STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

why is Turkey influencing South Asia politics?

International Relations

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Turkey’s growing influence in South Asia is driven by a mix of strategic, economic, ideological, and geopolitical interests. Here are the main reasons

1. Expanding Geopolitical Influence

Turkey wants to project itself as a global power beyond Europe and the Middle East. By engaging in South Asia, it increases its strategic reach in a region that includes India, Pakistan, China, and key maritime routes.

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2. Defence and Arms Exports

Turkey has developed a strong defence industry, especially combat drones (like Bayraktar TB2). Selling weapons to South Asian countries helps:

- Boost Turkey’s economy
- Build military partnerships
- Increase long-term political influence

3. Strategic Alignment with Pakistan

Turkey has close political, military, and ideological ties with Pakistan. It supports Pakistan on issues like Kashmir, which naturally brings it into South Asian geopolitics.

4. Ideological Outreach

President Erdoğan promotes a narrative of Islamic leadership and positions Turkey as a protector of Muslim causes globally. This helps Ankara gain influence among Muslim-majority populations in South Asia.

5. Countering Regional Rivals

Turkey’s growing presence indirectly counters:

- India’s regional dominance

- Saudi and UAE influence in the Muslim world
- Western influence in certain geopolitical spaces

6. Economic Ambitions

Turkey seeks new markets for:

- Defense exports
- Infrastructure and construction companies
- Energy and technology partnerships
- South Asia offers large, growing markets.

7. Soft Power & Diplomacy

Turkey uses:

- Cultural diplomacy
- Educational exchanges
- Media outreach
- to shape public opinion and strengthen ties.

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