

T.C
MARMARA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC FACTORS IN UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY
TOWARDS TURKEY DURING AKP ERA**

Master Thesis

HÜSEYİN BATUHAN ŞAR

İSTANBUL,2020

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SUPERVISOR: DR. ÖĞR. ÜYESİ ŞÜKRÜ YAZĞAN

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Sevgili babam Sami ŞAR ve sevgili annem Aşkım ŞAR'a...

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ÖZET

AKP DÖNEMİNDE ABD’NİN TÜRKİYE’YE YÖNELİK DIŞ POLİTİKASINDA İÇ UNSURLARIN ETKİSİ

Soğuk Savaş sonrasında çok boyutlu bir ortaklığa evrilen ABD-Türkiye ilişkileri, literatürde birçok bağlam çerçevesinde incelenmiştir. Ancak, bu incelemeler sırasında ABD-Türkiye ilişkilerinde iç politika unsurlarının dış politika yapım süreçlerindeki etkisi çok fazla çalışılmadı. Bu tez, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki iç politika aktörlerini analiz ederek iç unsurların ikili ilişkideki rolünü belirlemeyi ve literatürdeki boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır. Tez, iç politika faktörlerinin değişen rolünü göstermek için AKP döneminde yaşanan gelişmelere odaklanacaktır. AKP döneminde ABD Dış Politikasında iç faktörlerin Türkiye'ye olan etkisine ışık tutmak için kamuoyu, çıkar grupları, medya ve Kongre'nin dış politika yapım sürecindeki rolü analiz edilecektir. Bu çalışma, AKP döneminde iç politika faktörlerinin ABD dış politikası üzerinde etkili olduğunu kanıtlayacaktır.

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC FACTORS IN UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS TURKEY DURING AKP ERA

US-Turkey relations that have evolved into a multidimensional partnership during the Cold War era have been examined in the literature by various contexts. However, the impact of domestic factors in the foreign policymaking process in this relationship has been understudied. This thesis aims to determine the role of domestic factors in the bilateral relationship by analyzing the domestic factors in the United States and fill the gap in the literature. This thesis will focus on the developments during AKP era to demonstrate the changing role of domestic factors. To shed a light on the impact of domestic factors in the United States Foreign Policy towards Turkey during AKP era this thesis will focus on the role of public opinion, interest groups, media, and the Congress on foreign policymaking process. It will aim to prove that the domestic factors impacted United States foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Armenian Assembly of America
ACIA	American Committee for the Independence of Armenia
ADC	American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
ADL	Anti-Defamation League
AHEPA	American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association
AHI	American Hellenic Institute
AIPAC	The American Israel Public Affairs Committee
AJC	American Jewish Committee
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi /Justice and Development Party
ANCA	Armenian National Committee of America
ATAA	Assembly of Turkish American Associations
ARCDem	American Rojava Center for Democracy
CAATSA	Countering American’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act
CAIR	Council on American-Islamic Relations
FTAA	Federation of Turkish American Associations
HAMAS	Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-’Islāmiyyah /Islamic Resistance Movement
HDP	People’s Democratic Party
IHH	İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı/ Humanitarian Relief Foundation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NNAAC	National Network for Arab American Communities
PKK	Partiya Karkaran Kurdistan /Kurdistan Workers Party
PYD	Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat /Democratic Union Party

YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel / People's Protection Units
TABA	Turkish American Business Association
TCA	Turkish Coalition of America
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
UN	United Nations
US	United States



1. INTRODUCTION

Before the Cold War, the International relations discipline favored “the Great Man” approach, which was based on studying the actions of the leaders to analyze international politics. During the Cold War, use of “the Great Man” approach weakened and it was replaced by a level of state or systemic analysis. The end of Cold War provided new approaches to the discipline and provided a dynamic style over a static one by inserting the diversity of analyzing international relations.¹ Domestic politics was one of the levels of analysis that increased its importance after the Cold War. However, it remains one of the areas that seems to be understudied in Turkey: despite a large number of studies regarding the level of state or system analysis in Turkey, domestic politics did not receive the same attention from Turkish scholars. Role of domestic politics in US-Turkey relations also remained one of the understudied areas in Turkey.

This study aims to answer the following question to fill the gap in the literature regarding the lack of domestic political analysis about US-Turkey relations and pave the way for future studies: Is US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*-Justice and Development Party) Era influenced by domestic factors? This study will focus on public opinion, interest groups, media, and the Congress while analyzing the developments that occurred between 2002 and 2019 during the AKP era. It will try to utilize foreign policy analysis theories to understand/explain the diplomatic developments between two states by using qualitative methods to answer the aforementioned research question.

Studying the relationship between US domestic politics and foreign policy in the context of US-Turkey relations will fill the gap in the literature and pave the way for future studies in two ways. First of all, it will provide a template for understanding the changes in US foreign policy due to domestic factors towards other middle-power countries that have similarities with Turkey. Secondly, it will provide an explanation for ups and downs in the relationship between US and Turkey. While, there exist many studies that used national and international level of analysis to explain the shaky relationship between two states during AKP era, generally they had ignored the role of domestic politics of US in their analysis. Although there are studies

¹ Valerie M.Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, (Maryland: Rowman&Littlefield, 2014), 39.

regarding the role of ethnic interest groups that are influencing US foreign policy towards Turkey, they usually did not include other domestic political actors to their study.²

This study will focus on public opinion, interest groups, media, and the Congress to analyze the influence of domestic factors in US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era because of their influential role in US foreign policy decision-making process and its dynamic nature. “American exceptionalism” makes them an irrefutable element in the US foreign policymaking process. The common feature of these actors is that they influence foreign policy decision-making process from outside. They are not the main bodies that formulate foreign policy but they have a significant impact on the institutions that makes foreign policy such as the Department of State and White House. The main difference between these actors is that while public opinion, interest groups, and media show the social elements in American domestic politics’ influence on foreign policy, the Congress shows the administrative element. The Congress is closer to the state institutions that formulate foreign policy when compared with public opinion, interest groups, and media, but it is not one of the institutions that is “inside” for foreign policymaking process.

AKP era (the period between November 2002 and December 2019) will be the time period of this study because of two reasons. First of all, AKP’s election to the government in November 2002 is considered as a development that fundamentally changed Turkish foreign policy. AKP’s foreign policy approach based on dynamic understanding of foreign policy and seeing Turkey as a “center state” rather than “a bridge” changed the traditional features of Turkish foreign policy. Hence, the aforementioned changes in the approach to foreign policy influenced US-Turkey relations significantly. Although these changes in Turkish foreign policy provided “ups” in US- Turkey relations until 2013, it caused “downs” after that date. Secondly, US domestic politics experienced significant developments during that period. Iraq War of 2003 led to important changes for American domestic politics and its political consequences are still controversial even in 2020. Moreover, rising populism in the country following the election of

² Zeynep Başıoğlu, “Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’nde İç Dış Politika İlişkisi: Lobiler ve Türk Dış Politikasına Etkisi” (Abant İzzet Baysal University 2019).

Firdovsi Khalilov, “Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’nde Türk Lobi Çalışmaları”(Istanbul University,2008).

Erkan Çevik, “Ermeni Sorununun Oluşumu ve ABD’de Görüşülen Yasa Tasarılarının ABD-Türkiye İlişkilerine Etkileri” (Bahçeşehir University, 2017).

Nurhayat Ünlü, “Lobicilik Kavramı ve ABD’de Türk Lobisi” (Marmara University, 2013).

Donald J. Trump as a President caused noteworthy changes in the domestic political atmosphere of the country.

The main hypothesis of this study is that domestic factors have an influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era, and it aims to prove the four following sub-hypotheses to prove the main hypothesis of the study. The hypotheses of the study as follow:

H1: Public opinion has an influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

H2: Interest Groups have an influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

H3: Media has an influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

H4: The Congress has an influence on US Foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

All four hypothesis will be analyzed according to theoretical assumptions derived from foreign policy analysis subdiscipline of international relations because the foreign policy analysis subdiscipline incorporates different perceptions to the issues rather than just perceiving them with one single theoretical perspective. Different theoretical assumptions used in this study sets the methodology of the study. It will use the case study method for data collection and qualitative method for analyzing data. Case study method will be used for data collection process because it is a flexible method that allows multiple data collection methods. It does not limit researcher to strict rules during the data collection process and accelerates the process. The topic includes wide range of complex data due to its large scope and it would be impossible the use other data collection methods that necessitates quantitative analysis due to shortness of time preparing this study. This study will use hermeneutic strategy, which is one of the qualitative analysis methods, because hermeneutic method gives researchers a chance to interpret the data in its socio-historic context. Hence, researcher aims to use hermeneutic strategy to interpret data for the purpose of assessing dynamic changes between two states due to domestic factors and provide the researchers new thoughts and perspectives relating to US-Turkey relations.

The first hypothesis of the study will be tried to be proven by assessing various public opinion polls conducted about American public's attitude towards Middle East and Turkey by different

research companies between the time period of 2002 and 2019. This study chooses public opinion polls to investigate whether public opinion influences US foreign policy towards Turkey as they are assumed to reflect the public's perception related to the foreign policy situations.

The second hypothesis of the study will be assessed by analyzing official letters, statements, and press releases of interest groups in US who has an influence on US-Turkey relations. In addition to primary documents, this study will also benefit from secondary sources in the academic literature regarding the influence of interest groups in US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP era.

The third hypothesis of the study will be assessed by using textual analysis to news contents including editorials, op-eds, columns, and letters published in the Washington Post and New York Times newspapers during the period between November 2002 and December 2019. Despite changes in American media in the recent period, these newspapers continue to dominate the national news cycle and play a crucial role in informing the US public about foreign policy developments. They are considered as the cornerstones of American media.

The fourth hypothesis will be proved by textually analyzing hearings and legislations in the Congress occurred during AKP Era regarding US-Turkey relations. Hearings and legislations in the Congress have been chosen for textual analysis because they reflect the perceptions of American lawmakers regarding the foreign policy situation. While the debates and remarks in the hearings show lawmakers' individual normative perceptions regarding Turkey, legislations show their institutional/collective perceptions regarding Turkey.

This study is divided into three chapters (excluding the introduction and the conclusion) to answer the research question and prove the main hypothesis. In the first chapter, the literature on the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy in US will be reviewed in five subchapters. First, the foreign policymaking process in US will be explained by including different levels of foreign policymaking. Also, an analytical model will be used to show how different elements influence the process both from inside and outside. Second, the literature on public opinion and foreign policy will be analyzed to underline the changes of public opinion studies and the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy decision making process

in the 20th century. Third, it will explain how, when, and in which ways interest groups influence the foreign policymaking process. Fourth, media's changing importance for the foreign policymaking process in the literature will be analyzed. Fifth, the Congress's ways of influencing the foreign policymaking process will be explained in detail. This chapter not only aims to allocate theoretical assumptions to the study but also aims to explain the changes in domestic politics' role for US foreign policy.

The second chapter of the study will explain the determinants and major issues in US-Turkey relations during AKP Era. It will not only provide historical background to the study but also descriptively explain the major developments in the relationship during AKP Era. It will include four subchapters. While the first subchapters aim to analyze determinants and major issues in US-Turkey relations before AKP Era, the following three subchapters will analyze the determinants and major issues in US-Turkey relations during AKP Era. In the following three subchapters, developments and major issues in US-Turkey relations during AKP Era will be analyzed according to changes presented by three different presidents that governed US during that time period: namely George W. Bush, Barack H. Obama, and Donald J. Trump.

In the third chapter, primary and secondary documents regarding the impact of domestic factors in US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era will be assessed. This chapter will first underline the changes in the role of domestic politics in US foreign policy and later will assess its impact on US-Turkey relations. The chapter will be divided into four subchapters. In the first subchapter, the impact of public opinion on US foreign policy towards Turkey will be analyzed to show how public opinion influenced US foreign policy during AKP Era. In the second subchapter, primary and secondary documents will be reviewed to show the impact of interest groups in US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era. In the third subchapter, all news contents in the New York Times and Washington Post will be reviewed to find out the impact of interest groups in US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era. In the fourth and last subchapter, the impact of the Congress in US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era will be assessed by reviewing the primary documents.

2. DOMESTIC POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY RELATIONSHIP

The diversity of the actors in domestic politics, not only increases the importance of domestic politics in foreign policy making process but also causes a complex relationship. This chapter will analyze complex relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy in Foreign Policy Analysis to explain this complex relationship. The role of public opinion, domestic interest groups, media, and the Congress in US foreign policy decision making process will be discussed in details to provide theoretical framework and to show how these actors shape foreign policy making process in US. Although these four domestic politics actors influence and interact with each other in particular situations, in this chapter, the relationship of these four domestic politics actors with foreign policy will be analyze separately.

2.1. Foreign Policy Formulation in US

The foreign policy decision-making process in US is a complex process involving multiple domestic and foreign policy actors. The complexity of the foreign policy making process comes from the unification of various analytical models.³ It is necessary to use analytical models to understand this complex process. According to Brewer and Teitelbaum, analytical models are the generalizations we use to understand the nature of the American Foreign Policymaking process.⁴

Democratic Domestic Politics Factors Model that developed by the writer will be used to analyze the foreign policy-making process of US towards Turkey. It combines Democratic and Pluralistic & Bureaucratic Politics analytical models of Brewer and Teitelbaum. The Democratic Domestic Politics Factors Model is one part of the analytical model because it shows that the foreign policymaking process is formed by the indirect effect of the public on decision-making bodies.⁵ The pluralistic and bureaucratic politics model is another part of the analytical model because it demonstrates that the interest groups are influential in decision-

³ Thomas L.Brewer and Lorne Teitelbaum, *American Foreign Policy: A Contemporary Introduction* (News Brunswick: Prentice Hall, 1992),24.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 33.

makers due to their ability to affect public opinion.⁶ In addition to the aforementioned analytical models, media and the Congress are also elements that are included in the analytical model to illustrate how foreign policy making process in US works. According to the Democratic Domestic Politics Factors Model, the foreign policymaking process is an incessant negotiation process that consists of the interaction and collaboration of multiple actors.⁷

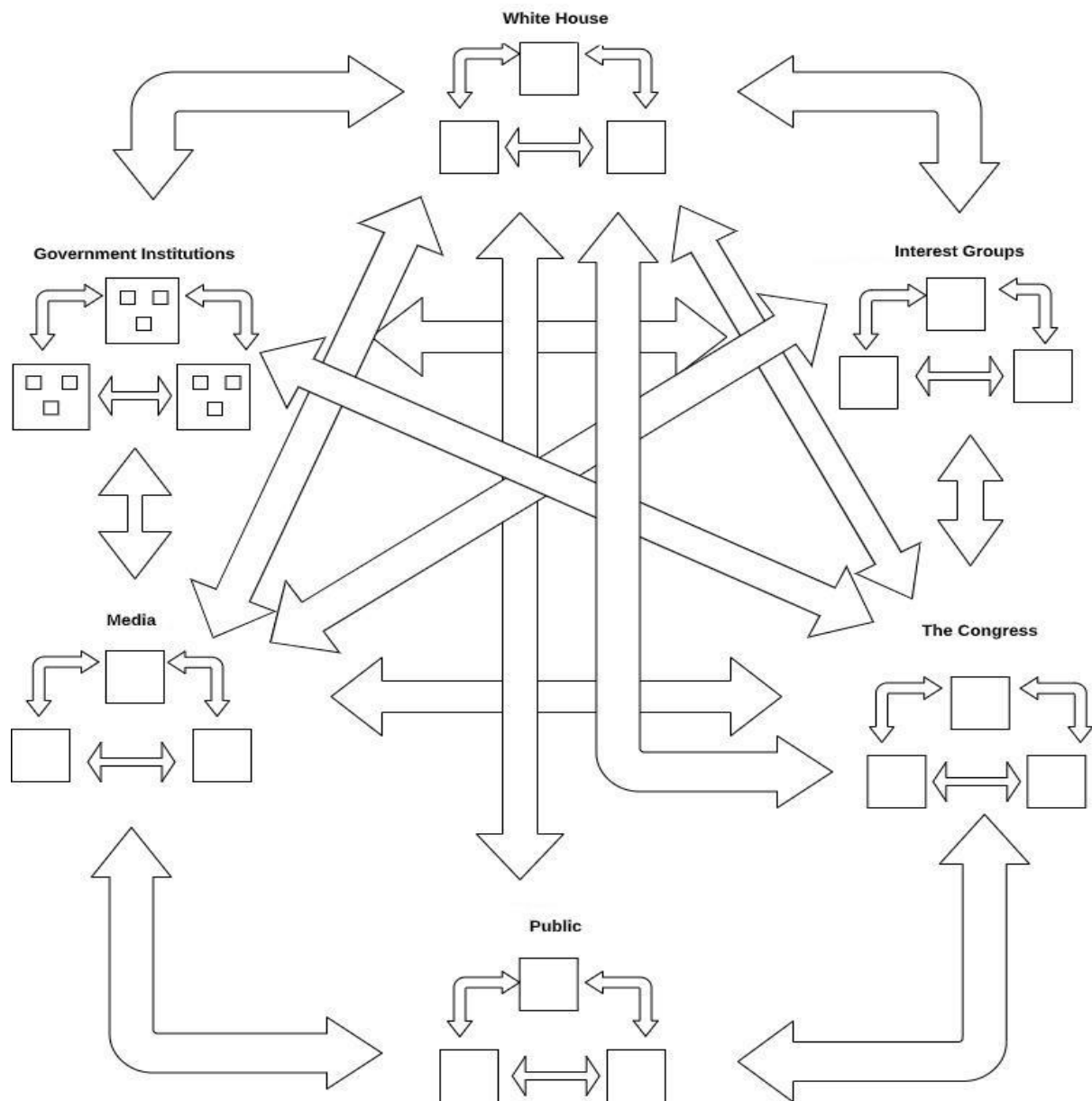


Figure 1: Democratic Domestic Politics Factors Model

⁶ Ibid., 35.

⁷ Ibid.

Although the Democratic Domestic Politics Factors model is a useful tool to explain the domestic factors that affect US foreign policy decision-making processes, it is inadequate to explain the whole process. Therefore, US foreign policymaking process can only be analyzed completely by using different levels of analysis. Different levels of analysis in US foreign policymaking process will not be explained in detail due to the nature of the study, but it will be briefly explained in this section to figure out the basics of the foreign policymaking process in US.

In democratic societies, leaders cannot be decision-makers in foreign policy alone, but each leader is actively involved in different dimensions in the foreign policymaking process. Hence, leaders in US are one of the fundamental aspects of the foreign policymaking process due to the democratic structure of the country.⁸ Thus, feelings and thoughts of leaders play a crucial role in the decision-making process. Their set of social values, the place where they were born and live, family issues and professional background affects their judgment in foreign policy issues.⁹ The decision-making process of leaders can also be determined by the severity of the foreign policy situations. In crises, leaders can become more influential because public and government organizations rely on a strong authority that can give fast decisions.¹⁰ During non-crisis situations, leaders' influence diminishes and they influence by domestic political actors such as public, media, and the Congress. Despite their diminished influence, they continue to make final decisions on foreign policy issues,¹¹ because according to US Constitution, presidents can appoint and dismiss executive officials, negotiate treaties, sign or veto legislation, directs foreign policy through communicating and commanding government organizations.¹²

Although the leaders are authorized use vast powers in the foreign policymaking process in US, they cannot make decisions alone. In modern states, foreign policy is formulated by large government organizations, not by a single individual, and therefore the process of foreign policymaking should include group level of analysis. Foreign policy decisions are generally

⁸ Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 40.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 43-50.

¹⁰ T. Knecht and M. S. Weatherford, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Stages of Presidential Decision Making," *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006): 706.

¹¹ Knecht and Weatherford, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Stages of Presidential Decision Making", 710-711.

¹² U.S. Const. art. 2.

made within the framework of bureaucratic traditions. During the decision-making process in bureaucracies, small groups can conflict with each other because of conflict of interest, but, conflicts can be resolved through coalitions among small groups or the nature of organizational behavior.

When a foreign policy problem arises, the most important factor that determines how to decide at the group level depends on whether that foreign policy problem is routine or non-routine.¹³ If a foreign policy problem is a routine problem, the solution to that problem would be taken within the framework of the organization's daily functioning. In non-routine foreign policy problems, government organizations change their response mechanism and decide in small groups.¹⁴ In crises, although the President's role increases due to the severity of the situation small-groups within the bureaucracy can still be influential in the process because the President has to listen and take into consideration their advice and ideas.¹⁵

One of the most important factors affecting groups and individuals in the foreign policymaking process is the cultural and national identity of the states. Scholars started to emphasize the role of identity and culture in foreign policy processes with the end of the Cold War.¹⁶ Countries perceive the world within the framework of the values that constitute their identities and cultures and thus formulate their foreign policies accordingly. The values that constitute the foreign policy of US is derived from the universalism that depends on liberalism and supremacy of individualism.¹⁷ Universalism of US constituted by the belief that US morality, which depends on the principles of liberalism and Kantian ideas, should be spread in the entire world so that the world can be a safer place.¹⁸ The universalism of US not only paved the way for US exceptionalism in international politics but also caused decision-makers and the public in US to perceive the world as black or white.¹⁹ According to the American public and the decision-makers, the values represented by US are morally "good" and should be expanded to ensure a

¹³ Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 73.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 101.

¹⁶ Ibid., 117.

¹⁷ Nur Çetinoğlu Harunoğlu, *Düzen-Adalet İkileminde Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası ve ABD ile İlişkiler*, 1st ed. (İstanbul: Derin Yayınları, 2016), 54-63.

¹⁸ Ibid., 59.

¹⁹ Ibid.

world peace, but the values represented on the opposite parties are “evil” and these values need to be eradicated.²⁰

Culture and identity form the idealistic features of US foreign policy, while the international system and national attributes constitute its realist features. The international system and national attributes “set the stage” for other factors to influence the foreign policy decision-making process.²¹ Decision-makers have to take into consideration national attributes such as size, natural resources, geography, demographics, political system, and military capabilities.²² Decision-makers should also take into consideration the international system because the system determines the nature of foreign policymaking. Whether the international system is unipolar, bipolar or multipolar can change how a country decides foreign policy. US decision-makers establish US foreign policy according to the nature of the international system.²³

2.2. Public Opinion and Foreign Policy Formulation

Studies on the role of public opinion in foreign policy emerged in the 20th century, although the main argument about the structure of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy can be traced back to the 17th century. The ideas of Niccolo Machiavelli and Giovanni Botero inspired a generation of historians as well as political scientists to establish their arguments according to the law of “the primacy of foreign policy”.²⁴ The law of “the primacy of foreign policy” started a conservative and state-centric approach in political science studies. According to this law, domestic politics’ effects on foreign policy are limited, therefore, international necessities shape states’ foreign policy formulation.²⁵

In the 20th century scholars of International Relations theory continued to formulate their views according to “the primacy of foreign policy” law. Both idealist and realist scholars abstained from making revisionist arguments regarding dichotomy between domestic politics and foreign policy. Furthermore, almost all of the realist scholars embraced this law and established their

²⁰ Ibid., 61.

²¹ Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 161.

²² Ibid., 162-173.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Elisebetta Brighi, *Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics and International Relations, Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics and International Relations: The Case of Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 11.

²⁵ Ibid.

works according to the dichotomy between domestic politics and foreign policy.²⁶ Classical realist scholars such as Hans J. Morgenthau and George Kennan stated that public opinion's effect on foreign policy is volatile and its influence on foreign policy should be limited because of its emotional structure.²⁷ According to Morgenthau, governments should not give concessions to the public regarding foreign policy issues. Furthermore, they should consider themselves as the leader of public opinion and should accept the volatility of public opinion to decrease the negative consequences of public opinion in foreign policy.²⁸

While the realist school's assumptions regarding the role of public opinion based on rational interpretations, some scholars also provided empirical evidence about the volatility of public opinion.²⁹ Gabriel Almond analyzed public opinion by studying Gallup polls and Americans' perceptions about the most important issues to prove that public opinion is volatile.³⁰ Furthermore, Almond agreed with the ideas of American journalist Walter Lippman, who had stated that public opinion lacks structure and coherence to influence foreign policy. Lippman's conclusions about public opinion derived from his observations of American public opinion during World War I and the Russian Revolution. Lippman argued that people's assumptions derive from their biased perception and consolidated by mass media. Public opinion was not effective to prevent the outcomes of the aforementioned events because it had no impact on foreign policy formulation.³¹

Almond not only provided empirical support to Lippman's views about public opinion but also contextualized these views with his "mood theory". According to Lippman, public opinion's volatility and mood-driven characteristic constrained decision-makers in foreign policy formulation. Almond argued that when people are dealing with the issues that directly influence them such as local improvements, taxation, and social security; people tend to develop rational decisions on issues. However, on other issues that remotely affect them, such as foreign policy, they tend to react to them according to their moods. According to Lippman, a short term foreign

²⁶ Mehmet Osman Çatı, "Foreign Policy and the Internal/External Distinction: An Integrative Approach to Conceptualisation," *Siyasal Bilimler Dergisi* 5, no. 1 (2017): 69.

²⁷ Jean Frédéric Morin and Jonathan Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 169.

²⁸ James Headley, Andreas Reitzig, and Joe Burt, *Public Participation in Foreign Policy*, ed. James Headey, Andreas Reitzig, and Joe Burton, *Palgrave Macmillan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 10.

²⁹ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 169.

³⁰ Gabriel A. Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950), 72.

³¹ Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922), 135.

policy crisis, for example, an imminent threat of war, may cause people to act with anger or a sense of betrayal on issues that normally could be regarded as diplomacy.³²

Almond's contextualization of Lippman's assessments about public opinion with empirical studies led to the establishment of "Almond-Lippman Consensus". The Almond Lippman consensus continued to be effective until the Vietnam escalation at the end of the 1960s and it based on three major propositions. First, public opinion is quite volatile and it could lead to catastrophic consequences in foreign policy. Second, the public is not essentially interested in foreign policy and ill-informed. Public opinion lacks structure and coherence. Third, although public opinion can have an impact on foreign policy despite the aforementioned reasons, that effect would be very limited.³³

These three major propositions have been supported by various scholars: For instance, the dean of American diplomatic historians Thomas Bailey who not only had supported the Almond's argument about the mass public's uninterested and uninformed attitude but also stated that effective foreign policy can only be achieved by executive deliberately mislead the public regarding foreign policy issues due to volatility of public opinion.³⁴ Scholars such as Philip Converse focused on public opinion's structure and coherence about foreign policy. Converse's study that was based on the data of the 1950s and 1960s demonstrated that mass and elite opinions regarding the political issue was lacking a real structure or coherence, as well as persistence.³⁵ The impact of public opinion on foreign policy was the main reason why scholars started to pay attention to the field. However, the fear that ill-informed and mood-driven public will constraint American diplomacy to take necessary actions slowly transformed into the idea that public opinion should be led, not followed.³⁶ For example, Bernard Cohen's study regarding public opinion's role on foreign policy bureaucrats in US demonstrated that

³² Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy*, 56.

³³ Ole R. Holsti, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to Almond-Lippman Consensus," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (1992): 442.

³⁴ Thomas Bailey, *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Polic* (New York: Macmillan, 1948).

³⁵ Philip Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. D. E. Apter (New York: Free Press, 1964).

³⁶ Holsti, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to Almond-Lippman Consensus," 444.

according to the state department officials, public opinion not only had limited effect on foreign policy formulation but also it was an entity that should be guided.³⁷

However, Sidney Verba and his team's study about Vietnam War stimulated critics against Almond-Lippman consensus. The catastrophic consequence of the Vietnam War had two fundamental effects on those scholars who were studying public opinion in foreign policy. First of all, scholars who argued the necessity of giving greater power to executives due to the volatility and unreliableness of public opinion have changed their views because of the wrongful acts of US state bureaucrats during the Vietnam War. Even Lippman, who harshly defended public opinion's volatility, criticized Lyndon Johnson administration's policy during Vietnam War and stated that even the public is more informed than administration. Hence, scholars started to question arguments about public opinion's volatility, structure, and coherence.³⁸ The polls conducted by prominent companies such as Gallup, Harris, and others were started to be observed as simple and inadequate to assess the public's opinion on foreign policy issues. The polls were only assessing the people's support or opposition to the Vietnam war but they were inadequate to assess people's views about other alternative solutions in the Vietnam War.³⁹ Sidney Verba and his team's study not only paved the way for comprehensive and independent studies about public opinion but also showed that public opinion was supporting alternative policies like negotiating in the Vietnam war. According to Verba and his team's study, public opinion had consistency about the Vietnam War. Furthermore, people of US were against both the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam and further engagement.⁴⁰ Hence, after Verba and his team's study, researchers started to conduct comprehensive and independent studies about public opinion.⁴¹

³⁷ Bernard Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973).

³⁸ Holsti "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to Almond-Lippman Consensus," 445.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Sidney Verba et al., "Public Opinion and the War in Vietnam," *The American Political Science Review* 61, no. 2 (1967): 317–333.

⁴¹ See also:

John Rielly, *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1979* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1979). ; John Rielly, *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1983*. (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1983).; John Rielly, *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1987* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1987).; John Rielly, *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1991* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1991). ; Jon Hurwitz and Mark Peffley, "Public Images of the Soviet Union," *Journal of Politic*, no. 52 (1990): 3–28. ; Barton Allen, "Conflict and Consensus among American Leaders," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1974): 507–30.; Barton Allen, "Fault Lines in American Elite Consensus," *Daedalus* 109, no. 3 (1980): 1–24. ; Bruce Russett and Elizabeth Hanson, *Interest and Ideology: Foreign Policy Beliefs of American Businessmen* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1975). ; Ole Holsti and James Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs: Vietnam and the Breakdown of Consensus* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984).

William Caspary's insights regarding the volatility of public opinion presented significant criticism to Almond's mood theory. His independent and comprehensive study about the mood of American people regarding significant issues showed that American people possess a stable mood to international events.⁴² John Muller, another scholar who criticized Almond's mood theory, demonstrated that change of public opinion during wars was not coincidental and ill-considered but it was based on casualties of countries.⁴³ Hence, the volatility of public opinion during the international crisis or wars had a linear relationship with some variables.

Although Caspary and Mueller's study provided a significant challenge to Almond-Lippman consensus in the context of the volatility of public opinion, Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro's comprehensive study that analyzed thousands of surveys between 1930 and 1990 regarding public opinions in US finished the Almond-Lippman consensus. When they were analyzing thousands of surveys, they find out that %20 of the questions asked to the public was asked them twice and they analyzed the consistency of the given answers. According to Page and Shapiro's analysis, the fluctuation in public's opinion was less than 10% in the public's answers to the question that were asked twice. Page and Shapiro also concluded that the rapid shift in public opinion during that period of time was caused by a piece of new information. Hence, Page and Shapiro asserted that not only the public opinion was not as volatile as Almond-Lippman consensus claimed it was, but also it has systematic stability that depends on variables.⁴⁴ Page and Shapiro's conclusions regarding the rationality of public opinion had been studied by many other scholars afterward and their thesis supported by further analysis.⁴⁵

Another significant challenge to Almond-Lippman's consensus was against the view that public opinion lacks structure and coherence. With the data provided by Page and Shapiro's study

; James Rosenau and Ole Holsti, "The Domestic and Foreign Policy Beliefs of American Leaders," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32, no. 2 (1988): 248–94.; James Rosenau and Ole Holsti, "The Structure of Foreign Policy Attitudes among American Leaders," *Journal of Politics* 52, no. 1 (1990): 94–125. ; William Chittick and Keith Billingsley, "The Structure of Elite Foreign Policy Beliefs," *Western Political Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1989): 201–24.; Cherly Koopman, Jack Synder, and Robert Jervis, "American Elite Views of Relations with the Soviet Union," *Journal of Social Issues* 45, no. 2 (1990): 119–38. ; Cherly Koopman, Jack Synder, and Robert Jervis, "Theory-Driven vs. Data-Driven Assessments in a Crisis: A Survey of International Security Readers," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 34, no. 4 (1990): 694–722.

⁴² William Caspary, "The Mood Theory: A Study of Public Opinion and Foreign Policy," *American Political Science Review* 64, no. 2 (1970): 536–47.

⁴³ John Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (New York: Wiley, 1973).

⁴⁴ Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, "Foreign Policy and the Rational Public," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32, no. 2 (1988): 211–47. ; Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁴⁵ Bruce Russett, *Controlling the Sword: The Democratic Governance of National Security* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

about public opinion, scholars started to study the structure of public opinion by studying different variables that affect public opinion. Eugene Wittkopf studied public opinion's structure in two axes: one line was consisting of internationalism and isolationism and the other was consisting of conciliation and military action.⁴⁶ Through their studies, these three scholars demonstrated that public opinion was not lacking structure and coherence as Almond-Lippman consensus claimed.

Verba and his team's study also challenged the third major proposition of Gabriel-Almond consensus: limitedness of public opinion's effect on foreign policy. Although leaders were paying attention to public opinion on foreign policy issues even before the escalation of the Vietnam War at the end of the 1960s, public opinion's influence on foreign policy was very limited. Since Franklin D. Roosevelt, US Presidents were using public opinion data in decision-making processes but this public opinion data was not at the center of decision-making processes.⁴⁷ However, the significance of data on public opinion in the US Presidents' decision-making processes increased gradually. While Franklin Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower ignored data on public opinion during decision making on significant foreign policy crises, John F. Kennedy took utmost attention to public opinion during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Kennedy was not eager to escalate further in USA's confrontation with the Soviet Union because he was considering that it would be hard to explain the outcomes to the American public.⁴⁸

After Verba and his team's study, scholars started to present various studies regarding the influence of public opinion on foreign policy and they demonstrated the increasing influence of public opinion on foreign policy. However, while studies regarding the volatility and structure of public opinion demonstrate clarity, studies regarding the influence of public opinion present relativity. Relativity occurs, because the influence of public opinion on foreign policy depends on some conditions and variables.⁴⁹ One of the most distinctive condition is the political regime of states. The influence of public opinion on foreign policy can change depending on whether that state is authoritarian, semi-authoritarian or democracy.⁵⁰ Public

⁴⁶ Eugene Wittkopf, *Faces of Internationalism: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).

⁴⁷ Holsti, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to Almond-Lippman Consensus," 451.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 452.

⁴⁹ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 173.

⁵⁰ Marijke Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis A Comparative Introduction* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2007), 120.

opinion's impact on foreign policy processes is limited in authoritarian regimes because the public is not able to participate in (foreign) policy processes directly. Leaders in authoritarian regimes aim to completely abolish domestic constraints with the purpose of continuing their rule. In authoritarian regimes; citizens are prohibited to join interest groups, media are often captivated by government and polling firms that can measure the public's attitude about policies of the government are not welcomed by the regime. However, leaders in authoritarian regimes do not ignore public opinion completely, they tend to convince public opinion about specific issues to stay in power.⁵¹

In semi-authoritarian regimes, although the public has more influence in foreign policy processes; still the influence of leaders over the public is greater than the influence of public over leaders. The public can have more opportunities to actively participate in foreign policy processes.⁵² The public has a wider chance to protest an unpopular opinion than in authoritarian regimes and the public can demonstrate its discontent to leaders via elections. Usually, public opinion in semi-authoritarian regimes aims to take action to force the government to change policy rather than changing the government. However, public opinion in semi-authoritarian regimes is more prone to be directed because governments usually control media coverage, information flow, and interest groups to prevent public opinion to be more effective in the government's policies, and thus the impact of public opinion on foreign policy processes in semi-authoritarian regimes is limited.⁵³

Public opinion is more influential in democratic regimes because the public has several channels to demonstrate its reaction against policies of the government. In democratic regimes, the public is capable to join interest groups, polling firms are more free to operate, and media is usually free from the government's pressure.⁵⁴ Leaders are not able to conduct foreign policy processes with a small group of people because they are ultimately accountable to the public in their foreign policy ventures. According to the "two-level game" established by Robert Putnam, leaders are conducting diplomacy in two different levels when they are negotiating international agreements and situations. Leaders negotiate international agreements and situations with other

⁵¹ Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis A Comparative Introduction*, 121.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid, 122.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

leaders at the first level but also negotiate with domestic elements at the second level. Therefore, foreign policy processes in democratic regimes are conducted according to the delicate balance between the first level and second level.⁵⁵

While the public indirectly influences foreign policy processes in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes, it directly influences foreign policy processes in democratic regimes. In democratic regimes such as the US the public can have a direct impact on foreign policy processes in two ways: elections and expressing views through public opinion polls.⁵⁶ According to a wide range of studies about elections' importance for foreign policy, voters tend to punish leaders that pursue unpopular policies in the ballot box.⁵⁷ Three criteria must be met for elections to have an influence on foreign policy: the public should have consistent and coherent attitudes on foreign policy issues, the public should be well aware of these attitudes during the ballot box and the political parties should include different foreign policy perspectives so that voters can differentiate between candidates.⁵⁸ Public opinion polls conducted by polling firms can also influence foreign policy processes because leaders in democratic regimes need these polls to anticipate the public's reactions to certain policies before elections. Leaders can benefit from these polls about foreign policy of a state to reduce the damage of an erroneous policy or shape public opinion according to different perspectives.⁵⁹

States' differing political regimes provide a variable that affects the possible influence of public opinion on foreign policy because it is intertwined with the degree of state's independence and a state's internal and external independence can affect the influence of public opinion.⁶⁰ Internal independence of states depends on the state's institutional decentralization because the institutionally decentralized state will be more prone to influence of public opinion than the institutionally centralized state. External independence of states depends on economic and

⁵⁵ Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization*, 1988.

⁵⁶ Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis A Comparative Introduction*, 122.

⁵⁷ See also:

James Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (1994): 577–90; Bruce Bueno De Mesquita et al., "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (1999): 791–807; Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam III, "Democracy, War Initiation, and Victory," *The American Political Science Review* 92, no. 3 (1998): 377–89; Catarina P. Thomson, "Public Support for Economic and Military Coercion and Audience Costs," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 18, no. 2 (2016): 407–21.

⁵⁸ John H. Aldrick et al., "Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9, no. 1 (2006): 496.

⁵⁹ Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis A Comparative Introduction*, 123.

⁶⁰ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 174.

military independence and its engagement with international bodies because these dependencies and engagement will make the state more sensitive to public pressure.⁶¹

Another condition that affects public opinion's influence on foreign policy processes is the importance of the situation and how decision-makers want to present the situation to the public. The public will behave differently in crisis and non-crisis situations in foreign policy. During crisis situations, the public will give utmost attention to a problem in the beginning due to the importance of situation and media coverage. Although decision-makers define a foreign policy problem as a crisis, the public's utmost attention to the problem will give decision-makers less freedom in foreign policymaking.⁶² Hence, in a crisis situation decision-makers will take the public into consideration during the implementation stage of the decision-making procedure due to the direct influence of the public. In contrast, the public's attention to a problem can be more limited to a short period of time during non-crisis situations due to the lack of importance of the situation, although it can continue to occupy decision-makers' agenda for a long period of time without significant media coverage. During non-crisis situations, decision-makers will take the public into consideration only during the decision phase because of the lack of long-term attention of the public. Thus, decision-makers take the public into account in both crisis and non-crisis situations, but at different phases of decision-making.⁶³

The last condition that affects the influence of the public on foreign policy decision-making processes is decision-makers' beliefs. Decision-makers' beliefs indirectly affect foreign policy-making processes. While other conditions usually play a significant part in democratic regimes, decision-makers' beliefs also play significant role in non-democratic regimes as decision-makers' beliefs do not depend on election pressure. Nonetheless, decision-makers' normative and strategic beliefs play a significant role when they are making decisions. Normative beliefs of decision-makers can urge leaders to consider taking the public into account as one of the moral obligations of a decision-maker. According to their strategic beliefs, decision-makers can

⁶¹ Thomas Risse Kappen, "Public Opinion, Domestic Structure, and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies," *World Politics* 43 (1991): 479–512. ; Steve Chan and William Safran, "Public Opinion as a Constraint against War: Democracies' Responses to Operation Iraqi Freedom," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2, no. 2 (2006): 137–56.

Gerry C. Alons, "Predicting a State's Foreign Policy: State Preferences between Domestic and International Constraints," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3, no. 3 (2007): 211–32. ; Sarah Kreps, "Elite Consensus as a Determinant of Alliance Cohesion: Why Public Opinion Hardly Matters for NATO-Led Operations in Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6, no. 3 (2010): 191–215.

⁶² Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis A Comparative Introduction*, 124.

⁶³ T. Knecht and M. S. Weatherford, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Stages of Presidential Decision Making," *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006): 710.

think that public support is one of the crucial aspects of success and can take the public into account during decision-making processes. Hence, the two types of beliefs can increase the influence of public opinion on foreign policy.⁶⁴

While public opinion affects foreign policy-making processes by influencing decision-makers, decision-makers can also influence public opinion by benefitting from the public's attention to a foreign policy problem. While most of the scholars stated that decision-makers' efforts to direct the influence of public opinion is successful, others argued that the efforts of decision-makers were inadequate to direct the influence of public opinion.⁶⁵ They also stated that public opinion is initially directed by political elites rather than decision-makers or leaders.⁶⁶ However, most of the scholars who study the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy established theories to explain how decision-makers' aim to influence public opinion about foreign policy issues since the end of Almond-Lippman consensus. Two significant theories paved the way for understanding how decision-makers influence public opinion: rally around the flag and diversionary theory of war.

According to the rally around the flag theory, the public will rally around its leader for short a period of time in case of an international crisis or a war. The term coined by John Mueller and used by many scholars after the Cold War to explain the reasons for conflicts. Usually, leaders who are close to losing their power apply rally around the flag phenomenon to increase their low ratings for a short period of time. Leaders tend to follow the phenomenon particularly during election years due to the phenomenon's temporary effects, but it does not necessarily happen during election years. Leaders can benefit from the phenomenon to bolster their grip on power or for materializing certain policy promises.⁶⁷ The events that trigger the rally around the flag phenomenon do not necessarily have to be military attacks. Rally around the flag phenomenon can be triggered by both negative events such as economic sanctions, diplomatic crisis or refugee influx and by positive events such as scientific discoveries, international summits, and sporting victories. All of these events can persuade people to unite around the

⁶⁴ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 175.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 177.

⁶⁶ Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *Rızanın İmalatı*, ed. Ender Abadoğlu, 1st ed. (BGST Yayınları: İstanbul, 2012); Christopher Witko, "Cold War Belligerence and U.S. Public Opinion toward Defense Spending," *American Politics Research* 31, no. 4 (2003): 379–403; Matthew S. Levendusky and Michael C. Horowitzb, "When Backing Down Is the Right Decision: Partisanship, New Information, and Hearing Costs," *Journal of Politics* 74, no. 2 (2012): 323–38.

⁶⁷ Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion*.

government and its leader.⁶⁸ These events can lead to a rally around the flag because of the public's patriotic reaction to events⁶⁹ or the news cycle's ability to present crisis.⁷⁰

In the rally around the flag phenomenon, leaders benefit from an international crisis or a war that occurs without their efforts to urge the public to accept a certain policy or policies. In the diversionary theory of war phenomenon, leaders actively participate in the establishment of an international crisis or war to urge the public to accept certain policy or policies. When decision-makers find themselves in a delicate situation in domestic politics, they tend to use the diversionary theory of war phenomenon to divert attention from domestic instability.⁷¹ Decision-makers can achieve their objective to divert attention through military conflict or through economic problems, military scandals or even radical rhetoric.⁷² For example, presidents in US usually benefits from the diversionary theory of war by substituting the military conflict with trade disputes. When the unemployment rate rises in US, American Presidents aim to start trade disputes with other countries to divert the attention of the public.⁷³ By substituting military conflict, US Presidents not only mitigate the destructive effects of war but also reaches similar rallying effects and pleases economic elites by earning them much more than earlier. Moreover, US Presidents resort to the diversionary theory of war phenomenon to increase their already high level of support because leaders aim to avoid a catastrophe in case of military defeat.⁷⁴

The problem with the diversionary theory of war is explained by James Fearon in his "Audience Cost" phenomenon. According to Fearon, leaders do not show their true intentions until they reveal to the public, and after publicly demonstrating their true intentions in form of military or economic threats, especially in democratic regimes, it will not be easy to back down from these threats. Hence, leaders who desire to benefit from the diversionary theory of war phenomenon

⁶⁸ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 178.

⁶⁹ Suzanne L Parker, "Toward an Understanding of 'Rally' Effects: Public Opinion in the Persian Gulf War," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (1995): 526–46.

⁷⁰ Robin Marra, Charles Ostrom, and Dennis Simon, "Foreign Policy and Presidential Popularity: Creating Windows of Opportunity in the Perpetual Election," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 34, no. 4 (2016): 588–623.

⁷¹ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 179.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 181.

⁷³ Jr. Karl DeRouen, "Presidents and the Diversionary Use of Force: A Research Note," *International Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (2000): 317–28; David H. Clark, "Trading Butter for Guns: Domestic Imperatives for Foreign Policy Substitution," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 5 (2001): 636–60; Tachee Whang, "Playing to the Home Crowd? Symbolic Use of Economic Sanctions in the United States," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2011): 787–801.

⁷⁴ Jr. Charles W. Ostrom and Brian L. Job, "The President and the Political Use of Force," *American Political Science Review* 80, no. 2 (1986): 541–66.

will have a bigger problem in backing down from a threat because the domestic public can punish leaders for their failure to implement earlier threats.⁷⁵

2.3. Interest Groups and Foreign Policy Formulation

Thomas S. Clive defines interest groups as formally organized associations that aim to influence the government's policy according to their particular agendas.⁷⁶ The agendas of interest groups may change, but each interest group contains three common characteristics regarding influencing governments. First of all, an interest group does not work alone in its efforts to influence the government. Interest groups take action by establishing a flexible coalition with different interest groups within the framework of the issue they want to influence the government. Hence, an interest group's success in influencing government depends on the features of the coalition it is part of. However, interest groups can also act without a coalition for their particular policies. The interest groups acting under this exception are few because for an interest group to establish such pressure, it must be very strong in influencing the state.⁷⁷

Secondly, even if the goals of interest groups change, they use similar tactics to influence the government. Interest groups first conduct a detailed study of rhetoric that will influence decision-makers. Thereafter, they aim to include public opinion to the coalition they have already established among themselves by benefitting from different media channels with this rhetoric. Along with the public support, interest groups testify in parliament hearings and meet confidentially with decision-makers to avoid interruption. Moreover, interest groups provide compensation to decision-makers who support them.⁷⁸ Thirdly, interest groups are often effective in the early stages of the decision-making process because other factors become more effective during the subsequent stages. In the early stages, interest groups can influence the decision-makers by convincing them that this particular policy is already included in the agenda of the government and can alter the decision maker's interpretation of foreign policy situation. However, as the process gets longer and different policy options are introduced, the influence of interest groups decreases, while the influence of bureaucracy and expert communities

⁷⁵ Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes.," 581.

⁷⁶ Thomas S. Clive, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Interest Groups", Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/interest-group> (30 May 2020).

⁷⁷ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 189.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

increases.⁷⁹ Hence, the influence of interest groups in foreign policy processes mostly occurs during the assessment stage of the foreign policy situation.⁸⁰

As these three common characteristics demonstrate, while other domestic actors such as public opinion and media indirectly influence foreign policy decision making processes, interest groups directly influence the processes. The interest groups can directly affect the foreign policymaking process due to number of their members, their mobilization, and the region in which they function. An interest group with a large membership has the opportunity to provide more votes to decision-makers in case of support.⁸¹ However, if an interest group cannot mobilize members on a particular policy, it will have difficulty in affecting decision-makers. Therefore, an interest group with a small number of members but focusing on a single agenda is more effective than an interest group with a high number of members and focusing on multiple agendas. Moreover, interest groups located in strategic regions can become more influential for decision-makers due to their electoral base.⁸²

While interest groups can influence decision-makers with their voter base, they can also be influential by obstructing the government's agenda and altering the decision-makers' interpretation of foreign policy situations.⁸³ They can either stop a bill in the Congress by offering compensations to lawmakers, or they can persuade government officials by compensations to follow a particular policy. Interest groups can act as epistemic communities or as think tanks to change how decision-makers interpret a foreign policy situation.⁸⁴ Epistemic communities are loosely coordinated networks that can change the interpretation of a situation by decision-makers.⁸⁵ On the other hand, think tanks are closely coordinated organizations that can change the interpretation of a situation by decision-makers through advising decision-

⁷⁹ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 189.

⁸⁰ For detailed works about the role of interest groups in decision making stages see also:

Ethan A. Nadelmann, "Global Prohibition Regimes: The Evolution of Norms in International Society," *International Organization* 44, no. 4 (1990): 479–526; Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 887–917. Jutta Joachim, "Framing Issues and Seizing Opportunities: The UN, NGOs, and Women's Rights," *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (2003): 247–74. Jean Frédéric Morin, "The Two-Level Game of Transnational Networks: The Case of the Access to Medicines Campaign," *International Interactions* 36, no. 4 (2010): 309–34.

⁸¹ Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 181.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 182.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁸⁵ Morin ve Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 197.

makers about a specific issue to present policy options.⁸⁶ Epistemic communities and think tanks are interest groups which mostly operate to influence decision-makers' interpretation of a situation. Although most think tanks claim to be independent, they are usually not and they perform their duties for a particular purpose.⁸⁷

The influence of interest groups may also vary depending on some situations independent of their strength. These are divided into two as international and domestic situations. In international situations, interest groups will have a greater impact on decision-makers in a low-threat environment because the involvement of an interest group to the decision-making process will be less costly in case of a wrongful decision that could jeopardize the national security of the state. In general, the influence of domestic actors will decrease during a high-level threat environment in international relations.⁸⁸ In domestic situations, the influence of interest groups will increase when the power of the central government is weak. If the government has doubts about losing elections, it may attempt to benefit from interest groups' ability to mobilize its voter base. Hence, ambiguous policies of the executive branch and the public's support for a policy of an interest group will increase the chance of success for interest groups.⁸⁹ Moreover, interest groups will be less influential regarding a foreign policy situation when the issue is technical and salient to the public.⁹⁰

The influence of interest groups on decision-makers also depends on their functions. According to Christopher Hill's typology, interest groups are divided into three categories based on their functions. The first is the interest groups that function according to their economic activities. Examples of interest groups in this category are private companies, firms, and unions. The second is communities such as ethnic minorities, indigenous communities that function for territorial purposes. The third category includes idea-based interest groups such as religious interest groups or feminist interest groups. All three interest groups in this typology affect foreign policy from different perspectives.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Donald Abelson, Stephon Brooks, and Xin Hua, *Think Tanks, Foreign Policy and Geo-Politics Pathways to Influence* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁸⁷ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 196.

⁸⁸ Ripsman et al., *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, 186.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁹⁰ Trevor Rubenzer, "Ethnic Minority Interest Group Attributes and U.S. Foreign Policy Influence: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 2 (2008): 109.

⁹¹ Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 268.

Economic interest groups are more influential in the issue of domestic politics than foreign policy but they are also influential in particular foreign policy situations that is closely related to their sectors such as trade disputes and tariffs. In addition to trade disputes and tariffs, they can be influential in foreign policy in other sectors that are related to the economy. For example, military-industrial complexes played a significant role in the foreign policy decision-making process in US during the Cold War and former US President Dwight Eisenhower warned his successors to take cautious measures against this kind of interest groups to protect national security.⁹²

Ethnic interest groups are considered as the most influential ones in foreign policy decision making processes. The main reason is that they meet three necessary conditions to influence the government. Although their number of members is not very large, they both can mobilize their members splendidly and regional distribution of their voter base increase their strength in elections. However, there are also conditions for ethnic interest groups to have more influence in foreign policy. The degree of proximity of interest group to the state, its compatibility with the society and the suitability of its demands for the state's interests determine the influence of interest group in the foreign policy decision-making process.⁹³

In pluralistic societies, ethnic interest groups have a much bigger influence on the foreign policy decision-making process due to ethnic interest group's relations with the home state. Ethnic interest groups have closer ties with their home states and governments in pluralistic societies tend to allow this kind of relationship due to tolerance in their structure.⁹⁴ However, because of this pluralistic structure, ethnic interest groups have to adopt a more transparent structure and this makes them more visible. Furthermore, ethnic interest groups adopt a more autonomous structure thanks to the pluralist social structure because they continue to function less dependent on the state.⁹⁵

Idea-based interest groups differ among themselves. While religious interest groups have large membership rolls, coherent structure and higher mobilization for a purpose, other idea-based

⁹² Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 194.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁹⁴ Rubenzer, *Ethnic Minority Interest Group Attributes and U.S. Foreign Policy Influence: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis*, 106.

⁹⁵ Morin and Paquin., *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 192.

interest groups such as feminist and environmental NGOs lack the aforementioned features for an interest group, thus religious interest groups are more influential in decision making process. Religious interest groups occupy a special place in the foreign policy decision-making process due to its proximity and similarities to ethnic interest groups. Both religious and ethnic interest groups enjoy similar strategies to influence governments. Moreover, in some societies, ethnoreligious interest groups play a crucial role in influencing governments.⁹⁶ For example, Armenian and Jewish lobbies in US are both religious and ethnic interest groups and influences foreign policy decision making in certain periods.

2.4. Media and Foreign Policy Formulation

Media can be influential in the foreign policy decision-making process due to its two prominent features: its protective role in domestic policy competition and its communicative function in public.⁹⁷ Media plays a protective role rather than being a distributor of information in domestic policy competition. It is one of the building blocks of societies in democracies. In the foreign policy decision-making process, the media can protect the public by urging decision-makers to act with transparency.⁹⁸ Moreover, if there is no elite consensus or consensus among domestic actors about a foreign policy problem, there can be less media coverage on that issue due to the media's role in domestic policy competition.⁹⁹ One significant exception to this argument is that, competition among media outlets about influencing the public could led to more media coverage of a foreign policy issue.

The media's communicative role in foreign policy demonstrates the media's role as a trader of information within the foreign policy decision-making process.¹⁰⁰ Media's communicative role enables it to influence decision-makers via public opinion. However, decision-makers can also influence the media and gain public support for their policies. Relationship between decision-

⁹⁶ Ibid., 194.

⁹⁷ Douglas Foyle and Douglas Van Belle, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Analysis: Public Opinion, Elections, Interest Groups, and the Media," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* 1, no. October 2018 (2018): 15.

⁹⁸ Foyle and Van Belle, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Analysis: Public Opinion, Elections, Interest Groups, and the Media," 16.

⁹⁹ Kerstin Schulz, "Foreign Policy Involvement Matters: Towards an Analytical Framework Examining the Role of the Media in the Making of Foreign Policy," *Global Media Journal—German Edition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 5.

¹⁰⁰ Matthew A. Baum and Philip B.K. Potter, "The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11, no. 1 (2008): 56.

makers and media based on mutual exploitation as both sides aim to achieve their goals via public opinion by exploiting each other.¹⁰¹ Scholars use two theories to explain the nature of this relationship based on mutual exploitation.: the CNN effect and manufacturing consent theory. The CNN effect theory explains how the media influence decision-makers through the public, while the manufacturing consent theory explains how decision-makers influence the media.

According to the CNN effect theory, the development of real-time news coverage technologies has increased the responsiveness of the public and elite to global events. Thus, the media started to increase its influence in policy areas where its influence used to be relatively low. The CNN effect occurred because of two reasons. First, international channels and 24-hour journalism, which have emerged with technological developments, have enabled the public to access the news quickly. Hence, the public's interest in foreign policy increased due to easier and quicker access to news. Furthermore, the repetition of news cycles in 24-hour journalism allowed media to influence the public on particular policy issues. Second, policy uncertainty in external foreign policy space emerged with the end of the Cold War. This clear and coherent lack of foreign policy has led to the emergence of the CNN effect by increasing the media's role in decision-making on foreign policy.¹⁰²

The increasing interest of the public in the context of foreign policy problems has increased the media's influence in the foreign policymaking process. In addition, rebroadcasting of news over and over in 24 hours made it easier for the media to influence public opinion because repetition increases the probability of influence.¹⁰³ Secondly, with the end of the bipolar world after the cold war, and uncertainty emerged in the foreign policies of the countries, especially US. This lack of clear and coherent foreign policy has led to the emergence of the CNN effect by increasing the media's role in decision-making on foreign policy.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 185.

¹⁰² Piers Robinson, "The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 301.

¹⁰³ Stuart N. Soroka, "Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 8, no. 1 (2003): 34.

¹⁰⁴ Schulz, "Foreign Policy Involvement Matters: Towards an Analytical Framework Examining the Role of Media in Foreign Policy Making," 4.

The CNN effect influences foreign policy decision making process in three ways.¹⁰⁵ First of all, the CNN effect forces decision-makers to make quicker decisions on foreign policy issues because of the public's increasing awareness of the issues due to fast news coverage of media. This consequence of the CNN effect can be seen more in humanitarian interventions or in conflict areas where it is a matter of deterrence. Secondly, the media can alter the plans of decision-makers by acting as a preventer.¹⁰⁶ The media can be a preventer by either triggering the emotions of the public or can be a threat to operational security. The media can emotionally trigger the public by repeatedly reporting casualties or atrocities in the conflict zone, as in the Vietnam syndrome. Also, media coverage can endanger the confidentiality of a military or political operation because of the media's lust for ratings.¹⁰⁷ Thirdly, the media can act as an agenda-setter. It can force decision-makers to take action about a particular issue by prioritizing it through repetition.¹⁰⁸

The media generally uses two strategies to influence public opinion: priming and framing. In priming strategy, the media act as agenda-setter by ensuring that particular news to become more repetitive and prominent in the 24-hours cycle. Once a foreign policy issue presented in the news coverage cycle frequently, it will emerge again later.¹⁰⁹ Another strategy used by media to influence the public is framing strategy, which filters the news and presents it to the public with different interpretations. In framing strategy, media can change the public's perception about a foreign policy issue by recreating the story as it wishes.¹¹⁰

While the media's influence on decision-makers enables it to act as a "watchdog", the media can also become a "lapdog" when this situation is reversed.¹¹¹ According to the manufacturing consent theory, decision-makers are more influential in the relationship between media and decision-makers.¹¹² As elaborated in Entman's cascade theory, the media act as a bridge that

¹⁰⁵ Steven Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention," *John F. Kennedy School of Government's Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy*, 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰⁹ B. Dan Wood and Jeffrey S. Peake, "The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Agenda Setting," *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 1 (1998): 173–84.

¹¹⁰ Morin ve Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 182.

¹¹¹ Baum and Potter, "The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Public Opinion: Toward A Theoretical Synthesis," 55.

¹¹² Piers Robinson, "The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 302.

carries information between decision-makers and the public thus provides decision-makers a chance to influence the public about foreign policy issues. Decision-makers can benefit from the media's role as a bridge by either using their executive powers or using elites' power over media to pass the information to the public, particularly if there is elite consensus. The importance of elite consensus has been explained in Bennett's indexation hypothesis. The handling of a foreign policy problem by the media depends on how the issue is handled by the elites. If there is an elite consensus about a particular issue, it will have more news coverage.¹¹³

The biggest advantage of decision-makers in influencing the media is that information derives from decision-makers in the first place. In the event of a foreign policy crisis, decision-makers are the primary channel informing the media and thus they can lead the media. In order to lead media, they can transfer the information to the media as they wish or hide some information from the media for the sake of secrecy. Furthermore, they can send visuals that will shape the perception of the media in the desired direction.¹¹⁴

Decision-makers use the aforementioned priming and news framing strategy to take advantage of media. Along with these strategies, decision-makers receive public support by dehumanizing the leaders of the country against the foreign policy problems they face. These strategies, especially used prior to the conflict, accelerate the mobilization of the public and increases the approval ratings of the leaders. Decision-makers use this dehumanizing effect of the media in parallel with the rally around the flag effect. Hence, the media's dehumanized effect allows decision-makers to achieve their goals on domestic and foreign policy issues.¹¹⁵

2.5. The Congress and Foreign Policy Formulation

The influence of the Congress on the foreign policy decision-making process is based on its relationship with the leader and the executive. The successful foreign policy of a state depends on the delicate balance between the Congress and the executive. When this balance is disrupted, corruption may occur and the country's foreign policy may fail.¹¹⁶ The Congress has a crucial

¹¹³ W. Lance Bennett, "Indexing Theory," *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, edited by Gianpietro Mazzoleni, (New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 1.

¹¹⁴ Morin ve Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, 185.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Nereus I. Nwosu, "Legislature and Foreign Policy: Nigeria's Experience Under the First and Second Republics," *Journal of Eastern African Research & Development* 24 (1994): 88–101.

actor for checking& balancing foreign policy decision-making process due to its responsibilities and powers.

The delicate balance between the Congress and the leader has experienced important changes in the 20th century. Prior to the Vietnam War, the leader had a relative advantage over the Congress. Although leader was more influential most of the time, there were some instances where the Congress was able to limit leader's executive power in foreign policy. For example, the Congress blocked Woodrow Wilson's decision to join League of Nations in 1919 and caused a significant problem for Wilson administration's foreign policy.¹¹⁷ However, after the Vietnam War, the Congress had more influence in the foreign policy decision-making process with the inclusion of the public to the process. Therefore, the Congress has more influence on the foreign policy decision-making process in the present day vis a vis Cold War period.¹¹⁸ The increasing influence of the Congress has also increased the impact of interest groups on the Congress due to the latter's attempt to influence decision-makers.¹¹⁹ However, the Congress is still not able to influence the leaders in high threat security issues because lawmakers' mentality to protect the unity of the nation.¹²⁰ Moreover, despite the public's opposite view about a foreign policy problem the Congress can choose to support the leader's decision by considering the national interest of the state. However, the Congress' support to the leader depends on the public's support during the low threat environment.¹²¹

While the success of the Congress in influencing the leader in security-related foreign policy issues is less, it is more successful in influencing the leader in foreign policy issues related to the economy.¹²² The congress's influence is high since voters are more interested in issues such as economics and the powers of the Congress are broader in subjects such as international trade and economic sanctions.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Trygve Throntveit, "What Was Wilson Thinking? A Review of Recent Literature on Wilsonian Foreign Policy," *White House Studies* 10, no. 4 (2012): 459–74.

¹¹⁸ Shane Martin et al., *Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press:2014), 408.

¹¹⁹ Foyle and Van Belle, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Analysis: Public Opinion, Elections, Interest Groups, and the Media," 13.

¹²⁰ W. R. Mack, Karl Derouen, and David Lanoue, "Foreign Policy Votes and Presidential Support in Congress," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 9, no. 1 (2013): 79–102.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Martin et al, "Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies," 412.

¹²³ Ibid.

The tools of the Congress in influencing the leader in the foreign policy decision-making process are determined within the framework of the constitution.¹²⁴ The Congress can influence leaders in 5 different ways. First, they can influence foreign policy by using budgetary items on foreign policy issues. Second, they can pass the laws or refusing to allow to laws to pass issues relating to foreign policy. Third, they can limit presidential action by applying predetermined limits. Fourth, they can prevent the executive from making confidential decisions on foreign policy by changing delegation. Fifth, they can influence leaders by making public posturing to steer public opinion.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Arthur Schlesinger, "The Legislative-Executive Balance in International Affairs: The Intentions of the Framers," *Washington Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1989): 97–107.

¹²⁵ Martin et al, "Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies," 416.

3. DETERMINANTS AND MAJOR ISSUES IN UNITED STATES-TURKEY RELATIONS DURING AKP ERA

US and Turkey have experienced ups and downs in their bilateral relationship. According to Gözen, US-Turkey relations have two main determinants since the beginning of the relationship: a) structural & institutional factors and b) domestic, regional and international periodical developments.¹²⁶ The first one usually contains elements that ensure the continuity of the bilateral relationship, while the latter contains the elements that cause the relationship to have ups and downs.¹²⁷ Turkey's participation to international organizations such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) has established a link between domestic social actors and diplomatic actors of Turkey and US. However, conflicts of interest caused by domestic, regional and global developments have led to tensions in the relationship. In general, developments in the third countries causes turmoil in US-Turkey relations.¹²⁸ This chapter, first of all, will examine the factors that determine the parameters of bilateral relations before the AKP period, and then it will analyze two main determinants of US-Turkey relations during AKP era through three US Presidents who served at that time. This chapter will also include the significant developments that influence the course of the relationship during AKP era.

3.1. Determinants and Major Issues in US-Turkey Relations before AKP Era

US-Turkey relations that started economically, socially and culturally in the 18th century has been evolved into a fully-fledged strategic partnership before the beginning of AKP era in 2002.¹²⁹ The most important developments in the relationship occurred after the Second World War when US became a “global policeman” in the world. The Truman Doctrine, announced on March 12, 1947, was the political milestone of the relations between the two states and strategic alliance was established between the two states after this date.¹³⁰ Truman Doctrine not only represented the end of the isolationist foreign policy of US but also signified the end of Turkish foreign policy based on benevolent neutrality.¹³¹ During the Cold War, Turkey became an

¹²⁶ Ramazan Gözen, “Turkish - American Relations in 2009,” *Perceptions* 15, no.3-4 (2010): 49.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹²⁹ Füsun Türkmen, *Kırılgan İttifaktan Model Ortaklığa: Türkiye-ABD İlişkileri* (İstanbul: TİMAŞ, 2012), 16.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³¹ Joshua M. Walker, “The United States and Turkey in a Changing World,” in *Another Empire? A Decade of Turkey's Foreign Policy Under the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Kerem Öktem, Mehmet Karlı, and Ayşe Kadioğlu (İstanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2009), 146.

important actor for the US containment policy against the Soviet Union in Southeastern Flank and US protected Turkey's national security against the invasion of the Soviet Union.¹³² Thus, in the early Cold War period two states experienced golden times of the alliance due to geopolitical concerns.¹³³

US-Turkey relations, which experienced a golden age because of geopolitical concerns, faced substantial challenges after the 1960s due to regional and global developments. Events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, Cyprus Crisis of 1964 and the "Johnson Letter" has shaken Turkey's confidence against US.¹³⁴ While the events that occurred in the 1960s caused Turkey to question the strategic alliance, it was the 1974 Cyprus Intervention of Turkey caused US to question the strategic alliance. Economic and military sanctions implemented by US caused a downward trend in the relationship and altered the both states' perceptions on each other.¹³⁵ The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979 led to re-emergence of geopolitical concerns. Re-emerging geopolitical concerns, new developments in global, regional and domestic politics of both states and communication between diplomatic channels ensured rapprochement in US-Turkey relations. The relations that were disrupted by the developments in the third countries have improved again because of structural factors. As a result of this rapprochement, there was a golden age again in bilateral relations.¹³⁶

The global and regional uncertainty that emerged after the fall of the bipolar world order at end of the Cold War was also reflected in bilateral relations.¹³⁷ The end of the Cold War provided new opportunities to two countries to increase the scope and multidimensionality of the relations. In 1991, US demonstrated her will to increase the economic dimension of the relationship by defining it as an "enhanced partnership".¹³⁸ While the end of the Cold War provided opportunities in economic dimensions it also brought new challenges in political and security dimensions. US's policy of dual containment of Iran and Iraq caused major divergences in the 1990s because Turkey was aiming to have stable neighbors for her security but US was

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Çetinoğlu Harunoğlu, *Düzen-Adalet İkileminde Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası ve ABD ile İlişkiler*, 98.

¹³⁵ Walker, "The United States and Turkey in a Changing World," 146.

¹³⁶ Gözen, "Turkish - American Relations in 2009," 50.

¹³⁷ Ali Şevket Ovalı, "Stratejik Ortaklık, Kriz ve Restorasyon: Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Yörüngesine Kavramsal Bir Çerçeve Den Bakmak," *International Journal of Social Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (2019): 164.

¹³⁸ Ayşe Ö. Atmaca, "Yeni Dünyada Eski Oyun : Eleştirel Perspektiften Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri," *Ortadoğu Etütleri* 3, no. 1 (2011): 171.

eager to intervene in those states due to their authoritarian and aggressive ideologies and leadership.¹³⁹ Despite these divergences, US-Turkey relations continued to enhance throughout the 1990s. In 1999, US President Bill Clinton defined US-Turkey relations as a “strategic partnership” to demonstrate US’s desire to strengthen alliance in the post-Cold War era.¹⁴⁰ Although the concept of strategic partnership was vague and ambiguous, it symbolized the goals of both countries to increase cooperation & coordination in a multidimensional way at the domestic, regional and global levels.¹⁴¹

3.2. Determinants and Major Issues in US-Turkey Relations During the Bush Jr.

Administration Period

Iraq War and the changing identity of Turkey disrupted the nature of bilateral relations during the 2000s. 2003 Iraq War became the main problem during the Bush Jr. Period because it caused insecurity in US-Turkey relations.¹⁴² Two states managed to minimize the problems erupted from the 2003 Iraq war thanks to both new geostrategic realities in the Middle East and cooperation & coordination emerging from the historical, political, economic and cultural ties.¹⁴³ Although US-Turkey minimized the effects of the 2003 Iraq War in the short-term, the sense of insecurity continued to affect the dynamics of the relationship in the long term.

US-Turkey relations faced significant challenges during this period not only because of regional and global developments but also because of their different foreign policy approaches. Two states’ foreign policies were experiencing considerable changes during the beginning of the 2000s. US foreign policy under Bush Jr. and Turkish Foreign Policy of the AKP government did not overlap.¹⁴⁴ Every US President should aim to balance idealist and realist tendencies in foreign policy establishment to avoid catastrophe in international relations. However, Bush Jr.’s administration’s neo-conservatist and idealistic principle caused US to follow a revisionist foreign policy in the Middle East.¹⁴⁵ Bush Jr. focused on idealist tendencies rather than realism,

¹³⁹ Ovalı, “Stratejik Ortaklık, Kriz ve Restorasyon: Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Yörüngesine Kavramsal Çerçveden Bir Bakmak”, 167.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 164.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 163.

¹⁴² Türkmen, *Kırılğan İttifaktan Model Ortaklığa: Türkiye-ABD İlişkileri*, 177.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ali Aslan, “The Foreign Policy- Hegemony Nexus: Turkey’s Search for a ‘New’ Subjectivity in World Politics and Its Implications for US-Turkish Relations,” *Perceptions* 17, no. 4 (2012): 172.

¹⁴⁵ Ronald Powaski, *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H.W. Bush to Donald Trump*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 147.

and Bush Jr. administration tended to use hard power rather than soft power towards the Middle East in the context of this revisionist foreign policy.¹⁴⁶ Bush Jr. was perceiving the international relations as black-and-white and US elites started to perceive international relations like Bush Jr. after the 9/11 incident.¹⁴⁷ Bush Jr.'s perception caused him to divide the world as a free world vs global terrorist. He established "we vs others" perception to urge US public to accept his "war on terror".¹⁴⁸ While "we" was signifying the Western world led by US, "others" was signifying the "axis of evil" states that includes Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, Libya and Syria.¹⁴⁹ With the appointment of Condoleezza Rice as the National Security Adviser in 2004 and the failure of US to establish stability in Iraq, a balance was achieved between idealism and realism in US foreign policymaking.¹⁵⁰ While Bush Jr.'s neoconservative militant presidency caused important divergences from traditional US foreign policy, it did not cause any uncertainty in foreign policy establishment. US foreign policy was having a clear judgment to bring democracy to the Middle East, and the Iraq War was a reflection of that policy. Thus, there was no uncertainty in foreign policymaking and implementation during the Bush Jr period.

The Iraq War, which started in 2003 as a result of Bush's revisionist foreign policy approach, has caused two main crises in US-Turkey bilateral relations: "March 1 Resolution" and the "Hood Incident". According to Hale, some of the high-ranking government officials and public were against the 2003 Iraq War because of three reasons. Firstly, they believed that a conflict alongside to Turkish border would increase the security problems and cause instability in the already problematic region. Turkey was already struggling to counter terrorist activities of PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and she was fearing that a new instability would further increase PKK's power. Secondly, Turkey has concerns about the legality of military operations against Iraq as there was no UN (United Nations) Security Council resolution openly authorizing the military intervention. Thirdly, Turkey was concerned about the establishment of an independent Kurdish state alongside her borders because war could increase the role of Kurdish forces in Iraq's administration.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Çetinoğlu Harunoğlu, *Düzen-Adalet İkileminde Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası ve ABD ile İlişkiler*, 325.

¹⁴⁸ Aslan, "The Foreign Policy- Hegemony Nexus: Turkey's Search for a 'New' Subjectivity in World Politics and Its Implications for US-Turkish Relations," 165.

¹⁴⁹ Powaski, *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H.W. Bush to Donald Trump*, 112.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 118.

¹⁵¹ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 165.

Although Turkey was against the Iraq War, US needed Turkey's permission for US troops' entry to Northern Iraqi territories from Southwest of Turkey in order to invade Iraq with fewer casualties and faster.¹⁵² On 1 March 2003, The Turkish Grand National Assembly rejected¹⁵³ the resolution that allowed US troops to use Turkish territories to enter Northern Iraq. TGNA (Turkish Grand National Assembly)'s decision was a shock for Bush Jr's administration and the decision received harsh criticism from high-level US officials.¹⁵⁴ That decision had significant impacts on US-Turkey relations. Turkey forced to watch the developments in Iraq remotely and US started to recognize Kurdish forces in Northern Iraq as an ally for their operations.¹⁵⁵ US soldiers detained Turkish soldiers deployed in Northern Iraq for joint military operations by putting a hood on their heads on 4 July 2003. Hood incident was seen as a retaliation by Bush Jr. administration against Turkey because of the rejection of resolution by TGNA on 1 March 2003 and increased anti-Americanism in Turkey.¹⁵⁶ US representatives in the Congress began drafting bills about the recognition of 1915 events as genocide. Turkey tried to prevent recognition of 1915 events against Armenians as genocide by diplomatic channels but Turkish decision-makers interpreted this attempt as intimidation towards Turkey due to 1 March Resolution incident.¹⁵⁷

According to the Baker-Hamilton report published on December 6, 2006, the United States had to both get closer to different religious and ethnic groups in Iraq and establish better relations with Iraq's neighbors in order to achieve stability in the region.¹⁵⁸ In accordance with this report, Bush Jr.'s administration increased his efforts to solve bilateral issues in US-Turkey relations. Both state's diplomatic and civil society organizations were already trying to solve the problems erupted after 1 March Resolution incident and changing geopolitical realities gave those initiatives an impetus. US President George W. Bush and Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan started to cooperate and coordinate with each other to provide stability in the region and held joint meetings. US supported Turkey in her accession negotiations with the

¹⁵² Ibid., 166.

¹⁵³ 533 lawmakers participated. 250 voted against, 264 accepted and 19 abstained. Although majority of the votes were favoring the resolution, yes votes failed to reach absolute majority that stated in the 96th article of the Turkey's constitution.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 167.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar Cilt III: 2001-2012* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2013), 298.

¹⁵⁸ Gözen, "Turkish - American Relations in 2009," 52.

European Union (EU), coordinated with her to resolve the Cyprus issue and cooperated to eradicate the PKK problem during the period between 2006-2008.¹⁵⁹

When TGNA rejected 1 March Resolution neoconservative elites in US claimed that this was a manifestation of AKP's Islamist agenda.¹⁶⁰ They claimed that AKP government had fundamentally changed Turkish domestic politics and foreign policy. It changed traditional security-orientated Kemalist Turkish foreign policy to liberal-orientated Islamism. While the first based on hard power to protect the interest of the country the latter based on soft power.¹⁶¹ At that period, the AKP government changed the traditional rhetoric of Turkish foreign policy based on the premise that Turkey is a "bridge" country that ties East and West. It stated that Turkey is a center country that resides in the heart of the world. Hence, it's wide and scope should be enhanced.¹⁶² Turkey's changing approach in foreign policy caused a lack of understanding in US. This lack of understanding made it difficult for Turkey to solve problems that emerged due to the 2003 Iraq War.¹⁶³ Although strategic partnership continued despite the problems such as Hood Incident, 1 March Resolution, and changing identities, during the Bush Jr. period there was a clear decline in bilateral relations.

¹⁵⁹ Ovali, "Stratejik Ortaklık, Kriz ve Restorasyon: Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Yörüngesine Kavramsal Bir Çerçeveden Bakmak." 170.

¹⁶⁰ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774*, 167.

¹⁶¹ Müge Aknur and Tuğcan Durmuşlar, "Turkey's Changing Security Environment and Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy," *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 21, no. 4 (2019): 1359.

¹⁶² Aslan, "The Foreign Policy- Hegemony Nexus: Turkey's Search for a 'New' Subjectivity in World Politics and Its Implications for US-Turkish Relations," 164.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 176.

3.3. Determinants and Major Issues in US-Turkey Relations During the Obama Administration Period

Barrack Obama's first term that covered years between 2008-2012 was about solving the problems caused by the revisionist foreign policy of Bush Jr. administration.¹⁶⁴ Obama not only dealt with the foreign policy crises of Bush Jr. administration but also tried to solve economic crises during the beginning of his term. Obama served as a "crisis manager" in domestic politics and foreign policy.

Obama's 2008 Presidential Campaign was focused on change and transformation of US.¹⁶⁵ In his first term, he prioritized problems in domestic politics against foreign policy and aimed to solve domestic politics first so that he can focus on foreign policy problems later.¹⁶⁶ Obama administration reshaped US foreign policy by (re)establishing idealist-realist balance in foreign policy based on "smart power". Smart power was a combination of soft and hard power but Obama focused on using soft power to achieve foreign policy objectives of US. Obama administration's foreign policy approach was based on the idea of preventing nuclear proliferation and the termination of global terrorism.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, unlike his successors, Obama started to focus on Asia instead of focusing on the Middle East with his "Pivot to Asia" strategy and aimed to prevent China's growing economic, military and political influence in international relations¹⁶⁸

Obama's foreign policy was based on the idea that the United States could no longer be a global task force.¹⁶⁹ Obama established his foreign policy according to this perspective and aimed to minimize the costs of armed conflicts to solve the economic crisis of 2008.¹⁷⁰ Hence, the Obama administration transformed the revisionist strategy of Bush Jr administration in foreign policymaking into a retrenchment strategy. The decisions to withdraw militaries of US in the Middle East and Afghanistan was reflecting changing foreign policy attitude of US during

¹⁶⁴ Oxana Gaman-Golutvina, "Political Elites in USA under George W. Bush and Barack Obama: Structure and International Politics," *Historical Social Research* 43, no. 4 (2018): 142.

¹⁶⁵ Ömer Kurtbağ, "Obama Döneminde Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri: Model Ortaklıktan Eksen Kaymasına İniş Çıkışlar ve Ayrışan Çıkarlar," *Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Yönetim Araştırmaları Dergisi* 3, no. 2 (2015): 187.

¹⁶⁶ Burcu Sari Karademir, "A Dance of Entanglement: US-Turkish Relations in the Context of the Syrian Conflict," *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 16, no. 62 (2019): 30.

¹⁶⁷ Powaski, *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H.W. Bush to Donald Trump*, 162.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁷⁰ Sari Karademir, "A Dance of Entanglement: US-Turkish Relations in the Context of the Syrian Conflict," 30.

Obama administration.¹⁷¹ In his second term, Obama continued to follow a retrenchment strategy by using “surrogate war” and “leading from behind” strategy against the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011.¹⁷² According to these strategies, US government was going to support local forces warring against jihadis terrorists economically and militarily and would not send American soldiers to conflict zones to prevent military casualties. American troops could only participate in conflict zones in case of a collective military action supported by other Western powers.¹⁷³ Obama was trying to prevent a second Iraq War by adopting the strategies of surrogate war, leading from behind and collective participating in case of military conflicts.

Obama’s campaign promises provided new opportunities for US and Turkey to improve their bilateral relations that was disrupted during the Bush Jr. period. During the Obama period, the interests of both countries overlapped due to global, regional and domestic developments.¹⁷⁴ Turkey defined itself as a center state during the AKP period and she changed his traditional foreign policy in the Middle East. AKP’s foreign policy in the region was based on cooperation through Islamic identity.¹⁷⁵ While Turkey perceived itself as a center state, the Obama administration considered Turkey as a bridge country. Turkey was perceived as a moderate Islamic country due to its background of laicism and Islamism by Western powers. Obama administration was trying to change the bad image of US in the Middle East by increasing her ties with moderate Islamic countries including Turkey. Turkey was also eager to increase her ties with US because she was aiming to be a hegemonic power in the region to prove her center state rhetoric, and it needed economic, military and political support of US to achieve her objectives. The strategic partnership evolved into a “model partnership” thanks to overlapping interests in the minds of decision makers. Model partnership, which first mentioned by Obama during his speech at TGNA in 2009, was based on the idea that Turkey would be a “model” for the countries of the region for development and modernity.¹⁷⁶ According to Obama, Turkey

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Helin Sari Ertem and Radiye Funda Karadeniz, “Lost In Translation : A System-Level Analysis of the Turkish- US Alliance under the Obama and Trump Administrations,” *Perceptions* 24, no. 1 (2019): 20.

¹⁷³ Sarı Karademir, “A Dance of Entanglement: US-Turkish Relations in the Context of the Syrian Conflict,” 32.

¹⁷⁴ Gözen, “Turkish - American Relations in 2009,” 54.

¹⁷⁵ Muharrem Ekşi, “AK Parti Döneminde Ortadoğu ’ Da Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Jeokültürel Eksen: İslami Kimlik,” *Akademik Bakış* 9, no. 18 (2016): 68.

¹⁷⁶ Kurtbağ, “Obama Döneminde Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri: Model Ortaklıktan Eksen Kaymasına İniş Çıkışlar ve Ayrışan Çıkarlar,” 190.

would be a model for the Middle East countries by her three features: laicism based on modernity, Islamic identity and being the ally of US.

US-Turkey relations enhanced during the model partnership period and lived one of its “golden eras”.¹⁷⁷ Model partnership implemented in three levels: global, regional and bilateral. At the bilateral level, two states not only increased cooperation & communication in government channels but also increased cooperation& communication through civil society organizations.¹⁷⁸ On the global level, Turkey’s participation increased by the diplomatic support of US and Western countries. Turkey served as a provisional member of the UN Security Council with the support of 159 states thanks to her peaceful foreign policy approach between 1 January 2009 and December 31, 2010.¹⁷⁹ Besides the UN, Turkey and US enhanced cooperation and communication in international organizations such as NATO, IMF, and World Bank. At the regional level, Turkey decreased PKK’s terrorist activities with the support of the Kurdish Regional Government and US. Moreover, Turkey worked with other countries to preserve peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina through her efforts in the UN Security Council and enhanced diplomatic communication with Armenia despite century-long problems in Turkish-Armenian relations. Obama gave the utmost support to the Turkish government for the solution of problems between Turkey and Armenia because of two reasons. First, Obama was aiming to prevent Armenia to enter Russia’s orbit. Second, he was trying to prevent the possible pressure of the Congress for recognition of 1915 events as the Armenian genocide.¹⁸⁰ Any possible bill regarding the issue could jeopardize the modal partnership among two states. Despite Obama’s attempts, Armenian lobbies tried to pass Armenian genocide bills especially after Turkey and Armenia failed to establish diplomatic channels.¹⁸¹

However, Islamic identity and regional developments that caused convergence of interest at first, created disruption in bilateral relations later. Turkey started to demonstrate the problematic sides of her new Islamic identity for US with the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011. She started to perceive herself as the leader of the Islamic world as the conflict continued. Developments in the third countries also caused problems alongside this approach. Turkey and

¹⁷⁷ Gözen, “Turkish - American Relations in 2009,”50.

¹⁷⁸ Gözen, “Turkish - American Relations in 2009,” 55.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 60.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 68.

¹⁸¹ Kılıç Buğra Kanat et al., *US-Turkey Relations Under The AK Party* (Istanbul: SETA, 2017), 75.

Israel had enhanced their relations during the post-Cold War era and good relations among the two states were helping Turkey in her relationship with US. 2010 Mavi Marmara raid ended good relations between Turkey and Israel. Israeli security forces raided Mavi Marmara flotilla, who was aiming to provide humanitarian aid to Palestine people by breaking the blockade of Gaza and in the raid 7 Turkish citizens were killed. After that incident, US did not condemn Israel and tried to ease the tension between the two states through diplomacy.¹⁸² Jewish interest groups' approach towards Turkey changed after the Mavi Marmara Flotilla incident and they lobbied against Turkish interest in the Congress. Turkey also received harsh criticism from US when he rejected the resolution of US in UN Security Council implementing economic sanctions against Iran in 2010. Despite those problems, the model partnership rhetoric continued in US-Turkey relations.¹⁸³

While developments in Iran and Israel ignited the fuse for divergence in the relationship, developments in Egypt and Syria caused main divergence in US-Turkey relations. In December 2010, Tunisian people revolted against their autocratic regime due to poverty and lack of freedom in their country. This movement caused a spill-over effect in the Middle East and spread to other countries of the region including Libya, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria. Turkey and US had different perceptions about these movements.¹⁸⁴ In the 2010s, Turkey both tried to assume a leadership position in the Islamic world to be the hegemon in the region and changed his liberal orientated foreign policy based on soft power to security orientated foreign policy based on hard power.¹⁸⁵ Turkey was on the same page with US during the outbreak of movement against the autocratic leaders of the Middle East. Both states were supporting the protesters in Egypt and trying to convince Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad to leave his office through diplomatic means. When the protests turned into a civil war in Syria in 2012, Turkey and US were supporting local proxies in the country to topple the Assad regime. While some of the local proxies had a close relationship with Islamic militant countries, some of them were radical Islamist. An Islamic militant groups' attack on US embassy of in Libya in September 2012 led the Obama administration to change its attitude against political Islam and Arab Spring.¹⁸⁶ US abstained from supporting local proxies that had close relationships with Islamic

¹⁸² Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, 172.P.172.

¹⁸³ Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar Cilt III: 2001-2012*, 216.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 331.

¹⁸⁵ Aknur and Durmuşlar, "Turkey's Changing Security Environment and Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy," 1364.

¹⁸⁶ Sarı Karademir, "A Dance of Entanglement: US-Turkish Relations in the Context of the Syrian Conflict," 38.

militant groups after this incident. Obama administration also passively supported coup d'état in Egypt against the Muslim Brotherhood government. US's activities against political Islam demonstrated that it no longer searches a "model" to solve its problem with the countries of the region and Turkey was no longer a "model".¹⁸⁷

US and Turkey's foreign policies towards Syria further differentiated after 2012 and it started the "axis shift" debate regarding to Turkish foreign policy. Divergence between two states continued to deepen as the Syrian Civil War continued. After the 2012 Benghazi attack, US's main objective in Syria changed from the toppling Assad regime to prevent Islamist take over in Syria. This objective was more compatible with the Obama administration's retrenchment strategy. However, Turkey continued to embrace active engagement in Syria policy and continued to try to end the Assad regime in Syria. In 2013, US accused Turkey to support jihadist terrorist organizations such as Al-Nusra and ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). US decided to choose PYD (Democratic Union Party), an extension of PKK in Syria, as a local proxy to fight against ISIS. US's accusations and choosing PYD as a proxy caused Turkey to feel abandoned in her Syria policy.¹⁸⁸ After US's support to PYD during the Kobane War in 2014, Turkey's feel of abandonment increased. After Russia's inclusion of the conflict in 2015, Turkey started to cooperate with them gradually against US's cooperation with Kurdish forces.¹⁸⁹ Turkey's cooperation with Russia increased further when US continued to coordinate PYD against Turkey's harsh criticism. Turkey cooperated with Russia diplomatically in Syria to prevent PYD's growing influence.

In the 2010s, Turkey not only changed her liberal orientated approach in foreign policy but also made important changes in domestic politics due to security reasons. Turkey's policy relating to the Kurdish issue was experienced significant changes with the AKP's emergence to power in 2002. Before AKP, Turkey was conducting a security-orientated approach based on military strategy against the Kurdish issue but the AKP administration changed this into a liberal-orientated approach based on negotiation. Turkish government started a peace process in 2009 to solve the Kurdish issue.¹⁹⁰ The AKP government also ended military tutelage in domestic

¹⁸⁷ Ekşi, "AK Parti Döneminde Ortadoğu'da Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Jeokültürel Eksen: İslami Kimlik," 72.

¹⁸⁸ Sarı Karademir, "A Dance of Entanglement: US-Turkish Relations in the Context of the Syrian Conflict," 38.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 41.

¹⁹⁰ Burak Bilgehan Özpek, "Paradigm Shift between Turkey and the Kurds: From 'Clash of the Titans' to 'Game of Thrones,'" *Middle East Critique* 27, no. 1 (2018): 44.

politics through Ergenekon and Sledgehammer cases.¹⁹¹ Western powers increased their support towards Turkey by interpreting these two developments as good signs for Turkey's road to embrace principles of liberal democracy. However, the AKP government forced to take intense security measures because of the effects of the Syrian civil war. Turkish government started to embrace tougher rhetoric after the 2013 Gezi Park protest and strengthened the security apparatus of the state for preserving stability.¹⁹² In 2015, the government also terminated the peace process due to increasing terrorist activities of PKK¹⁹³ and increasing the influence of PYD in Northern Syria. After 2015, the AKP government started to embrace traditional security strategies against Kurdish insurgency based on military operations.¹⁹⁴

The outbreak of the FETO problem was another reason for the changing rhetoric of the AKP government after the 2013 Gezi Park protest. FETO was a self-proclaimed Islamic cult established by cleric Fethullah Gulen in the 1970s, and aimed to infiltrate government agencies and establish a parallel administration in Turkey. The conflict between FETO and the AKP government started with the decision of the government to close all educational institutions related with the organization. Conflict deepened with the arrest of high-level national or local politicians from AKP with alleged corruption charges in a police operation by cadres related to the FETO terrorist organizations on 17 December 2013. Since 2014, Turkey has defined FETO as a terrorist organization and aims to prevent the organization from infiltrating Turkish state agencies. FETO issue became a significant problem between Turkey and US because the head of the terrorist organizations was residing in US since early 2000s.¹⁹⁵ An attempted coup d'état in Turkey (linked to the FETO elements in the military) on 15th July 2016 prevented by the Turkish people led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Obama administration remained silent during and after that coup attempt and rejected Turkey's demand for the extradition of Fethullah

¹⁹¹ Burak Bilgehan Özpek and Nebahat Tanriverdi Yaşar, "Populism and Foreign Policy in Turkey under the AKP Rule," *Turkish Studies* 19, no. 2 (2018): 199.

¹⁹² Özpek and Yaşar, "Populism and Foreign Policy in Turkey under the AKP Rule," 205.

¹⁹³ In 2015 Turkish general elections, HDP (People's Democratic Party) passed the necessary threshold of %10 to enter parliament and AKP lost its majority. These two developments caused tensions between two parties. Suruç Bombing, ISIS's terrorist attacks that killed 32 young activist who was traveling to Kobane to reconstruct the city, and Ceylanpınar incident, which PKK killed 2 police officer as a retaliation for Suruç Bombing, increased tensions further. Turkey launched a cross border operations against PKK camps in Northern Iraq after Ceylanpınar incident and PKK retaliated by starting a trench war in several cities of Southeastern Anatolia. Turkish government terminated the peace process with the outbreak of trench war.

¹⁹⁴ Özpek, "Paradigm Shift between Turkey and the Kurds: From 'Clash of the Titans' to 'Game of Thrones,'" 57.

¹⁹⁵ Mehmet Şahin et al., "Uluslararası Bir Tehdit Olarak FETO" (Ankara: Polis Akademisi Yayınları, 2018), 45.

Gülen. Lack of support by US against the FETO problem deepened the distrust in Turkey toward US government.¹⁹⁶

During the Obama period, US and Turkey tried to establish a “model partnership” because both state’s geopolitical imagination overlapped for a short period of time. However, divergences in geopolitical imaginations in the long term caused existential problems in bilateral relations. Turkey’s importance in the perception of US decision-makers increased due to its newly gain moderate Islamic identity during the beginning of the Obama period. But Turkey’s decision to pursue an independent foreign policy towards the Middle East caused US to change her foreign policy towards Turkey. Developments in third countries, the transformation of liberal-orientated Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East to security-orientated foreign policy and her changing approach to handling domestic politics not only ended “model partnership” but also caused the re-emergence of debates about axis shift.

3.4. Determinants and Major Issues in US-Turkey Relations during the Trump Administration Period

Donald Trump elected as President of US in 2016 thanks to his unusual rhetoric and campaign. Trump administration’s foreign policy that established according to his campaign motto “America First” was remarkably different from Obama’s idealist-realist foreign policy in many aspects. After the 2008 Economic Crisis, US public’s perception toward American institutions changed.¹⁹⁷ Cultural and social problems arising from globalization continued to disturb the public, even if the growth rates were normalized and unemployment decreased during the Obama period.¹⁹⁸ In this period, there was a clear disagreement with the bipartisan elite and public in US because of the reflections of Bush Jr administration’s policies.¹⁹⁹ US public started to think that globalization causes problem rather than providing benefits. This line of thinking increased anti-elite sentiment in the public and strengthened populist tendencies. Trump, who took office with a campaign established within the framework of the anti-elite and anti-globalist message and the “drain the swamp” in Washington rhetoric, formulated a nationalist-populist

¹⁹⁶ Kılıç Buğra Kanat et al., *An Almanac: US-Turkey Relations Under The AK Party* (Ankara: SETA, 2018), 171-176.

¹⁹⁷ Georg Löffmann, “America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy,” *Survival* 61, no. 6 (2019): 117.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 118.

foreign policy to meet the expectations of American public.²⁰⁰ Therefore, it can be argued that President Trump further enhanced Obama's retrenchment strategy in foreign policy by embracing the isolationist approach in US foreign policy.

Trump administration's foreign policy has 4 main principles. First, Trump administration focused on the minimize commitments and engagement of US in global order to end injustices towards US caused by globalization. Second, US's burden should be shared by her allies and partners in international organizations. Third, US should enhance her good relations with countries of Saudi Arabia & Israel and should act aggressively against the growing influence of Iran in the Middle East. Fourth, the global reputation of US should be restored through necessary means.²⁰¹ In accordance with these principles, the Trump administration started a trade war with China in 2017 and withdrew US from several international trade agreements to protect US's economic interest.²⁰² Moreover, Trump administration reduced US's economic contribution to international organizations such as NATO and IMF.²⁰³ He also withdrew US from military agreements such as INF(Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) Treaty because according to Trump administration those agreements were obsolete and useless.²⁰⁴

Trump's isolationist foreign policy approach caused fundamental changes in the international system. US's "unipolar moment" in international relations was already in decline due to the results of the Iraq War but Trump's retrenchment strategy increased the transformation of the international system from unipolar to post-unipolar era.²⁰⁵ Non-western powers like China and Russia increased their power in international politics and started to challenge US's hegemonic power. Trump administration considered China's increasing economic and military influence as the main threat to his country's interest and focused on the problems in Asia-Pacific rather than the Middle East.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 119.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Mauro Lucentini, "The Outlook for US Foreign Policy under President Donald J . Trump," *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali* 83, no. 4 (2016): 579.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Julian Borger and Martin Pengelly, "Trump Says US Will Withdraw from Nuclear Arms Treaty With Russia", *The Guardian*, 21 October 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/20/trump-us-nuclear-arms-treaty-russia>. (30 May 2020)

²⁰⁵ Tarık Oğuzlu, "Turkish Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order," *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 9, no. 1 (2018): 130.

²⁰⁶ White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), 2-3.

While US's focus changed regionally in world politics during the Trump era, she did not overlook the problems in the Middle East. He continued Obama's surrogate warfare strategy and resumed US's aid to local proxies in the region.²⁰⁷ Trump administration formulated a proactive foreign policy towards Israel and Iran. His administration recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel despite harsh criticism from the international community and moved US Embassy to that city. He also recognized Golan Heights, a territory which was occupied by Israel in 1967 Six Days War, as Israeli territory despite clear UN resolution against it.²⁰⁸ Trump also took unorthodox measures against Iran. Obama administration's Iran policy was based on soft power and diplomacy through negotiations. Trump altered Obama's Iran policy and took harsher measures to prevent the increasing influence of Iran.²⁰⁹ His administration terminated the nuclear agreement of 2015, implemented heavy economic sanctions against Iran and assassinated the Commander of Quds forces Qasem Soleimani who was commanding Iran's proxy military forces abroad and his assassination demonstrated the unorthodox style of Trump administration.²¹⁰

Trump has an unorthodox style in foreign policymaking. He uses social media platforms vigorously to directly appeal to his support base and counterpart, and he continuously makes changes in important offices for foreign policy decision making processes. He decided to establish a foreign policy of US by himself and his close circle rather than listening to diplomats and state officials.²¹¹ Trump's approach in foreign policy draws reaction from American academics, scholars, and elites, and also it is criticized by high-level government officials. His unorthodox style caused a conflict of interest among government agencies including Pentagon, CIA, Department of State and White House. Hence, during the Trump Era there has been a problem of clear and definitive foreign policy due to his policy of draining the swamp in Washington.

²⁰⁷ Ertem and Karadeniz, "Lost In Translation : A System-Level Analysis of the Turkish-U . S . Alliance under the Obama and Trump Administrations." 9.

²⁰⁸ Lucentini, "The Outlook for US Foreign Policy under President Donald J . Trump," 587,588.

²⁰⁹ Powaski , *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H.W. Bush to Donald Trump*, 252-253.

²¹⁰ Julian Borger and Martin Chulov, "US Kills Iran General Qassem Suleimani in Strike Ordered By Trump", *The Guardian*, 03 January 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/03/baghdad-airport-iraq-attack-deaths-iran-us-tensions>. (30 May 2020)

²¹¹ Uri Friedman, "What's Dangerous About Donald Trump's Foreign Policy?", *The Atlantic*, 26 November 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/11/trump-dangerous-foreign-policy/546230/>. (30 May 2020)

Trump administration's "American First" foreign policy, claimed to be full of inconsistencies, led long-time allies of US to shift toward other blocs in post-unipolar international politics.²¹² US's isolationist policies increased Turkey's fear of abandonment that originated during the Obama period. Trump administration was continuing Obama's support to Kurdish forces in Northern Syria. Turkey failed to find a middle ground with US after Operation Euphrates Shield that launched on 24 August 2016 against ISIS forces.²¹³ Turkey cooperated and coordinated with Russia and Iran instead of US in her cross-borders operations against terrorist organizations in Northern Syria between the period of 2017 and 2020.²¹⁴ In this context, Turkey launched Idlib operation in October 2017, Afrin operation in January 2018 and Operation Peace Spring in October 2019.²¹⁵ After 2016, Russia- Turkey relations became the determinant of the developments in Syria. Turkey's priorities changed in accordance with this cooperation & coordination to eliminate the influence of PYD-YPG in his southern border instead of toppling the Assad regime in Syria.²¹⁶ Toppling the Assad regime in Syria became secondary target in Turkey's Syrian policy. Turkey's joint operation with the non-western countries caused mutual abandonment in US-Turkey relations in the context of the Syrian Civil War.²¹⁷

Developments in Syria were not the only problems that increased divergence during the Trump Era. Domestic political problems that started in the Obama period accelerated and started to upset the nature of the relationship further as FETO issue became a bigger problem during Trump Era. After the 15 July coup attempt, Turkey arrested several US dual-citizens by accusing them of being a member of FETO. Turkey arrested a NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) employee and US citizens Serkan Golge and Pastor Andre Brunson because of allegations of them being FETO members days after the 15 July coup attempt. In 2017, Turkey arrested officials of US consulate ,Metin Topuz and Serkan Uluçay, due to same reasons.²¹⁸ These arrests caused a controversy on accusations of "hostage diplomacy" among

²¹² Lucentini, "The Outlook for US Foreign Policy under President Donald J . Trump.", 583.

²¹³ Kareem Shaheen, "Turkey Sends Tanks Into Syria In Operation Aimed At Isis And Kurds", *The Guardian*, 24 August 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/24/turkey-launches-major-operation-against-isis-in-key-border-town>. (30 May 2020)

²¹⁴ Sarı Karademir, "A Dance of Entanglement: US-Turkish Relations in the Context of the Syrian Conflict," 42.

²¹⁵ BBC News Türkçe. "Suriye Sınırında Hazırlık: Türkiye'Nin Önceki Askeri Operasyonlarında Neler Yapıldı?", 8 October 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-49959630>. (30 May 2020)

²¹⁶ Ajdin Đidić and Hasan Kösebalaban, "Turkey's Rapprochement with Russia: Assertive Bandwagoning," *International Spectator* 54, no. 3 (2019): 135.

²¹⁷ Sarı Karademir, "A Dance of Entanglement: US-Turkish Relations in the Context of the Syrian Conflict," 42.

²¹⁸ Carlotta Gal, "Americans Jailed After Failed Coup In Turkey Are Hostages To Politics", *New York Times*, 7 October 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/07/world/europe/turkey-american-detainees.html?auth=login-google>. (30 May 2020)

two states. US blamed Turkey for using US citizens as hostages for the extradition of Fethullah Gulen. Outgoing US ambassador John Bass stated that Metin Topuz's arrest was not for justice, but for revenge against US's lack of support in the FETO issue. US embassy in Turkey stopped visa activities towards Turkey on 8 October 2017 as a retaliation against these arrests.²¹⁹ Two states tried to overcome "Visa Crisis" through the communication of diplomatic channels and talks between US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu.²²⁰ After Visa Crisis, anti-Americanism increased in Turkey and value of Turkish lira depreciated against US dollar. This led to a downward trend in the Turkish economy.²²¹ On 6 November 2017, two-state overcame the problem and visa operations returned normal with the announcement of US Department of State.²²² According to this announcement, Turkish officials assured US officials that another consular employee of US would not be arrested again. However, the Foreign Ministry of Turkey falsified this statement and drew attention to judicial independence in Turkey.²²³

Hostage diplomacy allegations did not begin in US-Turkey relations in 2017. The origins of these allegations started with the arrest of Iranian-Turkish businessman Reza Zarrab.²²⁴ In March 2016, Zarrab arrested by US officials with charges of money laundering and violations of economic sanctions against Iran. Zarrab accepted to be a witness during his trial and confessed he worked alongside with high-level officials from AKP and Deputy General of Halkbank Hakan Atilla to evade sanctions. US officials stated that harsh economic fines could be granted to Halkbank because of its actions. Hakan Atilla arrested in 2017 in US due to Zarrab's confessions. Turkish President Erdogan labeled this case as a conspiracy against Turkey by foreign powers. Turkey claimed that the Zarrab case was not a financial issue, but a

²¹⁹ Kanat et al., *US-Turkey Relations Under The AK Party*, 201.

²²⁰ Ibid., 202.

²²¹ Ibid., 203.

²²² US Embassy & Consulates in Turkey, "Statement from The U.S. Mission To Turkey On Re-Opening Of Limited Visa Services", 06 November 2017. <https://tr.usembassy.gov/statement-u-s-mission-turkey-re-opening-limited-visa-services-turkey/>. (30 May 2020)

²²³ Carol Morello Erin Cunningham, "U.S. And Turkey Visa Crisis Ends After Three-Month Standoff", *The Washington Post*, 28 December 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-and-turkey-visa-crisis-ends-after-three-month-standoff/2017/12/28/2643d8a6-ebec-11e7-8a6a-80acf0774e64_story.html

²²⁴ Dilek Ulutaş, "Conspiracy to Spy Novel: The Reza Zarrab Case and US-Turkey Relations," Roma: Istitutio Affari Internazionali, 2018, 2. (30 May 2020)

political issue that aimed to stalemate Turkey in her foreign policy endeavors and accused US of hostage diplomacy.²²⁵

Turkey tried to solve the issue through diplomatic channels and civil society organizations because statements of US officials about fining Halkbank were severely damaging for the Turkish economy. According to allegations, Turkey tried to free Zarrab by bribing Trump's National Security Advisor Michael Flynn and his legal counselor and former mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani in 2017.²²⁶ After Zarrab became confessor, Turkey focused all of her efforts to free Hakan Atilla from prison. Hakan Atilla freed after his 28 months of imprisonment on 21 October 2019.²²⁷ Despite Atilla's release, the Halkbank case continued to be one of the major problems in US-Turkey relations. Halkbank case and Zarrab issue was a reflection of Turkey's relations with Iran and US's changing rhetoric against regional developments played a crucial role. This case caused insecurity in bilateral relations and increased hostility between officials of the two states.

In 2018, debates about hostage diplomacy continued to be a problem after the Visa Crisis of 2017 and caused one of the biggest problems in the relations since the 1 March Resolution incident. The indictment of Pastor Brunson, who was arrested on 9 December 2016, was prepared 1.5 years later. Within the scope of this indictment, Pastor Brunson, who was accused of being a member of FETO and PKK, was charged with 35 years in prison. Brunson was much more important for Trump administration than other US citizens arrested by Turkey because Brunson was a pastor for the Evangelist religion which benefits from good ties with Trump administration.²²⁸ Evangelist communities had also a close relationship with the members of Congress and other interest groups in US. During the meetings held between Turkish and US officials at the beginning of July 2018, two states were on the brink of an agreement but Turkey rejected the agreement because US failed to guarantee about not implementing economic

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Melik Kaylan, "The Zarrab Court Case: What It Means For Flynn, Trump, Erdogan, Even Putin", *Forbes*, December 5 2017. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/melikkaylan/2017/12/05/the-zarrab-court-case-what-it-means-for-flynn-trump-erdogan-even-putin/#46d2f4827ecb>. (30 May 2020)

²²⁷ BBC News Türkçe, "Hakan Atilla'nın ABD'de Yargılandığı Davada Neler Yaşandı? ", 21 October 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-42096305>. (30 May 2020)

²²⁸ Kılıç Buğra Kanat, "Türkiye'nin ABD Politikası 2018," in *Türk Dış Politikası Yıllığı 2018*, ed. Kemal Burhanettin Duran, Kemal İnat, and Mustafa Caner (İstanbul: SETA, 2018), 192.

sanctions towards Turkey.²²⁹ During the Brunson hearing that conducted on 18 July 2018, the court decided for the continuation of detention of the Pastor, however, it changed Brunson's punishment from prison to house arrest after lawyers' objections.

High-level officers in US and Trump responded harshly to Brunson's house arrest. First, Vice President Mike Pence threatened Turkey with economic sanctions during a dinner in Washington. President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also warned Turkey about economic sanctions from twitter.²³⁰ On 1 August 2018, US implemented Magnitsky sanctions against Turkey's Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu and Justice Minister Abdülhamit Gül. Within the framework of this sanction, the assets of these two officials in US (if any exists) were frozen and they were forbidden to trade with US citizens.²³¹ On 10 August 2018, Trump announced the doubling tariffs against the steel and aluminum imported from Turkey via twitter.²³² After economic sanctions, the Turkish lira lost 20 percent value against US dollar and experienced currency crisis. As a retaliation, the AKP government implemented tariffs against vehicles, alcohol, and tobacco imported from US. It implemented economic sanctions against the Homeland Secretary and Attorney General of US.²³³ On 2 October 2018, Brunson released from prison after hearing and went to US immediately after his release.²³⁴ Both states lifted economic sanctions reciprocally on 2 November 2018.²³⁵ Although two states managed the overcome the hostage diplomacy crisis, its reflections continued to alter relations during the Trump period.

FETO related issues, Zarrab Case, Visa Crisis and Brunson Case made Turkey closer to Russia in international politics. Two states were already increasing their co-operations in Syria due to Turkey's feeling of abandonment but the aforementioned events accelerated good relations.

²²⁹ Carlotta Gall, "Turkey Frees Pastor Andrew Brunson, Easing Tensions With U.S.", *New York Times*, 12 October 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/world/europe/turkey-us-pastor-andrew-brunson.html>. (30 May 2020)

²³⁰ Secretary Mike Pompeo, *Twitter*, 25 July 2018. <https://twitter.com/SecPompeo/status/1022141117305958400>. (30 May 2020)

²³¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Sanctions Turkish Officials With Leading Roles In Unjust Detention Of U.S. Pastor Andrew Brunson", 1 August 2018. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm453>. (30 May 2020)

²³² BBC News, "Trump Tariff Move Pushes Turkish Lira Down", 10 August 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45123607>. (30 May 2020)

²³³ Hurriyet Daily News, "Turkey Increases Tariffs On U.S.-Origin Products - Turkey News", 15 August 2018. <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-increases-tariffs-on-u-s-origin-products-135805>. (30 May 2020)

²³⁴ BBC News, "Turkey Frees US Pastor From House Arrest", BBC News, 12 October 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45841276>. (30 May 2020)

²³⁵ Makini Brice and Tuvan Gümrükçü, "U.S., Turkey Lift Sanctions In Sign Of Easing Tensions", *Reuters*, 2 November 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-usa-sanctions/u-s-turkey-lift-sanctions-in-sign-of-easing-tensions-idUSKCN1N71K2>. (30 May 2020)

Turkey decided to buy S-400 missile system from Russia as reflection of these good relations. Turkey's search for a defense system started before enhancement in Russia-Turkey relations. Turkey decided to buy a ground-based defense system after her plane shot down by a Syrian air defense system in June 2012.²³⁶ After this incident, NATO deployed Patriot batteries with the request of Turkey. However, Turkey was desiring to possess her own defense missile system due to increasing security concerns in Northern Syria.²³⁷ Therefore, she decided to buy FD-200 system from China Precision Machinery Import-Export Corporation in 2013.²³⁸ Turkey gave up this because of NATO's criticism about the interoperability of the system and China's vague stance about technology transfer.²³⁹ After 2015, local defense industries in Turkey insisted on the government for the procurement of long-range air and ground missile defense system. Despite problems with US, Turkey tried to buy Patriot batteries from US. Turkey's efforts remained fruitless in his attempt in April 2017.²⁴⁰ Thus, Turkey decided to buy an S-400 system from Russia due to developments in Northern Syria, refusal of US to provide Patriot and demand from local defense industries.²⁴¹ In spite of harsh response from US, Turkey's first parts of S-400 arrived Turkey on 12 July 2019.²⁴² US decided to remove Turkey from the F-35 program and threatened Turkey to implement CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act).²⁴³ Turkey's purchase of S-400 interpreted as an axis shift by US policy elite.²⁴⁴

The divergence between two states further deepened with Turkey's cross-border operation named Operation Peace Spring that was launched in October 2019. Operation Peace Spring became one of the biggest challenges in the relationship after the 1974 Turkish Military Intervention to Cyprus. Trump administration announced military withdrawal from Northern

²³⁶ Sitki Egeli, "Making Sense of Turkey's Air and Missile Defense Merry-Go-Round," *All Azimuth* 8, no. 1 (2019): 73.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid., 74.

²³⁹ Ibid., 74-78.

²⁴⁰ Vakkas Dogantekin and Büşra Nur Bilgiç Çakmak, "2 Sides to Story Of Turkey'S S-400 Purchase: Trump", *Anadolu Agency*, 03 December 2019. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/2-sides-to-story-of-turkey-s-s-400-purchase-trump/1662743>. (30 May 2020)

²⁴¹ Egeli, "Making Sense of Turkey's Air and Missile Defense Merry-Go-Round," 80.

²⁴² BBC News, "Turkey Defies US Over Russian Defence System", 12 July 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-48962885>. (30 May 2020)

²⁴³ CAATSA is a federal law that passed 27 July 2017 and imposes sanctions on Iran, North Korea and Russia. It aims to counter aggression from Iran, North Korea and Russia by using punitive measures.

²⁴⁴ Kılıç Buğra Kanat, TDP 2018 Yılı, 193.

Syria on 19 December 2018.²⁴⁵ Turkey was trying to establish a security zone in Northern Syria since the outbreak of conflict in 2011 but she was not getting any support from US and Russia on that issue. Turkey's dual aims were to relocate 3.5 million Syrian refugees from Turkey into northern Syria and to diminish the influence of PYD-YPG in Northern Syria by creating 20 km safe zone.²⁴⁶ Operation Peace Spring received harsh criticism from US and other Western powers and they labeled the operation as an invasion of Northern Syria by Turkey. Trump threatened Turkey via twitter during the operation.²⁴⁷ US implemented economic sanctions to ministers and high-level officials of Turkey. Trump sent a degrading letter to his counterpart Erdogan to convince him to halt Operation Peace Spring. Trump's letter made harder for diplomatic channels to solve bilateral issues.²⁴⁸ Despite Trump's harsh rhetoric and degrading diplomacy, Turkey and US managed to declare a ceasefire in Northern Syria through meetings held between aides of Trump and Erdogan.²⁴⁹ After the intense diplomatic process between Trump and Erdogan, Trump administration continued its policy of military withdrawal in Syria and announced the withdrawal of troops from Northern Syria.²⁵⁰ Although Trump administration lifted sanctions against Turkish officials after the declaration of ceasefire and announced military withdrawal, a negative attitude toward Turkey continued in US. The Congress approved economic sanctions that can cripple Turkey's defense industry, approved a bill that recognizes 1915 events as genocide and called for an investigation of Erdogan's assets in US.²⁵¹ Turkish government threatened US to leave NATO and close down US military bases in Turkey as a retaliation.²⁵²

²⁴⁵ Mark Landler, Helene Cooper and Eric Schmitt, "Trump to Withdraw U.S. Forces From Syria, Declaring 'We Have Won Against ISIS' ", *New York Times*, 19 December 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/19/us/politics/trump-syria-turkey-troop-withdrawal.html> (13 July 2020).

²⁴⁶ Al Jazeera, "Turkey Begins Ground Offensive In Northeastern Syria", Al Jazeera, 10 October 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/turkey-begins-ground-offensive-northeastern-syria-191009212025006.html>. (30 May 2020)

²⁴⁷ Josh Wingrove and Glen Carey, "Trump Whipsaws On Turkey As Threat Follows Green Light On Syria", *Bloomberg*, 7 October 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-07/trump-issues-warning-to-turkey-after-green-light-for-incursion>. (30 May 2020)

²⁴⁸ BBC News, "Turkish President Threw Trump Letter In Bin", 17 October 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50080737>. (30 May 2020)

²⁴⁹ BBC News, "Trump Lifts Sanctions On Turkey Over Syria Assault", 23 October 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50157439>. (30 May 2020)

²⁵⁰ Julian Barnes and Eric Schmitt, "Trump Orders Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Northern Syria", *New York Times*, 16 October 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/13/us/politics/mark-esper-syria-kurds-turkey.html>. (30 May 2020)

²⁵¹ Philip H. Gordon and Amanda Sloat, "The Dangerous Unraveling Of The U.S.-Turkish Alliance", *Foreign Affairs*, 10 January 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2020-01-10/dangerous-unraveling-us-turkish-alliance>. (30 May 2020)

²⁵² "Turkey's Erdogan Threatens To Close Strategic Bases To US Military", 15 December 2019. <https://www.dw.com/en/turkeys-erdogan-threatens-to-close-strategic-bases-to-us-military/a-51686229>. (30 May 2020)

It can be argued that Trump's attempt to "drain the swamp in Washington" and "American First" policies increased the problems that emerged during Obama Period. Trump changed Secretary of State and National Security Advisor several times because of his drain the swamp in Washington policy. Therefore, he has been accused of not having a clear foreign policy. While the drain the swamp policy caused the disruption in domestic social and diplomatic factors that may solve the problematic issues in US-Turkey relations, America's First policy caused Turkey to drift away from US. Trump's unorthodox style and Syria policy forced Turkey to increase her ties with Russia. Trump's unorthodox approach to foreign policy also changed the nature of one of the determinants in the bilateral relations, as the personal relationship between Donald J. Trump and Recep Tayyip Erdogan replaced the diplomatic, social and structural mechanisms that have been traditionally used to solve problems in US-Turkey relations.

4. DOMESTIC FACTORS IN US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS TURKEY DURING AKP ERA

Changes in US domestic policy and international developments during AKP era have increased the role of domestic politics in the foreign policy of US towards Turkey. Domestic, regional, and international developments not only caused divergence in the relationship in this period but also caused an erosion in the structural & institutional factors that constitute the elements of continuity in the relationship. Domestic policy actors that enabled the enhancement of the relations during the time period between 2005 and 2010, hindered the bilateral relations afterward. Domestic politics actors such as public opinion, interest groups, media, and the Congress played an important role in both the strengthening and weakening of the relations. This chapter will focus on the aforementioned domestic politics actors that enhanced or hindered the relationship during AKP era. This chapter will first analyze public opinion polls about US foreign policy to assess the impact of American public opinion on Turkey during that era. Second, it will explain which interest groups influence US foreign policy towards Turkey and show their lobbying efforts to enhance or hinder US-Turkey relationship. Third, it will examine the American mainstream media's expression of Turkey during AKP era. Lastly, it will analyze the hearings and legislations related to Turkey in order to explain the role of Congress in US foreign policy towards Turkey.

4.1. Impact of Public Opinion in US Foreign Policy towards Turkey During AKP Era

Public opinion is one of the domestic political factors that influenced US foreign policy decision-making process during AKP Era. Since the Vietnam War, public opinion has been one of the important factors for decision-makers to take into consideration when making foreign policy. The end of the Cold War made significant changes in the public's perception related to foreign policy. Changes in technology, diversification of media outlets, and decrease of problems relating to the national security of US changed the public's perception of the issues. Different perceptions of the public and elites regarding foreign policy issues caused the creation of a "populist gap" in US. Bush's war towards Iraq and Obama's foreign policy towards Syria failed to meet the public's perception of foreign policy. Decision-makers and the public had a

different understanding of foreign policy for a long period. Hence, the failure of decision-makers to meet the demands of the public led to the election of Donald Trump in 2016.²⁵³

Bush Jr.'s foreign policy was the genesis for the emergence of the populist gap in US foreign policy. When he elected to the office in 2000 with a neoconservative agenda, there was very little expectation regarding his term. His approval ratings were %51 before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. After the catastrophic event, Bush Jr.'s approval ratings increased to % 86 on September 15 and it peaked on September 21 to %90.²⁵⁴ Dramatic changes in Bush Jr.'s approval ratings can be explained by a rally around the flag effect. People rallied around their leaders because they were afraid, and Bush Jr. was able to start the War on Terror campaign that led to the Iraq War of 2003 thanks to the approval ratings he received after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The American public's support was low for the war against Iraq. According to American public opinion, US should have dealt with Al Qaeda and Afghanistan rather than Iraq because they were the real culprits of the attack.²⁵⁵ Bush Jr.'s administration was forced to postpone the military attack due to the public's low support for an invasion. During that period, the Bush Jr. administration tried to influence public opinion by priming the rhetoric that Iraq's possessing weapons of mass destruction.²⁵⁶ The administration's main aim was to increase the support of public opinion for the war by using media. However, public support of war remained at %60 despite Bush Jr.'s administration's overselling of the weapons of mass destruction rhetoric.²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Bush Jr. started Iraq War with the support of Republicans and some part of Democrats thanks to his lobbying efforts.

Bush Jr.'s oversell of the weapons of mass destruction might have led to a small percentage of increase public opinion's support for his cause but it did not last long. The public was skeptical about launching a war towards Iraq and one of the main reasons for this was that they were

²⁵³ Dina Smeltz et al., "Foreign Policy Beliefs among Leaders and the Public," in *Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidences*, ed. James M McCormick (London: Rowman&Littlefield, 2018), 133–134.

²⁵⁴ Marc J. Hetherington and Michael Nelson, "Anatomy of a Rally Effect: George W. Bush and the War on Terrorism," *Political Science and Politics* 36, no. 1 (2003): 37–42.

²⁵⁵ Scott Lucas, "'You Don't Launch a Marketing Campaign in August': The Bush Administration and the Public Before and After the Iraq Invasion," in *US Public and American Foreign Policy*, ed. Andrew Johnstone and Helen Laville (New York: Routledge, 2010), 173.

²⁵⁶ Douglas Foyle, "Leading the Public to War? The Influence of American Public Opinion on the Bush Administration's Decision to Go to War in Iraq?," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 16, no. 3 (2004): 271.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 290-291.

against launching a war towards a country without a strong military coalition.²⁵⁸ Hence, the impression of military support from allies was important for Bush Jr. administration. For Bush Jr. administration it would have provided three significant achievements related to the war: increasing the legitimacy of the invasion in the public's eyes, reducing the number of casualties, and accelerating the invasion process. Despite extensive diplomatic efforts, closest allies such as France and Germany refused to participate in the military coalition. Rejection of Germany and France increased the importance of Turkey's participation in the military coalition for Bush Jr. administration due to aforementioned reasons. Bush Jr. administration would be able to benefit from Turkey's participation in the invasion by increasing the legitimacy of the invasion in the eyes of the public. TGNA's rejection of 1 March resolution caused a disappointment in Bush Jr. administration not only due to operational reasons but also for public opinion reasons. 1 March Resolution incident was an important setback for Bush Jr. administration in its attempt to persuade public opinion for supporting the war. The Hood Event and developments regarding the Armenian Genocide were the signs of the administration's disappointment of Turkey.

Public opinion was one of the reasons for the deterioration of the US-Turkey relationship after the 1 March Resolution incident, but it also helped the rapprochement process between two states indirectly. After the Iraq War of 2003, Bush Jr.'s approval ratings started to decrease due to the number of American soldiers who died during the military operations and lack of international support to the invasion. Although Bush Jr. had been able to win the 2004 elections, his approval ratings were continuing to drop because of the continuation of military casualties.²⁵⁹ Bush Jr.'s approval ratings fell to %31 at the beginning of 2006.²⁶⁰ The changes in public opinion and the results of the Baker-Hamilton Report of 2006 urged Bush Jr. administration to change its policy towards the Middle East. Although Turkey and US were continuing to cooperate in Iraq despite 1 March 2003 resolution, Bush Jr.'s changing policy towards Middle East due to aforementioned reasons led to a rapprochement period between two states at the end of 2006.

²⁵⁸ Lucas, "'You Don't Launch a Marketing Campaign in August': The Bush Administration and the Public before and after the Iraq Invasion.", 176.

²⁵⁹ David Karol and Edward Miguel, "The Electoral Cost of War: Iraq Casualties and the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election," *Journal of Politics* 69, no. 3 (2007): 646.

²⁶⁰ "Presidential Approval Ratings—George W. Bush," Gallup Organization, Washington, D.C. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/16500/presidential-approval-ratings-george-bush.aspx>. (30 May 2020)

Changes in public opinion for long-lasting wars of US reflected itself during the 2008 elections. Obama established his campaign according to this changing public opinion and won the elections. There were two important public opinion data that urged Obama administration to change foreign policy of US. First, public opinion was favoring troop reduction during the beginning of Obama's term and people were wanting Obama administration to prioritize domestic politics rather than foreign policy.²⁶¹ Second, America's global image were negatively affected from 2003 Iraq War and most of the public of foreign countries were against US's foreign policy.²⁶² Hence, restoring the positive global image of US and preventing US to act as "a global policeman" once again was one of the main objectives of the Obama administration. Obama tried to establish better ties with US's allies in the Middle East under these objectives.²⁶³

Turkey was one of the states that Obama aimed to enhance relations to restore the image of US in broad and abroad. Turkey was a moderate Islamic country and had a good relationship with the neighboring countries, thus growing partnerships between US and Turkey could show the countries of the region US's changing image. Turkey had also a good reputation in the American public. According to the Gallup poll conducted in 2007, the majority of Americans (%53) had favorable views for Turkey. Turkey was the third most favorable Middle Eastern country for Americans after Israel and Egypt respectively.²⁶⁴ Although the positive attitude of the American public towards Turkey was not the only factor for the establishment of a model partnership in 2009, it can be considered as one of the factors that paved the way for it. If the American public had a negative attitude towards Turkey during that period, establishment of a modal partnership would not be possible. Positive perception towards Turkey continued during the first term of the Obama administration despite bilateral problems. One of the most important of them during that period was the Mavi Marmara Flotilla incident. Obama administration continued to act in accordance with public opinion during that incident. According to Rasmussen reports national telephone survey, %49 of respondents was believing that pro-Palestinian activists were responsible for the deaths of people during the raid. Only %19 of

²⁶¹ Richard C. Eichenberg, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in the Obama Era," *Politique Americaine* 2, no. 14 (2009): 18.

²⁶² "Reviewing the Bush Years and the Public's Final Verdict—Bush and Public Opinion," Pew Research Center, Washington D.C. 18 December 2018. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2008/12/18/part-3-bush-and-americas-place-in-the-the-world/> (13 July 2020)

²⁶³ Fawaz A. Gerges, *Obama and the Middle East: The End of America's Moment*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 157.

²⁶⁴ Lydia Saad, "Americans Remain Skeptical About Middle East Peace," Gallup Organization, Washington, D.C. 4 June 2009. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/120728/Americans-Remain-Skeptical-Middle-East-Peace.aspx>. (30 May 2020).

them were considering Israel as guilty for the raid. Therefore, American public opinion was favoring Israel rather than pro-Palestinian activists that supported by Turkey.²⁶⁵

American public opinion's view regarding the Syrian Civil War that started in 2011 was one of the reasons that caused the end of the model partnership. When clashes started between the government and the protesters, US was the one that urged Turkey to take proactive role against Assad regime. Hence, Turkey started to expect that eventually, the Obama administration would take a proactive approach to Syria beyond diplomatic efforts just like Bush Jr. administration did in Iraq and would intervene in the situation militarily in support of protesters to promote democracy and freedom. However, the Obama administration abstained from direct military interventions to Syria because it would be contradicting with his campaign promises. Furthermore, it would cause an audience cost because it would act against public opinion. Public opinion was against intervention to Syria in 2012 and 2013 due to problematic outcomes in the Iraq War of 2003.²⁶⁶ According to the public, the Syrian Civil War was not a priority that necessitate military involvement. American public opinion played an important role for lack of support from Obama administration to Turkey for the ousting Assad regime.

ISIS's emergence during the summer of 2014 changed public opinion regarding the Syrian Civil War. American public opinion started to prioritize the conflict because of the emergence of a deadly terrorist organization but they were still against taking unilateral military action to Syria. The majority of the public was favoring to US to act with her allies to prevent terrorist activities of ISIS.²⁶⁷ Despite the emergence of ISIS, the public was not still perceiving the Assad regime as a fundamental threat to US security. The majority of the public was wanting US should target radical Islamic terrorism rather than the Assad regime.²⁶⁸ Also, the majority of the public was against sending weapons to jihadist organizations in Syria, in which some of them were allies of Turkey.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ "49% of Americans Blame pro-Palestinian Activists for Flotilla Deaths," *Haaretz*, 08 June 2010. <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5131306>. (30 May 2020).

²⁶⁶ Aneta Hlavsová, Kristýna Tamchynová, and Radka Havlová, "Public Opinion and the Fear of Terrorism : Turkish and US Involvement in the Syrian Conflict," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2018): ,36 .

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Bruce Drake, "U.S. Aid to Syrian Rebels: Public has Opposed American Involvement in the Past," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. 14 June 2013. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/06/14/u-s-aid-to-syrian-rebels-public-has-opposed-american-involvement-in-the-past/>. (30 May 2020).

Public's reluctance for waging a war against Assad and uneasiness for sending weapons to Jihadist was one of the reasons that urged decision-makers to choose PYD-YPG as an ally. Decision-makers had a positive attitude towards Kurds because they were cooperated and coordinated with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) during the Iraq War of 2003. Although PYD-YPG was a different fraction comparing with the KRG, decision-makers also had a positive attitude towards them. Kurds were more attractive for decision-makers due to cultural reasons comparing with the jihadist organizations because they were fighting side by side with women, "piously" democratic and "freedom fighters". Hence, the Obama administration enhanced the relationship between PYD-YPG and US after 2014. The main problem was that PYD-YPG was an offshoot of PKK terrorist organization and caused a significant problem for the bilateral relations. Turkey was sensitive regarding the PKK issue due to Sevres syndrome and US's close relationship with PYD-YPG triggered the syndrome.²⁷⁰ While public opinion played a crucial role in the establishment of modal partnerships indirectly and it also caused the end of the modal partnership indirectly. The enhancement of US-PYD relationship caused the decline of US-Turkey relations and paved the way for Turkey to felt abandoned by US.

Public opinion continued to play an important role for the decline of US-Turkey relations during the Trump period by causing divergences between two states. Trump's populist presidential campaign was about ending the military contribution of US to long-lasting wars. Trump was able to use the "populist gap" between elites and the public by using populist rhetoric to won the presidential elections in 2016.²⁷¹ Trump established his foreign policy by listening to his personal advisors rather than state officials due to his unorthodox style. Therefore, the impact of institutional mechanisms in the government that directs foreign policy diminished but the role of domestic social politics actors such as interest groups and public opinion increased. Trump had to listen to public opinion just like every president for reelection but the difference was that he was giving more importance to re-electability and his image in the public's eyes

²⁷⁰ Sevres Syndrome was a belief that external forces, Kurds and imperialist Western forces such as EU and US, was conspiring to divide Turkey.

²⁷¹ Löffmann, "America First and the Populist Impact on US Foreign Policy.", 119.

due to his populist style. Therefore, Trump's unorthodox style in foreign policymaking caused erosion in traditional institutions that makes foreign policy.²⁷²

During the beginning of Trump's term in the office, the majority of the public was still perceiving the ISIS and international terrorism as the greatest threat to the security of US. The major difference in Trump period and Obama period was the change in public's perception of China. Although China was not considered as one of the greatest threats to the security of US, according to public opinion, negativity towards China increased during that period and more people started to perceive China as a threat to the country.²⁷³ According to American public opinion, US was losing against China in trade issues due to an imbalance in the relationship.²⁷⁴ Hence, the Trump administration aimed to take the focus shift that started during the Obama administration one step further and changed US's focus on foreign policy from the Middle East to East Asia. It started a trade war against China and tried to end an imbalance in the economic relationship using diplomatic negotiations. Trump administration continued Obama's surrogate warfare strategy in Syria and abstained from military interventions towards the region following his strategy to turning US foreign policy focus on East Asia. Thus, PYD-YPG and US partnership continued during the Trump period.²⁷⁵

Although Trump administration's Syria policy resembles the Obama administration's Syria policy on many levels, it also has significant differences that based on his intention to end the military contributions of US to long-lasting war. In accordance with this strategy, Trump was also aiming to cut military contribution to US's ally PYD-YPG.²⁷⁶ According to Trump, PYD-YPG was a burden for US.²⁷⁷ Trump administration aimed to solve bilateral problems between Turkey and US by both ending the military contribution of US to the long-lasting war in Syria

²⁷² George Packer, "The President Is Winning His War On American Institutions", *The Atlantic*, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/04/how-to-destroy-a-government/606793/>. (14 July 2020)

²⁷³ "The World Facing Trump: Public Sees ISIS, Cyberattacks, North Korea as Top Threats," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. 12 January 2017. <https://www.people-press.org/2017/01/12/the-world-facing-trump-public-sees-isis-cyberattacks-north-korea-as-top-threats/>. (30 May 2020).

²⁷⁴ Frank Newport, "Trump's Foreign Policy and American Public Opinion," Gallup Organization, Washington, D.C. 12 July 2018. <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/237134/trump-foreign-policy-american-public-opinion.aspx>. (30 May 2020).

²⁷⁵ Ali Askerov, Sean Byrne, and Thomas Matyok, "Effects of US PYD/YPG Policy on Russo-Turkish Relations," in *Contemporary Russo-Turkish Relations: From Crisis to Cooperation*, ed. Ali Askerov (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 102.

²⁷⁶ Mark Landler, Helene Cooper and Eric Schmitt, "Trump to Withdraw U.S. Forces From Syria, Declaring 'We Have Won Against ISIS' ", *New York Times*, 19 December 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/19/us/politics/trump-syria-turkey-troop-withdrawal.html> (15 July 2020).

²⁷⁷ John Bolton, *The Room Where It Happened* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020), 40.

and ease the military burden of PYD-YPG for US. It would be more beneficial for Trump to let Turkey take the burden in Northern Syria.²⁷⁸ Hence, Trump's Syria policy was based on the military withdrawal of US troops from Syria. However, there was strong opposition to Trump administration's Syria policy from the government officials, state agencies, and elites because they were accusing Trump of abandoning the allies.²⁷⁹

The uncertainty of decision-makers regarding the Trump administration's Syria policy reflected itself in American public opinion. While the majority of Republicans were supporting Trump administration's military withdrawal policy, the majority of Democrats were against it. It must be noted that increasing polarization in US was one of the reasons for the complex views of the public against the Trump administration's Syria policy.²⁸⁰ Trump continued to implement military withdrawal strategy to please his electoral base but Turkey's Operation Peace Spring started in October 2019 changed the public's perception of the situation. The majority of the American public was against "abandoning" Kurds in Northern Syria despite mixed views regarding the military withdrawal.²⁸¹ Even Republicans, who strongly supported military withdrawal, were against abandoning Kurds because since the emergence of the Syrian conflict mainstream media had portrayed Kurds heroically. Turkey's military operations caused American public opinion to have a coherent idea about the situation in Northern Syria. Although Trump was in favor of enhancing ties with Turkey and decreasing the military support towards PYD-YPG to achieve his campaign objective, changes in public opinion urged him to pressure Turkey for ending military intervention. After the achievement of a cease-fire between Turkey and PYD-YPG with the diplomatic endeavors of Trump administration, Trump bragged about his success in a campaign rally in Texas and compared Turks and Kurds fighting in Northern Syria to "two kids in a lot".²⁸² Trump's "two kids in a lot" analogy demonstrates that his

²⁷⁸ Bolton, *The Room Where It Happened*, 177.

²⁷⁹ Karen De Young et. al., "As Trump Withdraws U.S. Forces from Northern Syria, His Administration Scrambles To Respond", *Washington Post*, 13 October 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-orders-withdrawal-of-us-forces-from-northern-syria-days-after-pentagon-downplays-possibility/2019/10/13/83087baa-edbb-11e9-b2da-606ba1ef30e3_story.html. (15 July 2020)

²⁸⁰ Amia Dunn and Bradley Jones, "Americans divided over decision to withdraw from Syria," Gallup Organization, Washington, D.C. 18 January 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/18/americans-divided-over-decision-to-withdraw-from-syria/>. (30 May 2020)

²⁸¹ Kathy Frankovic, "Republicans approve of President Trump's moves in Syria, most Americans do not," Yougov. 16 October 2019. <https://today.yougov.com/topics/international/articles-reports/2019/10/16/trump-syria-turkey-kurds-poll>. (30 May 2020)

²⁸² Philip Rucker and Jenna Johnson, "Trump on Turks And Kurds: 'Like Two Kids In A Lot, You've Got To Let Them Fight'", *Washington Post*, 18 October 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-on-turks-and-kurds-like-two-kids-in-a-lot-youve-got-to-let-them-fight/2019/10/17/bf37283c-f0eb-11e9-b648-76bcf86eb67e_story.html. (30 May 2020).

administration's policy towards Northern Syria was frequently influenced by public opinion. Public opinion's coherent pressure on Trump during the conflict influenced Trump's decision making in Northern Syria and urged him to abandon his traditional policy as not to intervene in the situations. Hence, Trump attempted use of his "success" of achieving a cease-fire in Syria for electoral gain.

4.2. Impact of Interest Groups in US Foreign Policy Towards Turkey During AKP Era

Interest groups constitute one of the most important elements of American exceptionalism because in other states interest groups are not effective as they are in US.²⁸³ Interest groups' effectiveness based on the right of the petition of Anglo-Saxon systems. Since the proclamation of Magna Carta in 1215, people have a right to make a complaint or apply for assistance from his or her government for their interests.²⁸⁴ US's multicultural system based on migration from other countries transformed the right of petition into lobbyism. Interest groups lobby their way to influence decision-makers to achieve their objectives.²⁸⁵

In US-Turkey relations during AKP era, ethnic interest groups that are based on ethnic communities have been one of the primary groups that affect the bilateral relations. Idea based interest groups such as religious ones also affect the relations but they are not as effective as ethnic interest groups. Interest groups can influence relations directly or indirectly. While Jewish, Arabian, and religious interest groups influence the relations indirectly; Armenian, Greek, Turkish, and Kurdish interest groups directly influence the relations. Armenian, Greek, and Kurdish lobbies aim to hinder the relationship between US and Turkey but Turkish interest groups aim to enhance the bilateral relationships. Other interest groups' role of lobbying depends on the political developments between their host state and Turkey.

During the Trump administration period, interest groups became much more important for the course of relationship because of three reasons. First, geopolitical developments were against the enhancement of Turkey-US relations. There was a clear divergence of interests in the Middle East. Second, Trump is a populist leader and despite their rhetoric, populist leaders tend to work closely with interest groups to achieve their objective because they depend on their

²⁸³ Türkmen, *Kırılğan İttifaktan Model Ortaklığı: Türkiye-ABD İlişkileri*, 271.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 272.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 273.

electoral base for continuing public support. Third, diplomatic and structural mechanism that constitutes an enduring element in the relations weakened during this era. Lack of communication mechanisms between two countries increased the power of interest groups to influence the relations.

Armenian interest groups are the most influential interest groups in US-Turkey relations because of their capacity, scope, and single-issue approach. They are receiving sufficient financial support and well organized. However, their capacity to influence US foreign policy is limited. They are not as powerful as Jewish lobby to urge decision-makers to take a ground decision about foreign policy issues but they are one of the fundamental barricades in US-Turkey relations. They can reach the legislative branch but not effective in the executive branch.²⁸⁶ Until the 19th century, Armenian Americans were few in numbers compared with other ethnic minorities. The wave of Armenian migration during the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century made Armenian Americans one of the most crowded ethnic communities in US.²⁸⁷ In 1918, Vahan Kardashian established ACIA (American Committee for the Independence of Armenia) to support the establishment of an independent Armenian state.²⁸⁸ Since that date, Armenian American interest groups aimed to influence US decision-makers for Armenian interests. ACIA re-established as ANCA (Armenian National Committee of America) in 1941 and institutionalized with new objectives. ANCA's objectives are urging US decision-makers to accept the alleged Armenian Genocide of 1915, fine Turkey about it, and support Armenian interest in contemporary issues such as blockades of Turkey and Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh. Besides ANCA, AAA (Armenian Assembly of America) was another Armenian American organization that aimed to hinder US-Turkey relations and enhance Armenian-American ties. While ANCA focused on lobbying to achieve its objectives, AAA focused on informing the public about Armenian history.²⁸⁹

Armenian interest groups used grass-roots approach to influence decision-makers. ANCA urges Armenian Americans to participate in local and regional elections so that they can influence decision-makers at the regional level.²⁹⁰ Hence, they aim to influence decision-makers in the

²⁸⁶ Julien Zarifian, "The Armenian-American Lobby and Its Impact on US Foreign Policy," *Society* 51, no. 5 (2014): 511.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 505.

²⁸⁸ Karacagil Ö.Kurşad, "Amerika 'da Tek Kişilik Lobi : Vahan Cardashian," *Akademik Bakış* 8, no. 16 (2015): 116.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁹⁰ Zarifian, "The Armenian-American Lobby and Its Impact on US Foreign Policy.", 508.

state and city level. ANCA mobilizes people through online tools, manifestations, and petitions. Their lobbying efforts not only limited to state and city levels but they also actively lobby in Washington. ANCA prepares annual report cards for all of the congressmen. Congressmen are financially supported according to their grades in the report cards. ANCA checks members' activities about Armenian interests. They grade them according to which bills they supported or which letters they sign or sponsored.²⁹¹

Armenian interest groups that aim to hinder US-Turkey relations saw 1 March 2003 resolution incident as an opportunity to urge Congress for the recognition of the Armenian genocide. In 2005, Armenian interest groups lobbied in Congress to pass a resolution that recognizes 1915 events as genocide and they urged pro-Armenian congressmen to propose 3 different bills regarding the issue.²⁹² Usually, Jewish interest groups supported Turkey during the Armenian genocide issue, however, they remained neutral about those bills in 2005 because they were upset due to Turkey's decision on 1 March resolution. In 2007, a bill approved by House Committee on Foreign Affairs thanks to the lobbying efforts of Armenian interest groups and ADL. Those bills never reached the House of Representatives because of three reasons. First of all, the Dağlica Attack by PKK on October 2007 increased anti-Americanism in Turkey,²⁹³ and US decision-makers thought that recognition of the bill would further increase anti-Americanism in Turkey and upset the relations beyond repair.²⁹⁴ Secondly, geopolitical developments and the increasing importance of Turkey outlined in the Baker-Hamilton report urged decision-makers to blockade the bill. Finally, Turkey's lobby efforts in Washington and the support of major Jewish interest groups other than ADL regarding the issue changed the dynamics in Congress.²⁹⁵

Armenian genocide allegations returned to the agenda with Obama's accession to power. In 2010, the Foreign Affairs Committee one more time passed a resolution regarding the recognition of 1915 events as a genocide. Armenian interest groups' lobbying during that period

²⁹¹ Ibid., 14.

²⁹² Sedat Laçiner, *Ermeni Sorunu, Diaspora ve Türk Dış Politikası* (Ankara: USAK- Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu, 2008), 475.

²⁹³ On 21st October 2007, PKK terrorist killed 12 Turkish soldiers in a sneak attack at Dağlica village. This terrorist attack sparked debates about cross border operations toward Northern Iraq. Turkey's large scale cross border operation in Iraq during that period would jeopardize US interest because it would increase instability in the region.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 493.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 484.

was about using genocide bills as a bargaining chip against Turkey during the 2010 peace talks between Turkey and Armenia. Armenian interest groups' success was based on the neutrality of Jewish interest groups. Jewish interest groups remained impartial because of the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident and the rising anti-Israel approach in Turkey.²⁹⁶ Moreover, Armenian lobby spending increased to \$ 40 million in 2010 to support Armenian interest in Turkey-Armenian peace talks.²⁹⁷ Despite Armenian lobby efforts, the bill did not reach Congress once again because of the positive perception of Turkey comes from "model partnership".

Deterioration of relations between US and Turkey brought Armenian genocide allegations once again in 2019. As clearly demonstrated above, Armenian interest groups' lobby efforts were fruitful during the crises between US and Turkey. 2019 Armenian Genocide bills brought by pro-Armenian congressmen were different from earlier ones due to the severity of crisis between US and Turkey. It received bipartisan support in Congress because of the negative image of Turkey due to its fostering relations with Russia and the Operation Peace Spring. Armenian interest groups increased the negative perception towards Turkey in Washington by comparing with Armenian deaths in 1915 with the deaths of Kurds in 2019 Operation Peace Spring. Furthermore, they worked together with Jewish, Kurdish, and In Defense of Christians organizations for the bill.²⁹⁸ Cooperation of interest groups and the prevalent negative image of Turkey caused the recognition of the Armenian genocide by both House of Representatives and the Senate.²⁹⁹ Armenian interest groups were able to urge Congress to recognize 1915 events as genocide thanks to their extensive lobbying efforts based upon a grand coalition, however, they were not able to urge the executive branch for such as recognition.³⁰⁰

While Armenian interest groups focus on lobbying in state and city level, Greek interest groups mainly lobby in Washington DC to hinder US-Turkey relations.³⁰¹ They increased their role in

²⁹⁶ Ömer Faruk An, "Türkiye'nin Dış Politikasına Etkisi Bakımından 2015'e Doğru Ermeni Lobisi," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, no. 45 (2013): 222.

²⁹⁷ Ocak Tan et al., "Kronoloji (2010-2011)," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, no. 40 (2011): 239.

²⁹⁸ Aaron Schaffer, "Turkey Lobby Goes to Bat Against Armenian Genocide Bill", *Al-Monitor*, 28 October 2019. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/10/turkey-lobby-against-armenia-genocide-bill.html>. (30 May 2020)

²⁹⁹ The Armenian Weekly, "ANCA-ER Welcomes District Of Columbia'S Passage Of Armenian Genocide Resolution", 27 November 2019. <https://armenianweekly.com/2019/11/27/anca-er-welcomes-district-of-columbias-passage-of-armenian-genocide-resolution/> (30 May 2020)

³⁰⁰ BBC News. "Trump Administration Rejects Congress Vote on Armenia 'Genocide'", 17 December 2019.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50828179> (15 July 2020)

³⁰¹ Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Impact of Lobbies on Turkish-American Relations," in *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 184.

US foreign policymaking after the 1974 Cyprus Intervention of Turkey and lobbied to create a positive perception toward Greece and Greek Cyprus interests ever since.³⁰² The Greek community in US is not as unified as the Armenian community, but, they are still able to influence decision-makers. Two Greek interest groups in US are influential for US-Turkey relations: AHEPA (American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association) and AHI (American Hellenic Institute). Both organizations urge their members to vote for pro-Greek congressmen, provide financial contributions to those who supported Greek interest, and organize legislative conferences.³⁰³ Greek interest groups aim to hinder US-Turkey relations for the sake of receiving American support in the Cyprus conflict and East Mediterranean Gas issue.

AHI's anti-Turkish letter to Bush Jr. in 2006 demonstrated the organization's willingness to hinder US-Turkey relations. In that letter, AHI emphasized Turkey's unreliableness due to her actions in the 1 March Resolution incident and urged Bush Jr. to cooperate with Greece on the Cyprus issue.³⁰⁴ Greek interest groups' lobbying efforts increased with the emergence of Eastern Mediterranean Gas disputes between Turkey and Greece and they increased their activities since the election of Trump.³⁰⁵ Since 2017, AHI organized several events to convince congressmen to the legitimacy of Greek claims in the Eastern Mediterranean Gas issue. AHI sent a letter to both US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Donald J. Trump to convince them about the legitimacy of Greek claims.³⁰⁶ AHI and AHEPA further increased their lobbying activities for the intention of benefitting from the deteriorating relations between US and Turkey in 2019. On 25 May 2019, AHI sent another letter to President Trump to urge him about sanctioning Turkey for her aggressive action in the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean regions.³⁰⁷ They released a statement titled "Turkey's Invasion of Syria Not Isolated Event, but a Historical Pattern" after Turkey's Operation Peace Spring in October 2019.³⁰⁸ AHI also

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.,185.

³⁰⁴ Zeynep Bağışhoğlu, "Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde İç Dış Politika İlişkisi: Lobiler ve Türk Dış Politikasına Etkisi" (Master of Arts Thesis, Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi, 2019),90.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.,91.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.,92.

³⁰⁷ American Hellenic Institute, "Sanctions On Turkey Long Overdue" AHI's Letter To President Trump," 25 May 2019. <https://www.aheworld.org/press-releases-1/2019/5/25/sanctions-on-turkey-long-overdue-ahis-letter-to-president-trump?rq=TURKEY>. (30 May 2020)

³⁰⁸ American Hellenic Institute, "Sanctions On Turkey Long Overdue" AHI's Letter To President Trump," 21 October 2019. <https://www.aheworld.org/press-releases-1/2019/5/25/sanctions-on-turkey-long-overdue-ahis-letter-to-president-trump?rq=TURKEY>. (30 May 2020)

started “Call your Senators Today to Stop Delivery of F-35 to Turkey” initiative to prevent Turkey from participating F-35 program.³⁰⁹ AHEPA started the “Sanction Turkey” campaign and urged its members to call their Senators to impose sanction Turkey due to her aggressive actions in Syria and Eastern Mediterranean.³¹⁰

Kurdish interest groups are also one of the organizations that aim to hinder US-Turkey relations via direct lobbying but they are not influential because of their lack of institutional capacity and funding. They are highly dispersed because of every Kurdish group lobby for their interest. While Kurdish interest groups who have an affinity to KRG lobbies for its interests, others lobby for the interests of PYD-YPG.³¹¹ In 2016, KRG spent a huge amount of money to get support from US against ISIS but did not spend any money for the interest of PYD-YPG.³¹² Until the Syrian Civil War, PYD-YPG groups did not have interest groups in US. ARCDDEM (American Rojava Center for Democracy), which established in 2018, was the first interest group established for enhancing Kurdish-US ties and worked for the independence of the Kurdish state alongside Turkey’s Syrian border. ARCDDEM lobbies in Washington in cooperation with American Kurdish Information Network and uses ineffective grass root approaches to influence decision-makers. Kurdish groups are aiming to foster positive views within the American public and Pentagon towards Kurds and to benefit from it. Moreover, they usually cooperate with other interest groups that aim to hinder US-Turkey relations by establishing coalitions.³¹³

Kurdish interest groups published an article titled “The Ethnic Cleansing in Afrin: Blood on Turkey’s Hands” and articles related to Turkey’s S-400 purchase to create a negative perception towards Turkey. They met with religious lobby groups such as the Family Research Council to

³⁰⁹ American Hellenic Institute, “Action Alert: Call Your Senators Today To Stop Delivery Of F-35 to Turkey,” 10 April 2019. <https://www.ahiworld.org/press-releases-1/2019/4/10/action-alert>. (30 May 2020)

³¹⁰ American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, “Sanction Turkey!,” 18 October 2019. <https://ahepa.org/sanction-turkey/>. (30 May 2020)

³¹¹ İrfan Aktan, “Mutlu Çiviroğlu: Kürtler ABD'deki Diplomatik Sempatiji Kazanma Çeviremiyor”, *Duvar*, 22 December 2018. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/yazarlar/2018/12/22/mutlu-civiroglu-kurtler-amerikadaki-sempatiyi-diplomatik-kazani-ma-ceviremiyor/>. (30 May 2020)

³¹² Eric Lipton, “Iraqi Kurds Build Washington Lobbying Machine To Fund War Against ISIS”, *New York Times*, 6 May 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/07/us/politics/iraqi-kurds-build-washington-lobbying-machine-against-isis.html>. (30 May 2020)

³¹³ Maria Koinova, “Diaspora Coalition-Building for Genocide Recognition : Armenians , Assyrians and Kurds,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 11 (2019): 1890–191, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1572908>.

attract support for their cause.³¹⁴ Kurdish interest groups aimed to increase their capacity through loose coalitions with other interest groups in US. They collaborated with Armenian interest groups for Armenian genocide claims, took the limited support of Jewish interest groups about Syrian issues³¹⁵ and organized protests with other interest groups during the Erdogan's meeting with Trump in November 2019.³¹⁶ Kurdish interest groups managed to convince decision-makers to prevent the withdrawal of military troops from Syria.

Jewish interest groups indirectly influence US-Turkey relations but they are the most influential interest groups in terms of influencing US foreign policy in general. US's Middle East policy is established in parallel with Israel's national security due to the influence of Jewish interest groups. Jewish American society's capacity to influence US foreign policy derives from the fact that they are well-integrated, well-organized, and well-funded lobby/interest groups compared to others.³¹⁷ They are not only benefiting from their huge electoral base by grass-root approaches but also effectively lobby in Washington through financial and political means.³¹⁸ Generally, the interest groups are only influential on one part of US departments that take part in the foreign policymaking process. However, Jewish interest groups are influential in Capitol Hill, White House, and Congress, which makes it easier for them to urge decision-makers for Jewish interests.³¹⁹ Moreover, they are the most money spending organizations for lobbying to influence decision-makers.³²⁰ There are a large number of Jewish American organizations but the leading Jewish American organizations are AIPAC (The American Israel Public Affairs Committee), AJC (American Jewish Committee), and ADL (Anti-Defamation League). These organizations aim to urge decision-makers for the continuation of "special relationship" between US and Israel which depends upon US's economic, military and diplomatic assistance

³¹⁴ Will Christou, "Kurdish, Turkish Groups Compete For Influence In Washington D.C. As Invasion Looms", Syria Direct, 07 October 2019. <https://syriadirect.org/news/kurdish-turkish-groups-compete-for-influence-in-washington-d-c-as-invasion-looms-1/>. (30 May 2020)

³¹⁵ Ofra Bengio, "Israel And The Kurds: Love By Proxy", *The American Interest*, 18 March 2016. <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/03/18/israel-and-the-kurds-love-by-proxy/>. (30 May 2020)

³¹⁶ Zehra Ulucak, "Armenian Groups, PKK Terror Backers Team Against Turkey", *Anadolu Agency*, 13 November 2019. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/armenian-groups-pkk-terror-backers-team-against-turkey/1643757>. (30 May 2020)

³¹⁷ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroud, 2007), 141.

³¹⁸ Yılmaz, "Impact of Lobbies on Turkish-American Relations.", 201.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Tom Perkins, "Pro-Israel Donors Spent Over \$22M On Lobbying And Contributions In 2018", *The Guardian*, 15 February 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/feb/15/pro-israel-donors-spent-over-22m-on-lobbying-and-contributions-in-2018>. (30 May 2020)

to Israel.³²¹ Turkey cooperated with Jewish interest organizations especially after the 1990s to enhance US-Turkey relations.³²²

However, cooperation has been interrupted with the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel after the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident. After the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident, changes in the relationship between Israel and Turkey also affected the relations between Turkish and Jewish interest groups in US. Jewish interest groups supported the legitimacy of Israeli raid against the flotilla by lobbying in the Congress. AIPAC's efforts were fruitful because more than three quarters of the members of the Congress and the Senate sent a letter to President Obama for supporting Israeli claims in the Mavi Marmara incident.³²³ AIPAC also prevented the second flotilla named "Freedom Flotilla" that aimed to provide aid to Gaza in 2011 by lobbying in the Congress.³²⁴ During that period, ADL sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to designate IHH (Humanitarian Relief Foundation) members as terrorists due to their ties with US-designated terrorist organization HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement).³²⁵ Obama administration's passive stance during the Mavi Marmara incident was a result of the lobbying efforts of Jewish interest groups and that passive stance created insecurity in Turkey towards model partnership. This was the first major obstacle for the future of the model partnership and the Jewish interest groups was one of the elements that caused the failure of the Obama administration to secure the trust of Turkey for modal partnership.

Jewish interest groups continued their anti-Turkey lobbying efforts following the Mavi Marmara incident. AIPAC lobbied in Washington for the continuation of military aid to Egypt after the coup by General Abdülfettah el-Sisi against the Mursi government related to Muslim Brotherhood in 2013.³²⁶ Turkey's ruling party AKP and the Muslim Brotherhood has close connections in the international arena and Turkey harshly criticized the coup in Egypt. Jewish

³²¹ Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, 23-49.

³²² Yılmaz, "Impact of Lobbies on Turkish-American Relations.", 203.

³²³ Ben Smith, "Members Defend Israeli Flotilla Action", *Politico*, 15 June 2010. <https://www.politico.com/blogs/ben-smith/2010/06/members-defend-israeli-flotilla-action-027572>. (30 May 2020)

³²⁴ The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, "Lawmakers To Turkey: Stop Second Flotilla", 20 May 2011.. <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/AIPAC%20Periodicals/Israel%20Update/2011/05/May%2020>. (30 May 2020)

³²⁵ Anti-Defamation League, "ADL Calls on State Department To Designate Main Flotilla Organizers As Terrorist Organizations", 08 June 2010. <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-calls-on-state-department-to-designate-main-flotilla-organizers-as>. (30 May 2020)

³²⁶ John Hudson, "Egypt's Rulers Have A New Friend In DC: The Israel Lobby", *Foreign Policy*, 19 August 2013. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/19/egypts-rulers-have-a-new-friend-in-dc-the-israel-lobby/>. (30 May 2020)

interest groups highlighted anti-Semitism in Turkey through their press releases during that period. In 2014, ADL warned decision-makers for the hostile environment towards Jews in Turkey.³²⁷ In 2015, AJC issued a press release that condemns President Erdogan for anti-Israeli rhetoric.³²⁸ Jewish interest groups' anti-Turkish lobbying efforts also increased with the deterioration of relations between US and Turkey in 2019. Jewish interest groups lobbied their way for the passage of the Eastern Mediterranean Partnership Act that promotes the interest of Greece and Israel in the issue and tried to deadlocked Turkey's efforts.³²⁹ Jewish interest groups also lobbied in Washington to prevent Turkey from purchasing F-35³³⁰, call for sanctioning of Turkey for her S-400 purchase and (ADL) endorsed the Armenian genocide bill in 2019.³³¹

Similar to Jewish interest groups, religious interest groups in US indirectly influence US-Turkey relations and their influence has been more limited. However, the Evangelical interest group played an important role in US-Turkey relations during AKP period. Evangelicals aim to spread to religious doctrines of the Bible and they urge decision-makers to establish US foreign policy according to religious principles.³³² Evangelicals have a special relationship with Jewish interest groups. The main reason of this is that they believe apocalypse will come after an outbreak of great chaos in the Middle East in 2000s. Jesus Christ will resurrect, save them and they will rule to world alongside with Jesus Christ. However, Jewish people should be return to promised lands completely, Al Aqsa-Mosque should be demolished and Temple of Jerusalem must be re-build for the outbreak of great chaos.³³³ Hence, helping and supporting Jewish people in their quest for strong Israel state regarded as one of the good deeds. Therefore, Evangelical interest groups work closely with Jewish interest groups to shape US foreign policy

³²⁷ Anti-Defamation League, ADL Alarmed At Increasingly Hostile Environment Toward Jews In Turkey, 18 July 2014. <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-alarmed-at-increasingly-hostile-environment-toward-jews-in-turkey>. (30 May 2020)

³²⁸ American Jewish Committee, "AJC Condemns Erdogan's Unbridled, Dangerous Attacks On Israel", 15 January 2015. <https://www.ajc.org/news/ajc-condemns-erdogans-unbridled-dangerous-attacks-on-israel>. (30 May 2020)

³²⁹ American Jewish Committee, "AJC, HALC Applaud Passage Of Eastern Mediterranean Partnership Act", 19 December 2019. <https://www.ajc.org/news/ajc-halc-applaud-passage-of-eastern-mediterranean-partnership-act>. (30 May 2020)

³³⁰ Times of Israel Staff, "Israel Reportedly Lobbied Washington To Drop Turkey From F-35 Program", *Times of Israel*, 01 August 2019. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-reportedly-lobbied-washington-to-drop-turkey-from-f-35-program/>. (30 May 2020)

³³¹ Anti-Defamation League, "ADL Endorses Congressional Resolution Commemorating The Armenian Genocide", 28 October 2019. <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-endorses-congressional-resolution-commemorating-the-armenian-genocide>. (30 May 2020)

³³² Gökalp Saylam, "ABD Dış Politikası ve Evanjelizm" (Ufuk Üniversitesi, 2019), 63.

³³³ Ensar Çetin, "Hristiyan Fundamentalizmi ve Ortadoğu'da Tanrıyı Kıyamete Zorlama Stratejisi," Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi 5, no. 1 (2014): 2.

in the Middle East, and the Republican Party's foreign policy in the Middle East heavily influenced by Evangelical doctrines.³³⁴

Evangelicals' important role in US-Turkey relations based on their lobbying efforts in 2017 and 2018 to free Pastor Brunson from jail in Turkey. Trump administration had good ties with Evangelicals and Vice President Mike Pence was one of the members of their organizations. They lobbied through executive and legislative branches (thanks to their influence in Republicans) to free Pastor Brunson. Prominent Evangelicals such as Franklin Graham, Johnnie Moore, and Robert Jeffress expressed their support via social media to increase public support for the release of Brunson. Furthermore, Trump's harsh rhetoric towards Turkey during the Brunson issue was occurring due to his eagerness to secure support from Evangelical organizations in the Midterm elections in US.³³⁵ The relationship between Trump and Evangelical interest groups resulted in the victory of both parties because Brunson released from prison in October 2018 and Trump received huge support from the Evangelical electoral base.³³⁶

Arab Americans fractionalized due to their different interest in the Middle East and most of the Arab states preferred the lobby in Washington via lobbying firms rather than using the Arab-American community. The disunity of Arab Americans caused the lack of a unified voice and a single-issue approach.³³⁷ Although there are some Arab American organizations such as NNAAC (National Network for Arab-American Communities), American Muslims for Palestine, ADC (American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee) and CAIR (Council on American Islamic Relations), they are ineffective of influencing US foreign policy due to aforementioned reasons. Despite its limited influence, American Muslims for Palestine supported Turkey during the Mavi Marmara incident by sending a letter to President Obama that underlines the geostrategic importance of Turkey for US foreign policy and urged its

³³⁴ Paul D Miller, "Evangelicals, Israel and US Foreign Policy," *Survival* 56, no. 1 (2014): 9.

³³⁵ Umar Farooq, "Trump Using Brunson To Rally Evangelical Votes: Report", *Anadolu Agency*, 17 August 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/trump-using-brunson-to-rally-evangelical-votes-report/1234574>. (30 May 2020)

³³⁶ Elana Schor, "Trump's Faithful: 2020 Tests His Ties To White Evangelicals", *Associated Press News*, 13 January 2020. <https://apnews.com/2004552db629d9e720761221be3e1209>. (30 May 2020)

³³⁷ Maciej Huczko, "The Pro-Israeli and Pro-Arab Lobby in the United States," *International Scientific Journal Science. Business. Society*. 4, no. 2 (2019): 73.

members to choose Turkish products and Turkey as a travel destination to support Turkey's economy.³³⁸

Turkish interest groups are one of the fundamental sources of the enhancement of US-Turkey relations. Turkish lobby organizations work closely with their host state and they are effectively lobbying via firms in Washington to protect Turkey's interest in US domestic politics. Turkish interest groups' activities not only include enhancing US-Turkey relations via lobbying but also include counteracting anti-Turkish propaganda and educating Americans about Turkey.³³⁹ There are two main Turkish interest groups in US: ATAA (Assembly of Turkish American Associations) and FTAA (Federation of Turkish American Associations). Both of these organizations are umbrella organizations and they aim to nourish Turkish American networks.³⁴⁰ In addition to these organizations, US-Turkey Business Council, TCA (Turkish Coalition of America) and TABA (Turkish American Business Association) are newly formed organizations that aim to foster bilateral relations. While US-Turkey Business Council and TABA aim to enhance economic relations, TCA aims to enhance relations by effectively lobbying in Congress.

Turkish interest groups have three strategies to influence US decision-makers. First, they work with professional lobby firms alongside with Turkish government. Second, they use their educational, cultural, and academic networks in the Turkish American community. For this purpose, they hold annual parades under the name of "Turkish Culture Festival" on 19 May. For example, they also established institutes in American universities to educate American about Turkish culture and politics. Institute of Turkish Studies established in 1982 with the help of Turkish government conducts its operations for this purpose. Third, they work closely with American high-level officials to influence executive branch of US government.³⁴¹ While Turkish interest groups can influence executives to achieve their objectives, they are not able to influence the Congress because geographically they are highly dispersed and lack an effective electoral base to influence elections at state and city levels.³⁴²

³³⁸ Bağışlıoğlu, "Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde İç Dış Politika İlişkisi: Lobiler ve Türk Dış Politikasına Etkisi", 106.

³³⁹ Yılmaz, "Impact of Lobbies on Turkish-American Relations.", 196.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 197.

³⁴² Ibid., 199.

Turkish interest groups worked extensively to help solving bilateral problems between Turkey and US. After the 1 March 2003 resolution incident, Turkish interest groups lobbied in Washington to create a rapprochement between two states. Turkish interest groups' lobbied efforts led by TABA were effective to open a dialogue mechanism between two states.³⁴³ Although TABA is an economic interest group, it cooperated with political interest groups in US to influence decision-makers. Also, ATAA started to increase its activities during that period by increasing its network capability and organizing Leadership Conferences to influence US decision-makers.³⁴⁴

Turkish interest groups lobbied against Armenian interest groups' efforts to ensure the Congress for the recognition of 1915 events as genocide. For this purpose, Turkish interest groups published newspaper advertisements against Armenian allegations and urged the Congress for the establishment of a commission for the investigation of Armenian genocide allegations.³⁴⁵ Turkish interest groups' lobby efforts against the Armenian genocide were retroactive because they were only lobbying effectively against allegations when the issue brought to the agenda by Armenian interest groups during crises.³⁴⁶ Despite retroactive strategy toward Armenian genocide allegations, they were successful to prevent the recognition due to their fruitful lobbying efforts toward the executive branch and Turkey's geopolitical importance for US.

During AKP Era, Turkey's lobbying efforts in Washington increased significantly. Turkish interest groups alongside with Turkish government used the first and the third strategy options successfully to influence decision-makers in US. According to the first strategy, the Turkish government increased its spending for lobbying beginning in 2014. Turkey was expending less than 2 million \$ in 2014 but she expended more than 6 million \$ in 2018. Today, she is working with prominent lobbying firms such as Ballad Partners, Inovo BV, Mercury Public Affairs, Amsterdam Partners, and Greenberg Traurig that have strong connections with Trump administration.³⁴⁷ According to the third strategy, Turkey cooperated with high-level officials

³⁴³ Firdovsi Khalilov, "Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde Türk Lobi Çalışmaları"(IstanbulUniveristy, 2008),134.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Bağışlıoğlu, "Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde İç Dış Politika İlişkisi: Lobiler ve Türk Dış Politikasına Etkisi.",119.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.,122.

³⁴⁷ Adam Klasfeld, "Boom Times For Turkey's Lobbyists In Trump'S Washington", *Courthouse News*, 31 October 2019. <https://www.courthousenews.com/boom-times-for-turkeys-lobbyists-in-trumps-washington/>. (30 May 2020)

such as former National Security Adviser of Trump administration Michael Flynn, personal attorney of President Rudy Giuliani, and senior Senator Lindsey Graham for Turkish interests. Flynn emphasized the importance of enhancing US-Turkey ties by writing in newspapers.³⁴⁸ Giuliani accused of receiving bribe from Turkish officials for the release of Reza Zarrab. Senator Graham accused of blocking Armenian genocide resolution in 2019 due to financial contributions and electoral support from Turkish Americans.³⁴⁹

4.3. Impact of Media in US Foreign Policy Towards Turkey During AKP Era

Media plays a crucial role in the establishment of foreign policy decision making in US due to the pluralistic and democratic nature of the state. Media's importance for the foreign policy decision-making process in US increased significantly after the Cold War. After the Cold War, American leaders benefitted from the increasing influence of media to steer public opinion in some instances. For example, the Bush Jr. administration used media coverage to generate public support for his war campaign towards Iraq.³⁵⁰ He benefited from a heroic framing strategy to reinvigorate patriotic sentiment in the American public.³⁵¹ There are some instances where media steers public opinion against the policies of the leader. For example, the Clinton administration influenced by the American media's coverage of the events during the airpower interventions of NATO in Bosnia in 1994 and 1995.³⁵² The main determinants that decide whether media will influence decision-makers or influenced by it depend upon the existence of crises and policy certainty.

1 March 2003 resolution incident was the first crisis in US-Turkey relations during AKP Era. Rejection of resolution caused widespread resentment in Bush Jr. administration but the resentment of the administration was not visible in mainstream media of US. There was no priming and framing about the 1 March 2003 resolution in New York Times and Washington Post newspapers. However, mainstream media was eager to report Turkey's rejection of

³⁴⁸ Michael Flynn, "Our Ally Turkey Is In Crisis And Needs Our Support", *The Hill*, 11 August 2016. <https://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/foreign-policy/305021-our-ally-turkey-is-in-crisis-and-needs-our-support>. (30 May 2020)

³⁴⁹ Harut Sassounian, "Turkish Money Motivated Sen. Graham To Block Armenian Genocide Resolution", *The Armenian Weekly*, 02 December 2019. <https://armenianweekly.com/2019/12/02/turkish-money-motivated-sen-graham-to-block-armenian-genocide-resolution/>. (30 May 2020)

³⁵⁰ Orayb Najjar, "The American Media and the Iraq War at Its Tenth Anniversary : Lessons for the Coverage of Future Wars," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 8, no. 1 (2014): 20.

³⁵¹ Emily D Shaw, "The Heroic Framing of US Foreign Policy" (PHD Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2010).

³⁵² Piers Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention* (London: Routledge, 2002), 118.

resolution as a good sign of the democratic process of Turkey. Although the tone of the coverages was objective, the anti-war approach in the media during that period demonstrated itself by praising Turkey's democratic decision and criticizing Bush Jr. administration for his pressure on Turkey.³⁵³

Mainstream media coverage in US towards Turkey was positive during the administration of Bush Jr. News, editorials and opinion sections in New York Times and Washington Post emphasized Turkey's democratic reforms in the context of EU accession process, labeled Turkey as a long-term NATO ally and underlined the importance of Turkey as a fundamental Muslim ally of US. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan frequently praised by the columnist in the mainstream media and the repressive actions of the military criticized by them. Hence, Turkey was framed as a democratic NATO ally that governed by moderate Islam. Although mainstream media highlighted democratic problems in Turkey such as the assassination of Armenian journalist Hrant Dink and prosecutions of Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk due to his remarks about the alleged Armenian genocide, they highlighted AKP and Erdogan's endeavors to enhance democracy in Turkey. This frame was coherent with the changing rhetoric of Bush Jr. administration during that period. Policy certainty of administration against Turkey led to the aforementioned frame for the country. Mainstream media in US was manufacturing consent for the establishment of strategic partnership between two states. Turkey's Islamic and democratic leaders found themselves a significant spot in mainstream media during that period.

Framing of Turkey as a democratic NATO ally that governed by a moderate Islamic party continued during the early Obama period. AKP and Erdogan's democratic struggle praised in the editorials section of New York Times and the news section of Washington Post.³⁵⁴ One clear reason for the positive coverage of Turkey was the establishment of "model partnership" between two states. Positive remarks of the decision-makers and policy certainty towards Turkey ensured the continuation of the positive coverage of the country despite the emerging

³⁵³ Dexter Filkins, "Threats And Responses, Turkey; In Defeat Of U.S. Plan, Turks See A Victory For Democracy", *New York Times*, 5 March 2003. <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/05/world/threats-responses-turkey-defeat-us-plan-turks-see-victory-for-democracy.html?searchResultPosition=272>. (30 May 2020)

³⁵⁴ The Editorial Board, "Turkey's Democracy On Trial", *New York Times*, 21 March 2008. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/21/opinion/21fri2.html?searchResultPosition=40_ (30 May 2020)
Henri Barkey, "Turkey's Court Case Is Not The End", *Washington Post*, 23 August 2008. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/22/AR2008082202323.html>. (30 May 2020)

problems between two states such as the Mavi Marmara Crisis and Turkey's rejection of UN Security Council resolution imposing economic sanctions against Iran.

Although policy certainty towards Turkey continued during the second term of Obama, mainstream media's coverage against Turkey changed. New York Times and Washington Post were already focusing on the rising influence and conservative policies of Erdogan during the end of the first term of Obama. Erdogan's policies during the Gezi Park protests and his crackdowns towards the members of the FETO terrorist organization widely criticized by New York Times and Washington Post. During the Gezi Park Protests in 2013, New York Times first time used the word autocratic when describing then Prime Minister Erdogan and Washington Post described Erdogan as a leader who embraces "strongman" policies against protests.³⁵⁵

In 2014, mixed coverage of mainstream media towards Turkey changed into a negative one due to divergences of US and Turkey against Syria and domestic problems in Turkey. The government's crackdown towards FETO terrorist organization was perceived as an undemocratic endeavor by mainstream media and Turkey's lack of support to Kurdish terrorist organizations during the Kobane War of 2014 was criticized. Media's negative coverage increased with the end of the peace process between the government and PKK in 2015. His rejection of establishing a coalition with the opposition drew criticism from the mainstream media and he accused of using violence in Syria towards Kurdish people to win the majority in the elections.³⁵⁶ After AKP won the majority in November 2015 elections, negative coverage of US mainstream media increased and they even accused Erdogan of "pulling Putin" in Turkey by addressing Erdogan's autocratic tendencies.³⁵⁷ Negative coverage of Turkey in mainstream media continued in 2016. The government's success in suppressing coup attempt of FETO

³⁵⁵ Sebnem Arsu, "After Protests, Forums Sprout In Turkey's Parks", *New York Times*, 07 August 2013. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/08/world/europe/after-protests-forums-sprout-in-turkeys-parks.html?searchResultPosition=50>. (30 May 2020)

The Editorial Board, "Prime Minister Erdogan's Strongman Response To Turkey's Protests", *Washington Post*, 3 June 2013. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/prime-minister-erdogans-strongman-response-to-turkeys-protests/2013/06/03/6d83987a-cc78-11e2-8f6b-67f40e176f03_story.html. (30 May 2020)

³⁵⁶ Eric S. Edelman, "America's Dangerous Bargain With Turkey", *New York Times*, 27 August 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/27/opinion/americas-dangerous-bargain-with-turkey.html?searchResultPosition=2>. (30 May 2020)

³⁵⁷ The Editorial Board, "Erdogan's Formula For Consolidating Clout In Turkey", *New York Times*, 03 November 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/03/world/europe/erdogans-formula-for-consolidating-clout.html?searchResultPosition=53>. (30 May 2020)

terrorist organization did not receive praise from the mainstream media. Contrarily, they focused on the crackdowns of the government following the coup attempt and framed Erdogan as an autocratic leader.³⁵⁸ Erdogan's framing in mainstream media as a moderate Islamic leader who promotes democracy in Turkey transformed into an autocratic leader who threatens democracy during the second term of Obama's presidency.

Mainstream media continued to frame Erdogan as an autocratic leader who threatens democracy in Turkey during Trump's presidency. Three important differences distinguish the media's role in the foreign policymaking process towards Turkey in this period. First, mainstream media's negative coverage towards Erdogan increased drastically and they started to use editorial sections of their newspapers to openly target Erdogan's government. For example, New York Times accused Erdogan of being a hypocrite in its editorial article published on 17 March 2017. According to the article, Erdogan was accusing Germany as acting like Nazis and knowing nothing about democracy but he "jailed tens of thousands of people, shuttered more than 150 media companies and called a referendum in April to enlarge his powers."³⁵⁹ Washington Post similarly criticized Erdogan's policies during the referendum process in its editorial article published on 14 March 2017 and urged American politicians to act against Turkey's spiral downward.³⁶⁰

Second, mainstream media was using Erdogan and Trump's close personal relationship to discredit Trump in domestic politics. New York Times and Washington Post was consistently showing the similarities of Erdogan and Trump's leadership styles and their attitude toward making foreign policy. For example, Brian Klaas depicted Erdogan's Turkey as the future of US under Trump administration in its article published in Washington Post on 13 January 2018.

³⁶¹ New York Times also published an article on 2 April 2018 that likens Erdogan's public

³⁵⁸ The Editorial Board, "The Countercoup in Turkey", *New York Times*, 18 July 2016.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/18/opinion/the-countercoup-in-turkey.html?searchResultPosition=112>. (16 July 2020)

³⁵⁹ The Editorial Board, "Mr. Erdogan's Jaw-Dropping Hypocrisy", *New York Times*, 08 March 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/08/opinion/mr-erdogans-jaw-dropping-hypocrisy.html?searchResultPosition=86>. (30 May 2020)

³⁶⁰ The Editorial Board, "Will The United States Speak Out Against Turkey's Spiral Downward?", *Washington Post*, 14 March 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/will-the-united-states-speak-out-against-turkeys-spiral-downward/2017/03/14/b014c678-02a2-11e7-b1e9-a05d3c21f7cf_story.html. (30 May 2020)

³⁶¹ Brian Klaas, "Want To See Where Trump Is Taking America? Look at Turkey Under Erdogan.", *Washington Post*, 13 January 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2018/01/13/want-to-see-where-trump-is-taking-america-look-at-turkey-under-erdogan/>. (30 May 2020)

speeches to Trump's tweets.³⁶² It must be noted that Erdogan was not the only leader that likened to Trump by mainstream media in US. However, mainstream media that dislikes Trump openly benefitted from his close relationship with Erdogan to discredit him in American domestic politics.

Third, there was a policy uncertainty during the Trump administration period. Trump was having a conflict of interest with other state agencies about the establishment and conduct of foreign policy due to his "drain the swamp" approach in policymaking. He made significant changes to traditional US foreign policy that supported by Republican Party elites, Department of Secretary officials and Pentagon.³⁶³ Hence, Trump's foreign policy towards Turkey was consisting of policy uncertainty. Trump's decision of withdrawing US troops from Syria on 7 October 2019 was a shock for the top US commanders in Pentagon.³⁶⁴ Later, his harsh rhetoric towards Turkey and announcements from Twitter about not abandoning Kurds in Northern Syria shows the policy uncertainty of Trump administration.

Turkey's Operation Peace Spring against PYD-YPG in Northern Syria in October 2019 took significant attention in US mainstream media. Mainstream media made it prominent news in US domestic policies by extensively covering the issues. Kurdish groups in Northern Syria were receiving positive coverages in mainstream media and framed as a progressive organization that promotes human rights in the region. Turkish operation towards terrorist organizations framed as an invasion by both New York Times and Washington Post. Two newspapers framed the issue as US abandoning prominent ally and Turkey was invading their land by using coercive measures. Furthermore, both newspapers accused Turkey of carrying ethnic cleansing against Kurds in Northern Syria in their opinion sections.³⁶⁵ Mainstream media's framing was fruitful because it steered public opinion for the advantage of Kurdish groups. Trump was forced to change his foreign policy towards Northern Syria due to pressure from media.

³⁶² Carlotta Gal, "Sermons and Shouted Insults: How Erdogan Keeps Turkey Spellbound", *New York Times*, 02 April 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/02/world/middleeast/erdogan-turkey.html?searchResultPosition=47>. (30 May 2020)

³⁶³ Hal Brands, Peter Faever and William Inboden, "In Defense Of The Blob", *Foreign Affairs*, 29 April 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-04-29/defense-blob>. (30 May 2020)

³⁶⁴ Lara Seligman, "Defying Pentagon, Trump Endorses Turkish Operation In Syria", *Foreign Policy*, 7 October 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/07/erdogan-defying-pentagon-trump-endorses-turkish-operation-in-syria/>. (30 May 2020)

³⁶⁵ Max Boot, "Trump's Corrupted Foreign Policy: Coddle The Dictator, Abuse The Ally", *Washington Post*, 14 November 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/bc483f18-06fc-11ea-8292-c46ee8cb3dce_story.html. (30 May 2020)

4.4. Impact of the Congress in US Foreign Policy Towards Turkey During AKP Era

The Congress's role in influencing the foreign policymaking process in US experienced important changes during AKP Era. Congress's effectiveness in the foreign policymaking process was diluted due to the static nature of the Cold War but developments during the Vietnam War increased its role in the process.³⁶⁶ After the Cold War, Congress's participation in the foreign policymaking process further increased due to changing the security environment.³⁶⁷ The 9/11 terrorist attacks changed the role of the Congress once again because public and decision-makers perceived these terrorist attacks as a threat to the national security of US.³⁶⁸ Although it continued to be an important factor for the foreign policymaking process, it was not influential as it was during the post-Cold War until the election of Trump in 2016.³⁶⁹ Trump was even receiving harsh criticism from his fellow Republican Congressman due to his unorthodox style in foreign policymaking. The Congress became a more active domestic actor in the foreign policymaking process after Republicans lost the majority in the House of Representatives to Democrats in the 2018 elections. Democrats were eager to use their majority to show the public that Trump's foreign policy was not beneficial for the interest of the public. Hence, they used the Congress as a tool to achieve their objectives.³⁷⁰

Bilateral problems between US- Turkey relations also set the agenda for Congress during the Bush Jr. administration. The major difference was that although Turkey was harshly criticized by Bush Jr. administration officials due to her approach to sending troops to Iraq, in the Congress there were mixed reactions to the incident. The main reason for this mixed reaction was that even though Congress gave greater powers to Bush Jr. by passing a joint resolution authorizing use of force against those responsible for the 9/11 attacks, most of the lawmakers (mostly Democrats) were suspicious about the idea.³⁷¹ Hence, the mixed reaction of the lawmakers towards the Iraq War reverberated to the lawmakers' reactions towards Turkey. Democratic Senator Tom Harkin's speech in the Senate on 3 March 2003 and Democrat

³⁶⁶ James M McCormick, *American Foreign Policy and Process*, 5th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 308.

³⁶⁷ S David, "The Obama Presidency and US Foreign Policy: Where 's the Multilateralism?," *International Studies Perspective* 13 (2012): 53.

³⁶⁸ James Wallner, "A Dynamic Relationship: How Congress and the President Shape Foreign Policy," *RStreet Policy Study*, 2019, 2.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁷⁰ Brian Mckee and Caroline Tess, "How Congress Can Take Back Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* no.1, (2019): 76-87..

³⁷¹ James M. Lindsay, "Invitation to Struggle: Congress, the President, and U.S. Foreign Policy," in *Domestic Determinants of Foreign Policy in the European Union and the United States*, ed. Daniel S. Hamilton and Tiilikainen Teija (Washington D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations and Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2018), 145–63.

Congressman Frank Pallone's speech in the House of Representatives on 27 March 2003 exemplified the mixed reactions towards the incident. Senator Harkin criticized Bush administration for failing to urge Turkey to allow US troops to go across the country and stated that even Turkey was debating the war democratically when US was failing to do.³⁷² On the other hand, Congressman Pallone criticized the Bush administration too by stating that his administration gave too much to Turkish administration. Turks were not a stable ally for US and they were not on the side of American soldiers during the war despite US's support.³⁷³

Armenian Genocide issue was a more significant issue in the Congress comparing with the 1 March 2003 incident. Turkey's problems with the administration due to the 1 March 2003 incident and the efforts of interest groups in Congress led to a wide range of debates about the genocide allegations during the Bush Jr. period. There were six legislation bills proposed by different lawmakers during this period. The most important and problematic one of those bills was the bill introduced by Republican Congressman Adam Schiff on 30 January 2007. Bill had 212 co-sponsors and received support from many Democrats. Although bilateral problems between Turkey and US had been solved partially thanks to the efforts of Condoleezza Rice after the publication of the Baker-Hamilton Report in 2006, Armenian interest groups already seized the opportunity. Moreover, the Democrat Party had won the majority in both chambers of the Congress during the 2006 midterm elections. Prominent figures in Democrat Party such as Nancy Pelosi and Bob Menendez were staunch supporters of the Armenian Genocide due to their proximity with Armenian interest groups.³⁷⁴ Hence, it can be argued that the triumph of the Democrat Party in the Congress was another development that caused the re-emergence of Armenian Genocide issue in the Congress after 2006.

The Bill titled "Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution" was repeating the allegations outlined in the all of previous Armenian Genocide bills. It was claiming that 1,5 million Armenians were killed and 2 million were exiled by Turks during the period between 1915-1923. Hence, Turks had conducted systematic ethnic cleansing towards

³⁷² U.S. Congress, Senate, *Proceedings And Debates Of The 108th Congress*, 108th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 149, No. 33. 3 March 1997, 8. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2003/3/3/senate-section/article/s29918?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=6&r=39>. (30 May 2020)

³⁷³ U.S. Congress, House, *Questioning Wisdom Of Huge Economic Aid Package To Turkey*, 108th Cong, 1st Ses., Vol. 149, No. 50. 27 March 2003. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2003/3/27/house-section/article/h2456-2?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=7&r=13> (30 May 2020)

³⁷⁴ Laçiner, *Ermeni Sorunu, Diaspora ve Türk Dış Politikası*, 475-476.

Armenians, and US should recognize this as a fact. According to the bill, US President should characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation as genocide during his annual commemorations on 24 April. Although the bill successfully passed the House Committee on Foreign Affairs by 27 Yeas and 21 Nays on 10 October 2007, it did not reach to Floor Hearings because of the aforementioned reasons.³⁷⁵ Bilateral problems such as Cyprus issue, Ecumenical Patriarch issue, democratic problems of Turkey concerning the Kurdish population, freedom of speech and problems relating to the stability in Iraq were also other issues highlighted by lawmakers in the Hearings of the Congress but they did not set the agenda for the relationship.³⁷⁶

Obama benefitted from the powers granted to Bush Jr. by Congress after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, however, his relationship with the Congress was different in comparison with his predecessor. Obama, coherent with his campaign promises, was more careful to not draw harsh criticism from Congress especially after Democrats lost the majority in the 2008 November midterm elections. For example, Obama did not militarily intervene in Syria after Bashar Assad used chemical weapons against the people of Ghouta in 2013 although he previously stated that usage of chemical weapons was his “red line” in Syria conflict because the Congress did not authorize a military intervention to Syria.³⁷⁷

The main agenda of the Congress during the first term of the Obama administration was the Armenian Genocide and Mavi Marmara issues. Although other problems related to the third states such as the Cyprus issue and Ecumenical Patriarch issue found a voice for themselves in

³⁷⁵ U.S. Congress, House, *Affirmation Of The United States Record On The Armenian Genocide Resolution*, H.Res.106, 110th Cong. 1st Sess. Introduced House on 30 January 2007. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-resolution/106?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=429&s=7>. (30 May 2020)
For more information about the issue please visit page 54.

³⁷⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Expressing The Sense Of The Senate That Turkey Should End its Military Occupation Of The Republic Of Cyprus, Particularly Because Turkey's Pretext Has Ben Refuted by Over 13,000,000 Crossings Of The Divide By Turkish-cypriots and Greek-cypriots Into Each Other's Communities Without Incident*, , S.Res.331, 110th Cong. Vol 153,no.143. Introduced in Senate on 25 September 2007. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2007/9/25/senate-section/article/s12067-2?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=3>. (16 July 2020)
U.S. Congress, House, *Turkish Penal code--Elif Shafak's Trial*, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., Vol. 152, No. 122. 26 September 2006. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2006/9/26/house-section/article/h7351-4?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=4&r=6>. (16 July 2020)
U.S. Congress, House, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 153, No. 86. 24 May 2007. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2007/5/24/house-section/article/h5913-3?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=56>. (16 July 2020)
U.S. Congress, House, *Kurdish Prisoners Released*, 108th Cong., 2nd sess., Vol. 150, No. 90. 25 June 2004. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2004/6/25/house-section/article/h5134-2?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=52> (16 July 2020)

³⁷⁷ Powaski, *Ideals, Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy from George H.W. Bush to Donald Trump*,168.

the Hearings and Legislation they were not the main problems in the relationship. Armenian Genocide issue once again became a main agenda in the Congress with the introduction of a resolution titled “Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution” by the Democrat Congressman Adam Schaffer on 17 March 2009. Armenian interest groups were aiming to pressure the Obama administration so that he can urge Turkey to meet the expectations of Armenians in the upcoming meetings between Turkish and Armenian officials regarding the normalization of the relations.³⁷⁸ The aforementioned resolution passed by the Committee on Foreign Affairs by 23 Yeas and 22 Nays on 4 March 2010 and placed on House Calendar for consideration.³⁷⁹ Passage of the resolution by the Committee on Foreign Affairs drew criticism from Turkish decision-makers and caused a problem in bilateral relations during that period. Turkish diplomatic efforts and the good relationship between the Obama and Erdogan administrations prevented the resolution to progress further. After the Mavi Marmara Incident in 2010, several lawmakers defended Israelis right to self-defense and labeled the people in the Mavi Marmara flotilla as “extremists”.³⁸⁰ Several congressmen even introduced a resolution accusing IHH of providing financial, logistical, and material support to the terrorist organization and called for the investigation of the incident.³⁸¹ Although the resolution failed, it showed the Congress’ stance about the incident.

Despite the Armenian Genocide and Mavi Marmara issues, good relations between two states reflected in the Congress. Republican James Sensenbrenner introduced a resolution to the House of Representatives on 01 December 2010 for the establishment of a bilateral free trade agreement between Turkey and US. In that resolution, Sensenbrenner stated that “Turkey is a democratic, secular, unitary, constitutional republic, with an ancient cultural heritage and

³⁷⁸ Kanat et al., *An Almanac: US-Turkey Relations Under The AK Party*, 76.

³⁷⁹ U.S. Congress, House, *Affirmation of the United States Record On the Armenian Genocide Resolution*, H.Res.252, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., introduced in House 17 March 2009. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-resolution/252/all-actions-without-amendments?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=6&r=9>. (30 May 2020)

³⁸⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, *A Resolution to Express The Sense Of The Senate That Israel Has An Undeniable Right To Self-defense, And To Condemn The Recent Destabilizing Actions By Extremists Aboard The Ship Mavi Marmara*, S.Res.548, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., introduced in Senate 09 June 2010. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/senate-resolution/548?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=4&r=9>. (30 May 2020)

³⁸¹ U.S. Congress, House, *Urging an Investigation Into The Role Of The Insan Hak ve Hurriyetleri ve Insani Yardim Vakfi in Providing Financial, Logistical, And Material Support To Terrorists, And Into The Role Of Any Foreign Governments, Including The Republic of Turkey, Which May Have Aided And Abetted The Organizers Of The Recent "Gaza Flotilla" Mission To Breach Israeli Coastal Security And Assault The Naval Defense Forces of the State of Israel* H.Res.1532, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., introduced in House 15 July 2010. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-resolution/1532?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=4&r=7>. (30 May 2020)

westward-looking future.”³⁸² During Obama’s term as President, several resolutions and bills introduced in the Congress but they did not pass the Committee section due to lack of support by lawmakers. Although attempts signify Turkey’s positive image in the Congress during that period, Turkey was not able to receive a material success in the Congress due to a lack of lobbying and influence of interest groups.

In Obama’s second term in office, Armenian Genocide issues were not highlighted as in the first term even though Armenian interest groups continued their attempts to urge the lawmakers for introducing proposals and bills. The main difference was that democratic problems in Turkey highlighted in the Congress during this period. Starting from 2013 Gezi Park Protests, Turkey was criticized by US lawmakers due to her lack of freedom of press and speech.³⁸³ Furthermore, lawmakers started to harshly criticize President Erdogan beginning from 2015 with the end of peace process and policies about suppressing dissidents. Turkey continued to be perceived as an important ally for US by the lawmakers despite the aforementioned highlighted issues. Republican Congressman Alexander Mooney introduced a resolution titled “United States-Turkey Free Trade Promotion Act of 2015” on 06 October 2015 by referring Turkey as “a democratic, secular, unitary, constitutional republic, with an ancient cultural heritage and westward-looking future.”³⁸⁴ His resolution failed, but it signified the mixed reaction towards Turkey in the Congress, although lawmakers who had negative perception towards the country was increasing.

Since his declaration of candidacy to the Presidency in 2015, Donald Trump was receiving criticism from lawmakers due to his unorthodox style in politics. Although Republicans won

³⁸² U.S. Congress, House, *Expressing The Sense Of The House of Representatives That the United States Should Initiate Negotiations To Enter Into a Bilateral Free Trade Agreement With Turkey*, H.Res.1748, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., introduced in House 12 January 2010. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-resolution/1748?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=5&s=4>. (30 May 2020)

³⁸³ U.S. Congress, House, *Unrest And Brutality In Turkey*; 113th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 159, No. 79. 6 June 2013. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2013/6/6/house-section/article/h3220-3?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=3&r=2>. (30 May 2020)

U.S. Congress, Extensions Of Remarks, *Freedom of Speech in Turkey*, 114th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 161, No. 16. 30 January 2015. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2015/1/30/extensions-of-remarks-section/article/e136-2?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=7&r=1>. (30 May 2020)

U.S. Congress, House, *Calls On The Government Of Turkey To Allow Free Expression And Internet Freedom*, H.Res.532, 113th Cong., 2nd sess., introduced in House 01 April 2014. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-resolution/532?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=19&s=7>. (30 May 2020)

³⁸⁴ U.S. Congress, House, *United States-Turkey Free Trade Promotion Act of 2015*, H.Res.3685, 114th Cong., 1st sess., introduced in House 10 June 2010. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/3685?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=4&r=26>. (30 May 2020)

both chambers in the 2016 election, Trump's election upset the status quo in the Congress because it ideologically fractured Republicans.³⁸⁵ Trump's "drain the swamp in Washington" policy was against the interest of the important faction in the Republican Party but some of the members were supporting Trump. Lack of Republican cohesion was also one of the important obstacles for Trump to endure in his presidency.³⁸⁶ However, Trump was still able to benefit from the majority of Republicans in two chambers in his foreign policy. Republicans were preventing Democrats to pressure Trump by using the Congress. Moreover, Democrats did not have the necessary means to influence Trump's foreign policy via the Congress. Democrats won the majority in the House of Representatives in 2018 November midterm elections.³⁸⁷ They started to prevent Trump's policies that defy traditional American foreign policy according to them. Hence, Trump had a significant problem to convince the Congress regarding his controversial foreign policy decisions on the Middle East.

Main agenda of the Congress regarding Turkey during the beginning of Trump's term consisted of the brawl between the bodyguards of President Erdogan and protestors outside the Turkey's embassy in US on 16 May 2017, American citizens incarcerated by Turkey (especially Brunson), democratic problems in the country and Turkey's acquisition of S-400 missile system from Russia. Clashes in front of the Turkish Embassy in Washington received strong backlash from the members of the Congress. Criticism increased to a level that Congressman Poe referred President Erdogan as "tyrant" in his speeches that condemn Erdogan's bodyguards on 19 July 2017 due to incident.³⁸⁸ Although other lawmakers were not as harsh as Congressman Poe, they expressed their concern with the changes in the Turkish domestic politics. Republican Senator Roger Wicker, in his speech on 04 May 2017, stated that "eroding respect for fundamental freedoms, rule of law, and democratic institutions in Turkey has proceeded at an alarming pace."³⁸⁹ Lack of freedom speech and press was also highlighted in the Congress.³⁹⁰ Hence,

³⁸⁵ George C Edwards III, "'Closer' or Context? Explaining Donald Trump's Relations with Congress," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (2018): 465.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Mckeon and Tess, "How Congress Can Take Back Foreign Policy."

³⁸⁸ U.S. Congress, House, *Turkish Tyrant Not Welcome in United States*, 115th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 163, No.122. 19 July 2017. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2017/7/19/house-section/article/h60293?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=3&r=5>. (30 May 2020)

³⁸⁹ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Turkey*, 115th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 163, No.77. 4 May 2017. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2017/5/4/senate-section/article/s2769-2?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=3&r=1>. (30 May 2020)

³⁹⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Press Freedom*, 115th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 163, No.209. 17 December 2017. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2017/12/21/senate-section/article/s8245-1?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=3&r=16>. (30 May 2020)

lawmakers started to refer Erdogan as an authoritarian, Islamic leader in their speeches in the Congress during this period. Moreover, Erdogan and Trump's close relationship and Trump's economic interests in Turkey highlighted during the impeachment hearings against Trump in 2017. Lawmakers claimed that Trump's foreign policy towards Turkey was affected by his economic interests in the country and thus, he was violating foreign emoluments law in the Constitution.³⁹¹

While democratic problems in Turkey only received criticism in hearings, the Brunson crisis and Turkey's purchase of S-400 missile system urge lawmakers to act in the Congress through legislations. Republican Senator Bob Corker introduced a bill titled "Turkey International Financial Institutional Act" that would restrict loans from international financial institutions to Turkey until it frees arrested US Citizens on 19 July 2018. Lawmakers urged President Trump to take action against Turkey regarding the Brunson issue. The influence of evangelical interest groups was an important element for the actions of lawmakers that aims to pressure Turkey for the release of Pastor Brunson. Although the bill did not pass the Committee on Foreign Relations, it was an important attempt to influence decision-makers about pressuring Turkey economically about the issue.³⁹² Lawmakers also tried to influence decision makers regarding the S-400 missile system issue. On 26 April 2018, Republican Senator James Lankford introduced a bill to the Senate about limiting the transfer of F-35 aircrafts to Turkey if she continued to purchase S-400 missile system.

Republican's loss of majority in the House of Representatives were not only a problematic issue for Donald Trump but also it was a problematic issue for the relationship between US and Turkey. Democrats were eager to pressure Trump by using Kurds' positive perception in the American public and they were not alone. Preeminent members of the Republican party also had a negative opinion regarding Trump's foreign policy on Northern Syria.³⁹³ Hence, their cooperation on the issues regarding the Turkey's acquisition of S-400 missile system, her

³⁹¹ U.S. Congress, House, *Impeaching Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, of High Crimes and Misdemeanors*, H.Res.621, 115th Cong., 1st sess., introduced in House 15 November 2017. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-resolution/621?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=4&r=34>. (30 May 2020)

³⁹² U.S. Congress, Senate, *Turkey International Financial Institutions Act*, S.3248, 115th Cong., 2nd sess., introduced in Senate 19 July 2018. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3248?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=3&s=2>. (30 May 2020)

³⁹³ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Turkey and Syria*, 116th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 165, No.162. 15 October 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2019/10/15>. (16 July 2020)

participation in F-35 project, democratic problems in the country and her operations in Northern Syria against PYD-YPG caused significant challenges to US-Turkey relations.

Before Turkey's Operation Peace Spring towards Northern Syria in October 2019, S-400 missile system issue and domestic problems in Turkey highlighted in the Congress. Democrat Congressman Eliot Engel introduced a resolution to the House on 05 October 2019 that caused problems for future of the alliance of US and Turkey. The resolution, which agreed in the House, was expressing support for US government for selling an alternative missile system to Turkey if Turkey gave up his decision to purchase S-400 missile system. Resolution was also calling that if Turkey purchase the S-400 missile system, her participation in F-35 program should be terminated and US should impose sanctions to Turkey according to CAATSA.³⁹⁴ Republican Senator Rick Scott's resolution was harsher than Engel's resolution because he called for President to consult with NATO member states about the exclusion of Turkey due to her actions threatens the alliance.³⁹⁵ Lawmakers also expressed their concern regarding the domestic developments in Turkey during this period. Cancellation of the mayoral election in Istanbul was at the agenda of the lawmakers during the hearings and legislation. Congressman William R. Keating introduced a resolution to the House on 19 June 2019 that was expressing support for holding Turkish government accountable and calling for fair elections.³⁹⁶ These resolutions were showing the perceptions of the members of the Congress and were restricting the Trump administration ability to continue his foreign policy.

Lawmakers reacted fiercely to Turkey's Operation Peace Spring against PYD-YPG in November 2019. They tried to influence the Trump administration by introducing resolutions to Congress and publicly criticizing Trump's foreign policy in Syria. There was a bipartisan reaction against Operation Peace Spring. Democrat Congressman Eliot Engel introduced a resolution to the House on 11 October 2019 which was stating that Turkey should immediately

³⁹⁴ U.S. Congress, House, *Expressing Concern For The United States-Turkey Alliance.*, H.Res.372, 116th Cong.,1st sess., introduced in House 10 October 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/372/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=28&s=6>. (30 May 2020)

³⁹⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate, *A Resolution Expressing The Sense Of The Senate Regarding Turkey's Purchase of the S-400 Air and Missile Defense System From The Russian Federation And Its Membership in NATO, And For Other Purposes*, S.Res.278, 116th Cong.,1st sess. introduced in Senate 18 July 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-resolution/278/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=47&s=8>. (30 May 2020)

³⁹⁶ U.S. Congress, House, *Expressing Support For a Genuinely Democratic Repeat Mayoral Election in Istanbul, Turkey*, H.Res.449, 116th Cong.,1st sess. introduced in House 19 June 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/449/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=37&s=8>. (30 May 2020)

stop the operation and US should provide military and humanitarian assistance to Kurdish groups in Northern Syria.³⁹⁷ Alongside the resolutions, lawmakers introduced bills to the Congress to punish Turkey for the operation. Republican Senator Paul Rand introduced a bill to prohibit the arms sales to Turkey³⁹⁸ and Republican Congressman Adam Kinzinger introduced a bill calling State Department to extensively review whether Turkey fulfills her NATO obligations or not.³⁹⁹ Lawmakers perceived Turkey's operations against PYD-YPG as a hostile act towards one of their allies. They consistently expressed the vital role of Kurds for the prevention of ISIS and accused Trump administration of betraying an ally.⁴⁰⁰

One of the most critical results of Operation Peace Spring was that it paved the way for Armenian interest groups to urge lawmakers to recognize 1915 events as genocide. Turkey's ongoing unpopularity in the Congress and the support of other ethnic interest groups to the cause led the recognition of the Congress alleged Armenian Genocide. Democrat Adam Schiff's resolution titled "Affirming the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide" passed in the House of Representatives by 405 Yeas and 11 Nays.⁴⁰¹ Democrat Senator Robert Menendez's resolution titled "A Resolution Expressing the Sense of the Senate that it is the Policy of the United States to Commemorate the Armenian Genocide through Official Recognition and Remembrance" passed in the Senate by unanimous consent.⁴⁰² Both resolutions were underlying the same arguments of previous resolutions and they were accusing Turkey of conducting genocide against Armenian in the period between 1915 and 1923. Trump failed to prevent the passage of resolutions in his three attempts. Although the resolutions were non-

³⁹⁷ U.S. Congress, House, *Opposing The Decision To End Certain United States Efforts To Prevent Turkish Military Operations Against Syrian Kurdish Forces In Northeast Syria*, H.Res.625, 116th Cong., 1st sess. introduced in House 11 October 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/625?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=56&s=8>. (30 May 2020)

³⁹⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, *A Bill to Prohibit Arms Sales To Turkey*, S.2624, 116th Cong., 1st sess. introduced in Senate, 17 October 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/2624/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=62&s=8>. (30 May 2020)

³⁹⁹ U.S. Congress, House, *United States-Turkey Relations Review Act of 2019*, H.R.4694, 116th Cong., 1st sess. introduced in House 16 October 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/4694?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&r=60&s=8>. (30 May 2020)

⁴⁰⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Acknowledging The Kurds' Vital Role In Stopping The Spread Of ISIS Militants In The Middle East, And For Other Purposes*, 116th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 165, No.164. 17 October 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2019/10/17/senate-section/article/s5901-1?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Turkey%22%5D%7D&s=5&r=28>. (30 May 2020)

⁴⁰¹ U.S. Congress, House, *Affirming the United States record on the Armenian Genocide*, H.Res.296, 116th Cong., 1st sess. introduced in House, 08 April 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/296?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Armenian+Genocide%22%5D%7D&r=1>. (30 May 2020)

⁴⁰² U.S. Congress, Senate, *A Resolution Expressing The Sense Of The Senate That It Is The Policy Of The United States To Commemorate The Armenian Genocide Through Official Recognition and Remembrance*, S.Res.150, 116th Cong., 1st sess. introduced in Senate 09 April 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-resolution/150?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Armenian+Genocide%22%5D%7D&r=2&s=10>. (30 May 2020)

binding and do not impose an obligation to the President, it was demonstrating the Congress's determination to punish Turkey. The Congress's decision to recognize 1915 events as genocide further deteriorated the relationship between Turkey and US.



5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to answer the question of whether US foreign policy towards Turkey influenced by domestic factors in US during AKP Era. The literature regarding the issue focuses on the impact of interest groups in US foreign policy towards Turkey. However, this study analyzed the domestic politics of US as a whole and provided different perspectives on the issue. It analyzed the impact of public opinion, interest groups, media, and the Congress separately to show how they impacted US foreign policy towards Turkey. This study first provided theoretical assumptions to the issue by analyzing the literature about the role of domestic politics actors in the foreign policymaking process by giving examples from US. Second, it explained determinants and major developments in US- Turkey relations before and during AKP era to show how the relationship developed in terms of including other factors. Third, it assessed primary and secondary documents regarding the impact of public opinion, interest groups, media, and the Congress in US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era separately.

The major limitations of this study were lack of data, time, and financial resources. Lack of available data was the main limitation for proving the influence of public opinion on US foreign policy towards Turkey because there were limited studies regarding the public's attitudes towards Turkey. American public opinion towards Turkey was not an issue widely covered by public opinion poll companies. Lack of financial resources was one of the limitations because of money shortage I was unable to conduct field study in US regarding the issue. If I had enough resources, I would be able to extend my research by conducting face-to-face interviews with officials of interest groups and members of the Congress. Better resources would also allow me to conduct a survey to assess American public opinion towards Turkey. Time was also one of the limitations of the study because the impact of domestic factors on the foreign policymaking process is a complex issue that necessitates immense focus. If I had more time to prepare this study, I would be able to include other newspapers and media channels (TV, Twitter, etc.) to assess the impact of media on US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

Despite limitations, this study makes the following conclusions regarding the following hypotheses to prove the main argument of the study:

H1: Public opinion has an influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

This study proved the first hypothesis by analyzing the polls conducted by Pew, Gallup, and Yougov between 2002 and 2019. Public opinion, directly and indirectly, influenced US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era. Public opinion directly influenced US-Turkey relations during the Bush Jr. period because it was one of the reasons why Bush Jr. administration harshly criticized Turkey during the 1 March 2003 incidents. Public opinion also indirectly influenced US-Turkey relations when the public's lack of appetite for the continuation of military involvement in Iraq urged Bush Jr. administration to solve the problems between Turkey to provide stability to Iraq at the end of 2006.

During Obama's term, public opinion indirectly influenced US-Turkey relations regarding the two issues. First, it urged the government to change the Bush administration's aggressive and costly policies in the Middle East, thus Obama administration tried to enhance US's relations with regional countries that would help his objective. The positive image of Turkey in the American public and Islamic identity of AKP government led to the establishment of a model partnership. Second, the public urged the Obama administration to reduce military contributions of US to the Middle East, thus Obama administration adopted strategies of surrogate war and leading from behind during the Syrian Civil War. Under this strategy, the Obama administration chose PYD-YPG as a surrogate of US in Northern Syria rather than choosing organizations (including Islamists) that were supported by Turkey. Public opinion played an important role in the Obama administration's strategy and choice of ally because the public was against radical Islamist organizations and was perceiving radical Islamist terrorism as the main threat in Syria.

Public opinion's indirect influence continued after Trump's election. Public opinion urged Trump administration to continue Obama's retrenchment strategy and Trump administration decided to withdraw military troops from Syria. Trump administration's continuation of Obama's strategy to cooperate with PYD-YPG urged Turkey to enhance her ties with Russia and Iran to protect her sovereignty. While the public indirectly influenced Trump's Syria policy, it directly influenced his decisions during Turkey's Operation Peace Spring in November 2019. Trump worked to prevent Turkey's operation to please public on that issue. Furthermore, he turned the situation into an advantage by taking credit for assuring peace in Syria. He showed himself as a "great negotiator" and used the situation to his advantage by impressing his electoral base.

H2: Interest Groups have an influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

This study proved the second hypothesis by analyzing official letters, statements, and press releases of interest groups. It focused on both interest groups that try to have a direct influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey such as Armenian, Greek, Kurdish, Turkish interest groups, and interest groups that have an indirect influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey such as Jewish, Evangelical, Arabian interest groups. During Bush Jr and Obama administrations, Armenian, Kurdish and Greek interest groups constantly tried to harm the US-Turkey relations while Evangelical, Jewish and Arabian interest groups' impact on the relations had focused on the political developments. Turkish interest groups' influence on US foreign policymaking is limited due to lack of electoral base.

The influence of interest groups in US foreign policy increased during Trump's presidency because of the uncertainties of the foreign policymaking process and increasing problems between Turkey and US. These two developments provided two changes for US-Turkey relations. First, Armenian, Greek, and Kurdish interest groups used these developments to their advantage to hinder US-Turkey relations. Second, throughout the AKP era many interest groups' positive impact on US-Turkey relations changed into a negative one. Jewish interest groups' positive impact on relations turned into negative due to problems between Turkey and Israel. Evangelicals hindered the relationship because of the arrestment of Pastor Brunson after the 15 July coup attempt.

H3: Media has an influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

This study proved the third hypothesis by analyzing all news contents including editorials, op-eds, columns, and letters published in the Washington Post and New York Times newspapers. Media has an influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era because it acted both as a watchdog and lapdog in US-Turkey relations. Until 2015, media manufactured consent for the enhancement of the relationship between US-Turkey relations in the context of the model partnership. Turkey framed as a democratic NATO ally that was governed by a moderate Islamic party/leader. Turkey not only praised for its democratic openings but also for its moderate Islamic identity. Decision-makers in US were able to demonstrate to the public that US was not against Islam but was against radical terrorism in the Middle East by using

Turkey for their advantage. Although the changes in Turkey's Middle East policy with the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War and in domestic politics caused American media to include negative coverage against Turkey after 2013, the tone of the coverages was still not entirely negative. Human rights problems, lack of freedom of speech, and the internet highly criticized by American media but there was mixed coverage towards Erdogan and Turkey.

Deterioration of US-Turkey relations relating to the developments in Syria and domestic politics of Turkey reflected in the American media's coverage of Turkey after 2015. Media continued its role as watchdog and changed its framing strategy towards Turkey to manufacture consent for the public for the changing relationship between US and Turkey. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan started to be framed as an autocratic leader who was threatening the democracy in Turkey, and Turkey framed as a NATO ally where democracy was threatened by an autocratic leader.

After Trump's election, media's role for influencing US foreign policy towards Turkey changed into a watchdog. Media aimed to influence public opinion to affect US foreign policy towards Turkey. Media influenced the public in two ways during the period between 2016 and 2019. First, it framed PYD-YPG as progressive organizations that promote human rights and freedom in the region against ISIS. Hence, they tried to show Turkey as an aggressive state rather than protecting her sovereignty. Second, media aimed to use the close relationship between Trump and Erdogan to discredit Trump in domestic politics. Erdogan had already been framed as an autocratic leader and they aimed to use it to show people that Trump is also an autocratic leader who threatens to democracy of US. Media's aforementioned strategies played a crucial role in the Trump administration's harsh measures towards Turkey during Operation Peace Spring in November 2019.

H4: The Congress has an influence on US Foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era.

This study proved the fourth hypothesis by textually analyzing hearings and legislation in the Congress that occurred during AKP Era regarding US-Turkey relations. The Congress' influence on US foreign policy towards Turkey was limited to Armenian Genocide allegations, political developments between Turkey and states who had strong interest groups in US until the deterioration of the relationship between two states after 2015. Armenian Genocide issue

was the main agenda of the Congress both after 1 March 2003 incident and in 2010 but despite efforts of Armenian interest groups Turkey was able to deter these allegations through lobbying and good relations with decision-makers. Until 2015, the Congress had a mixed attitude towards Turkey and that impacted the Congress' role in influencing US foreign policy towards Turkey.

After 2015, developments in Syria and the domestic politics of Turkey changed the Congress' approach. Especially after Republicans lost the majority in the House of Representatives in the 2018 elections, the Congress' tone towards Turkey and President Erdogan included more negativity than before. Turkey's enhancing relationship with Russia due to developments in Syria caused lawmakers to materialize their negative comments towards Turkey through legislations. Although many bills failed to influence decision-makers due to lack of support, 2019 Operation Peace Spring provided changes. Lawmakers aimed to pressure decision-makers to sanction Turkey for her actions in Northern Syria. Moreover, the Congress's decision to recognize 1915 events as the Armenian Genocide further deteriorated bilateral relations. Hence, the Congress's influence towards US foreign policy towards Turkey hindered bilateral relations especially after Republicans lost the House of Representatives chamber in 2018.

This study contributed to the literature in two ways. First, it showed how domestic factors influenced US foreign policy towards Turkey during AKP Era. Their influence in US-Turkey relations was a neglected area and it plays an important role in enhancing or hindering the relations. This study helps decision-makers to reconsider the importance of domestic factors in the foreign policymaking process and increase their endeavors in American domestic politics to enhance the relationship between US and Turkey. Second, this study paves the way for future studies regarding the influence of domestic factors in US foreign policy towards not only Turkey but also other middle powers because it provides a template for assessing the influence of domestic politics in US foreign policy.

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