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Structure of Turkey-USA Bilateral Relations and Analysis of Factors Affecting Bilateral Relations

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Structure of Turkey-USA Bilateral Relations and Analysis of Factors Affecting Bilateral
Relations

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on understanding and explaining the factors affecting Turkey-US bilateral relations, which have been on a fluctuating course in recent years. Turkish foreign policy had a Western-centric foreign policy approach in line with Turkey's westernization goal in previous years. However, Turkish foreign policy has undergone a major change since it became clear that the long-lasting European Union accession process would not reach a result. Therefore, Turkey's new foreign policy, which is not Western oriented and closely associated with the former Ottoman Empire geography, has also affected the bilateral relations between Turkey and the United States.

The most important factor affecting Turkey-US bilateral relations is common interests. The study examines how bilateral relations are maintained when two countries share common interests and what consequences this may have if the two countries have different interests. As a result, the international institutions of which the two countries are members have not been sufficient to change the interest-oriented structure of bilateral relations.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Turkish-American bilateral relations dates back to the end of the 18th century. Despite the geographical distance of the two countries, bilateral relations were carried out around the arms trade until the end of the First World War. (Gencer, 2008) However, Turkish-American relations gained momentum after the Second World War. As a result of the Second World War, Turkey joined the US-led Western camp to deal with the threat of the Soviet Union.

After the Truman Doctrine promulgated in 1947 and Turkey joined NATO in 1952, significant progress made between the two countries in the areas of political, economic, and military cooperation. Furthermore, during the Cold War, Turkey's foreign policy decisions were shaped by the direct or indirect influence of the United States. Even today, the most important agenda of Turkish foreign policy, such as the Cyprus Problem, the Syrian Civil War, Northern Iraq, and the July 15 coup, attempt are considered within the framework of relations with the United States.

It would not be wrong to say that the institutional basis of Turkey-US bilateral relations is the NATO partnership. Although Turkey joined organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank as part of the Western camp after the Second World War, NATO has always been the main element of bilateral relations. The main reason for this situation is that Turkey is located at the intersection of Europe, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. Furthermore, Turkey, which formed the southeastern borders of NATO during the Cold War, became one of NATO's major countries

during this period thanks to its geopolitical importance. However, it could be argued that Turkey-US bilateral relations during the Cold War period were in a one-sided structure.

Turkey did not pursue a foreign policy independent of the United States during the early stage of the Cold War. In accordance with the definition of Bandwagoning, Turkey relied on the US, the leader of the Western camp, to ensure its security, and followed it. Furthermore, although Turkey tried to pursue independent policies on issues such as Cyprus in the 60s and 70s, it remained under the influence of NATO until the end of the Cold War. (Erhan, 2001)

Some people argued that the lobbying activities that took place in the United States have been effective in the course of Turkey-US relations sometimes. These lobbying activities organized against by Armenian groups most of the time. Besides, the Jewish lobby has taken a stance against Turkey recently. While the influence of lobbying activities was limited when Turkey-US relations were on a good course, the influence of lobbying activities increased during the periods of bad relations, and lobbying activities were used as a pressure factor on Turkey. In this context, it can be argued that the lobbying activities that take place due to the domestic political atmosphere of the United States have an effect on the foreign policy of the United States and in this context, its relations with Turkey. (Ari, 2005)

In the new world formed by the end of the Cold War, some have claimed that Turkey's importance has diminished. In this context, some scholars argued that Turkey's importance has decreased within the security concept of the West, which has survived the threat of the Soviet Union. (Atmaca, 2014) However, thanks to the new requirements created by the new global world order after the Cold War, Turkey's importance increased in the Western alliance. Turkey's geopolitical position is critical to combating the next generation of threats facing the modern world, such as energy, security, counterterrorism, and human trafficking.

Turkey also acted with the United States in the 90s, supported the United States in the first Gulf War, Furthermore, Turkey contributed militarily to the formation of which called as the Hammer Force, which was created to protect the Kurdish population in the north of Iraq from attacks by Saddam Hussein.

In this context, while Turkey was trying to modernize and democratize, it thought that this would only happen with developing good relations with the EU and the United States. Turkey liberalized its economy throughout the 1980s and 1990s and harmonized its laws with European states in order to become a full member of the EU. Furthermore, Turkey has not developed close relations with Middle Eastern countries as a political preference for many years and has not been involved in the problems between these countries with the idea that it may affect itself. (Bilgin, 2017). Following a Western-oriented foreign policy throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Turkey's top priority goal was to become a member of the European Union. Turkey believed that it could become a developed country only through this way, and it has implemented this policy for many years. Consequently, Turkey's candidate country status to the European Union politically and its membership in NATO militarily formed the basis of Turkey's institutional relations with the Western hemisphere.

The September 11 attacks caused a significant change in US foreign policy. Furthermore, the United States declared the Bush Doctrine as a result of the September 11 attacks. Along with the Bush Doctrine, the United States adopted the pre-emptive strikes policy to eliminate potential threats against it. Moreover, the effects of the pre-emptive strike doctrine implemented with the Afghanistan war and then the Iraq war on the Middle East continue even today. In this respect, George W Bush-era United States foreign policy could be shown as an example of offensive realism. (Yordan, 2006) Hence, in order to establish the full meaning of American hegemony in

the post-Cold War unipolar order, the Bush administration did not hesitate to take measures against countries it considered a threat to the US. The Iraq invasion and sanctions against Iran could be considered within this framework.

During this period, the Bush administration announced the Greater Middle East project with the aim of redesigning the Middle East and showed Turkey as an example of the Middle East countries, which it wants to be governed by moderate Muslims with its secular and democratic structure.

In 2002, Erdogan's administration came to power in Turkey, and as a result, Turkey adopted a new foreign policy approach that was different from its usual practices. Furthermore, Turkey, whose relations with the European Union have deteriorated over time, has started to take a close interest in the Middle East Region and has started to carry out a foreign policy independent of the West.

When taken into consideration in Turkish-American relations, it is seen that the characteristics of the relations change over time. During its strengthening period, Turkey pursues independent foreign policy than NATO and the United States. For instance, Turkey has adopted a foreign policy approach different from the United States in the Syrian Civil War. Moreover, Turkey has been reluctant to impose sanctions against Iran and has sought to mediate Iran to reconcile with Western states. In addition, Russia uses the Middle East and China as a counterbalance to Western states.

Turkey has always shown great importance to its relations with the United States in its foreign policymaking process. Furthermore, the policies of the United States towards Turkey have been one of the first indicators to be looked at when Turkey shaping its Foreign Policy. Therefore,

Turkish policymakers, aiming to adapt to the newly established world order after the Cold War, have aimed not to be excluded, as they have been for decades, by acting together with the United States. (Oran, 2010)

By the 2000s, it is possible to say that the Turkish economy was much stronger than in previous periods. The liberalization process in the Turkish economy, which started in 1980 with the encouragement of the USA and IMF assistance, was the most significant factor in the creation of a growing Turkish economy that originated from exports. Therefore, Turkey strives to maintain its position in the post-cold war economic order by improving its relations with the US and the EU. (Sayari, 2000)

Moreover, Turkey, needs new modern weapons as a result of new threat perceptions in the Middle East Region, realizes that these weapons would not be as easily accessible as they were during the Cold War period. In this context, Turkey continues to adapt to the requirements of the new liberal global system by making democratic reforms, while at the same time developing foreign policy practices consistent with the different perspectives of each different American administration. (Kurtbag, 2015) Nowadays, although Turkey has purchased weapons systems from countries such as Russia, the main reason for this situation has been that the United States does not want to sell these weapons systems to Turkey. For instance, Turkey wanted to acquire the American-made Patriot air defense systems before purchasing the Russian S-400 missile defense systems. However, the American Congress did not approve arms sales to Turkey in 2015. (Hurriyet, 2015)

Since Turkish foreign policy was determined on an American axis for a long time after the Second World War, relations with America in Turkish foreign policy have a much more important dimension than relations with Turkey in US foreign policy. In this respect, while world politics

has undergone a major transformation as a result of events such as the end of the Cold War, the Gulf War, and the September 11 attacks, it is not impossible for the Turkish foreign policy not to be affected by this change.

Methodology

This study applied process tracing, case study and historical analysis to understand the general course of Turkey-USA relations. Furthermore, in the study, different conditions between different periods were examined comparatively. The study was conducted using qualitative research methods. In addition, surveys conducted by some research companies, numerical data disclosed by government agencies, and datasets from non-governmental organizations such as Freedom House were used in the research.

Scope of Study

The scope of this study is limited to the course of Turkey-US relations that have taken place since 2000. Furthermore, in this study, the problems affecting Turkey and US relations during the different US presidents will be examined. In this context, the research will investigate how consequential international institutions are in Turkey's relations with the United States.

It will be examined how effective the interests of the two states are in the course of bilateral relations, and whether Turkey's democratic standards are a determining factor in the relations for the United States. During the research, the answer to the question, “Why the bilateral relations between Turkey and the United States are taking a good or bad course in different periods?”, will be sought.

CHAPTER 1: EXAMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES ON THE CONCEPT OF ALLIES

Introduction

Alliances in international relations theories have a prominent place. States are allied with each other to realize their various aims; however, power and security are the most common of these objectives. In the later stages of the study, the perspective of realism, liberalism, and constructivism theories on the concept of alliance will be examined comparatively. However, it is crucial to understand the definition of the alliance concept in international relations before proceeding to this comparative study.

While the concept of alliance has multiple meanings, this study will focus on the state-centered perspective. Although non-state actors are becoming increasingly important in the international relations discipline, the states are the still most determining factors in the discipline. Furthermore, the state-based point of view is more valid in this study because Turkey and the United States' alliances are the main focus of the study.

When the definition of alliances is taken into consideration, it is seen that many scholars use different purposes and shapes to make sense of the concept of the alliance. The main reason for this is that the international relations theories have different perspectives on the purpose of alliances and the formation of alliances. According to Realist theory, alliances are formed by taking the concept of power into the center. Stephan Walt, while defining alliances, states that with the effect of the neo-realist approach, in addition to the concept of power, security is another important

element that leads states to form alliances. (Walt, 2007) Liberal international relations theorists have considered the alliances to be useful tools to improve cooperation. Furthermore, Constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of concepts such as culture and identity in the formation of alliances.

Realism

Realist theory has gained importance in the international relations discipline in the post-World War II period. The failure of the idealist theory, which prevailed during the period between the first and Second World War, paved the way for realism to dominate international relations as the dominant theory. (Behr & Heath, 2009)

Realism, which acts with the assumption that international relations take place on an anarchic structure, sees the state as the most important actor in international relations. Therefore, one of the most important assumptions of realism, expressed by Morgenthau, (Morgenthau, 1973) is that the international order does not recognize any higher authority, which means that it is an anarchic structure.

According to realists, who consider anarchy as the most important feature of the international system, the most important priority of the states is survival. In this respect, the formation of an alliance by the states and the participation of the states in the existing alliance takes place within this framework. While the primary purpose of states is to survive, their second priority is power and interest maximization. The realists also claim that the participation of states in alliances is entirely based on these motives. (Ozluk, 2017) While powerless states enter alliances which are under the auspices of the great states, the main reason for this is that another great power threatens their existence. In addition, the great powers want to expand their domain by alliance

with the smaller states. From this point of view, when alliances are considered with a realist approach, there is an interest-based formation within the anarchic structure of international relations. Therefore, according to realists, power and security are the two significant motivations that states have for forming an alliance.

In this respect, some consequences can occur because of the state's entry into the alliances. First, a weak state could gain the title of Bandwagoning country by entering the alliance under a great power. (Schweller, 1994) The state, which wants to guarantee its survival, must determine its foreign policy in line with the direction of the great power, which is the leader of the alliance. (Ozluk, 2017) This situation, which frequently encountered during the Cold War years, could be likened to being a colonial tie beyond establishing an alliance. As a matter of fact, the state, which cannot afford its survival, submits all its foreign policy preferences to a great power and join in under its protection umbrella. When the Turkish-American relations considered, the period between 1945-1960 could evaluated under this category.

Secondly, states may seek to form alliances to balance. The balancing concept takes up a large area, especially in the neo-realist theory. In this context, according to Kenneth Waltz, one of the theorists of the balance of power concept, the main purpose of balancing is to support the weak side to prevent the great power who is trying to become a hegemon. (Waltz, 2010) The general views of Waltz are considered under the framework of defensive realism, which is why his descriptions about alliances are in this direction. On the other hand, neo-realist Randall Schweller, makes a definition that gives more importance to military force in balancing. According to him, balancing is a kind of protection mechanism, which contains mostly military meanings, and which a state does against another state or alliance. (Schweller, 1994) In this way, the balancing state can resist the military or political power of the country it perceives as a threat. In other words,

Schweller says that balancing is a temporary activity and that balancing will be significant only in periods when the perception of threat is felt at the highest level. (Ozlu, 2017)

Neo-Realist scholars approach the concept of balancing in two separate aspects as offensive realism and defensive realism. For instance, offensive realists such as Mearsheimer (2001) claim that states tend to build their regional hegemonies regardless of their power and capacity. Furthermore, Mearsheimer argues that only regional hegemonies are possible. Water prevents states from becoming global hegemonies. Hence, they criticize Waltz's ideas about balancing and argue that the defensive realist view he draws constitutes a status quo rather than a balancing act. (Mearsheimer, 2002)

According to Waltz (2010), states are making alliances within the international system to protect their existence. In this respect, the main purpose of the balance of power is to guarantee the existence of states. The criticisms of Mearsheimer, one of the most prominent scholars of the offensive realism, about the alliance and the balance of power in the defensive realism, are emerging in this context. Mearsheimer claims that, if Waltz's approach is valid, states do not need to maximize their power. If Waltz is right, there is no need for states to make an effort to maximize their power. Great powers will already make the necessary arrangements to keep the system in balance. (Ozlu, 2017) In this respect, Mearsheimer, has been critical of Waltz's ideas that care about units in the international system. According to him, power maximization is the fundamental component that determines the anarchic structure of the international system. However, Waltz puts greater emphasis on balancing than necessary. (Mearsheimer, 2009)

There have been criticisms against the power-based approach to the reasons for countries to form alliances; some scholars argue that the balance of power has lost its validity over time. The concept of the balance of threat has emerged as a result of criticism of the balance of power.

In this context, Stephen Walt (2007) updated the theory that balancing applies against power and claiming that balancing apply against threat rather than power.

Overall, realist theorists have failed to reach a consensus on why states make alliances on the anarchic structure of international relations. The approach that emerged together with Neo-realism and claimed that the structure of the system put states in search of power and security has also limited the aims of alliances formed by states in an anarchic structure to the concepts of power and security in general.

Liberalism

Liberal international relations theorists have considered the alliances to be useful tools to improve cooperation. As a result of the criticism of realism based on the liberal theory, with the effects of the accelerating globalization in the 1980s, the neo-liberal perspective has begun to rise to an important position in world politics. With the neo-liberal view, co-operation has been proposed as a solution while seeking solutions to global problems in state-centered global politics. This understanding, which promotes cooperation rather than conflict, promotes world peace and security rather than war. (Keohane, 2012) Neo-liberal theory also referred to as liberal institutionalism because scholars in the theory give great importance to alliances and institutions.

Leading scholars of the neo-liberal theory are, Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye. The main focus of neoliberal scholars is the cause and effect relationships that affect the functioning of the system.

When world politics is observed during the period when neo-liberal theory emerged, it is understood that developed economies such as Japan and Germany have come to the fore as rival to the US economy, which is defined as hegemon power. (Ermagan & Karci, 2017) The major

difference between neoliberalism and liberalism is that the international system operates through a network of international regimes, not through the rule of a hegemonic state. (Ermagan & Karci, 2017) Neo-liberalism, unlike realism, says that war is preventable. Furthermore, Neo-liberal scholars argue, the great devastation brought by the war actually causes even the winners of the war to suffer great losses. (Starr, 2007) Although the United Kingdom, after the Second World War or the US after the Iraq War, was the winning side of the war, they essentially lost power. In this context, neo-liberals emphasize the structure of the system and say that human nature is good, however the irregularity in the international system cause wars. Therefore, according to neoliberals, wars can be prevented by cooperation with alliances.

It is here that this feature causes neoliberalism to take the pseudonym of neo-institutionalism. Neo-liberals, who attach importance to institutionalization for the continuation of cooperation, also claimed that the international community should establish courts with international jurisdiction power. Neoliberal scholars state that the creation of interdependence would make states more easily convinced of cooperation. They claim as in the economy, creating interdependence in international relations will help to ensure global security.

With the theory of interdependence developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1996), neoliberals tried to prevent unit-level irregularity from having a destructive effect on the overall system. Furthermore, Neoliberals say that states do not make politics only in order to maximize their interests. Although some states try to maximize their interests, Keohane and Nye believe that interdependence will prevent policies aimed at maximizing interest. This system, in which states cooperate mutually with consent, has given great importance to concepts such as international organizations and international law. Keohane and Nye argue that states will act rationally and

focus on the absolute gains they will gain in the general framework rather than maximizing their short-term interests. (Keohane & Nye, 1996)

Neo-liberals, like realist scholars, argue that the state is the main actor in the international system. However, the end of the Cold War and the changing world order affected the theory of international relations as well as every other field. Neoliberalism, which gained importance after 1980, acknowledge that there were non-state actors in the international system in accordance with the conditions of the period. In this context, in addition to states, individuals, international organizations, transnational NGOs, multinational corporations, and pressure groups are important elements in global functioning. (Ermagan & Karci, 2017)

Overall, although neo-liberals consider states as the main actors of the international system, they argue that states are not egoist actors. Therefore, they point out that through states whose only purpose is not the maximization of interest, opportunities for co-operation can be improved and that war can be prevented. Hence, International organizations established by mutual consent play a critical role in the development of cooperation between states.

Constructivism

Constructivism has started to gain importance in the international relations discipline as a new theoretical approach after the 1980s due to the influence of the changing political environment. (Ari & Kiran, 2011)

Constructivism argues the materialist approach of realist thinking, which focuses on military power and economic capacity, is not enough to explain the world. Thus, Constructivists say that the world contains material elements; however, the most crucial factor in international relations is the social phenomenon. Therefore, Constructivists acknowledge that the world contains

material elements; however, for them, the most important factor in international relations is the social phenomenon. In this context, social constructors state that the elements that influence the thoughts and beliefs of the actors in international relations should be given importance. (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013)

As the starting point of the constructionism, there is the idea that people are a social entity and that the social relations they establish are more important than anything else. The first emergence of Constructivism as a theory of international relations was thanks to Nicholas Onuf's study *With World of Our Making*. (1989) Furthermore, *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999), written by Alexander Wendt, is regarded as one of the most important sources of social constructivism.

According to Wendt, while states form alliances, identity and interests are the main elements of relations. (Wendt, 1999) Wendt rejects the neo-realist understanding based on the anarchic nature of international relations and argues that states should self-sufficient. Wendt argues that the identities and interests of the states are forms during the period when the states into relationships. Furthermore, states do not engage in bilateral relations knowing what they want, aware of their interests and identities, as the neorealist theory asserts. However, while neo-realists and constructivists agree that the state's primary goal is survival, they think differently about how states can achieve this. (Wendt, 1999) Wendt claims that states decide to develop policies for survival based on the interaction created by the social relationships they engage in. In this context, states can choose to maximize their power, or they can go to cooperation. As a result, this is an outcome determined only by the identity and interests of the states. (Ari & Kiran, 2011)

According to Wendt (1999), the vertical anarchic structure of the international system does not have consequences that require states to compete with each other. In this context, Wendt

rejected the neorealist theory, which claims that anarchy is the determining factor of the system. (Ari & Kiran, 2011)

In addition to Wendt, Peter Katzenstein and Friedrich V. Kratochwil are also important constructivist theorists. In his book *The Culture of National Security* (1996) Peter Katzenstein, discusses how culture, identity and norms can establish international security. According to him, culture and identity are two major factors in determining national interests for states. Friedrich V. Kratochwil, in his work *Rules, Norms and Decision* (1999), claims that allegiance to international institutions could jeopardize the continuation of the international system. (Ari and Kiran, 2011)

According to the constructivist theory, what is decisive for the continuation of the alliance relationship of states is the interaction of states with each other in this process. Therefore, social concepts such as identity will be one of the factors determining the direction of the relationship alongside concepts such as interest.

Conclusion

The Realist paradigm says that the main goal of states is to survive, and that states are maximizing their power in order to achieve this. In this context, realists say that states have formed alliances in order to realize their own interests and ensure their security. The Liberals, on the other hand, claimed that cooperation through international organizations would make the world a safer place. According to the neoliberals, the international order created through cooperation does not require power and interest maximization; therefore, cooperation could prevent war. In this way, states can create institutional structures and live in a more secure and prosperous. Constructivists argue that social interaction, identity, and culture are more prominent factors in international relations than power and interest maximization.

Turkey's NATO membership determines the overall framework of Turkey-US bilateral relations. The two countries have had the same foreign policy approach as strategic allies for a long time. However, the diverging threat perception and different interests have led the two states to make different foreign policy choices. Although there are many international institutions to which the two countries affiliate, this situation has not changed.

CHAPTER 2: POST-COLD WAR TRANSFORMATION OF THE STRUCTURE OF TURKEY-US BILATERAL RELATIONS

Introduction

Every time the new American president takes office, the topics underlying the Turkey-US relations have undergone several changes. For instance, Clinton's presidency is important in terms of establishing a new world order after the cold war. The United States, which emerged from the Cold War as the absolute winner of the war, has also undergone some changes in the aims of the bilateral relations it established after the Cold War.

Furthermore, some scholars argued that Turkey's geostrategic importance also decreased after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Throughout the Cold War, Turkey protected NATO's southeastern borders against the Soviet threat. However, in the post-Soviet era, Turkey's main geopolitical importance was reduced to its borders with the Middle East. In the post-Cold War era, U.S. foreign policy mostly focused on the Middle East. In this context, the US, which wants to bring a new order to the Middle East, has developed a new Middle East strategy and shaped it around three topics. Arab-Israeli peace, the encircling weakening of Iraq and Iran, which America sees as potential threats, and the making of economic reforms that support economic liberalization in the region. (Altunisik, 2009) Turkey has shared many common values such as promoting democracy, human right, and fight against terrorism with the United States during the 20th century. The bilateral relations built by these values entered the 21st century very strongly.

Turkey-United States Relations During Clinton Presidency

The Clinton administration had seen that Turkey is the country that can help it the most in implementing its new strategies in the Middle East. In this respect, Turkey, which has a developed democratic culture and functional elections, has had good bilateral relations with all the actors in the Middle East at the time. For instance, as a result of this situation actors in the Middle East were considering Turkey as a mediator in the Arab-Israeli peace. However, in the late 1990s, the Clinton administration's failures in Middle East policy began to emerge.

The first failure observations were seen in the transition phase to a liberal economy. In the transition to a liberal economy, the group that benefited the most from the liberated political environment were the political Islamists. In addition, the interruption of the Arab-Israeli peace talks with the intensification of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in 2000 caused the second pillar of the Clinton administration's Middle East policy to fail. (Altunisik, 2009) Moreover, the U.S. strategies to contain Iraq and Iran began to be widely criticized by its European partners in the early 2000s. Turkey, on the other hand, has reached an agreement with the Iranian government to build a natural gas pipeline in a manner contrary to the policies of the Clinton administration. Even though the Clinton era is seen as one of the brightest periods for the US, it is considered to be largely unsuccessful in terms of Middle East policies. (Kahraman, 2011)

President Clinton's visit to Turkey in November 1999 is a major turning point in the history of Turkey-USA bilateral relations. 1999 was a year of important events that took place in Turkey. As a result of the democratic reforms carried out in line with the goal of EU membership, Turkey has started to be classified as a free and/or semi-free country by many independent evaluation institutions. Also important events for Turkey in 1999 are the two devastating earthquakes experienced by the country. President Clinton's visit to Turkey occurred just after the second

earthquake in November 1999. The Turkish public widely welcomed Clinton's visits to the earthquake sites. As a result of this visit Anti-Americanism in Turkey, which has been at high rates for a long time, declined after this historic visit. Thus, President Clinton's speech at the Turkish Parliament during his visit is an attribute that determines the framework of Turkey-US relations. Furthermore, this speech is also important to see Turkey's place in the post-Cold War world order according to the U.S. approach. (Aliriza & Aras, 2012) President Clinton praises Turkey's democratic and secular structure mentioned in his speech. President Clinton emphasized Turkey's role in the containment of Iran and Iraq and emphasized that the support of Turkey in the Middle East region. Besides, he said Turkey's support is vital for US foreign policy in the Middle East. President Clinton stated that Turkey is the only Muslim majority country in the Western alliance and that Turkey's Islamic and Western status makes Turkey important. (Lacey, 1999)

As can be seen, the change of the international system in the post-Soviet period resulted in the emergence of different characteristics of the actors in the system. For instance, while it was not the most important feature of Turkey to be a Muslim nation before, Turkey was one of the doors of the US opening up to the Middle East as part of the Muslim and Western alliance in the post-Cold War period. Systematic changes and new priorities have shaped the policies of countries towards each other.

Overall, under the Clinton administration, U.S. foreign policy has been actively engaged in world problems as a result of U.S. political and military leadership. Furthermore, during Clinton's presidency, Turkey and the United States cooperated in several international operations, such as the Kosovo operation. Turkey's proximity to the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East, as well as its membership in NATO, have resulted in Turkey becoming the most active partner of the United States in the region. During this period, Turkey has also received great

support from the United States regarding EU membership. The Clinton administration, considering that the commitment to international institutions would make international relations more peaceful, believed that Turkey's accession to the EU would indirectly strengthen the bilateral relations between the United States and Turkey. As a result, Turkey was accepted as a candidate country for the EU in 1999. In this case, President Clinton's lobbying efforts to EU leaders for Turkey have been critical in making this decision. (Cakir, 2015)

Conclusion

With the Clinton period, bilateral relations adapted to the conditions of the post-Cold War period. Furthermore, two countries pursued common policies in the region in line with the definition of strategic partnership. (Oran, 2012) However, when the Turkish foreign policy of the period is analyzed, it is seen that the policies applied in all areas except that Turkey's sole goal is EU membership were influenced by the wishes and interests of the United States. For instance, the tension between Turkey and Greece is a clear manifestation of this situation. In 1996, Greece unilaterally changed its maritime border with Turkey, and the two countries were on the brink of war. Furthermore, there has been no conflict, thanks to the mediation efforts of the United States. However, this problem is still unsolved. (Oran, 2012) Turkey thought that its dispute with a NATO and EU member state would disrupt its relations with the United States and the EU, as a result this issue was shelved without any solution. Greece, on the other hand, continued to use the new maritime borders from that date. As can be seen, Turkish foreign policy acts in line with the suggestions of the United States when Turkey-US relations are on a good course. As a result, the factors determining the course of bilateral relations during this period were the foreign policy preferences of the United States and the alignment of Turkey with these preferences.

CHAPTER 3: PRESIDENT BUSH ERA AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

Introduction

Although the relations between the two countries after each newly elected American President have undergone various changes, the President Bush period has brought about unprecedented changes in bilateral relations.

In the first days after President Bush elected, he adopted a policy that gave priority to domestic politics. However, the Bush administration, which took office in January 2001, was considering the Clinton administration's Middle East policy as an example of failure. (Gregg, 2017)

According to our assessment, at different periods in American foreign policy, arguments of different theories have acknowledged as the prevailing view. For instance, The Clinton period can be considered an idealistic period due to institutionalization and peace efforts. Even if military power was used in various events during this period, the search for the participation of international institutions in the solution of problems is an excellent example for an idealistic period. However, as a result of the 9/11 attacks, within the framework of what we know as the Bush Doctrine, the new American administration demonstrated an example of offensive realism. This situation has affected Turkish-American relations as well as affecting the political atmosphere around the world.

Turkey-United States Relations During George W. Bush Presidency

Bush Doctrine

The terrorist attacks that took place in the United States on September 11, 2001, brought about a rupture as important as the end of the cold war for world politics. As a result of these terrorist attacks that resulted in the deaths of nearly three thousand innocent civilians, American foreign policy has also changed dramatically. As a result of these attacks, the American public felt a sense of insecurity and vulnerability that they could not handle it for a long time. These feelings of the American public have made it easier for the Bush administration to adopt a foreign policy approach that calls the war on terror which is based on the unilateral use of force. (Jones, 2019)

These preferences of the George Bush administration had virtually eliminated the implementation of the concepts of democratic peace and international justice that the Clinton administration, which was the administration before him, had advocated for many years. According to the principles of this new policy, if the aim was to fight terrorism, there was no obstacle to the use of military force. In this context, the biggest enemy declared by the Bush administration to the world is international terrorism. (Jones, 2019) When the policies of the Bush administration in the fight against international terrorism are examined, the fight against communism during the Cold War period comes to mind. Therefore, this new concept of security, which called the Bush Doctrine, could be understood as a theoretical manifesto for the establishment of mono-center hegemonic stability after the Cold War.

When taking a closer look at the Bush Doctrine, which was published in November 2002, it will be clearer how the new US foreign policy principles are shaped. As a result of the September 11 attacks, the world public opinion was largely supporting the United States in the fight against

terrorism. This pro-American atmosphere has been a facilitator for the implementation of the Bush Doctrine, which will bring about a great debate in the future.

The Bush Doctrine is based on two main concepts. The first is unilateralism, and the other is the use of the pre-emptive strike. Furthermore, the US administration claimed that terrorism posed a threat to the whole world and claimed that some rogue states supported terrorists. In describing the rogue states, the Bush Doctrine said that they were dictatorships that persecuted their people and that corrupt rulers stole countries' wealth. Moreover, these states do not comply with the rules of international law and develop weapons of mass destruction. According to the Bush Doctrine, these rogue states, which provide financial support to terrorist organizations on a global scale, are at war with the US and the values it represents. (Singh, 2006)

In this context, the Bush Doctrine emphasized that the structure of the enemy that threatens the United States and its values is different than in the past. The Bush Doctrine states that terrorists do not need large armies to threaten the United States. Furthermore, it argues that terrorists are organized using modern technology and are carrying out attacks on the United States. The Bush Doctrine said that the United States would maintain peace by fighting these terrorists. The United States, which pursues war against terrorists and rogue states supporting them at the global level, stated that it would not make any distinction between these two groups and would fight against both of them. (Singh, 2006)

Overall, when the Bush Doctrine and its global war strategy are examined, it is seen that it does not have an absolute definition of terrorism. Moreover, this doctrine is perceived as a war against Islam and has been criticized for a long time because it does not contain limits and time. In addition, with its preventive war strategy, the United States has accepted as its sovereign right to attack any place it perceives as a threat to itself. In this context, the preventive war strategy can

also be regarded as a clear indication of America's grand strategy, which has changed since September 11. As the only superpower in the post-Cold War world, the United States has declared that it will maintain order in its own interests by using military force, if necessary, as the world's regulatory power.

The Effects of the September 11 Attacks on Turkey-US Relations

The September 11 attacks changed the course of Turkey-U.S. relations. Turkey's geopolitical importance in the war against terrorism has once again come to the agenda. Turkey's geographical proximity to the Middle East and the fact that the United States will fight terrorism in the Middle East have increased Turkey's geopolitical importance. (Onis, 2004)

Turkey immediately after the September 11 attacks mentioned that it was with the American people and announced what it was all ready to do whatever it takes to ensuring justice. Turkey has declared its support for the US in this way clearly. Moreover, Turkey declared its support for the United States in the implementation of NATO's fifth article. (Pbs, 2002) In this respect, Turkey stated that the US planned operation in Afghanistan would be beneficial for both NATO and the peoples of the world. As part of the Afghanistan Operation, Turkey opened its airspace to the use of Allied forces and allowed its ports to be used by foreign troops. As a result of the Enduring Freedom Operation, which took place on 7 October 2001, the Taliban rule in Afghanistan got destroyed.

It can be said that the greatest support provided by Turkey to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan came after the fall of the Taliban regime. Turkey, which has sent troops to Afghanistan as part of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF), has been one of the biggest supporters of the United States and NATO in the region. Turkey has made three times the

command of the international coalition in Kabul. Furthermore, Hikmet Cetin, a former Foreign Minister of Turkey, was the most senior civilian to represent NATO in Afghanistan between 2004 and 2006. (Eksi, 2010)

Immediately after the September 11 attacks, Turkey's great support to the United States and its contributions to the Afghanistan War positively affected bilateral relations. Turkey's contribution to the Afghanistan war can be regarded as the greatest cooperation between the two allies in the field after the Korean War. However, the fact that Iraq was shown as a target for the new war after the Afghanistan War has caused Turkish public opinion to be suspicious about the USA and the goals it wants to achieve. (Eksi, 2010) The Social Democratic government, which was in power in Turkey at the time, stated that Turkey would not support the occupation of any of its neighbors by the United States. (Oran, 2010)

Turkey and the United States can cooperate through international institutions on issues where their interests do not conflict and maintain similar policies as two strategic partners. However, it seems that on issues where the two countries have different perspectives, international organizations do not help the two states choose partnership rather than their interests. Afghanistan and Iraq are two important examples of this situation.

During this period, the Bush administration launched a worldwide campaign against Saddam Hussein. This campaign, was formed within the framework of America's pre-emptive strike concept, accused the Saddam Hussein administration of supporting terrorism. Although the US has not provided enough evidence to the world public that Iraq has chemical weapons and supports terrorism, the US has not abandoned its claims. This has become a test for the pre-emptive strike and unilateralism policies of the Bush Doctrine. (Singh, 2006) One of the main reasons for

this is the Bush administration's desire to guarantee the continuation of U.S. global hegemony. (Griffiths, 2004)

Meanwhile, a general election took place in Turkey on November 2002, and Tayyip Erdogan's conservative government came to power in a way that it wasn't predicted before. Furthermore, in the statements made after the new government took office, it was emphasized that close cooperation with the US was desired. This situation was met with great pleasure by the Bush administration. Because Turkey's support for US policies was of great importance to the United States.

Turkey's geopolitical importance, as well as its Muslim identity, were an important factor for American policymakers. It was important for a Muslim-majority country like Turkey to support the US fight against terrorism. Because Turkey's support was a factor that could prevent the US administration's fight against terrorism from being presented as a Christian-Muslim war.

New Erdogan Government and Its Effect on Bilateral Relations

For many years, Turkey has made reforms to become a democratic country with strict secular laws. The main reason why Turkey is trying to build good relations with the West is the belief that cooperation with the United States and the EU will make Turkey a more democratic and economically developed country. Especially in the 1980s and 1990s, many governments from the right and left side came to power in Turkey; however, they did not stop implementing these politics. In this context, it can be argued that Turkey's relationship with the United States is implemented as a state policy and seen as a tool for democratization and enrichment of the country. (Oran, 2010)

As a result of the great economic crisis in Turkey in 2001, all the political parties that have ruled the country for the last 20 years lost the 2002 elections and were unable to send their representatives to the Parliament. In the continuation of this crisis environment, Tayyip Erdogan, who had not previously served in the administration of the country, stepped forward and was elected as a result of the 2002 elections. (Economist, 2002)

Erdogan, who has an Islamist political background, was a political figure who was anti-Western and advocated Islamism in his speeches in the 1990s. This has been a source of concern for many about the direction Turkey will go after Erdogan's election as prime minister. However, Erdogan's government, after he took office, did not insist on this issue like the former government and declared that they wanted to develop good relations with the United States. (Sontag, 2003) After winning the 2002 general elections, Tayyip Erdogan endeavored to define himself as a center-right and conservative democrat leader. (Ugur & Canefe, 2004)

Erdogan's election also coincided with the period when the US was trying to gain international support for the invasion of Iraq. Turkey's previous government's support of Iraq's territorial integrity and opposition to the invasion of Iraq had created an element of tension in Turkey's relations with the United States. However, Erdogan's government after taking office did not insist on this issue like the former government and declared that they wanted to develop good relations with the United States. (Sontag, 2003)

Turkey-US Relations Under the Influence of the 2003 Iraq War

One of the results of September 11 was the targeting of Iraq, which was then described as a rogue state like Afghanistan. Although the campaign launched by the US administration for the

invasion of Iraq did not receive the support it expects, however an operation with a preventive war within the scope of the Bush Doctrine has started to be expected by the world public opinion.

Turkey, as a neighbor country has shown a close interest in the period when the invasion of Iraq was being planned. Turkey has implemented a policy that prioritizes the territorial integrity of Iraq in the post-Saddam period for its own security. Turkey has been dealing with separatist terror attacks from northern Iraq to targeting Turkey for many years. In this context, Turkey, which sees the partition of Iraq as a threat to its own security and defends the territorial integrity of Iraq. Therefore, Turkey shapes its Iraq policy according to its perception of the threat it perceives from the north of Iraq. The possibility that terrorist groups in the north of Iraq, estimated at five thousand terrorists at the time, might increase their effectiveness with the invasion of Iraq, has been an element of concern for Turkey. (Ovali, 2019)

Crisis of Proposal

The period when the Justice and Development Party under Erdogan's leadership came to power at the end of 2002 was important for the future of Turkey and its region. The first crisis faced by this new government was America's plan to occupation Iraq.

According to the plan made by the United States before the Iraq intervention, attacking from two fronts, north, and south of Iraq, would make it easier to win the war. In this regard, the US administration considered the northern front to be opened through Turkey as a necessity. In line with this plan, the US administration has informed Turkey that it intends to open a front through Turkey in the preparation stages of the Iraq War. The American administration thought that Turkey would accept this offer without any objections. (Oran, 2010) However, the opposition of the Turkish public to the Iraq War and the different views within the new government were the

factors that prevented Turkey from taking a final decision. In this context, the American administration has submitted offers, including large amounts of economic and military grants to Turkey, in order to use Turkish territory. (Walker, 2008)

The Turkish government predicted that the Iraq War was inevitable and submitted a proposal to the Turkish Parliament for war approval in order to be effective in post-war Iraq and to prevent the deterioration of bilateral relations with the United States. The proposal was submitted for a vote on March 1, 2003 and rejected by a margin of only three votes. The Turkish Parliament did not allow Turkey's direct participation in the Iraq War and the use of Turkish territory by American troops. (Walker, 2008)

Rejection of the offer caused one of the biggest crises in Turkish-American bilateral relations. Rejection of the proposal caused a major shock to the US administration. Furthermore, this decision taken by the Turkish Parliament debated for a long time as to whether it ends cooperation in bilateral relations, which is defined as a strategic partnership.

The Iraq War, which began without Turkey's support, has grown the problems in bilateral relations. A trust problem has occurred between the American administration, which did not receive the support it had hoped for from Turkey, and Turkey, which perceived some serious threats from Iraq.

The biggest tension in Turkish-American relations after the invasion of Iraq was the Sulaymaniyah Crisis. On July 4, 2003, American soldiers stormed the Sulaymaniyah base of Turkish Special Forces without warning and detained Turkish soldiers there with sacks on their heads. (Gorvett, 2003) This crisis did not be forgotten by the Turkish public for a long time and is still seen as a revenge of Turkey's failure to participate in the Iraq War.

Influence of US Unilateralism on Bilateral Relations

The year 2003 is important because it clearly shows all the risks that can be encountered in the future of bilateral relations. The pre-emptive strike strategy announced by the United States with the Bush Doctrine opened the door to a new era of more military interventions in the Middle East. (Jones, 2019) Turkey's foreign policy implementing with the United States can be described as a continuation of the Cold War foreign policy understanding until the Bush administration period. (Oran, 2010) The foreign policy that Turkey and the United States applied under the strategic cooperation title was a continuation of the doctrine defined as containment. The doctrine, originally designed to prevent Soviet expansionism during the Cold War, was used in the post-cold war period to limit the effects of “rogue states” such as Iraq and Iran. Thus, this doctrine, which gives priority to defense and siege rather than attack, applied for a long time as a policy that agreed in Turkey-US relations. (Ataman & Gokcan, 2012)

The Bush Doctrine that emerged after 9/11 was referring to unilateralism as well as the concept of preventive war. This new situation after September 11 has brought about changes in the predictable structure of bilateral relations. With the new national security strategy, the United States unilaterally moved away from containment politics and created a more offensive security policy. Furthermore, this new policy, which the U.S started to implement unilaterally, was a structure that changed and transformed the close circle of its allies without caring about the ideas of an old ally like Turkey. (Ovali, 2019)

The U.S has started to have problems with its allies as a natural outcome of its unilateral foreign policy. Perhaps during this period, the greatest of the crises, the United States has experienced with its allies is the lack of confidence with Turkey. (Ovali, 2019) During the Iraq War, Turkey was dealing with the aftershocks of the economic crisis and experienced a new change

of government. In this case, Turkey's refusal to support the war with a parliamentary resolution perceived as anti-Americanism. However, it is a fact that the new government under Erdogan at that time supported the Iraq war, but the Turkish parliament did not approve the support for this war. (Oran, 2010)

The USA's policy of unilateralism has formed the understanding that either you are with us or you are against us. Furthermore, this policy, which did not give importance to the bilateral relations with the allies and the ideas of the allies, was the clearest reflection of the US hegemony for that period. (Jones, 2019) These events, which will create a crisis of confidence in bilateral relations and stop the use of the concept of Strategic Partnership title for a while, have also caused the anti-American groups in Turkey to gain power.

Greater Middle East Project and in This Context Turkey-US Relations

The Bush administration, which changed the US policy in the Middle East in the post-September 11 period, sought to design the region in line with US interests. According to the Bush administration, the current status quo and economic situation in the region allows for the strengthening of extremist views, and as a result of these emerged extremist views, the U.S. has suffered. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the Bush administration, which sought to obtain results by resorting to military force in the first place, understood that the use of soft power was also a necessity. (Guney & Gokcan, 2010)

With the program called Middle East Partnership Initiative, a politics has been established in order to promote the development of democracy and human rights in the Middle East and to support economic development. Furthermore, this initiative was expanded in late 2003 under the name of the Greater Middle East Project. This project, which unilaterally designed by the United

States, needed the support of American ally countries in the region to succeed. According to the Bush administration, the lack of liberal democracy, free-market economy, and education in the Middle East have led to terrorist activities. In order to resolve these problems, reforms are needed in the Middle East. (Stewart, 2010)

The U.S. first introduced the Great Middle East Project in 2004 at the G-8 Summit in Georgia. After this summit, the boundaries of the project were expanded to include the North African region. The most concrete evidence for the project itself and its objectives is the final declaration issued at the end of the G-8 summit in 2004. (Mirkasymov, 2007)

Turkey is a secular and democratic state in the Islamic world and has been an ally of the United States for many years, therefore, has come forward as an ideal partner within the scope of the Greater Middle East project. According to the Bush administration, the promotion of moderate Muslim structures that did not support terrorism was crucial to winning the war against terrorism. (Guney & Gokcan, 2010) In this context, the support of the Erdogan administration, which is considered as a moderate Islamist who came to power in Turkey, has become important for the US administration. As a result, the Turkish government has taken a very positive approach to this project and has assumed the co-chairmanship of the structure established for the implementation of the project. (Stewart, 2010)

When the Greater Middle East project was examined in line with Turkey's interests, it was seen that the project contained principles that could be very beneficial for Turkey. Turkey, which shares the same borders with three Middle Eastern countries, has cultural, religious, and economic ties with this region. Therefore, stability and economic development that will occur in the Middle East would be the most suitable to the interests of Turkey. In addition, the idea that moderate Islamists take over the governments of the countries in the Middle East was seen as an opportunity

for the Erdogan administration to expand their sphere of influence therefore the Greater Middle East project was supported by the Erdogan administration.

In Turkish domestic politics, there has been a long-standing debate between the secularists, who want the country's direction to be oriented towards the west, and the conservatives, who regard the Middle East region as an Ottoman historical heritage. In this context, secularists who oppose the promotion of Turkey as a Middle Eastern country with moderate Islamist rule have opposed the Greater Middle East project. (Oran, 2010) In addition, countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which have long been overseers of American interests in the region, have opposed the Greater Middle East project, seeing it as a threat to their own regimes. (Ataman & Gokcan, 2012)

As a result, the viability of the project has been a topic of discussion during the period when the project was introduced. The Greater Middle East project, which was prepared unilaterally by the Bush administration and contains elements that do not match the realities of the Middle East, has been met with suspicion in the Middle East. In addition to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the fact that the leaders who have been dominating the Middle East countries for many years want not to lose their power makes such a big change difficult in the Middle East. As a result, the reasons such as the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, which emerged in the United States during the Iraq War, led to the loss of credibility of the United States in implementing this project.

Second Term Bush Administration and Evolving Political and Economic Relations

George Bush won the November 4, 2004, presidential election against John Kerry, the Democratic Party candidate. (CNN, 2004) As a result of this election, political observers were not hopeful about the future of Turkey-US bilateral relations during the second George Bush era. The wars taking place in Afghanistan and Iraq during President Bush's first term, the proposal crisis

experienced with Turkey, and the fact that American soldiers detained Turkish soldiers in Sulaymaniyah were supporting this suspicion. (Oran, 2010) As a result, it could be argued that the policy of unilateralism, which was intensively implemented in the first period of the Bush administration, caused the conflict of interests of the two states and weakened bilateral relations.

Contrary to expectations, bilateral relations followed a more stable course in the second term of President Bush. One of the most important reasons for leaving behind the crisis atmosphere in bilateral relations is that the US administration has started to take into account Turkey's wishes and expectations. Turkey's greatest expectation from the U.S. administration at the time was that the separatist terrorist organization, the PKK, would be placed on the list of terrorist organizations.

PKK is a Marxist terrorist organization founded in the late 1980s and operates in southeastern Turkey. Furthermore, as a result of its terrorist activities, the PKK is recognized as a terrorist organization by NATO, the European Union, and the United States. (MFA, 2019) PKK was taking advantage of the lack of authority created by the first Gulf War, and the organization was entrenched in the north of Iraq. The inclusion of the PKK on the list of international terrorist organizations in accordance with the U.S. Senate report in February 2004 was one of the first indicators of the improvement in Turkey-US bilateral relations.

One of Turkey's biggest concerns in bilateral relations was its lack of influence in the reconstruction of post-war Iraq. Furthermore, Turkey, isolated from the future of Iraq after the proposal crisis, felt that the new government established in Iraq, which is controlled by the Shiite sect and gives the Kurds broad powers, could be a threat to Turkey. The Bush administration's portrayal of Turkey as one of the cornerstones of the Greater Middle East project and the active participation of Turkish contractors in the reconstruction of Iraq was perceived positively by Turkey.(Ataman & Gokcan, 2012) However, when the structure of the bilateral relations is

examined, it is still far from the concept of strategic allies used to define the bilateral relationship between Turkey and the United States.

Although Turkey and the United States have common interests in the Middle East, such as energy security, democratization, and counterterrorism, they have conflicts of interest on some issues. Although Turkey had differences of interest with the United States over some issues in the post-Second World War period, it mostly applied the wishes of the United States. However, this situation began to change in the post-1990 period when Turkey became stronger economically and militarily. In some cases, Turkey has adopted a foreign policy approach that maximizes its interests independent of the United States. In the early 2000s, Turkey tried to develop good bilateral relations with its neighbors, Iran and Syria. However, Bush administration was considering these countries as part of the axis of evil and perceiving as a threat to the world.

For instance, Prime Minister Erdogan's official visit to Iran in 2004 and the signing of agreements in the areas of energy lines and the fight against PKK terrorism were not welcomed by the American administration. In line with these agreements, Iran has listed the PKK as a terrorist organization and has declared that they are with Turkey in its fight against terrorism. In addition, Turkey has informed Iran that it could be a mediator in the nuclear negotiations that will allow Iran to integrate into the rest of the world. (Tandfonline, 2004)

It is clear that the US administration is reacting to Turkey's new foreign policy pursuits. Turkey, a staunch ally of the United States for many years, wants to develop economic and political relations with neighboring countries such as Iran and Syria to pursue a foreign policy in which it can be more comfortable in the field of energy and security. However, the US administration's failure to support Turkey's new foreign policy initiative has put Turkey in a dilemma. As a result of Turkey's seeking new partnership as a longtime ally of the United States, discussions have arisen

that Turkey's axis has shifted from West to East. (Baser, 2015) Erdogan's government, which has a political Islamist tradition, wants to diversify Turkish foreign policy over its Muslim identity and Ottoman Empire heritage. This approach, which differs from traditional pro-western Turkish Foreign Policy dynamics, aims to establish a balance between the west and the east. In particular, the attitude of the European Union, which does not want to accept Turkey as a member of the union, affected Turkey's Eastern expansion. However, this expansion does not have the character of a shift from West Camp to East camp as it did during the Cold War era.

In order to improve bilateral relations that have deteriorated since Turkey's rapprochement with Iran and Syria, the foreign ministers of the U.S. and Turkey met in Washington in June 2006 and signed a common dialogue document. According to the document confirming that the two countries are friends and allies, it is emphasized that bilateral relations will be improved on the basis of mutual trust and common interests. (Oran, 2010) Turkey and the United States share common views in areas such as peace, democracy and economic development in the Middle East. In this context, focusing on common interests rather than differences has been an important decision regulating the future of bilateral relations.

Turkey and the United States have broad common interests not only in the Middle East but also in the region that encompasses Turkey's immediate surroundings. For instance, the two countries sharing the goal of ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which one of Turkey's most important priorities in the Middle East, by aiming for a two-state solution. Furthermore, the stability of the Black Sea, Caspian basin and Central Asia and the security of energy resources in the region are of great importance to the two countries. This region is one of the most important energy supply points for China, the new great power of the Twenty-First century.

The biggest crisis experienced by Turkey and the United States during the second term of the Bush administration is the increasing effectiveness of the PKK terrorist organization whose located in northern Iraq. The PKK terrorist organization, which has not had the capacity to take action for a long time, has been strengthened by taking advantage of the lack of authority in the north of Iraq. As a result of this, the PKK began to organize actions and attack military superiors in Turkey in 2007. (Lesser, 2007) In this context, Turkey's expectation from the United States, which defines the PKK as a terrorist organization, was that an intervention would be carried out against the PKK. However, the threat perceived by Turkey and the United States from the PKK terrorist organization differed. The implementation of the motto of the common fight against terrorism, which has been repeated for a long time, has been far below expectations when it comes to Turkey. The reluctance of the US to intervene in a case where the subject is Turkey has created a situation of mutual distrust between the two countries.

As a result of Turkey's great discomfort, the United States began to share intelligence with Turkey, and the Turkish Air Force conducted operations in the north of Iraq in line with these intelligences. According to Turkey, airstrikes operations against PKK targets in the north of Iraq were insufficient to diminish the PKK's effectiveness. (Arsu & Farrell, 2007) Therefore, Turkey has shared with the US administration the idea of carrying out a cross-border ground operation to the north of Iraq in accordance with its rights arising from previous agreements with Iraq. The Bush administration has long resisted against Turkey's request for the realization of these cross-border ground operation. However, as a result of Turkey's intense demands, the Bush administration has approved an operation that will be limited in duration and scope.

The huge difference between the US administration and Turkey's view of the cross-border operation to the north of Iraq allows some inferences for the divergent interests of Turkey and the

US. The United States has had close relations with the Kurds in the region since the first Gulf War. Although Turkey is a NATO ally, the United States has not paid enough attention to Turkey's fight against terrorism. However, the US administration has placed great emphasis on the stability of the Kurds in the region. (Lesser, 2007) In fact, Turkey has close and good relations with the autonomous Kurdish administration in northern Iraq. The stable and secure structure of the region is important for Turkey's security. In addition, it is important for the Turkish economy in commercial activities with the region. Turkey is initially uncomfortable with the PKK's use of northern Iraqi territory to launch attacks on its territory.

The support of the American administration to the Kurds can be explained under three headings. The first is that the support of the Kurds, the largest ethnic group in the world without having a state, is of great importance in ensuring Iraq's territorial integrity. The U.S. administration, which does not want more chaos in Iraq, has accepted the Kurds as allies and supports them in line with the stability of Iraq. The second reason is the security of energy resources. Iraq's richest oil reserves are located in Mosul and Kirkuk. The cities of Mosul and Kirkuk are neighboring cities to the Kurdish region in northern Iraq, although they have an Arab population structure. In this context, the Kurds stand out as an important actor for the security of Iraqi oil. The third reason is Israel's security in the Middle East. Although Kurds are a Muslim society, they have stayed away from extremist religious structures. Therefore, the Kurds do not pursue an anti-Israel policy like some extremists. Considering the geography in which the Kurds live, it can be said that this region is almost a buffer zone. Therefore, possible attacks against Israel from Iran and Syria, which America considers to be rogue states, can be prevented by the Kurds.

Bush Administration Period Turkey-US Economic Relations

The economic and commercial relations between Turkey and the United States, which have been two allies for a long time, are seen to be at low levels. The United States, which has the largest economy in the world, and Turkey, which has the largest economic size in the Middle East and the Balkans, operate their commercial relations largely through arms sales. For instance, despite the economic crisis, at the end of the Bush administration period, it is seen that the USA is the biggest international investor with \$2.8 trillion spent in investments worldwide in 2007. In the same period, Turkey became the least affected country in the world from the economic crisis after China and survived the effects of the global economic crisis. However, the amount of American investment coming to Turkey during this period was only \$10 billion. (Ozel, 2009)

The export-based economic growth policy adopted by Turkey which started to be implemented in 1980 has made Turkey an important exporting country in 2008. European Union countries constitute for a large proportion of Turkey's exports. However, although the United States has the world's largest economy and is a long-term ally of Turkey, it is Turkey's seventh largest export partner. Turkey achieved only 3.8% of its exports to the United States in 2008. In addition, only 4.8% of its imports were from the United States. (Ozel, 2009) As can be seen, Turkish-American economic and commercial relations have not developed as much as political relations during the Bush administration. The amount of trade that takes place with Turkey accounts for an insignificant percentage for the Bush administration era US economy. Hence, the amount of trade taking place with Turkey constitutes an insignificant percentage for the economy of the United States during the Bush administration.

Conclusion

The main topics of Bush-era Turkey-US bilateral relations were the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Bilateral relations followed a fluctuating course during this period. The main reason for this situation is the differences in the threat perception of the two countries. Turkey has seen the power vacuum in Iraq as a major threat to its national security. However, it appears that during this period, the United States did not take into account the priorities of its allies with the influence of the Bush Doctrine. Therefore, the diverging interests of Turkey and the United States have caused the bilateral relations to follow an unpredictable course

CHAPTER 4: THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION PERIOD AND THE UNSTABLE COURSE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

Introduction

Obama's inauguration as president of the United States in 2009 meant a major shift in Turkish-U.S. relations. During the beginning of the Obama era, Turkish-American relations described as a model partnership rather than a strategic partnership. According to Fusun Turkmen (2016), the model partnership concept used by the Obama administration to describe relations with Turkey based on three dimensions as strategic, economic, social/values. In this context, the strategic dimension constitutes a large part of bilateral relations. The economic relations between the two countries need to be improved. However, the social/values dimension, which is described by Fusun Turkmen (2016) as the third basis of the model partnership concept, has almost no place in bilateral relations. This dimension, which was pushed to the background in bilateral relations during the Bush era, is an indication that concepts such as democracy and human rights are not effective enough in bilateral relations. In this context, the Obama administration and its political approaches made a positive contribution to the U.S. relations with Turkey in the early years. During this period, the United States began to develop closer relations with Turkey, which it designated as a model partner. However, the interests of the two states are largely aligned during this period. The fact that the United States cared more about the wishes of its allies, and that the interests of the two states aligned led to a new era of bilateral relations.

Furthermore, the Obama administration's coming to power in the US had been a new hope for world politics. World politics, which had been influenced by the unilateral offensive principles of the Bush Doctrine for many years, brought the concept of soft power back to its agenda after a long break.

Obama Administration Period Turkey-US Relations

The hope of peace and stability created in the world upon the inauguration of the Obama administration also has been considered as a fresh and clean start for the development of Turkey-USA bilateral relations. The world's has greatest expectation from the Obama administration was the immediate resolution of problems that were inherited from the George W. Bush era. The Bush administration, which received great support from the world against terrorism after 9/11, lost much of this support as a result of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. In addition to this insecurity atmosphere in the world, overcoming the global economic crisis which caused by the United States has been another problem that the expected to solve from Obama administration.

When the course of American foreign policy in the last century is examined, it can be said that it has been influenced by different theories of international relations in different periods. After the Second World War, US abandoned its isolationist foreign policy to not reapply. In some periods, the United States shaped its foreign policy in line with the principles of realism, while in some periods it applied an interventionist liberalism that allowed it to intervene in international events as a superpower. When an interview with The Atlantic Magazine in April 2016 at the end of Barack Obama's presidential term was examined, it appears that the Obama Doctrine does not fit any of these definitions. (Turkmen, 2016) Obama believes that international problems can be solved by strengthening international organizations and norms. In this context, according to Obama, during his presidency, international organizations were tried to be functional and great

importance was given to democracy and human rights. (Goldberg, 2016) In this context, Obama is a president more suited to being described as an idealist.

Obama Administration Foreign Policy Principles

After the Bush Era, American foreign policy had lost the support of the international public opinion. According to a survey conducted in 2008, the proportion of those who supported American foreign policy worldwide significantly reduced. Support for American foreign policy, measured at 53% in Britain, 42% in France, and 31% in Germany, was much lower in Middle Eastern countries. For instance, Egypt 22% and Turkey 12%. (Pirincci 2011)

Seeing American foreign policy lose credibility, the Obama administration has set out new foreign policy principles to create a functional foreign policy strategy. The first of these documents, which can be called the Obama Doctrine in a sense, was published in 2010 and then updated in 2015 in accordance with changing world conditions.

Although the Obama administration has an idealistic perspective, it has shown great importance for the continuation of the US global leadership. In the National Security Strategy Plan (2010), which published in 2010, it was emphasized that the US should focus on economic growth by leaving the economic crisis behind in order to produce a new policy against China's rising power and maintain its global leadership.

In this context, the Obama administration has decided to promote democracy and justice in the world with its allies instead of unilateral military interventions in the new era. Moreover, one of the most important points that the Obama administration has realized is that global problems are bigger than the US can solve alone. (Gerstein, 2009) The Obama administration, which intends to solve global problems with the contributions of the international community, believed that

global problems could be solved through diplomacy, international law, and international organizations. When the policies of the Obama administration are analyzed, it is seen that NATO and the UN are the two most used organizations in the solution of global problems.

The Obama doctrine adopted different requirements for the use of force, unlike the Bush Doctrine. In this context, the Obama administration completely abandoned the concept of preventive strike. According to the Obama administration, which drew the limits of the use of force, the use of force could be used to maintain global and regional peace, solve humanitarian crises, secure energy and trade, and prevent the devastating effects of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, as we shall see later in Syria and Libya, the Obama administration has adopted the policy of obtaining the support of its allies in the use of force and not using US troops as land forces as much as possible. (Chesterman, 2011)

The National Security Strategy document published in 2015 contains some updates in line with the changing world politics. In this document, the US has stated that it is still strong while emphasizing its intention to maintain a global leadership position. The main reason for this emphasis is rising China, as well as the threat posed by Russia, which is increasingly engaged in world politics with its military power, against US interests. In this context, it is clear that the main focus of the 2015 National Security Strategy (2015) document is the Asia-Pacific region. This document, which pushes the problems of the Middle East to the background, has focused on developing strategies to be implemented against rising China and aggressive Russia.

Overall, although the Obama administration focused on the continuation of the US's global leadership position in the 2010 national security strategy document (2010), it adopted a strategy that would respond to the demands of US domestic policy. However, changing world dynamics in

2015 shifted the Obama administration's main threat perception to the Asia-Pacific region and forced it to develop a strategy counter this threat.

Obama Administration's Middle East Politics and Turkey's Role

After the Bush administration's counterterrorism and war-oriented Middle East politics, the biggest expectation of the Middle East public from Obama was a solution to the problems inherited from the Bush era. The Bush administration's foreign policy approach has removed the United States from fundamental values such as human rights and has been a major blow to US relations with the Islamic world. (Ovali, 2019)

According to the 2010 National Security Strategy Document, radical Islamic terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda still pose a major threat to American national security. The fact that the war against terrorism did not result in a victory and as a result of the emotional rupture between the Islamic world and the United States compelled the Obama administration to develop a new Middle East politics. In addition, President Obama has seen the Israeli-Palestinian problem and Iran's nuclear weapons development efforts as the most important problems that need to be solved in the Middle East region.

In order to correct the restore Turkish-American relations after the Bush era, the Obama administration defined its bilateral relations as a Model Partnership. With the concept of Model Partnership, the Obama administration stated that Turkish-American relations do not contain only strategic facts and that the bilateral relations are intended to be integrated into a wide-ranging structure that includes common cooperation in many areas of economic, social and cultural. (Ovali, 2019) Another part of the concept of Model Partnership used to describe Turkish-American bilateral relations is the representation of Turkey as a model country to Muslim Middle Eastern

countries. The Model country concept emphasizes that Turkey has a functional democracy and an industrialized economy with its Muslim population. (Kurtbag, 2015)

Erdogan's administration had similar ideas about the Middle East with the Obama administration. Obama thought that dictatorships in the Islamic world should be overthrown and a democratic order should be established. However, the Obama administration desired that these changes be made not through military operations but through internal reforms. This is the biggest reason why Turkey is introduced as a model country in the Middle East. The Obama administration, seeing that changes through military methods have had negative consequences, has encouraged internal democratic reforms in Middle Eastern countries.

Moreover, with the disappearance of dictatorial administrations, closed economic systems in the Middle East countries were expected to be replaced by open market economies compatible with the global liberal economy. In this context, the Obama administration thought that acting together with the Erdogan government, which has an Islamic mindset, would contribute to the democratization of Islamic groups in the Middle East. (Kurtbag, 2015) Furthermore, Turkey could be an example to other Muslim countries with its state and society structure that brought Islam and democracy together. In addition, the Model country concept was supported by the Erdogan government as it would allow Turkey to expand its political sphere of influence in the Middle East.

The fact that Obama made his first overseas international visit to Turkey in April 2009 after his inauguration as president is important to understand the value the Obama administration has given to Turkey. In his speech to the Turkish Parliament, Obama stated that the concept of Model partnership can change and transform the world. According to Obama, the most important feature of Turkey is the secular and democratic system created under the leadership of Ataturk. (Hurriyet, 2009) In this context, Obama continued his speech by saying that the United States,

which has a majority Christian population, and Turkey, which has a majority Muslim population, could build a modern and international community together.

According to Richard Falk (2014), the relationship structure that the United States wants to establish with Turkey is a one-sided structure, as it was during the Cold War. In this regard, Falk claims that, in order for bilateral relations to continue as a model partnership, Turkey should have to accept the strategic priorities of the United States by putting them ahead of its own interests.

Obama's efforts to improve relations with the Islamic world were not limited to Turkey and the Model Country concept. In June 2009, President Obama visited Cairo, the capital of Egypt, and gave a speech addressing the whole Islamic world. President Obama quoted the Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims, and stated that Islam is part of the United States. In his long speech, Obama touched upon many problems such as the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the Iraq War, and Iran, and said that the solution could only be achieved by creating a common understanding. (The New York Times, 2009)

When the messages given to the public during Obama's trips to Turkey and Egypt are examined, it is understood that the United States wants to solve the current problems by applying soft power within the framework of neoliberal theory. In this context, the definition of the soft power of Joseph Nye, one of the leading neoliberal thinkers, is worth remembering. According to Nye (2009), even if the U.S. has the most powerful army and weapon stocks in the world, the US should be dominated world politics and should be able to impose on its own wishes to other countries. Furthermore, he argues the United States, which wants its own wishes to be realized, should pay attention to its soft power and use it. Therefore, if the United States wants to maintain its power to determine world politics, it must care about its soft power and improve it. (Nye, 2009)

The concept of soft power in one context is the preference for diplomacy instead of military operations. Therefore, the success of soft power has to do with how convinced the target is. Furthermore, topics such as culture and discourse are also important for persuading the target in soft power practices.

In this context, the Greater Middle East Project, which is seen as a soft power application of the Bush administration, did not succeed because it was incompatible with the Middle East realities. However, the application of soft power initiated by Obama during his visits to Turkey and Egypt and aimed at reconciliation with the Islamic community was perceived as positive by the Middle East peoples.

The United States also needed to take some concrete steps in order to increase the trust of people in the Middle East to the United States. In this case, President Obama has taken a decision that will both be welcome in American domestic politics and change the perception of the United States of the people living in the Middle East. The prolongation of the Iraq War has long been criticized by the American public. In addition, human rights violations in the Guantanamo prison camp was worsening the outlook on America in the Middle East. In this context, the Obama administration announced that it would withdraw American troops from Iraq and that the Guantanamo camp would be shut down. (Kurtbag, 2015)

Turkey was in an important position for the successful implementation of the Obama administration's withdrawal plan from Iraq. Since the election campaign, President Obama has described the invasion of Iraq as a major mistake of US foreign policy during the Bush era. Iraq was occupied without sufficiently analyzing the country's internal dynamics, and the US military had to stay in Iraq for a long time to restore order. (Brennan, 2015) There were sectarian conflicts between the Shiites, who make up the majority of the country's population, and the Sunni minority

that dominated the country's administration during the Saddam era. Furthermore, The Kurds and Arabs living in northern Iraq were in an ethnic conflict. (Brennan, 2015) Using Turkey's good relations with the Kurdish administration in northern Iraq and its sectarian affinity with the Sunni minority, the Obama administration thought that Turkey could be a facilitator in the process of establishing democracy in Iraq. Otherwise, Iraq, where 55% of its population is composed of Shiites, could be easily entered Iran's sphere of influence. (Lipka, 2014)

Overall, the Obama administration sought to end the wars it inherited from the Bush administration as soon as possible and is shifting its main focus to the Asia Pacific region. The Bush administration, which did not take into account the dynamics of the Middle Eastern countries, completed its term with great chaos and an increasing anti-Americanism in the Islamic world. The Obama administration, which aims to make peace with the Islamic world, has made a trip to Egypt for this purpose. In addition, the United States, which has turned its foreign policy focus to the Asia-Pacific region, has introduced the model country concept that takes Turkey to the center in order to protect its interests in the Middle East and prevent the power vacuum that will occur. As a result, the growing interest of Erdogan's government in expanding its sphere of influence in the Middle East has resulted in Turkey and the United States having common interests and aspirations.

Effect of Changing Turkish Foreign Policy on Turkey-US Relations

When the Erdogan administration came to power in 2002, it had declared that it would develop a foreign policy aligned with the West. In line with this goal, Turkey has started full membership negotiations with the European Union and has harmonized many laws with the EU for democratization purposes. Moreover, the Turkish economy achieved a significant growth rate during this period, and Turkey became one of the countries least affected by the global economic crisis. (Kurtbag, 2015)

Turkey began to be governed by the Republican regime in 1923 and has adopted a Western-centric foreign policy approach since that date. One of the biggest reasons for this situation is the concern that the troubled Middle East system that occurred after the First World War will affect Turkey. In this context, Turkey adopted the principle of not having close relations with the actors of the Middle East region, which was its territory until the end of the First World War, and not supporting any side in the problems of the Middle East. However, in 2009, this policy began to be abandoned by the Erdogan administration.

By 2009, it was understood by Turkey that the European Union would not accept Turkey as a full member of the Union, despite its full membership negotiations with Turkey. During this period, as the Turkish economy grew stronger, and its military capabilities increased, Turkey has started to seek new allies as an element to balance the West. In addition, the Erdogan government began to pursue increasingly Islamic policies in this period and began to develop close relations with countries within the borders of the former Ottoman Empire. (Kurtbag, 2015) As Erdogan's administration abandoned its foreign policy understanding aimed at maintaining good relations with the West, it slowed down its democratization efforts. In addition, Turkey is more focused on Middle East issues and has become a side of many Middle East problems.

Many Western states have interpreted Turkey's diversification of foreign policy preferences as a shift of Turkey's foreign policy axis from west to east. In this context, the new foreign policy approach implemented by the Turkish government was not fully understood by the Obama administration. While Turkey wants to become a regional power by becoming a playmaker country in the Middle East, the Obama administration has not been able to implement the model partnership concept that it uses to define Turkey politically. (Adam, 2012)

However, Turkey-US relations, which developed during the beginning of the Obama era, declined due to the Israeli-Palestinian problem and disagreements over Iran, and even came into crisis as a result of Turkey's independent policies in the Middle East.

When the Turkish-US bilateral relations are examined, it is seen that Turkey's democratic development has not contributed as much to the bilateral relations as it had been thought. Although democracy and human rights were important concepts cited in bilateral relations during the Obama era, the structure of Turkey-US bilateral relations was determined by Turkey's NATO membership and the alignment of Turkey's policies in the Middle East and Eurasia regions with the United States. Turkey's level of democratic development has not been a topic of discussion between the two countries as long as Turkey fulfills minimum democratic standards such as fair elections and respect for human rights. For instance, while Turkey has gone back in terms of its level of democracy since 2010, according to reports published by organizations such as Freedom House and the European Union, the main focus of Turkey-US relations has been the different politics implemented by two countries in the Middle East. In this context, even during the reign of a liberal president like Obama, who gave great importance to the concepts of democracy and human rights, Turkey-US relations are seen to be carried out through a neo-realist framework.

Turkey had good relations with Israel until 2009 and even took part as a mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks for a while. However, the fact that right-wing governments in Israel won the elections and started to pursue a military power-oriented policy towards Palestine resulted in the Erdogan administration pursuing a pro-Palestinian foreign policy. When Turkish foreign policy is examined after 2009, it is seen that Turkey considers itself as the heir to the former Ottoman Empire and is involved as a side to the problems in this region. (Danforth, 2016)

The 2010 Mavi Marmara attack, in which Israeli soldiers attacked Turkish activists who were transporting humanitarian aid to Palestine, ten people killed by the attack, resulted in the termination of Turkish-Israeli bilateral relations and indirectly from the event Turkey-US relations have been affected. The United States did not welcome the interruption of Turkey's relations with Israel because Israel is the most important US ally in the Middle East. (Bayyumi, 2010) In addition, Turkey was a country, who has been in an important position in Israel's security and been a member of NATO since the 1950's. However, the cause of the Turkey-US bilateral relations enters crisis was not the problems between Turkey and Israel. The main reason is Turkey's rapprochement with Iran without U.S. approval.

The Obama administration's 2010 National Security Strategy Document highlighted Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons as a major risk to the Middle East and World security. Furthermore, the Obama administration was in search of a solution that would prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons with the cooperation of the international community. As a result, the United States has decided to use the UN to solve the Iran issue with international solidarity. However, Turkey's rejection of a proposal for sanctions against Iran submitted to the UN Security Council by the American administration to restrict Iran's capacity to develop nuclear weapons has led to a breakdown between the two countries' relations. (Kurtbag, 2015)

Turkey believed that the problems caused by Iran's development of nuclear weapons could be solved with cooperation rather than sanctions. As Abramowitz and Edelman pointed out, Turkey and the United States were claiming to have common goals. However, Turkey's policies were gradually moving away from the U.S. axis. (Abramowitz & Edelman, 2013). Brazil and Turkey were an interim member of the UN Security Council at the time. Two countries based on

this title signed an agreement with Iran in May 2010. According to this agreement, Iran agreeing to expel uranium from its country, which Iran used to make nuclear weapons.

With this agreement reached with Iran, Turkey was intent on proving that it is a regional power in the Middle East and capable of setting up a game. Some political scientists, such as Falk, point out that the United States sees issues such as nuclear negotiation with Iran in the Middle East as under their jurisdiction. In this respect, Turkey's efforts to intervene in the Iran issue as an independent actor have caused discomfort to the United States. (Kurtbag, 2015) As a result of this discomfort, the American Congress did not approve the arms sale to Turkey. As a result of this bill, which was implemented as a punishment against Turkey, the sale of one hundred nine combat helicopters, four warships, and unmanned aerial vehicles that Turkey planned to purchase have been canceled. (Hurriyet, 2015)

Overall, Turkey's foreign policy practices, which it tries to conduct independently, are subject to intense pressure if they contradict US interests. Although the United States has undergone various changes in its foreign policy and policies with changing presidents, it continues to make decisions with a realist perspective on issues that represent its main interests. Turkey and the Middle East region are still one of the main centers for US interests, although their importance has declined in Obama-era policies. Therefore, the US administration does not approve of Turkey's independent foreign policy and wants to prevent it.

The Impact of the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War on Bilateral Relations

The protests that started in Tunisia in December 2010 due to economic reasons have grown to include democracy, freedom and human rights issues, and spread all over the Arab world.

Although the US claims that it attaches great importance to the issue of human rights and democracy, it needed and supported the presence of authoritarian leaders for the continuity of the policies in the Middle East. When U.S Middle East politics is examined from a realist point of view, it can be argued that the United States attaches great importance to three issues. These are the security of Israel, the security of energy supply, and the fight against terrorism. (Kurt, 2018) However, the wave of rebellion that began with the Arab Spring in the Middle East has jeopardized the sustainability of the Middle East policy, which the US has continued to implement on these three bases for a long time.

The Obama administration has had a hard time deciding how to react to these events after the Arab uprisings began. Although the United States had liberal goals such as democracy and human rights, its interests in the field sometimes contradicted these goals. However, it would be fair to say that after the Arab uprisings began, the Obama administration set a different policy for each country in according to its own interests. (Gerges, 2013) For example, the Islamist leader Morsi won the elections held in Egypt as a result of the Arab Spring. This has proved that democracy will not always produce the results the US wants. However, it is clear that this election result is a threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East and to Israel's security. (Kurt, 2018) In this context, although the Obama administration announced its support for democratic administrations, it recognized the military junta that came to power by overthrowing the Morsi administration in 2013.

The Obama administration's policy towards the Arab rebellions differs greatly from the Bush administration's policies in the Middle East region. The United States was avoiding as much as possible, organizing the restructuring of the countries during the Arab Spring. Because that was the most challenging issue in the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan. During the Arab Spring, the Obama

administration pursued policies that stated that it only supported public reactions. The Obama administration was trying to stick to its own doctrine, and they avoided unilateral American military intervention, as in the case of Libya. In addition, the US, with the support of its allies, has endeavored to use international institutions such as NATO and the UN to solve problems.

On the other hand, Turkey has made efforts to develop good bilateral relations with Egypt and Syria in order to achieve its foreign policy goals in the Middle East. In this period, when Turkey understood that the EU would not accept it, it increasingly shifted its foreign policy priorities to the east rather than the West in order to expand its sphere of influence. Hence, Turkey has started to support the rebels because Turkey believed it could easily lead new governments that would be formed by the rebels. Therefore, Turkey has backed Sunni rebels instead of the Shiite government in the Syrian Civil War. (Ataman & Ozdemir, 2018)

Turkey's support of the moderate Islamist Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt, which is considered the political center of the Arab world, is based on the same rationale. (Kuru, 2016) Furthermore, Erdogan's government has similar views with the Muslim Brotherhood. This has caused Turkey to give a big support to the Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi administration, which came to power as a result of the Arab Spring in Egypt. However, in addition to the eight-year Syrian Civil War, the overthrow of the Morsi administration in Egypt as a result of a military coup in 2013 has done considerable damage to Turkey's middle east politics, which it is trying to establish as a regional power.

In 2011 which is the year the Arab Spring began, although Turkey sought to conduct an independent foreign policy, the similar interests of Turkey and the United States in the Middle East have led to the emergence of the spring season in bilateral relations. For instance, in an interview with Time magazine in January 2012, Obama announced that Erdogan was among the

five leaders with whom he has best relations. (Zakaria, 2012) In this period, the two countries preferred to focus on common interests, although there were some issues, they had different perspectives on. Some political scientists, such as Gerges, argue that Turkey's rising power and strengthening relations in the Middle East were not perceived as a threat by the Obama administration, but rather welcomed. According to Gerges, while the US administration was shifting its attention to the Asia-Pacific region from the Middle East, they thought that a possible power vacuum in the Middle East could be filled with Turkey, and this could be compatible with the US interests. (Gerges, 2013)

Although the model country rhetoric that Obama used during his visit to Turkey in 2009 could not be implemented, however secular and democratic Turkey was a country that could fill the power vacuum created by the withdrawal of the United States in the Middle East. Thus, the withdrawal of the US from the Middle East could be prevented from giving Iran an advantage. (Gerges, 2013)

The first tangible result of the improvement in Turkey-US relations was Turkey's approval of the missile shield project, which NATO plans to build against Iran and Russia. As a result of Turkey's approval for this project, it has agreed to place radars on Turkish territory to monitor the entire Middle East region. (Shanker, 2011) As a result of Turkey's approval for this project, Turkey has been criticized by Iran and Russia.

According to Yilmaz (2011), as a result of the success of protesters in some countries in overthrowing regimes with the Arab Spring, the concept of a model country in which Turkey will be introduced as a model country to these new regimes has come back on the agenda, and its content has become clear. (Yilmaz, 2011) In this period, despite Turkey's efforts to implement an independent foreign policy, Turkey's approval of the missile shield and get involved Syrian Civil

War caused Turkey's relations with Syria and Iran to deteriorate and become closer to the United States.

Throughout the Arab Spring, the policy pursued by the Obama administration has been democracy-and human rights-based. In this context, the Obama administration has called for reforms to central governments and has stated that violence should not be inflicted on protesters. The US did not want to be at the forefront because of its negative image from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, it has adopted the "leading from behind" policy. Libya can be considered as the first example of the leading from behind policy. In Libya, the United States carried out its activities through France and provided only limited support to military operations. In the early stages of the civil war in Syria, Turkey was deemed suitable for this task. (Duran, 2017)

When the first protests began in Syria, the U.S. administration did not think that these would have different consequences than other Arab Spring affected countries. However, Syria's chaotic ethnicity and the Assad regime's rejection of reform demands and using violence against suppressing protesters have made Syria unpredictable compared to other countries. The Obama administration has followed pro-democratization policies in Syria in accordance with its general policy. (Cankurtaran & Genckaya, 2017) However, unlike other Arab Spring countries in Syria, the Obama administration has frequently changed its policies and the parties it supports according to the daily developments and has not been consistent in this context. For instance, at the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, the Obama administration had said that the Assad administration should leave office, however in the later periods, it looked positively at the establishment of a Syrian transitional government in which the Assad administration was involved. (Cankurtaran & Genckaya, 2017)

In accordance with similar policies pursued in the first period of the civil war in Syria, Turkey and the United States have announced that they are against the continuation of the Assad regime. However, the fact that the civil war in Syria is expanding and becoming a proxy war and the fact that Iran and Russia are involved in the Syrian civil war in support of the Assad regime has strengthened the hand of the Assad administration and enabled it to continue in office. As a result, the developments that have taken place have not been in line with the US and Turkey's Syria politics.

Since the Syrian crisis has evolved into a civil war, Turkey has expected the United States to become more involved in the Syrian issue. However, as the US stressed in its 2010 National Security Strategy Document, the US wanted to get as little involved as possible in the military and political problems in the Middle East region. Furthermore, it would not be wrong to say that Obama, who wants to implement a more cautious foreign policy on his way to the elections in 2012, applies a wait-and-see tactic for Syria. On the other hand, Turkey has started to feel the effects of the Syrian civil war in its own country without the possibility of implementing a wait-and-see policy.

Since April 2011, Turkey has started to maintain an open-door policy for Syrians who fleeing war. As a result, Turkey has become the world's largest refugee host with 3.5 million Syrians in 2019, according to the United Nations Refugees High Representative Office (UNHRC, 2019). Turkey has spent more than 40 billion dollars on these refugees as of September 2019. (TimeTurk, 2019) Thus, Turkey has started to see Syria as a national security issue and Turkish foreign policy has started to differentiate from the United States in terms of the importance given to Syria.

The chemical weapons issue could be presented as evidence of the United States' reluctance to intervene in the Syrian crisis. Since the beginning of the Syrian war, the Obama administration has declared that the use of chemical weapons is its "red line" and that if chemical weapons are used on opponents, they will intervene in the war. 1,400 civilians died as a result of a chemical attack carried out by the Assad regime in Syria in August 2013. Despite this attack, the United States has not given any response to the Assad regime. Therefore, Obama's policy on the use of chemical weapons in Syria has not been a successful approach. (Blewitt, 2013) On the contrary, this has led to a decline in the faith of allies such as Turkey in the United States.

From Obama's point of view, if Assad were toppled from power by the direct intervention of the American government, the US would then directly confront Assad's allies. This has been described as a bad policy by the Obama administration. (Sen, 2013) Turkey, on the other hand, was feeling the economic cost and security risks posed by the hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers waiting at its borders from there and is beginning to feel uncomfortable with the US policy on Syria. In addition, Turkey considered Assad's continued stay in office a situation that would damage his rising prestige in the Middle East. (Kurtbag, 2015)

The cautious policy implemented by the Obama administration in the Syrian civil war has changed after the emergence of ISIS in the Middle East. (Cankurtaran & Genckaya, 2017) Obama declared his policy of combating ISIS by using regional elements instead of the US military and defeating ISIS through airstrikes. In this context, the force that Obama has described as a regional element is the YPG, the Syrian branch of the PKK, which acts as a terrorist organization in Turkey and causes civilian casualties. This case was the first starting point of the long-lasting dispute between Turkey and the United States. (Duran, 2017)

The ISIS Kobani attack in 2014 marked a significant milestone in terms of the PYD and its military wing, the YPG, providing international support. The United States increased its support for the PYD after the Kobani attack. Furthermore, the US, fearing that the ISIS threat will grow and affect the entire Middle East region, has provided air support to the PYD and provided a large amount of arms aid. Thanks to the support it received from the US, the PYD has strengthened and gained an important position in Syria compared to other opposition groups. As a result, the balance of power in Syria has changed significantly in favor of the PYD with the support of the US. (Letsch, 2014)

In Syria, the increasing effectiveness of the PYD and its military wing, the YPG, have created various problems for Turkish foreign policy. The first is that the PYD, which Turkey describes as the Syrian branch of the terrorist organization PKK, has been supported by big states in its war with ISIS as a legitimate actor. Another important problem is the increasing area domination that the PYD has ruled on Syrian territory. The PYD has established dominance over 14% of the Syrian territory and wants to increase this rate further. (Turkmen, 2016) Thus, Turkey considers this structure established by the PYD on the opposite side of its border to be a threat to its national security. In addition to Turkey's concerns about own national security, concerned that the PKK, which has been included in the list of terrorist organizations by all western states, will benefit from the legitimacy perception provided by the PYD. (Turkmen, 2016)

Turkey considered that the transition of entire northern Syria under the control of the PYD would create a corridor through which the PKK could reach the Mediterranean Sea, and this could affect its territorial integrity and national security in the future. (Daily Sabah, 2019) Thus, Turkey, which opposes the PYD's attempt to change the Arab and Sunni population-dominated ethnic structure of the region in northern Syria, has begun providing arms and training support to the

dissident. Furthermore, the fact that the PYD established cantons and declared an autonomous government in the territories under its control, where the Kurdish population is a minority, supported Turkey's thesis.

The differing interests of Turkey and the United States in the Syrian Civil War, which became a proxy war, led Turkey to establish a dialogue with the Russian and Iranian camps. (Ovali, 2019)

The reflection of the civil war in Syria on Turkish national security has been the increase in terrorist attacks in Turkey. Furthermore, PKK and ISIS, which are trying to establish area dominance in Syria, have both described Turkey as an enemy and carried out terrorist attacks in Turkey. On the other hand, Turkey has decided to intervene militarily in Syria as a result of the losses suffered in these terrorist attacks. As a result, Turkey launched a military operation in Syria in August 2016 with moderate opponents, citing Article 51 of the UN Convention in addition to UN resolutions on fighting ISIS. (MFA, 2019) As a result, in Syria, where the United States and Russia have fought a proxy war through the forces they support, Turkey has de facto established a safe zone in the territory near its borders.

After this operation, which took place in Russia's sphere of influence, Turkey announced that the safe zone would be expanded to include Manbij within the US sphere of influence. This has led to deteriorating Turkish-US relations to the extent that they have not experienced in recent years.

Today, the Kurds are the most important partner in the field in order to protect American interests in both Iraq and Syria. Therefore, the rapprochement between the United States and the

Kurds, especially the Kurdish structures that are included in the PKK sphere of influence, has caused a crisis of confidence among NATO ally Turkey and the United States.

Turkey was shocked by the fact that the United States, in implementing its policies in the region, was cooperating with a wing of the organization, which Turkey considered its biggest national security problem, rather than with its NATO ally Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey considers that large-scale arms grants to this organization pose a major threat to its own security. (Cankurtaran & Genckaya, 2017)

Even if the USA wants a situation in which Turkey will come to terms with the PYD, this seems actually quite not possible. Thus, it can be argued that Turkey and the United States bilateral relations are going through a major breaking process. The fact that the balances in the war in Syria have been going unchanged for a long time has resulted in this fracture still continuing in 2019.

Overall, although the process that started in the Arab Spring was thought to make the entire Middle East a more democratic and prosperous region, this idea has not been realized, on the contrary, the Arab Spring has led to the start of long-running civil wars in many countries such as Syria and Libya. Although the Obama administration has introduced Turkey as a model country for other Middle Eastern countries with its democratic structure and economic development, the content of this promotion has not been established and become obsolete. Moreover, the emergence of ISIS in the Middle East has led to a transformation in American policies and the Obama administration, which does not want to play an active role in the field, has sought actors to realize American interests in the region. The PYD, which operates as the Syrian branch of the PKK, the terrorist organization that Turkey has been fighting for many years, was the most appropriate actor for this situation with its military structure taken over from the PKK.

Turkey and the United States, who shared a common view on Assad's withdrawal from power in the early stages of the Syrian civil war, have failed to share a common approach on Syria once it is understood that Assad will remain in office with Russia's support. Furthermore, the United States' rapprochement with the PYD, which Turkey sees as its greatest national security threat, has led Turkey to develop good relations with Russia in order to balance this.

As a result, the protests that were aiming to Assad's withdrawal from power led to the Syrian Civil War, and this civil war turned into a proxy war in which Russia and the United States engaged in the struggle through groups they supported. As long as the Syrian civil war continues in this balance, it seems difficult for Turkey and the United States to return to the bright days of bilateral relations.

Coup Attempt in Turkey and its Consequences

When looking at the developments in Turkish-American relations, it can be argued that the period between 2016 and 2019 was the worst period between the two states. Realizing that the coup attempt in Turkey on July 15, 2016, was carried out by supporters of Fethullah Gulen, who lives in the United States, has been a major source of tension in the two countries' relations.

On July 15, 2016, a group within the Turkish army took action with the aim of overthrowing the civilian government. However, the military junta, the size of several thousand people, failed thanks to the resistance of the remaining part of the Turkish army and resistance of Turkish public taking to the streets to protest the coup. (Hurriyet Daily News, 2016) After the coup attempt, many civilians captured in military areas who were senior executives of the religious organization of Fethullah Gulen. For instance, it was revealed that Adil Oksüz, who is a university professor and captured at an airbase in Ankara after the coup attempt, planned the coup on the

orders of Fethullah Gulen. Gulen accepted that Oksuz was a member of his religious group, however claimed that the coup was not by his own command. Moreover, many confessor soldiers admitted that they were members of the Gulen organization. However, Gulen still claims that the coup attempt carried out without his knowledge. (Weise, 2017)

The US government did not issue a statement condemning the coup until it suppressed what it described by Turkey as a Fethullahist coup attempt. In addition, granting political protection to Gulen by the United States has been a source of crisis for bilateral relations. According to Turkey, Gulen, who lives in the United States, should have been extradited to Turkey in accordance with the extradition treaty. (Ovali, 2019)

Fethullah Gulen, the leader of a religious and trade community, moved to the United States in 1999 as a result of lawsuits filed against him in Turkey. Moreover, these cases are generally associated with the fact that Gulen and his organization are seeking to destroy Turkey's democratic and secular structure. The Gulen organization, which has been described by the United States as a moderate Islamist, has aimed to spread its ideas all over the world, especially by opening schools in third world countries. In addition, the organization, which has a closed organizational structure, is organized in the form of ranks and lower level members affiliated to those ranks. (Ozel, 2016)

After 2002 the organization was strengthened by using the domestic political environment in Turkey. Besides, after September 11, the United States has started to support moderate Islamist groups. Thus, American support for moderate Islamic groups has made it easier for the organization to achieve international legitimacy.

As a result, the organization had reached a serious power in Turkey. Furthermore, in order to govern the country for its own purposes, the organization attempted a coup on July 15, 2015, with the participation of soldiers and police members of the organization. (TRT World, 2019)

The coup attempt, which took place in the last months of the Obama era, also has a major impact on Trump-era Turkey-US relations. As a result of the coup attempt, Turkey had sought to find new allies to balance the United States, which Turkey considers to be pursuing policies against it. Furthermore, the biggest impact of the coup attempt on Turkish foreign policy has been Turkey's rapprochement with Russia. (Ovali, 2019)

The detention of Andrew Brunson in Turkey in 2017 who is an American pastor living in Turkey, on the grounds that he was a member of the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization, in addition to the detention of a Turkish citizen named Metin Topuz, who worked at the Consulate General of the United States of America, drew a great response from the United States. (Hurriyet Daily News, 2019)

The American government's response to these arrests has been of unprecedented harshness between the two countries. Furthermore, in response to these detentions, which took place during the Trump administration, the United States has halted nonimmigrant visa issuance from its consulates in Turkey. On the other hand, Turkey has announced that it has stopped issuing visas to American citizens in accordance with the principles of reciprocity. (Moore, 2017) The two countries lifted their sanctions against each other after a while. The sanctions imposed by the two countries against each other were lifted after a period of time, and in addition, Pastor Brunson, a US prisoner in Turkey, was released and returned to the United States. (BBC, 2018) Nevertheless, the skeptical attitude of the two countries towards each other in bilateral relations still continues. The main reason for this is that conflicts of interest in the Syrian Civil War and the consequences

of the coup attempt in Turkey have turned into a stress test for the two countries. Thus, the two countries, which have defined themselves as strategic partners for many years, today perceive each other as potential threats.

Obama Administration Period Turkey-US Economic Relations

The United States, which has the world's largest economy, also has the world's largest market. Moreover, the US is the world's largest source of foreign capital, according to World Bank data (2019).

It has always been important for Turkey, which has the seventeenth largest economy in the world and the biggest in the Middle East, to attract American investments and sell goods to the US market. In this respect, with the effects of the global crisis at the beginning of the Obama era, the FED's monetary expansion policy and the support of the whole world with cheap dollars was critical support for the Turkish economy. (Spicer, 2019)

Generally, Turkey, one of the countries least affected by the global economic crisis, was one of the countries that attracted the most foreign investors during this period, which started in 2007 and lasted until 2013. Furthermore, the hot money flow towards Turkey had made Turkey one of the countries with the fastest growth rates in the world after China. For instance, according to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute, the average growth rate of Turkey was 5.6% between 2008 and 2016. (TUIK, 2017)

This economic growth in Turkey also affected the way Turkish foreign policy was implemented. Politically, Erdogan's government started to pursue a more independent policy than the US by taking power from the growing economy. However, in addition to the Fed's

announcement in 2013 that it would halt monetary expansion, Turkey's deteriorating level of democracy has led to a gradual decline in investments in Turkey.

Contractionary economic policies implemented by the FED in the post-2013 period caused the beginning of a bad period for the Turkish economy, which needs a flow of hot money to support its economic growth.

According to 2016 data, the United States is Turkey's fifth largest export market and makes 4.4% of its exports to the United States. Nevertheless, when the Turkish-US trade data is examined, it is seen that the actual trade volume is quite low. For instance, while Turkey exports 6.3 billion dollars to the United States, it imports from the US 11.1 billion dollars. (MFA, 2019)

Overall, it is seen that Turkey-USA economic relations do not have as much breadth and depth as political relations. Therefore, while Turkey has closer ties with European countries in which it is in the customs union in its economic relations, it has comprehensive relations with the United States in its political relations.

Conclusion

Obama era Turkey-US relations can be described as a period that started well but ended badly. Initially, Turkey was introduced as a model country to Muslim Middle Eastern countries. However, by the end of the Obama era, bilateral relations had deteriorated to an unprecedented degree throughout its history. The diverging interests of Turkey and the United States are the biggest reason why this situation has arisen. Turkey has started to conduct foreign policy independent of the West and has a desire to become a regional and then global power. Along with the consequences of the Arab Spring and the Syrian civil war, the foreign policy interests of the two countries have entered a crossroads.

CHAPTER 5: THE VOLATILE COURSE OF TURKEY-US RELATIONS

Introduction

Since the end of the Second World War, Turkey and the United States have been two states that call themselves as strategic partners. Thus, when looking at the historical structure of bilateral relations, it can be seen as the cooperation of the two democratic states with each other. Therefore, the United States has been a supporter of Turkey while Turkey has been making democratization reforms throughout the twentieth century.

Turkey, which formed NATO's southeastern border during the Cold War, is host to seven American military bases, some of which are critical. Furthermore, the critical geopolitical importance of Turkey being the point at which the European and Asian continents intersect causes Turkish-American relations to be not only democracy and ally-based, but also interest-oriented. For instance, throughout the Cold War, the US propagandized that it was the leader of the free world. However, during the Cold War, there were three military coups made against elected governments in Turkey in 1960, 1971 and 1980, and the United States developed good relations with all of them. In this case, it is understood that the United States is taking exception to countries with which it has critical interests, such as Turkey. Therefore, even if the United States has a liberal discourse in its foreign policy towards Turkey, it is taking actions aimed at maximizing interest.

When the differences of America's discourse and action are evaluated through the theory of constructivism, the US's view of Turkish and Muslim identity can be understood more easily. Furthermore, I strongly argue that, President Clinton, one of the most prominent supporters of the

Democratic Peace Theory, President Bush, who applied offensive realism and sought to establish American hegemony, and the idealistic Obama, who espoused the functionality of international institutions, have similar foreign policy approaches to Turkey during their presidency periods.

Does Turkey's Level of Democratic Development Affect Bilateral Relations?

In order to understand whether the level of democracy and human rights practices in Turkey a variable in the capacity are to affect Turkey-US relations, a periodical comparison is required. Turkey's progress on democracy and human rights are published annually as a report by the European Union. Furthermore, Freedom House publishes comprehensive reports on Turkey every year. Thus, in addition to Turkey's level of democracy, which can be measured by the reports of these two organizations, the course of Turkey-US relations will be examined, and it will be understood how important democracy and human rights are in bilateral relations.

According to Freedom House's 2019 report, the United States is one of the most democratic countries, although it has suffered erosion in its democracy on some issues in recent years. (Freedom House, 2019) Therefore, it could argue that the change of president and governments does not have a significant impact on the development level of the U.S. democracy. On the other hand, Turkey has made many reforms in the field of democracy and human rights in order to become a full member of the European Union. Thus, only Turkey's level of democratic development is might affect bilateral relations.

In her study, Evren Balta (2018) measured Turkey's level of development using the Freedom House data set to cover the period from 1972 to 2018. Furthermore, in the graph where seven points are given to the highest level of democracy, one point is given to not free countries.

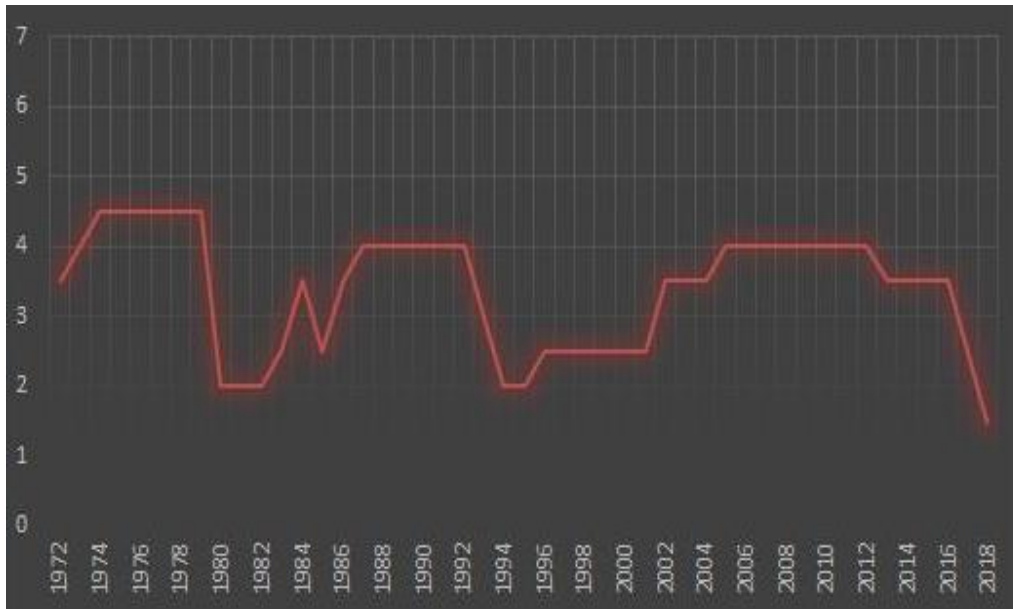


Figure 1: (Freedom House Turkey Democracy Index, 1972-2018)

As can be seen, the level of Turkey's democracy is following a fluctuating trend. Moreover, during this time period, when Turkish democracy experienced various breakdowns, Turkey-US relations also followed a fluctuating course. For instance, according to the table, Turkey has reached its most democratic level in 1974. However, this year also coincides with the time period when Turkey-US relations were at their worst, and the US imposed an embargo on Turkey.

While examining the effect of democracy on Turkey-U.S. relations, it is also going to be beneficial to evaluate the democratic peace theory. Democratic Peace Theory acknowledges that a state's form of government determines its foreign policy behavior. Accordingly, states which governed by a democratic regime are more prone to peace and do not fight under almost any circumstances because of the cooperation they have developed with each other. (Buyukbas & Atici, 2013)

The fact that after the Cold War neoliberalism was more popular than other international relations theories led to the democratic peace theory being considered as an important international

relations theory. However, the studies carried out by Western scholars on the democratic peace theory date back much earlier. Therefore, the theory, whose intellectual background is based on Immanuel Kant and his idea of eternal peace, has been the main focus of many studies since the 70s and 80s. For instance, in their studies examining the wars between the years of 1816-1965, Melvin Small and J. David Singer (1972) concluded that democratic states did not fight each other between these years. Furthermore, at the end of the 80s, liberal scholars were increasingly focused on the study of the theory of democratic peace with the influence of the neoliberal atmosphere of the period. Yet more, Jack Levy determined the democratic peace theory as a "new scientific law" in 1988. (Buyukbas & Atici, 2013)

The common point of the criticism of the realist scholars towards the Democratic Peace Theory is that the peace between the democratic countries is not because of their democratic regimes, but because of their shared interests which arising from their perception of common threats. (Spiro, 1994) Thus, it can be argued that the reason why democracy is not a leading factor in Turkey-US bilateral relations is the different perception of threats and different interests.

Turkey has accelerated its democratization efforts after 1999 in order to align with the European Union. Furthermore, democratization moves carried out with the aim of becoming a full member of the European Union continued when Erdogan's government came to power in 2002.

According to the 2003 Turkish progress report published by the European Union, the Turkish government has initiated reforms on transparency, human rights and democratization topics. In addition, according to the European Union, which refers to the fair elections, and the improvements in freedom of speech, Turkey is implementing strong reforms towards democratization. (DPT, 2003) However, when Turkey-US relations were analyzed in 2003, it is

seen that one of the biggest bilateral relations crises that took place after the Cold War occurred this year.

The Turkish parliament's decision on March 1, 2003 that US troops cannot use Turkish territory for the invasion of Iraq caused bilateral relations to suffer their worst since the U.S embargo in 1974. Thereby, this shows us that the two democratic states can have disagreements regardless of their democratic development if they have different interests. Furthermore, this disagreement between the two democratic countries could have even lead to an armed conflict, as mentioned earlier in the study. For instance, In July 2003, US soldiers carried out an operation against the Turkish Special Forces soldiers' quarter in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq and detained them. Hence this shows how close two democratic states can come to armed conflict if they share different interests.

Another important year that can be examined in terms of the link between bilateral relations and democracy is 2010. According to the Freedom House 2010 report (Freedom House, 2010), Turkey is classified as a partly-free country. In addition, the report claimed that Turkey is experiencing a weakening in check and balance system and that self-censorship is being applied in universities. Furthermore, the 2010 Turkish progress report, published by the European Union (2010), mentions the slowdown in Turkey's democratization reforms and expresses concern about the legal system in Turkey. Despite all these conditions, the Obama administration has tried to develop good relations with Turkey by ignoring its democratic development because it wants to withdraw from the Middle East. In addition to the prolonged Iraq War and its rising costs, the growing threat of China in the Asia-Pacific region has led the Obama administration to view the Middle East as a secondary foreign policy priority. Thu, the Obama administration, which is withdrawing from the Middle East, has preferred NATO ally Turkey to fill the possible power

vacuum. Although Turkey has some problems with democracy, the fact that Iran and Russia have taken the Middle East into their own sphere of influence would pose a major threat to American interests. Therefore, the United States appears to support democratization only as long as it is appropriate for its own foreign policy interests.

According to Turkmen (2016), the main factor determining the direction of Turkish-US bilateral relations during the Obama era was not Turkey's democratic development, but the different positions taken by the two countries in the Syrian Civil War. Furthermore, during this period, the annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices series published by the U.S. State Department (2017) stated some concerns about Turkey, however these concerns were not strong enough to affect bilateral relations. For instance, when the 2016 report is examined, there are serious accusations against Turkey, such as pressure on the owners of media organizations in addition to journalists and the lack of impartiality of the courts.

Overall, when the course of Turkey-US relations is examined over the years, it is seen that Turkey's democratic practices have no or limited effect on the relations of the two countries. Furthermore, although over the time different US presidents have different theoretical foreign policy approaches, it is seen that bilateral relations with Turkey are based on a realist and interest-oriented basis. Therefore, while bilateral relations were on a good course when the two countries had similar foreign policy interests, bilateral relations declined when Turkey wanted to pursue its foreign policy as an independent actor.

Diverging Interests of the Two Countries

When the Soviets were no longer a threat, the Western bloc largely lost its ability to coexist under any circumstances. As the European Union became increasingly institutionalized in the 90s,

moreover its political understanding with the United States became increasingly divergent. As Sinkaya (2011) notes, Trans-Atlantic segregation has emerged more clearly, especially after the September 11 attacks. While the European Union had adopted a more peaceful and dialogue-based foreign policy approach, the US adopted an attitude based on unilateral intervention. (Sinkaya, 2011)

In the first half of the 2000s, Turkey's relations with the EU became the main priority in the implementation of Turkish foreign policy. As a result of Turkey's increasing alignment with the European Union and its evolving level of democracy, the EU started accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005. Furthermore, a critical effect of Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU has been that the traditional structure of Turkish foreign policy has begun to change. Turkey's foreign policy, practice used to be constituted on the axis of security for many years. The main reason was Turkey was sharing the same border with the Soviets during the Cold War. Moreover, after the cold war during the 90s Turkey had to deal with separatist terrorism. However, after 2005 a foreign policy approach based on economic relations and oriented towards cooperation with the Middle East prevailed in Turkey. Western European states have seen this policy change experienced by Turkey as compatible with the EU's Neighborhood Policy and the Middle East approach. (Oran, 2013)

When Turkey's bilateral relations with the United States are examined in the 2000s, there is a volatile course where relations are sometimes good or sometimes bad. Although the Cold War period was allied with Turkey-USA as a strategic ally against the Soviet threat, the new conditions brought by the globalizing world has changed the structure of the bilateral relations and led to a new era in which relations were interest-oriented. Erdogan's government, which was in

power in Turkey after 2002, has implemented a foreign policy approach aimed at more independent and regional leadership.

When Erdogan's government took office, he tried to develop good relations with the American government. Furthermore, in this period, it was seen as an important element for the United States to gain the support of Turkey, which it saw as an effective regional power in implementing its Middle East Policy. (Sinkaya, 2011) However, the first step for Turkish Foreign Policy to start to pursue an independent foreign policy out of the influence of the USA was with the Iraq War. The fact that the Turkish Parliament did not allow the United States to use Turkish territory to invade Iraq was an unusual shock for the United States.

The lack of authority in the north of Iraq after the Iraq War led the terrorist organization PKK to increase its influence again. However, the US administration has not allowed Turkey for a long time to take action against the PKK in northern Iraq. Thus, Turkey has increased its relations with other regional countries, Syria and Iran, in order to ensure its national security, as it is under the impression that the PKK, which it sees as the biggest national threat, was being protected by the United States. As can be seen, different perceptions of threats and differing interests between the two countries lead to a crisis of trust and new crises in relations.

Although Turkey has implemented many democratic reforms, the fact that the European Union blocked Turkey's accession negotiations with lame excuses has led Turkey to move away from the EU perspective. Furthermore, it is important to remember again before examining this issue, the concept of identity has taken a big place in Turkey's EU relations. Turkey has started the process of building a western identity with its new and modern republican regime. In order to build this Western-Turkish identity, it has considered European integration as its main priority and ignored the Middle East. However, the rise of moderate Islamist politics in Turkey and the EU's

refusal to make Turkey a full member of the EU due to its high and Muslim population caused Turkey to change its foreign policy priorities. Therefore, disagreements with the United States and the freezing of Turkey's EU membership process has resulted in a “revisionist” perspective being dominant in Turkey's foreign policy.

As a result of this identity building process of, Turkey has achieved a Muslim population with Western values. However, Turkey, which has the largest economy and military in the Middle East, and the only democratic country other than Israel, reshaped its foreign policy priorities after 2008.

The fact that Turkey wants to increase its influence on the geography of the former Ottoman Empire is considered by some to be a neo-Ottoman politics. (Walton, 2010) However, the new elites, who dominated Turkish foreign policy with Erdogan's power, have considered this as Turkey's reestablishment of brotherhood ties with Middle Eastern countries with whom it shares common culture and history. (Altunisik, 2009)

As Turkey abandoned its Westernization-oriented foreign policy, it was subject to criticism of the axis shift. Furthermore, a large part of these criticisms also originates from the United States. Thereby, Turkey, which does not want to pursue a single-channel foreign policy that follows the United States as it did during the Cold War, has set a new foreign policy course that it considers necessary by its own interests. Therefore, as a powerful regional power, Turkey aims to become a global power with the help of new balances that will occur in the world. In this context, it can be said that the possibility of the formation of the new balance which that Turkey wants emerged with the Arab Spring.

Politically, the best examples of the diverging interests of the United States and Turkey in the Middle East is Syria. Furthermore, taking into account the diverging interests of the two countries through the Syrian Civil War, it can be seen how the differentiation of the two countries interests and changing perceptions of threats have badly affected bilateral relations. While the Obama administration, which did not want to be directly involved in the Middle East problems in the early stages of the civil war, and Turkey, which wanted to expand its sphere of influence, cooperated around their common interests, in the later stages of the civil war the two countries began perceived threats from each other.

Turkey has seen U.S. cooperation with the PYD in the fight against ISIS in Syria as a major national security threat to itself. For instance, President Erdogan said that from Turkey's point of view, ISIS and PYD are both terrorist organizations and argued that to eliminate one terrorist organization, the other should not be supported. (Hurriyet, 2015) On the other hand, Turkey started to get closer to Russia as the U.S continued to support the PYD.

Overall, the diverging interests of Turkey and the United States over time have led the two countries to perceive each other as a threat. For instance, Turkey cooperates with Russia to balance the threat it perceived from the United States, as a response, the United States reorganized the PYD into a regular army, training it and arming it. As Walt points out, states only balance against states that they perceive as a threat to themselves. (Walt, 2007)

Conclusion

When Turkey-USA bilateral relations are examined, it is seen that concepts such as democratic development, human rights and liberal economy do not affect bilateral relations as much as interests. Bilateral relations have always been on a good course when Turkey has carried

out foreign policy in accordance with US interests. However, when Turkey adopted policies that did not align with the United States interests, bilateral relations, regardless of Turkey's democratic development, went into crisis. In this context, while evaluating the course of bilateral relations, it is important to understand the political environment of the two countries and their view of the world. The two countries are experiencing deep disagreements on issues such as the Syrian Civil War. These differences caused the two countries to acquire new allies and implement new policies. As a result, Turkey and the United States began to perceive each other as a threat rather than an ally because of their incompatible interests.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this thesis is to understand better “why the bilateral relations between Turkey and the United States are taking a good or bad course in different periods?” To find out the answer the course of bilateral relations during the periods when different US presidents were in power was examined through process tracing method and case studies. Furthermore, breaking points such as September 11 and the Iraq War, which are important for US political history, have produced results that will change the structure of Turkey-US bilateral relations. In this respect, it was examined whether the changes in bilateral relations were due to US foreign policy or a result of Turkey's changing foreign policy dynamics.

First, in order to understand of Turkey's place in the post-Cold War World order, the study examined Turkey-US relations during Clinton's presidency and Turkey's view of the Middle East. In this context, it has been seen that Turkey's membership in NATO forms the institutional infrastructure of bilateral relations. However, the biggest driving force of Turkey's Western-centric foreign policy is Turkey's relations with the EU. When Turkey's relations with the EU have gone well, it has carried out a Western-centric foreign policy. However, whenever Turkey realized that it's not going to join the EU, Turkey sought new allies to balance western countries, including the U.S.

Second, the study focused on Turkey's role in the Middle East politics in George W. Bush's presidency period within the framework of the principles of unilateralism and Bush Doctrine and examined the conflicting interests of the two countries. Therefore, the diverging interests of the

two countries have raised a confidence problem in the bilateral relations. For instance, The PKK terrorist organization, which took advantage of the power vacuum in the north of Iraq as a result of the Iraq War and gathered forces in the region, has been considered a major national security problem by Turkey. Although Turkey had been willing to make democratic reforms and had made progress on human rights, freedom of expression and separation of powers, bilateral relations had been carried out on an interest-based basis. This is one of the biggest indicators of how much Turkey's democratic development has affected the structure of bilateral relations. When the events such as the Iraq War and the Bush Doctrine and the Greater Middle East project are examined, it is seen that as long as Turkey contributes to the implementation of the interests of the United States, bilateral relations are on a good course, otherwise they are in crisis. In this context, bilateral relations are carried out in an interest-oriented and realist structure.

Third, during the Obama presidency, liberal values, international institutions, and the concepts of international cooperation were given great importance from 2008 to 2016. However, the course of Turkey-USA relations continued to be interest-oriented. In the study, the promotion of Turkey as a model country, and the Syrian civil war were examined as two major case studies. Yet, the United States still wants to maintain a lopsided relationship structure of bilateral relations as it did during the Cold War. The single channel structure requires the United States to set foreign policy in line with its interests, and Turkey to accept this policy even if this situation does not completely correspond with its own. Therefore, the fact that Turkey stopped carrying out a Western-oriented foreign policy and adopted an independent foreign policy approach caused bilateral relations to enter into crisis. Furthermore, with the understanding that Turkey cannot become a member of the European Union, it has developed good relations with the Middle East

countries and in addition has sought new allies that will create a balance element in its bilateral relations with the USA and the EU.

Fourth, the study examined the reasons for the fluctuating process in bilateral relations in order to reach a valid conclusion. The democratic development of Turkey and its effect on relations were investigated. For instance, it has been seen that at the beginning of the 2000s, when Turkey scored the highest in democratic development indices such as Freedom House, bilateral relations were easily impacted by issues such as Iraq. Furthermore, in 2010, when Turkey was shown by the Obama administration as a model country for Middle Eastern countries, bilateral relations were on a good course, but that period Turkey abandoned its European Union goals and slowed down its democratic reforms.

Overall, Turkey-US bilateral relations will be carried out within the framework of a strategic partnership unless Turkey adopts an independent foreign policy approach. Turkey's shift away from the Western-centric foreign policy approach results in the differentiation of the interests of Turkey and the United States. Nevertheless, The US's unilateral foreign policy choices, such as in Iraq and Syria, have been instrumental in Turkey's shift away from the Western-based foreign policy. Furthermore, the diverging interests of the two countries and their diverging foreign policy practices have resulted in the perception of the two NATO allies as a threat to each other. As a result, the two countries are forming alliances with different state and non-state actors in the Middle East to balance the threat they perceive from each other.

Future Research

While the US and Turkey bilateral relations were conducted through an anti-Soviet alliance during the Cold War period, the Middle East was the main focus of bilateral relations due to the

increasing importance of the Middle East in the post-Cold War period. Furthermore, when literature on Turkey and the United States relations is reviewed, it is seen that it focuses mostly on these two issues. However, Turkey has a unique geopolitical importance, which is at the intersection of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. In addition, Turkey has the potential to affect its relatives in Central Asian countries. Therefore, the increasing importance of China, and Turkey's position on the Caucasus-Europe-Asia Energy Corridor and Turkey's relationship with minorities in China, such as the Uighurs, are among the topics needs to research in the literature.

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