the radical change of the Turkish border policy and

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The SDF is composed of both Arab and Kurdish fighters (Holland-McCowan 2017: 9-10).

migration regime towards Syria. The takeover of power by the AKP in 2002 meant among others change of the perception of the term „border". After introduction of the „zero problems with neighbours" policy, Turkey initiated the process of visa-liberalisation with the neighbouring countries and the importance of border understood as a barrier has declined. This is reflected in the Turkish open-door policy towards Syrian refugees in the initial phases of the crisis, when the country did not introduce any strict border controls; the registration of Syrians was performed on the ad hoc basis and even people crossing the borders irregularly without any valid travel documents were not halted by the local officials and were allowed to move freely across the country. However, duration and further development of the Syrian migration crisis and war in the state created a new and revived old security threats that forced Turkey to redefine its perception of the state borders. Mass migration waves opened new channels for the traffickers of illicit goods, arms and other substances. The *Daesh* fighters have also used Turkish policy of opened borders to spread their activity to the Turkish territory. Syrian civil war awakened stifled issue of Hatay and its territorial ties with Syria. Besides, an engagement of the Kurds in the conflict and reinforcement of their positions in Rojava revived the separatist movement of the Kurdish minority in Turkey. The combination of the stated factors, threats to internal security and territorial integrity forced Turkey to reverse its border policy and return to the traditional concept of borders as barriers rather than places of contact. This occurred continuously in three stages – first, closure of official border crossings; second, introduction of visa requirements for Syrian citizens and third, build-up of walls along the borders with Syria, Iran and Iraq, which earned the label of the Great Wall of Turkey. This development implies that the treatment of borders as either places of contact or division keeps on changing dynamically and depends on various external factors that are hardly predictable in advance.

Literature:

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Wielki Mur Turecki: od polityki otwartych drzwi do budowy fortecy?

Streszczenie:

W następstwie wybuchu wojny w Syrii w 2011 r., Turcja odnotowała bezprecedensowy napływ imigrantów z tego południowego kraju sąsiedzkiego. Polityka otwartych granic prowadzona w okresie pierwszych lat wojny została zastąpiona sekurytyzacją polityki dotyczącej ochrony międzynarodowej i innych polityk, które kraje zazwyczaj

przyjmują w sytuacji kryzysu migracyjnego. Jednak wzrastająca liczba imigrantów z Syrii, pogorszenie relacji Turcji z rządem Assada oraz włączenie się Kurdów jako kolejnej ważnej strony w konflikcie syryjskim skutkowało zwrotem w tureckiej polityce granicznej. W 2014 r., prezydent Erdoğan rozpoczął budowę ponad 800-kilometrowego odcinka muru na granicy z Syrią wraz z zapowiedzią wzniesienia podobnych umocnień na granicach z Irakiem i Iranem w 2017. Głównym celem artykułu jest analiza rozwoju tureckiej polityki granicznej (w szczególności dotyczącej granicy z Syrią) w następstwie wydarzeń z 2011 r. oraz wskazanie czynników, które doprowadziły do przejścia od polityki gościnności do polityki wznoszenia „Tureckiej Fortecy". W pierwszej części artykułu krótko podsumowana zostanie turecka polityka migracyjna. Nacisk położony zostanie na przedstawienie zmiany początkowo otwartego podejścia wobec migrantów z Syrii na obecny stan budowy murów na pograniczu z Syrią. Następnie, w artykule przedstawione zostaną wybrane czynniki, które wywołały to zjawisko. Obejmują one rozprzestrzenianie się terroryzmu i napływ bojowników z Daesh, którzy wykorzystywali łagodny reżim graniczny do rozszerzania swojej aktywności na tureckim terytorium, wzrost przemytu i nielegalnego handlu transgranicznego, obawy o rozprzestrzenianie się konfliktu, ale także kwestie integralności terytorialnej w związku ze wzrostem aktywności Kurdów w regionie.

Słowa kluczowe:

mury, granica, migracja, Turcja, Syria