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TURKEY-U.S. RELATIONS TOWARDS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PARTNERSHIP



INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC RESEARCH ORGANIZATION
USAK USAK Center for American Studies

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USAK CENTER FOR AMERICAN STUDIES (AMERAM)

Despite narratives of a decades-long decline in America's world significance, the United States is still the dominant power of the international system. As such it continues to attract the attention of nearly all regional studies through its ongoing influence and involvement. Turkey and its vicinity is no exception, and the Center for American Studies examines U.S. foreign policy with a particular focus on Turkey-U.S. relations. What makes the Center unique is that it follows the internal mechanisms of state power and domestic policy traditions in its studies. The Center aims to research U.S. foreign policy in the context of its domestic dynamics and distill its findings into policy recommendations and analyses. The Center is a source of sound information and a platform for lectures, round-tables, and conferences.

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- U.S. Foreign Policy
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- American Global Strategy
- The Role and Future of NATO
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- Turkey and Northern Iraq
- The War in Afghanistan and Its Effects



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Unlike other studies on Turkey-U.S. relations, this report examines the key actors influential on U.S. policy and their perspectives about Turkey, theoretically discusses the regional aspects in Turkey-U.S. relations, and finally emphasizes the economic and social dimensions of the bilateral relations.

American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy and Turkey

- Although foreign affairs are not at the forefront of the American political policy agenda, they do become prioritized in times of crises. Besides, public support is regarded as a precondition for military interventions in the U.S. foreign policy. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have resulted in exhaustion and even an attitude comparable to that of ‘Vietnam Syndrome’ among Americans. Support for the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is at 82%, and the percentage of American citizens who believe that it was not worth fighting the Iraq War has risen up to 63%.
- The American people oppose the U.S. leading a possible military intervention in Syria. There is only majority support for air operations in which the U.S. does not lead but instead acts with allies. The deadly Boston Marathon bombings did not significantly affect Americans’ perception of foreign policy. The economy still stands at the top of the agenda.
- Americans neither clearly define Turkey as a friend like the United Kingdom, nor as an enemy, like in the case of North Korea. However, the negative image of Turkey in the U.S. media adversely affects views of the Americans about Turkey. While 43% of the public has a positive opinion of Turkey, 46% have negative perceptions about Turkey.
- 69% of Americans support the idea that Turkey should pursue an independent foreign policy, as it will lessen America’s burdens and responsibilities. Only 18% of Americans are concerned that an independent Turkish foreign policy would clash with the U.S. interests.
- The strategic importance of American public opinion and its sensitivity to taking on global obligations is again relevant as studies show that public support for maintaining long-term bases in Turkey is flagging. Public support has fallen from 58% in 2002 to 40% in 2012, whereas opposition has climbed from 34% to 57% in the same period.

Congress's Approach

- During times when U.S. financial resources are scarce, Congress, which has authority over budgetary policy, is expected to increase its influence over foreign policy.
- Due to economic problems, Congress has tendency to dole out money only for the most important foreign policy programs. On the other hand, possible impacts of foreign policy on the economy and business particularly in Africa are on the table.
- The opposition party in Congress criticizes the administration for the attack on the U.S. embassy in Libya. This event had a major impact on the approach to Syrian issue. While individually some members of Congress support arming the Syrian opposition, there still remains a concern that these weapons may be redirected at the U.S. (or its ally Israel) like in the case of Libya.
- Congress gives priority to Israel's security above all else in the Middle East. Accordingly, Turkey was heavily criticized in Congress in the last term. Israel's latest apology may dampen the criticism. Congress has concerns that U.S. policies may result in the Syrian people hating the U.S. Thus, the members would like the U.S. aids that are given to the opposition to be well announced to Syrian people.
- In Turkey, Congress is generally known for its bills drafted against Turkey. Lately, however, bills in favor of Turkey have also been drafted. In the 2005-2006 legislative year, there were two; it has risen to eight in the last term. During the same period, bills drafted against Turkey decreased from 19 to 10. In addition to its close relations with the Obama administration, Turkey needs to make more friends in Congress. Americans with Turkish backgrounds bear an important responsibility towards this end.

Foreign Policy Parameters of the Second Obama Administration

- Leading figures in the Obama administration are not in favor of military interventions and prioritize establishing relations with countries like Iran and North Korea.
- Obama is unlikely to pursue isolationist policies in his second term. His administration's intention to focus on the Asia-Pacific region does not imply that it will entirely withdraw from other regions.
- Nevertheless, the current administration also does not want to be overburdened. Therefore, the Obama administration tends to act with international and regional organizations as well as its main allies.
- The Obama administration is seeking a political solution to the Syrian Crisis—an approach often stressed by key actors in the administration.
- Instead of conflict, the Obama administration will prioritize communication and confidence-building with Iran. However, if Iran does not agree to sit down at the negotiating table, sanctions would be strengthened for coercive purposes.
- Highly concerned about a possible armed conflict in Iraq, the administration promotes the unity and the stability of the country. The administration is therefore expected to continue to support Maliki administration and prevent Northern Iraq from exporting oil without the consent of the central administration in Baghdad.

- American foreign policy under the Obama administration will not abandon its traditional red lines on the existence and security of Israel.

Turkey-U.S. Bilateral Relations

Diplomatic Contacts and Institutionalized Communication

- Strong communication between leaders is important and should not be underestimated. However, institutionalized communication embracing the two countries' bureaucracies should also be strengthened.
- Despite the magnitude of regional terrorism triggered by Afghanistan and Iraq wars in the Bush period, the number of high-level visits during Obama's time in office has surpassed that of the Bush era. The purposes of visits from American officials to Turkey have centered on the Middle East, and Syria in particular. Apart from Syria, the agenda has been preoccupied with Iraq, Iran, and Israel.
- Iran, Syria, and anti-terror cooperation have been continuously discussed during the bilateral official visits.
- Deteriorating relations with Iraq were at the top of the agenda in 2011. The Turkish Model within the context of the Arab Spring came to the fore only this year. Turkey-Armenia relations have steadily lost their significance since 2011.

Regional Approaches and Compartmentalization

- The U.S., a global, and yet declining power, views the region from afar with decreasing interest. On the other hand, Turkey's policies should be understood as the approach of a neighboring, and rising regional power. This discrepancy of approaches is reflected in the two states' regional policies.
- Washington has the strategic option to be a third party or avoid being a party at all in Turkey's bilateral relations in the region. Yet, Ankara as a country in the region is inevitably one of the parties in bilateral relations, and is primarily responsible for the current state of these relations as well as their future.
- The U.S. has the option to pursue a 'wait-and-see' policy with regards to regional developments that are on the agenda of Turkey-U.S. bilateral relations. On the other hand, a 'wait-and-see' policy for Turkey could always turn into a 'wait-and-lose' situation, especially in regions where Turkey is closely involved.
- Consequently, the 'wait-and-see' policy Obama administration is pursuing in the Syrian Crisis, because it does not pose a direct threat to U.S. regional interests, could mean the death of five Turkish citizens in Akçakale, the shooting down of a Turkish reconnaissance plane, and the terrorist attacks in Reyhanlı and at the Cilvegözü border gate for the Erdoğan administration.
- In line with these differences, discrepancies will remain in bilateral relations, which might not be reconciled through communication. At this point, the governments should compartmentalize their bilateral relations as a new modus operandi.

Security-Based Relations and Economic Relations

- Security and defense cooperation is the basis of Turkey-U.S. relations. However, such relations are naturally unstable and unsustainable as relations revive and expand only when regional security threats against these two countries arise or increase.
- Therefore, bilateral relations should be redesigned to incorporate economic issues as well. Grassroots contact can create common values would in turn generate sustainable, expansive, and deeper relations. Economic relations will expand if Turkey becomes a party to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) expected to be signed between the U.S. and the EU in the near future. Success in economic relations carries the potential to enhance relations at the non-governmental level. From this perspective, this agreement presents big opportunities for the bilateral relations.
- Conversely, the fact that Turkey is not a EU country while being a member of the Customs Union carries great risks if it cannot conduct parallel negotiations. Since Turkey is a member of the Customs Union, American goods will benefit from free movement in Turkey but Turkey will not benefit from the advantages of the prospective agreement since it covers only the EU members.
- If Turkey feels disadvantaged in trans-Atlantic economic relations, Turkish public opinion may favor Turkey heading East, and the West may face the risk of losing Turkey.
- At this point, the U.S. should not take steps excluding Turkey from trans-Atlantic relations and thus miss the opportunity to expand Turkey-U.S. relations.
- Turkey should lobby forcefully on this issue and raise awareness in Washington about the mutually negative consequences of Turkey being left out of the agreement.

Social Relations

- The trust problem in Turkish society emanates from the idea that the U.S. will abandon or even act against Turkey in Turkey's time of need. The American side does not make enough effort to address this problem as it does not consider this having a significant negative impact on relations. The continuous disregard of Turkish concerns contributes to an ongoing sense of insecurity on the Turkish side.
- Until Turkish people feel they can trust the U.S., there is a risk that cooperation on various topics—even on mutual interests—may become unpopular to pursue for the policy makers. Turkish people do not have any problems with the American way of life and values. They are not against the U.S. but are concerned about its foreign policy. For that reason, the U.S. administration needs to make significant progress in winning over Turkish people.
- It is quite normal for Turkey to pursue distinct policies in case of divergence of interests with the U.S. Nonetheless, Turkish people should not regard cooperation in policies of converging interests as a matter of breach to Turkey's independence and sovereignty.
- More transparency in bilateral relations will decrease the impact of conspiracy theories and the allegation that Turkey is making concessions behind closed doors.

- Relations between the elites of two countries hold a great potential to develop bilateral relations and enhance social interaction.
- Every year, nearly 12,000 Turkish students go to the U.S. to study at American universities and the number of American students coming to Turkey has seen a recent surge. The number of students going to the U.S. from Turkey is only the 10th highest in the world (2012), but it's worth pointing out that half of these students are graduate students.
- The increasing number of Turkish think tanks offers new channels through which Turkey can explain itself and enhance intellectual communication between Turkey and the U.S. Think tanks also serve to shed light on the important debates occurring at the highest levels.
- Furthermore, Americans with Turkish backgrounds make important contributions to bilateral relations. In the 2012 elections, political action committees (PAC) established by Americans with Turkish backgrounds contributed more than \$350,000 to the campaigns of 130 candidates. Of these candidates, 80% won their respective races.
- Since 2009, the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA) has brought 150 members of Congress to Turkey. In 2012, the TCA was the fourth most active lobby (after the Israel Education Foundation, the Aspen Institute, and the Congressional Institute) in sponsoring trips. Between 2005 and 2012 membership in the Turkish-American Caucus in Congress went from 62 to 157, making it the second in size among others.

INTRODUCTION

Differing from other studies on Turkey-U.S. relations, this report examines the key actors in U.S. domestic policy and their perspectives about Turkey, theoretically discusses the regional approaches in Turkey-U.S. relations based on their own dynamics, and finally emphasizes the economic and social dimensions of Turkey-U.S. relations.

This report does not focus on the historical background of the bilateral relations. On the contrary, the economic and social dimensions of the relations as well as the parameters, which determine the approaches of the two states towards regional issues, are the focal points of this report.

The report is divided into three parts. In the first part, the general foreign policy tendencies of key actors in U.S. domestic policy and their perspectives concerning Turkey are scrutinized. Brief information about the role of these actors in the U.S. foreign policy is provided. Then, the foreign policy approaches of the American people and Congress are examined. The first part wrap up with an exposition of Obama's foreign policy team and their tendencies.

The second part of the report begins by explaining the regional approaches in Turkey-U.S. relations on a theoretical level, followed by the economic dimension of the bilateral relations and the risks posed by excluding Turkey from Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership of U.S. and EU. The nature and purpose of recent Turkey-U.S. diplomacy is discussed. The lack of social trust is addressed. The second part ends by exploring the potential for cooperation found in elite relations and Turkish lobbies in Washington.

The report's conclusion has some suggestions for Turkish foreign policy. Based on the findings from the first two sections, The conclusion provides suggestions for Turkey on the steps that it needs to take in its foreign policy in general and particularly in its relations with the U.S.

1 U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND RELATIONS WITH TURKEY

The internal dynamics of the U.S. and influences of different actors on the foreign policy should not be underestimated while examining Turkey-U.S. relations.

Unless Turkish officials and lobbies are able to determine the right actors to engage with in their advocacy, their efforts may fall short or turn out to be no avail. Although the president is the most important figure in determining American foreign policy, the attitudes of Congress and the public are influential at critical points.

The perception of an omnipotent American president is not right. Some topics are beyond the president's authority to shape and direct, and his power to interfere to these matters is very limited. With this in mind, the attitudes of the public, the Obama administration, and Congress warrant a close examination.

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A. What Do Americans Think?

1) Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

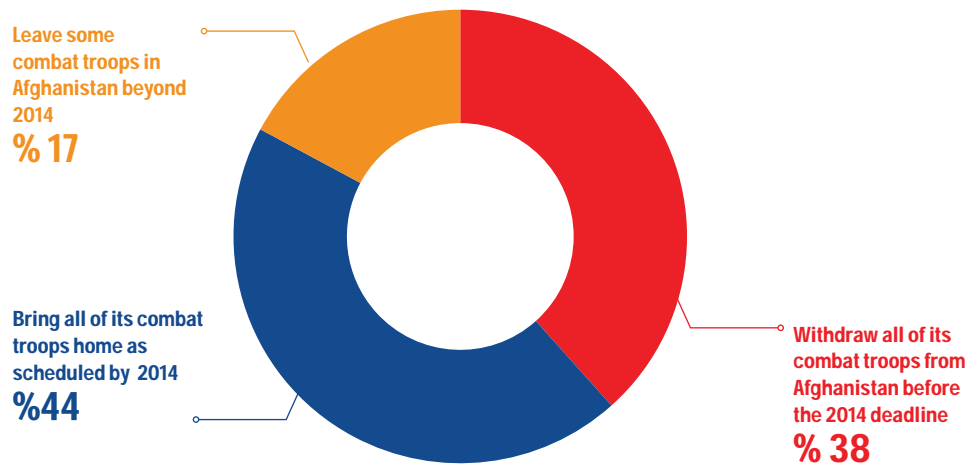
Despite the fact that foreign policy issues do not loom large in the political agenda, the gap between elites and the public is closed in times of crises.¹ For a long time, studies have asserted that the public's approach towards foreign policy is emotional, unstable, and does not rely on true information.² However, some research has recently established that the public's approach is indeed rational,³ and even prudent.⁴

The significance of public opinion on foreign policy has been much debated. Arguably, public support is of supreme importance in legitimizing and maintaining military operations abroad.⁵ Besides, the influence of electoral politics on foreign policy actors is undeniable. If the U.S. president and members of Congress want to be re-elected, they must take public preferences into account. In the 2006 mid-term elections and the 2008 general elections, Democrats enjoyed broad success due to voters' dissatisfaction with the president and his party. Moreover, if the president can maintain the public's support during his term, members of Congress wishing to be reelected readily contribute to his political agenda.

2) War Weary

The American people are war weary and this affects their approach to foreign policy. The public generally believes that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were not worth the cost in resources and human lives. According to the figures of the Chicago Council of Global Affairs, 51% of the public is of the opinion that the Afghanistan War has not contributed to U.S. security and even 18% of Americans think that the war has turned the U.S. into a more insecure place. The American people believe that their troops should be withdrawn from Afghanistan as soon as possible. While 82% of the public support the withdrawal, there remain different views on the exact date. 37% of those surveyed do not want to wait until 2014.

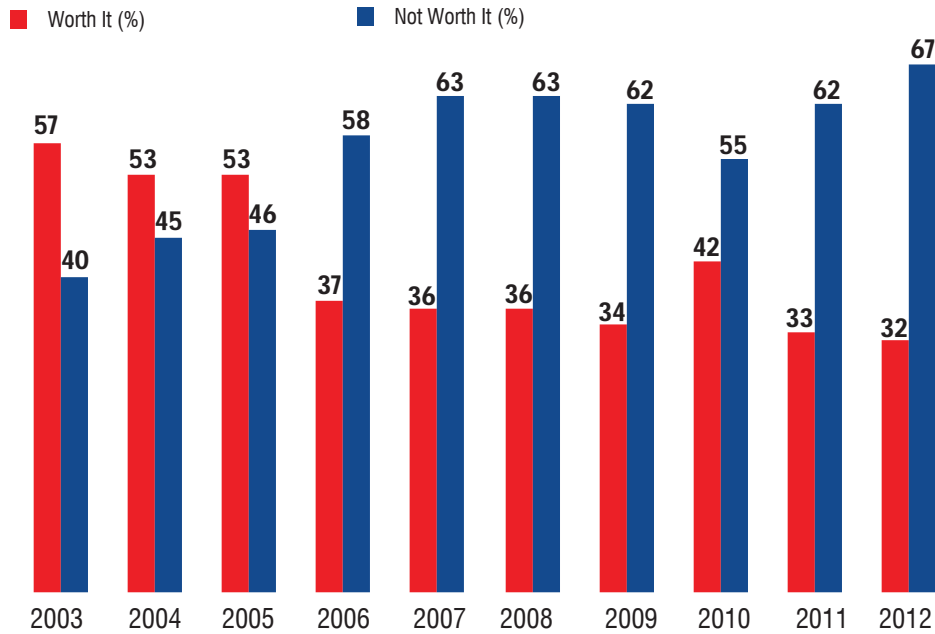
Graph 1. Withdrawing Combat Troops from Afghanistan⁶



Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2012

Regarding Iraq, only 32% of the public believe the war was worth fighting with 67% holding the opposite view.

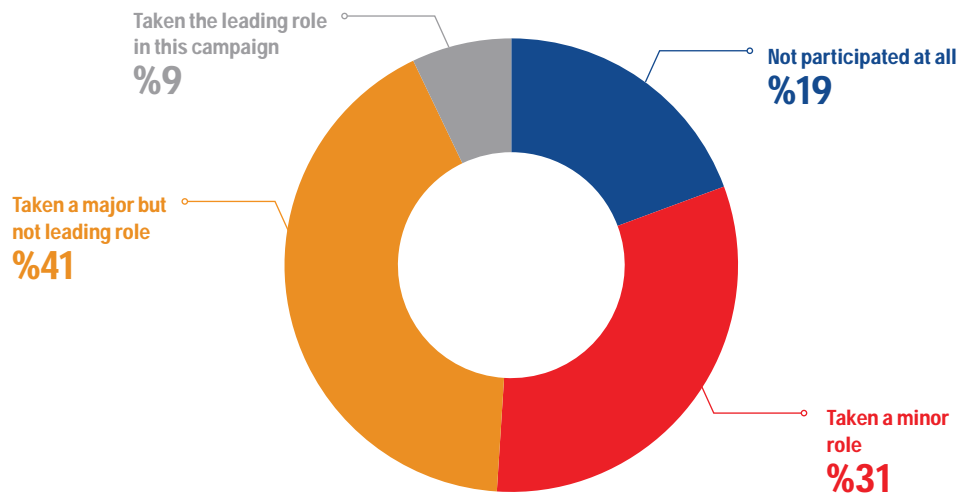
Graph 2. Iraq War Worth It?



Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

70% of the American people believe that the war in Iraq has worsened U.S. relations with Muslim societies. In short, the Americans have distanced themselves from the large scale wars that their government leads. Americans do not entirely object to interventions like the one in Libya, where the U.S. did not stand in the forefront but instead acted alongside allies. Still, it is striking that only 7% of the Americans would like to see their country leading such operations.

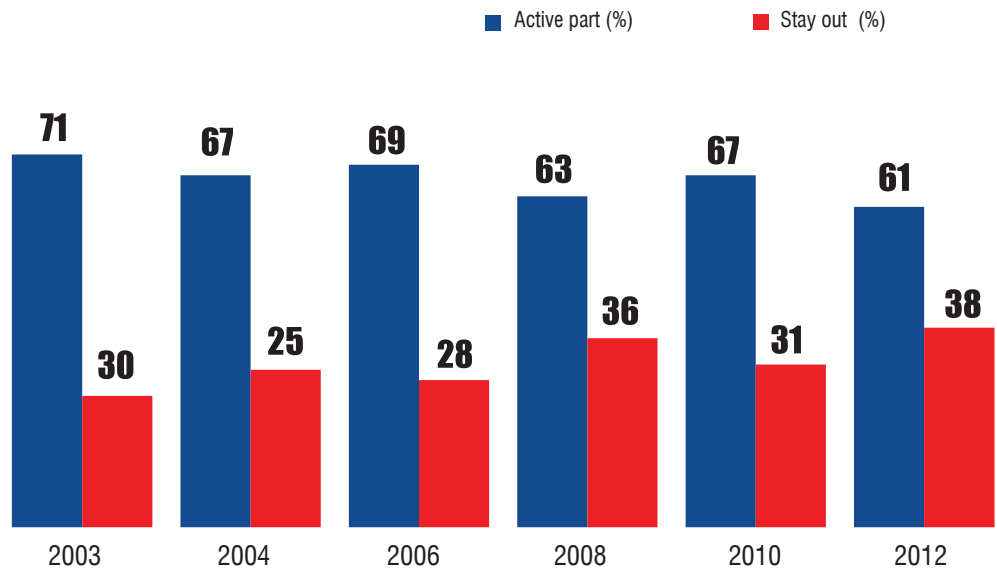
Graph 3. U.S. Role in Libya



Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2012

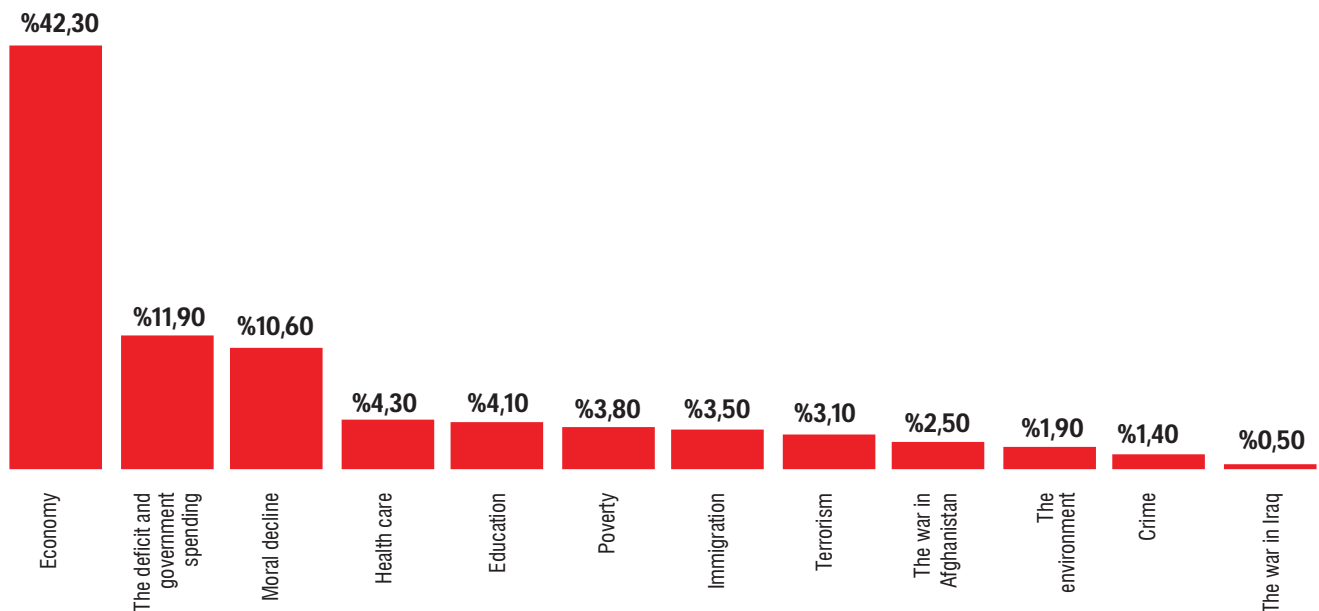
71% of the American people think that the U.S. government should be more careful about using military power. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan accompanied by domestic economic problems, have led Americans to temper their attitudes towards an activist foreign policy. Those who say that the U.S. should be more active in its foreign policy has decreased to 61%-the lowest percentage recorded in the last ten years.

Graph 4. Taking an Active Part in World Affairs



Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Graph 5. What do you think the most important problem facing the United States today?

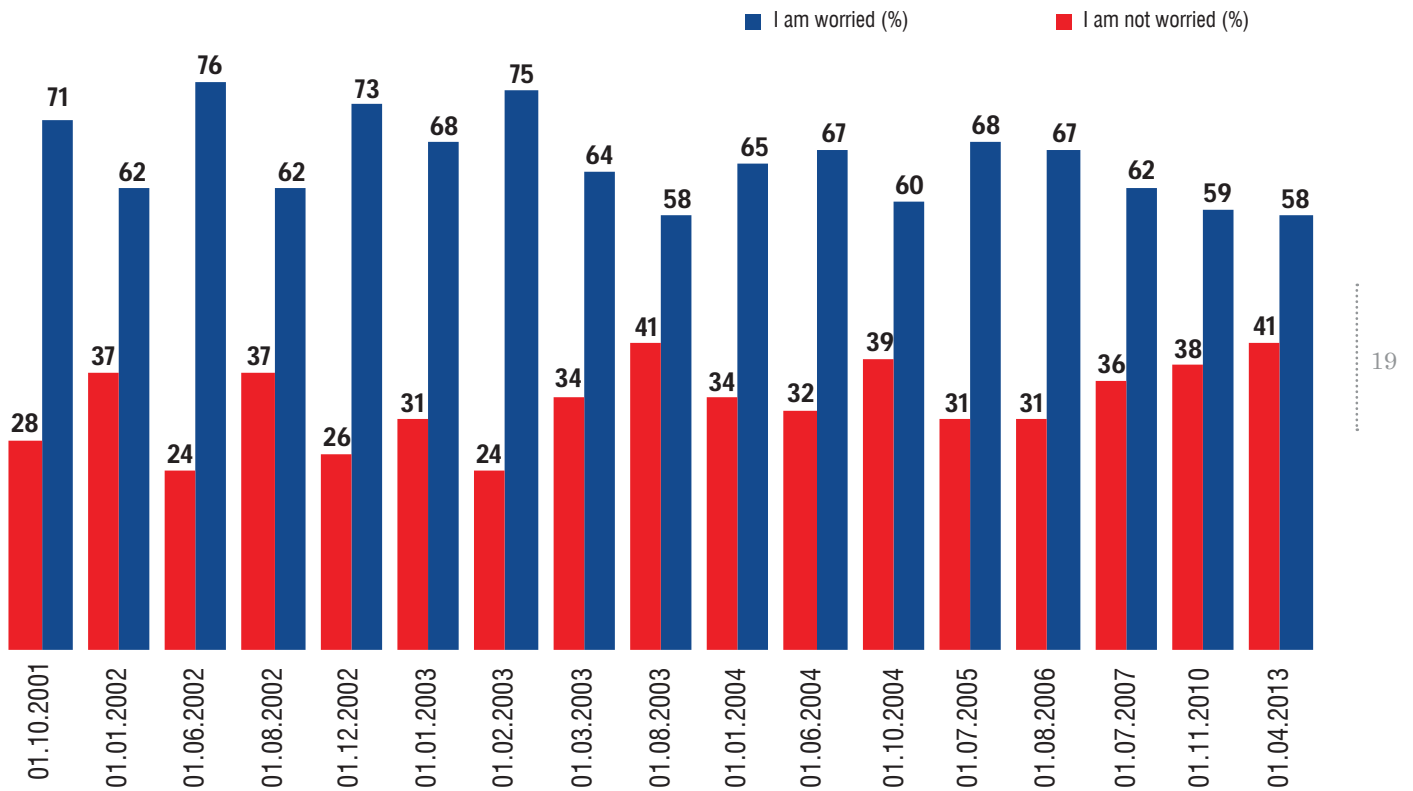


Source: American National Election Survey (ANES) 2012

3) Focus on Internal Affairs

Americans believe that the administration should primarily focus on internal affairs. The percentage of people who saw foreign policy and defense issues as the most important problem faced by the country is only about 5%. American people prioritize economic issues. Following the Boston Marathon bombings, the percentage of people worried about terrorism was about 60%, a figure which has not changed significantly in recent years. It may be argued that the public has become inured to terrorist attacks.

Graph 6. Concern of Terrorism



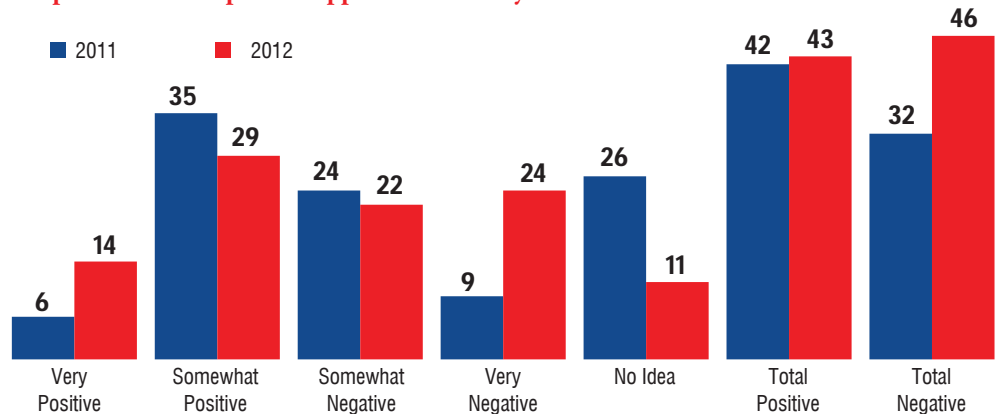
Source: PEW Research Center, April 18-21, 2013

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 It is striking that in 2011, more than one-fourth of the public could not make any comments; in 2012, views about Turkey came into sharper focus. Nonetheless, it is too early to argue for a meaningful trend.

4) What does American Public think about Turkey?

Reports which deal with Turkey-U.S. relations usually present Turkish public opinion on the U.S. while Americans' perceptions of Turkey are deemed less significant. This report, albeit briefly, sheds light on Americans' attitudes toward Turkey. The following figures may not draw a clear picture of U.S. public opinion like in the case of the United Kingdom (ally) or North Korea (enemy), but can still give a general idea about Turkey's presence in the U.S. media and its consequences.

Graph 7. American public's approach to Turkey



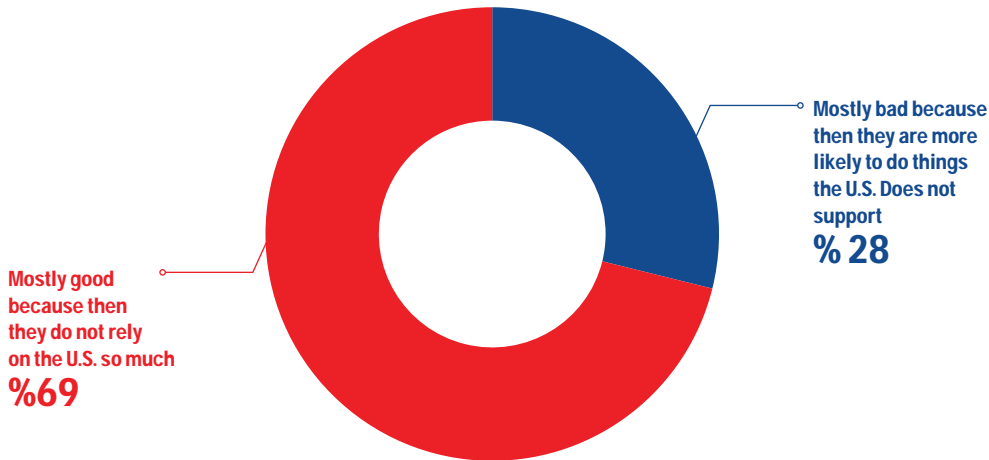
Source: GMF Transatlantic Trends

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 %69 of American people are pleased that Turkey pursues an independent foreign policy. These numbers reflect the influence of the general belief that the U.S. should not be overburdened in its foreign policy.

According to the graph, there has been an increase in Americans' negative views on Turkey compared to last year. Moreover, it is striking that in 2011, more than one-fourth of the public could not make any comments; in 2012, views about Turkey came into sharper focus. Nonetheless, it is too early to argue for a meaningful trend.

On the other hand, the American people are pleased that Turkey pursues an independent foreign policy. These numbers reflect the influence of the general belief that the U.S. should not be overburdened in its foreign policy. 69% of the public support Turkey and Brazil acting independently in their foreign policies. Only 18% of Americans are worried that this independence may lead to policies, which clash with the American interests.

Graph 8. Foreign Policy Independence of Turkey and Brasil

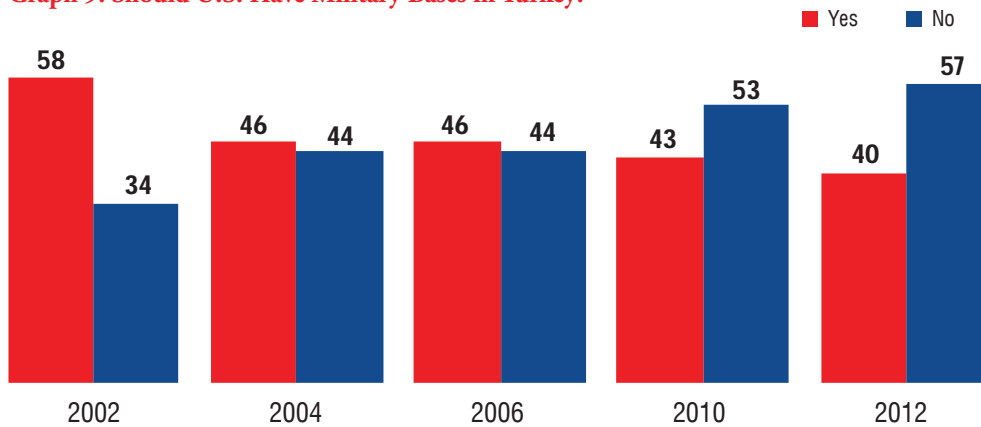


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 Despite their strategic importance, there is a growing concern among the American public that military bases in Turkey impose a burden on the U.S. Support for the bases declined from 58% to 40%.

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2012

A similar approach is observed regarding American military bases in Turkey. Despite their strategic importance, there is a growing concern among the American public that these bases impose a burden on the U.S. While in 2002, 34% of the public opposed to long-term bases in Turkey, this figure increased to 57% in 2012. Support for the bases declined from 58% to 40%.

Graph 9. Should U.S. Have Military Bases in Turkey?



Source: Collected from various polls of The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

B. Congress and U.S. Foreign Policy

1) Congress and Foreign Policy

In addition to the president's influence on the U.S. foreign policy, Congress plays an important role. Especially after the Vietnam and Watergate in the 1960s and 1970s, Congress has been reinforcing its constitutional powers and strengthening its position through measures like the War Powers Resolution.⁷ Congress' influence on foreign policy mainly stems from the 'power of purse'-the power to allocate and cut funds for policies. At times when U.S. financial sources are limited, the Congress is expected to increase its influence over foreign policy.⁸

On the other hand, the president has an important role in convincing Congress to adopt and implement particular policies. Congress generally has a negative power in the policy-making process. In other words, it has the power to apply the brakes. Congress can theoretically use its appropriations power to terminate wars declared by the president, though it never has. Blocking weapons sales or leases valued above a specific price and withholding approval for critical officials are also within Congress's powers. Congress has frequently restricted arms sales to Turkey. Congress also impeded the appointment of the current U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, Francis J. Ricciardone, resulting in a period in which there was no American ambassador to Turkey.

All these powers require the president to take Congress's preferences into account before he acts. Indeed, sheer partisan intransigence between the president and Congress or within Congress itself can precipitate a crisis. In this atmosphere, President Obama will likely narrow his focus to critical topics while using his political capital to convince Congress. As Obama has now entered his second term, and thus the period of legacy creation, he is expected to be concerned with domestic politics above else.

2) Congress's Foreign Policy Agenda

Recently, the economy and the efficient use of money have been the main subjects of discussions in Congress. The statements of committee chairmen on these topics are illuminating. Discussions over which foreign policy programs to fund have gone beyond differentiating the good from the bad. Worthwhile and deserving programs are now being ranked and defunded according to their significance.⁹

At this point, foreign aid stands at the top of the agenda. The following statement made by a senator about aid to Syria is striking: "Every dollar that we spend [in Syria] is borrowed from China and other places, will have to be repaid by our children or grandchildren who will face their own type of challenges as they grow up."¹⁰

From another aspect, Congress perceives foreign policy as an efficient tool to help the U.S. economy recover. In this regard, Congress reiterates the need to be more active in important markets like China and Africa.¹¹ There have been several bills submitted to both houses of Congress aimed at promoting exports to Africa. Furthermore, members

of Congress have asked the White House to adopt a firmer stance towards intellectual property right abuses in China.

The attack on the U.S. consulate in Libya was also an important topic in Congressional debates. While frequently pointing out the Obama administration's mistakes, Congress heavily criticized the American ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, for her misleading statements about the attack.¹² Criticism about the administration's response to the Libya attack has been adversely affecting discussions about arming the Syrian opposition. Because, the general concern is that those weapons may be directed against the U.S. and its critical allies like Israel in the future. Even though some senators are in favor of providing arms to the opposition, there is a widespread concern that weapons provided to the opposition may be directed against American interests. The Boston Marathon bombings heightened these concerns.

Whether or not the current U.S. policies in Syria will foster animosity among Syrians against the U.S. is frequently debated in the Senate. In this regard, the Senate has expressed a desire to emphasize the American origin of aid being provided. Officials in the region are also instructed to draw attention to America's generosity.¹³

Finally, while discussing the developments in the Middle East and the Arab Spring, the Congress puts the security of Israel at the heart of the debate.¹⁴ It is even asserted that the U.S. should take in account the relations of its allies with Israel in how it approaches them.¹⁵ For example, in the previous term Turkey was heavily criticized for the Mavi Marmara incident.¹⁶ Criticism of Turkey is expected to soften due to Israel's apology.

3) Turkey in Congress

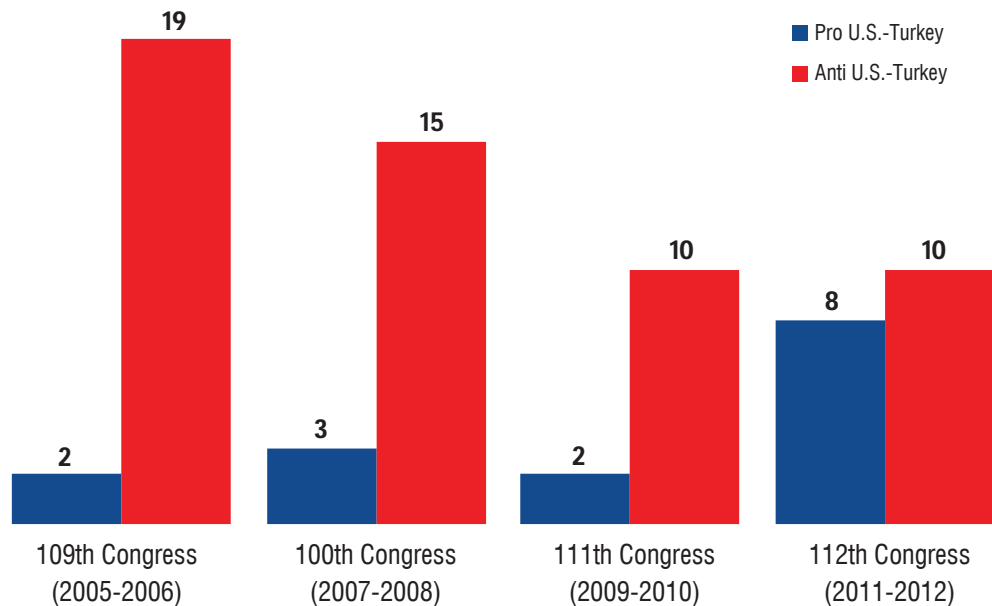
Resolutions recognizing the so-called Armenian genocide allegations, criticizing Turkey for the deadlock in Cyprus, and defending the ecumenical status of the Orthodox Patriarch are introduced nearly every year. In the last legislative year, however, there were also some resolutions condemning the terrorist attacks in Turkey, reaffirming that Turkey is a strategic ally, and commemorating the 23rd of April and 29th of October, as well as the 10th anniversary of the Turkey Caucus in Congress.

There has been considerable increase in the number of resolutions in favor of Turkey in the last four legislative years. Although the number is still not at the desired level, efforts of the Americans of Turkish origin should be appreciated.

In the present legislative year, Congress is underlining the importance of acting together with Turkey in Syria. This view is also shared by members of Congress who are known to be against Turkey. Turkey's efforts in the ongoing refugee crisis are also being recognized.¹⁷

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There has been considerable increase in the number of resolutions in favor of Turkey in the last four legislative years. Although the number is still not at the desired level, efforts of the Americans of Turkish origin should be appreciated.
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Graph 10. Legislation That Supports a Strong Turkey-U.S. Relationship



Source: Turkish Coalition of America

C. The Obama Administration and Its Foreign Policy

1) The Obama Administration

As Obama is now working with a team of his own choosing, rather than one required by circumstances, his team's foreign policy and security policy stances provide insight into his own plans.

a) John F. Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State

Secretary of State John F. Kerry comes to the fore as an important figure in U.S. foreign policy. Kerry, son of a Foreign Service officer, fought in Vietnam and participated in several peace operations. Kerry's anti-militarist positions after 9/11 were one of the reasons behind his defeat to Bush. However, he casts a desirable profile for the secretary of state in the Obama administration. Kerry, who has presided over the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations for many years, is expected to establish more stable relations with the legislative branch. Kerry's foreign policy positions resemble those of Obama. Kerry also thinks that global problems can be solved by multilateral coalitions.¹⁸ The biggest criticism he directed at Bush during the 2004 presidential election was that Bush didn't (or couldn't) gain the support of U.S. allies.

Instead of using hard power, Kerry prefers dialogue with North Korea and Iran. He was especially vocal about his position on North Korea during his election campaign.

It should also be noted that during the Clinton presidency, Kerry, with John McCain, played an important role in establishing new relations with Vietnam. John Kerry is known to have had close relations with the Armenian lobbies when he was a senator. In Turkey, the prospect of a Kerry presidency was seen as a nightmare. However, it is not expected that this closeness will challenge Obama's foreign policy understanding.

b) Chuck Hagel, U.S. Secretary of Defense

The appointment of Chuck Hagel was highly controversial. Hagel opposes the idea of putting the use of force at the center of foreign policy.¹⁹ Like John Kerry, Hagel favors solving problems through multidimensional approaches and coalitions. Believing that it is unwise for the U.S. to assume too many obligations by itself, Hagel argues that the U.S. should strengthen its alliances.²⁰ He asserts that relations with important countries including Turkey should not be limited to a single topic, instead the U.S. should seek a multidimensional relationship.²¹

There are two specific details about Hagel that prolonged the Senate's approval of his appointment. Firstly, Hagel is not a figure that meets all the expectations of the Israeli lobby. Yet, he is not anti-Israel. He has proven this with his trip to Israel. Besides, he has been estranged from his own Republican party. Hagel generally opposed Bush's Iraq policies and, particularly the 'Surge' strategy of 2007. For these reasons, Hagel was confronted with great opposition during the approval process. For the first time in American history, a candidate for a defense post was filibustered.

Hagel is of the opinion that the U.S. pushed Turkey away during the Iraq War, and did not do enough strategic planning.²² Contrary to general belief, the Secretary of Defense thinks that Syria is much more important than Libya in terms of U.S. regional interests. Taking into account his opinion on Iraq, Hagel is expected to act with caution.

c) Tom Donilon, National Security Advisor

Tom Donilon is neither a foreign policy expert nor does he come from a military background. On the contrary, his expertise is in domestic policy issues. However, having served as chief of staff to former Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Donilon is experienced in directing foreign policy. He is also known to have 'pivoted' U.S. attention towards Asia-Pacific region. Donilon thinks that focusing on Asia neither decreases the importance of other regions nor encircles China. According to him, this strategy is only about allocating the necessary "time, effort, and resources" for the region.²³ Donilon also defines 'energy' as one of the components of the national security scheme, aims to achieve American energy independence, and even seeks to use energy as a political tool.²⁴ Perhaps the most striking characteristics attributed to Donilon is his extraordinarily meticulous and hard-working nature. He is extremely loyal to Obama and it has even been alleged that he leaked some flattering information to the press in order to make the administration look better. Claims about his pending appointment "being a disaster" have not been repeated since he came to office.

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From the descriptions above it can be concluded that Obama's team is composed of figures that have similar political approaches. Both Kerry and Hagel are war veterans and distance themselves from military operations. Moreover, almost all of them are in favor of dialogue with countries with which the U.S. has problematic relations. Lastly, it can be said that Obama has created a loyal team.

2) Foreign Policy Parameters of the Obama Administration

In his inaugural address, Obama made the following statement: "America will remain the anchor of strong alliances in every corner of the globe."²⁵ Thus, the Obama administration does not seem to be pursuing an isolationist policy. Instead, the U.S. will continue having an active role in world politics while simultaneously shedding unnecessary burdens. During the Obama administration, U.S. foreign policy will strive to meet its obligations without exceeding its capabilities.

The intention of the Obama administration to focus on the Asia-Pacific region does not imply that the U. S. will entirely withdraw from other regions. However, the desire to rid its foreign policy of extra burdens will lead it to act with international and regional organizations, as well as with its allies in the second term. For example, the U.S. will cooperate with Saudi Arabia and Turkey on Yemen and Syria, respectively. With regards to Libya, the Obama administration expects America's European allies to take more initiative.

In terms of the fight against terrorism, the U.S. will prioritize solving social problems in targeted countries by enhancing their governing capacity while at the same time continuing with its strategy of targeted killings. To that end, the Obama administration will increasingly use drones to fight terrorism. Yet, there is no talk of staging a foreign intervention in response to the Boston Marathon bombings.

With regards to Syria, the Obama administration will try hard to avoid the mistakes made by the Bush administration in Iraq. In open support for the Syrian opposition, the administration has announced that it would double non-lethal military aid to Syria. The Obama administration prefers a political settlement in Syria, and key figures reiterate this approach. For now, the administration has succeeded in resisting the pressure to take more action on Syria. How long this restraint will continue is unclear, as the claims that the Assad regime has used chemical weapons, and thus crossed a 'red line,' gain credibility.

The Obama administration will prioritize communication and establishing relations in the region instead of armed conflict. On Iran, especially, all cabinet members seem to share the same view that diplomatic relations with Iran should be pursued rather than an armed intervention. In the previous term, Hillary Clinton had a firm stance concerning Iran. However, now both Hagel and Kerry share Obama's approach. For example, the Obama administration has once more issued a Nowruz message in 2013. However, at least for now, Iran seems reluctant to sit at the negotiating table, which is why the U.S. is expected to follow the sanctions strategy to convince Iran.

The U.S. administration has been acting with extra caution in Iraq due to Obama's decision to withdraw American troops. Obama will be the first target of criticisms if any disturbances occur in Iraq. Therefore, the U.S. administration has been prioritizing the unity and stability of the country.

Despite the allegations of a deepening rift between Obama and Netanyahu, there seems to be no change in U.S. policies regarding Israel's security, and no change is expected. However, the Obama administration also thinks that the deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not serve Israel's interests. The administration believes that in case of a deadlock, Israel will face democracy problems, as well as pressure from the international community. Furthermore, the U.S. administration also points out that the military and technology gap between the two parties has lessened.²⁶ Keeping these facts in mind, the administration has been sharing its belief with Israelis and Israel's allies in America that a peace accord would be in Israel's best interest.



TURKEY-U.S. BILATERAL RELATIONS

The Obama Administration has expanded the scope of Turkey-U.S. bilateral relations and even elevated the description from the ‘strategic partnership’ of the Clinton and Bush years to a ‘model partnership’.

The model partnership aims to extend bilateral relations beyond the military and strategic basis and envisages a relationship between equals. According to Füsün Türkmen, the model partnership has three dimensions: strategic, economic, and social/values. “The strategic dimension will continue to form the backbone of the relations. The economic relations have to be enhanced. The social/values dimension is the least developed and should include values such as democracy and human rights.”²⁷

If it had succeeded, the model partnership would have been applied to relations with other Muslim countries as well. However, neither of the parties has made a real effort to materialize the concept thus far. Even the concept has been increasingly questioned in the aftermath of the so-called Armenian genocide resolutions and Turkey’s negative vote on the UN voting to sanction Iran over the nuclear issue. CSIS expert Stephen Flanagan argues that despite the good relations between the two countries, they are still not at the desired level for a successful model partnership. Nonetheless, he also argues, despite all its problems the model partnership is an ongoing project.”²⁸

Whether it is called a model partnership or something else, steps should be taken in order to enhance bilateral relations. It is critical to strengthen communication, compartmentalize relations when necessary, and sustain cooperation. For the sake of stable relations in the future, security-oriented cooperation should be buttressed with economic, social/values aspects, and should be made permanent and sophisticated.

A. Diplomatic Contacts and Institutionalized Communication

A substantial increase has been observed in diplomatic interactions in bilateral relations. First of all, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the U.S. President Barack Obama frequently speak on the phone. Turgut Özal and George W. H. Bush similarly had close communication. Stephen Flanagan notes that such personal connections should not be ignored.

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In addition to phone calls, the U.S. officials frequently visit Turkey. In fact, the number of official visits during the first Obama term was more than during the whole of the Bush administration, despite the latter's ambitious agenda in the Middle East.

Table 1. High Profile Visits from U.S. To Turkey

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
President Barack Obama					April 5-7
Vice President Joe Biden			December 2		
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton		August 11-12	July 15-16		
		May 31-June 7			
		March 30-April 1			
Secretary of State John Kerry	March 1				
	April 7				
	April 20-21				
Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta			December 16		
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Michael Mullen				September 3	
Deputy Secretary of States William Burns				February 17	
Deputy Secretary of Defense Ash Carter	February 4				
Chief of Staff of the Army Martin Dempsey		September 17			

Source: Collected by USAK Center for American Studies

The increase in diplomatic visits is of great significance. It proves the enhancement of communication and consultation between the two countries. However, according to some experts, in spite of the good relations between leaders, current lower-level interactions are not as strong and stable as they seem.²⁹ Thus, there still remains a need to institutionalize communication at the bureaucratic level.³⁰

1) The Agenda of Visits

Which topics are discussed and how frequently during these visits? We at the USAK Center for American Studies presents a general picture of the themes on the agenda based on the information revealed by the press.³¹ Since the beginning of Obama’s term, cooperation for counterterrorism and the Middle East emerged as the most discussed topics. The Syrian Crisis sits at the focal point of the Middle East. After that, Iraq, Iran, and Israel equally share the spotlight in debates. Thematically, cooperation in fighting terrorism stands at the top of the agenda. Turkey’s economy and democratization process follow, respectively.

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Table 2. Top Topics of the Visits

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Cooperation for counterterrorism	3	1	3	2	2	11
Syria	1	1	2	2	4	10
Iraq	2	1	3	0	1	7
Iran	2	1	1	1	2	7
Israel	2	1	1	0	3	7
Palestine	2	0	0	0	3	5
Economy	1	1	1	0	2	5
Afghanistan	2	0	1	1	1	5
Democratization of Turkey	1	0	2	0	2	5
Cyprus	1	1	1	0	0	3
Armenia	2	0	1	0	0	3
EU	2	0	0	0	1	3
Global outlook	2	0	1	0	0	3
Africa	1	0	0	0	1	2
Turkish model	0	0	2	0	0	2

Source: USAK Center for American Studies

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Turkey and the United States' positions in the global system as well as their goals and capacities shape their regional policies. Though the two countries share interests, the nature of their policies is different. Regional policies of the U.S., a declining, faraway, superpower, approach the region differently from Turkey, a neighboring, rising, regional power.
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The table shows that since 2011 Armenia has lost its importance on the agenda. The topic has not been brought back to the table due to the deadlock in the Armenian Opening of Turkey. On the other hand, the continuously relevant topics of Iran, Syria, and terrorism are debated each year. Syria has been the most discussed topic so far in 2013, followed by the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Iraq was at the forefront in 2011 when Turkey-Iraq relations were damaged by the controversial policies of Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki expanding his power and marginalizing the opposition. The 'Turkish Model' was also a fixture of the agenda throughout 2011, as it was the Arab Spring's debut year.

2) Regional Approaches and Compartmentalization

While examining the regional dimensions of Turkey-U.S. relations, the dynamic nature of the bilateral relations should be taken into consideration. Turkey and the United States' positions in the global system as well as their goals and capacities shape their regional policies. Though the two countries share interests, the nature of their policies is different. Regional policies of the U.S., a declining, faraway, superpower, approach the region differently from Turkey, a neighboring, rising, regional power. This results in discrepancies in two states' approaches in their regional policies.

First of all, the presence of the U. S. in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and East Mediterranean is political. In other words, the U.S. exists in these regions through its policies. It should be noted that American political presence in these regions started with the Cold War. On the contrary, Turkey's existence in these regions is primarily ontological. In other words, Turkey is one of the constitutive countries in these regions. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu explained the discrepancies in both countries' regional approaches by referring to the fact that the history of the Turkey-Iran border is older than the history of the U.S. Yet, existing ontologically in a region does not necessarily mean existing politically. In the last decade, Turkey has strived to develop a political presence in regions where it has historical roots and expand its influence to other regions.

The facts that the U.S. is an extra-regional power and Turkey is a regional power inevitably results in policy discrepancies. For example, while Washington has the strategic option to be a third party or not a party at all in Turkey's bilateral relations in the region, Ankara is always one of the parties to its regional bilateral relations. Moreover, Ankara also bears most of the responsibility for the current and future state of these relations. If the U.S. chooses to intervene in Turkey's regional bilateral relations, it can always determine the timing and the extent of this intervention in line with its interests. This situation not only causes a chronic problem of trust in bilateral relations but also restricts Turkey's political sphere of action.

The U.S. approach towards Turkey's relations with Iran and Syria before the Arab Spring are illustrative. Located, as it is, out of the region, the U.S. has the option to pursue isolation policies in the Middle East. Syria and Iran, both members of the Bush administration's expanded axis of evil, are both Turkey's neighbors. American policies that isolate these two countries indirectly isolate Turkey as well. In other words, the United States

opens gaps between Turkey and its neighbors through its isolating policies. Although Turkey tried to improve its relations with Syria and Iran with its zero problems with neighbors initiative and its goal of regional integration, the U.S. intervened adversely affecting regional balances. On the other hand, the U.S. has the option to stay out of Turkey's bilateral relations when Turkey would prefer more American activism. Today, the American quietism on the Syrian Crisis concerns Turkey.

Second, while the U.S. has the option to pursue a 'wait and see' policy with regards to regional developments that concern Turkey-U.S. bilateral relations, Turkey does not have such a luxury. A 'wait and see' policy may turn into a 'wait and lose' situation for Turkey, especially in regions where Turkey is closely involved. This is one of the reasons Turkey and the U.S. do not see eye to eye on the political and humanitarian crisis in Syria. While the Obama administration may pursue a 'wait and see' policy in Syria as the crisis does not pose a direct threat to the U.S.' regional interests, for the Erdogan Administration the waiting period has meant five Turkish citizens being killed in Akçakale, a Turkish reconnaissance plane being shot down, terrorist attacks being conducted at the Cilvegözü border gate and in Reyhanlı, support given to the PKK by the Assad regime, and more than 310,000 asylum seekers. Turkey prioritizes preventive diplomacy and an active foreign policy because it does not have the luxury to wait and see.

Third, the Obama administration desires to rearrange its foreign policy in light of the economic crisis in the U.S., Asia's rising importance in the world politics and economy, and finally the increasing efficiency and impact of China's growing international power. The U.S. is currently signaling an upcoming political and military withdrawal from the regions on the Turkey-U.S. agenda. However, Turkey is attempting to create diplomatic and economic openings in those regions to make its economic development sustainable and bolster its influence in the regional systems. The course of Turkey-Iraq relations and the problems occurred in Turkey-U.S. relations during that period is a good example for this. While Washington politically and militarily withdraws from Iraq, Ankara is seeking an economic and political opening in Iraq. This policy seems to be successful in Northern Iraq.

Finally, the process of redefining Turkish foreign policy affects the regional policies of both countries. Turkey's position in global politics, its historical experience, cultural characteristics, geographical position, goals, and priorities are being redefined. This redefinition has resulted in a new foreign policy approach called that can be called 'strategic autonomy'. Knowing that a country cannot maintain its security, support its economic development and increase its influence by means of isolationist policies, Turkey prefers a foreign policy approach that enables it to determine its own priorities, pursue independent policies, and act without hesitation, even in contradiction with its traditional partners. In recent times, Ankara has developed a tendency to pursue policies that are proactive, autonomous, and authentic.

This paradigm shift is one of the reasons Turkey and the U.S. have adopted different approaches towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. Turkey's current support for Palestine in terms of rhetoric and action is the highest it has ever been. This support is part of Turkey's new 'safeguarding policy' in the Middle East. On November 30th, 2012, Turkey

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not only voted in favor of Palestine becoming a non-member observer state at the UN, but also lobbied other countries to vote 'yes'. On the contrary, the U. S. voted against upgrading Palestine's status to observer state in line with its policy of protecting Israel. The Obama administration described the final decision as 'unfortunate'.

The scope of the Turkey-U.S. agenda has been widening day by day, but together with cooperation possibilities comes the potential for discord in bilateral relations. Even good communication may not be able to bring forth consensus or even compromise. At this point, the compartmentalization of Turkey-U.S. relations is a significant success. A culture of compartmentalization can even prevent disagreement in some topics from militating against each other.

B. Security-Based Relations and Economic Relations

While the security aspect of the Turkey-U.S. partnership mainly keeps bilateral relations from rupturing, it also prevents relations from being more sustainable and profound. Security cooperation serves as an anchor in Turkey-U.S. relations. Security needs, threat perceptions, and actual threats maintain bilateral cooperation. Turkey's need for American collaboration in security and defense policies is the main reason behind this cooperation. However, the security and defense cooperation revitalizes and expands bilateral relations only when regional security threats emerge or worsen. This dynamic is inherently unstable and unsustainable.

For these reasons, bilateral relations should not only rely on security but should also be buttressed by economic, inter-community, and value-based interaction. Only then will the parties be able to achieve a sustainable, expansive, and deeper alliance. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement expected to be signed by the U.S. and the EU, is a significant opportunity. Both Turkey and the trans-Atlantic alliance will suffer if Turkey is excluded from this agreement.

1) Cooperation in Economic Issues

Bilateral economic relations have not yet reached their potential. With its 7.9% share of Turkey's international trade, the U.S. falls behind Russia and China. The rather limited amount of trade cannot anchor bilateral relations in the way security issues do. While Turkey, mentioned as a 'trading state' attaches considerable importance to trade, expanding bilateral trade would go a long way towards materializing the model partnership.³² Two important factors lie behind the underdeveloped Turkey-U.S. trade: geographic distance, and Turkey's deeply rooted economic relations with the EU. The prospective U.S.-EU Free Trade Area, however, may change the equation. Turkish and American companies can also initiate important openings together in third markets, such as in African countries. The U.S. is currently discussing increasing trade opportunities in Africa in order to fight domestic unemployment. Both countries can benefit from undertaking joint trade projects in under-explored regions. Successful trade collaboration would

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improve inter-communal relations and help overcome the trust problem embedded in bilateral relations.

2) The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and Turkey

Negotiations for Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the U.S. and the EU are planned to start in June. This agreement is going to be the biggest and the most comprehensive free trade agreement in the world. While the combined population of the U.S. and the EU is around 800 million, they produce 45% of world GDP and conduct 30% of global trade. This agreement is expected to generate 2 million jobs and at least 1.5 % GDP growth for both sides.³³ Despite the French resistance on agriculture, both parties are in favor of the agreement to overcome the ongoing economic stagnation.

However, as Turkey is not an EU member but still is part of the EU Customs Union, under the free trade agreement American goods would enjoy free movement in Turkey while Turkish goods could not do the same in America. Having such a great disadvantage against a big economy like the U.S., Turkey may reconsider its membership to Customs Union, and in broader terms, its economic ties with the EU.³⁴ This situation may also have political consequences: As Turkey will be excluded from trans-Atlantic relations that are gaining economic character, the idea to head towards the East in general would gain more support. In this regard, the U.S. and the EU may actually face the real risk of 'losing Turkey'.

In order to avoid these risks and protect Turkey's interests, the U.S. needs to start free-trade negotiations with Turkey. Alternatively, there should be a statement in the agreement including Turkey as a party. This is one way the U.S. can make a serious opening in bilateral relations. In addition, Turkey should lobby in Washington to communicate the negative consequences of not being included in the agreement.³⁵

C. Inter-Community Relations

Due to the deep-rooted trust problem, Turkish public does not approach positively towards Turkey-U.S. bilateral relations. This attitude, while not an enormous obstacle, would pull vote-conscious Turkish leaders away from mutually-beneficial, cooperative policies. Improved economic relations may be a way to correct this problem. Moreover, elites can play a constructive role in overcoming these fears as there is high potential for important interaction between them. Interaction provides an invaluable chance for people from both sides to realistically define and interact with each other independent of conspiracy theories.

1) What does Turkish Public Think?

As long as the Turkish public's lingering distrust in America is not confronted with, suspicions will continue to grow. This problem could not be resolved during the Presi-

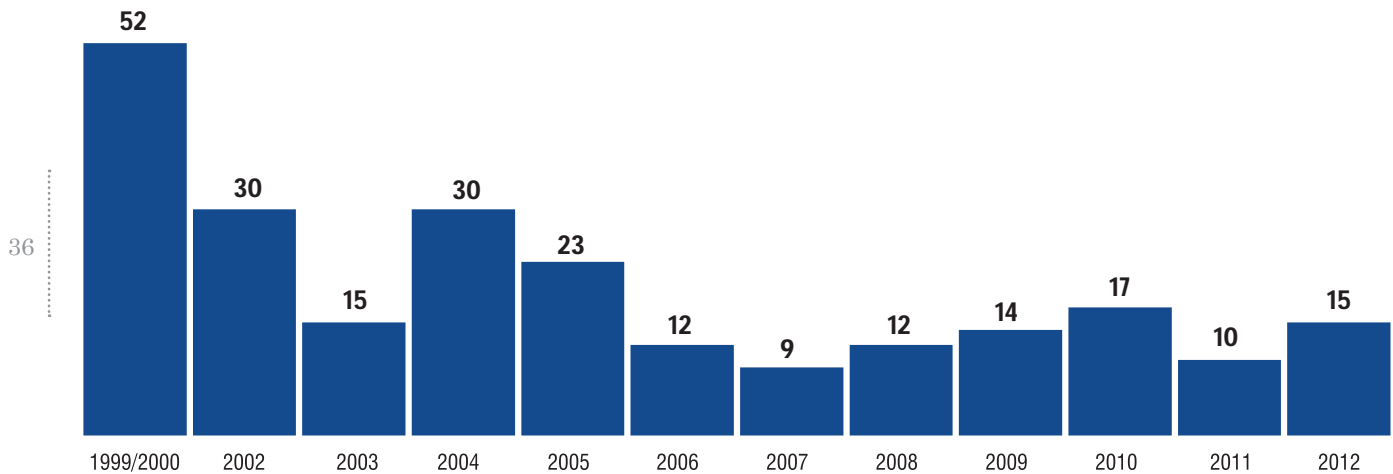
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dent Obama's first term. The situation is exacerbated by the belief, on the part of the Americans, that negative public opinion will not affect bilateral relations. Unless the trust issue is addressed, there will always be the risk that public pressure will constrain mutually beneficial cooperation.

a) The Problem of Trust and Anti-Americanism

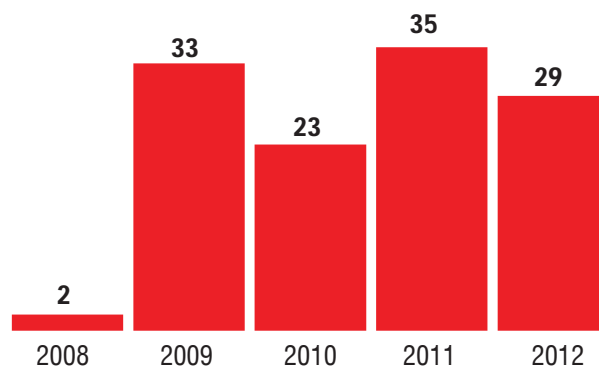
In spite of the general public sympathy towards Obama in Turkey, there has not been a significant change in Turkish people's attitudes about America. The public opinion that soured so deeply during the Bush administration also recovered during the Bush administration. The Obama administration has seen some fluctuations but no significant advances. The problems that the Obama administration inherited have had a big effect on bilateral relations.

Graph 11. Level of Sympathy in Turkey towards America



Source: PEW Research Center

Graph 12. Level of Trust to Bush and Obama



Source: PEW Research Center

The trust issue is among the problems that have roots in the past. Turkish people believe that in case of need, the U.S. will abandon Turkey and even work with Turkey's enemies. America's abandonment of Turkey during the Cyprus problem in the 1960s and its discussion of Armenian resolutions while the Armenian terrorist group ASALA was carrying out its attacks is still fresh in the Turkish consciousness.³⁶ However, the main doubt stems from the idea that the U.S. pursues policies against Turkey's unity and integrity. The U.S. acting in tandem with the Iraqi Kurds during the Iraq War in 2003 and afterwards, and handcuffing and putting hoods on Turkish soldiers' heads drew a frightening picture in Turkish people's minds about what an ally could do. Even worse, anti-Americanism has become an industry in Turkey, deepening and mainstreaming such fears. The popular TV series *The Valley of the Wolves* and the book *Metal Storm* have created an image of Turkey and the U.S. confronting each other.

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In fact, Turkish people do not have a particular attitude towards neither the American public nor its values. They are not interested in America but are concerned about its policies. Positive responses have been observed in the Turkish public when some positive steps are taken. For example, Turkish people appreciated the American collaboration in capturing the PKK terrorist group's leader Abdullah Öcalan. We can thus define the Turkish distrust of the United States in Katzenstein and Keohane's 'moderate distrust' category. Overall, the Turkish public wishes to see the U.S. taking more positive steps.

Table 3. Implications of Negative Views for Predispositions, Depending on Openness to New Information and Attribution

Openness to new information	Attribution: Essential	Attribution: Situational
Low	Predisposition: bias (closed minded)	---
Medium	Predisposition: strong distrust ("Show me you are good")	Predisposition: moderate distrust ("Show me you will behave well here")
High	---	No predisposition: opinion

Source: Peter S. Katzenstein & Robert Keohane, "Anti Americanism in World Politics", Cornell University Press, 2007

This proves that the problem is not unsolvable. Having in mind that the U.S.' image improved in 2007 when President Bush declared the PKK as common enemy, this issue, as an underlying reason for the trust problem, is of significant importance for the normalization of relations. The U.S. has to convince Turkish public that it will not adopt policies that will jeopardize Turkey's security interests. Until the U.S. takes more concrete steps towards this, suspicions will remain high.

According to Füsün Türkmen, Turkish leaders also have to explain the importance of good relations with the U.S. to the Turkish public. As Turkey does not hesitate to act independently when its interests contradict those of the U.S., it should also be open to cooperation with the U.S. when its interests ask for it. In such situations, the cooperation should be explained to the public and cooperation should be carried out in a transparent way. This approach will actively undermine conspiracy theories that draw an image of Turkey making concessions to the U.S. behind the closed doors.

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2) New Dynamics in Elite Relations

Elites have an important responsibility to speak factually and not to mislead the publics with conspiracy theories. In order to avoid misleading the public and conspiracy policies, the Turkish elites having sound information about the U.S., bear an important responsibility. A transformation and an expansion are noticeable in inter-elite communication. While in the 1990's, communication between elites was security-oriented, in the present day a pluralistic communication is established through civilians and think-tanks. This new situation not only enables the Turkish elites to analyze the U.S. by relying on more solid information but also provides a greater sphere of interaction for the U.S.

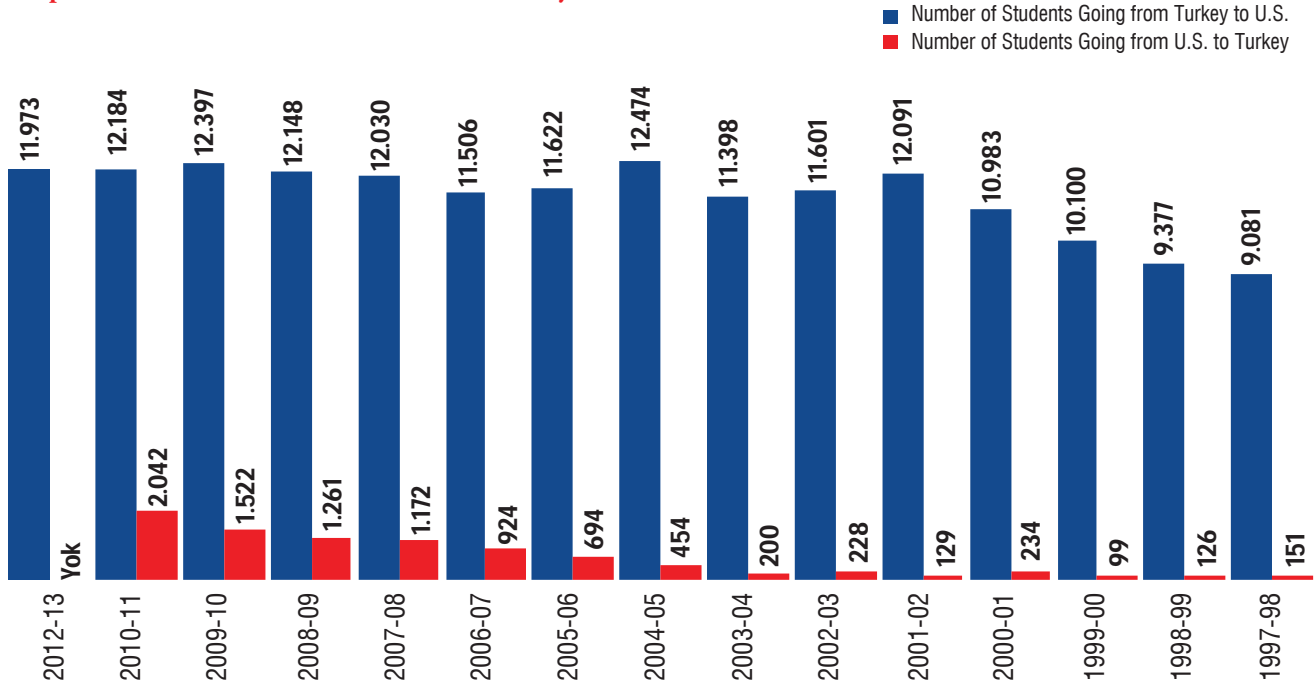
a) Educational Interactions

In terms of cultural relations, the most striking opportunity for interaction is in Turkish students studying in America and vice versa. The figures reveal that almost each year 12,000 Turkish students go to the U.S. In 2012, Turkey sent the 10th highest number of students to the U.S.. The fact that more than half of these students are post-graduates offers high potential for improving Turkey's image in the U.S. academia.

Graduates who stay in the U.S. to teach at universities continue their interaction with American students and academics, and after returning to Turkey share their experiences with the Turkish academia. The same is also true for American students who come to Turkey, a trend which has seen significant growth since 2004.

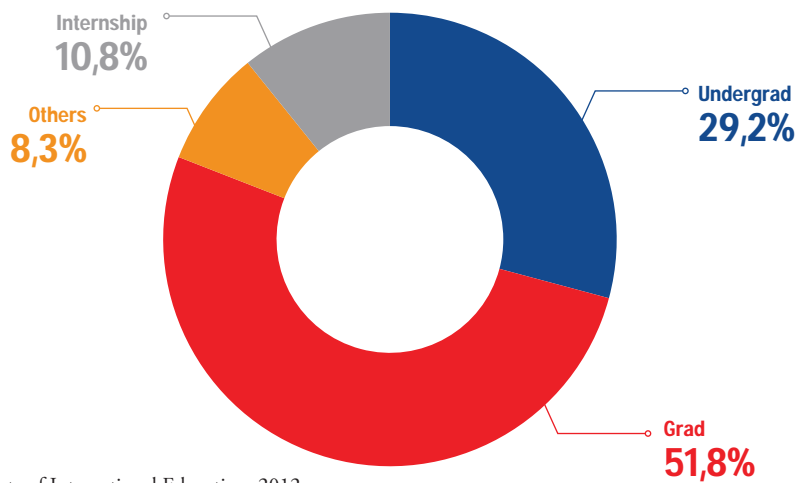
In addition, there are programs enhancing interactions at the professional level. The Young Turks–Young Americans, the Voluntary Visitors Program, the International Visitor Leadership Program, the Edward R. Murrow Program for International Journalists, and other similar programs promote interaction by bringing together the media, academics, bureaucrats, and other members of civil society. While some of the programs only facilitate visits from Turkey to the U.S., others facilitate interaction by bringing people together from both countries and acting as platforms for further cooperation in projects.

Graph 13. Student Traffic Between U.S. And Turkey



Source: Institute of International Education

Graph 14. Degree of Turkish Students Studying in U.S.



Source: Institute of International Education, 2012

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 The growing number of think tanks in Turkey has not only opened new channels for Turkey to express itself but has also enabled more civil society communication. In addition to think-tanks' activities in Turkey, think-tanks opening offices in the U.S. have created an important platform for Turkey.

b) Think-Tanks

The growing number of think tanks in Turkey has not only opened new channels for Turkey to express itself but has also enabled more civil society communication. In addition to think-tanks' activities in Turkey, think-tanks opening offices in the U.S. have created an important platform for Turkey.³⁷ These organizations take discussions into a wider frame and also open them up to the general Turkish and American publics.

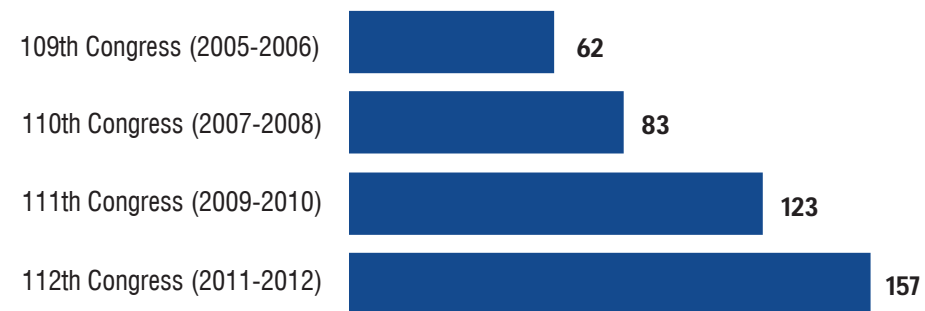
The following scene can illuminate the impact think-tanks can have in foreign policy discussions. An expert from an American think-tank close to the U.S. administration discusses the ideas of a senior Turkish statesman in a meeting of another think-tank in Turkey. This is an important scene to prove the efficiency of platforms set by Turkish think tanks and also their potential impact. Similar scenes may take place every day in American think tanks, yet it was hard to talk about such phenomenon in Turkey ten years ago.

c) Lobbying Activities

Finally, there have been significant developments in the lobbying activities of Turkish-Americans in Washington. Political Action Committees (PAC), namely the Turkish Coalition USA PAC (TC-USA PAC), TC-New Jersey PAC, TC-California PAC, TC-Midwest PAC, and the Turkish PAC in Texas were all founded by Turkish-Americans and they have been active in election campaigns by, for example, supporting 130 candidates with over \$305,000. Notably, 80% of these candidates were successful in their elections.³⁸

Furthermore, an independent non-profit organization, the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA) has brought nearly 150 members of Congress to Turkey since 2009. The TCA thus sponsored the fourth highest number of congressional trips in 2012, following the Israel Education Foundation, the Aspen Institute, and the Congressional Institute.³⁹ Moreover, thanks to the actions well suited to the U.S. domestic political conditions and dynamics, there has also been significant growth in Congress's Turkish Caucus members so much that it has become the second in size.

Graph 15. Causus Membership of Turkey (From 109th to the 112th Congress)



Source: Turkish Coalition of America

Consequently, there has been a major increase in Congressional resolutions favoring Turkey. Though resolutions against Turkey have significantly decreased, they have not yet fallen to the desired level. However, considering that Turkish-Americans came late to lobbying, these developments can still be seen as a major success.

3

CONCLUSION

Turkey has to consider the actors in U.S. domestic politics other than the administration while setting policies toward the U.S. Turkey should also take into account the internal dynamics of U.S. domestic politics and aim to develop economic and social dimensions of the relationships with the United States.

Ensuring that these actors support Turkey's interests or at least don't obstruct them will allow these approaches to be implemented as U.S. policies in favor of Turkey. That is why it would be more effective to try to get the support of these actors directly instead of expecting the President to ignore them or asking him to convince them on his own. It is equally important to understand the approach of the American people and Congress and also to give them the right messages through the right channels. Turkey is still in the early stages of making friends in Congress, which requires serious effort. On the other hand, establishing an institutionalized communication between Turkey and the U.S. is critical to realizing their common goals.

Today, bilateral relations are still attached to security and fluctuations in such cooperation are unavoidable. Economic and social interactions have to be enhanced in order to take these relations to a steadier basis. In this regard, TTIP would provide a great opportunity if Turkey can be a part of it. Such an economic boost could trigger major positive changes in relations between the two countries. However, if Turkey were excluded, the impact on the Turkish economy would be equally harmful.

As in educational activities, the U.S. has the lead for programs targeting elites. Turkey has to increase its share of programs. Finally, Turkey needs to better define its values in foreign policy in relation to the U.S. and apply these values to the long-term common policies of Turkey and the United States.

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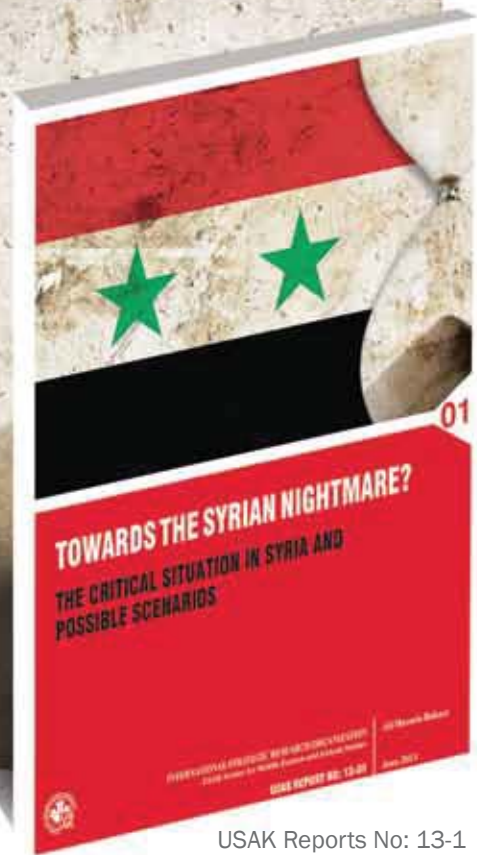
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