YASEMIN YILMAZ THE IMPACTS OF NON-STATIST THREATS ON ALLIANCE COHESION: TURKISH-AMERICAN CASE Bilkent University 2017

THE IMPACTS OF NON-STATIST THREATS ON ALLIANCE COHESION: TURKISH-AMERICAN CASE

A Master's Thesis

by
YASEMIN YILMAZ

Department of International Relations
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
Ankara
July 2017

To my parents

THE IMPACTS OF NON-STATIST THREATS ON ALLIANCE COHESION: TURKISH-AMERICAN CASE

Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

YASEMIN YILMAZ

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

July 2017

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

Prof. Dr. Ersel Aydınlı
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

Asst. Prof. Dr. İbrahim Özgür Özdamar
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Nihat Ali Özcan
Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Halime Demirkan
Director

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACTS OF NON-STATIST THREATS ON ALLIANCE COHESION: TURKISH-AMERICAN CASE

Yılmaz, Yasemin

M.A., Department of International Relations

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ersel Aydınlı

July 2017

There is a complex web of alliances formed against a range of actors from states to NSAs and diversified agenda of threats from statist to non-statist. This thesis aims to explore the changing nature of alliances in light of the increased role of VNSAs by challenging Walt's balance of threat theory. The Turkish-American alliance is selected to demonstrate non-statist threats' impacts on alliance cohesion. This thesis argues that concurrence/divergence of threat perception and threat management between two allies affects the degree of cohesion as high or low. In this regard, I aim to find an answer to this research question: How have the evolving Turkish and American perceptions of the PKK/PYD affected the alliance cohesion between Turkey and the US? I will analyze the historical period from 1952 to 2017, dividedby the Kobane siege, using a single-longitudinal case study method. I observe that certain Kurdish entities have become the "Achilles heel" of this partnership and

constitute the major challenge for the cohesiveness of the alliance. The rise of Kurdish capabilities in the region against ISIS has led the US to ally with the PYD/YPG as the ground force of choice. This choice has forced apart the two allies by decreasing the cohesiveness of the alliance and given way to a kind of "veiled trilateral relationship" among the US, Turkey and the PYD/YPG. This outcome demonstrates how "diverse-actored" alliances can be formed simultaneously to balance against different external threats contrary to the "state to state" origin of BoT theory.

Keywords: Alliance cohesion, Balance-of-Threat Theory, Non-statist threats, Turkey, US,

ÖZET

DEVLET-DIŞI TEHDİTLERİN İTTİFAKIN UYUMUNA (KOHEZYONUNA) ETKİSİ: TÜRK-AMERİKAN İTTİFAKI

Yılmaz, Yasemin
Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü
Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Ersel Aydınlı

Temmuz 2017

Günümüzde devletlerden devlet-dışı örgütlere kadar uzanan bir dizi aktöre karşı oluşturulmuş karmaşık ittifak ağları ve bu aktörlerden kaynaklanan tehditler mevcuttur. Bu tez, şiddet kullanan devlet dışı örgütlerin giderek artan rolü ışığında günümüzdeki ittifakların değişen doğasını Walt'ın "tehdit dengesi" teorisi çerçevesinde araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Devlet-dışı tehditlerin ittifakın kohezyonuna (uyumuna) etkisini göstermek amacıyla Türk-Amerikan ittifakı vaka olarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu tez, müttefiklerin kendi aralarında tehdit algılamasının ve onun yönetiminin muvafakat (uyuşma)/ayrışmasına bağlı olarak ittifak uyumunun

yüksek ya da düşük olacağını iddia etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, aşağıda belirtilen araştırma sorusuna cevap bulunulması amaçlanmıştır: Türkiye ve ABD'nin zaman içinde evrim geçiren PKK/PYD tehdit algılamaları, Türk-Amerikan ittifakının kohezyonunu (uyumunu) nasıl etkilemiştir? 1957'den 2017'ye kadar uzanan tarihi dönem, Kobani kuşatması dönüm noktası olarak seçilecek şekilde, tek-boylamsalvaka metodu kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu süreçte bazı Kürt gruplarının, zaman içinde Türk-Amerikan ittifakının "Aşil Tendon" u haline geldiği ve ittifakın uyumunun önündeki en büyük zorluk olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. IŞİD'e karşı bazı Kürt gruplarının savaşma yeteneğinin ve kapasitesinin artması, ABD'yi karada savaşan bir güç olarak PYD/YPG'yi seçmeye yönlendirmiştir. Bu seçim, iki müttefikin (Amerika ve Türkiye) ittifakının kohezyonunu azaltarak ittifakın güçten düşmesini sağlamış ve üç taraf arasında (Amerika-Türkiye-PYD/YPG) "örtülü üçlü bir ilişkinin" doğmasına yol açmıştır. Bu sonuç, farklı dış tehditleri dengelemek maksadıyla Walt'ın "devlet-devlet" unsurlu ittifak teorisinin aksine, bugünün konjonktüründe "çeşitli-aktörlü" ittifakların da eş zamanlı olarak oluşturulabileceğini göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ABD, Devlet-dışı tehditler, İttifak kohezyonu, Tehdit dengesi teorisi, Türkiye

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Ersel Aydınlı for his precious guidance, patience and unwavering personal and academic support not only throughout my thesis but also during my master degree at Bilkent University. Whenever I face a trouble spot or have questions about my research, he led me to the right source and perspective. This thesis would not have been possible without his mentorship and constructive comments.

I am grateful also to my thesis committee members Assist. Prof. Dr. Nihat Ali Özcan and Assist. Prof. Dr. İ. Özgür Özdamar for their insightful evaluations and constructive criticism. I also thank Gonca Biltekin and Şermin Pehlivantürk for their warm attitude and continuous encouragement during my graduate studies and sharing their academic knowledge whenever I needed.

I would like to thank my dearest friends Elif Akkaya, Yeliz Gökçer, Ülkü Duman Esra Buran Öztürk, and Meltem Özyıldız for their long-term friendship and endless support throughout my undergraduate and graduate studies. I would like to express my gratitude to Begüm C. Canpolat and Nurten Çevik for being my companion while writing this thesis. I am indebted also to the deceased Nimet Kaya for her kind-heartedness and helpfulness throughout my years of study at Bilkent University. Finally, my special thanks go to my beloved father Orhan Yılmaz and beloved mother Selvi Yılmaz for their continuous encouragement, support and self-

abnegation throughout my whole life. I owe all I have to their dedication and patience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT…….....i

ÖZET…….....iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS…….....v

TABLE OF CONTENTS……...vii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS……xii

LIST OF TABLES……xiv

LIST OF FIGURES……...xv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY……...1

1.1. Motivations for Alliance Making……..2

1.2. Defining the Gap and Identifying the Problematique in Alliance Theory

1.2.1. A need for Non-statist Explanation in BoT Theory……...4

1.2.2. Linkage between Threat and Alliance Cohesion ……..8

1.3. Case Selection…….12

1.4. Outlines of Chapter…….14

1.5. Methodology……...16

1.5.1 Research Design……17

1.5.2. Single Longitudinal Case Study……...24

1.5.3. Data Gathering and Analysis……28

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW……31

2.1. Alliance Definition

2.1.1. Narrow and Wide Definitions……...32

2.1.2. Formal and Informal Alliances……35
2.2. The Significance of Forming an Alliance……37
2.3. The Dissolution of Alliances……...39
2.4. Typologies of Alliance Choices
2.4.1. State-Based Concepts and Traditional Alliance Theories in Pre-Cold War Period……..41
2.4.2. The Concept of Alliance in Post-Cold War Period……...44
2.4.2.1. New Alliance Concepts Focusing on Domestic Elements….45
2.4.2.2. Balance of Interest Theory……47
2.4.2.3. Alliance Shelter Theory……48
2.4.2.4. State-Centric Alliance Theory……...48
2.4.2.5. Tethering Alliance……49
2.4.3. Non-State Actor Based Alliance Concepts
2.4.3.1. Alliance between VNSAs……..51
2.4.3.2. Miscellaneous Alliances
2.4.3.2.1. State to VNSA based Alliances……..57
2.5. Threat Perception……63
2.5.1. Variables of Threat Perception……65
2.5.2. Balance of Threat Theory……67
2.5.2.1 Main Assumptions of BoT theory……..69
2.5.2.1.1. To Balance or to Bandwagon……..70
2.5.2.1.2. Level of Threat……72
2.5.2.1.3. Critique and Gaps in Balance of Threat……..73

CHAPTER 3: CONVENTIONAL ALLIANCE RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE US……78
3.1. Balance of Threat: Theoretical and Conceptual Explanations between 1945 and 1990……78
3.1.1. Golden Age - Honeymoon Period (1945-1960) ……..79
3.1.2. Years of Digression between Turkey and the US (1962-1975)……84

3.1.3. New Rapprochement Era (1980s)…….92

3.2. Balance of Threat: Theoretical and Conceptual Explanations between 1990 and 2003……93

3.2.1. Turkish-American Alliance between 1990 and 2003……...95

3.2.1.1. From Enhanced Partnership to Strategic Partnership……97

3.2.1.2. Regional Security Issues……99

3.2.1.3. Iraqi Quagmire (Gulf Crisis)……...100

3.2.1.4. Kurdish Question…….....103

3.2.1.5. Ethno-national Conflicts in the 1990s……106

3.2.2. A New Baulk in the TR-US Alliance: Post-September 11 Period….107

3.2.2.1. Alliance in Tatters: March 1st Crisis in 2003……...108

3.3. Balance of Threat: Theoretical and Conceptual Explanations between 2009 and 2014……..112

3.3.1. Implications of Post-Arab Uprising on the US-TR Alliance……..113

3.4. The Historical Building Blocks of the US-Kurdish Alliance……118

CHAPTER 4: DEEPENING DISCORD BETWEEN TWO LONGSTANDING ALLIES: TURKEY AND THE US ……124

4.1. Turning Point of a Long-standing Alliance

4.1.1. The Siege of Kobane (Ain-al-Arab) and its Liberation……..126

4.2. Three-pronged Threat: PKK/PYD/YPG

4.2.1. Two Allies' Diverging Primary Threat Perceptions……...131

4.2.2. The New Sister Organization of the PKK/PYD: The YPG

4.2.2.1. Identification of the YPG……133

4.2.2.2. The Critical Role of the YPG in Kobane and Tal-Abyad…135

4.2.3. Turkish Perceptions of the PYD/YPG Threat

4.2.3.1. Turkey's Justifications about the PYD/YPG……...136

4.2.3.2. Concrete Evidence for Turkish Perception of the PYD/YPG……139

4.2.4. Echoes of the Three-Pronged Threat Perception……141

4.2.5. US Decision Makers' Threat Evaluation and Ally Preference……...143

4.3. An Odd De Facto Alliance: The US and the PYD/YPG

4.3.1. Actual Side of the US-PYD/YPG Relations……...146

4.3.2. Verbal Side of the US-PYD/YPG Relations……..149
4.4. Turkey's Reactions to the US-PYD/YPG Alliance
4.4.1. Actual Reactions to the US-PYD/YPG Alliance…….....150
4.4.2. Verbal Reactions the US-PYD/YPG Alliance…….....151
4.5. Bilateral Efforts to Mend the Fences
4.5.1. First Bilateral Effort: "Train-and-Equip Program" in Syria……...152
4.5.2. Second Bilateral Effort: Incirlik Agreement……...154
4.6. Trilateral Relations among Turkey, the US and the PYD/YPG…….....156
4.7. The Erosion of Essential Trust in the TR-US Alliance: The 15 July Coup Attempt…….157
4.8. Turkey's Red Line: The Euphrates Shield Operation in Syria (August 2016-March 2017)…….161
4.9. Trump Administration: Ambiguous Future of Turkish-American Alliance….163

CHAPTER 5: BEFORE-AFTER ANALYSIS……168
5.1. Before Phase: From NATO to Kobane Siege
5.1.1. Concurrence of Threat Perception and Management
5.1.1.1. Sub-Phase: 1952-1990…….168
5.1.1.2. Second Sub-Phase: 1991 Gulf Crisis……...169
5.1.1.3. Third Sub-Phase: 1992-2014……...171
5.1.2. Rising Kurdish Power and Origin of Threat Differentiation among Allies
5.1.2.1. Threat Differentiation Regarding Iraqi Kurdish Entities….173
5.1.2.2. 2003 Iraq War: Divergence of Threat Perception and Threat Management……..175
5.1.2.3. 2009-2014 September: Threat Differentiation Regarding Syrian Kurdish Entities…….178
5.2. After Phase: From the Kobane Siege to 2017……...182
5.2.1. Syrian Kurds are on the Rise: Practical and Discursive Divergence..183
5.2.2. Turkish Policy vs. American Policy after the Kobane……...190
5.2.2.1. The Turkish Policy: Strategic, Long-term focused, Politicized…….....190
5.2.2.2. The American Policy: Pragmatic, Short-term focused, Result-oriented….193

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION…….197
6.1. Concrete Observations on Turkish-American Alliance: Kurdish Power Challenge……..197

6.2. Balance of Threat Theory: Theoretical Observations on Turkish-American Alliance…….202

6.3. Revision of BoT Theory: Walt's Critique and Suggestions……..204

6.4. Policy Implications and Future Prospects…….207

REFERENCES…….216

LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

BoT	Balance of Threat
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
DECA	Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement
DHKP-C	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FETO	Fethullah Gulen Terror Organization
FSA	Free Syrian Army
HDA	Humanitarian Defense Abroad
HDP	People's Democratic Party
HPG	People's Defense Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISIS (DAESH)	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JDP (AKP)	Justice and Development Party
KCK	Kurdistan Communities Union
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
NAG	Non-State Armed Groups
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSA	Non-State Actor

OCG	Organized Crime Groups
ODS	Operation Desert Storm
OPC	Operation Provide Comfort
PÇDK	Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party
PJAK	Kurdistan Free Life Party
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces (Hashd al-Shaabi)
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
PYD	Democratic Union Party
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SNC	Syrian National Council
SOLI	Sons of Liberty International
TEV-DEM	Movement for a Democratic Society
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VNSA	Violent Non-State Actor
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction
YPG	People's Protection Units
YPJ	Women’s Protection Units

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Framework for measuring threat perceptions and threat management……22

Table 2: Framework for the degree of alliance cohesion ……..24

Table 3: Strategic and tactical alliances…….....57

Table 4a: Typologies of alliance choices and their features……..62

Table 4b: Typologies of alliance choices and their features……..63

Table 5: The summary of theoretical explanations from 1945 to 2014 September…….....123

Table 6: The cohesion degree of the Turkish-American alliance based on threat perceptions and threat management in each era……...190

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Motivations for alliance making based on the alliance literature……3

Figure 2: Fundamental reasons for the dissolution of alliances……...40

Figure 3: Refined nexus model…….54

Figure 4: Arrangements of Convenience……..56

Figure 5: An example of "diverse-actored" alliance in the alliance formation…….76

Figure 6: Overall and recent arrests of several terrorists groups in Turkey……155

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

"*It is impossible to speak about IR without referring to alliances; the two often merge in all but name. For the same reason, it has always been difficult to say much that is peculiar to alliances on the plane of general analysis"*[1]

"For how can Tyrants safely govern home,
unless abroad they purchase great alliance?"[2]

"We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow."[3]

The above-mentioned three expressions regarding the gravity of alliances demonstrates the significant status of the concept of alliance and alignments throughout the history of humanity. The first statement takes place in the opening sentences of one of the theoretical seminal works of George Liska in his *Nations in Alliance*. Liska (1962) attests to the significant status of alliance in the International Relations literature. The same view is shared by George Modelski, who asserts that 'alliance' is among the "dozen or so key terms of International Relations" (Modelski, 1963: 773). The second quote, by Shakespeare, proves the relationship between a state's political structure and its alliance policy, and finally the last one implies the

[1] Liska, G. (1962). *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependance*. Johns Hopkins University Press, p.3.
[2] William Shakespeare, *Henry VI*, Part III (c. 1591), Act III, scene 3, line 69.
[3] This quotation belongs to Lord Palmerston, from remarks made in the House of Commons (*Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3d series, vol. 97, col. 122).

changing character of alliance relations between political entities in the sense that the only perpetual phenomenon is "interest" in alliance formation. Alliance is a comprehensive word which is used to imply many things, from limited cooperation to an institutionalized, NATO-like structure (Byman, 2006: 772). Thus, while some scholars generally use this term interchangeably with coalition, pact, bloc, or alignment, others make distinctions among them based on various criteria (Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan, 1973: 3).

1.1. Motivations for Alliance Making

First of all, alliances are the central element of international cooperation, while at the same time showing the commitment level between states (Bennett, 1997: 846). The decision to form an alliance emanates from the need of maintaining or improving one's own status in the global, regional or domestic arena. While some defensive realist scholars link states' alliance motivations with the maintenance of relative power, on the other hand, offensive realists argue that state seek power maximization through alliance formation. As stated by George Liska (1962: 21), "alliances aim at maximizing gains and sharing liabilities", thus, through alignment behavior, "power" can be a factor which states desire to obtain as a gain. When nation states tend to tie with each other via alliances, they at the same time tie their policy positions and adopt relevant policies accordingly knowing their partners' next move or choice (Altfeld, 1984: 526). Thus, alliances are instruments in order to structure or transform the state system and to facilitate transparency and communication among partners (Liska, 1962: 12; Friedman, Bladen and Rosen, 1970: 20; Weitsman, 1997: 165). Secondly, states have several domestic and international options to confront with external or internal threats. While a nation can

respond to such threats with some creative measures such as domestic political reforms, foreign policy initiatives, and economic or political cooperation, alliances and internal mobilization are the two most frequently used instruments (Cooper, 2003: 309). Hence, alliances are used as the primary expression of foreign policy decisions (Beres, 1972: 702). Thirdly, the alliance concept is not only wielded to control a crisis or the outcome and the spread of war but is also used as a part of a wider political strategy in those kinds of conflicts (Rothstein, 1968: 53). Hence, as Weitsman claims, alliances are essential in International Relations both in theoretical and practical manner (Weitsman, 1997: 158).

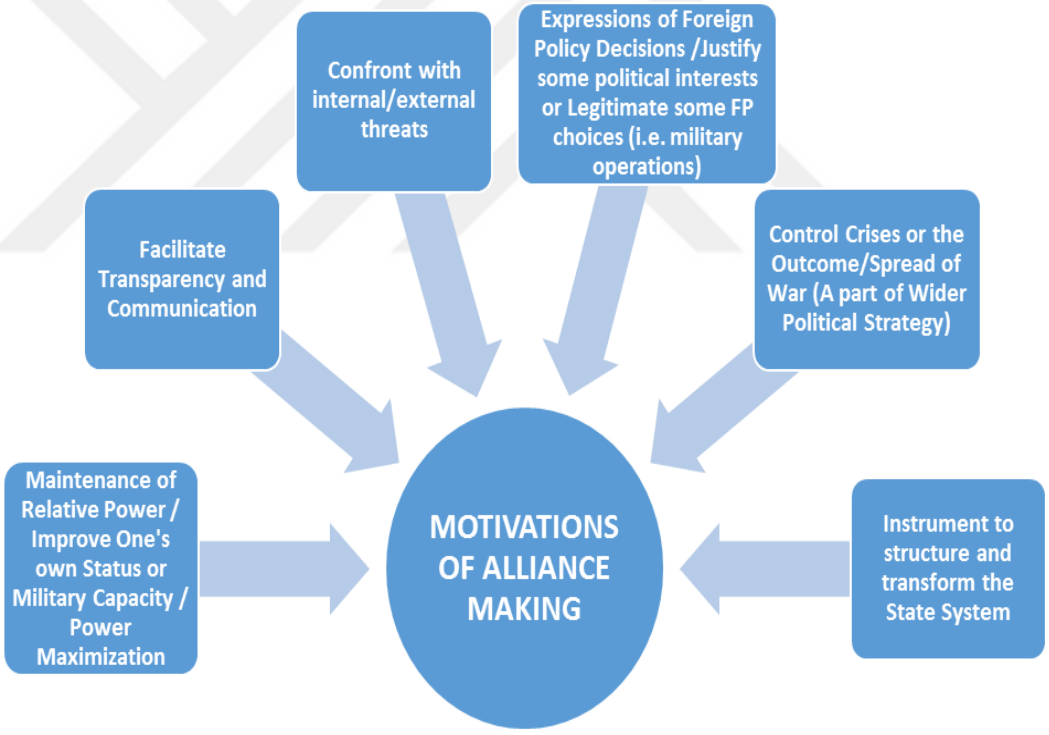

Figure 1: Motivations for alliance making based on the alliance literature

1.2. Defining the Gap and Identifying the Problematique in Alliance Theory

1.2.1. A need for Non-statist Explanation in Balance of Threat Theory (BoT)

In order to comprehend the coalition and conflict dimensions in bilateral or multilateral relations between nation-states, scholars developed alliance theories. To date, the study of alliances has been elaborated with the explanations of realists and from the state-centric perspective. While defining the alliance concept, realists make systemic explanations that focus mainly on states' relative status in the international system as the primary motivation for alignment (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005: 328). For instance, the typology delineating necessary terms for the concept of alliance identifies alliances as "comprised of states as members" and "having a fixed territorial jurisdiction" (Fedder, 1968: 80-81). Alliance concept has been developed with the contributions of realist and neo-realist scholars. The first attempts for alliance theories were started with Morgenthau's (1948) and Waltz's (1979) balance of power theory, then gained new dimensions with Walt's balance of threat theory. These two traditional alliance theories come up with state-based concepts and overemphasized states' role in alliance structure. Even the definition of the "alliance" was made by scholars adopting the afore-mentioned state-centric understanding. An important figure in alliance literature, Glenn Snyder, also argued for NSAs' exclusion from the concept of alliance but he gave no reasonable explanation for his argument. The relevant literature focused only on the modification of the state-based alliance theories theoretically and there were several attempts to support these traditional theories empirically. There are plentiful studies elaborating on why and with whom states form alliances and why we witness a dissolution of alliance between states. Although some scholars criticized the overemphasis on nation states

in alliance literature, their suggestions did not go beyond states' internal dynamics such as the role of national leaders, governments and executive bureaucracy in the formation and maintenance of an alliance. Moreover, some scholars come up with the ideas that small states have an idiosyncratic nature and should be analyzed differently than great power alliances. Schweller's 'Balance of Interest' (1994), Bailes, Thayer and Thorhallsson's 'Alliance shelter' (2016), and Cooper's 'State-centric alliance theory' (2003) are some of the main examples of the modification attempts of old concepts in alliance literature(i.e. "bandwagoning" → "jackal bandwagoning") and traditional alliance theories.

However, this realist perspective to alliance concept should be streamlined from different angles: First of all, in contrast to previous alignment strategies made between states against traditional threat perceptions (i.e. Cold War threat atmosphere), post-Cold war alignment strategies between states focus mostly on transnational threats (i.e. terrorism, transnational organized crimes, human trafficking). More than ever, states perceive "non-statist threats" seriously and in an era of transnationalism the forms and dynamics of inter-state alliances against transnational threats have to take into consideration the changing nature of this threat perception. Secondly, new globalization dynamics have also affected the type of entities in alliance formation: Violent non-state actors (VNSAs)/Non-violent NSAs (NGOs, Multinational corporations (MNCs)). Among all NSAs, I will specifically and narrowly focus on VNSAs because they are rising actors which have gained a vital status in alliance formation with states or their counterparts against external threats. The abundance of state to VNSA relations and VNSAs' competence in contrast to other NSAs requires a comprehensive analysis.

Security is at the heart of the concept of alliance and mainstream alliance theories, thus, states' choosing of VNSAs as partners is to serve their security interests by countering external threats. Thus, I would like to focus on "security dimensions" of the alliance concept more than "economic, political or social dimensions" that are provided mostly by non-violent NSAs. The alliance between states and VNSAs is either a new phenomenon or studied under different perspectives such as "state support," or a cooperation for "rivalry management" strategy. This means the relations between states and VNSAs are analyzed from the perspective of states' one-sided support for them or states' perception of them as a substitution strategy for their enemies. However, I will dub the relations between states and VNSAs as a new kind of alliance affecting the traditional typology of alliance formations. The reason why I need to integrate the cooperation between states and VNSAs into the alliance category is because the interaction has gained an idiosyncratic feature that extends beyond the concepts of "single-sided support" and "enemy management". When appropriate, VNSAs have gained a chance to sit at the table and participate in the decision-making procedures. For instance, the controversies between the US and Turkey regarding the PYD's attendance to the Geneva Peace Conferences has demonstrated to what extent VNSAs play a role in decision-making mechanisms as states done for centuries. Thus, considering the interaction between states and VNSAs from only the perspective of states and thereby assigning a subordinate role to VNSAs, does not give adequate value to the VNSAs' position in the new global era. If I look at the components of alliance definition made by Walt, I notice three vital components that are related also with the interactions between states and VNSAs: security cooperation; intention to augment members' influence; and commitment for mutual support. Attributing "one-sided support status" from states to

VNSAs is not enough to understand the real essence of today's special relationship between VNSAs and states because states also benefit from tactical support of VNSAs, albeit asymmetrically, when VNSAs benefit from the financial, political and military support of states. Thus, the winners are not only VNSAs but also states, as we witnessed in the Kobane Victory. There was an important security cooperation during the Kobane siege between PYD/YPG forces and the US in the form of mutual support. While the US provided logistic and military support from the air, the PYD/YPG forces compensated the US's "no boots on the ground" policy by filling the "viable ally" gap in the region. In return, the PYD/YPG was able to promote its Rojova project by augmenting its influence in the region. Hence, we can see the alliance between the US and PYD/YPG as a tactical alliance against the ISIS threat.

States may prefer in some cases to ally with NSAs more than with their state counterparts especially when they understand that the most effective and tactical move can be done accordingly. When states ally with NSAs, especially the violent ones, they are not required to be as generous towards their commitment as they are in their formal alliance structures with states. For instance, in contrast to their state counterparts that demand more legal, political and military support, states can form alliances against a potential common threat with VNSAs in return for fewer military and political assurances. Moreover, converging interests between a state and a NSA can be easier in contrast to concurrence of interests between two states. States can have sensitivities regarding policy options, priorities or limitations which are insurmountable in terms of legal boundaries, political culture or legitimacy; however, NSAs can easily adopt new priorities or, exceed certain limits uncomplicatedly in contrast to states (e.g. breaching international norms, not being a part of international

sanctions), or even quickly reassess their sensitivities if the potential benefits outweigh the costs. My scope in this thesis is inter-state alliance formation against VNSAs, alliances formed among VNSAs and mixed alliance formation between states and VNSAs. Hence, throughout this thesis the gap between old concepts and new dilemmas will be identified, furthermore, I will observe whether Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory responds to the challenges of a new era and actors in alignment behaviors.

As indicated by Ole Holsti, "Alliances are apparently a universal component of relations between political units, irrespective of time and place" (Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan, 1973: 2). Thus, limiting of the alliance concept solely to states is anomalous in today's world of dynamic and multi-actored alignments. There is a reality which is often neglected or underestimated regarding the status and role of terrorist groups as VNSAs in a political sphere of alliance formation. It is very critical in this sense to evaluate and analyze whether traditional alliances theories and concepts are losing their relevance against new security challenges and how the historical and long-standing ties between states differ when faced with different threat perception and new types of actors, agencies and entities. It is vital to understand the new structure of alliances in which both states and VNSAs form alignments with each other and to what extent traditional theories of alliances maintain their explanatory power in the new global order.

1.2.2. Linkage between Threat and Alliance Cohesion

According to Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan (1973: 88):

> "Alliances are generally formed in response to external threat, [and] that their cohesion is largely dependent on the intensity and duration of that threat, and one major cause of their disintegration may be the reduction or disappearance of the external threat against which they were initially formed".

The alliance literature occupies a vital place in the general international relation literature, yet it still needs to be improved in terms of new types of actors and threat perceptions. This infertility was expressed early on by one of the prominent alliance scholars as follows "One of the most underdeveloped areas in the theory of international relations is alliance theory" (Snyder, 1991: 83). This old criticism has remained problematic since then as well. According to Bailes, Thayer and Thorhallsson, alliance theories have focused mainly on great powers and, thus put small states in the same equation with great powers. They argue that "small state alliance behavior is theoretically and empirically underdeveloped" (2016: 9-12). Let alone not making a distinction between small state and great powers, the alliance theories have not theoretically integrated NSAs and empirically analyzed them despite their emerging powers in the international system. In the existing literature, which is mainly centered on classical realists and neoclassical ones, the scholars take an interest in the origins, involvement in an alliance, the formation of alliance in case of wars, and the extent to which alliances achieve the interests of allies (McCalla, 1996: 446). The recent literature about alliance theories still sticks with mainstream alliance theorists while explaining their case(s) empirically or does not go beyond the scope of traditional theories in theoretical manner. Discarding NSAs from the empirical and theoretical analysis and not advancing state-based alliance theories since the 1990s has significantly prevented the development of the alliance literature.

The issue of what an alliance turns into when the threat which it was formed against changes or vanishes, is underestimated. At this point, alliance scholars content themselves with the fact that without threats, alliances will not endure (Hellman and Wolf, 1993). Moreover, another significant issue as much as alliance

persistence is the cohesion of an alliance. When the parties that form an alliance believe that to enter into an alliance is more valuable than non-attendance, then this will lead them to subordinate their individual interests at the expense of the group's interests which, in turn increase the cohesion and longevity of the alliance. In other words, "the greater the threat or power to be balanced, the greater the cohesion of the alliance" (McCalla, 1996: 451). As indicated, there is a firm connection between alliance cohesion and the threat notion and, thus, I will measure the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance based on the threat notion in the alliance concept.

We can see threats as the hinge of the alliance structure that holds together the parties that form the alliance and can consider strategies to deal with threats as the hinge pin of that alliance. Thus, the concurrence of threat perceptions and threat management against an external threat will increase the persistence and cohesion of the alliance and will make allies subordinate their interests at the expense of its allies. Alliance cohesion is defined as "the ability of member states to agree on goals, strategy, and tactics and coordinate activity directed toward those ends" (Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan, 1973: 16). Political, military, economic or social strategies (in the forms of military force, economic sanctions, formal agreements) that are implemented against a shared threat during threat management consolidate two allies' commitments to each other and the very essence of the alliance which they formed. Common strategies increase the level of dependency and solidarity making the alliance an environment of trust. In this regard, to determine the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance I will use the concurrence of threat perception and threat management as a measurement issue. If each ally defines its own threat perception (which makes different hinges) and strategies to deal with discrete threats (different

hinge pins), in the end it will be difficult to hold together the parties of the alliance that have different threat perception and strategies to deal with them. I should interrogate deeply the fact that when threats disappear or allies' perception of threats change, then do alliances break up or, if not, to what extent do they falter? Faltering constitutes here that allies' threat perceptions are changing both in scope and nature and the prioritization of different threats causes them to not meet on common ground about who the real enemy is and to what extent it poses a threat. Eventually, the lack of policy coordination about threats, the mutual mistrust that affects their perceptions of each other, and alliance fatigue cause the alliance to falter and make them employ different strategies at the expense of each other. Break up means a transition from cooperative relations to conflictual ones that necessitate tacit or direct war among allies. Moreover, traditional alliance theories' understanding of the external threat concept and to what extent the cohesion of an alliance is bound to the presence of a common threat perception are other significant issues that should be addressed.

I will ask my research question on the basis of two assumptions: Firstly, states' choice of VNSAs as partners against an external threat can affect the cohesion of an existing alliance between two states. Balance of Threat theory does not address what will be the implications of adding a third dimension in the form of NSAs' partnership at the expense of an existing alliance that has formed against an external threat. Secondly, different perceptions regarding the threat potential of the chosen VNSA is the other dimension that will determine the alliance cohesion between two states. As opposed to BoT theory's argument, which claims that the disappearance or decrease of common threat perception leads to less cohesive alliances, this thesis argues that states' prioritization of different external threats and the management of these threats

with different strategies accordingly causes less cohesive alliances. In this regard, the aim of this thesis is to find an answer to this research question: How have the evolving Turkish and American threat perceptions of the PKK/PYD affected the alliance cohesion between the US and Turkey? My independent variable is evolving threat perceptions of the PKK/PYD and the dependent variable is the Turkish-American alliance cohesion. The intervening variable is the ISIS threat perception.

1.3. Case Selection

The long-standing strategic alliance between the United States and Turkey dates back to the 1950s and has been identified as a mutually valuable partnership based on shared geopolitical interests. Both the US and Turkey generally so far have maintained and endorsed their alliance against external threats coming from traditional common enemies such as Russia (formerly the Soviet Union) or Iran. The Turkish-American alliance has experienced ups and downs throughout times. While the up period, which was also dubbed as the "Golden age" era was mainly between the 1950s and 1960s and in the rapprochement era in the 1980s, on the other hand, different issues shook the alliance, from the Cuban missile crisis to Cyprus and the subsequent Johnson letter and arms embargo between 1975 and 1978, from the opium issue to the so-called Armenian genocide issue. However, it took the entrance of VNSAs into the picture to really shake the long-standing alliance, from the Al-Qaeda prompted war in Afghanistan/Iraq through to today's ISIS initiative. Different threat perceptions perceived from different VNSAs have induced a prioritization among these perceived threats. The power vacuum created by, first, American intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11 and secondly by the Syrian civil war has facilitated the prioritization of the perceived threat which in turn give birth to

new alliance formations. There are four fundamental reasons why the Turkish-American alliance case is a good one for exploring my research question and allow me to better understand the possible changing nature of alliances in light of the increased role of VNSAs. First of all, Turkish-American alliance history offers me the possibility to investigate the increasing status of VNSAs in an existing alliance to balance against external threats and it is good-case for presenting the formation of diverse and multi-actored alliances against external threats. Moreover, the Turkish-American case can allow me to widen the scope of alliance theories that focus on statist external threats. Thus, this alliance case can give me an opportunity to explore the possible typology of alliances so that I will understand whether or not there is a need for revision in BoT theory and in the broader alliance literature (i.e. the US's partnership with the KDP/PUK after the Gulf Crisis against the Saddam regime and the PYD/YPG after the Kobane siege against ISIS). The veiled trilateral relationship between the US, Turkey, and the PYD/YPG presents us with concrete evidence to empirically explore the changing dynamic of alliances both between states, and also between states and VNSAs. Secondly, the Turkish-American alliance is a good case for allowing me to better understand the changing perceptions and strategies' possible effects in the maintenance of an alliance while balancing different non-statist threats. This alliance allows me to observe how usage of VNSAs as a substitution strategy in an existing alliance can be problematic in terms of alliance cohesion. Some of the reasons in the ups and downs of the Turkish-American alliance emanated from the intervention of VNSAs as threats or partners. Turkey's threat perception regarding the PKK/PYD has affected its relations with several states such as Syria, Iraq, Iran. However, to determine the cohesion issue, I need to find a formal alliance that goes beyond a simple form of relationship or occasional

partnership. Thirdly, the Turkish-American alliance appears to be a long-standing formal alliance and having systematic foundations that can offer a strong empirical case to measure the cohesion of the alliance. Thus, a change in the degree of cohesion in a robust and rooted alliance can help me to justify the impacts of non-statist threats on alliance cohesion. Fourthly, gathering primary and secondary data and resources in Turkish and English, position the Turkish-American alliance as a good case for this thesis. Thus, there is also a pragmatic/practical reason for choosing this case among other alliance cases such as the US-Israel or Russia-Syria which demands the knowledge of a language to reach primary sources. Even if I deal with the language barrier, the afore-mentioned cases cannot present me a similar alliance like the Turkish-American case which is disrupted by a non-statist threat that has long-lasting effect on the alliance cohesion.

1.4. Outlines of Chapters

The second chapter gives an overall picture of the alliance literature starting from the definition of the concept of alliance and goes through a process in which formation and dissolution of alignment behaviors, traditional and post-cold war alliance theories are discussed. The second part in this chapter covers alignments in which VNSAs play a significant role, as well as miscellaneous alliances that are orchestrated between state and VNSAs. Furthermore, beside the general overview of the alliance concepts, Stephen Walt's BoT theory is elaborated specifically in this chapter in three subtitles: balance and bandwagoning behaviors, broader conceptualization of threat perception and critique and gaps in balance of threat theory. Hence, I will take BoT theory as a reference point in order to analyze the impacts of VNSAs in the alliance between the US and Turkey based on different threat perceptions and threat management. Moreover, I aim to explore whether or not

the BoT theory is adequate for exploring the current nature of alliances, if not what its limitations are and what are my propositions accordingly.

In the third chapter, I aim to present historical background information in order to understand the trajectory of the Turkish-American alliance from past to present. This part embraces a large period from 1945 to recent times. Due to the sophisticated content of the relations between Turkey and the US in this broad period, I solely focused on main events that played a significant role and shaped the long-standing alliance. This chapter is divided into six sub-parts that cover the honeymoon period (1945-1960), years of digression (1962-1975), new rapprochement in the 1980s, relations between 1990-2003, the post-September 11th era, and finally the current discord (the extradition issue of Fethullah Gulen and the US's support of the PYD/YPG) in the relations between the US and Turkey.

In the fourth chapter of this study, the phases of the deepening discord between two longstanding allies are elaborated in detail to demonstrate how the Turkish-American has faltered since the Kobane siege. Starting from the siege of Kobane, considered as the turning point, the formation of an odd de facto alliance structure between the US and the PYD/YPG are discussed according to official statements and reports, as well as secondary sources. The lack of legal and formal structure such as agreements/institutions and the rational being formed for tactical reasons position this partnership as a de facto alliance. The partnership between the US and the PYD/YPG transformed from tacit support (through SDF) into direct arm support in the Trump administration. The US's persistence in seeing of the PYD/YPG as a "reliable" partner on the ground, despite its well-known affiliations with the PKK, a common designated foreign terrorist organization by the US and Turkey, make this

partnership an odd alliance having an idiosyncratic nature as opposed to the US's tacit support for other VNSAs. Moreover, the effects of the 15 July Coup Attempt and the subsequent Euphrates Shield Operation's repercussions on Turkish American relations are provided. Finally, I touch upon briefly the beginning of the Trump administration and Turkey's hope and expectations from the new administration in order to resuscitate the Turkish American alliance.

In the fifth chapter of this thesis, I will make a before-after analysis from 1952 to 2017 divided by the Kobane Siege as a turning point in the Turkish-American alliance. A "before-after" analysis requires dividing a longitudinal case into two main sub-cases and examining a phenomenon (in this case, alliance cohesion) before and after one particular event (George, Bennett, 2004: 76). The before phase of this analysis covers the years between 1952 to September 2014 and is divided into three sub-phases. In the after phase, I analyzed the effects of the Kobane victory and the subsequent developments in the cohesion of the long-standing alliance. This thesis's main focus in the fifth chapter is to show how Turkey and the US have grown apart as a result of diverging threat perceptions and threat management in response to the growing Kurdish power. A chronological study of this divergence will be presented based on American and Turkish discourses and practices. Moreover, the two states' policies after the Kobane victory are compared to understand the rationale behind the faltering state alliance between Turkey and the US.

1.5. METHODOLOGY

This thesis is conducted by means of a case study method. Before elaborating on what kind of case study method is applied, it is significant to identify why I chose a case study approach for my research question. According to George and Bennett

(2005: 5), a case study is "the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events". They, further, identify four main advantages of case methods in the sense that scholars properly test their hypotheses and contribute to theory development. The identified strengths of case study methods as follows: 1) high conceptual validity; 2) robust procedures for generating new hypotheses; 3) exploring causal mechanisms; and, 4) the ability to address and assess causal relations (George and Bennett, 2005: 19). Case study approaches incorporate several methods such as single case studies, with-in case or across-case approaches, process-tracing, structured and focused case comparison. These case study approaches along with the above mentioned purposes are also conducted in order to explain a phenomenon with existing theories or testing to what extent a theory is valid for future research studies (George and Bennett, 2004: 76). Moreover, case-study methods enable us to gather data from real-life circumstances in order to analyze the theoretical assumption of my research as well as providing empirical examples. According to Robert K. Yin (1994: 13), famous for his studies on case methodology, a case study approach is an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context". Thus, in order to evaluate to what extent existing alliance theories and concepts, as for my case the BoT theory, explain the new dynamics in alliance formation in the era of non-state threats, I will conduct case study methodology.

1.5.1. Research Design

In this part, I will mention in detail how I will conduct my research methodologically. Firstly, I will analyze a broad time period from 1952 to 2014 in two sections divided by the 1991 Gulf Crisis as a watershed event that left a lasting

impact on the alliance and hereby regarded as a reference point for the growth of Kurdish power. Secondly, by admitting the siege of the Kobane as a turning point in the alliance, I will discuss the subsequent events that affected the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance until the Washington visit of President Erdogan on May 16, 2017. Thus, the former, which is the before part of the analysis will cover from 1952 to 2014 whereas, the latter that starts with the siege of Kobane will be the after part of the analysis. I divide the before phase into three terms to analyze systematically two allies' threat perceptions and strategies in Syria and Iraq: (1) 1952-1990; (2) the Gulf Crisis; and (3) 1992-2014 September.

The after phase will cover a relatively short but more intense time period in terms of diverging threat perceptions and strategies, from September 2014 to President Erdogan's Washington's visit on May, 2017. I determined the Kobane siege as the turning point of the Turkish-American alliance. Kobane is where the two allies' threat perceptions and threat management have started to concretely change in a conflicting way in nearly all official discourses. While Turkey's primary threat perception is the PKK/PYD/YPG, the US has perceived ISIS as a primary threat. Kobane is also the place where each country has experienced a divergence in threat management. While Turkey desired to fight against ISIS and PYD/YPG/PKK with moderate or religious rebel groups and be a part of a US-led Coalition without the partnership of the PYD/YPG. The US positioned the PYD/YPG as the only effective ground forces in Kobane. Thus, the rationale behind Kobane's choice as the center of before-after analysis emanates from the US's raising the PYD/YPG to the "reliable and effective ally status" which Turkey's sensitive Kurdish issue and interrelated PKK threat has come to surface again. Hence, the siege of Kobane allows us to

explore how Turkey and the US's divergence of threat perception and threat management will affect the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance. In this thesis, I will present a long-standing alliance- the Turkish-American alliance case- in which I witness how VNSAs also play a role in the balancing behavior against external threats and how alliances formed between states and VNSAs can shape the cohesion of a long-standing alliances between states. For the purpose of this study, I will analyze a wide historical period which is divided with the "2014 Siege of Kobane by ISIS". Hence, single longitudinal case study will be applied and the longitudinal case will be divided into two subcases requiring a before-after analysis.

The measurement of threat perception and management will be done qualitatively by asking pre-determined sets of questions that will clarify how I will understand or analyze Turkey and the US's perceptions and actions (strategies). In each phase, first of all, I looked how each country identifies and positions its threat perceptions vis-à-vis each other and what kind of identity do they attribute to these threat perceptions? Furthermore, beside the support which has been provided to the PYD/YPG by the US, I looked at how the US identifies the PYD/YPG and justifies its support to measure Turkey's concerns about the PYD/YPG in the after phase. For example, during Cold War while both allies identified the Soviet Union as an "arch-enemy" and this identity shaped their perceptions accordingly, on the other hand, in the post-Cold War period with the emergence of VNSAs, threat perceptions started to be determined mostly on whether a VNSA is recognized as a terrorist organization or not. To understand how each country determines its level and nature of threat, I looked at primary sources, which are mainly composed of public speeches of high-level state officials and official reports and press briefings from relevant ministries or

departments. In these primary sources, I made a discourse analysis to analyze how and to what extent Turkey and the US evaluate their threat perception, and what kind of "titles" are utilized while referring to these threats. Secondly, does each country use some adjectives, for instance "immediate", "pre-eminent", "primary", "auxiliary", and "tertiary" and so on, before nomination of these threats to qualify these threats' significance for them? While finding answers for the above-mentioned questions, I used the "identity" concept to understand Turkey and the US's concerns about the PYD/YPG and ISIS, respectively after Kobane siege. Political culture and discourse about various Kurdish entities and their aspirations in Turkey shaped Turkey's threat perceptions from the PKK/PYD/YPG which also show me a pattern for measuring Turkey's threat perception. In the same manner, the US's political culture and discourse about religious-based extremist organizations enabled me to understand the rationale behind the US's perceptions from ISIS and its affiliations. Thirdly, throughout the empowerment of these threat perceptions in each phase, I interrogated what were the verbal or discursive reactions of each party's allies? In this third question, I used the "power" concept to understand how the opponents' willingness and capability of executing threats for each country can shape their threat perceptions. Especially, while analyzing the first and second sub-phase in the before period of the alliance, threats are considered as the function of power asymmetries. That is why the power concept is used in the afore-mentioned phases to measure the Soviet Union's threat perception for each country. Fourthly, to measure the threat perception perceived from Turkey's three-pronged threat (the PKK/PYD/YPG), I analyzed the number of perpetrated terrorist attacks in the after phase and verbal reactions in the immediate aftermath of these attacks based on press release of Turkish state officials. The same is done in terms of ISIS attacks from the

perspective of the US. Moreover, while making this discursive analysis, I analyzed also the military's views of the US and Turkey about the position of their own threat perceptions in the military agenda of each country based on the press releases and statements of military officials and institutions. Fifthly, to measure Turkey's perceptions of the PKK/PYD/YPG, I analyzed the quantity and quality of the military, logistic and political support of the US to these entities by looking the US's defense and state departments' press briefings, as well as U.S. Central Command and the spokesman of Operation Inherent Resolve's press statements. I argue that the more the US increases its support to the PYD/YPG, the more Turkey fears for the empowerment of its threat perception. Hence, in Table 1, I categorize into two criteria all these pre-determined questions for the sake of clarity.

To measure or understand what Turkey's and the US's strategies are for threat management, I aim to find answers for the following sets of pre-determined questions: First of all, I interrogated what kind of roadmaps did each ally adopt for coping with their own or common threat perceptions. Then, I asked "What was the common and divergent points in these strategies?" to elaborate on the process of roadmaps in threat management. I designated two kinds of roadmaps for threat management: (1) Containment of threat through political, military or economic measures and the existing alliance structures; (2) Balancing the threats through new alliance formations. Thus, while analyzing the strategies adopted to deal with common and diverging threat perceptions, I used in general the "alliance" concept and, specifically the "Balance-of-threat" concept in the alliance literature. My second question is interrelated with the latter part of my first question but was used to deeply interrogate the dynamics of threat management in the after phase. Thus, did they use

a substitution strategy in their threat management, for instance supporting or allying with another state or VNSAs, if so how do they determine their ally choices in threat management? Thirdly, to what extent did the adopted common or divergent strategies take place in official discourse, if so how did each ally specify its strategies' type (military, economic, or political), scope (wide or narrow), aims (objectives or targets), and duration (short-term or long-term)? By looking at the details of specified strategies, I observed the nature of each country's threat management, which in turn allows me to analyze the way they deal with their threat perceptions. Fifthly, to understand how Turkey and the US managed the PKK/PYD/YPG and ISIS threat in the after phase, respectively, I analyzed the actual reactions (e.g. number of arrests, termination of cease-fire, aerial operations, and unilateral or joint military ground operations) of each country. In the same way, in Table 1, I categorized into two criteria the above-mentioned questions.

THREAT PERCEPTION
Nature of threat: Identification and positioning of threat perception (Attribution of identity)
Level of threat: Qualifying the significance of threat perception (e.g. primary, auxiliary, pre-eminent)
THREAT MANAGEMENT
The type of roadmap: Containment through formal and strategic alliances or new informal and tactical alliance formations
Type (military, economic, political); scope (narrow, wide); aims and duration (long-term, short-term) of strategies

Table 1: Framework for measuring threat perceptions and threat management

After explaining how the US and Turkey's threat perception and management will be analyzed, I will explain how I translated that analysis into a degree of cohesion

between the two allies. I looked in every phase at whether the US and Turkey concurred in their threat perceptions and management, to see whether there is a reconciliation in discursive and practical manner. Discursive reconciliation in threat perception, which is the two allies' sharing common views regarding the nature and level of a threat perception, causes the concurrence of threat perception between two allies, which in turn increases the cohesiveness of the alliance accordingly. In the same manner, practical reconciliation in threat management, which is the two allies' sharing common strategies and methods about how to manage a common threat perception, leads to concurrence of threat management and augments the cohesion of the alliance. To analyze whether there is a practical reconciliation and, if so, the degree of it, I look at the type of roadmap and the endurance and the commonality of strategies. Both discursive and practical reconciliation can be determined also by whether there is a special branding or status given to each other. Giving a special status and role model to an alliance can facilitate the concurrence because these attempts can affect how each country reads the threat perception and thus acts as accordingly to manage these threat perceptions.

I hypothesize the degree of cohesion as follows:

- H_1: If two allies concur in both their threat perceptions and threat management, then there is a high cohesion between them.
- H_2: If two allies diverge in both their threat perceptions and threat management, then there is a low cohesion between them.

		THREAT PERCEPTIONS	
		CONCURRENCE	**DIVERGENCE**
THREAT MANAGEMENT	**CONCURRENCE**	HIGH	AMBIVALENCE
	DIVERGENCE	AMBIVALENCE	LOW

Table 2: Framework for the degree of alliance cohesion

After the generation of my hypotheses about the degree of alliance cohesion, I will measure the cohesion between the two allies based on the sources mentioned in the data gathering and analysis section. For the measurement of cohesion, I will analyze the assessment of each other's real intentions and, the degree of trust between them, and I will interrogate whether or not there is any attempt to give special status or branding for the alliance, as based on a limited discourse analysis through the primary sources and evaluations in the secondary sources. After making such measurements, I will look at whether there is a parallel between my hypotheses and the degree of alliance cohesion between the US and Turkey in reality.

1.5.2. Single Longitudinal Case Study

There are several research methods which can be utilized to answer my research question such as process tracing, discourse analysis, or historical analysis. However, the single longitudinal case approach is the most suitable both in terms of applicability and the most proper one that may help to understand the possible causal relations between my variables. A possible approach while explaining the causal

process is process-tracing which is considered as an indispensable instrument for theory-testing and development (George and Bennett, 2005: 223). However, in process tracing the researcher needs to shed light on every intervening step to explain the causal process properly, a feature that requires enormous amounts of information at each step. When the data between two steps is not accessible, the hypothesis is weakened, which in turn misleads the causal process. While processing a possible causal mechanism between the evolving threat perceptions of the PKK/PYD threat (independent variable) and the outcome of the dependent variable (the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance), the intervention of other issues (the decision making structure or the duration of the alliance) that affect the cohesion can obstruct me from clearly observing a non-statist threat's impacts on the alliance cohesion. Moreover, my independent variable is a three-pronged threat that is formed in different periods, so finding a common date for starting the causal process and designating the intervening steps for each cannot be possible due to the two allies' different perceptions about them.

There are other methods, like field research which cannot be possible due to some financial, security and time issues. First of all, two main components of field experiment are participant observation and interviewing which require observation of facts in their natural settings. This cannot be possible if one considers observing a large period of time, past events, and recent events that occurred in dangerous places in the Middle East. Thus, it is not feasible to engage personally in areas where the events took place to observe cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance. Secondly, another component of field research is collecting systematic data about actors' actions and behaviors via asking direct questions; however this cannot be possible if

we take into account engaging with VNSAs. Comparative methods like controlled comparison and with-in cases analysis is not suitable methods for my research question. In such kind of methods the researcher needs to find two different cases which "resemble each other in every respect but one" but the structure of my research does not consist comparable two different cases. Moreover, my inquiry is the effect of the PKK/PYD threat on Turkish-American relations and the purpose of this study is comparing only the sub-phases of a single longitudinal case based on alliance cohesion. Furthermore, historical analysis will serve just to explore what happened at a particular time and place in terms alliance relations between two states. At first historical analysis methods also seems to be applicable to my study, however, due to the dependence only on historical records during the research, I cannot apply this method in case where I have to use other kinds of resources such as op-ed articles from newspapers or think tanks reports. It is true that I need an historical analysis based on historical records of Turkish American alliance for the before part of the analysis, yet the after part covers new processes that demands more than historical records. Thus, historical analysis cannot be used to analyze events that have inadequate data.

Now, I will discuss why the single-longitudinal case study that require a before-after analysis is the best option among several research methods and research designs: First of all, before-and-after analysis will increase my understanding and the way I analyze complex case data. The scope or extent of the Turkish-American alliance is very wide and intricate to analyze, so a before-and-after analysis will provide a systematic way of observing the events in the long-standing alliance by clarifying shifts between significant periods. Secondly, throughout the single

longitudinal case, I will identify pivotal events and observe to what extent the variables that have an impact on my inquiry have affected the cohesion between two allies before and after the turning point, which is Kobane siege in September 2014. Along the historical alliance between the US and Turkey, both allies have experienced some pivotal events that shaped the trajectory of their alliance. In my case, disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1990, the Gulf War, the 2003 Iraq War, and the rise of ISIS are some of the watershed events that have had an impact on relations between the two states. Identification and positioning of these events provides us evidence to explain the link between alliance cohesion and diverging threat perceptions and strategies. Nevertheless, due to application of this method, I expect to face some limitations: Firstly, single case methods provide little basis for generalizing the proposed arguments or causal relations between variables. I aim to prove that discrete threat perceptions and strategies affect the cohesion of an alliance by drawing on implications from the case of the Turkish-American alliance. By doing multiple-case studies that resemble the Turkish-American alliance case I could have increased my chance to generalize the arguments about alliance cohesion. To combat with this first limitation, I analyzed several sub-cases in the Turkish-American alliance to compensate the lack of comparativeness in my single-case study. Furthermore, the Turkish-American alliance has an idiosyncratic nature as an alliance and finding another alliance structure that resembles it is hard to achieve for making a comparative analysis. The second limitation regarding single case study is information-processing biases. According to Yin (2003: 10), one who conducts research by using a single case method can confront biased views, which can influence the direction of the findings and implications. While collecting data about the relations between Turkey and the US, I plan to benefit also from secondary

sources. However, these kinds of sources can have prejudicial opinions, for example, there are several anti-Turkish think tanks which publish biased report regarding Turkey's ties with Jihadist organizations. Having said that, restraining from biases is not entirely possible using other research methods either. For instance, individuals who prepare surveys, conduct historical research or ethnographic experiments can also be prejudiced. The third limitation is the longtime frame of this research. While analyzing a longtime period in detail can increase the robustness of the study, at the same time, it can puzzle the researcher when deciding at which point the alliance should be divided into two vital sub-phases to make a before-and-after analysis. To deal with this limitation, the turning point is selected in terms of my independent variable that I determined for the measurement of the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance. Furthermore, other sub-phases also are divided in terms of vital events, which are regarded in nearly all sources as watershed events, which affected the evolving threat perceptions and threat management of the two allies.

1.5.3. Data Gathering and Analysis

The data gathering process of this research will make a textual analysis of primary and secondary sources. As a primary source, official and semi-official reports of government agencies and statements issued from governmental leaders, national party spokespeople, declarations of regional states and VNSAs, articles on official websites, and international agreements will be analyzed. Official declarations will be taken from newspaper reports and transcripts via the LexisNexis Academic Database as a secondary source. Additionally, to analyze the discursive and practical developments of two allies in terms of growing Kurdish power in the newspapers I will utilize "Google News Scraper". Using a set of key words like "ISIS",

"PYD/YPG", "DAESH", "SDF", I obtained several online news sources discussing the contemporary developments in the Turkish-American alliance.

I will briefly mention how much text was collected in terms of type of source and era that they belong: The 'before part' of this thesis is generally based on the secondary sources, which are comprised of scholarly books and journal articles. Between 1952 and 1990, 12 journal articles and 14 books, for the era of the 1991 Gulf Crisis 19 Journal articles and 4 books, and for the analysis between 1992 and 2014, 20 articles and 8 books were analyzed. On the other hand, the after phase of this thesis generally relies on primary sources from the following governmental and state agencies of Turkey and the US: the US Department of Defense, US-CENTCOM, the US Department of State, the Executive Office of the President-White House, the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, the official websites of the Justice and Development Party and Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense. The number of each primary source analyzed between 2014 September and May 2017 is as follows: Press Statements and Releases from state officials and spokesman and spokeswoman (96); Presidential Speeches and Remarks (72); Press Briefings (84); and declarations of regional state and VNSAs (41). Moreover, the secondary sources were articles, commentaries, and reports from Turkish and foreign newspapers (263); journal articles (16); scholarly books (3); and articles or reports from think-tanks (42).

The method of analyzing the discourse and the employed strategies in the sources mentioned above was to establish a framework in order to determine the "tone or genre" of threat perception and the "pattern" of threat management. I determined two criteria in this framework (Table 1) for each, based on pre-determined questions

mentioned in the research design section about measuring the threat perception and threat management. For threat perception: (1) identification and positioning of threat perception (attribution of identity) for determining the nature of threat; (2) qualifying the significance of threat perception for determining the level of threat. Identification refers here to whether each country perceives a statist or non-statist threat perception. While statist threats are usually identified as "enemy" or "aggressive" states, on the other hand, (violent) non-statist threats are identified usually as "religious" or "ethnic" in terms of their objectives. Positioning means whether or not each country establishes a correlation between its threat perceptions. Qualification refers to the determination of the degree of threat in a way its threat perception poses to each country. "Primary", "secondary", "auxiliary", "tertiary", "pre-eminent" are some examples for qualifications. This qualification was measured based on the variables of Walt's level of threat (aggregate power, aggressive intentions, offensive power). Here I used the "degree of mobility" to determine the level of threat a VNSA poses beside the above-mentioned three criteria. If Turkey and the US reconcile the former and the latter criteria of the tone of threat perception, then it leads to the concurrence of threat perception in terms of nature and level of threat. The two criteria for threat management are as follows: (1) The type of roadmap: containment of new alliance formations; (2) Type, scope, aims and durations of adopted strategies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVİEW

The literature regarding the formation of alliances and the reasons that drive apart the alliances are voluminous. However, as I see throughout the review, almost all prominent scholars and sources try to elaborate the importance of alliance theories with empirical studies that are based on state-centric understanding. Before analyzing the studies which put solely "the state" on the center in the concept of alliances, I will first focus on the definition dilemma regarding the concept of alliances. "Alliance" refers to various phenomena from formal or informal alignment strategies for economic or political aspirations to collective security groups in the form of military cooperation such as NATO-like structures. Thus, it is not an easy task to define precisely the concept of alliance due to its rapidly changing nature depending on new actors and new world order. Hence, one should take into consideration both the formal and informal alliances to better grasp the global dynamics among various entities from states to NSAs. Secondly, the reasons behind the alignment behaviors will be discussed in detail. Thirdly, the rationales behind the dissolution and persistence of some alliances will be addressed. Lastly, alliance theories will be given into three different parts: the first part will discuss traditional theories and alliance concepts that have been produced pre-1991, the second part will be regarding post-cold war concepts and theories. Third part will elaborate on NSA-based alliance concepts covering different ways of interactions and correlations of

state and VNSAs in alignment behavior. Additionally, Balance of threat will be elaborated in detail discriminately from other theories due to its role in explaining my research question which is based on potentially diverging threat perceptions.

2.1. ALLIANCE DEFINITION

2.1.1. Narrow and Wide Definitions

Alliance is one the most elusive terms like terrorism or war in international relations literature due to several narrow or widely done definitions produced by practitioners and scholars. While according to the majority of scholars alliance is identified as a technique of statecraft, on the other hand some argues that it is a kind federation or under the category of coalitions (Padelford and Lincoln, 1962; Fedder, 1968). For instance, the definition made by Fedder considers alliances under the rubric of coalitions which is formed by states in order to enhance military security of its partners (Fedder, 1968: 68). The definition of alliances made both widely and narrowly by different scholars. Narrow definitions put an emphasis on formal commitments and military forces which explicitly directed against other alliances comprised of states (Beres, 1972; Gibler and Sarkees 2004; Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan, 1973; Miller and Toritsyn, 2005; Snyder, 1997). As an instance to formal alliance definition, I can give Snyder's description: "formal associations of states for the use (non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership" (Snyder 1997: 4). On the other hand, broad definitions include both formal and informal alliance formations (Wolfers 1968; Waltz 1979; Walt 1987; David 1991; Gibler and Vasquez 1998). For instance, the alliance definition done by Stephen Walt is broad due to its emphasis on both formal and informal alliances.

One of the first alliance definitions are introduced in *Alliance in International Politics* (1970) which is one of the seminal works in alliance literature. In this book both Julian R. Friedman and Christopher Bladen present their own delineation of alliance. Friedman prefers to define the concept of alliance by comparing it with other concepts such as cooperation or economic partnership. He argues that in an alliance, different from similar concepts, there is an "actual or anticipated enemy, contemplation of military engagement or the risk of war, and finally there is a mutual interest zone in which status quo is aimed to preserved and aggrandizement of power regarding territory population" (Friedman, Bladen and Rosen, 1970: 5). On the other hand, Bladen gives a direct definition that supports power maximization argument in the motivations of alliance formations: "Alliances are groupings of actors joined together in the expectation that union will increase their collective power" (Friedman, Bladen and Rosen, 1970: 121).

According to specific and exclusive definition that distinguishes between alliance and alignment made by Glenn Snyder (1997:4), alliances are "formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership". The scholar that affect Snyder's definition is Arnold Wolfers, his simplistic description is as follows: "a promise of mutual military assistance between two or more sovereign states." (Wolfers, 1968: 268). Both Wolfers and Snyder adopt a narrow understanding by excluding informal ones and that prioritizes military cooperation in an alliance concept. Wide definitions of alliance do not differ between alliance and alignment and take into consideration ad hoc coalitions instead of focusing solely on formal commitments. (Barnett & Levy 1991: 370; Waltz 1979; Walt 1987; David 1991b: 29; Gibler & Vasquez 1998,

Singer and Small 1966). As one of the most epitomist and widely-used definition in the alliance literature is Stephen Walt's (2009: 86) alliance/alignment description:

> An alliance is a formal (or informal) commitment for security cooperation between two or more states, intended to augment each member's power, security, and/or influence. Although the precise arrangements embodied in different alliances vary enormously, the essential element in a meaningful alliance is a commitment for mutual support against some *external* actor(s).

Although there is a consensus in the above mentioned alliance definition, Walt also underestimated or neglected some fundamental issues and actors in this definition. First of all, Walt also fell into error like his counterparts in the sense that alliance formation can only be seen among states discarding NSAs. The notion of "external actor" in Walt's definition refers to states which perceive VNSAs innocuous entities against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states. At first sight, this can seem obvious, however, if I think the reactions of Turkey in 2003 Iraq War against the Kurdish factions that have close relation with the PKK, the challenge and threat perceived from VNSAs about the interruption of territorial security of a state (here Turkey) can be above states' expectations. Secondly, this definition also underestimates the power and capability of an alliance made between a NSA and state actor against an entity that threaten their existence. For instance, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the USA trained and sponsored *Mujahideen* to resist against the Soviet threat and power in this region. Nevertheless, in the entire Cold War era, this form of formal or informal alliances in which state apply or consult to NSAs to balance against threat were disdained. Alliance theorists tend to believe that alliances are formed solely between states and assumed that the only political unit that can pose a threat to national security or to whom against collective power will be aggrandized are states. Even the alliance studies aftermath

of 9/11 put more emphasis on alliances between states against VNSAs, this concept of alliance represented only one side of the medallion in the name of "Coalition of the Willing". However, the other side of the medallion- Alliances between state and VNSAs (e.g. The USA/Democratic Union Party (PYD), Turkey/Free Syrian Army or Hashd al-Watani, Iran/Popular Mobilization Forces (Hashd al-Shaabi) that the world witnesses frequently in conflict-ridden areas like in Syria and Iraq still lacks a precise analysis and deserve a place under the rubric of alliance theories to understand better the dynamics of transnational relations.

2.1.2. Formal and Informal Alliances

The discussion of formal and informal alliances is also critical in the alliance formation literature. However, the distinction between formal and informal ones merely limited in the alliance definitions. While broader definition includes both informal and formal alliance structures, narrow one concentrates solely on one of them, which is generally formal alliances. The alliance scholars refer formal alliances when discussing alliance formations with treaties, and informal ones refer to alliances formed without treaties (Xu, 2017: 2). Thus, one of the clear distinction between them is the presence of formal agreements. For instance, the alliance of the UK and the US, which is called as an Anglo-American special relationship (AASR) by Ruike Xu (2017), is demonstrated as an informal alliance. Although, there are various treaties between these two states about nuclear and intelligence issues, the lack of a specific agreement or treaty that certify the special ties between the US and the UK make their alliance informal (Marsh and Baylis 2006: 183). In this regard, a formal military cooperation or partnership supported by a formal specific treaty is the precondition of a formal alliance between states. Robert Osgood's description of an

alliance set the framework of a formal alliance as such: a formal agreement that pledges states to co-operate in using their military resources against a specific state or states and usually obligates one or more of the signatories to use force, or to consider (unilaterally or in consultation with allies) the use of force in specified circumstances' (1968: 17). Hence, formal military component and treaties the essential parts of formal alliances. Nevertheless, there is not a spirit of compromise regarding the content and features of these military treaties. Another vital example of informal structure is alliance formed between the U.S. military forces and Iraqi tribal authorities and clans during the occupation of Iraq in 2003 for practical benefits (Strakes, 2011: 236). Thus, another vital distinction between two forms of alliance formations is whether two sides are states or not. If at least one of them do not have statist characteristic and the basis of their alliance is supplied without military formal treaties, then the nature of the alliance can carry informal features.

There is not much detail about the features of informal alliances besides their formations without treaties and the types of entities that form them. Focusing frequently on formal alliances and excluding informal alliances can misguide while understanding the concept of new alliance formations. The distinction between informal and formal ones can blur the understanding of alliance instead of enlightening it with excluding a vast majority of agreements (Oest, 2007: 14). The exclusion of informal alliances on the narrow definitions can also mislead us in the analysis of state - non-state alliance in the new transnational era where VNSAs take the leading role on alliance formations.

2.2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FORMING AN ALLIANCE

As Glenn Snyder argues the formation of an alliance is a kind of expectations of decision-makers and law makers regarding inquiries about "Who will support and defend whom?" and "To what extent and in what probability one side will support or oppose the other side?". Snyder, further, claims that there are three fundamental reasons behind the idea of grouping among states and oppose the other group of states: i) The strength and power inequalities between parties; ii) Competing or shared interests among states; iii) The existing or past conflicts and interactions or the presence of formal cooperation (Snyder, 1991: 123). According to Michael Altfeld (1984: 526) and James Morrow (1991) the price in the formation of an alliance, especially from the perspective of weak and small states, is their freedom of action or their autonomy. Both of them argue that states make a tradeoff between autonomy and their security. Yet the idea of forming an alliance at the expense of autonomy is problematic in the sense that it is hard to assess to what extent security is needed to form an alliance while giving up its autonomy, in other words, what should be the optimum combination in an alliance (Miller, 2003: 53). If states value their autonomy more than their security, then they prefer to stay neutral or balance internally against threats. However, as Miller points out, when a state's reputation is attractive than its counterparts in an alliance, then this state will give less autonomy due its relative credibility when attracting new allies (Miller, 2003: 55).

Whether it is formal or not, one of the fundamental reason of the alliance of states is to enhance their security by deterring an external or internal threat. Through convening partners, states, in an alliance, augment their resources for defensive purposes. Thus, at first sight, an alliance can be seen as a stabilizing factor through

deterring the greatest power or threats. However, the formation of an alliance might trigger destabilizing circumstances in which allies tend to burden the cost of deterring an aggressive power or threat to another partner which dubbed as "buck-passing" or "chain-ganging" occurs in which all partners might not avoid their commitments and are dragged into conflicts (Christensen and Snyder, 1990:140-141). The stability and destabilization can be an outcome of the polarity in the international system. Bipolar system is considered as more stable environment that the probability of an ally to defect the other side is very low in contrast to multipolar systems. In multipolar system, the characteristic of the environment in which alliance occurs is more fluid in the sense that states have a wide-range of potential allies and the border between enmity and amity might not be as obvious as in bipolar system alliances (Snyder, 1997: 19; Selden, 2013: 340). Being in an alliance gains some vital political advantages to its partners, even in time of wars. Each ally desires to affect the policy of its partner in the direction of its own interest and policies. Furthermore, the formal links in an alignment give the right to be consulted by other partners in critical periods that will affect the destiny of other allies. This consultation mechanism also prevents some "adventurist" states to risk the presence of the alliance and their partners (Rothstein, 1968: 50).

The significance of the concept of alliance in IR and other fields of social sciences are as follows: Firstly, alliances are tangible indicators that show the level of commitments between states (Bennett, 1997: 846); Secondly, if a state join an alliance, this expresses its foreign policy position, preferences and stance and moreover, it also shows which foreign policy means will be prioritized depending on the type of alliance whether military or diplomatic/political (Beres, 1972: 702).

Thirdly, alliance formation can also shape the outcome or outbreak of war and conflictual situation between states (Christensen and Snyder, 1990; Paul, 1995; Weitsman, 2004). Fourthly, democratic countries can form an alliance so that they can justify some political interests or legitimate military operations. Fifthly, the presence of an alliance, especially in a specific zone convenient for power vacuum, can preclude third parties' stake a claim on this zone. In other words, when an alliance which control certain regions dissolves, then the creation of power vacuum would facilitates the fulfillment of this vacuum with others. Finally, especially with the help of alliances, states find the opportunity to affect the military capacity of its allies by training or technical interoperability as NATO does regularly. (Tertrais, 2004: 143). Hence, to fully understand the subfields like foreign policy, war and conflict studies of International Relation and cooperative or conflictual dimension among states and NSAs, I need to comprehend the changing nature of alliances and the reasons of their collapse or formation.

2.3. THE DISSOLUTION OF ALLIANCES

Alliance formation has occupied and attracted notice in the literature more than the disintegration of alliance. In a study presented in 1997, Stephen Walt has introduced the reasons of "why do alliances end?" and the rationales behind the persistence of some alignments. As Walt points out, the main motives for the dissolution of an alliance are as follows: Firstly, if the perception of threat or the level of threat perceived from an external hazard shift, it is likely that the alliance dissolve. Secondly, credibility is an important factor that brings together the partners and if a "loss of credibility" occurs among members in the sense that the means, capacity or the willingness are went through an interrogation, then the ties between allies tend to erode and become more fragile making the alignment unsecure.

Thirdly, domestic politics within an alliance might also explain the erosion of an alliance through domestic and social trends, domestic competition among elites due to their internal positions, regime change and ideological divisions among partners (Walt, 1997: 158-163).

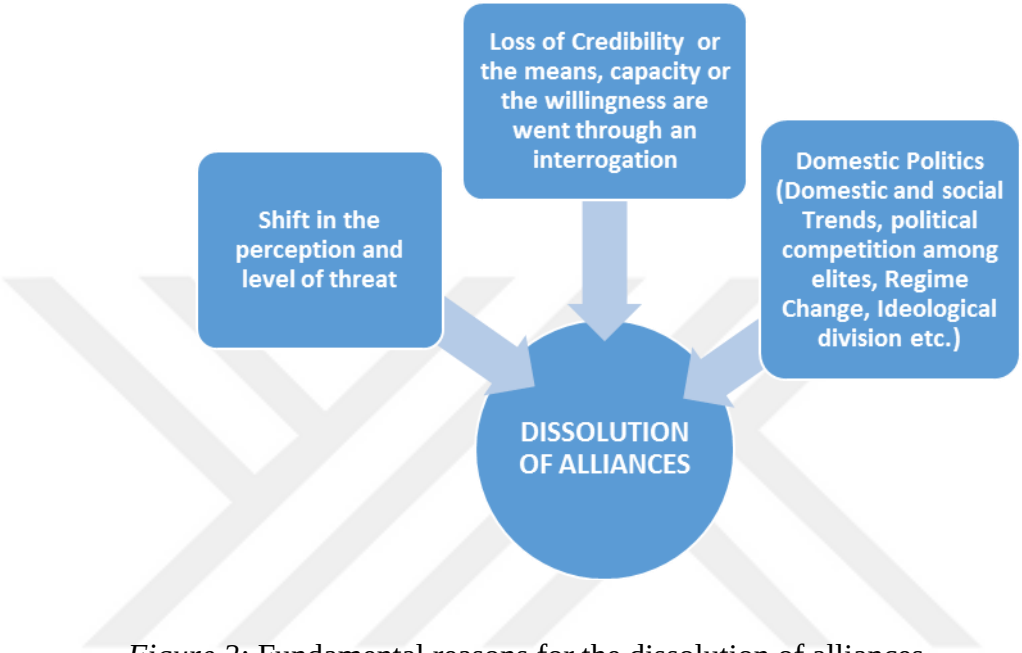

Figure 2: Fundamental reasons for the dissolution of alliances

The question of "Why do alliances persist?" also gives a clear answers and actually the reasons are pretty the opposite of the abovementioned reasons for the dissolution. The first element that makes an alliance persistent is having a strong alliance leader. The second one is preserving the credibility and not letting partners to question the reliability of their commitments. Thirdly, the same elite that trigger the dissolution of an alliance also manipulate the persistence of an alliance. If these internal domestic agents pursue their self-interest it can, even seen rarely and risky, the alliance can be sustained. Fourthly, one of the most vital factors that prolongs an alliance's lifespan is the institutionalization of the alliance's structure. By creating formal organizations and principles or rules an alliance can endure as we saw since 1949 in NATO's endurance. Lastly, ideological solidarity, shared identities and the

concept of “security communities” can also maintain the alliance and will adapt to new challenges easily (Walt, 1997: 164-170).

2.4. TYPOLOGIES OF ALLIANCE CHOICES

In this section, alliance theories will be presented in order to probe the function of the concept of alliance in the new global dynamics and during this review I will analyze to what extent the old concepts is enough to enucleate new challenges and problems. Thus, I overview traditional theories of alliance to see what is the explanatory power of these existing concepts and do they still relevant theories in the new transnational era where new actors flourished in the global scene. Moreover, the main tenets of the Balance of Threat theory are elaborated and this theory’s statist perspective is critiqued in the sense that it remains to some extent incapable of explaining properly today’s alliance trends.

2.4.1. State-Based Concepts and Traditional Alliance Theories in Pre-Cold War Period

Traditional theories of alliance refers to here as existing theories that were produced pre-1991, before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and are referenced or consulted by scholars to implement on various empirical cases from the relation between the two hegemonic powers of the Cold war to Middle or Southeastern States. Even these theories lack a proper clarification of 21st century’s idiosyncratic problematic issues and threats, still they are widely-used theories in today’s academic studies concerning alliances. Moreover, aftermath of the Cold War a few scholars attempted to update the concept of alliance with new definitions, theories and systematic reviews. The main contributions to the traditional theories of alliance are made in two different level of analysis: Unit and Systemic (structural) levels.

Unit level studies of alliances made by Liska (1962) underscore alliances' role in national foreign policy, Rothstein (1968) focuses on small state alliances rather than great power alliances, Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan (1973) compare the West and East alliance formations, and Walt (1987) studies the Middle East alliance strategies in the light of balance of threat theory. On the other hand, Morgenthau (1948) and Waltz (1979) contributed the alliance theory literature in structural level, while Morgenthau examines the balance of power in a multipolar system structure, Waltz exhibits a theory of international politics that is based on balance of power theory.

The fundamental question of why and with whom states align has contributed the development of alliance theories with conceptual and empirical studies. Although significant scholars, such as Ernst Haas, Morton Kaplan, Hans Morgenthau, and Arnold Wolfers contribute to alliance theory literature before Liska, theoretical understanding of the concept of alliance was launched as a distinct subfield with George Liska's (1962) prominent work "Nations in Alliance". His analysis regarding why states align with each other based heavily on "balance of power theory" which is one of the significant traditional alliance theories. His study covers the rationale of dealignment/realignment/non-alignment, the cohesion and efficacy of alliances by giving historical examples from traditional alliance between nation-states. According to Liska (1962: 12-26), "alliances are against, and only derivatively for, someone or something" and "nations prefer to ally "in order to supplement each other's capability" or to reduce the effect of an "antagonistic power".

As one of the preeminent historian Paul Schroeder (1976) ponders on the alliance concept and argues that alliances are established to oppose a threat and can be used as a management tool over other partners. Thus, according to Schroeder, there are

two rationales behind the concept of alliance: security and to influence or control the behavior of its allies. Kenneth Waltz generates a seminal work that enhanced the alliance theory literature in two ways: First of all, he gives a new impulse to balance of power theory in a sense that states balance against the capabilities of great powers consisted of military and economic power. Secondly, Waltz coined a new term, which he called bandwagoning, in alliance literature which complements the notion of "balance" and saw as the opposite side of balancing in alliance formation (Waltz, 1979: 126).

Balance of Power theory underscores the fact that distribution of capabilities is the most significant element while designating alliance behavior. (Gulick, 1955: 61-62; Waltz, 1979: 68). According to balance of power theorists, there are two fundamental reasons behind the balancing behavior: First of all, in a stabile international system, states will oppose those who desires to dominate the system and disrupt the existing equilibrium so they tend to balance against the strongest and potential hegemon (Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan, 1973: 4-5; Waltz, 1979: 127). Secondly, the weaker and most vulnerable group are the most attractive one that draw the attention of other in the sense that they will join them to form an alliance against the most powerful one with its counterparts (Waltz, 1979: 127).

Stephen Walt challenges the ideas of his professor Waltz and one of the rooted traditional alliances theories-balance of power theory- in alliance literature. He argues that states not only balance against power capabilities but in a broadest term balance against external threats (Walt, 1987: 21-49; Walt, 1988: 277). The perceived level of threat can be a function of four causes: (1) aggregate power, (2) geographic proximity, (3) offensive power, (4) aggressive intentions. (1987: 21-60). Moreover,

he states that bandwagoning can occur not only for defensive reasons, as Waltz argues, but also for offensive reasons to gain the proceeds of the victories (1987: 19-21).

According to Glenn Snyder, alliances occur between states, ties between states and NSAs like revolutionary groups should be excluded from the understanding of the concept of alliance. Moreover, his study theorizes the concept of alliance into two parts: "Alliance formation" and "Alliance management". While in management phase allies struggle "to keep the alliance alive" and contribute to their national interests through its allies, formation phase, a bargain process occurs between alliance partners regarding to what extent state will commit an alliance and what will be the amount of military structures in this commitments. (Snyder, 1997: 3-4). His explanation behind the rationale for forming an alliance is as follows: (1) When a state discontents with moderate security and desire to accumulate its power and security through an alliance; (2) States can form an alliance in an environment where all states choose a partner in order not to be isolated and remain sole in the international arena or to prevent its partner to ally against them (Snyder, 1984: 461-462).

2.4.2. The Concept of Alliance in Post-Cold War Period

This section will focus on new theories and concepts of alliances that emerged after Cold War period when two fundamental theories-balance of power and balance of threat- of alliances remain inadequate for some scholars to explain the post-1991 period.

2.4.2.1. New Alliance Concepts Focusing on Domestic Elements

According to Robert Kaufman, Walt's balance of threat theory does not address properly the alliance between democratic countries because domestic limitations in democratic process postpone the balancing behaviors and challenge the efficiency and cohesion of alliances (Kaufman, 1992: 436-438). Taking cognizance of the fact that domestic elements like state-society relations and the status of national leaders or elites also shape the formation of an alliance, some scholars put an emphasis accordingly on this manner in alliance formation (Barnett and Levy, 1991; Larson, 1991; David, 1991).

While Kaufman departs from the type of regime, Barnett and Levy, Larson and David prioritize national elites' interests in weak or Third World states through bandwagoning while making alliance choices. These scholars oppose Walt in the sense that bandwagoning behaviors are not rare as balance of threat theory predicts. Larson argues that elites prefer to retain their own authority and strength instead of his/her government's national interests and by bandwagoning national leaders get the chance to preserve their rule from domestic rivals , ensure economic assistance and became invincible through great powers' triumphs (Larson, 1991: 103). On the other hand, David argues that the balancing against power/capabilities is insufficient while explaining Third World alignments due to its ignorance of the Third World states' distinctive characteristics in international arena. Thus, he introduces an new concept dubbed as "omnibalancing" in order to "to incorporate the need of leaders for appeasing secondary adversaries, as well as to balance against both internal and external threats in order to survive in power. " By introducing a new concept to alliance literature, David claims that the realist theory in which balance of power

theory originates, should restructured in two ways: First of all, its threat type perception must include internal threats as well as external threat and capabilities. Secondly, national leader and elites should be focused primarily as level of analysis instead of state's itself (David, 1991a: 233-237). Ultimately, national leaders make a calculation as such that which outside power will keep them in power (David, 1991b: 6). Miller and Toritsyn (2005) make a refinement in Steven R. David (1991) omnibalancing theory in the sense that the conceptualization of internal threats should include "assassination attempts, coups, civil war, secessionist movements" beside the perceived threat from opposition leaders. (Miller and Toritsyn, 2005: 325). Both scholars analyzes Ukraine and Uzbekistan cases as Common Wealth of Independent States.

In a similar manner, Jack Levy and Michael Barnett argue that Third World leaders' alignment strategies are the function of their domestic goals consisting of their political position and consolidation of their status via military and economic support from great powers that they bandwagon. (Barnett and Levy, 1992: 35). To enhance security, states have two option: internal mobilization and the formation of an alliance. Sometimes states can face domestic political and economic constraints that restrict their source mobilization to secure against external threats. Thus, leaders prefer forming an external alliances rather than internal mobilization which poses a risk to elites' domestic political interests. In this way, material resources also can be used parsimoniously against both other domestic and external threats. Moreover, the authors state that these domestic preferences can also be shaped through ideological and religious factors (Barnett and Levy 1991: 370).

2.4.2.2. Balance of Interest Theory

Randall Schweller criticizes both Waltz and Walt in the sense that the alliance theories that they support assume status quo motivation of realism and thus in turn cause a narrow interpretation of bandwagoning that are believed being made only for security purposes. Both Waltz and Walt identify bandwagoning solely on giving in to threats in order to provide security. However, Schweller points out that while "the aim of balancing is self-preservation of values already possessed, the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension: to obtain values coveted." (Schweller, 1994: 74).

Various kinds of bandwagoning behaviors offered by Schweller are as follows: i) Jackal bandwagoning in which opportunistic revisionist power desire to bandwagon with the most powerful revisionist state; ii) Piling on bandwagoning occurs when the result of a war and the winning of the become apparent; iii) Wave of the future bandwagoning occurs when a state is believed to be the strongest in the future; iv) The contagion or domino effect bandwagoning departs from the "dominoes" and "spreading diseases" metaphors that external events like revolutions in outside world can affect easily all states located in the region. Thus, Schweller brings the revisionist state back in the concept of alliance by introducing a "balance of interest theory" into the literature. This new theory claim that the stability in the system depends on the balance between revisionist and conservative states and has two meanings: The first one is at the unit level which addresses the costs a state is eager to advocate for its values in contrast to its eager to extend this values. The second meaning is at the systemic level that relative power of status-quo and revisionist states (Schweller, 1994: 93-104).

2.4.2.3. Alliance Shelter Theory

Alliance Shelter Theory offered by Alyson J. K. Bailes, Bradley A. Thayer & Baldur Thorhallsson demonstrates that traditional alliance approaches do not consider small state alliances and their alliance formation behavior. This new approach consists a series of tactics adopted by small states to compensate their weakness in alliance formation. According to Bailes et al. existing theoretical constructions do not embrace small state alliance preferences, and additional concepts are required to understand reasons behind the alliance behavior of small states (Bailes, Thayer and Thorhallsson, 2016: 10). The reasons for them offering a new "shelter" concept to alliance behavior are as follows: First of all, small states have an idiosyncratic nature as political, economic and social units in contrast to great and middle powers and accordingly their alliance relationships has unique character. Secondly, due to international system's discriminative and disproportionate share of power and resources, they need alliance in which they have been protected or sheltered economically, politically and socially (Bailes et al., 2016: 13). This theory is noteworthy in the sense that we can put NSAs in the same position with small states due to their similarities as economically, politically and socially weak social units. NSAs also need to be sheltered and protection of big state, as well as need to compensate their weakness through alliances with states or with their more powerful counterparts.

2.4.2.4. State-Centric Alliance Theory

This theory is a modification of Stephen Walt's "balance of threat" theory by Scott Cooper. At first glance, "state-centric" label might be puzzling, however, Cooper argues that his theory differ from alliance theories which puts an emphasis on "nation-state" in the sense that state, here, refers to "individuals who occupy offices

that authorize them, and them alone, to make and apply decisions that are binding upon any and all segments of society". This time in "state-centric alliance theory" the unitary actors are not nation-states, rather government and executive bureaucracy. Moreover, Cooper's alliance theory focuses on not only interstate relations but also state-society relations (Cooper, 2003: 309-321). The main difference between Walt's "balance of threat theory" and Cooper's "state-centric alliance theory" is that the former aim to form an alliance against an external threat, on the other hand, the latter indicates a tradeoff between an external and an internal threat. According to Cooper, neither external not internal threats are more priori possibility and when an "autonomous" and "survival-maximizing" state pursues a foreign policy to form an alliance, "national interest" cannot correspond the "state as executive" interest (Cooper, 2003: 325-326).

2.4.2.5. Tethering Alliance

According to Patricia Weitsman, the formation and maintenance of alliances do not only serve the purpose of security aggrandizement, but also aim to manage existing conflicts among partner states. She argues that one of the best alternative to balancing behavior is its opposite side "bandwagoning". While the main idea behind balancing behavior is ally against threats, bandwagoning occurs for appeasement or as a way of weak states' survival. However, both of them miss a vital part in alliance formation and do not cover the whole extent of alliance preferences. Weitsman argues that alliances formed and managed during peace times operates differently than their wartime counterparts in the sense that peacetime alliances might dissolve and the level of commitments might not be as same as wartime alliances. (Weitsman, 2003: 81; Bueno de Mesquita, 1981: 160).

Moreover, she made a clear distinction between tethering and bandwagoning behaviors. While bandwagoning indicates capitulation or appeasement; tethering indicates making concessions to gain strength. When states confront with reciprocal and symmetrical threats they choose to form tethering alliances instead of bandwagoning. (Weitsman, 1997: 156-162). Furthermore, Weitsman claims that there is not always a linear relationship between the level of threat and alliance cohesion. The cohesion between alliances increases when the level of external threat relative to the internal threat was perceived as high, which in turn direct the partners to balance against the threat rather than tethering or bandwagoning. (Weitsman, 1997: 168-169). Weitsman's arguments regarding balancing, tethering, and bandwagoning alliances are based on whether internal threat is higher or lower than external threats perceived by states. External threat refers to menaces coming from outside of the alliance formed between states. On the other hand, the "internal threat" refers threats emanating from within alliance. Distrust between allies and to what extent the level of hostility between states increase the possibility of waging war to each other, which in turn increases the perceived internal threats. Balancing alliances are formed against external threats whereas bandwagoning and tethering alliances aim to counter internal threats. However, while in tethering alliances, the internal threat is reciprocal (symmetrical) between equal states, on the other hand, in bandwagoning the internal threat is asymmetrical which compel weak state to accept a subordinate role (Weitsman, 1997: 164).

Weitsman's analysis shed lights on the effects of different types of alliances on alliance cohesion. However, she also does not include non-statist threats in her analysis both in external and internal threat concept. What if perceived "internal threat" stems from a NSA that operates both within and outside of (but in

neighborhood) the territory of one of the ally states? Thus, limiting the nature of internal threats again with statist characteristics like done in external threats leave some areas unanswered. I cannot adopt this argument to my research question because the internal threat concept that I employ is the PKK threat which has the capacity to interrupt internal balances inside Turkey. Weitsman's internal threat concept have statist features that emanated from other distrust state allies. As such, the alliance between Turkey and the US is not an example of a tethering alliance formed between two adversaries which have a high level of hostility and distrust. Nevertheless, her argument that there is not always a linear relationship between the level of external threat and alliance cohesion supports my specific question in the sense that not only external threats matter in alliance cohesion but also the role of internal threats, albeit it has statist characteristics.

2.4.3. NSA-based Alliance Concepts

2.4.3.1. Alliance between VNSAs

In this section, alliances between VNSAs will be analyzed. There are ample studies regarding why and with whom states form alliances, why do these alliances end. However, states are not the sole political units that need to ally for purposes such as security, common interests and perceived threat in global arena. Due to power disadvantage and the asymmetric nature of terrorist violence, VNSAs need the support of either states or their counterparts to achieve their political aim. According to Tricia Bacon, terrorist groups' incentives to ally with one another emanate from their illicit status. There are abounding empirical evidences that present the inclination of terrorist groups to ally one another despite their short-lived commitments (Bacon, 2015: 1). Yet the studies focusing on this phenomenon remain rare, especially under the rubric of alliance literature.

As Edward Mickolus (1981) expresses, which is one of the first scholar gathering quantitative data regarding terrorist alliance, the reason of the rarely infrequency of alliance behaviour among terrorist groups are as follows: i) First of all, forging agreements require resources and expenditures; ii) Secondly, every terrorist factions has their own ideological and idiosyncratic tendencies so these group's discrepancies induce personal disputes; iii) Thirdly, terrorist organizations cannot be transparent like states so do their alliance formation as such the more the alliance between two terrorist entities became public and the group's activities known the more it poses a risk to both the alliance and the terrorist factions itself. This non-transparency situation inhibit a terrorist organization to give an assurance to its ally to honor future commitments and promises which in turn gingers disintegration. (Bapat and Bond, 2012: 811).

Bacon (2015) also introduces some obstacles which terrorist alliances can face "difficulties establishing reputations, a lack of enforcement mechanisms, the security-autonomy tradeoff, provoking new enemies and counterterrorism (CT) pressure, alienating constituents, and the danger of leaks and infiltration." (Bacon, 2015: 2-7; Morrow 1991). Due to above-mentioned reasons, when a VNSA get involved in an alliance, the level of commitments, alliance cohesion, duration, formation and management differ from old alliance concepts and conventional wisdom. Hence, this dissimilarity should be focused and analyzed so that alliance concepts and theories broaden its scope and address better today's new challenges. However, to date, scholars have chosen to isolate VNSA from the alliance literature, assuming a subject to be studied under terrorism studies. Alliance concept should be comprehended and developed taking into consideration all forms and types of

alliance behavior among all kinds of actors especially the state-non-state alliances as a new phenomenon formed in problematic areas.

General opinion regarding a cooperation between two VNSAs claims that these type of alliances can be accepted as a "marriage of convenience" which become prevalent in geopolitical "hot spots" and areas where state weakness are seen (Makarenko and Mesquita, 2014: 259). There is a direct correlation between the success of VNSAs and the degree of mutual cooperation. By adopting one another's tactics and methods or by exchanging knowledge, they step up their military capacity and capabilities. Thus, this type of alliance formation permit to enhance the operational capacity of the actors in a way that the alliance gains a greater communication, command and control ability (Ortiz, 2002: 136-139). The linkages between Organized Crime Groups (OCG) and Terrorist Networks are the most common type of these alliances in the literature. The nature of this kind of alignments can vary from one-off or short-term relationships to long-term ones. The rationale behind this alliance ranges from the desire to expertise in an illegal field or services (laundering of illicit money or forging documents) to access to human trafficking activities, from logistic support to funding operational activities (i.e. drug trafficking). This makes the interaction between OCG and Terrorist Networks (TN) as a functional alliance in the sense that "a straightforward exchange of good and services" occurs between two parties (Makarenko and Mesquita, 2014: 263). According to Gabriela Tarazona, the linkage between OCG and groups that use indiscriminate violence for political aims is a kind of "business relationship" which serves each parties' respective goals (Tarazona and Reuter, 1990: 100). As such, the alliance of convenience between these two parties aggravates traditional law enforcement methods and CT strategies because this alliance formations create

complex contours which complicates coping mechanisms (Chaudhry, 2013: 184; Williams, 1996: 25). The duration of the alliance between OCG, which is considered here as the dominant partner, and TN is determined according to coalescence of interests, the resilience and survival of the organization, the harmonization of motivation, and the level of contest among themselves (Morbach, 1998: 116-122).

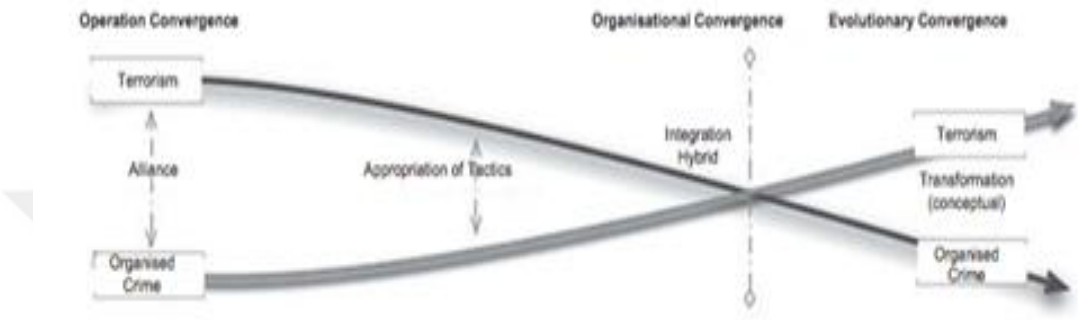

Figure 1. Refined nexus model.

Figure 3: Refined nexus model (Source: Makarenko, Tamara and Michael Mesquita. "Categorising the Crime-Terror Nexus in the European Union." Global Crime 15, no.3-4 (2014): 259-74).

The marriage of convenience between OCG and TN encapsulates three planes: Operational, organizational, and evolutionary. The first one relies on adopting the tactics of the "other". The adoption includes a tactical alliance in order to cooperate for reciprocal operational benefits or the appropriation of methods and tactics with the "other" such as the relation between FARC and Hezbollah. Italian intelligence state structures identified the mutual ties between Italian OCGs and Palestinian or North African terrorist factions in the sense that while the former have provided arms to the latter, the latter in return have supported smuggling routes for drug trafficking. For instance, Camorra, a notorious Italian OCG, had helped to arrange false paperwork to facilitate the perpetration of 2004 Madrid terrorist attacks. The second

plane entails the merging of a criminal and a terror group as a "hybrid entity" that utilizes terror tactics for financial interests (as witnessed in FARC) or assures some political objectives to gain an upper hand in illegal activities (i.e. Dawood Ibrahim Company) (Makarenko and Mesquita, 2014: 260-263). For instance, some insurgent groups operating under IRA has perpetuated criminal activities behind their ideological and political stance that, in turn, caused them to be named as "full-time criminals and part-time terrorists" (O' Reilly, 2014: 50). The third plane of the crime-terror nexus accounts for circumstances that a TN or an OCG transforms its tactics and methods to such an extent that one of them resolve into the other. A metamorphosis can be seen between two of them and the defining lines between two start to disappear. Some TNs which use more criminal methods than terrorist tactics fall under this category, yet this type nexus between OCG and TN is identified hardly due to conceptual reasons (Makarenko and Mesquita, 2014: 260-261). Similar argument regarding interactions between VNSA is made by Phil Williams based on a business network theory that describes VNSAs' relations as an "economically motivated arrangement of convenience" (Williams, 2002). According to Williams, VNSAs form several type of relations in order to advance their interests and this can vary from conflictual to cooperative relations (Williams, 2002: 68). The collaboration between criminal organizations can be against a common adversary such as law enforcement. This relationship diversifies from "strategic alliances and joint ventures at the most ambitious level through tactical alliances, contract relationships, supplier customer relations, to spot sales at the most basic level" (Williams and Godson, 2002: 326-327).

A typology of VNSA interactions is developed by Annette Idler on the basis of Williams's "arrangement of convenience". Idler has conceptualized a two-

dimensional clustery continuum of VNSA arrangements comprising of seven categories of interactions: (1) Violent combat, (2) Spot sales and barter agreements, (3) Tactical alliances, (4) Subcontract relationships, (5) Transactional supply chain relationships, (6) Strategic alliances, (7) Pacific coexistence. The afore-mentioned linkages enable VNSA groups to form networks which are "adaptable, resilient, and conducive to expansion". The engagement of different types of VNSAs provides two fundamental advantages: mutual benefit and spreading the risk.

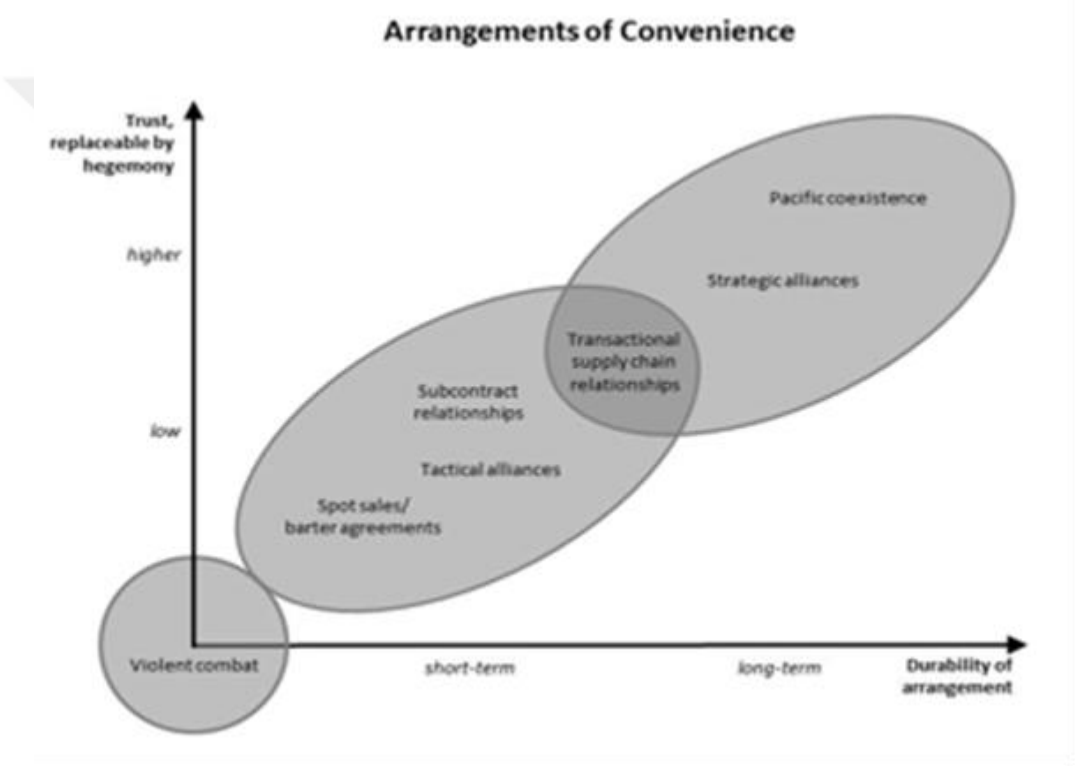

Figure 4: Arrangements of Convenience (Source: Idler, A. (2012). Exploring Agreements of Convenience Made among VNSAs. Perspectives on Terrorism, 6(4-5).

In this regard, depending on the degree of trust and the durability of the arrangements seven types of interactions emerges between VNSAs and strategic and tactical alliances are two of them. Accordingly, while Idler defines strategic alliance as "long-term commitments between different VNSAs that are based on a relatively

high degree of trust and institutionalization"; on the other hand, Williams sees them more "systematic and extensive cooperation with a high degree of regularity, predictability and some expectation that the cooperation will endure well into the future". Tactical alliances are defined as "temporary collaborative agreements between different VNSAs" and is considered relatively shorter than strategic alliances by Idler; on the other hand, according to Williams they are formed between "two or more criminal organizations that comes together for a relatively short period to meet particular needs". (Idler, 2012; Williams, 2002: 75).

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES	TACTICAL ALLIANCES
Long-term commitments	Short-term or temporary collaborative agreements
High degree of trust	Low level of trust
Systematic and extensive cooperation	Meeting particular needs
Regular, predictable and expectation of future cooperation	Less stable and less institutionalized
Sharing intelligence, revenues, expenses and signing of "war pacts" against a third group	Immediate benefits in terms of economic profits and increased social status of VNSAs

Table 3: Table demonstrated above is prepared according to Idler (2012) and Williams' (2002) definitions of strategic and tactical alliances.

2.4.3.2. Miscellaneous Alliances

2.4.3.2.1. State to VNSA Based Alliances

As discussed in the alliance formation section, states get to grips with their rivalries through alignment in order to deter them easily beside other forms of mechanism such as arms race, direct military confrontation or covert operation. A fair amount of research in the literature tries to explain a state's support of Non-state Armed Groups (NAGs) (insurgents, terrorists, guerrillas, or revolutionary movements) under the rubric of rivalry management strategies. If a NAG targets a

state's rivalry, it is used as a cat's paw to avoid direct military confrontation in some circumstances. The elements that trigger states' support of NSAs and its implications on the trajectory of interstate conflicts between two rival states are elaborated by various scholars (Crenshaw 1990; Byman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau, and Brannan 2001; Saideman 2002; Byman 2005; Gleditsch 2007; Salehyan 2007, 2008; San-Akca and Maoz, 2012). The cooperation between state and NAGs can be in some cases be institutionalized: Arab states' support of some insurgent groups against a would-be Jewish state in 1947 had institutionalized as the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) (Morris, 2008), Syrian government's backing of Hamas and the PKK, Iran's establishment of Hezbollah as a political party in rival states such as Lebanon and Israel, Libya's support of Islamic Legion as a paramilitary force against Chad. Thus, even these kind of alliances are not indicated in formal treaties, they rely on conscious decisions and cooperative modalities in order to be utilized as substitution strategy to deal with a rival (San-Akca and Maoz, 2012: 721). Having said this, there are some cases which rivalry shows up as a result of a state's backing of another state's domestic opponents (Maoz and Mor, 2002; Rasler and Thompson 2000: 516).

The impetus of realist tendencies is not the only element which explains the states' supports of Non-state Armed Groups (NAGs) against an adversary. There are some cases which NAGs are supported against a target by a state that does not have belligerent relations with that target. Moreover, states can utilize NAGs as substitutes for state allies when coping with external enemies (San-Akca, 2009: 591). Due to some extent of domestic resource extraction and the need to contribute to common resources in an alliance, states can abstain from forming an alliance with their counterparts (Morrow, 1993; Sorokin, 1994; Walt, 1985). In this regard, NAGs are

considered as “viable allies” to being substituted in the absence of state allies. According to San-Akca; the onset of interaction between states and NAGs can emanate from either of them: (1) NAGs can choose states for the low cost of operation and humanitarian or material sources inside a state’s territory or (2) Due to domestic restrictions regarding its military capacity, a state tend to support a NAGs against an external adversary as a substitution for its counterpart (San-Akca, 2009: 595).

The nature of the support can be voluntary or involuntary depending on whether supporter state demonstrate a deliberate act to help the NAGs or NAGs exploit the state in which it operates or has free hands inside this state’s territory. The latter type of support is dubbed as “passive support” by Daniel Byman (Byman, 2005). As such, while Al-Qaeda example that operates in Pakistani territory fits in the latter category, on the other hand, Hizbullah that has been backed by Iran fall under the former category. An active state support can be seen when a state’s insurgents use the territory of another rival state’s soil in order to increase instability in the border of that state. This active support not entails the permission of access to its territory but also requires the active encouragement and assistance (Salehyan, 2007: 225). The propensity to enhance an “alignment of interests” with a NAG operating in another state can stem from five reasons: (1) Proxy wars to weaken an adversary, (2) Regime disputes, (3) Irredentist and separatist objectives, (4) Guarding its ethnic or religious communities from oppression, (5) Tit-for-tat or retaliation strategy, (6) Domestic faces to operations or to gain a legitimate status via NAGs (Gleditsch, Salehyan, and Schultz, 2008: 484-486; Byman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau and Brannan, 2001). Generally, there is a hostile relation between VNSA and state authorities. However,

sometimes these ties can be complex in the sense that tacit cooperation and an extent of connivance can be seen between state structures and VNSAs. In order to serve their interest, state authorities can ally with several VNSAs as I saw in the linkages between Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) and Dawood Company (D-Company) which is an organized crime group suspected to perpetrate the Mumbai attacks in 1993 with the help of ISI or in the linkages between Venezuela and FARC (The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) (Williams, 2008: 8).

As one of the closest literature to my case, San-Akca's argument regarding the usage of VNSAs as a substitution strategy for external adversaries still leave some issues unanswered. First of all, states can substitute a VNSA against another VNSA rather than against a state rivalry as seen in my case of the US's support of the PYD against the ISIS (DAESH). The PYD has been used by the US as a substitute ally to fight against the ISIS threat when other strategic state allies (such as Turkey) and their proxies (Free Syrian Army) have remained incapable (FSA) or unfit (Turkey) according to the US. Akca's assumption that statist threats are the main stimuli for state support to VNSAs explains one side of the coin by discarding (or underestimating) the increased trend of VNSAs as external adversaries by states. If I look at the current alliance dynamics between states and VNSAs (US-PYD/YPG and Iran-PMF against ISIS, Turkey-FSA against PYD/YPG), I witness that states have started to perceive VNSAs as rival or the actors that endanger their presence equally or more than their counterparts. I argue that substitution strategy cannot merely against rival (enemy) states but also against enemy VNSAs. Thus, Akca's "state support" argument does not properly explain the interaction between the PYD/YPG

and the US against a VNSA-ISIS because this time the adversary has non-statist features that make it as dangerous as a rival state for supporter state.

Secondly, if state A chose to support a VNSA which has close affiliations with another VNSA that poses a domestic threat to state B, which is a strategic ally with state A, for a longtime. Thus, the complexity in the interactions is not addressed well in Akca's state support argument. In my case, the US has supported the PYD/YPG, yet this VNSA has regarded as a rival by Turkey due to its close affiliations with another VNSA (PKK) designated as a foreign terrorist organization both by Turkey and the US. This complex web of relations in real world interactions among various entities deserves to be well-explained and elaborated by using new concepts under the alliance literature. My aim is bring a new dimension to Akca's state support argument by including VNSAs. While compensating Akca's argument, I use Milburn's perspective to explain why states can perceive VNSAs as rival (or enemy). According to Milburn, the perception of the threat by the target can differentiate based on three main elements: (1) Acts of the source of threat, (2) History of the relationship between target and the source of threat, (3) Target's recent memories and culture regarding the source of threat (Milburn, 1969). Hence, determining an entity as rival depends on this actor's historical deeds and recent activities. Milburn's perspective is quite applicable to my case in terms of understanding the rationale behind why Turkey and the US has differentiated their threat perception regarding the PYD/YPG.

<table>
<tr><th>Alliance Choices</th><th colspan="2">Motivations for Cohesion</th><th>Legitimacy</th><th>Types of Alliance Formations</th></tr>
<tr><td>State to State Alliances</td><td colspan="2">*Increase deterrence (Protection against other states)
*Maintenance of Relative Power / Improve One's own Status or Military Capacity / Power Maximization
*Facilitate Transparency and Communication
*Confront with internal/external threats
*Expressions of Foreign Policy Decisions /Justify some political interests or Legitimate some FP choices (i.e. military operations)
*Control Crises or the Outcome/Spread of War (A part of wider political strategy)
*Instrument to structure and transform the State System</td><td>*Provide legitimacy through agreements, treaties, pacts, international organiations etc.</td><td>*Formal (military alliances, defense pacts, neutrality or non-aggression treaties, entente agreements)
*Informal (Without specific treaties or agreements)</td></tr>
<tr><td>(Violent) Non-State to (Violent) Non-State Alliances</td><td colspan="2">*Enhance Operational Capacity (Communication, command and control abilities, share intelligence/revenues/expenses)
*Expertise in an illegal field and services (Laundering Money or Forging Documents etc.)
*Financial Interests
*Political or Religious Objectives (End to the Nation-State System, Restate Caliphate)
*Common adversary (State or Non-state)</td><td>*Provide legitimacy through violence/coercion, ideology, religion, public services to fill the gap in state performance</td><td>*Strategic Alliances (Joint Action)
*Pacific Coexistence (Non-interference and non-agression)
*Transactional Relationship (Have own specific functions)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">State to (Violent) Non-State Alliances</td><td>States</td><td>Violent or Non-Violent Non-States</td><td rowspan="2">*Provide legitimacy through territorial gain or victories</td><td rowspan="2">*Tactical Alliance
*Counter-terror Alliance</td></tr>
<tr><td>*Rivalry Management (Avoid direct military confrontation, regime changes, Tit-for-tat, gain in direct legitimacy for military intervention, proxy wars, separatist objectives etc.)</td><td>*Increase the support of their constituents
*Inhibit CT pressures or enemies
* Establish reputations
*Compensate weakness
*Desire for Shelter and Protection</td></tr>
</table>

Table 4a: Typologies of alliance choices and their features

Alliance Choices	Endurance	Theoretical Underpinnings	Examples
State to State Alliances	*Depend on the formal time-frames of treaties or agreements: usually long-lived commitments *Loss of Credibility, Regime Change, Domestic Politics, Shift in the perception of level or nature of threat	*Balance of Power *Balance of Threat *Omnibalancing, Band-wagoning, Buck-Passing *Balance of Interest *Alliance Shelter Theory *Tethering Alliances	*Formal: NATO, North Korea-China *Informal: Pakistan-China, Anglo-American (US-UK)
(Violent) Non-State to (Violent) Non-State Alliances	*Depend on Security-Autonomy Trade-off: Short-Lived Commitments/Low Trust or Long term Commitments/ High Trust	*Marriage of Convenience (Makarenko and Mesquita) *Business Network Theory (Phil Williams) *Arrangement of Convenience (Annette Idler)	*Organized Crime Groups and Terrorist Networks (Crime-Terror Nexus): (i.e.Italian OCGs-Palestinian/N. African Terrorist Factions) *Between Terrorist Networks: (i.e. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army , (ELN), Boko Haram-ISIS)
State to (Violent) Non-State Alliances	*Depend on states' support or tactical aims (i.e. The US's support of FSA became short-lived after supports frozened by new administration)	*No specific theoretical underpinnings	*Tactical Alliances: Iran-Hezbollah, Popular Mobilization Forces, US-PYD/YPG, Turkey or Gulf Countries-Free Syrian Army and moderate islamic forces etc.)

Table 4b: Typologies of alliance choices and their features

2.5. THREAT PERCEPTION

The subject of threat perception takes an important place in the discipline of international relations in the sense that it prompts a large set of behaviors from alliance formation and defense spending to commercial ties and membership to an international institutions or regimes. Essentially, the field is divided between three main camps: the first camp (classical realists and neo-realists) admits that material elements, i.e. balance of military power, determines the perception of threat; the second camp (liberals and neo-liberals) believes that ideational elements, i.e. shared democratic values, define the perception of threat; and finally, the third camp

(constructivists) attributes a special status to "identity" more than "the structure of the international system" because they believe that, as A. Wendt's famous saying remarks, "Anarchy is what states make of it" (Rousseau, 2006: 3-4; Wendt, 1992).

According to classical realists and neo-realists "current or potential power asymmetries are sufficient to produce threats" because realists believe that states are inclined to see each other as "potential threats" and when the differences in military capabilities increase, threat perception rises also concomitantly (Rousseau, 2006: 19). Moreover, particular realists make a discrimination between offensive and defensive capabilities in a way that if defensive measures are higher than offensive ones then threat perception is lower, but if these two capabilities are indistinguishable, perceived level of threat is higher (Jervis, 1978). However, according to the developer of power transition theory- Kenneth Organski, power is not an adequate factor as realists claim for the emergence of threat. Organski states that as long as a hegemonic power dominates the international system, perceived level of threat becomes lower. If this hegemon' power decrease and the power parity between adversaries increase along with the dissatisfaction of the status quo, then war was more likely (Rousseau, 2006: 25-29).

Threats do not clearly express themselves because the meaning of threats depend on the perception of the target. Perceiving a threat is a process that contain recognition and interpretation of the threat concept with the help of the human senses (Stein, 2013). Thus, as Meyer (2009: 648) argues, "threats are socially constructed within and among the discourses of experts, political actors and the public at large, each using their own lenses through which they see 'the threat' ". Furthermore, in his book "Identifying Threats and Threatening Identities", Rousseau (2006) expresses

that threat perception is a function of shared identity in the sense that if shared identities increase, then parties perceive less threat from each other and less inclined to wage war. In sum, a state's perception of threat depends on which side of the line it locates the other state: "us (friend)" or "them (enemy)" (Miguel, 2013).

2.5.1. Variables of Threat Perception

I will group into five categories the variables that determine the threat perception state perceives: (1) Changes in the distribution of capabilities and giving no credible commitments, (2) Security and status dilemma, (3) Institutional interests and bureaucratic politics, (4) Political culture and identities, and (5) Breach of international norms. In my first variable, when the balance of power shift in favor of one state or a rising power emerges in the international system, then the possibility of aggressive behaviors appear and that situation complicates the credibility of that power making it a "threat". Sometimes, even if these aggressive powers do not have much military capability to change the status quo, they can misrepresent the information about their capabilities and their intentions. For instance, despite several warnings from the US, Saddam Hussein withhold the private information that Iraq had terminated the WMD programs due to the desire to maintain its deterrent capability over Iran. Thus, the inability to make credible commitments to the US increased the perception of threat in the eyes of the Bush administration that is already looking for ways to see Saddam as threat to national security (Lake, 2011). In the end, this misrepresentation complicated the sender's signals and concomitantly it rarified threat perception for the receiver. Giving credible assurances to its partners are significant because these credibility are the signer of the future acts and intentions (Mercer, 1996; Press, 2005).

The second variable is the security and status dilemma in which both the intentions become difficult to read and the challenge for the status cause competitive behaviors. The security dilemma occurs when two states are in quest of security. When the type of action is misread by others, i.e. if defensive acts are misread as offensives, this mutual misperception can make parties perceiving each other as a "threat" (Jervis, 1978, Glaser, 1977; Kydd, 1997, 2005; Booth and Wheeler, 2008; Fearon, 2011). On the other hand, the status dilemma is the satisfaction of two states regarding their status when they have perfect information about each other's faith. If leaders do not have that kind of information, then they start to believe that their status are being challenged by the others, even when it is not. These leaders can spring into action in order to reassert their status, yet this action can be perceived as a "threat" (Lebow, 2010; Wohlforth, 2009).

The structural attributes of the political system is another explanation for the threat perception. Sometimes organizational and institutional interests play an important role in the threat assessment by creating and taking advantage of decreased or increased level of threat. For instance, leaders can structure the issue in way that enhance their political interests either adopting a lower or higher threat discourse. Another argument regarding structural attributes is the failure of conveying information to the top of the chain command in time. For example, the US intelligence agencies failed to read the threat posed by Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda due to the noisy and crowded environment in which threat emerged. Thus, if an institution that is responsible for preventing threat fails to draw the attention of leaders or have difficulties while sharing information regarding the threats, this can affect the process of threat assessment (Stein, 2013: 367).

The fourth variable for the perception of threat is socio-cultural in the sense that identities of a society influences decision makers' threat assessment (Hopf, 2002). Political culture of a state can make leaders to adopt a military and hyper-national discourse that in turn reverberate into defensive measures and worst-case scenarios, as well as increased level of threat from external enemies (Stein, 2013: 367).

The violation of norms is also another determinant for the increasing threat perception. The scholars that see this factor as an important variable for the perception of threat rely on history in the sense that Hitler's non-accommodative stance in the Munich crisis elevated the level of threat perceived from Nazi Germany. According to this perspective, the increasing military capabilities of Hitler's army was not so decisive in Roosevelt's perception of Nazi intentions, but the violation of the international norms (Farnham, 2003).

2.5.2. Balance of Threat Theory (BoT)

I aim to give an answer to my research question at the framework of BoT theory. While addressing my research question, I will also discuss the gaps in Walt's theory that should be revised in terms of emerging non-statist threat perceptions from VNSAs and their effect on alliance cohesion in the current alliance dynamics. From historical perspective, Turkey and the US has formed an alliance against most threatening entities mostly to balance statist threats. However, this trend is shifted more towards non-statist threats, especially in the post-Cold War era. With the increasing level of threat from ISIS, the US have adopted two dimensional counter-ISIS strategy. The first one is the formed alliance structure between the US and Turkey. The second one is US's tactical alliance with the PYD/YPG. In the former alliance structure, there are two states that ally with each other to balance a threat.

However, the nature of that threat is non-statist which is out of the scope of the BoT theory, as well as the general alliance formation literature. Thus, the dynamics in the former alliance can be addressed partly with BoT theory because the alliance between two states (US and Turkey) is against a non-statist threat-ISIS. The latter alliance is between one state (the US) and a VNSA (PYD/YPG) that challenge not only BoT theory's assumptions but also alliance definition that requires the presence of states as primary actors of both formal and informal alliances. Thus, the tactical alliance between the US and PYD/YPG to balance ISIS threat is out of the scope of Walt's balance of threat theory because two sides of the alliance structure contain non-statist dimensions. However, I argue that current alliance formations between states depend on the presence of threat perception diverging from statist to non-statist ones. Thus, BoT theory should be revised in terms of external actor that pose threat to trigger the alliance formation. As such, the level of threat argument should be accompanied with the nature of threat for better grasping today's alliance dynamics that contain both statist and non-statist elements. So far, the thing that provided the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance has been the common threat perception and threat management. However, this shared threat perception has started diverging based on different threat perceptions perceived from different set of actors in terms of level and nature. Hence, as discussed above while the BoT seems the most relevant alliance theory for my research question in terms of threat perception concept as independent variable that affect the alliance cohesion between two states. Nevertheless, it needs a restoration to address current complex alliance structure and to address these gaps, I need to introduce the main assumptions of this theory.

2.5.2.1. Main Assumptions of BoT Theory

In this section Stephen Walt's alliance theory that dominated the alliance literature and inspired various scholars to contribute to alliance studies will be discussed in detail. It is a widely known fact that balance of threat theory is one of the powerful alliance theory which gives an answer to the fundamental question of "how states select their partners?". Walt's theory followed the footsteps of balance of power theory in the sense that both of them are based on neorealist assumptions which consider states as rational unitary actors surviving in a self-help anarchical system. However, Walt's theory not only take into account the great powers but also lesser states in the self-help anarchical system. In his seminal work *The Origins of Alliances (1987),* Middle Eastern states' alliance choices and strategies are analyzed empirically to underscore the significance of lesser in the international system. Hence, balance of threat theory is introduced by Walt to alliance literature as a precious refinement of balance of power theory. His main argument is that the main motivation behind the alliance behavior is not solely balancing against the strongest and most powerful state but also the most threatening ones. Hence, while balance of power theory anticipates that states form alliances in response to "imbalances of power", balance of threat theory anticipates that states not only look for allies for imbalances of power but also "imbalances of threat". According to Walt, despite these two theories are parsimonious, yet his theory is more general and abstract containing also the balance of power theory. Furthermore, while in balance of power, the main concept is distribution of capabilities and the resources for power inequalities are demographic change, economic strength, military structures, on the other hand, in Walt's theory the main concept is the distribution of threats that are

the function of "capabilities, geographical proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions" (Walt, 1988: 281). By adopting an approach in which states' alliance strategies depends on the perception and calculation of external threat, he varies from main realist theorists who support balancing against power such as Wolfers (1962) and Morgenthau (1948).

Furthermore, Walt elaborates the way states responds against threats by addressing two fundamental phenomenon: the first one is balancing which refers to opposing the perceived threat; the second one is bandwagoning which implies accommodating with the threat. Throughout my literature review, we discussed other phenomenon that are introduced by other scholars. Yet, the most accepted options for states is either balance against or bandwagon with the threat. According to Walt, balancing is the dominant disposition in alliance formation and bandwagoning is considered as an exception in the international system that is mostly identified with Finland's alliance strategy with the Soviet Union. I will address: First of all, Stephen Walt's balancing/bandwagoning notions in detail and comparatively; Secondly, the four factors that are introduced by Walt that determines the level of threat will be presented. Even Walt's precious alliance theory has been challenged in various scholars' critiques, it is an incontrovertible fact that no one has introduced a fundamental theory as balance of threat theory. However, it does not mean that the balance of threat theory covers and explain all type of alliances seen in today's international system. Thus, thirdly, my critiques will be presented to address the existing gaps in balance of threat theory.

2.5.2.1.1. To Balance or To Bandwagon

Walt makes a clear distinction between balancing and bandwagoning while he defines balancing as "allying with others against the prevailing threat of hegemony"

and bandwagoning as “aligning oneself with the source of threat”. He considers that when a state confronts with an external threat it chooses the balancing behavior rather than aligning with the source of threat. He acknowledges that, as discussed in the previous sections, states can face a dilemma between its autonomy (freedom of action) and its national security. Walt argues that, instead of leaving its autonomy in the hands of the source of danger and approving its subordination role, states prefers to balance against that threat. It is not more secure to expect that belligerents states remain benevolent than to balancing against this threatening state (Walt, 1985: 15). In his another study, Walt fleshes out the delineation of bandwagoning in the sense that consisting unequal exchange in which vulnerable state is constrained to asymmetrical compromises and a subordinate role. In short, bandwagoning is a kind of toleration of illicit actions by the dominant partner (Walt, 1991: 55). If balancing behavior become prevalent than bandwagoning in an international system, states are much safer than the opposite situation because aggressor states will confront united opposition, while in the opposite circumstance, aggression is rewarded through gaining new partners (Walt, 1985: 4)

To sum up, the reason that make the states preferring the balancing more than bandwagoning is not to risk their own survival and when they join the vulnerable side it will attract new members’ attention. On the other hand, even bandwagoning having been seen rarely, there are two main reasons behind the opposite proposition of balancing: appeasement for defensive reasons and sharing the spoils of the victory for offensive reasons (Walt, 1985: 5-8). In his seminal work (the Origins of Alliances-1987), Walt hypothesized the conditions favoring balancing and bandwagoning. For instance, when the probability of allied support increases, this

will direct the partners to balancing or unassailably an aggressor state challenges the others, then balancing will prevail (Walt, 1987: 32-33).

2.5.2.1.2. Level of Threat

The refinement of Waltz' theory incorporates a broader conceptualization of threat which Walt identifies them as the determinants of the level of external threat: i) Aggregate power (distribution of capabilities); ii) Geographic proximity; iii) Offensive power (capabilities), and iv) Perceived aggressive intentions. A state can use these four main factors to determine which external threat poses the greatest hazards to its survival and security. First of all, aggregate power refer to Waltz's identification of capabilities a state can have as a great power resource consisting of military and political power as well as its population and technological potential. Secondly, geographical proximity implies that the more nearby a threat the more the perceived level of threat because the sphere of influence or power will increase with the geographical proximity. Thirdly, states that have offensive power to provoke other states galvanize the alliance formation against those offensive ones. Lastly, aggressive intentions trigger the balancing behavior against those aggressor states. (Walt, 1985: 9-12).

Despite the fact that the supporters of the balance of threat theory consider that all four factors have the same significance and no one has the edge on the other factor, according to Walt (1987), aggregate power and aggressive intentions play the most significant roles in the implementation of the balance of threat theory. As Anders Wivel points out, aggregate power give the signs to foreign policy decision makers which states matter much, on the other hand, aggressive intentions mean "how do

they matter?" (Wivel, 2008: 297). Thus, for Wivel the two of them matter much in contrast to other factors.

2.5.2.1.3. Critique and Gaps in Balance of Threat Theory

Throughout the literature several concepts and theories are proposed alongside the balance of threat theory (BoT) and various scholars have critiqued Walt's theory but no one has proposed a comprehensive alternative theory to challenge BoT (Schweller, 1994: 78). However, this reality should not mean that BoT theory continues to be the main explanation for all kinds of alliance choices and behaviors especially in today's political conjuncture.

First of all, Walt introduces a theory which lacks "non-statist emphasis" in the balancing behavior against threats. This gap has two dimensions: First of all, it is too state-centric in the sense that, it limits the understanding of "external threats" ruling out "non-statist threats" in the formation of alliances. Thus, balance of threat should admit the fact that "external threats" might come from other political units aside from states. Certain intra-state alliances in different parts of the world formed against VNSAs or states prefer VNSAs as a partner so that they gain advantages on conflicts. The power vacuum that occurred in some part of the Middle East due to political and military turmoil or civil war precipitates such kind of alliance behaviors. There are some formal or informal alliance examples formed among VNSAs to withstand against a single VNSA or a group of forces composed of state or VNSAs. For instance, Popular Mobilization Forces (Hashd al-Shaabi) that is composed of nearly 40 Shiite militias or brigades is an umbrella organization formed to oppose ISIS threat and backed formerly by Iran and Iraq. Balance of threat theory should include "diverse-actored" alliances, composed of multi-dimensional entities from states to NSAs, in its theoretical concepts to better explain the real-life alliance formations.

Hence, the first dimension of the restoration in BoT theory requires a shift from single-type actored alliances that composed merely from states against statist threats to diverse-actored alliances formed against statist and non-statist threats.

Second dimension of the "non-statist emphasis" regarding the restoration in BoT theory requires a transformation in the threat perception both in terms of nature and level of threat. Stephen Walt's assumption regarding the level of threat composes of four main factors: aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and perceived aggressive intentions. However, these variables are identified based on statist features and characteristics. For instance, the idea of geographical proximity has been defined taking into consideration static threats, as of location, in the sense that the proximity among states determines the level of threat. However, I cannot judge the level of threat perceived from a VNSA according to geographical proximity due to de-territorialized nature of VNSA. Although the US is not geographically close to the main influence zone (Syria and Iraq) of ISIS, the dynamic nature of VNSA through recruitment mechanism, foreign fighter notion and technology (Social media platforms) augments the level of threat more than ever. In today's atmosphere in which people, ideas and capital move with ease and speed, distances should not be determined how much kilometer far away the hazard. Hence, I propose a new "mobile threat concept" that complements "static threat" understanding of BoT theory stemming from statist threats. Here, I will describe "mobile threat" as threats that have distance-free and transitive nature originated from VNSAs due to their de-territorialized and dynamic nature. Transitive nature component in mobility refers to the VNSAs' ability/capacity of internal disturbance (infiltration) of states' territorial integrity and security. Thus, the more degree of mobility of a VNSA the more it pose a threat. In other words, not only geographical

distance increases the threat perception but also to what extent the NSAs, especially violent ones, has the ability to transcend the border and disturb the peace and security atmosphere of a state.

Another problematic determinant like geographical proximity is the factor of aggregate power. According to Walt, states balance against other states depending on their military, political and economic strengths but when states confront with terrorist entities, it can be hard to determine their military capability or financial capacity based on unofficial records. Moreover, even the states know the reality that VNSAs do not reach almost never to a state capacity, VNSAs has their own aggregate powers such as the ability to use social media to recruit its own populations and army (composed of militias) both in the local area and in the soil of those who formed alliance against them. Thus, aggregate power function also like geographical proximity should be adopted to new challenges and non-statist threat perceptions.

The way Walt determines the nature and level of threat carries solely state-centric characteristics. In the new transnational era, in which VNSA has increased their voice more than ever due to systemic and global variables, there is a tendency among states to wield them as a bridge or as an instrument to fulfill their aims. Thus, balance of threat should take into account the significant status of VNSAs both in terms of a new actors that shapes alliance formations and in terms of alliance cohesion due to clash of national security priorities among states. For example, the alliance cohesion between the US and Turkey has been damaged due to the US's formal and informal alliance preferences such as PYD and its armed wing YPG against ISIS. This situation canalized Turkey to prioritize its national interests in favor of Free Syrian Army (FSA) and Turkmen Brigades and reevaluate its long-standing partnership with the US.

Hence, I admit realists' arguments that balancing is the dominant behavior in alliance formation and states balance against threats. However, the BoT theory introduced by Walt into alliance literature, requires an update in two senses: "diverse-actored alliances" and "mobile threat perception" to compensate the lack of "non-statist" threat emphasis. Turkey's threat perception from the PKK/PYD and the US's perceived threat from ISIS have non-statist characteristics. The main current interactions between state and VNSAs in Syria showed below, fit into the proposed "diverse actored" alliances. Despite their long-standing alliance, both the US and Turkey have added the PYD/YPG and FSA, respectively, to their alliance agenda to balance against a non-statist threat perception-ISIS threat.

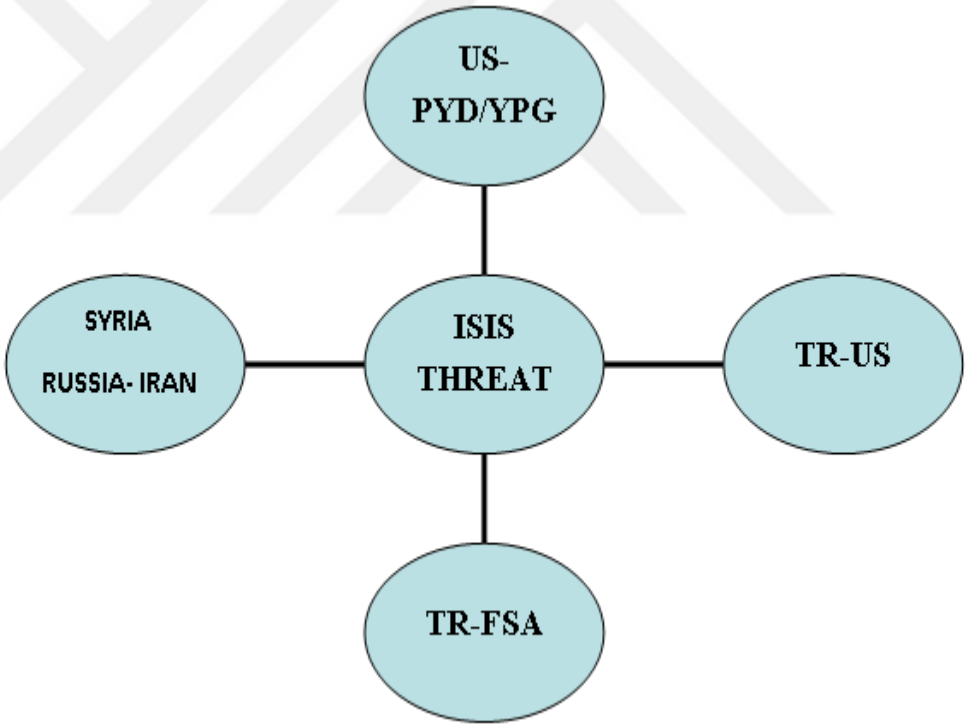

Figure 5: An example of "diverse-actored" alliance in the alliance formation

However, this has increased the tension between the US and Turkey, especially since the Kobane siege, due to Turkey's three pronged threat perception from PYD/YPG/PKK. Thus, states' different non-statist threat perceptions have directed

them to form interactions with VNSAs as a substitution strategy to fight effectively against non-statist threats. This tendency has shadowed some former alliances formed between tutelary states of these VNSAs (i.e. the alliance between the US and Turkey) by decreasing the cohesiveness of these former alliances. The independent variable in my research question is the evolving threat perception of the PKK/PYD and this non-statist threat perception is closely related with the above-mentioned two dimensional gap of "non-statist emphasis" in BoT theory. Turkey perceives its non-statist PYD/PKK threat as mobile threat that has a distance-free and transitive nature. With the increasing threat of ISIS, the US has increased its interactions with the PYD as a "viable ally". However, this has led Turkey to increase its threat perception from the ascent of the PYD, due to its close connections with Turkey's long-standing non-statist threat perception-the PKK. The differentiation of alliance behaviors against different threat perceptions demonstrates us the need for first of all, redefinition of external threat concept so that both statist and non-statist threat incorporated into external threat understanding in BoT theory, and secondly, the functions of level of threat should also be updated in terms new type actors and challenges.

CHAPTER 3

CONVENTIONAL ALLIANCE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND TURKEY

3.1. Balance of Threat: Theoretical and Conceptual Explanations between 1945 and 1990

It seems that the origin of the Turkish-American partnership is threat-based in the sense that the fundamental motivation that brought together two states to form a formal alliance can be explained best with Walt's balancing against a "statist threat" argument. The continuity of Turkish-American alliance cohesion in these three periods (Golden age period (1945-1962), Digression Period (1960s and 1970s), Rapprochement Era (1980s)) can be explained with a shared threat perception perceived from the Soviet Union. As long as Soviet encroachment continued to be a threat for two states between 1945 and 1990, the significance of this alliance continued, albeit some small challenges that affect the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance: Jupiter missiles, Cyprus issue/Johnson letter, arms embargo, opium issue. However, the USSR has proved itself again in 1980s that it continues to be a threat for two states. In these periods, two states' alliance motivation is to balance a threat that has a statist nature. Thus, Walt's BoT theory's main assumptions about the balancing behavior against an external actor and the perceived level of threat from the USSR explain well the rationale behind the maintenance of the Turkish-American alliance such a long-time. In these periods, Turkish-American alliance was formed against an external threat namely, the Soviet Union, and the

cohesion of this alliance was dependent on the intensity and duration of the Soviet expansionism. As witnessed, the times which the alliance seemed to disintegrate were the reduction of this external threat that the alliance was initially formed. For instance, the years of digression between two allies were the years which the US and the Soviet Union had experienced a harmony and détente. As long as the Soviet Union ceased to be a threat or was regarded as less threatening in contrast to other periods for the US, yet it was a power, the ferment of the alliance loosened. This statist threat perception became apparent with the development in the 1980s (1979 Afghanistan's invasion, 1979 Iranian revolution). Causing less attention than Soviet Union, Iran was also regarded as a threatening state like the Soviet Union for the US and Turkey. Hence, the alliance maintained its cohesive status once again thanks to aggressive states that have an aggressive and offensive power with close proximity to Turkey, which can compel the US to intervene due to its NATO commitments and interests in the Middle East.

3.1.1. Golden Age - Honeymoon Period (1945-1960)

The relations between Turkey and the US can be traced back to Ottoman Empire era in the form of trade and missionary activities. However, the genuine formal relations began to emerge after World War II of which some determinants lay the groundwork for Turkish-American alliance. Thus, we can assume the origin of the connections between Turkey and America dates back to the early days of the Cold War. Due to the shared threat perceptions, both states sought to form an alliance against Soviet encroachment and their alliance was based on a tradeoff as follows: While Turkey gave consent for military installations to contain Soviet threat and encircle the USSR, the US provided a defense umbrella and economic assistance (Aydın, 2009: 128). One of the main reasons behind this rapprochement after Second

World War was the security of Turkish Straits which constitutes not only a backbone for Turkish national interests and sovereignty but also the US's apprehension regarding the future of the Middle East and Mediterranean regions. At first the US abstained from giving support to Turkey but when it was sure about the Soviet expansionist goals and regarded the Soviet-American harmony as a dream, the US approached Turkey as an obligation for its strategic interests (Arıogul, 2003: 9). Furthermore, Turkey was viewed as a military barrier for the southern flank against Soviet Union's aim in the Gulf Region so that the US could secure the route from oil-producing region to Europe (Athanassopoulou, 2001: 144).

The majority of scholars dubbed the first period from 1945 to 1962 as Golden Age or Honeymoon in which relations seen as less tumultuous than other periods. The first phase in this long-standing alliance initiated when the battleship Missouri, which bear the remains of Turkish Ambassador *Münir Ertegün*, steamed into the port of Istanbul in 1946 with great appreciation by Turkish Press (Harris, 1972: 20, Aydın and Erhan, 2004: 66). Another determinant is the proclamation of Truman Doctrine in 1947 in order "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure," with economic and military assistance. Moreover, Western interests could be guaranteed through the promulgation of Truman Doctrine in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East by increasing the defense capabilities of Greece and Turkey (Hale, 2002: 115). The official declaration was followed with the ratification of an Assistance Act by Congress in 1947 in which Turkey benefitted from an aid package of 150 million dollar to strengthen its military establishment (Leffler, 1985: 808; Türkmen, 2009: 111-112). Truman Doctrine was designed in case of Soviet advance to strategic points like Turkey and Greece so that

Soviet demands could be resisted and its threat could be slowed down. US military planners began promoting the apportionment of military aid to Turkey by giving fighter aircraft and ammunition in order to thwart USSR's advances in wartime. The real concern in this doctrine was to update and strengthen the combat power of Turkish army, navy and air forces increasing their mobility and firepower as well as to help restructuring strategic routes, communication and transportation channels (Leffler, 1985: 815-817). Truman Doctrine was not the only economic assistance program during the 1950s, Marshall Aid also began to provide general (792 million dolar) and military aid (687 million dollar) to Turkey between 1948 and 1952 (Criss, 1993: 341).

The third determinant to pave the way for official Turkish-American alliance in the Golden age is the Menderes government's decision to send a 4,500-man unit to Korea in order to fight alongside US troops. According to George Harris, the Korean gambit was utilized as an opportunity by Menderes government to force the gates of NATO (1972: 36). Korean War was a milestone both in terms of the trajectory of Cold War and Turkish-American alliance. The decision to send a Turkish brigade to Korea by Menderes government was perceived by the US government as a great heroism which in turn augmented the advocates of Turkey's admission to NATO in the US. As one can see the Turkish brigades' success put moral pressure on the American troops and government so that it triggered the establishment of closer relations and further collaboration between two countries (Güney, 2005:342). Moreover, the Korean War constituted a watershed for the formation of a Turkish-American strategic alliance under NATO umbrella in which Turkey's entry was ratified on January 29, 1952 (Türkmen, 2009: 111-112).

At first, Turkey's entry to NATO were tried to prevent due to "limited geographic area" argument and the nolleity of Western leaders to spread "meager resources" but later the shift in US foreign policy understanding, increasing disadvantage of Turkish neutrality and the role of Turkish brigades in Korea lead the American government to accept Turkey's application (Criss, 1993: 331; Arıogul, 2003, p.76). Furthermore, Turkish side tried to assure the US that if Stalin is aware of the fact that the US is not ready to protect Turkey, it will give an advantage to carry out his aggressive plan on neighborhood regions including Turkey. Turkey's instigation worked and the US pressed its other NATO partners to admit Turkey's entry to NATO. However, UK government put a vital precondition regarding Turkey's sponsorship to the Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) for accepting its application status (Hale, 2000: 116-119).

Turkey's NATO membership has been considered as a significant institutional link which ties the USA and Turkey to each other. Thus, one cannot make an accurate analysis regarding the strategic bilateral relations between these two states by overlooking the NATO dimension in this long-standing alliance. NATO constitutes the fundamental pillar in which strategic and military-security concerns play an important role within the Turkish-American strategic relationship since 1952 (Oğuzlu, 2013: 208). According to Suhnaz Yılmaz (2012: 481), Turkey's NATO membership, has institutionalized three vital issues: First of all, NATO has provided an umbrella regarding the Turkey's perennial search for security. Secondly, NATO has supplied a platform in which Turkey can attain its goal of Westernization through western institutions and formalize its Western identity. Thirdly, Turkish-American bilateral relations has taken on a new meaning under the NATO shelter which has

made both parties liable in contrast to past in terms of Turkish-American defense relations. Although the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan launched the first official attempts via military and econonic bonds, the acceptance of Turkey to NATO has been the culmination of the forging of Turkish-American alliance (Güney, 2005: 342; Yılmaz, 2012: 488).

Turkish-American alliance which started with economic aid programs such as Truman Doctrine and Marshall Aid gave the sign of continuity in this direction as long as the communist threat proceed. During a speech in Congress in 1957, President Eisenhower gave the clue regarding the maintenance of these aid programs to anti-communist regimes and the deployment of US forces, if necessary, in order to protect any nations against aggressive states that are "controlled by international communism". Hence, the above-mentioned policy which is later called Eisenhower Doctrine is one of the milestone in American foreign policy regarding the Middle East (Pakel, 2007: 25). Turkey was one of the main countries which aimed to benefit from these American economic assistances and its role regarding the American policy towards the Middle East was once again come to the fore. However, these assistances were admitted by Turkey at the expense of the US's freedom of action in Turkish soil, particularly in military installations. For instance, after the putschist stage a coup in Iraq on July, 15 in 1958, Lebanon's threat perception increased and upon the invitation of Lebanese government the US decided to deploy its troops by using the Incirlik Airbase located in Turkey in the context Eisenhower Doctrine. However, the US did not informed the Turkish government regarding the landing of its forces to Incirlik and Turkey took offence at this American fait accompli which in turn raise doubts in Turks regarding the freedom of action of America in Turkish soil

(Harris, 1985: 185). One of the series of development beside the above-mentioned issues, which converge Turkey and America's strategic interests during this period were the establishment of military defense-related installations. There are 24 NATO bases[4] in Turkey and some of them has served in serious events during the Cold war in order to collect intelligence regarding Soviet military activities (i.e. Sinop and Diyarbakir/Pirinclik), to supply logistic facilities or the deployment bases for aircrafts (i.e. Incirlik Air Base). In 1954, a secret Military Facilities Agreement was signed to formalize the establishment of US military installations in Turkey (Güney, 2005: 342; Grimmett, 1986: 48-50).

3.1.2. Years of Digression between Turkey and the US (1962-1975)

Sporadic events that occurred both in the 1960s and in the 1970s causing frictions between the US and Turkey, resulted with the end of the honeymoon period which characterizes the 1950s. The main events that strain the relations between two countries and reminded the drawbacks of its unidirectional foreign policy can be stated as follows: i) Cuban Missile Crisis, ii) Cyprus issue and the notorious Johnson letter, iii) Arms embargo between 1975-1978, iv) the Opium issue (Kardas, 2011: 29). Even though the Turkish-American alliance converged especially in military and security areas, at times both sides suffered from this official cooperation. The main reason behind this suffering was the imparity of the Turkish-American alliance structure which is composed of a superpower and a medium-sized regional power (Güney, 2005: 342-343). When the above-mentioned occasional frictions merged with the American insensitivity towards the Turkish public opinion that were

[4] Global Research (2011). NATO's Eastern Anchor. 24 NATO bases in Turkey, retrieved from http://www.globalresearch.ca/nato-s-eastern-anchor-24-nato-bases-in-turkey/23205, Accessed on December 25, 2016.

affected from the leftist movements, the alliance confronted with an arduous period of digression, triggered by different actors including lobbies, Congress and domestic pressure groups by the mid-1960s (Harris, 2004: 70-73).

Aftermath of the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957, the US sought ways to convince some NATO countries which have a strategic location, about stationing intermediate-range ballistic missiles in order to consolidate NATO militarily and psychologically. This offer was refused by some NATO members due to some facts like provoking Soviet aggression, the possibility of being a target in a nuclear war and internal pressures from domestic groups. Turkey are among the members to comply with the US's demands along with Britain and Italy. The missiles was seen as political assets which can deter Soviet aggression and adding prestige to Turkey's role in NATO which in turn enhance the warmth relations with the great power-the US (Bernstein, 1980: 99-100). However, the Soviets concerned from this development and in order to retaliate for the Jupiter missiles that were located in Turkey, in return they deployed Soviet missiles in Cuba escalating the existing tension between the super powers. To resolve the Jupiter missile crisis, both sides agreed to make a trade-off, in which the missiles deployed in Turkey and Cuba were going to be removed mutually. At first it can be said that the Cuban missile crisis strained the relations between the two hegemonic power-U.S. and Soviets. However, the real crisis occurred when Turkish government was aware of the fact that the U.S. concealed the secret agreements made with Soviets at the expense of Turkish national interests and security. The removal of the Jupiter missiles became a "matter of honor" in Turkish side which in turn aggravated anti-American sentiments and called into question the staunchness of the Turkish-American alliance.

The majority of Turkish government officials knew the limited defensive value of the Jupiter missiles, and found reasonable to replace with the Polaris submarines without hesitation by trusting the US's words. However, when the US-Soviet secret talks were made in public, the truths deteriorated the Turkish-American alliance because they were considered as a symbol for demonstrating Turkey's significance within the Western security system. Furthermore, they were the most effective political instruments in which Turkish government could obtain more economic assistance from its long-standing ally-U.S. Hence, the removal of the Jupiters without the prior consultation with the Turkish government and secret-bilateral talks with the Soviet caused one of the most serious political and military problems in Turkish- American relations in history (Seydi, 2010: 439-442). The U.S. give the impression to the world, especially to Turkey, that it will not hesitate to negotiate with other states or enemies, if its national interest are in danger, at the expense of its allies' interests. Turkey's deep resentment emanating from the fact that it was perceived as a client state whose future could be debatable with other enemies for the sake of the U.S.'s future. The Cuban missile crisis constituted a vital historical lessons regarding the costs and dangers of the Turkish-American alliance which can be put on the bargaining table easily due its big power-small power nature (Uslu, 2003: 157-160).

Another turning point which as well considered as the event which ended the honeymoon period of Turkish-American relations is the Cyprus issue. The political dispute regarding the future of the Cyprus and its indigenous Greek and Turkish Cypriots was a legacy of the imbroglio due the imperial withdrawal of the Great Britain from this island. Aftermath of declaration of the ENOSIS, the idea which

aims to unite the Greece and Cyprus, Turkey took a nationalist stance by taking into account the precarious position of the Island's Turkish minority. When the Greek atrocities towards Turkish Cypriots increased to a high-level, Turkish government did not resisted to domestic pressures and applied to Britain for a settlement which were once the protector of the Cyprus. A short-term negotiation among the British-Greek-Turkish sides were signed in London and Zurich in 1959 based on separate representation of both communities. However, after the election of Archbishop Makarios, the trajectory of the political process relapsed and communal friction increased to a level of which the "Turkish minority being forced to flee from their villages and suffering high casualties." Turkey notified the America regarding its intentions about utilizing its right of intervention as a guarantor state to protect the Turkish Cypriots (Rustow, 1989: 93-94).

After this notification, the Turkish government received a stiffest and notorious letter from President Lyndon Johnson warning that:

> "A military intervention in Cyprus by Turkey could lead to a direct involvement by the Soviet Union…your NATO allies have not had a chance to consider whether they have an obligation to protect Turkey against the Soviet Union if Turkey takes a step which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and understanding of its NATO allies." (Stearns, 1992: 156-157).

Besides the warning about the intervention to Cyprus, President Johnson emphasized in his letter not to use American-supplied military equipment even it considers to intervene in Cyprus. The Johnson letter was the second biggest sign after 1962 October Crisis in a sense that the alliance between Turkey and US which enjoyed a honeymoon since 1950s was over and Turkish government should appraise realistically more than ever its relations with the US from now on (Gunter, 2005: 118).

This blunt letter shocked both the Inönü government and later the Turkish public after the text leaked through Turkish press. The first reaction from the Turkish side was to call off the intervention. The feeling of abandonment and betrayal by its staunchest ally to whom Turkey always show its commitment even sending its troops to fight shoulder to shoulder in Korea against communist threat was at the highest level (Rustow, 1989: 95). If one considers the event of Cuban Missile Crisis as a stumbling block which shattered the Turkish-American alliance, the Johnson letter written following Turkey's intention in Cyprus to support the beleaguered Turkish community was the real break in this historical alliance (Harris, 2004: 69-70). The query about the credibility of NATO umbrella led Turkey to evaluate its role in this defense organization and the cohesion of Turkish American bilateral relation under the threat of a Soviet attack (Uslu, 2003: 74). On the other hand, the US government turned a blind eye to the realities of Turkish politics and public reaction by solely focusing on preclusion of Turkish intervention that would bring danger for NATO and the US (Stearns, 1992: 24). The US government which was stand behind Turkey after the Soviet premier Khrushchev's threat regarding the deployment of Turkish army along the Syrian border in 1958, was not eager this time. Thus, as stated by Seyfi Tashan, the Johnson letter was a retreat and a concrete proof for the "arbitrariness of the Turkish-American alliance" while functioning in real contexts (Pakel, 2007: 44).

The Cyprus question reactivated twice between 1965 and 1975; first in 1967, when Greek Cypriot forces occupied the Turkish Cypriot settlements Bogazici and Gecitkale in order to succeed in their ENOSIS plan (Bölükbaşı, 1988: 133-134; Ehlrich, 1974: 98; Crawshaw, 1978: 377). Secondly, on 15 July 1974, again the

Greek military forces stage a coup to oust Makarios who are replaced with right-wing extremist and pro-Enosis nationalist Nikos Sampson in order to carry out the ENOSIS. Although the Turkish government was prevented to mobilize against the Greek forces in the former occupation, the latter one is the last straw that break the camel's back invoking the Ankara government to carry out military occupation on July 20, 1974 (Rustow, 1989: 95). Even though, the Turkish government notified the US regarding this illicit act occurred in 1974, the US once again maintained its indifferent stance. However, the Turkish government, did not tolerated this time and run the risk of losing its strongest ally for the sake of its national security and interests by using its legal right specified in the 1960 Cyprus Treaty of Guarantee to restore the constitutional order (Couloumbis, 1983: 90; Rustow, 1989: 96; Uslu, 2003: 206). Aftermath of the Turkish intervention capturing the 36 percent of the Cyprus territory, the US only let off with a warning to cut its military assistance instead of explicitly condemning Turkey's attitude (Polyviou, 1975: 87; Bölükbaşı, 1988: 211).

The concrete reaction to the second invasion of Turkey to Cyprus came into effect in 1975 by the US Congress's arms embargo resolution. Even though the Ford administration opposed this resolution, with the vigorous efforts of the Greek lobby, the Congress passed this decision as a response to Cyprus intervention by Turkish Armed Forces (Turkmen, 2009: 112). Turkish government harshly criticized the US regarding the frozen of arms sales by stating that these economic pressures would not change the policy which they pursue in Cyprus (Polyviou, 1975: 210-211). The imposition of arms embargo that is terminated on 26 September 1978 induced three vital results: First of all, it hampered the joint cooperation made in security and

hindered the modernization of Turkish army. Secondly, the frozen of arms sales offended the Turkish government leaving another scar in the Turkish-American alliance in a way that augmented suspicion regarding the US neutrality. Thirdly, this arm embargo lead Turkey to reconsider its unilateral military dependence and security understanding with the US and directed Turkey to "seek new dimensions for its foreign policy and to distance Turkey somewhat from the US" (Harris, 2004: 72). The alienation showed itself in the form of the suspension of intelligence collection centers established in Karamursel, Sinop, Diyarbakir and Belbasi (Uslu, 2003: 94). The arms embargo that was perceived as an antagonistic act by the Turkish government led them limit the usage of Incirlik base with only NATO purposes and to repeal lots of bilateral negotiations including the Defense Cooperation Agreement signed in 1969 (Uslu, 2003: 94).

One of the most problematic area between 1962 and 1975 which damaged the Turkish-American relations was the Opium issue. After taking office President Nixon initiated a war against drug addiction at home and poppy cultivation at abroad especially to the opium producer countries such as India, Pakistan, China, Thailand, France (Marseilles), Turkey (Uslu, 2003: 233). However, the US pressured Turkey to abandon its opium cultivation more than other countries because of the allegation made by the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs in the sense that 80 percent of heroin originates from Turkish Opium (Harris, 1972: 192). From 1969 onwards, Nixon administration aimed to dissolve the drug addiction problem, which was in the first rank during his campaign, by forcing several countries especially Turkey to close all its poppy fields and banning all the poppy production (Harris, 1972: 193; Spain, 1975: 298). Due to the interference of its domestic affairs by the US, Turkey

felt humiliated again by its long-standing ally. To fulfil the American demands regarding the opium issue, Turkish government employed several measures to control opium production by reducing poppy acreage and provinces for legal production, establishing heavy punishments for smuggling of heroin. Nevertheless, this did not convince totally the US due to their desire for the total ban of opium production in Turkish territory. Internal pressure from domestic groups did not let the Turkish government to obey the US and fall under its influence.

The US government utilized the economic aid as a leverage to obtrude Turkey abide by the US demand (Coufoudakis, 1981: 187; Morris, 1977: 272). The trajectory of this issue shifted when the non-party Nihat Erim government came to power by giving the signs of compliance with the US interests regarding poppy. Due to Erim government's non-dependence of public support, the Turkish government issued an opium decree in 1971 that announced the prohibition of opium production completely in return for 35 million dollars loans (Uslu, 2003: 236-238). However, when Bulent Ecevit assumed the premiership in 1974, the Turkish government gave the decision to resume opium cultivation in seven provinces to demonstrate Turkey's independence form the US at the expense of Congress's economic threats (Uslu, 2003: 245-251).

Another intense debate that affected the cohesion of Turkish-American relations was the Turkish public reaction against Turkish-American bilateral agreements. The reasons behind this public criticism can be specified briefly as follows: Firstly, these bilateral agreements were not ratified by the Turkish Parliament which question their legality in the eyes of the public. Secondly, generally the majority of the Turkish-American bilateral agreements were done under the NATO umbrella even they solely

served on the US national interests. Thirdly, the US wanted to dominate freely and sometimes without consultation with Turkey over the military installations located in Turkey and further in some circumstances Turkey had not authority to control the American superiority in these military bases (Uslu, 2003: 83).

3.1.3. New Rapprochement Era (1980s)

There are three significant developments that induced a rapprochement between two sides after years of digression that endured more than a decade: First of all, when the Soviets occupied the Afghanistan in 1979, the US officials reevaluated the deterrent role of Turkey against the Soviet expansionist threats. Secondly, with the digression period between Turkey and America in 1960s and in late 1970s, the US lost its influence in the Middle East which were facilitated via Turkey's bridge building role. Finally, when the oil prices increased with a series of events after the Iranian revolution, the US reconsidered Turkey's duty in securing the access of oil to Western powers (Rubin, 1985: 79; Haass, 1986: 465).

Military and security characteristic which is the vital dimension of the Turkish-American alliance maintained in the 1980s as well. A Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) was signed between two sides as a new framework which redefine their military relations by 29 March 1980 (Campany, 1986: 103). With this negotiation while the US took on a task to supply the Turkish Armed Forces' defense equipment and military services and training, on the other hand, Turkish government gave the US the authorization in Turkish military installation to conduct their military operations (Uslu, 2003: 254). DECA was renewed in 1985 with a side letter which in return the US pledged to boost its economic and military support as security. Furthermore, this side letter included a secret protocol in which

the US promised to grant 40 F-4 and the replacement of F-4 fighter jets located at the Incirlik base with the F-5 and F-16s (Turkmen, 2009: 113).

The economic assistance done primarily in the military and security area were conditioned by Congress with Cyprus question, the so-called Armenian genocide allegations, areas of disputes between Turkey and Greek, human rights issues and so on. These sore points led Turkey to adopt a multilateral stance in its foreign policy and enhance its relations with alternative security partners which in turn the American side was suspicious about Turkey's commitment in this new era. However, Turkey maintained its special role also in the 1980s due the following reasons: First of all, being located in an idiosyncratic region and at the crossroads of vital regions like Middle East, the Caucasus and the Balkans, Turkey preserved its irrevocable position in the eyes of the US. Secondly, Turkey was perceived to be a barrier against foreign powers in the Middle East and a base for rapid deployment in the event of regional turmoil so that the US and Western forces intervene directly through Turkish territory. Thirdly, the emerging ties between Israel and Turkey and Turkey's perception of being a role model against fundamentalist Islamic movements augmented the value of Turkey in the 1980s atmosphere for the US governments (Uslu, 2003: 266).

3.2. Balance of Threat: Theoretical and Conceptual Explanations between 1990 and 2003

The years between 1990 and 2003 were the critical time period in which the alliance between the US and Turkey has experienced diversified threat agenda that composed of both statist and non-statist threats. In the Gulf crisis, the US and Turkey has strengthened their alliance to balance against an external actor-Saddam regime. The Gulf crisis created a shared threat due to "lack of credible commitments" by

Saddam regime regarding the WMDs and "breach of international norms" during the invasion of Kuwait. Iraq's containment strategy adopted by two states is the proof of how two allies can balance against an external actor that poses an aggravated threat. Two allies cooperated for common security, to increase their influence and power in the Middle East to balance against an aggressive state as defined in Stephen Walt's alliance definition. The nature of threat that brought two allies together in the Gulf Crisis, which later will be also in the 2003 Iraqi War, has mainly motivated by statist threat. This state-centric understanding is partly valid for Turkey because it perceived a high threat level from its Southern neighbors Syria and Iraq due to their utilization of the PKK as a cat's paw against Turkey and the fear for growing Kurdish power. Turkey's real threat perception emanated from a VNSA that poses a mobile threat in the sense that the PKK has the capability to transcend the Iraqi border and trigger ethno-nationalist feelings of Turkey's Kurdish population. Thus, in the absence of Saddam regime there was the possibility of the establishment of independent Kurdish state. On the other hand, the US's real concern both in the Gulf Crisis and 2003 was the Saddam regime in Iraq. Saddam's aggressive intentions and alleged offensive power regarding the utilization of WMDs increased Washington's level of threat from Iraq. Despite the different rationale behind two allies' threat perceptions, they managed to converge their threat perception in one point: Saddam regime. However, while the statist threats brought them together under common strategies (military and economic sanctions), some repercussions of the absence of Saddam regime which carried non-statist threat characteristics has created complications in the alliance cohesion. Turkey feared that the PKK will exploit the power vacuum when Iraq's territorial integrity was disrupted and this threat perception coming from a VNSA entity has added a new dimension to Turkish-

American alliance. Even though, the PKK as a non-statist threat did not drive two allies apart very much in the 1991 Crisis, its repercussions had long-lasting effects after 2003 Iraqi invasion in terms of the cohesiveness of the long-standing formal alliance. BoT theory lacks to explain Turkey's increased threat perception from the PKK due its statist nature and the US's diverse-actored type alliances with Kurdish entities (i.e. the PUK and KDP) did not fit into Walt's alliance definition that composed of states. The US's preferences of NSAs as partners, which were seen as threatening entities by Turkey, were the points where the alliance cohesion started to decrease.

3.2.1. Turkish-American Alliance between 1990 and 2003

With the end of the Cold War between two hegemonic powers and newly emerging international system during the 1990s, the trajectory of Turkish-American alliance went through significant changes. Due to the number and nature of exogenous elements, which affected the cohesion of the alliance, in the post-Cold war period, the analysis of the alliance between the US and Turkey has become rarified. While during the Cold War, the level of analysis was based on the presence of single foe, namely Soviet Union; now it is quite difficult to specify the level of analysis in their relations. Thus, the alliance initiated to be perceived multi-faceted and complex since the end of the Cold War (Tekdemir, 2004: 5). The dissolution of the Soviet Union transformed the political landscape of the international system which in turn reshaped the international and regional context of the Turkish-American alliance. Furthermore, not only the external dimension of this bilateral relationship was affected but also both the American and Turkish domestic context have been experienced from the post-Cold War period. One of the significant

changes in the 1990s was the military downsizing policy that was adopted by the US government which aimed to reduce the number of military installations and US forces or close some military bases. Moreover, the military and economic aid decreased in a significant amount in the post-Cold War era and came to conclusion in 1998 (Sayari, 2004: 91).

As seen in the aforementioned period even if this alliance became loose, it preserved its significance no matter what kind of difficulty it confronted. In an official visit to Turkish Grand National Assembly the then President Clinton stated the status of this alliance in the new conjuncture as follows:

> "Since the cold war ended, we have learned something quite wonderful. We have learned that our friendship does not depend upon a common concern with the Soviet Union, and that in fact, in the post-cold-war era, our partnership has become even more important" (Clinton, 1999).

As specified in the words of the Clinton, the US did not isolated totally Turkey from its decisions while considering the situations in different part of the world. For instance, in the Middle East (in the containment policy of Iraq and Iran, intermediator role of Turkey in the Palestinian Peace Process), in the peacekeeping operations for the ethno nationalist conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, energy security and development issues in the Caucasus and the Central Asia and limiting the effect of some regional and global powers accordingly, and issues relating Aegean sea and the Eastern Mediterranean in terms of two NATO allies- Turkey and Greek (Sayari, 2004: 92). The words of the then President Clinton highlighted the fact that Turkish-American alliance should be freed of their common threat perception from the Soviet Union, which also the political conjuncture necessitated this understanding. The real wish behind this political statement was the desire for maintaining the cohesion of Turkish-American alliance around other afore-mentioned concerns. The post-Cold

war era has changed states' threat understanding in the sense that the alliance cohesion is not only depend on solely to one single foe, rather diverging statist and non-statist issues can be common concerns for state to maintain their alliance. Thus, it is clear that BoT theory started to lose its relevance (in contrast pre-Cold War period) from this period when the understanding of external threat has changed its meanings in the new political landscape with the dissolution of the USSR.

3.2.1.1. From Enhanced Partnership to Strategic Partnership

In the post-Cold War era, the Turkish-American alliance was identified with several concepts. The first one was the "enhanced partnership" adopted in 1991 that aimed to extend the cooperation between two countries in the political area by boosting diplomatic advisements and in the economic area using Turkey's potential as an emerging markets in the world (Guney, 2005: 344-345). The enhanced partnership phenomenon later evolved into a "strategic partnership" as the defining characteristic of the Turkish-American alliance and was first voiced in 1999 by President Clinton. The "pivot state" concept which was coined by Halford Mackinder long time-ago, started to be utilized for states which "not only determine the fate of its regions but also affect international stability"(Chace, Hill, and Kennedy, 1996: 33). Thus, by the mid-1990s, the cooperation which was consolidated with DECA in 1980, turned into a strategic partnership in the sense that Turkey came to be perceived a pivotal state during post-Cold War. The strategic partnership concept was used so often by experts and analysts to define Turkish-American alliance structure. However, according to some scholars, this concept lacks a clear definition in the sense that it solely considered as a security-based concept that focuses on military and defense cooperation instead of areas for cooperation like trade, energy, human trafficking. Besides the concept's security-centered

understanding, the concept also augmented the existing asymmetric relationship preventing a partnership between equals and underestimating the role of Turkey in terms of democratization and socio-economic development in its near abroad (Aydın, 2009: 132-133).

The radical change in the world order and the incontrovertible effect of the globalization reshaped the policies and actions of the states in the world. Turkish leaders preferred to stay on the side of the US, as usual since the Cold War, which has the ability to designate the newly founding order. Globalization phenomenon redefined the perception of threat in the sense that there is no more a single hazard which the Turkish-American alliance should be based but a diversified new threat agenda in which the alliance challenged seriously. This diversified threat agenda emanates from Turkey's geographical proximity as a frontline country to a turbulent area that positioned it at the epicenter of the newly established international stage (Aykan, 1996: 346). After the Cold-War period Turkey's strategic priorities shifted in way that Turkey started to perceive a threat from its Southern neighbors particularly those stemmed from Iraq and Syria, while still not disregarding the former Soviet aggression. (Lesser, 1992: 24-27; Brown, 1991: 98, 114). Thus, the long-standing Turkish-American alliance is based on new common threat perceptions as follows: the scourge of terrorism, the wave ethno-nationalist conflicts, the proliferation of weapon of mass destruction in the troubled region, regional struggles and hegemonic cooperation as proxy wars, the implications of mass migration due to civil wars and breakdowns, the possibility of deactivation of Gulf oil flow, and emerging anxieties regarding the prestige and credibility of NGOs and America (Criss, 1995: 204, 211; Sezer, 1995: 169).

3.2.1.2. Regional Security Issues

The bilateral relations between Turkey and the US initiated with a good momentum when Turkey accepted to support the US government in the 1990-1991 Gulf War. However, this momentum was not preserved at continued at the same phase, particularly the one which was achieved during Operation Desert Storm, due to some strains in this alliance. As such, during Clinton administration, some US circles in the government started to perceive Turkey as a "declining asset". This opinion made the Washington espousing an unresponsive attitude towards Ankara for a short-term. Nevertheless, by the mid-1990s, things went in favor of Turkey again when the US government redefined its policies which were sensitive for Turkish government such as Serbian aggression against Bosnian Muslim, Russia's strategic plan in Chechnya, and the energy route in the flow of Caspian oil and gas through Turkish territory (Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project). One of the significant critical juncture in the 1990s was the generous economic support of the US through the IMF assistance in the 1999 economic depression and earthquake (Turkmen, 2009: 113-114).

While the divergent opinions within the alliance during the Cold War emanated mainly from the Cyprus Question, on the other hand, the policy differences in the post-Cold War era comprised of a range of issues from the containment of Iraq, US-led embargo against Iran, Turkish-Greek relations to arm transfer (Athanassopoulou, 2001: 154; Sayari, 2004: 93-94). Although there were different approaches regarding the afore-mentioned thorny issues, Turkish government officials was aware of the reality that Turkish-American alliance constituted the centerpiece of the Turkish foreign policy (Athanassopoulou, 2001: 154). Nevertheless, since the 1990s, Turkish officials tried to transform the unidimensional and dependent nature of the alliance

into a bilateral and interdependent one while playing an increasing role in NATO as well (Karaosmanoglu, 1999).

3.2.1.3. Iraqi Quagmire (Gulf Crisis)

Regional security problems that emerged in the immediate aftermath of the post-Cold War dominated the agenda of this alliance. There were two fundamental sources behind these regional security problems. First of all, the arms conflicts and political violence increased by leaps and bounds in the Turkish neighborhood including the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus. The political turmoil and the surge in arm conflict during the 1990s in the Middle East was the result of the development following the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein in 1990. Having a long border with Iraq, controlling the twin pipelines (Yumurtalık-Kirkuk) which transports the Iraqi oil to West through Mediterranean, and the existence of American military bases in the eastern Turkey laid an emphasis on strategic partnership of Turkey in the fight against Saddam Hussein. Turkish-American alliance was boosted with the support of Turkish government to the US-led Allied Coalition in Gulf crisis in a way that Turkey granted access and reconnaissance flight to American aircrafts located primarily at the Incirlik Air Base. Moreover, Turkish government deployed 100,000 soldiers along the Iraqi border to immobilize Iraqi army (Güney, 2005: 345; Larrabee, 2008: 25). Ankara's response to Kuwait's invasion by Iraq was a farewell for Turkey's long established policy regarding non-involvement in the Middle East skirmishes. Turkey's central role in the allied coalition was a production of the then President Turgut Ozal's active engagement and bilateral relations with the US (Sayari, 1992: 10).

When Iraq annexed Kuwait on August 1990, the threat perception of the US rose in the sense that Saddam Hussein's aspirations to increase Iraq's zone of influence

will endanger US interests in the region. Ozal government wanted to benefit from the opportunity of US's anxiety regarding Saddam. Turkish government invigorated its commitment to Washington by abandoning traditional policy of "non-involvement" in regional affairs and gave consent to adopt a hardline position against Saddam at the expense of economic losses. Turkey granted reconnaissance flights in the Operation Desert Storm and facilitated US's soldiers' access to Incirlik air base for military operations in Iraqi soil. Turkey's close cooperation contained a trade-off between two states: increasing trade relations, particularly facilitating Turkish goods access to US markets; modernization of Turkish army and military support; a new strategic dimension for the Turkish-US relations, and finally Iraq's territorial integrity (Sayari, 1992: 13-14). In this manner, I can argue that Turkey did not hesitate as much as the US about Saddam's increasing control in the Middle East. However, the last trade-off mentioned above regarding Iraq's territorial integrity was an important factor than other bargaining issues for Turkey. Ozal government's concerns were stemming from the fear of its own Kurdish minority's involvement in the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. Moreover, there were signs of Saddam's support to the PKK in response to Turkey's alliance with the US during Gulf War (Sayari, 1992: 19-20). Hence, while the real fear in the Gulf War in terms of Turkey was the power vacuum created after the collapse of Saddam Hussein and the ascent of the PKK, US's fear was the uncontrollable growing threat of Saddam Hussein and its by-products (i.e. WMD).

To contain Iraq, the US government employed an embargo to Iraq and convinced Turkey to renounce for a short-term from the Yumurtalik-Kirkuk oil pipeline. This sanction induced some discontents in the sense that Turkish government took a

knock from this situation losing billions of dollars in trade and tourism sector, spending military expenditures as well. Not only Turkey's economic interests were in danger but also its national security interests. As such, despite the US promised to compensate Turkey's economic losses due the US-led embargo against Iraq, emerging security gap aftermath of the Gulf crisis was much hard to compensate. Turkey confronted with the increasing terrorist activities of the PKK in its South East. Moreover, this crisis caused an unrest in Kurdish regions in Iraq, which in turn intensified the ethnic consciousness of the Kurdish population in Turkish soil. Furthermore, the insurgency caused by the Kurdish separatist groups obliged Turkey to increase its military resources to thwart the PKK terrorist activities and conduct cross-border military operations to destroy their safe havens. Firstly, this led Turkey to be alienated from the Western institutions and move in accordance with the US demands in order not to destroy the fundamental ties on which the Turkish foreign and security policy was based on (Hale, 1993: 245). Secondly, the military interventions dragged Turkey into an imbroglio in the region, particularly in Iraq, that left a legacy of unresolved problems in the future (Gresh, 1998: 195; Müftüler-Bac, 1996: 261).

One of the unresolved and protracted issues was the increasing threat of the PKK which exploited the downfall of Saddam in Northern part of Iraq and confiscated Iraqi army's equipment while they were withdrawing from Northern Iraq. When they occupied Turkey's southern border, the PKK increased its activities in the border provinces such as Hakkari, Sırnak by killing and abducting many Turkish soldiers (Hale,1992:689).

3.2.1.4. Kurdish Question

Close cooperation during Gulf War cost Turkey a lot beside economic and trade relations. While economic losses was the short-term repercussions of this support, in the long term Turkey faced an escalation of terrorism and its Kurdish Question. The formation of a de facto Kurdish state in Northern Iraq was a driving force for Kurdish nationalism and the PKK's aspirations. Furthermore, it became a logistical area and breeding ground for the PKK. According to veteran scholar Ian O. Lesser, Turkey believed that Gulf crisis was "the place where the trouble started" (Larrabee, 2007: 105). In contrast to the US's perceived level of threat from Saddam's aggregate and offensive power, Turkey's perception of threat level was a function of geographic proximity, the capacity of internal disturbance of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and history of Kurdish uprisings in the past (1925, 1930, and 1936–38) (Brown, 2007: 90). Ozal personally believed that the possibility for an Iraqi attack to Turkish soil is low due to deployed coalition troops in Saudi Arabia and Iraq's unwillingness to open a second front war with Turkey. As a response to critics regarding his ignorance of Saddam Hussein's offensive power probability he replied that "I am not a gambler. I am an engineer. I know mathematics and logic, and therefore I don't think I will lose" (Kuniholm, 1991: 46). Thus, he gave his focus on Kurdish issue by giving more relaxation about Kurdish language and cultural freedom to Kurds in Turkey, as well as suggested a safe haven for Kurds in Iraq and meeting with Iraqi Kurds regarding their PKK affiliations during his presidency (Sayari, 1992: 18).

However, Ozal's commitment to Bush administration in their fight against Saddam was based on the idea of taking a united stand towards aggressive Iraq that aims to disrupt regional peace atmosphere. According to one analyst "Granting

legitimacy to the use of force could one day backfire, since there were enough potential enemies around who might do the same to Turkey" (Kushner, 1996: 210). In a TV interview President Ozal stated that "Doesn't anyone think that such an aggressive country will, in the future, constitute a problem for us as well?" (Kuniholm, 1991). Neighboring aggressive states like Syria and Iraq represented in the Turkish media as primary threats despite the fact that the real menace was the fear of an independent Kurdish state. Even though Turkey did not confront with the danger of Iraq's invasion to its territory, Ozal disliked the situation of having a dictatorial regime in Turkey's neighborhood. Thus, Ankara tend to assess the Gulf Crisis in the same way that President George H.W. Bush did (Brown, 2007: 94).

One of the vital implications of the Gulf War was the deployment of an international force in order to guard the Kurdish population living in the northern Iraq. Turkey's military contribution both in the Operation Desert Storm (ODS) and later on the Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) (referred also as Operation Northern Watch) to control the northern Iraqi Kurds under the "no-fly zone" which was between 32 and 36 parallels, was considered critical developments with regard to the Turkish-American alliance (Altunışık, 2013: 162; Sayari, 2004: 95-96). The then President Turgut Ozal suggested to establish a buffer and no-fly zone in the Northern Iraq to inhibit the refugee flow into Turkish territory in case of a mass migration. When the US officials learned the Turkish government's proposal regarding the safe haven in the Northern Iraq, they saw this as a golden opportunity for their long-term plan about the rapid deployment force (Yavuz, 1993: 197). Nevertheless, the Turkish side worried about the shortcomings of this plan in the sense that the more the number of American forces in the region, the more the intelligence gathering activities and unrest in Turkish population. Not only military personnel got the free

movement but also humanitarian organizations and NGOs on the Iraqi-Turkish front. Besides the presence of US forces in the region, Turkey also complained from the fact that the US intelligence institutions and officials did not wanted to share the information they gathered with Turkish counterparts (Uslu, 2003: 281). As stated by Michael M. Gunter (2005: 114) "the Kurdish issue represented both militarily and psychologically the weakest part of the U.S.-Turkish alliance" and the outcomes of the decisions to show an active commitment in the Gulf War created new problematic areas which challenged the long-standing Turkish-American alliance in different ways. Hence, the precautions and sanctions taken by the Turkish government in order to satisfy the US and demonstrate a high level of commitment in this alliance marked a salient shift in Turkish foreign policy that had been characterized with non-interference and minimum intervention (Aydın, 2009: 129; Turkmen, 2009: 113).

With the active Turkish involvement and support in the Gulf War, the US reaffirmed and invigorated Turkey's status as a frontline state for the US's national interests in the Middle East (Makovski, 2000: 223). This cooperation was reciprocal in the sense that in return for Turkey's role in the Gulf crisis, the US promoted Turkey to realize the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project and its participation to the EU (Aydın, 2009: 129). Furthermore, this support enabled Turkey to affect the US policies about the designation of the PKK as a terrorist organization in 1997, aid in the capture of the PKK's leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999, and not raised a substantial objection in Turkey's fight against Kurdish separatists despite some critics from the US Congress. However, despite the fact that two allies shared similar views about regional order and peaceful resolution of conflicts, their approach differed greatly. While the US aimed to overthrow Saddam Hussein with backing the

Kurdish local groups and encouraging them to unite against Saddam regime; Turkey, desired not to damage the territorial integrity of Iraq and was on a knife-edge with the tactical activities of the US regarding the Kurdish political autonomy (Sayari, 2004: 97). Due to the potential effect on the Kurdish population living in Turkish territory, Turkish government opposed these tactical reasons for the sake of its national security.

3.2.1.5. Ethno-national Conflicts in the 1990s

Ankara and Washington rejuvenated their military cooperation between 1991 and 2003 actively in different conflict areas like Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan (Erickson, 2004: 30). One of the notably area of cooperation was seen during the military coordination in the 1990s against ethno-nationalist conflicts. Turkey's proximity to problematic areas in which armed conflicts increased and US's fear about the stability in those regions created an atmosphere of common interests between them. The outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts aftermath of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s, and new secessionist movements in Georgia, in Nagorno-Karabakh and Chechnya emphasized the potential role of Turkey in the Turkish-American relations (Sayari, 2004: 94). During the 1990s, Turkey tried to cooperate with the US in a variety of ethno-national conflicts and humanitarian crisis in different parts of the world like Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo (Turkmen, 2009: 113-114). Turkey and the US cooperated under NATO Enforcement/Stability Force (IFOR/SFOR) to enforce the Dayton Agreement signed in 1995 that aimed to put an end to Bosnian war. To maintain peace and security in the Balkan region, the US and Turkey undertook the responsibility to "equip and train" the Bosnian Muslim-Croat Federation. Moreover, Turkey

demonstrated its commitment to NATO while conducting an air operation against the Milosevic regime and when it joined to NATO's Kosovo force (Sayari, 2004: 97).

3.2.2. A New Baulk in the Turkish-American Alliance: Post- September 11 Period

September 11 terrorist attacks, which initiated the war on terror concept globally and American misadventure in Iraq, has shaped the international system by transforming the security understandings of major and regional powers. State-centric threat perceptions gave way to non-statist threats and states which are affected from this radical change has been compelled to find new strategies and policies to deal with it. Turkey was among those countries that were in the search of new roles and strategies and was aware of its increasing regional profile after the global developments (Ozel, 2011: 56). Being cognizant of this fact, the US started to give a special value to its alliance with Turkey. However, the American government disappointed with the refusal by Turkey of allowing the US forces utilizing the military bases and took an active role in its fight against Al-Qaida. Two flashpoints played a vital role in the deterioration of Turkish-American relations in the aftermath of 9/11: The March 1st Crisis upon the refusal of the government motion by the Turkish parliament regarding Iraqi issue and the Sulaymaniyyah Incident which left scars for future military relations.

With the Justice and Development Party's coming into power in Turkey in 2002, Turkey has started to adopt an autonomous and active foreign policy especially in its neighborhood. This policy change has also affected Turkey's approach towards NATO and in particular the trajectory of its strategic partnership with the US. According to Tarık Oğuzlu (2013), Turkey's reactions against several American initiatives and policies have been framed by the JDP's "strategic depth" doctrine and

"national role conceptualization" model adopted by Turkish elites. This understanding and model caused a perception that Turkey is vested with strategic autonomy due its centrality in several issues (Aras, 2009). It is argued that this centrality stems from its emerging power capabilities, strategic location and substantial historical experiences originating from the Ottoman Empire (Oğuzlu, 2013: 209-210). Hence, Turkey preferred to pursue autonomous foreign and security policy in the post-September 11 period which in turn at times challenged its long-standing alliance with the US.

3.2.2.1. Alliance in Tatters: March 1st Crisis in 2003

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks to Pentagon and the World Trade Center on September, 11 in 2001, Turkish government condoled with the US and declared its decision to cooperate with the US against all kinds of terrorist activities. Turkish government perceived counterterrorism as an instrument to develop a cooperative spirit with the US government because it also suffered nearly for many years with the PKK and had a comprehensive experience in this area. As such, Turkey provided logistic support and deployed Turkish troops to Afghanistan against Taliban regime in the Operation Enduring Freedom (which was known before as Operation Infinite Justice but later changed its names for religious reasons). Turkish government agreed to open the Incirlik military base and air corridor for the Operation Enduring Freedom flights and further supported in the humanitarian assistance operations, intelligence gatherings, maritime anti-money laundering military operations (Barkey, 2003: 233). In order to help in strengthening the coalition forces operating under the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), Turkey sent military personnel. Moreover, Turkey took the responsibility to command the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that was formed upon

NATO's intervention in Afghanistan that is started in 2002 and has continued with Turkey's new duty in the "Decisive Support Mission" since 2015 (Isyar, 2005: 37).

After the declaration of war against Iraq in 2003, with the denial of Turkish government regarding the usage of Turkish territory as a launching pad beleaguered the long-lasting Turkish-American partnership causing a confidence crisis. So to say, the alliance was "in tatters" with accusation from the Pentagon in the sense that Turkish government sacrificed its 50-year partnership ("A friendship on hold", 2003). At the beginning high-level officials from the US tried to convince Turkish government which had some suspicions regarding the US war plans and their negative consequences. The reason behind the unwillingness of Turkey in participating for the US-led war were as follows: First of all, due to its painful experiences about the economic loss in the Gulf War in 1991, Turkey did not want this time to put into danger its economic interests especially the one which were done with neighbor countries. Secondly, which was the most crucial one and also mentioned again during the Gulf War, in case of military operations to the region by the US, Turkey feared the high possibility of provoking the Kurds living in Turkey about the establishment of an autonomous or independent Kurdish state. This possibility could also create a refugee flow, as had happened during the Gulf Crisis, which would assume responsibilities to Turkey due to its close proximity to the region. Moreover, another grave concern for Turkish side was the control of Kurdish forces in oil-rich cities like Mosul and Kirkuk and the situation of Turkmen minorities. Finally, there were some arguments about the stance of the newly established government-Justice and Development Party (JDP or in Turkish the AKP) regarding the presence of foreign troops in Turkish territory and waging war against a Muslim population. Due to the JDP government's Islamic political tradition and

oppression from its grassroots, despite it had the majority with 363 seats in the Turkish parliament, could not achieved to pass the bill from the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. On March 1, 2003 Turkish parliament made an historic session in which the majority parliamentarians declined the motion of the deployment of the foreign troops in Turkish military installations and sending Turkish army for Operation Iraqi Freedom (Güney, 2005: 347-350). Being eye-to-eye so far in several issues, Turkish-American alliance stumbled again in the same thorny issue-Iraq after one decade in the sense that the differences regarding Iraq brought the relations to the minimum level in history (Gillis, 2004: 3-4). Being always the primary source of the rift between two states, the Iraqi issue, was mainly, and is still today, stem from the PKK's presence in northern Iraq (Eligur, 2006: 3). When the Turkish government rejected the bill on March 1st, the US government changed its policy in favor of the Kurdish entities. Taking advantage of the turmoil in northern Iraq the PKK resumed its terrorist activities in Turkish territory after a five-year ceasefire since the 1999. The PKK alleged as a pretext the Turkish military operations and the government's indifference to the Kurdish question. The ignorance of the PKK by the US in northern Iraq and the allegations regarding the US support of the Kurdish militants both militarily and logistically increased the suspicions about the trustworthiness of the Turkish-American alliance. Furthermore, the attitude of the American government was interpreted as a double standard in the fight against terrorism while taking a blind eye on the PKK. (Eligur, 2006: 1-2).

3.2.2.2. Sulaymaniyya Incident (Hood Event)

Another fissure in this long-standing alliance was the Sulaymaniyya Incident which was considered as the second major episode of quarrel since the first one- the 1964 Johnson Letter between the US and Turkey. This contentious event unearthed

the long-buried anti-Americanism in Turkey which did not have difficulty to gather proponents in all circles ranging from nationalists, leftists to radical Islamists (Turkmen, 2009: 123-124). On July, 4 in 2003, a combat team namely, the 173rd Airborne Brigade arrested 11 Turkish Special Force soldiers with an accusation of plotting an assassination to the Iraqi-Kurdish governor of Kirkuk Abdurrahman Mustafa and inducing destabilization in the Iraqi Kurdish administration. The first reaction of Turkish government was the feelings of embarrassment and perceived this arrest as an insult to both the Turkish army and to the Turkish population.

In the US military raid, Turkish soldiers were caught with some military equipment including explosives, sniper rifles, and maps showing certain locations like the office of the Kurdish Mayor. Sulaymaniyya incident was a clear sign for the reversal of the alliance in the sense that, especially after the refusal of the 1 March motion, two sides should see each other as opponents rather than allies (Gunter, 2005: 120). From the Turkish perspective, the irritating factors in the arrest was putting hoods or sacks over Turkish soldiers' heads, as they did to Iraqi insurgents and terrorists, and releasing upon high level diplomatic efforts after a sixty-hour interrogation.

One of the Turkish soldiers who were in custody following their capture by the US forces, argued that the US officials behaved the Turkish soldiers as if they were war detainees. Moreover, one the first reaction after this incident came from the Turkish Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkök arguing that Sulaymaniyyah event is "the greatest confidence crisis between Turkey and the United States" (Eligür, 2006: 2; Howard and Goldenberg, 2003; "US releases Turkish troops", 2003). The then Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül stated that the allegations which are claimed about the presence of Turkish soldiers in Suleymaniyyah were "unconvincing" ("Gul: the US evidences is not convincing", 2003). Through the widespread coverage in the

Turkish media, anti-American stances flourished and initiated new debates about the future of the Turkish-American alliance.

3.3. Balance of Threat: Theoretical and Conceptual Explanations between 2009 and 2014

The Arab Awakening has provided new settings for the resurrection of a series of VNSAs which tried to fill the gaps of failed or weak states. The emergence of VNSAs transformed the existing threat perceptions of states in a way that they started to give much more attention to menaces coming from non-statist entities. In this regard, traditional theories of alliance that focus merely on statist threats has failed to explain properly the diverse-actored alliance formations after Arab Spring between states and VNSAs and between VNSAs. For instance, Assad regime formed informal alliance with the PYD/YPG to balance against statist threats coming from Turkey and the US. Moreover, its alliance with Iran and Russia to counter non-statist threats coming from VNSAs like the FSA, ISIS and Sunni radical non-state armed groups are the reflections of new types of diverse-actored alliance formations.

At the first stage of this period despite with different motivations, both allies' common threat perception was relied on the presence Assad government. This shared threat perception provided a maintenance in the cohesion of the alliance until the US's adoption of "ISIS-first policy". The variables that made the Assad regime as a shared threat for two allies are as follows: While Turkey has put forward "political discourse" which establishes a bond between its three-pronged threat the PKK/PYD/YPG and the Assad government, on the other hand, the US has highlighted "Breach of international law" in the sense that the utilization of chemical weapons and violent oppression of its population were regarded as red lines of the US values. Moreover, both allies' concerns were also based on the possible Russian

and Iranian intervention to the Syrian Civil War that can trigger new statist (Russia and Iran against Turkey and the US) and non-statist threats (more radicalism, ethno and religious-based conflicts, influx of refugees).

Two allies' "Assad regime as a threat" understanding can be explained with BoT theory' main assumption regarding balancing behavior against an external actor. However, with the appearance of a non-statist threat called ISIS, the US shifted its threat perception from statist to non-statist ones. The US's perceived threat from ISIS and radical groups can be partly explained with BoT theory because perceived threat from these actors have a distance-free and transitive nature in the form of mobile threat, rather than "static threats". The emerging concept of foreign fighters has triggered the US's "9/11 syndrome" and, in turn has increased the perceived level of threat from ISIS and other radial groups. Turkey has regarded ISIS as an auxiliary threat emanating from its primary threat-the Assad regime. The rationale behind this understanding cannot be addressed well with Walt's BoT theory: Firstly, BoT theory does not bring a prioritization understanding among different threats to be balanced against. How two allies prioritize their threat perception when they confront with more than one threat is an unanswered question in BoT theory. Secondly, the "lack of non-statist emphasis" in theory cannot explain why the cohesion of Turkish-American alliance loosened despite they shared common threat perception from ISIS (with different levels) and Assad (at first).

3.3.1. The Implications of Post-Arab Uprising on Turkish-American Alliance

Before elaborating on Turkish-American relations in the post-Arab awakening, it will be beneficial to touch upon briefly the troubled year of 2010 between the Israel and Turkish governments that have negative repercussions on Turkish-American alliance. After the 2010 military operation by Israeli soldiers on Mavi Marmara

flotilla, which carried humanitarian aid and construction materials to Gaza, nine Turkish citizens lost their life. Due to political diplomatic fallout of this incident and the existing tensions inherited from the Davos Summit and Turkey's expulsion of Israel from the international Operation Anatolian Eagle, the relations were tensed between Israel and Turkey (Akgün, Gündoğar, and Görgülü, 2014; Tür, 2009: 35).

While the first fallout of this increasing tension between Israel and Turkey were deterioration between these two states, on the other hand, it also strained the relations between Turkey and the US. As such, Ankara decided to extricate Israel dimension from the Turkish-American alliance structure in the sense that it intended to finish the "linkage politics" and deal with the US one-on-one (Kanat and Ustun, 2012: 2-3). Moreover, Turkey's "No" vote regarding the sanctions against Iran in the UN Security Council Resolution led the US officials to reassess Turkey's partnership and intentions. However, when Arab Spring erupted in 2011 in the Middle East countries simultaneously, it enabled a new dynamic in the bilateral relations between these two staunchest allies. After the troubled years inherited from 2003 Iraq War, the rapport between the Obama administration and Erdogan government facilitated the amelioration in relations and both sides recognized once again the exigency of this alliance structure.

After coming to power on January, 2009, President Obama made his first overseas official visit to Turkey. The reason behind this choice was the intention of the Obama government to initiate a new dialogue atmosphere with the Muslim world aftermath of the decreasing prestige of the US in the Muslim populated countries. Turkey was the key country that could serve this intention and this official visit also gave a clear sign that the US is decisive to heal the relations with its longstanding ally following the deteriorated relations after the March 1st Crisis. During this official visit, Obama

aimed to give a new impulse to Turkish-American alliance by giving a new brand as "model partnership" in order to increase the level of cooperation and to broad the scope of the coordination after Bush administration. Furthermore, this official visit and new paradigm of model partnership demonstrated, despite all divergent issues, Turkey is still one of the critical states in the Middle East in terms of the US regional and global interests and two countries could form a partnership that rest on mutual interests (Kanat and Üstün, 2012: 2-3).

Due to priorities of the Obama administration over nuclear weapons in Iran, Turkey's close relations with Iran increased growls in Washington to the detriment of Turkey, especially after the Tehran Declaration signed in 2010 among Turkey, Brazil and Iran. While some US official circles were discussing the significance of Turkey, the Arab Awakening that started in Tunisia and flourished into nearly all Arab regions compelled the American government to reframe and reconsider their attitudes towards Turkey (Kanat and Ustun, 2012: 2-3). The US appreciated the model role of Turkey in the democratizing waves in the Middle East. As a result of Turkey's admission to host NATO early warning radar system as part of the NATO Missile Defense System, Turkey wanted to assure its long-standing ally over its capability and critical role (Shanker, 2011).

At the first period of Arab Spring when the movement jumped into the Syrian territory, Turkish government tried to convince the Assad regime to pay attention to the Syrian individuals' legitimate demands. Turkey's diplomatic efforts in this manner was supported by the US government due to mutual interest and objectives. However, after all intensive diplomatic efforts failed, this led both the US and Turkish government to adopt an anti-Assad rhetoric and converged Turkey and the US accordingly (Kanat and Ustun, 2012: 4-5). Turkey and the US's stance and

priorities differed partially during the unrest occurred after 2011 both in Libya and in Egypt. While the US was regarding positively the extended role of the military in Egypt which was among the key partners of the US, Turkey was in favor of quick transition with restricted role of the army. In Libya, there was also divergent views regarding the Qaddafi regime. Due to its economic ties with Libya and Turkish nationals' existence, Turkey opposed critical the military intervention of NATO forces (Altunışık, 2013: 169).

Although both states had different views from time to time, at the first stage of their coordination, they supported the transformation in the region. While, the US's policy was the non-interference or minimum intervention to the critical region, on the other hand, Turkey, by virtue of the JDP party's pro-active foreign policy understanding, expected from the US to back Turkey as much as possible. Obama administration, abstaining from using hard power as far as possible, wanted at the beginning to utilize the soft power and popularity of Turkey, especially the charismatic leadership of Erdogan, on the Arab masses (Altunışık, 2013: 168). As a consequence of Turkey's foreign policy failures in its zero problem with neighbors, declining prestige in several Middle East country like Egypt and Syria, and retrogressive domestic conditions, led the US to sought new ways and allies at the subsequent phases of the crisis. A new opposition umbrella group named National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces was formed in 2012 in Doha (Qatar) under the leadership of the US. The Syrian National Council (SNC) that is established in 2011 during the Syrian uprising in Istanbul (Turkey) also joined this umbrella group in 2012. However, the SNC withdrew from Syrian National Coalition later in 2014 due the coalition's decision to participate Geneva 2 Conference regarding the future of Syria ("Main bloc quits Syrian National Coalition", 2014).

Even the divergent views between the US and Turkey became tangible in 2014 with the US' policy priority shifted from Assad to ISIS, the first signs of the divergent views was given in Doha meeting. The selection of place as the capital of Qatar, the US's leadership of the meeting and broadening the opposition forces from all segments of the Syrian society including Kurdish groups, all these factors marked the restricted role of Turkey regarding the future of Syria (Altunısık, 2013: 169). Thus, it is evident that the US did not want to give away the store and limited Turkish government's activist foreign policies about Syria. While Washington has tried to restrain Ankara's role in the Middle East at times, Turkey has been aware of the fact that changing global threat atmosphere load new burden on its shoulder and it should react accordingly. Turkey's tendency to adopt pro-active foreign policies and engage actively, especially to its near abroad, has been seen as a logical consequence of these increasing burdens and new realities (Keyman, 2009: 39). As such, while before Turkey tend to utilize economic and diplomatic ways, it is now more eager to show its hard power instruments.

The situations had become much worse in Syria with the radical factions gaining ground uncontrollably and with Assad regime's National Defense Units' success in the field. While Washington was supporting Ankara in its anti-Assad policy which adopts the principle of "it is impossible an Assad based solution in Syria", it had some suspicions over the strengthening of radical Islamist tendencies. The course of the events with the invasion of Mosul in 2014, which is a critical city in Iraq in terms of oil, stimulated the US's 9/11 syndrome. The skyrocketing threat of ISIS both in the Middle East region and in some European countries in the forms of foreign fighters, transformed the US's and some European states' "Assad first policy" into "ISIS first policy". On the other hand, Turkey has considered ISIS as a by-product of

Assad regime and for this reason, it focused on the demise of Assad. Another priority that is almost at the same level with the Assad regime for Turkey was the PYD/YPG (Barkey, 2016: 32; Lovely and Kayaoglu, 2016). As a concrete reflection of the US' policy shift, 64 countries has agreed, including Turkey, that ISIS was a threat to both the regional and international community and should be degraded and destroyed. To serve this aim, these countries participated the US-led airstrike operations-Operation Inherent Resolve to prevent the expansion of ISIS into Iraqi territory (CJTF, 2016). Moreover, with the large influx of refugees which fled from the ISIS's atrocious acts and the cruelty of pro- Assad regimes and VNSAs, Turkey has shouldered an excess load that gives birth to new concerns. This threat atmosphere worried and increased the frustration of Turkish government and public in the sense that the burden is too heavy to shoulder solely by one state. Thus, in every platform, Turkish government emphasized the importance of the international community, and particularly the US's, reckless attitude towards the refugee issue (Altunısık, 2013: 169).

3.4. The Historical Building Blocks of the US- Kurdish Alliance

Although the acquaintance between the US and various Kurdish entities dates back to 19th century when missionary activities carried out at schools in the East Anatolia, it can be argued that the US did not interested specifically in this era with certain Kurdish groups due to the its policy of isolationism. After the Second World War, this understanding has changed when the US took over the portfolio of the UK in the Middle East. The US needed containment policies and instruments to prevent the encroachment of the USSR to Middle East. The proclamation of Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957 and interactions between the USSR and Iraq in 1958 became critical turning points in terms of American-Kurdish alliance. Especially, aftermath of the "Friendship and Cooperation Agreement" signed in 1972 between the USSR

and Iraq, Iraqi Kurds and the US have started to approach towards each other (Noack, 2014). It took a long time for the US to realize the significance of the Iraqi Kurds in the Middle East heritage taken from the UK. There were three main elements that inhibited the interactions between Iraqi Kurdish groups (KDP/PUK) and the US: (1) Turkey's NATO membership in 1952, (2) Iraq's position in the Baghdad Pact, (3) The US's intimate relations with Iran's Shah Regime since 1954. However, the USSR's increasing relations with Iraq has become a real concerning issue and to prevent this, the US started to contact with Iraqi Kurdish leader Molla Mustafa Barzani. From that time, the US has discovered that it can benefit from Iraqi Kurds as a regional instrument like the UK. However, Iraqi Kurds were regarded not only a pressing and bargaining issue but also as part of the global power struggle for the US. The US's approach towards Iraqi Kurds was based on a pragmatic factor, and with the change in this factor, the US could sacrifice the Kurds. In other words, the Kurds was an instrument to break the Soviet influence and if Iraq can be taken again into Western satellite, the Kurds can be discarded. In this regard, the US's interest regarding Kurds has become sometimes a reflection for the US/the USSR struggle, and sometimes has become a part for the US's regional policies. Thus, the US has followed the Kurdish movements in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, yet this pursuit remained limited with the US-Turkish and the USSR-Syria- Iran alliance relations (Meho and Nehme, 2004: 19-21).

The US brought forward some proposals to Turkey about cultural rights regarding Kurds living in Turkey, however this suggestions were declined and the US did not opened this topic until 1980s. Strategic interdependence in the Cold War required to turning a blind eye to such "delicate issues" between two allies for a long-time. With the increasing counter terror measures against the PKK in the 1980s, the human

rights concerns were started to mention again and this led close follow-up to Kurds by the US. Even though, the US's concerns regarding Kurds have been criticized by Turkey, the US's human rights criticisms were limited just with non-binding reports due to Turkey's critical status in the Cold War period. However, the 1990s became an era in which the US voiced loudly the Kurdish Question/the PKK and started to see these issues as an important dimension of bilateral relations with Turkey. This special interest emanated from the developments in Iraq and Kurds' considerable status in the 1990s.

The US wanted to take the Iraqi Kurdish entities under its control to prevent the rampancy of Saddam regime. Moreover, the US feared that in the absence of a Soviet threat it can lose its staunchest ally-Turkey, and this would damage American interests in Central Asia and the Middle East because Turkey can play a key role in these regions. Thus, to attract Turkey's attention, the US increased its attention towards Iraqi Kurds. While on one hand, the US wanted to hold the Kurdish Card for strategic purposes, on the other hand, it did not want to offend its long-time ally regarding various Kurdish entities and the PKK. This dilemma has directed the US to enhance a strategy to diverge the two interrelated issues: the PKK and the Kurdish Question. By designating the PKK as a foreign terrorist organization, the US demonstrated that it supports Turkey in its CT activities against the PKK. However, the US did not give up its interest about Kurds. For instance, a series of conferences at the chairmanship of US officials and radio broadcasts aired on Voice of America about Kurds' political and cultural presence in these periods were carried out to maintain the US's special interests. Nevertheless, it is hard to say with all these efforts that the US transformed its Kurdish approach towards an application-oriented policy. The US adopted a "wait-and-see" policy about Iraqi Kurds until the Gulf

Crisis. The US not only approached to Iraqi Kurds but also to the PKK in the early 1990s due to the fear of a possible interaction between Russia and the PKK. The US wanted to prevent Turkey shifting its axis or alliance and thought that it could benefit from the PKK as an instrument to maintain its penetration in the region. Thus, Washington either turned a blind eye to the PKK's ascent in Northern Iraq which it protected with the Operation Provide Comfort or supported directly this VNSA. However, in the second half of the 1990s, the support ceased to end because another critical turning point came true: the PKK's notorious leader Abdullah Ocalan was arrested in Kenya that is one of the CIA's vital base. In the end of this era, Kurds experienced once again the dark side of the great power politics and realized that they are just a mean for Washington (Gunter, 2004: 11).

Both the Kurds and the US's paths crossed again after Gulf Crisis in the 2003 Iraqi invasion. By cooperating with the US, Iraqi Kurds played a central role to oust Saddam regime so that they became a loyal ally of the US in the reconstruction process of Iraq. They legitimized and consolidated the de facto autonomous state established in 1992. Washington presented significant opportunities that maintain and strengthen the position of Kurds in the newly Iraqi constitution to make up with Kurds. For instance, the US enabled Iraqi Regional Government to establish its own military other than Baghdad's and taking share from oil revenues, as well as enabling them to be president and foreign ministry in Iraq. The US's close interactions with Iraqi Kurdish leaders Barzani and Talabani created a stimulant in Turkish side in the sense that Ankara both started initiatives to find permanent solution for the Kurdish Question/ the PKK and searched ways to contact peacefully with Iraqi Kurds. The developments were shaped in this sense until the effects of the Arab Awakening jumped in Syria.

In 2011, due to the new foreign policy understanding of Obama administration the US took the decision to withdraw from Iraq. As such, Iran's attempts to fill the power vacuum strengthened Baghdad's position against Erbil. Moreover, the US's approach to Baghdad to circumvent Iran's influence annoyed Iraqi Kurds. This situation damaged the Sunni-Shia- Kurdish balance and Kurds' aspirations. The Obama administration demonstrated that Washington paid the duty of Kurdish loyalty enough, and exaggeration would not bring benefit to the US. For this reason, even the US seemed not distancing itself totally from the Kurds, it did not satisfy Kurdish interests totally. On the other hand, Turkey was eager to approach to Kurds in Erbil after Iran started close interactions with Assad regime. An interesting equation formed in the region in terms of Turkish-Iraqi Kurds in Erbil. First of all, Turkey showed its desire to solve Kurdish Question/PKK in the negotiating table with Ocalan. Secondly, Turkey permitted acts which causes Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government's independence by letting transfer of oil from its territory to world markets.

TURKISH AMERICAN ALLIANCE						
TERMS	**1945-1990**			**1991-2003**		**2009-2014**
Theoretical Variables	**The Golden Era 1945-1962**	**The Digression Era (1960-1980)**	**The Rapprochement Era (1980s)**	**The Gulf Crisis**	**The 2003 Iraq War**	**Arab Awakening**
Balancing Against (External Actor)	The Soviet Unions			Saddam Regime (Iraq)	Not common external actor	At first the Assad regime then they diverged
Level of Threat	Geographical Proximity Aggressive Intentions Offensive Power Aggragated Power			Geographical Proximity Aggressive Intentions Offensive Power Aggragated Power	Walt's four variables are not adequate+ Distance-free and mobile threat perception (the PKK)	Walt's four variables are not adequate + Distance-free and mobile threat perception (ISIS, the PKK/PYD/YPG)
Nature of Threat	Statist			Statist	Both Statist and Non-statist	Both Statist and Non-statist (Prioritization of threat perception has started)
Alliance Cohesion	The intensity and duration of Soviet Encroachement			Iraqi Containment (High Cohesion)	Iraqi Invasion (Low cohesion)	The dilemma between Assad-first and ISIS-first policy
Primary Labels	Staunchest Ally			Enhanced Partnership	Strategic Ally	Modal Partnership

Table 5: The summary of theoretical explanations from 1945 to 2014 September

CHAPTER 4

DEEPENING DISCORD BETWEEN TWO LONGSTANDING ALLIES: TURKEY AND THE US

The US has realized like other powers in the region that a change has been approaching in the Middle East where Sykes-Picot laid the foundations of a century-long regional structure. It aims to play the role of the UK that was once a vital figure in the Middle East. However, in contrast to the terms of the UK, there is now more arduous and complex Middle East which harbors a more controversial Kurdish equation that has multiple variables (or unknowns). One of the significant developments that made the Kurdish equation more complex and increase its unknowns was the Syrian Civil War subsequent to Arab Awakening. The Arab Spring did not affected Syria like other countries (i.e. Libya, Egypt) in terms of regime change, on the contrary Syria became a failed state. Assad regime has not projected authority over its territory and populations, as well as has not protected Syria's national boundaries from diverging threats emanated from states and VNSAs. The turbulent and chaotic atmosphere of this failed state gave birth to the emergence of new types of actors (YPG) and threats, and also increased the level of threats perceived from these new entities (PYD/PKK, ISIS). Especially, the PYD/YPG has offered a multi-functional opportunity to the US in order to be included once again in the Kurdish equation so that Washington can prevent the growing interaction and cooperation between Iraqi Kurds and Turkey.

At the beginning, two sides shared the same view that Bashar al-Assad should be overthrown and a new government that have respect for the collective will of the people should govern the country. Later, this common perspective changed due to some regional variables: Growing ISIS threat, Russia-Syria-Iran triple alliance, emergence of other VNSAs. According to Henri J. Barkey, "this initial consensus was ultimately undermined by the length, severity, and endlessness of the unfolding conflict, as well as by how each government interpreted the other's policy actions" (Barkey, 2016: 26). In the current atmosphere, discords between Turkey and the US, which have been characterized as the two staunchest allies for a long time, have deepened due to some fissures and divergent views between two countries. The origin of the discords was the PYD/YPG choice of the US on the Turkish-American alliance. Thus, this chapter shows the dynamics and repercussions of Washington's persistence on the PYD/YPG as a "viable ally" on Turkish-American alliance cohesion. As said before, the PYD/YPG has been regarded as a multi-functional instrument for US interests in the region. The reasons for the US's looking for a new ally are as follows: (1) To limit or narrow down Turkey's autonomous pro-active foreign policies that damage the US's long-term interests, (2) To interrupt the relations between Iraqi Kurds and Turkey and prevent the flow of oil revenues over Turkey's soil (Creating dicephaly among Kurds in order to distract Turkey), (3) To limit Russian Federation's influence and not abandon Syrian Kurdish autonomy to Russia' penetration and control, (4) To degrade and eradicate ISIS threat as the most effective ground force. Thus, Washington could not bear the consequences of leaving such multi-functional instrument to its own fate in Syria. American addiction of the PYD/YPG reflects not the US's principal commitment to Kurdish rights and

aspirations, but demonstrate the fact that this alliance is a product of changing realpolitik. As such, it can evolve with the changing of conjuncture in the future.

4.1. Turning Point of a Longstanding Alliance

4.1.1. The Siege of Kobane (Ain-al-Arab) and its Liberation

Kobane is located approximately 10 km away from a Turkish town Sanlıurfa next to the border crossing *Mürşitpınar*. There were 400.000 individuals living there before ISIS lay siege on the city. Moreover, it is a strategic point for Syrian Kurds who aim to form a de facto autonomous region alongside the Turkish border. It is the central of one of the three cantons of Rojava (Western Kurdistan) since 2012, when Assad regime's army retreated from the Kurdish-populated areas in northern Syria. It has become an area for PYD (*Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*, Democratic Union Party) to pursue its political goals, as well as for YPG (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel, People's Protection Units) and for YPJ (Yekîneyên Parastina Jin, Women's Protection Units) to serve as the security forces of the city (Morandeira, 2016: 3).

The reason why the battle for Kobane is so symbolic and has a key role in terms of Turkish-American relations stems from the emerging nationalist myth of heroism among Syrian Kurds who liberated the city. Regarded as a famous Kurdish victory, despite huge devastation, the liberation of Kobane augmented the Kurdish sentiment across the Middle East. While the US government was indifferent to this perception, Turkish government worried from this national sentiment which can jeopardize its territorial integrity and be an example for its own Kurdish groups. Moreover, after the establishment of de facto Kurdish regional government in 1992 in northern Iraq, Kobane was considered as a second jump for Kurds to reach their historical aims in Syria. Syrian Kurds were aware of the fact that their moment has arrived once and should be profited because the siege of Kobane congregated loosened Kurdish

factions and shelved enmities among them (Gunes and Lowe, 2015: 3). Hence, the US's negligence towards the developments in the border of Turkey and Turkey's vulnerability to be absorbed into emerging Kurdish nationalism has become the turning point of the long standing traditional alliance between two states.

The siege of Kobane become a dilemma for Turkey when US-led air coalition planned an air strike to liberate the city from ISIS. The origins of this particular Turkish reaction is that Turkey makes no distinction between the PKK and ISIS which were two warring sides in Kobane. Turkey defended that Syrian Kurdish entities in Kobane are highly affiliated with the PKK, which is a foreign terrorist organization and an existential threat for Turkey that aims to establish autonomous Kurdish state in the region. Moreover, the weapons and logistic support provided to Syrian Kurds will eventually fall into the wrong hands- the PKK to be used against Turkish army, which is a risky situation for Turkey. Regarding the ISIS as an effective opponent against Damascus and Syrian Kurdish entities, Turkey hesitated to confront directly with the ISIS threat in addition to existing threatening actors the PKK/YPG/PYD. As such, it immobilized its own Kurdish populations to transcend the border to attend the fight for Kobane, rather it utilized its ties with Iraqi Kurds (peshmergas) to deliver support, when things got complicated later. In terms of cost-benefit analysis of Turkey, letting a corridor from Turkey to Kobane and directly engage in Kobane would cost too much to Turkey in terms of increasing threat perception from its three-pronged threat (the PKK/YPG/PYD). Turkey voiced its suspicions regarding the US's actions toward Syrian Kurds because based on its historical experiences from Gulf crisis and 2003 Iraq War, Kurds will once again will be used as a trump card by the US to narrow down Turkey's foreign policies in

Northern Syria. Turkish government refused to let US soldiers utilize military installations as long as the operation did not target Syrian regime forces. Turkish President Erdogan stated Turkey's priorities in the national parliament by underscoring this operation's temporary goals if it just concentrate on the elimination of ISIS threat:

> "We will never tolerate any terrorist organizations in our lands, in our region or indeed in the world. We are open and ready for any cooperation in the fight against terrorism. However, it should be understood by everybody that Turkey is not a country in pursuit of temporary solutions, nor will Turkey allow others to take advantage of it." (President Erdogan, 2014).

Approximately 2 months later after that speech, on October 20, Turkish government gave into all international pressures by permitting the passing of some FSA factions and Iraqi *peshmergas* to aid in the resistance of Ain-al-Arab (Kobane). This rough decision came after an official telephone conversation made between President Obama and President Erdogan, however, it was considered a late and inadequate step by Kurdish political leaders (Aljaazera, 2014).

When ISIS surrounded the city and intensified its attacks, at first, the general opinion was the fall of the Kobane and a massacre perpetrated on Kurdish populations living in the town. However, with the increasing resistance of Kurdish forces, US airstrikes against ISIS lines to prevent them enter the town, and the intervention of Iraqi peshmergas with heavy weapons and ammunition provided by Iraqi Kurdistan, ISIS threat was rebuffed with a great victory. Later, YPG forces took the control of the town and on 27 January 2015, Kobane was fully liberated from ISIS. Trilateral cooperation among the US, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the PYD's military wing YPG has created negative perceptions in Turkey's perspective. This unexpected victory provided a strategic opportunity to

PYD in the sense that it promoted its status in the region and gain a leverage to put forward the "Rojava Project". According to Alder Xelil, who is a prominent member of PYD affiliated Western Kurdistan Democratic Society Movement (TEV-DEM):

> Kobane became Stalingrad. In the same way that Stalingrad changed the balance of the Second World War… and Kobane is now playing that role. For that reason it is strategic. For that reason it has become a battle of honour for Kurdistan. ... In particular 1,500 fighters have come from Bakur [North Kurdistan]. We are fighting against this terror for the world and all its peoples. Everyone should help us in the war we are waging. We are the most successful force defending against terrorism, that is to say the Kurds (Rojava Report, 2014).

As seen in the words of the executive member of TEV-DEM, it has been attributed a strategic and symbolic value to Kobane's victory. This triumph gave a galvanizing effect on Kurdish populations both in Syria and other Kurdish-populated areas because Syrian Kurds had no a powerful symbol for national struggle (i.e. Halabja genocide in Iraq or Mahabad Republic in Iran) until Kobane victory. The defense and recapture of Kobane has given a momentum to Kurdish sentiments in the sense that it is depicted as "the Castle of Resistance for the four parts of Kurdistan" (Gunes and Lowe, 2015: 7). Turkish government's rejection of helping to Kobane during the blockade approved the idea that Turkey see the main factions that operate there such as PYD/YPG as an enemy. As stated in the words of the deputy head of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party, Besir Atalay "there is no one left in Kobane except Kurdish militants. There is no tragedy in Kobane as cried out by the terrorist PKK. There is a war between two terrorist groups." (DeYoung, 2014). According to President Erdogan, support for the Syrian entities that Turkey designate as terrorists is identical to helping the PKK, which is another terrorist organization aims to disintegrate Turkey since 1980s. Erdogan underscored that "For Turkey the

PKK is what is ISIS is" (Al Jazeera, 2014). Thus, two allies got caught in a fight between two NSAs (ISIS-PYD/YPG/PKK) which has obliged them to choose a side. The selection of different sides symbolized a beginning of a faltering in their relationship. While the PYD/YPG has been regarded as a credible ally against ISIS, on the contrary, Syrian Kurds' state-building effort has annoyed Turkey. In this regard, Syrian Kurdish entities have become both part of the crisis and part of the remedy in the region.

Furthermore, Syrian Kurds accused Turkish side to offer assistance to ISIS and other jihadist groups in the region ("Interview with YPG Commander on the Attack on Kobane and its Objectives, 2014). According to a report published by Kurdistan National Congress the release of the 49 members of consular staff in 2014, who were taken hostage in Mosul in 2014, is a clear evidence of Turkey's collaboration and support of ISIS (Kurdistan National Congress, 2014). Thus, two sides have seen each other as an arch-enemy. The allegations regarding Turkey's tacit cooperation with "extremist" or "anti-Western Jihadist" groups were uttered several times by US officials, including the one that is stated by former US ambassador to Turkey Francis Ricciardone. Ricciardone's public statement that Ankara facilitated the conduit for weapons and non-lethal assistance to radical groups raised a diplomatic tension between two states. One month later, on October 2014, during a Q&A session in a conference in Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, Vice President Joe Biden criticized that Turkey "poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens of tons of weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad - [they] were al-Nusra, and al-Qaeda". Reactions of two significant figures had a broad repercussion in Turkish media in the sense that Turkish officials demanded an apology for these

unfortunate statements (“Behind Biden’s Gaffe, 2014). The selection of sides in the fight between two NSAs has taken a new form regarding Turkey’s choices at the expense of its ally-the US. Turkey’s support of Islamic groups that have close affiliations with ISIS or contain ISIS elements to prevent its three-pronged threat has demonstrated one important thing: Turkey made a survival type of choice. It showed us that the level of threat perceived from the PYD/YPG/PKK was so high that it could not afforded to accommodate her ally’s strategic interests anymore.

4.2. Three-pronged Threat: PKK/PYD/YPG

4.2.1. Two Allies’ Diverging Primary Threat Perceptions

Turkish government perceived several threats from different sources; while the PYD and YPG are considered as “existential (immediate) threats”, ISIS and Assad regime’s presence in the region are regarded as “auxiliary threats” that feed each other. On the other hand, the US has perceived ISIS’s increasing power and influence as a major threat to regional peace and stability. Report published on February 2016 by the US Intelligence Community saw the ISIS as the “preeminent threat” that have an “increasing ability to direct and inspire attacks against a wide range of targets around the world” (“Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community, 2016). The former CIA Director John O. Brennan argued that ISIS “remains a formidable adversary" that is expected to perpetrate high profile attacks in order to compensate their loss of territory (CIA, 2016). While both Turkey and the US, at first, agreed on the removal of Assad from power, the US changed its mind later because Washington realized that the collapse of the Syrian regime can cause negative effects in the regional order. This, in turn, can facilitate the expansion of ISIS by exploiting the power vacuum (Larrabee, 2016: 70).

Turkey's threat perception of the PKK/PYD has narrowed its maneuvering capability in Syria and has isolated Ankara vis-à-vis its allies and regional power brokers. To degrade and eliminate the ISIS threat, Turkish decision makers insisted, particularly to its traditional ally-US, on implementing not only collective but also a more integral policy for Syria's future (Parlar Dal, 2017: 16). The underlying factor, according to Turkey's viewpoint regarding the emergence of ISIS threat, are the "lack of inclusiveness" and "failures of the governance" of the Syrian regime. Thus, in order to degrade radical groups inside Syria a regime change should be made (Ulgen and Ergun, 2016: 3). Moreover, the Deputy Secretary General of the Presidency of Turkish Republic, İbrahim Kalın's own statement encapsulated the way Turkey saw the regional threats' origin:

> Mr. Assad's bloody war bears responsibility for the barbaric acts of ISIS as it prepared the ground for such terrorists groups to emerge and grow in the first place. Hitting ISIS while ignoring the Assad regime alone is a shortsighted strategy that will not end the bloodshed in Syria and Iraq (Kalın, 2014).

Although Western media sources blamed Turkey for resisting to fight against ISIS threat, Ankara openly enunciated its support for the US-led coalition. However, it refused to deploy ground troops into Syria when other Western ally countries reluctant to do so. Thus, Turkish government stated two preconditions: (1) Removal of the Assad Regime, (2) No-fly zone over Syrian territory and a "safe-zone" on the ground ("Turkey won't embark", 2015). Thus, it seems that Turkey wanted to employ an embedded strategy that contains to annihilate other two threats- the PYD/YPG and Assad regime- to fight against ISIS threat (Parlar Dal, 2017: 17). The main reasons why Turkey adopt a comprehensive strategy in Syria are "national

security" and "refugee burden" issues. The national security issue was mentioned by President Erdogan:

> The PYD is for us, equal to the PKK. It is a terror organization. … It would be wrong for the United States with whom we are friends and allies in NATO to talk openly and to expect us to say 'yes' to such a support to a terrorist organization' (President Erdogan, October 19, 2014).

The front-page story of pro-government media source Sabah claimed in its headline that "The PYD is more dangerous than DAESH (Arabic acronym for ISIS)" and it even argued that, based on military sources, ISIS can be effaced within two or three years, however the establishment of Kurdish corridor can have a long-lasting repercussions in parallel with domestic Kurdish question inside Turkey (Topal, Sengul and Ates, 2015). Another pro-government source' s headline- "PYD has closed the door'- is illustrative in that manner because it specified the potential threat of demographic ethnic cleansing that targets Turkey's cognate and Muslim Arabs in northern Syria (Parlar Dal, 2017: 19). Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stated that "DAESH (ISIS) attacks and kills those it captures. PYD/PKK (Kurdish militants) seize certain regions and force people living there to migrate" (Pamuk and Bektas, 2015).

4.2.2. The New Sister Organization of the PKK/PYD: YPG (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel/ People's Protection Units)

4.2.2.1. Identification of the YPG

Due to its place as one of the fundamental actors in my study, I will explain the foundations of the YPG in detail and what sparked off its actorness in the region. The origin of the YPG dates back to the Qamishli uprising in 2004. With the outbreak of Syrian Crisis, it was formed by the PYD in order to defend the Kurdish areas of Syria (later called de-facto autonomous Rojava-Western Kurdistan) in 2011. Assad regime

had not an adequate power to defend the northern part of the Syria. Thus, state failure and Assad's withdrawal from northern part of Syria can be considered as a vital factor that cause the YPG to develop as an actor in the region. In the current situation, the YPG attribute itself as a regular and organized actor operating in the cantons of Jazira, Kobane, and Afrin, and Şêx Meqsud district of Aleppo. The fighting forces of the YPG consists of men and women living in Kurdish local communities, yet there are also non-Kurdish people participating voluntarily from several European countries and different ethnic communities (i.e. Syrian, Assyrian and Armenian Christians) to fight against ISIS. With the increasing women forces in the YPG, a new all-female military branch was formed called the YPJ (Yekîneyên Parastina Jin/ Women Defense Units) on April 4, 2013. The YPG is regarded as a democratic socialist organization in the sense that its officials are appointed by its military units. Moreover, one of the significant element that shows the YPG cute in the eyes of the US and EU states is the concept of "gender, religious and ethnic equality" among its components. It is claimed that the YPG's effectiveness emanated from guerilla force tactics using surprise and hit-and-run methods. Furthermore, this guerilla forces have a large degree of autonomy in a way that bring advantages to the YPG to adapt swiftly to war conditions in ground and mobilize its forces (Stephens, 2014; Official Website of the YPG). In this regard, the other factors that facilitated the YPG's being an actor in the region are as follows: appeal to Western values and principles and being the most effective partner on-the-ground against ISIS, respectively.

4.2.2.2. The Critical Role of the YPG in Kobane Siege and Tal Abyad

The first case that give a prominent status to the YPG is its critical role in Kobane in 2014. Initially, Turkish President Erdogan's claimed that Rojava will fall due to its weak home-grown defense force-the YPG. With the US air support which targeted key ISIS positions and provided military equipment, as well as Turkey's reluctant permission regarding the passage of peshmergas units, the YPG became heroes of the Kobane by taking control of the city. This event aroused attention regarding the YPG. While fighting against ISIS, the YPG cooperated with different organizations to achieve several ends such as cooperating with Iraqi Peshmergas to liberate Sinjar and free Yazidi people, protecting Syrian Kurdish refugees fleeing from ISIS atrocities along the border of Turkey, allying with the FSA to counter ISIS threat. Thus, Kobane became a turning point in which different entities put aside their ideological and strategic interest to merge their power and capabilities against an evil force. After the catalyst role of the Kobane disappeared, differences between these entities and suspicions regarding their secret aims became apparent. For instance, Turkey's concerns regarding the YPG stemmed from its close structural affiliations with the PKK. Since September 2014, the YPG has conducted its operations in a coordinated manner with the international coalition formed against ISIS (Stephens, 2014; Official Website of the YPG). Aftermath of the Russian intervention in 2015 and covert activities of Iran through its non-state proxies, the YPG has increased its bargaining share and positioned itself as a critical actor in the region against Turkey. Hence, the role of foreign interventions by the US, Russia and Iran in the region has facilitated the creation of YPG's own identity.

Another area that YPG forces proved their effectiveness for the US against ISIS was in the liberation of Tal Abyad. Thanks to the US support, the success of YPG militias give an upper hand to the US government that Washington's strategy to ally with Syrian Kurdish groups, despite Turkey's fierce resistance, worked out well once again after the Kobane victory. This development lead President Erdogan open military bases- critical for Pentagon- in order not to alienate its traditional ally further. Turkey realized that if it shows uncompromising attitude towards the US, this will cost a lot to Ankara by lefting it out of play that, in turn, will give the opportunity to Syrian Kurdish factions to secure Kurdish corridor and to strength Rojava project. Thus, the normalization of bilateral ties and military cooperation seen in the summer of 2015 were perceived by two sides as a small contribution to broader cooperation between the two allies (Atmaca, 2017: 74; Tanıs, 2016).

4.2.3. Turkish Perception of the PYD/YPG Threat

4.2.3.1. Turkey's Justifications about the PYD/YPG Threat

At the subsequent phases of the Syrian Civil War, Turkey has become anxious regarding the presence of the Kurds living in northern Syria and their implications on the trajectory of the crisis. Syrian Kurds were represented mostly under the leadership of the PYD (Democratic Union Party) which is a political party founded in 2003 by Kurdish activists. Despite its characteristic as a political party, Turkish government strongly believes that the PYD is an offshoot of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) that operates in northern Syria for tactical reasons. The presence of the PYD in Syria has constituted a major threat in the sense that firstly, it can serve as a kind of springboard for terrorist attacks perpetrated by the PKK. Secondly, it can complicate the domestic balance in terms of Kurdish population. Finally, the Syrian

Kurds has driven apart from the Syrian National Coalition due to their desire to obtain a Kurdish autonomy in post-Assad order in Syria (Park, 2014: 5-6).

Turkish government seems to view both the PYD and its military branch the YPG as the top threat to its national security, given the fact that the PYD's political and the YPG's military achievement on the ground will give a moral and operational support to the PKK in Turkey. Both the PYD and the YPG have not been designated as a foreign terrorist organizations by the US, despite majority evidences and close personnel and military ties between the PKK and the PYD/YPG. A saying of Kurdish fighter named Zind Ruken, who was interviewed with the Wall Street Journal, was interesting in that manner because Zind argued that: "Sometimes I'm a PKK, sometimes I'm a PJAK [the PKK-allied affiliate, active in Iran], sometimes I'm a YPG. It doesn't really matter. They are all members of the PKK" (Stein and Foley, 2016). During a congressional hearing held on April 2016, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter responded "yes" to an inquiry whether the YPG has ties with the PKK. This statement was corrected in a press conference by John Kirby stating that "The YPG is not designated as a foreign terrorist organization, the PKK is" (Abdulla, 2016).

Ties with some extremist organizations like Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar ash-Sham caused a trust issue between Washington and Ankara due these organizations' changing organizational structure and recruitment capacity from ISIS-linked groups. This perception has driven the US apart from Turkey's way of "Syrian policy" and strained relations between two states. In order to draw the attention of Western states, especially the US, Turkey begin to impose more limitations on the transition of foreign fighters from its soil to reach West or Syria to participate the war in the ranks

of ISIS. Despite its efforts and collaboration, Turkey's campaign to counter ISIS threat did not receive applause and has always been regarded ambivalent. There is an important justification in this point of view because the US and other Western powers has believed that Ankara regarded ISIS as a counterweight to the expansion of its existential threats the PYD/YPG ("Turkey's growing security", 2015).

As a result of its speed and effectiveness to organize Syrian Kurds in the battle of Kobane, the PYD and the YPG have drawn considerable attention in contrast to other NSAs warring in the region. The rise of the PYD and its military wing YPG has been perceived a national security threat by Turkey due to the aforementioned actors' ideological affiliations with the number one existential threat of Turkey: the PKK. Turkish government has interpreted the ascent of the PYD/YPG as the increasing power of the PKK. Actually, this assumption deserves the right to be a fact because changing the capital letters is just a semantical attempt in order to "match strategic and operational level needs in the different theaters in which the PKK and its affiliates operate" (Ferris and Self, 2016). According to Jordi Tejel, expert in Kurdish history, the aim of the foundation of the PYD in 2003 is to "escape state repression and to maintain the support of the PKK's thousands of members and sympathizers." (Tejel, 2012).

Turkish government's thesis which is expressed by President Erdogan in every official platforms that "PYD, HPG, YPG, YPJ and PJAK are all derivatives of the PKK" (Aydogan, 2016) relies on two facts: Firstly, by giving birth to regional sister organizations, the PKK is considered to sponsor all its affiliations in order to obscure its true nature and discard terrorist labels. Secondly, Turkey believes that all these sister organizations have inseparable leadership cadres and the PKK exercises direct

command and exert ideological influence on them. Created and trained by the former PKK fighters, YPG and its political cover PYD are seen as existential threats to Turkey's national security and Ankara refuses to build cooperative relations with them in the fight against ISIS. Even after the victory of Kobane, where PYD/YPG increased their international legitimacy and supporter as an effective ground forces to fight against ISIS, Turkey insisted on its thesis and did not changed its attitude towards them (Gunes and Lowe, 2015: 9).

4.2.3.2. Concrete Evidences for the Turkish Perception of the PYD/YPG Threat

The rationale behind Turkey's threat perception from the PYD is based on some facts: First, Ocalan's idea of "decentralized democratic confederalism" (inspired by Murray Bookchin) was executed with the establishment of the Union of Kurdish Communities (Koma Civakên Kurdistan-KCK). KCK is a roof organization that harbors four separate entities: the PKK, the PYD, the PJAK, and the PÇDK. They are equal but separate parts of the KCK. These actors are ideologically affiliated but organizationally distinct organizations operating in four different Kurdish populated countries (Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Iran). The real essence that brings all these actor together is pledging allegiance to the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. Thus, I can see how the PKK and the PYD has maintained their relations based on Ocalan's theoretically founded roof organization- the KCK. Second facts was related to the "Turkification" of the PKK with the appointment of Murat Karayılan, an important figure in the PKK, in 2013 as the head of the HPG. When Karayılan took the control of the military branch of the PKK, lots of existing Syrian members of the PKK returned to Syria to join the PYD. This fact proves us how the cadres and operational capacity of two sister organizations make trade-offs among each other when political

and structural conjuncture changed. The reason why the PYD is nominated as the Syrian branch of the PKK is that Syrian Kurds who obtained combat experiences in the PKK cadres and camps transferred their military abilities to the PYD's arm wing the YPG. As such, the majority of the YPG's units are under the control of the PKK veterans. The PKK has provided the skeleton of the PYD/YPG both militarily and politically. Moreover, according to one estimate, the real expansion and transformation of the YPG happened when the PKK took steps to declare a ceasefire with Turkey on March 2013 (Jenkins, 2016). There are ample evidences in the forms of old photos that prove how the vital figures both in the PKK and the PYD rallied and operated together: Murat Karayılan - Salih Muslim, Abdullah Ocalan - Salih Müslim - Duran Kalkan. Moreover, there are other examples that reveal the relations between the PKK and the PYD/YPG. Fehman Hussein (Bahoz Erdal), Nureddin al-Muhammad (Sofi Nureddin), Asya Abdallah Reyhan Muhammad (Dilan Rihan Muhammed) are some of the significant names as the PKK terrorists who were appointed by the KCK to the PYD or assigned to operate the PYD's military activities in the immediate aftermath of the Syrian Crisis (Acun and Keskin, 2017). I can argue that there is kind of symbiotic relationship between the PKK and the PYD/YPG, while the former has supplied "strategy, militancy, and logistics" to the latter, the latter has utilized the legitimacy and credibility of the former, especially in the eyes of the US and EU countries. This symbiotic relationship can sometimes became complex in that it makes them to be considered as one entity. According to one journalist's report from the field in 2015, "It is quite apparent from here that the YPG and PKK differ in little other than a name." (Aslan, Kıyıcı and Soner, 2017: 5). Hence, the ties between the PKK and the PYD/YPG are so apparent that it justifies the perceived threat of Turkey from the PYD and its military wing the YPG.

4.2.4. Echoes of the Three-pronged Threat Perception: Turkey's Red Line Policy, Geneva II Conference, No-fly and Buffer Zone

In response to this grave threat, Turkey pursued two-stage strategy: Firstly, Turkey has conducted military operations, which became intense in 2015 with the suspension of the resolution process regarding the Kurdish Question, against the PKK safe heavens in order to degrade it inside the country. Secondly, in every platform Turkish government emphasized, particularly to the US, that the Euphrates River is the "red line" for Turkey and should not be passed by the PYD. If the PYD passed to the West of Euphrates River, it would have a great chance to merge three cantons-Jazira, Kobane and Afrin by providing a territorial contiguity between its cantons (Ustun, 2016). Washington assured Turkey that it will respect Ankara's red line policy and prevent the PYD/YPG forces' crossing of the west of Euphrates River. However, as always seen in this alliance, there was a price for this promise: opening up military bases, including Incirlik and three other southeastern installations. The reason behind Turkey's stepping back despite its recalcitrance, was the fear of marginalization after the PYD-US alliance take the leading role in northern Syria, as well as the effects of other regional and major powers like Russia and Iran (Barkey, 2016: 31).

Due to its negative perception towards the PYD/YPG, Turkish government pressured especially the US not to agree on the attendance of PYD to the Geneva 2 Conference. Geneva 2 Conference which was planned to be held on January 2014 aimed to convene all warring parties to negotiate and to draw a road map for the Syria's political transition. By bringing together representatives from Assad regime and opposition forces in Switzerland with the attendance of 30 countries including the US, Russia, Iran and Turkey, Geneva 2 Conference became a point of honor

between US and Turkey (Atassi, 2014). In the end, Kurdish National Council (KNC) invited to the peace talks as the representatives of Syrian Kurds and PYD did not get the support it desired from Washington as an independent delegation (Van Wilgenburg, 2014). Ankara's pressures on Washington to left out the PYD from Syria's future in January 2014 gave a considerable leverage to Turkish government in Syria (Çandar 2016). Following the developments that strengthen the PYD and YPG's hands between May and June in 2015, Turkish President Erdogan once stated that this Kurdish advance 'could lead to the creation of a structure that threatens our borders. Everyone needs to take into account our sensitivities on this issue' ("Thousands flee Ankara", 2015). According to Thornton (2015: 879-880), Turkish government will not permit an autonomous structure controlled by Syrian Kurdish entities the PYD and YPG forces. Thus, any unilateral military move by Turkish Army to establish a "buffer zone" can confront Turkish army or Turkish-led opposition forces with Syrian Kurdish entities, which in turn pit the two NATO allies against each other.

The entrance of Russia into the game and downing of Russian fighter jets by Turkey on November 2015 also affected the trajectory of TR-US relations. The fighter jet crisis that erupted between Russia and Turkey provoked Russia's support to Syrian regime forces, as well as to the PYD/YPG in northern Syria. Moreover, the active intervention of Kremlin to Syria's issues also endangered Turkey's protracted enthusiasm for "safe haven" or "buffer and no-fly zone". Abstaining from a direct military confrontation with Putin, Obama government acted with deliberation to the issue of safe haven. Thus, Russia's military build-up in Syria thwarted Turkey's plans to persuade the US about the necessity for a safe haven in northern Syria

(Dettmer, 2015). The Obama administration fearing from being drawn into Syrian quagmire accepted to agree with Turkey in broad terms to establish an Islamic State-free safe zone. However, despite Washington underscored that this plan will not a fully-fledged safe haven as Turkey claimed and desired, Turkish government preferred to call the new plan a "safe zone". While the US's understanding from that "ISIS-free zone" was to ensure greater security and stability along the Turkish border, Turkey perceived new plan as a no-fly zone to thwart Syrian regime forces' airstrikes in Turkish border, isolate it from the devastating effects of the Syrian crisis, and create secure places for refugees (Barnard, Gordon and Schmitt, 2015).

4.2.5. The US Decision Makers' Threat Evaluation and Ally Preference

While the decision-making mechanism (political and military wing) in the US has united about the ISIS threat perception, on the other hand, there has to some extent a polythink debates regarding the ally choice in the Syrian Crisis. The diverging ideas regarding the potential arming of the Syrian opposition groups between Obama's close political aides and the US government's military wing hindered an effective intervention to on-going conflict in Syria. While the inner circle of the President Obama who were against a full intervention and arms support in Syria in case these weapons found their way into jihadist groups, in contrast, for instance, former CIA Director General Petraeus tried to convince the administration about "the potential loss of the hard-fought gains of the Iraq War" and "spill-over effect" in case of non-intervention and non-support (Entous, 2013; Rohde & Strobel, 2014). These debates has shifted towards divergent views to support the PKK's Syrian franchises at the expense of the US's strategic ally-Turkey. As such, those who have been in favor of supporting Syrian Kurds in the US comprises of in general the military wing of the

US- primarily General Joseph F. Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In contrast, National Security Advisor Susan Rice and Ambassador to the UN and Turkey, Samantha Powers resisted the idea of choosing Syrian Kurds as ally due to its subversive effects on Turkish-American alliance. Instead, they proposed to back "Arab forces" that Turkey also gave consent to support these groups. Thus, two competing subgroups emerged in the US with distinctive institutional lines State Department and Pentagon which caused "dozens of meetings of President Obama's top national security team, scores of draft battle plans and hundreds of hours of anguished, late-night debates". This polythink caused taking effective measures in the fight against ISIS and leaving the issue to new Trump administration with an advice to arm the SDF, as well a memo which describe this ally preference to Ankara (Entous et al., 2017). All these flaws and determinative military wing in the decision making process about the US support of the Syrian Kurds generated fissures in the Turkish-American alliance.

As a response to Turkey's some actions that threaten coalition members' plan in Syria against ISIS following the Operation Euphrates Shield, the military wing mentioned its discontents. U.S. Lt. Gen. Townsend:

> "When members of the coalition aren't engaging Daesh, they're doing other activities, that's not helpful for the coalition. It's not part of the coalition. And we ask members of the coalition to refrain from undertaking activities that are not focused on the defeat of Daesh [IS]" (Defense Department 2016c).

In this statement there is a clear urge to Turkey to abstain from targeting the PYD/YPG instead of ISIS safe havens. General Townsend's verbal ally preference as the Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve's commander demonstrates us how the US cannot renounce from the PYD/YPG easily. Moreover, how the military wing of the US government has been determinative in the ally

choice. Nevertheless, it will be wrong to say the group that attributes special importance to Syrian Kurds is only the military officials, the Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter was also one of the moderate politicians towards the US support of the PYD/YPG. At the expense of Turkey, The New York Times argues that the plan of arming the SDF " filtered up through the Pentagon's Central Command…[and] calls for providing the Syrian Kurds with small arms and ammunition, and some other supplies, for specific missions, but no heavy weapons such as antitank or antiaircraft weapons" (Schmitt 2016). This shows us how Pentagon has a determinative role than White House officials regarding US alliance choice in the Obama administration. However, President Trump has chosen to enact rapidly the military's decision to arm SDF to seize Raqqa, in contrast its predecessor (Gordon and Schmitt, 2017). This rapid enactment has taken credit from some officials, for instance Senate Armed Services member Joni Ernst, who is a proponent of arming Iraqi peshmergas, expressed that "I'm thankful that we finally have an administration that's listening to the advice coming from those military leaders and those that know the situation on the ground" (Pecquet, 2017). This statement demonstrate how big the role of military wing in the threat perception and ally choice of the US.

An interesting fact about how the White House tried to escape from Turkey's complaints about the US's ally preference of the YPG/PYD occurred in 2016 Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington. Following two leaders' bilateral meeting in Antalya G-20 Summit on November 15, 2015, Erdogan attended the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington between 31 March and April 2016. A tension raised in media platforms when President Erdogan expected to see its counterparts in one-on-one meeting. US media sources claimed that President Obama

rejected to attend a bilateral meeting with President Erdogan. However, a US senior administration officials commented that the schedule of President Obama is busy and "it's not as if Erdogan is being excluded" (RT, 2016). President Erdogan meeting with the Secretary of State John Kerry instead of the president himself left a negative ephemeral impression in US-TR relations.

4.3. An Odd De Facto Alliance: The US and the PYD/YPG

4.3.1. Actual Side of the US and the PYD/YPG Relations

The first exacerbation in Turkish-American relations is the US's persistence on the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its military wing People's Protection Units (YPG) as an ally to defeat the ISIS threat. The Obama administration's actual support towards PYD has initiated with the ISIS siege of the Kobane in 2014 (officially known as Ayn al-Arab), which is a city in the Aleppo Governorate. Following this dangerous siege, the US government supplied aid and military equipment to indigenous people and also US airstrikes backed the YPG forces by targeting ISIS positions. The US provided 24 tons of small arms and ammunition and 10 tons of medical equipment to assist the YPG/PYD (Letsch, 2014). The justification of Obama administration in this backing was preventing the full occupation of Kobane by ISIS and strike a great blow against ISIS propaganda and threat. Later on October 11, 2015, another series of airdrops that contains 50 tons military equipment was supplied to the YPG in order to assist these forces in the north of Raqqa (Starr, 2015). However, the US underlined for abstaining from the reaction of Turkey that these aids did not contain anti-craft weapons or TOW (kind of anti-tank missile). These assistance continued in late October in the forms of 50 Special Forces and extra airdrops to support the YPG (Steele, 2015). Turkey approached with suspicion to the all these actual cooperation efforts between the

PYD/YPG militias and the US government. After the siege was broken on January 2015 by the cooperative efforts of the PYD/YPG forces and US airstrikes, the Obama administration has started to perceive PYD/YPG as the only effective ground forces in Syria (Orton, 2015).

After the failure of Obama administration's Train-and-Equip program in Syria, on October 2015, the US has implemented other strategies to balance its relations with both Turkey and the Syrian Kurdish entities. The US has started to establish a de facto alliance with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), multi-ethnic alliance of Kurdish, Arab, Turkmen, Assyrian and Armenian militias. The SDF has mainly dominated by the YPG, yet the Syrian Arab Coalition is also part of this umbrella organization. The US started to airdropping ammunitions to groups within the SDF and provided military advisers from the US Special Forces (Argentieri, 2016). One of the remarkable official statement regarding this actual support made by Col. Steve Warren, a spokesman for the U.S. military campaign against extremism, stating that the US based A-10 fixed-wing aircraft at Incirlik air base in Turkey. The aim was providing air support to SDF against ISIS in northeast Syria's Al-Hawl region. This statement was critical in the sense that it was the most public admission that the US has been using Turkey's military base to help the PYD/YPG. As a response to a reporter's question, Warren said that "We're providing weapons, or in this case, ammunition, to the Syrian Arab coalition. That's what we said we're doing, that's actually what we're doing." (Jones and Shahid Ahmed, 2015).

Moreover, an additional 250 US military personnel, consisting of Special Forces and medical and logistic providers from the US army, were deployed by the Obama administration on April 2016 and 200 more on December 2016 to increase the

fighting capacity of the SDF against ISIS and other extremist organizations (Lubold and Entous, 2016; White House, December 2016). According to the director of research at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Patrick Clawson, the SDF is regarded as the "single repository for the US weapons" (Clawson, 2016). One of the airstrip located in al-Hasakah (Rmeilan) and controlled by the YPG for two years has been given control of the US military helicopters to provide logistic and ammunition to SDF. Furthermore, although it was rejected by the US Central Command, there were some reports from the Kurdish side that the US Central Command was planning to build a second air base in northern Syria (Al-Khalidi, 2016). According to the statement made by Col. John Thomas, a spokesman for Central Command, this new airstrip (close to Kobane and 90 miles north of Raqqa) is planned to be used to assist YPG in the Raqqa operation against ISIS (Copp, 2017).

Until here, I witnessed how direct actual US military, diplomatic and economic support to the YPG/PYD has been occurred. There is also indirect US support happened through combat charities namely, Sons of Liberty International (SOLI) and Humanitarian Defense Abroad (HDA). The former US-based organization is the world's first combat charity, on the other hand, the latter is the first combat group that is designated a public charity under the Internal Revenue Service, bureau of the U.S. Treasury Department. These two charities directly supported the Kurdish entities (especially the PYD/YPG) since 2015 in the fight against ISIS. Their mission is summarized by Pavol Kosnac (2017: 26) as such:

> "HDA prepared a research paper for a YPG commander on how to better use and combine field intelligence with the analysis of online social media platforms... HDA has also taught Kurdish groups how to improve their operational security. For example, it has encouraged Kurdish operatives and observers in Islamic State territory not to send their reports through Facebook. Instead, it has taught them to use Telegram, SureSpot and other

> heavily encrypted services. It has shown Kurdish groups many apps that can be deployed for intelligence gathering or to help secure combat outpost. When local resources and HDA resources are insufficient, HDA teaches local groups and commanders how to use crowdfunding websites like Kickstarter and GoFundMe to bolster their funds. This is a simple and effective way of garnering financial support from Kurdish expatriates and other individuals."

These combat charities have ensured local Kurdish forces that American is on their side. In order to make public these supports and augment their prestige, some Kurdish forces posted their photos which they took with SOLI and HDA trainers. Beside the afore-mentioned intelligence supports, they ensured also military equipment (rifles, satellite phones, night vision tools), as well as foreign volunteers to the YPG/PYD (Kosnac, 2017: 14).

4.3.2. Verbal Side of the US and the PYD/YPG Relations

According to McClatchy DC Bureau journalists, for the first time a US official met with the leader of the PYD Salih Muslim to discuss the role of the YPG forces against ISIS threat (Allam and Gutman, 2014). Considering as "reliable partners" and "friendly forces" on the ground, PYD/YPG have proven that ISIS forces can be defeated despite its large fear propaganda, recruitment and equipment in the blockade of Kobane. Thus, Kobane set a model and became an important strategy for the US in dealing with a grave threat like ISIS that invested full of its energy in the siege (Gunes and Lowe, 2015: 12-13). This understanding lead the US officials to claim that PYD/YPG is different than the PKK. In a press briefing, State Department's deputy spokesperson Marie Harf affirmed that "The PYD is a different group than the PKK legally, under United States law" by adding that "We made it clear to Turkey that we believe it's incredibly important to support groups like the PYD, these Kurdish fighters and a small number of non-Kurdish fighters on the ground are pushing back against ISIL" (US Department of State, 2014).

The US officials has iterated on all occasions that the US does not "recognize the PYD/YPG as terrorist organizations". Former spokesperson of the United States Department of State, John Kirby, stated that:

> "We recognize that the Turks do (label the PYD as terrorists), and I understand that. Even the best of friends aren't going to agree on everything…Kurdish fighters have been some of the most successful in going after Daesh (ISIS) inside Syria. We have provided a measure of support, mostly through the air, and that support will continue." (cited in Botelho, 2016).

Washington noted that it respects Turkey's labelling of the PYD/YPG as terrorists, yet it has refused to share the same threat perception of Turkey regarding the YPG/PYD. These kind of verbal supports brought new dimensions to the US-YPG/PYD alliance in a way that complemented and consolidated the actual side of the relations between them.

4.4. Turkey's Reactions to the US- PYD/YPG Alliance

4.4.1. Actual Reactions

Generally, Turkey's verbal reactions regarding the US's support outweighed its actual reactions due to the systemic limitations on the field. The entrance of Russia and Iran narrowed Turkey's maneuver capability, especially after the jet crisis between Turkey and Russia and Shia militia issues between Turkey and Iran. However, when Turkey realized that the YPG/PYD increased its prestige both in the eyes of two superpowers- the US and Russia, it enacted its first actual reaction in the form rapprochement with Russia. According to Henri Barkey, one of the reasons for the marriage of convenience between Russia and Turkey was to urge the US about the actual relations between the US and the PYD/YPG that is beyond cozy relations (Barkey, 2017).

Turkey's another concrete reaction was in the form of using hard power capacity in northern Syria following the increasing level of threat from several VNSAs both inside and outside its borders. One of the watershed event that demonstrated the pertinacity of Turkey regarding the US preferences and policies was occurred following a series of bombing attacks perpetrated both by the PKK and ISIS. Turkish government decided to conduct an offensive military operation called as the Euphrates Shield Operation on August 22 in 2016 in the immediate aftermath of an ISIS-linked suicide attack in Gaziantep. Turkey stated that there are three main objectives behind this military offensive: 1) Providing border security against ISIS and abolishing ISIS threat being a national security inside Turkish territory; 2) An active struggle against foreign fighters who uses Turkey as a bridge to transcend to Europe; 3) Helping Syrian opposition forces, primarily to Free Syrian Army which did not succeed permanently against ISIS, to gain ground via Turkish Arms Forces against ISIS and the YPG forces in northern Syria. Other minor issues were providing a safe zone to refugees and the prevention of the PYD/PKK/YPG forces' progress in al-Bab and as well as in Jarabulus (Tastekin, 2016; Tahiroglu, 2016).

4.4.2. Verbal Reactions

Even the US tried not to alienate its longstanding ally due to Turkey's sensitiveness over the issue of the PYD, Turkey has started to interrogate the sincerity of the US government. As such, after a US special envoy in charge for the coalition against ISIS in Iraq and Syria visited the members of YPG, Erdogan lashed out at Obama saying "Who is your partner, is it me (Turkey) or the terrorists (PYD/YPG) in Kobane?" ("Erdogan asks Americans: Who's your partner, Turkey or Kurds?", 2016). President Erdogan's interrogation that "How will we ever be able

trust you?" after the US envoy's visit to the PYD leader in Kobane and John Kirby's unfortunate statements was one of the critical verbal reactions that decrease the alliance cohesion between two allies. Turkey's verbal reactions has based on the US's diverging official statements about its relations with Turkey's three-pronged threat (PYD/YPG/PKK). President Erdogan argued that "They do not say anything to our faces, but they make different statements elsewhere. It is not possible to understand what type of partnership this is" (Botelho, 2016). Ankara has always emphasized that there is no difference between the PKK and the PYD/YPG. As such, it also said by Turkish officials that they are ready to provide "written proofs" about this connection.

4.5. Bilateral Efforts to Mend the Fences

4.5.1. First Bilateral Effort: "Train and Equip Program" in Syria

On February 2015, an agreement signed between Turkey and the US in order to carry into practice the "Train and Equip Program for Syria". This program considered as "an effort to mend the fences between US and Turkey" that is deteriorated since Kobane siege. Turkey's active engagement to train and equip Syrian opposition fighters was a surprise for Washington due its frosty relations with Ankara over US's PYD/YPG assistance. However, Ankara saw Obama administration's decision to train and lethally equip vetted members of Syrian opposition as an opportunity to assert its role as traditional ally in contrast to PYD/YPG. Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Feridun Sinirlioglu, in a press conference, stated that the agreement was an "important step taken within the context of the strategic partnership between the two countries," by adding, "This is only the first step. We still have much to do." Although there is not much detail about the process of program, according to a Turkish media source, Turkey's role in the

program was to assist the US Special Forces in order to train moderate members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in the camps located in Kırsehir. In return for Turkey's cooperation against ISIS, US gave the assurance for not selecting Kurdish groups for training (PYD/YPG) that Turkey opposed since the formation of US-led coalition (İdiz 2015).

However, in the immediate aftermath of the agreement, an official statement made by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu disclosed the existing rift between two states regarding the objectives of the program. While the Turkish side claimed that the program aims to ensure a political transition after the demise of Assad regime and strengthen the Syrian opposition against extremist threats, the US underscored, after Turkey's official statements, that fighting ISIS would be the merely purpose of the program. Rear Admiral John Kirby from Pentagon made an official comment regarding the scope of the program that "Everything that we've done inside Syria has been aimed at that group (ISIS) and that group only". In response to a question, Kirby once emphasized that "The fight is against ISIS and ISIS only as far as the coalition is concerned" (The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 2015). Train and Equip program was expected to field 3,000 vetted Syrian opposition forces as of 2015 and approximately 5,500 in 2016 (Blanchard and Belasco, 2015). However, the Obama administration faced challenges during the implementation of the program on October 2015 and shifted the focus of the program from "training and equipping new units in neighboring countries" to "equipping select vetted fighters" (Humud, Blanchard and Nikitin, 2017).

4.5.2. Second Bilateral Effort: Incirlik Agreement

Terrorist attack perpetrated by ISIS on July 20, 2015 against a group of young socialist Kurds rallied in Suruc district to convey assistance in the reconstruction of Kobane changed the trajectory of the events (Peker, 2015). Although no claim of responsibility made by ISIS, Turkish government sources blamed on them and in return Kurds living in Turkey condemned Turkish Intelligence Agency colluding with ISIS members. On July 22, 2015, following the terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 32 peoples, Turkish government signed an agreement with the US regarding the status of Incirlik base for the anti-ISIS coalition, namely Incirlik Agreement. Moreover, Turkey joined for the aerial strikes that target both the PKK and ISIS safe havens. In retaliation for the Suruc attack, on July 22, 2015 two police officers were assassinated in Ceylanpinar district of Sanliurfa and the PKK claimed responsibility for that ("Kurdish group claims 'revenge murder', 2015). These events caused a significant milestone for the ceasefire between the PKK and Turkey. Ankara started a multi-faceted military operations against Kurdish circles and PKK-affiliated organizations, as well as launched air bombardment to the PKK camps.

Incirlik agreement has been regarded as a "game changer" deal that opened the military bases in Adana, Diyarbakir, Malatya and Batman to US-led ISIS coalition forces. After long-standing reluctance of Turkey to join the fight against ISIS, this verbal deal made in telephone conversation between President Obama and President Erdogan has changed Turkey's policy by giving it as a more active role. According to a senior Defense Department official: "Attacks in Turkey are part of the catalyst for them to think about how they get in the game," (Yeginsu and Cooper, 2015). The recent ISIS-perpetrated attacks on Turkish soil compelled Ankara to sign this

agreement and adopt a multi-faceted approach. The first facet referred detaining hundreds of suspected ISIS members and would-be extremists and allowing the use military base to the coalition forces. The second facet addressed Turkey's domestic counter-terrorism operations against the PKK following the termination of cease-fire in 2015. The third facet contains Turkey's desire to eliminate the PYD/YPG's role for the US by disqualifying them through military strikes while targeting ISIS. The first one was in compliance with the US's policy priorities and the US's expectations from its formal NATO ally. The second facet was also in line with the US's interests in a way that was regarded as a redemption for its ally's security priorities. However, the third one was contradictory with US policy priorities and alliance understanding regarding the PYD/YPG. Despite two common areas in the multi-faceted way of military operations, the tension remained high as a consequence of the diverging threat perceptions in the third and fourth facet. Hence, I can assume that as long as Turkey uses this deal as a trump card for the US's reliable partners-the PYD/YPG, the cohesion of Turkish-American alliance cannot resuscitate in the short term.

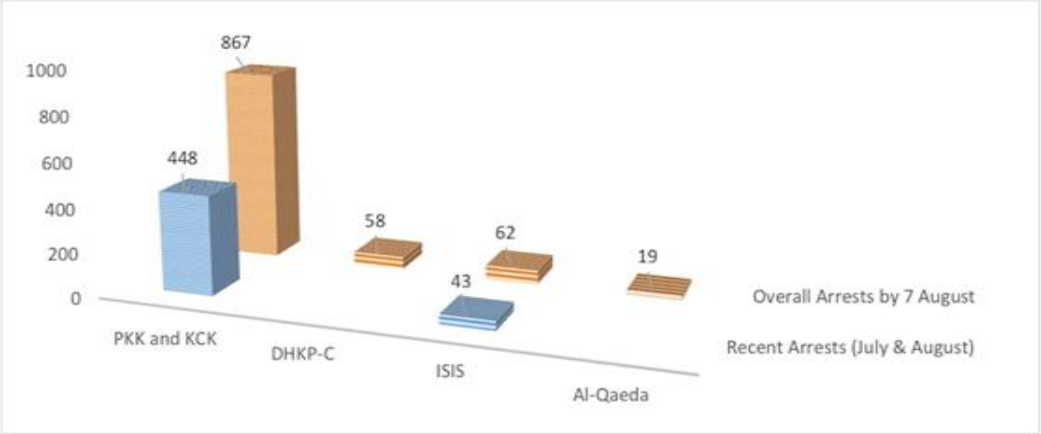

Figure 6: Overall and recent arrests of several terrorists groups in Turkey in 2015 (Source : Bozcali F. (August, 2015). "Turkey's Three-Front War?". Retrieved from http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/22513/turkey%E2%80%99s-three-front-war)

The then Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu used the term “cocktail terror” to indicate Turkey’s struggle against different terrorist organizations: the PKK, the DHKP-C (Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party-Front), and ISIS. According to pro-government media sources Turkey has been under “three-pronged attack” of the afore-mentioned terrorist factions. Some circles argue that Turkey used the aerial operations against ISIS in order to attack the PKK shelters in Qandil Mountains. Moreover, it had been launched an anti-PKK raid to arrest pro-Kurdish groups inside the country and the number of detention in July operations were nearly three times higher than anti-ISIS operations. Furthermore, Turkish Air Force conducted fourteen airstrikes against the PKK that targeted approximately 400 points whereas one anti-ISIS operation carried out hitting three targets. The data demonstrated in Figure 6 and the difference between the number of arrests and air bombardment in operations for ISIS and the PKK with its offshoots, justified the argument that Turkey used the anti-ISIS operations as a pretext for its existential threat perception: the PKK/PYD/YPG. Hence, Turkey’s real “three-front war” was waged against three pro-Kurdish fronts, namely: (1) the PKK, (2) the HDP (People’s Democratic Party), and (3) the PYD (Bozcali, 2015).

4.6. Trilateral Relations among Turkey, the US and the PYD/YPG

Although bilateral alliances have continued between Turkey-US and US-PYD/YPG separately, an indirect trilateral relation has been seen among three parties in the sense that the US has tried to play a double game between Turkey and Syrian Kurdish entities. The US has given the message that it can sacrifice one of them at the expense of the other side, however, in reality the US has pursued a strategy in which each has been used as a trump card to another. In this regard, Washington has

desired to establish a de facto threefold relationship that each ally should play its own part with limited scope, area and aspirations. After the failure of Train-and Equip Program that bring together Turkey and the US, the US has realized that it needs a "reliable partner" to limit Turkey's pro-active interest and foreign policy desires, as well as a go-to ally to be effective on the ground.

The alliance established between the PYD/YPG and the US Central Command afflicted Turkish sides, particularly after the deterioration of peace process between the PKK and Turkey in the summer of 2015 (Aydın and Emrence, 2016). The US needs a credible ally in the fight against ISIS, and Syrian Kurds seem the most effective partner on the ground, however, the US's "juggling act" between the PYD/YPG and old ally Turkey has risen the tension steadily. On May 2016, President Obama made a 70-minute phone call with his counterpart President Erdogan personally in order to receive Turkey's approval for the US warplanes using Incirlik military base to convey aid to Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Manbij, an ISIS sanctuary ("The Manbij time line", 2016). Following the liberation of Manbij from ISIS occupation on August 15, 2016, Turkey urged Washington not to let the PYD/YPG to move west of the Euphrates River due its red line policy.

4.7. The Erosion of Essential Trust in TR-US Alliance: 15 July 2016 Coup Attempt

The unsteady relations between two states struck the bottom after the 15 July Coup attempt in 2016. Turkey is a country which had experienced a series of military coup in its history since 1960s. The last one differs from the others in the sense that putchists are accused to have direct or indirect ties with a clandestine organization named as the Fethullah Gulen movement. Fethullah Gulen Movement is a clandestine organization which first initiated as "piety-focused educational entity"

than transformed into “violent and secretive religious-political entity” linked with theological and material interests (Yavuz and Esposito, 2003; Yavuz, 2013). On July, 15 2016, a group of military officers seized the Bosporus Bridge and some critical locations like airports, police headquarters and some media channels’ offices in different parts of Turkey. Furthermore, putchists used fighter jets to create deterrence against government and public through bombing the Turkish parliament, National Intelligence Organization (henceforth as MIT), Special Police Forces’ Headquarter in Ankara. One of the primary target was the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan who is in Marmaris in vacation, thanks to early precautions taken by the hotel management and Erdogan’s private bodyguards, Erdogan had left 15 minutes early the hotel (Yavuz and Koc, 2016: 142). As seen from this brief summary of the event the gravity of the coup d’etat was very intense causing the loss of nearly 250 individuals including civilians and police officiers.

In the immediate aftermath of this tragic night, Fethullah Gulen Terror Organization (FETO) was the only suspect behind this coup attempt. Even the main culprit was clear, there were some critical statements regarding the role of Western countries, primarily the US government. In the subsequent phases of the 15 July Coup attempt, these rumors done openly by both high-level Turkish officials, including Erdogan himself, and public increased and in turn increased the tensions between Turkey and the US (Hudson, 2016). The reason for the Turkish perception about its long-standing ally-the US- emanated from two fundamental facts: Firstly, the first official statement avowed by the Secretary of State John Kerry on the same day of the coup was as follows: “I hope there will be stability and peace and continuity within Turkey, but I have nothing to add with respect to what has

transpired at this moment". This first reaction which did not defend Turkish democracy or democratically-elected government was interpreted that the only important things for the US were the peace, continuity and stability in Turkey rather than its democracy or salvation (Kurt, "5 Questions: The July 15 Coup Attempt"). Secondly, even the Turkish government has tried to convince the US officials with major evidences, the US persisted in the "conclusive corroborating evidence of Gulen's direct involvement" and preferred to focus on the purges after the coup, rule of law and human rights violations (Yavuz and Koc, 2016: 145-146).

As a result of Turkey's negative reactions towards the US regarding its lack of official support, a telephone conversation made between Kerry and Obama, and Washington issued a statement in order to clarify the subject that "all parties in Turkey should support the democratically-elected Government of Turkey, show restraint, and avoid any violence or bloodshed," ("Obama supports Erdogan", 2016). The allegations led Turkey to expect the extradition of Fethullah Gulen, whom Turkey accuses as the main perpetrator of the 15 July coup attempt. The accusations regarding the role of US in the coup was rejected in the first hand by the Secretary of State John Kerry calling these claims as "utterly false and harmful". Moreover, he argued that as long as Turkey accuses the West for the 15 July Coup attempt and continues to dismiss civil servants and officials in large number, it would put into danger Turkey's NATO membership and tarnish the democratic image of Turkey (Bishara, 2016).

The overall picture has changed in the G-20 Summit that was held in Hangzhou (China) on September 2016. In the bilateral meeting which was arranged between

Obama and Erdogan, Obama's following statements demonstrated the swift in rhetoric over Turkey's resentment:

> "This is the first opportunity that I've had to meet face to face with President Erdogan since the terrible attempted coup that took place in July. By taking to the streets to resist the coup attempt, the Turkish people once again affirmed their commitment to democracy, and the strength and resilience of the democratic institutions inside of Turkey." (White House Press release, 2016).

Second reactions by the US was almost the opposite of the first one made by Kerry emphasizing the significance of peace, stability and continuity, rather than the fate of the elected government. The first one has created a perception that the US is neutral as long as destabilization occurs in Turkey and remained indifferent about the fate of Turkey's democratic government. The latter underscored the severity of the event as "terrible coup attempt" and Turkish public's heroic struggle against the putchists in order to protect the democracy by showing a solidarity spirit and a personalized rhetoric of Obama about Erdogan's safety. The afore-mentioned cosiness in the Obama's words was a desire to reaffirm the critical strategic alliance between two states (Falk, 2016).

The then Vice President Joe Biden's visit to Turkey on August 24, 2016 was symbolic in the sense that Biden aimed to restart the constructive dialogue between two states, yet it was not enough to eliminate all the discrepancies. In a press conference Biden, reiterated the fact that the "The United States of America did not have any foreknowledge of what befell Turkey on the 15th" (The White House, 2016). Furthermore, regarding the extradition of Gulen, Biden underscored that the US had "no interest whatsoever in protecting anyone who has done harm to an ally". However, Washington has never been convinced legally by Ankara in terms of being

meeting the standard requirements for Gulen's extradition demand ("Biden: US Had No Prior Knowledge", 2016). Nevertheless, Vice President's official visit was considered a relative achievement to propitiate anti-Americanism on the Turkish public and rage about the coup.

The Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım's remarks proved that relative success:

> The relationship between Turkey and the United States will never be disrupted by anything -- not the event or incident of the 15th of July, or anything else. We should not let that happen. And your visit today is a great opportunity to get rid of some of the misunderstandings and also to show that the U.S. administration and the American people are on the side of the Turkish government and the Turkish people, that you have great solidarity with us (The White House, August 25, 2016).

Although Biden's visit has broken the ice between two states, yet it has not still established the essential amount of trust that is needed for a cohesive alliance between two long-standing allies. The increasing perception since Kobane victory which claim that the US is ready to discard the existing Turkish Government (JDP) or state has been consolidated with Washington's reactions to 15 July Coup Attempt. As such, this was interpreted that the psychological root of the Turkish-American Alliance was demolished. As a result of the psychological break between two allies, it seems that shared dreams which were crowned in 2009 with the model partnership label between two governments came to naught. Recent bad relationship along with major fluctuations in perceptions between Obama and Erdogan governments has gained an interstate characteristic that affects alliance cohesion between two states adversely.

4.8. Turkey's Red Line: Euphrates Shield Operation in Syria (August 2016-March 2017)

Following a series of the ISIS and the PKK-suspected terrorist attacks perpetrated inside Turkey and 15 July Coup attempt, on August 24, 2016 Turkey gave the

decision to invade ISIS-controlled areas in northern Syria. Ankara deployed land, air and Special Forces along with the FSA factions to initiate a unilateral offensive military strike against the ISIS safe havens and dissident Kurdish entities (Jager, 2016). This operation was designed to counter both ISIS groups and Kurdish forces that have been long operated along Turkey's Syrian border line (Zaman, 2016). However, the majority of clashes happened between Kurdish groups and Turkish-led opposition forces which contain Arabs and Turkmens groups. This unilateral military move reflected Turkey's worries regarding the PYD/YPG's increasing control along the Turkish border, given the presence of Syrian Democratic Forces in two strategic hub-Manbij and Al-Bab. On March 2017, it was declared that the Operation Euphrates Shield was "successfully completed", yet Turkish Prime Minister did not specified the exact time for Turkish troops withdrawal from northern Syria in case of further military operations under different label ("Turkey can start new operation", 2017).

In the meantime, Vice President Biden paid an official visit to Turkey following the bloody coup attempt and he gave a significant message to US-backed Syrian Kurds, which is designated by Turkey an extension of the outlawed PKK. Biden's warning was hailed by the Prime Minister Yıldırım and this unexpected injunction demonstrated that the US consider the "red lines" of Turkey while maintaining its tactical alliance with the PYD/YPG. In his statement Biden argued that:

> We have made it absolutely clear to the elements that were part of the Syrian Democratic Forces, the YPG that participated, that they must move back across the river. They cannot, will not, and under no circumstances get American support if they do not keep that commitment (The White House, August 25, 2016).

However, the US's commitment regarding Manbij and Turkey's sensitiveness about its red line in Syria have fallen on a stony ground. Turkey was compelled to agree on the existence of Kurdish-dominated opposition forces in Manbij, which is a strategically important town near the Turkish border. Obama administration's retraction and burgeoning military alliance between the US government and Syrian Democratic Forces, that the YPG forces forms the backbone, increased again the tension between two old allies (Aydıntasbas and Kirisci, 2017: 5-6). Another diplomatic crisis happened when photos appeared in the media that show some US soldiers wearing the YPG insignia on their uniforms. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu reacted harshly to these photos by saying: "It is unacceptable that an ally country is using the YPG insignia. We reacted to it. It is impossible to accept it. This is a double standard and hypocrisy". As a response to this official statement, US Colonel Steve Warren said that "Wearing the YPG patches was unauthorized and it was inappropriate - and corrective action has been taken", yet Pentagon found that behavior was appropriate to enhance the US soldiers' security in some circumstances ("US troops' use of YPG insignia", 2016).

4.9. Trump Administration: Ambiguous future of the Turkish-American Alliance

The US's presidential campaigns turned over a new leaf in Turkish-American relations. The former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were two significant figures in the November 2017 Presidential elections. Clinton's rhetoric regarding the armament and support of the Syrian Kurds against the ISIS threat was perceived negatively by Turkish decision makers in the sense that Clinton will carry on the Obama policies. Even though Trump did not clarified openly his intentions whether he will depart from Obama's actions and tactical alliances or not,

Clinton's outspokenness was discredited in the eyes of the Turkish authorities. Thus, Trump's presidency was seen as an opportunity to rebuilt Turkish-American alliance. Moreover, Turkish policy makers placed reliance on goodwill of the new US administration's plans regarding the Gulen's extradition issue. In a similar manner, they desired that newly elected president's approach to Turkey's Syrian policy and priorities overlap with US's foreign policy choices. That is to say, ending cooperation with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a multi-ethnic umbrella organization controlled by the YPG forces, and restart the collaboration with Turkey and Turkish-led opposition groups (Wasilewski, 2017).

Although Donald Trump's "unconventional" remarks about the US's foreign policy agenda and "anti-Muslim" rhetoric have puzzled the world media, the onset of new administration has been evaluated as an opportunity to reset the relations between two allies. Allegations that Clinton received donations from the Gulen movement during the presidential campaign has left no choice for Turkey to adopt Trump's presidency (Aydıntasbas and Kirisci, 2017: 3-7). Moreover, after the 9 November election's results, an op-ed was published by Michael T. Flynn, one of the close aides of Trump, arguing that:

> Turkey is vital to U.S. interests. Turkey is really our strongest ally against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as well as a source of stability in the region. It provides badly needed cooperation with U.S. military operations. But the Obama administration is keeping Erdogan's government at arm's length—an unwise policy that threatens our long-standing alliance (Flynn, 2016).

As response to this gesture of goodwill, Trump's triumph was appreciated by the Prime Minister of Turkey Binali Yıldırım saying that:

> I call upon the president for a speedy extradition of the head of terrorism as soon as possible. This is what damages our historic relations between the two

> peoples. If you extradite the head of the terrorist group, we would open a new page in the Turkish-U.S. relations (Yıldırım, 2016).

In an interview made with the former US National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, following Trump's taking office, Hadley argued that the long standing relations between the US and Turkey are "not irretrievable" despite some "tested" issues and "misperceptions" during Obama administration. If Trump administration seizes the opportunity to address Turkey's apprehensions, in return, Ankara will respond well in accordance with the US's national interests (Yetkin, 2017). Turkey's main apprehensions are Gulen's extradition and the de facto tactical alliance between Syrian Kurds and the US that have the capabilities to usher in a new age and transform the Turkish-American alliance (Niyego and Wilson, 2016). Despite some positive arguments regarding the revival of a traditional alliance, some circles believe that the potential character clashes between two presidents can complicate the dialogue and new hope atmosphere by giving way to acrimony and strained relations. Furthermore, it is argued that due to ambiguous foreign policy agenda of the Trump administration, it is highly possible to see the identical path of Obama administration (Hakura, 2016).

The initial hope atmosphere with the new administration gave its way to old complaints following Trump administration's decision to provide heavy arms to SDF. The reason behind the US's decision to equip SDF with heavy weapons is the belief that without the assistance of the PYD/YPG, which are the backbone of the SDF, there will be no chance to liberate Raqqa from ISIS (Hensch, 2017). Especially, after Turkey's increasing military engagement in Northern Syria to strike the PYD/YPG targets on 25 April, 2017, the US declared Turkey's activities "unacceptable" and feared to lose its effective partners' capacity and trust to operate

in Raqqa (Cockburn, 2017). As a response to the Washington's decision to arm Syrian Kurds, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu argued that "every weapon seized by them (the PYD/YPG) is a threat to Turkey" (Sobir, 2017). Furthermore, same criticism also came from President Erdogan saying that: "I hope that this mistake will be reversed immediately… We want to believe that our allies would prefer [to] be side by side with ourselves rather than with the terror groups." (Hensch, 2017). Being aware of such kind of verbal reactions, the US has tried to relax its NATO ally by expressing that the weapons supplied to SDF will be monitored and will be cut off if it is realized to be handed over to the wrongs hands (Gordon and Schmitt, 2017).

In the immediate aftermath of President Trump's decree, President Erdogan paid an official visit to Washington on May 16, 2017 "to further strengthen the bilateral relationship and deepen two allies' cooperation to confront terrorism in all its forms" as indicated in the White House press release (Hensch, 2017). There were different issues in the mind of Turkish government and one of them is to halt the US's endless persistence on PYD/YPG in the fight against ISIS. However, with the shift from Obama administration to Trump administration, the alliance between the US and the PYD/YPG has transformed form undeclared to declared one. Moreover, it has been argued that President Trump's decision to arm the SDF has given new legitimacy to an existing partnership between the US and the PYD/YPG. President Erdogan went Washington with great hopes, however, two presidents hold a bilateral meeting which is approximately 20 minutes with no fruitful results for Turkey.

Due to the long-time frame of this thesis, I will end up my analysis at the President Erdogan's official visit to Washington on May 16, 2017. Thus, it is uncertain whether optimism or pessimism will, however, recent developments

demonstrate that in the short-term it is hard to see the fond memories between two states. In the near future, it seems that we will witness a "veiled trilateral relationship" between the US, Turkey and the PYD/YPG that is based on some parties' half-hearted and covert assent (Turkey and the PYD/YPG). Moreover, the cohesion of Turkish-American alliance has demonstrated a minimum degree of trust following the US's non-state ally choice in its fight against the ISIS, which in turn will affect the long-standing and cohesive state to state Turkish-American partnership.

CHAPTER 5

BEFORE-AFTER ANALYSIS

5.1. BEFORE PHASE: FROM NATO TO KOBANE SIEGE

5.1.1. Concurrence of Threat Perception and Management

5.1.1.1. First Sub-Phase: 1952-1990

At the first stage of the formal alliance between Turkey and the US, both states had agreed on the nature (statist) and level of the threat (Soviet Union as the primary threat) and the strategy (containment under NATO). While the common threat was the Soviet expansionism, the way to deal with that menace was the admission of Turkey into NATO (Balik, 2016: 20). According to Balik's integrative model (2016: 15), so long as Turkey and the US agree on the "strategic common threat" perceived from external actors and on "the strategies to cope with that external threats" the likelihood of security cooperation on Middle Eastern issues is high. Both the US and Turkey concurred their threat perception in way that lead them to manage the Soviet threat under NATO's collective security framework. Containment of the Soviet Union was two states' common way of threat management of Soviet expansionism. Two allies agreed also on strategies' commonality (i.e. building military installations and intelligence centers) and coordinated their activities based on same threat perception and management ways.

Nearly in all primary and secondary sources which are analyzed to measure the alliance cohesion between the US and Turkey, I looked the two allies' assessment of

each other's real intentions, the events that build trust and create confidence crisis and searched whether there are attempts for nomination in official discourses. Turkey and the US's alliance between 1950 and 1960 has been regarded as "honeymoon" until the détente period between two hegemonic powers. The degree of trust decreased in a significant way only between 1960s and 1970s due to a series of occasional frictions (i.e. arms embargo, Johnson letter) between two allies. However, these events' negative repercussions was compensated by the US military and economic aid in the 1980 Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement. The US started to give special status again to Turkey with the developments in the 1979 (skyrocketing of oil prices, the Iranian revolution and the invasion of Afghanistan) so that Turkey was perceived a role model against fundamentalist Islamic movements in the Middle East and a neutralizing instrument of the potential risks. The rapprochement period in the 1980s demonstrates how two allies built the damaged trust atmosphere and increased their trustworthiness to each other again to the existing degree experienced in the 1950s. As such, the former American ambassador to Turkey, George C. Mc Ghee argued that "Turkey is the only reliable element in the northern tier of the Middle East" (1990: 177).

5.1.1.2. Second Sub-Phase: 1991 Gulf Crisis

In the immediate aftermath of Cold War, two allies' threat perception shifted from the Soviet Union to Iraq (Saddam regime) in the 1990s which is again a statist threat. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was regarded as a threat to regional and global order, as well as to the US's national interests in the region. Thus, Saddam's aggressive intentions in the region increased the level of threat perceived by two states. On the other hand, the then President of Turkey Ozal was also considering the

leader of Iraq as a serious threat for both Turkey and the US due to regional ambitions of Saddam regime. George H.W. Bush stated that both Turkey and the US considered the Gulf Crisis with an equal "sense of urgency and concern" (George Bush, 1990). This shows us the level of threat perceived from Saddam regime is equal from the perspective of two allies. Annexation of Kuwait and Saddam's aggressive regime were the essence of two allies' common threat perception towards Iraq. Moreover, two allies concurred their interest on other issues so that they complemented the threat perception and facilitated the cooperation between two allies: (1) Turkey's aspirations about the integration to the European Community (EC), (2) Taking advantage of post-War agreements, (3) Gulf region's energy sources and regional stability, (4) Ensuring the regional balance of power by breaking a possible Iranian influence in the power vacuum formed after Saddam's demise. Convergence of interest regarding Gulf region and European Community complemented the shared threat perception from Iraq and in turn consolidated the alliance cohesion between Turkey and the US.

To manage the Iraqi threat again two allies adopted a common strategy which was the containment of Iraq. To serve this common strategy both states coordinated their activities toward containment plan. For instance, to comply with the economic and military measures taken to deter Saddam, Turkey renounced from its economic gains of the Yumurtalik-Kerkük pipeline, deployed soldiers along the border and give authorization for the Incirlik base and granted for reconnaissance flights. All these sacrifices served in the consolidation of cohesion of Turkish-American alliance through same threat perception and management strategies.

Turkey proved its trustworthiness to the US by doing several sacrifices in the Gulf Crisis. The suspension of commercial links with Iraq at the expense of its huge economic losses, closing one of its significant pipeline to serve the economic containment of Baghdad increased Turkey's degree of trust as an ally in the eyes of the US. The former Turkish President Ozal stated in a television interview on 2 March, 1991 that Turkey "has passed a test with flying colors and has proved to the world at large that it is a country that can be trusted" (as cited in Hale, 1992: 687). Another determinant for high cohesion is the attempt of giving special status or branding the alliance. In 1991, the Turkish-American alliance was started to be conceived as an "enhanced partnership" which reflects the concurrence of two allies' interests on several issues (Prager, 2003: 6). Hence, the concurrence of threat perceptions and threat management during the Gulf crisis caused a cohesive alliance between two states based on reliable relations in hard times and a special partnership status given to boost the strategic relations for high cohesion.

5.1.1.3. Third Sub-Phase: 1992-2014

The locus of threats and regional challenges in post-cold war period has changed Turkey's and the US's security understanding. While the immediate threat that the Turkish-American alliance formed against, was the Soviet expansionism, after Cold-War Turkey confronted with a much more diverse set of security issues in its southern border. This caused Turkey to adopt a much more Middle-East oriented foreign policy and security policies. Hence, the Middle East region has become the place where key challenges for both Turkey and its long standing ally -the US- determine the cohesion of the alliance (Larrabee, 2008: 3). Realizing the ambiguity in the new international system, the then President George H. W. Bush stated in a

speech that the US's new "enemy is uncertainty and instability". The origin of this uncertainty and instability stemmed from the emergence of non-statist threats. Although states agreed on the critical status of the non-statist threat to their security, yet they still disagree one which VNSA is a threat and to what extent it pose a threat. As such, two allies also experienced critical times based on this different perspective about non-statist threat perception, especially the one that is stemming from Turkey's protracted Kurdish issue. Washington's threat understanding has shifted from statist threats to non-statist ones: Proliferation of WMD, Drug and human trafficking, insurgencies and terrorist acts (Carpenter, 1991: 13). Turkey also shared the same nature of terrorism and insurgency threat with the US but from a different angle. Nevertheless, geographic and role model status of Turkey became a juncture point where two allies can concur their threat perception and management ways, albeit some fissure from time to time (i.e. 2003 Iraq War).

Turkish-American alliance has experienced a more cohesive alliance in the first and second sup-phase than the third sub-phase. The empowerment of NSAs with the end of the Cold War has affected states' threat perceptions and the way they deal with them either as proxies or enemies. The presence of a one shared archenemy (the Soviet Union) had facilitated the concurrence of threat management in the first sup-phase. The second sub-phase was relatively less cohesive than first sub-phase, but more cohesive than the third sup-phase because Turkey started to experience a dilemma between the rise of certain Kurdish entities and the containment of aggressive Iraqi and Syrian regime. Despite all its concerns regarding Iraqi Kurdish groups, Turkey showed its allegiance to its NATO partner-the US in the Gulf Crisis. Third sub-phase was the least cohesive among three so that two allies tried to put specific labels to their alliance structure as "strategic partnership" in 1999 and

"model partnership" in 2009 to concur their threat perceptions and management way which give alert signal towards diverging. The developments based on rising Kurdish power which occurred between 1992 and 2014 can be regarded as the origins of threat differentiation between the US and Turkey. In this regard, I will analyze how the empowerment of Syrian and Iraqi Kurds has affected the cohesion of Turkish-American alliance until the Kobane siege.

5.1.2. Rising Kurdish Power and Origin of Threat Differentiation among Allies

5.1.2.1. Threat Differentiation Regarding Iraqi Kurdish entities

The alliance between Turkey and the US did not demonstrate the same pertinacity after Gulf War due to unintended consequences of this crisis. First of all, a tripartite relationship emerged between Turkey, the US and Iraqi Kurds. Secondly, Saddam's persecution towards the Iraqi Kurds brought Kurdish issue on the international scene. Thirdly, due to the security zone provided by the Operation Provide Comfort and Iraq's withdrawal from the Northern Iraq, Iraqi Kurds had the opportunity to establish their own de facto independent statist entity in the region in 1992. Last but not least, as a result of political and military power vacuum in Northern Iraq, the PKK obtained a sanctuary and military training camps in order to perpetrate terrorist acts and disturb the peace and security atmosphere in Turkey (Balik, 2016: 57). All these issues were considered as the steps of rising Kurdish power for Turkey and constituted the origin of future threat differentiation between two allies.

Overall, the issue of Iraq's territorial integrity was the main source of threat for Turkey due to the possible ascent of the PKK and the possibility of a pan-Kurdish movement. Even though, on all occasions, the Washington gave assurances to Ankara regarding Turkey's sensitivities about Iraq's territorial integrity, the US failed to meet the expectations of its ally due to divergent interests about Iraq's

territorial integrity. While for Turkey, the major threat to Iraq's territorial integrity was a formation of independent Kurdish state, on the other hand, for the US, it was Saddam's aggressive regime. Thus, two allies' threat perception started to differ based on growing Kurdish power. The US continued to see Saddam regime an "immediate threat" to its national interests and used the Iraqi Kurds as a way to deal with Saddam as a threat management. In contrast, Turkey's threat perception was based on Iraqi Kurds, PKK and the fear for an independent Kurdish state, thus it remained aloof to the US's way of dealing with Saddam regime.

A set of common strategies adopted between 1996 and 2001 as threat management despite different threat perceptions. Terminating the clashes between two Kurdish parties, namely the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was seen as a common set of measure for different threat perceptions. While Turkey adopted this strategy to prevent the PKK's exploiting the chaotic environment, the US's support of the KDP-PUK negotiation was preventing both parties to serve the interests of Saddam regime and Iran. Nevertheless this short-term concurrence of threat management ended when Turkey realized the reconciliation process between Kurdish entities served the rise of Kurdish power in the region. Another area for common threat management was against Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Turkey's deployment of troops in Afghanistan and Somalia, logistical support in the Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, and assuming the leadership of NATO Regional Command Central and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul were the common ways two allies fight against Al-Qaeda threat. Moreover, Turkey contributed the NATO Afghanistan Training Mission (NTM-A) to strengthen the Afghan Security Forces (Gonul, 2010:18). Thus, NATO has served as a vital area for concurring the threat

management of two allies despite the fact that two of them did not concurred their threat perceptions.

The PKK's designation as a foreign terrorist organization by the US State Department in 1997, the US's support during the capture of the PKK's leader Ocalan and attributing a strategic label as "strategic partnership" in 1999 increased the degree of trust between two allies. Furthermore, the US played an important role in the IMF assistance during the 1999 economic depression and earthquake. The afore-mentioned positive developments relieved the anxiety of Turkey regarding the US's relations with Iraqi Kurds and decreased Turkey's level of threat perceived from the PKK. These developments served positively in the assessment of two allies' intentions from each other by consolidating the alliance cohesion and created a self-confidence and superiority in Turkey's threat perception over the PKK issue and rising Kurdish power.

5.1.2.2. 2003 Iraq War: Divergence of Threat Perception and Threat Management

During the 2003 Iraq War, Turkey identified the PKK as a primary existential threat in contrast to the US's own prime threat perception from Saddam regime. Two allies' threat perceptions diverged in a significant manner this time because while Turkey perceived a non-statist and ethnic threat, on the other hand, the US perceived a statist threat from an aggressive state. Both public and political circles in Turkey approached with suspicion to the US's justification to wage war against Iraq due to its possession of weapon of mass destruction. The American public and official circles thought in an opposite way. Thus, the level of threat perceived from Saddam regime differed among two allies. Losing Iraq's territorial integrity in case of a war

triggered Turkey's fears for another de facto state formation alongside its border and increased Turkey's level of threat from the PKK.

Turkish-American alliance's divergence on threat management during the 2003 Iraqi war were as follows: (1) the US tend to use force to remove Saddam from power whereas Turkey preferred to exhaust all diplomatic and peaceful ways to convince Saddam to comply with UN regulations, (2) the US wanted to supply the KDP and PUK with arms, while Turkey strongly opposed this idea due its future security concerns, (3) the US pressed Turkey for permitting for site surveys, site preparation, and deployment of US troops in its territory, yet Turkey prioritized Turkish Grand National Assembly's approval and consent through democratic ways for that (Balik, 2016: 191-193). Thus, as seen two allies' roadmaps for dealing with the aggressive intentions of Saddam regime found no common ground in contrast to the Gulf crisis. While Turkey preferred to maintain the containment policy against Iraq, the US insisted on the new partnership formations with Iraqi Kurds. Moreover, while Turkey desired first to employ a political strategy by exhausting all political and diplomatic ways, the US focused on military strategies.

Diverging views regarding the desire to adopt different strategies in 2003 Iraq War emanated from two main reasons: Firstly, due to the negative political and economic ramifications of the Gulf War, a trust gap had been formed between two long-standing allies about the development in Northern Iraq and Ankara's unfulfilled assurances and redlines regarding growing Kurdish power. Secondly, Turkey acted with deliberation because it feared that Washington will make trade-offs at the expense of Ankara's interests. Turkey believed that the CIA's armament of Kurdish factions and the exclusion of Turkomen from the US-led opposition activities were

the clear signs for the latter reason and the real US intentions in Iraq. The trust gap between two allies widened with the March 1st crisis and the Suleymaniyyah incident (Hood event) by creating a confidence crisis between two states. The ambiguous plans and mutual hesitations aftermath of March 1st motion created serious concerns in both sides while assessing each other's intentions regarding post-War conditions. Moreover, the surge in the PKK activities in northern Iraq after the Iraq war shaped the negative assessments (Davutoglu, 2008: 89). Turkey's suspicions about 'real US intentions' was revived due to the US's failures in its commitments to balance Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds (Altunısık, 2006: 189). As such, upon the 2005 election in Iraq, the former Prime minister Erdogan urged by referring the US that "Powers claiming that they came to bring democracy to the region preferred to remain insensitive to antidemocratic ambitions…Everyone must know that Turkey…won't allow this geography to be delivered to chaos that will last for many years" (cited in Rubin, 2005: 121).

Turkey realized that as long as the presence of the PKK threat, the emergence of a possible independent Kurdish state and the US's desire for decentralized Iraq that empower Iraqi Kurds continue, it will also be difficult to converge two allies as witnessed in the Gulf crisis. Domestic political variables led Turkey to create its own threat perception based on its own political culture and discourse about its own Kurdish population. When this political culture merged with divergent priorities and conflicting aims and national interests of two allies regarding Iraqi Kurds, a full-cooperation as seen in the Gulf war did not occur. However, the then President Bush's "military and hyper-national discourse" also created a political culture in the US in the sense that "if you are not with the US you are with the enemy", which is aggressive states that harbor terrorists. This understanding compelled Turkey to think

that supporting the US will be less costly than non-cooperation because of the red-lines about Kurds and the desire to have a voice in post-Saddam Iraq. Turkey did not voice so much its concerns regarding the Iraqi Kurds as we witnessed today about Syrian Kurds and did not directly equate them with the PKK, instead focused on to cut off their ties or supports to the PKK. Nevertheless, I concluded that the Turkish-American alliance experienced a "low cohesion" during and aftermath of the 2003 Iraq war due to the long-term confidence crisis and mutual hesitations between two allies.

5.1.2.3. 2009-2014 September: Threat Differentiation Regarding Syrian Kurdish Entities

In the beginning, both the US and Turkey agreed on the fact that Syrian quagmire can only be solved with the removal of Assad. While the US saw Syria as a satellite for Iran and Russia, Turkey's motivations emanated from Assad's support of the Syrian Kurds and its existential threat- the PKK. Although both states' perception of threat from Assad regime relies on different motivations, it seems that they concurred their threat perception until the rise of another threat-ISIS in 2014. However, this common threat perception has changed due the US's policy shift from Assad to ISIS at the end of 2013. This was also a shift from statist threat to non-statist one that caused a challenge for the concurrence of threat management. As such, with the rise of ISIS, the US's threat perception has changed from Assad to ISIS and to groups with radical tendencies like Jabhat Al-Nusra. On the other hand, Turkey has maintained its threat perception of Assad with including also a non-statist threat-PYD/YPG on its immediate threat list by creating a challenge in the future in terms of the concurrence of threat perception and management. Thus, in the early stage of this phase, two allies' nature and the level of threat perceived from the Assad regime

concurred. Both the US and Turkey preferred to overthrown the Assad regime by supporting opposition groups in Syria. Arming and providing military training to rebel groups constituted the military side of two allies' threat management. Moreover, assisting in the formation of a legitimate authority beside the regime was the political dimension of two allies' threat management. Both states aimed to overthrown Assad in the short-term by adopting a wide-scope strategy that goes beyond Syria's territory. Wide-scope here refers to the involvement of regional countries' in terms of military training, lethal and non-lethal support, opening their territory for rebel groups to conduct their political and military activities (i.e. Turkey, Qatar). Hence, Turkey and the US concurred their threat management to deal with the Syrian regime.

The Syrian Civil War erupted in 2011 and ISIS's uncontrollable penetration in the region have created a driving force for the empowerment of the PYD/YPG. The first assistance was made by Assad regime by withdrawing its forces from Kurdish areas of Syria in 2013. This opportunity has facilitated Syrian Kurdish entities', primarily the PYD, establishment of military (through YPG/YPJ) and political control over northern Syria. Another major driving force for the empowerment of Syrian Kurdish entities is the great power rivalry among great powers and regional powers. Iran and Russia's role is the most prominent factors that triggered the rise of Kurdish power. Being utilized as a proxy by different states against their enemy state or NSAs has facilitated the rise of Syrian entities, especially the ascent of the PYD/YPG.

Before ISIS's empowerment, both allies adopted same discourse in line with ousting Assad to manage the aggressive regime and supported the opposition groups to deal with Assad regime, albeit the US adopted this time "no boots on the ground"

motto. Thus, the common strategy of supporting Syrian opposition groups like the Syrian National Council (SNC) and overthrowing the Assad regime started to change in a way that lead the two allies to back opposing camps within the opposition. Turkey provided lethal and non-lethal support to an umbrella group called the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and groups with Islamist tendencies. In contrast, due to its threat perception originated from Islamic groups, the US tended towards more secular entities: the PYD/YPG. Once again two allies' perceptions of threat and the management ways started to differ with the empowerment of the PYD/YPG just as in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf Crisis.

Turkish officials has met several times with the PYD leader Salih Muslim to convey Turkey's concerns about the PYD's relations with the Assad regime and Syrian Kurds' aspirations about autonomy in northern Syria. Muslim's two visits held with Turkish National Intelligence Agency and Turkish Foreign Ministry officials on July and August 2013. These two visits are for preventing the PYD to be a threat for Turkish national security. Turkey has put three conditions to maintain its relations with the PYD, similar to the KDP and PUK: (1) the PYD should end its relations with the regime and join to the ranks of Syrian oppositions, (2) the PYD should abstain from unilateral acts like declaration of self-governance in northern Syria, (3) The PYD should not take steps which put into danger the Turkish-Syrian border (Elicin, 2013). However, the PYD enjoyed to fill the power vacuum in norther Syria and preferred to proclaim its autonomy from the Assad regime and adopted its first constitution on January 2014-the "Charter of the Social Contract" (Rubin, 2016: 45). The PYD's non-compliance to Turkey's afore-mentioned terms has led Turkey to identify the PYD as a primary threat that is equal to the PKK due to the common aspirations which they have in terms of Turkey's perspective. The empowerment of

the PYD/YPG did not affect much the trust between two allies because Turkey still continued its meeting with the PYD officials through official channels. Moreover, Turkey did not correlate the PYD with the PKK until the rise of its concerns regarding the PYD's threatening existence in the region. Another visit was held on October 4, 2014 to reiterate once again to the PYD to terminate its relations with Assad regime in return for the assistance in Kobane. Nevertheless the leader of the PYD focused on its aspirations on northern Syria and did not want the Syrian Kurds share the same fate with the Iraqi Kurds by complying with Turkey's demands. All these developments led Turkey to adopt different attitudes and discourses toward Syrian Kurds by creating a divergence in threat perceptions and threat management between two allies.

Turkish-American alliance experienced a short-term mistrust in this phase following Turkey's "no vote" in the UNSC in 2010 regarding Iran's nuclear issue, however, this mistrust did not endure so long due to the alliance's special status given by the Obama administration in 2009. To rebuild damaged trust atmosphere with its ally after 2003 Iraq war, the Obama administration made his first oversea visit to Turkey, which is called as a "true partner" by Obama in his speech at Turkish Parliament. Following the protests started in 2011 in the Middle East, the US's special branding to Turkey as a "model partnership" showed its significance. The two allies focused to reassess each other's friendship and intentions between 2009 and 2014. When I looked how they addressed to each other between 2009 and 2014 to measure the cohesion, "friend" was the most utilized word by having mostly "reliable" and "outstanding" titles to define the essence of their partnership. Moreover, both agreed on the fact that their views regarding developments in the

Middle East “overlap” significantly. Thus, I regarded the cohesion in this phase as high due to increasing trust atmosphere and special status of the alliance.

5.2. AFTER PHASE: FROM THE KOBANE SIEGE TO 2017

Despite the shortness of this period, the Turkish-American alliance has experienced a deepening discord following the victory of Kobane. I will analyze this period in terms of two components of the alliance cohesion: Threat perception and threat management. Firstly, both states’ threat perceptions have become more prominent due to the catalyzer role of the ISIS in this period than the period between 2009 and 2014 based on discourses and practices of two allies. Secondly, growing Kurdish power in the region has diverged the ways they manage the ISIS and regime threat. Thirdly, two allies started to voice a prioritization regarding their own threat perceptions in the sense that “primary”, “immediate”, “auxiliary” concepts have been used too often to indicate the degree they attribute to different threats. The more they attribute different status to different threats, the more the way to manage these threats has differentiated, causing two allies to grown apart seriously. The empowerment of the PYD/YPG following the Syrian civil war and great power rivalry between regional and great powers has located them into different status in the eyes of the two allies. The US has started to perceive the PYD/YPG as a tactical ally to serve the US’s short-term focused, pragmatic and result-oriented policies in the fight against ISIS. In contrast, Turkey has perceived Kurdish entities’ ascent a primary threat and adopted a more strategic, long-term focused, and politicized policy agenda. Thus, this policy differentiation based on different perceptions and management caused two allies to grown apart significantly by damaging the cohesiveness of their long-term alliance.

Throughout this period, I will discuss first of all, how the Syrian Kurds have become the most prominent threat for Turkey whereas they have turned into a go-to ally for the US. The divergent Turkish-American perceptions were analyzed based on two allies' discourses and practices. While different discourses or the way the Syrian Kurds, ISIS and Assad regime have been identified by each parties, have led us to determine how the US and Turkey have differed their threat perceptions, diverging practices to manage the afore-mentioned threats have indicated how the US and Turkey have adopted different ways of threat management.

5.2.1. Syrian Kurds are on the Rise: Practical and Discursive Divergence

Prior to Kobane siege, the PYD and its military arm wing the YPG had been serving as the government and security force in Kurdish populated areas from where Assad regime shifted its focus. The PYD/YPG's initial aim was to take defensive measures against religious-based organizations and prevent Kurdish areas from being drawn into the chaos between opposition groups and regime forces. This goal has changed when it has been realized that the ISIS threat can be tamped down with the help of those "friendly forces". Kobane siege was the initial step where the PYD/YPG assumed a great responsibility in order to counter ISIS threat with the assistance of the US. The YPG as the military branch of the PYD proved itself as the competent unitary command forces which has a trustworthy hostility against extremist tendencies. Thus, the PYD/YPG "established itself as the ground force of choice for the US-led anti-ISIS coalition" (Hussein, 2017). The victory of Kobane has transformed the PYD/YPG from "friendly forces" to "reliable partners" for the US. On the other hand, for Turkey they were regarded a non-statist threat which is the Syrian branch of the PKK terrorist organization. Each ally has casted a different identity to the PYD/YPG based on their formal discourse since Kobane: enemy or

partner. Thus, the Kobane victory became a turning point where the US and Turkey started to attribute diverging identities to the Syrian Kurds.

In an official visit to Ankara on November 2014, the former US Vice President Biden conveyed the US's message that Turkey should terminate to support highly problematic groups in terms of the U.S. perspective (i.e. Ahrar al-Sham). Turkey's policy to support these groups emanated from its threat perception of the PYD/YPG/PKK. Moreover, Biden emphasized that the two allies should combine their capacity under the Allen-McGurk proposal, which aimed to open up Turkish military installations for the US strike missions against the ISIS and act jointly to train and arm Syrian opposition with the assistance of US and Turkish air power. The US's proposal was stipulated by Turkey on their own proposal: "no-fly zone" over northern Syria (Kahl, 2017).

A secondary flashpoint for the PYD/YPG was in Tal-Abyad which is critical town as a major supply route for the ISIS and transition route for foreign fighters. The PYD/YPG increased its strategic value in the eyes of the US-led coalition by countering the ISIS threat in Tal-Abyad and strengthened its autonomous regions structure by merging the cantons of Jazira and Kobane. Turkey argued that it cannot tolerate demographic changes and the cross of Turkey's red-lines. President Erdogan reacted to the Tal-Abyad victory saying: "Unfortunately, the West is hitting Arabs and Turkmen with planes and putting the PYD and the PKK in their places. How are we supposed to see this positively? How are we supposed to see the West as honest?" (Cited in McCann, 2015). The US-led coalition's air support during the capture of Tal-Abyad by the YPG was inconsistent with Turkey's desired practices which envisage a policy without the assistance of the PYD/YPG. The former White House

Press Secretary John Earnest told in a press briefing after Tal-Abyad victory that Syrian Kurdish groups' success "is an indication that when US coalition can back capable, effective, local fighters on the ground, that US-led Coalition can make important progress against ISIL" (Earnest, 2015). On the other hand, after the success in Tal-Abyad one of the pro-government media sources in Turkey defined the PYD/YPG as "more dangerous than DAESH". The discursive and practical divergences based on growing PYD/YPG power caused to grown apart two long-standing allies after Kobane and Tal-Abyad key victories against ISIS.

Aftermath of two major ISIS terrorist attacks which targeted the young activists who plan to provide assistance to Kobane in Sanlıurfa (Suruc) and the Kurdish nationalist political party Peoples' Democracy Party (HDP)'s public demonstration in Ankara, Turkish was on full alert about Kurdish anger. President Obama's phone call to President Erdogan about opening the Incirlik base to the US coalition was accepted to check the Kurdish expansion in the region. This convergence seemed to put an end to practical divergence between two allies in fighting ISIS, however, the unwillingness of two parties' to focus on same allies and threats has grown their disunity. The establishment of an umbrella organization as Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) on October 2015 have provided a political and military cover for the PYD/YPG and helped the US to canalize its military support easily to them through this multi-ethnic umbrella group.

The PKK's official declaration on 5 November 2015 that it ended the cease fire launched in 2013 due to military build-up in southeast Turkey and the Turkish President's comment that Turkish government has consigned the peace process into the "refrigerator" affected significantly Turkish perception about various Kurdish

groups. These developments have caused Turkey to emphasize its redline about Kurdish moves and to adopt and anti-PYD/YPG discourse since Kobane. While Turkey opposed the idea of the US to assist the SDF which the PYD/YPG constitute its spinal cord, the US-led Coalition maintained its air support to the SDF by realizing the fact that without the US support the SDF will not endure against the ISIS. The mutual dependency between the SDF and the US was uttered by the U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Sean Mac Farland:

> They would not have been able to do any of that without coalition air support. They know that … They owe their existence really to the support that we are providing. And that's why they continue to work with us. And so far as I can tell, they have not turned away from us toward the Russians (U.S. Department of Defense, 2016).

The importance of Manbij in terms Raqqa (vital supply line and second bastion of the ISIS) and foreign fighters for the US-led anti-ISIS coalition have directed the US to convince Turkey about the transition of the SDF. However, Turkey adopted a decisive stance and indicated it will not tolerate any crossing to the west of Euphrates. Instead, to capture Manbij from the ISIS, Turkey proposed pro-Turkish opposition fighters. On May 2016, the YPG-dominated SDF crossed the west which raised Turkish concerns and brought along the "Turkish military interference" issue on the Turkish discourse. President Erdogan stated that "Turkey does not need to obtain permission from anyone to interfere in the region to secure its borders." ("YPG-dominated SDF", 2016)

Following a series of terrorist attacks which were claimed by either the ISIS or the PKK/TAK Turkey's concerns heightened that this attack can increase if the SDF takes over the rest of the border. ISIS's attack that targeted innocent people in a Kurdish-wedding party in Gaziantep was the final straw for Turkey. Turkey launched the Operation Euphrates Shield (OES) to counter both the ISIS and contain the

growing expansion of Syrian Kurds along the Turkish border. President Erdogan said that: “Turkey is determined that Syria retains its territorial integrity and will take matters into its own hands if required to protect that unity" (Tahiroglu, 2016). The OES was a clear urge from Turkey to the US that as long as the two allies diverge their practices in Syria, Turkey will act unilaterally at the expense of the US’s sensitivities about its go-to ally- Syrian Kurds.

The first phase of the Raqqa operation launched on 6 November 2016, but prior to this operation Turkey has made several warnings to Washington that its alliance with the SDF in Raqqa will cause “serious issues” between Turkey and the US (Pamuk, 2017). President Erdogan also stated that Turkey warned the US regarding the participation of the SDF to Raqqa: "one terrorist organization cannot be used to fight another. I believe the new U.S. administration will take these assessments into consideration." Turkey has never give up to identify the PYD/YPG as terrorist entities that pose a direct threat and has close ties with the PKK. This discourse has been put into practice one more time on April 25, 2017 with a Turkish air operation in Sinjar regions and the town of Deriq, in Syria’s northeastern Hasakah province. Turkish airstrike targeted various points which belong to PYD/YPG including “headquarters, press center, liaison offices and Voice of Rojava radio”. Turkey’s goal was not let Sinjar became a second “Qandil” to serve the PKK/YPG/PYD’s interests (Tastekin, 2017). The spokesman of the State Department, Mark Toner reacted to Turkey’s unilateral move as such: “We are very concerned – deeply concerned – that Turkey conducted airstrikes earlier today in northern Syria, as well as northern Iraq, without proper coordination either with the United States or the broader global coalition to defeat ISIS”. Furthermore, Toner added that “loss of life

of their partner forces in the fight against ISIS that includes members of the Kurdish Peshmerga" cannot be ratified (Toner, 2017).

Turkey has considered the PYD/YPG as a threat and identified it as a terrorist entity that has close affiliations with another terrorist organization- the PKK since the very beginning in nearly every official discourse. However, the US has attributed a different identity to the PYD/YPG that conflict with the identity given by Turkish side. The US perception towards the PYD/YPG has focused to calling them as "partners", "allies", "friendly forces" due to their concrete victories and being able to be the most "effective" and "capable" ground forces. Two allies also have adopted different practices when it comes to the Syrian Kurds. While Turkey has focused to eliminate and debilitate them, on the other hand, the US's deeds have focused on canalizing the empowerment of the PYD/YPG forces against their immediate threat perception. The two allies' roadmaps against the ISIS and Assad regime have consisted of forming new alliances with different VNSAs. While Turkey has preferred to ally with pro-Turkish opposition fighters such as moderate or religious-based groups, on the other hand, the US has directed its interest on the PYD/YPG. Moreover, the type, scope and aims of two allies' strategies differed in the fight against ISIS threat. While Turkey has adopted an embedded (annihilation of the PYD and Assad along with ISIS) and long-term (not temporary solutions) strategy. On the other hand, the US' military strategy was merely focused on "degrading and ultimately destroying" ISIS threat which is a short-sighted strategy in contrast to Turkey's wide-scope strategy that aims to a political transition in Syria, "safe zone" for refugees and "debilitate" the PYD/YPG/PKK while fighting with ISIS. For instance, although two allies negotiated on the "train-and-equip program" as a common military strategy against ISIS, they diverged on the program's scope and

aims. Another failure for concurrence in threat management was the Incirlik agreement that is about the status of Incirlik base for the anti-ISIS coalition. At first sight, the military strikes was in line with the US's policy priorities, however, Turkey mainly focused on the PYD/YPG target in these air operations.

In the end of two years, the discursive and practical divergence about Syrian Kurds have considerably grown apart two NATO allies. The assessment of each other's real intentions and the degree of trust was, first of all, negatively affected with the US's giving a partnership status to the PYD/YPG, and secondly with the 15 July coup attempt. President Erdogan lashed out several times with the following official statements that interrogated its long-standing allies' honesty: "Who is your partner: Turks or Kurds?" ; How will we ever be able to trust you?"; "The US makes different statements elsewhere". Furthermore, some photos regarding the US soldiers' wearing the YPG insignia defined as "hypocrisy" in the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs' official statement. These kinds of reprovals were the reflection of decreasing degree of trust between two allies. Moreover, the US's mistrust towards Turkey has stemmed from Turkey's alleged ties with some religious organizations which are considered dangerous by the US. These ties were several times addressed by the US officials creating a trust gap between the US and Turkey.

Another damaging effect came after the US's decision to equip the SDF with heavy weapons in 2017. It seems that the new administration has preferred to listen Pentagon's advices and the military commanders' effective ally choice on the ground more than Obama administration. The decision to provide heavy weapons to the SDF despite serious Turkish warnings and President Erdogan's last unfruitful official visit

was a clear evidence of how the Turkish-American alliance has lost its sprit and its future is far from looking promising.

ERA		CONCURRENCE / DIVERGENCE	ALLIANCE COHESION
1952-1990		Concurrence in threat perceptions Concurrence in threat management	High
1991- Gulf Crisis		Concurrence in threat perceptions Concurrence in threat management	High
1992-2014 September	1992-2002	Divergence in threat perceptions Concurrence in threat management	Ambivalence
	2003 Iraq War	Divergence in threat perceptions Divergence in threat management	Low
	2009-2014 September	Concurrence in threat perceptions Concurrence in threat management	High
2014 September-2017		Divergence in threat perceptions Divergence in threat management	Low

Table 6: The cohesion degree of the Turkish-American alliance based on threat perceptions and threat management in each era.

5.2.2. Turkish Policy vs. American Policy after Kobane Victory

5.2.2.1. Turkish Policy: Strategic, Long-term focused and Politicized

Turkey's policy against the empowerment of the PYD/YPG has shaped its immediate threat perception. Three-pronged existential threat perception (PKK/PYD/YPG) and the possibility of an autonomous structure controlled by the Syrian Kurdish entities have been two interrelated issues that pose an overriding threat to Turkey's survival instinct. According to Turkey's perspective, while the former dimension of Turkey's threat perception is the "terrorism" part of the rising Kurdish power, the latter is the "insurgency" part of the growing Kurdish issue in a

way that can affect the internal balance of Kurdish population in Turkey. This led Turkey to adopt more strategic, politicized and long-term focused decisions to manage its threat perception catalyzed by the ISIS threat. As such, Turkey has regarded the ISIS as a "tertiary threat" which become the by-product of its "secondary threat" perception: Assad regime. Turkey' policy is strategic in a sense that to reach a specific goal (which is ousting Assad regime and shatter the Syrian Kurds' hopes to establish an independent state in the future), it has adopted a series of methods and actions. To accelerate the ousting of Assad regime, Turkey has directly supported the opposition groups and rebels and provided shelter to defectors. Furthermore, to cease the US's support of the PYD/YPG, Turkey has struggled to include the PYD/YPG into the US's foreign terrorist organization list by emphasizing its organizational and ideological ties with the PKK. Furthermore, Turkey's policy regarding the change of the Assad regime with another legitimate authority that is approved by the majority of Syrian population has required long-term focused plans which serves its national interests. The rise of Kurdish power in northern Syria has triggered Turkey's politicized policy in way that Turkey has started to look the developments in Syria from the lens of its "internal Kurdish Question" and its protracted struggle with the PKK and its sister organizations. Thus, it has preferred to pursue a policy that prioritizes its sensitivities about the PYD/YPG in the fight against ISIS. Diverging threat agenda has compelled Turkey to act strategically instead of adopting short-term pragmatic solutions against its perceived threat perceptions. Thus, Turkey's divergent threat perceptions have directed it to adopt different sets of measures as a threat management against its diversified threat agenda.

To manage the PKK/PYD/YPG threat, Turkey adopted four significant strategies: Firstly, it has ended the cease-fire made between the PKK and launched military operations to eliminate the PKK from the East and Southeast part of Turkey. Secondly, it proposed to the US-led coalition members to establish a "no-fly or buffer zone" and "safe zone" to prevent the PYD/YPG gain more power along Turkey's border. This strategy has been voiced by Turkish officials but their plea was rejected because this strategy was conceived by the US to preclude any bid for Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria. The US has reservations on the "no-fly zone" due to the following reasons: (1) The risk of collision with the Assad regime forces, (2) Financial Burden, (3) The heritage of the Obama administration that adopted "no boots on the ground" policy due to the bad experiences of the 2003 Iraq War and Libya. It was hard to see a concurrence in this no-fly zone strategy because it was "what the U.S. and Turkey mostly disagree on. The buffer zone is a topic where all the gaps between Turkey and the U.S. are reflected. It's like a micro-symbol of that strategic disconnect." (Arango and Yeginsu, 2014). Thirdly, Turkey has preferred to support religious-based groups or the FSA against ISIS and Assad regime, yet later these groups was suspected by the US that they have connections to jihadist groups. Finally, to halt the merge between autonomous Syrian cantons established by the PYD/YPG, Turkey conducted the Operation Euphrates Shield (OES). This military threat management had different dimensions including ISIS and Syrian Kurdish entities. Initially, the ISIS dimension of this operation was supported by the US-led anti-ISIS Coalition. However, when Turkish backed groups and Turkish Security Forces decided to move beyond the initial agreed territory to counter the PYD/YPG threat, the US behaved timidly to Turkey's Al-Bab Campaign under OES. The US did not provide the adequate support from air and the US-led anti-ISIS air coalition

did not conducted Raqqa operation simultaneously with Turkey OES, especially in the Al-Bab Campaign. Publicized differentiation of discourse and practices between the US and Turkey regarding the final stage of OES has diverged their threat management ways significantly due to growing power of Syrian Kurdish entities (Ulgen and Kasapoglu, 2017).

When the perceived level of threat from the ISIS increased following a series of terrorist attacks (July 2015-Suruc, October 2015-Train Station, January 2016-Sultanahmet, June 2016-Atatürk Airport, August 2016-Gaziantep), Turkey wanted to adopt an integral and collective policy with the US. This was an embedded strategy that contains the removal of Assad and participation on the US-led operations to contain the ISIS threat, as well as countering its existential three-pronged threat. However, the US approached this embedded strategy suspiciously in the sense that Turkey can use this strategy as a counterweight to the expansion of its existential threats. Nevertheless, both allies concurred their threat management ways about foreign fighters due to increasing mobilization and recruitment capacity of ISIS in the global scale. Turkey increased its efforts to control the transition of Foreign Fighters with two mechanisms: prepare no-entry lists and establish Risk Analysis Units at critical points to stop and intercept Foreign Fighters (Yalcınkaya, 2015: 13). Moreover, Turkey is the co-chair in Counter ISIL Coalition Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters to control its porous borders.

5.2.2.2. The American Policy: Short-term focused, Pragmatic and Result-oriented

The US has given a clear sign to Turkey that it prioritizes ISIS and groups with jihadist tendencies as immediate threat, rather than the Assad regime and the PKK. When the US realized the fact that without the presence of Assad regime the ISIS

and extremist groups exploit the power vacuum, it shifted its Assad first policy to ISIS first policy. This shift has signaled the pragmatic vision of the US that prioritizes acts which bring the most beneficial results in terms of its cost-benefit analysis. According to the US perspective, focusing on the ISIS threat and doing this through assisting the SDF will be more beneficial for the US national interests, specifically for its "no boots on the ground" motto. The US's direct support to the PYD/YPG to manage the ISIS threat failed to bring together two allies due to divergent perceptions over rising Kurdish power across the Middle East region. This divergence in threat perception has started aftermath of Kobane. The discursive dimension of this divergence started with the US's recognition of the PYD/YPG in the ISIS-held territory as a friendly force. Then, the label of "friendly force" shifted to "reliable partner" which later culminated to "most-effective ground ally". The US officials' verbal comments regarding the PYD/YPG which emphasize that they do not recognize them as terrorist organizations was the reflection of this discourse. The practical dimension of this divergence also started with the US's assistance of the PYD/YPG in the immediate aftermath of Kobane siege and took new forms in Raqqa operations against ISIS.

There were shared measures to manage ISIS threat, however, all these strategies did not bring effective solutions due to the US's persistence of utilizing the PYD/YPG as part of these strategies both discursively and practically. One of them was "Train and Equip Program" that was launched on February 2015, but later failed due the US's "only-ISIS focus" expectations from that program. The intransigence point between Washington and Ankara stemmed from the fact within the scope of this program against whom those who are trained will fight: ISIS or Assad regime. Turkey's desire was using the newly formed "moderate opponents" against the

regime forces and ISIS, on the other hand, the US merely focused on ISIS. The abduction of a group of trained soldiers by Al-Nusra and some problems in the training process sounded the death knell for this strategy. The US's decision to continue with the existing vetted local forces rather than generating a new force from the very beginning that require more financial and military burden in the long-term is the proof of how the US opts for short-term focused military plans. When two sides realized that it is difficult to converge the strategies in the presence of discrete threat perceptions, they maintained their existing own strategies: while Turkey continued to support mainly FSA brigades, in contrast, the US shifted its sources from Turkey-led opposition groups to anti-Turkish opposition groups. Kurdish victories with the support of the US-led air support gained in the Kobane and Tal Abyad demonstrates how the US desire result-oriented policies in the fight against the ISIS. The US-led Coalition believes that every triumph won against ISIS, enfeebles ISIS day by day. The result-oriented policy also brings some problematic issues regarding the PYD/YPG's violations of human rights in the name of fighting against ISIS in Arab-majority areas. It seems that the US adopts "the ends justifies the means" motto in its fight against the ISIS. The US has turned a blind eye to its long-standing ally's concerns and warning regarding its national security along its border. Moreover, despite the evidences of the PYD/YPG's serious violation to change the demographic structure on some Arab-populated cities, the US has maintained its persistence to ally with these groups.

This situation deepened the discord between two allies at the expense of each other's priorities. They run the risk of short-term commitments, low-level of trust, less stable and les-institutionalized alliances and immediate benefits from divergent threat management ways. In this regard, the US behaved pragmatic, short-term

focused, and result-oriented when it understood that the only way to manage the ISIS threat is to use the empowerment of the PYD/YPG against its immediate threat perception-ISIS.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Concrete Observations on Turkish-American Alliance: Kurdish Power Challenge

Shared history can be an impetus for the persistence of an alliance, yet it is not the only element (Walker, 2008: 108). Throughout their shared history, allies will probably make common enemies, especially if they are under an institutionalized alliance structure like NATO, and thus will share common threat perceptions and strategies to deal with these enemies (or threats). Two allies concurred their threat perception and management based on a statist threat from the Soviet Union, and thus maintained the cohesion of their alliance significantly during Cold War. Statist threats are less ambiguous than non-statist threats and left more room to adopt common strategies, thus perceiving a threat from a state can easily increase the likelihood of cooperation between the two allies, as I witnessed in the Turkish-American alliance especially between 1952 and 1990. After 9/11, Turkey and the US substituted terrorism for the Soviet Union as a shared threat perception. However, terrorism did not have the same effect on the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance as did Soviet expansionism because the actors that posed a threat for each ally had different motivations. While Turkey has prioritized ethnic terrorism that originates from the Kurdish issue, the US's understanding of terrorism has been based more on religious based terrorist organizations. In the prioritization of these

non-statist threats, states can make dangerous trade-offs at the expense of the sensitivities of their allies. I can show the deepening discord between the US and Turkey as one of the best examples for this trade-off.

The cohesiveness of the alliance has started to decrease with the developments that have triggered the rise of Kurdish power in the neighborhood of Turkey and the ascent of the PKK along with its derivative terrorist organizations. After the Gulf-Crisis, Turkey has increased the perceived level of threat from the PKK year by year and positioned this non-statist threat as an immediate and existential danger to its survival instinct, rather than the presence of aggressive regimes. Turkey's main concerns have emanated from the support of these regimes to the PKK and its derivatives. What is more, these aggressive states' territorial integrity and regional stability has become more prominent due to Turkey's apprehensions regarding the possibility of a spread of a pan-Kurdish movement into its territory. On the other hand, the US felt uncomfortable because of the presence of these aggressive regimes and pursued a containment policy or needed the support of local or regional NSAs in order to oust these regimes. Thus, when the local forces which are supported by the US in the fight against these aggressive regimes, overlap with the forces which Turkey perceives an existential threat or designates as interrelated terrorist factions, this situation complicates the concurrence of threat perception and the ways to deal with it.

The growth of Kurdish power is the most challenging issue for the alliance in the post-Cold War era. Throughout the long-standing Turkish-American alliance, I observed that various Kurdish groups have become the "Achilles heel" of this partnership. This observation was uttered by Michael Gunter (2005: 114): "the

Kurdish issue represented both militarily and psychologically the weakest part of US-Turkish Alliance". The military dimension is linked to past experiences occurred after the Gulf Crisis which disrupted the level of cohesiveness between the two allies due to Turkey's increasing national security concerns regarding the empowerment of the PYD/YPG. Nevertheless, the alliance maintained its significance both under NATO structure and bilaterally under several labels like enhanced, strategic, and model partnership. The psychological dimension is related with Turkey's concerns whether the US will enable the establishment of an independent Kurdish state, at the expense of its NATO ally or use Turkey's sensitiveness about various Kurdish entities as a trump card for its pragmatic, result-oriented, and short-term focused policies.

The juncture of both threat perceptions and management ways has become the area where the Turkish-American alliance feed and grow. Thus, as long as the alliance experiences a concurrence in threat perceptions and found common management ways for dealing with this shared threat, the cohesiveness between them endure without problems. The Kurdish issue in the Turkish-American alliance challenges the concurrence in threat perceptions and management ways. When faced with growing Kurdish power, Turkey adopts a threat-centric discourse towards Kurdish entities and focused on ways to control this empowerment through military and political strategies. In contrast, the US usually embraces an approach towards the PYD/YPG that contradicts with the sensitiveness of its long-standing ally as long as it serves the US's pragmatic policies. One of my concrete finding regarding the Turkish-American alliance is that the growth of Kurdish power is the major challenge for the cohesiveness and persistence of the alliance.

The cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance has started to be tested after the PYD/YPG played a decisive role in Kobane victory. The victory of Kurdish entities with the help of the US airstrikes in Kobane against the ISIS has become a test-case in Turkish-American alliance. Both in Syria and in Iraq, the US has regarded the Kurdish entities as the most effective ground forces to fight against the ISIS and groups with radical tendencies, thus it has established tactical alliances with them at the expense of its strategic formal ally Turkey. This has interrogated the future of the Turkish-American alliance structure and also has pondered to what extent the two states will maintain their partnership in compliance with each other. The developments like Assad's withdrawal from the Kurdish-populated areas, Russia and Iran's involvement which triggered the great power rivalry and ISIS's uncontrollable growth have all served for the rise of Syrian Kurdish entities, primarily the PYD/YPG. The YPG as the military branch of the PYD proved itself throughout time as the competent unitary command which has a reliable hostility against extremist tendencies. The empowerment of the PYD/YPG has increased threat perception of Turkey, while for the US it means more as advantage if it is used efficiently by them, as I witnessed clearly in the aftermath of Kobane. The second concrete finding is that the rise of Kurdish capabilities in the region against the ISIS has led the US to ally with the PYD/YPG as the ground force of choice for the US-led Coalition. The US's recent armament of the SDF with heavy weapons directly and turning a blind eye to Turkey's warnings demonstrates to what extent this alliance is significant for the US.

The after period has constituted hardest years of the Turkish-American alliance, in which they have struggled to maintain their relations under a shared threat perception and common threat management ways as they did in the first and second sup-phases

of the before period. The historical trajectory of the Turkish-American alliance sheds light on the fact that an alliance can persist even though two allies perceive diverging threats, yet the cohesion of this alliance fades due to the divergence of threat perceptions and strategies. The two states have made no compromise to break up all bilateral ties because they consider to attend an alliance is more valuable than non-attendance. Thus, the persistence of the Turkish-American alliance seems not much affected, at least in the short-term, from the growing Kurdish power but the cohesion of Turkish-American alliance has nonetheless decreased seriously due to the practical and discursive divergences on the rise of the PYD/YPG. As long as the PYD/YPG remains "reliable partners" against the ISIS threat, the US will maintain its tactical alliance with them and this in turn will strengthen the their hands. Knowing that the empowerment of the PYD/YPG takes its source from its alliance with the US, Turkey compels to give its covert assent to the US's indirect support to the PYD/YPG through the SDF. Hence, my third concrete finding is that, in the near future it seems that we will witness a "veiled trilateral relationship" between the US, Turkey and the PYD/YPG that is based on some parties' half-hearted and covert assent (Turkey and the PYD/YPG). These three concrete findings give the answer of my research question. The empowerment of the PYD/YPG, which is perceived by Turkey as an equal threat with the PKK, has caused two allies to grown apart both in terms of threat perception and threat management. Hence, this divergence has decreased the cohesion of their alliance in a way that gave way to a kind of "veiled trilateral relationship" among the US, Turkey and the PYD/YPG in the current atmosphere.

6.2. Balance of Threat Theory: Theoretical Observations on Turkish-American Alliance

Balance of threat theory's statist explanations and assumptions regarding the perceived level of threat from the Soviet Union have succeeded to explain the formation of the Turkish-American alliance. Moreover, it explains how the alliance maintained its cohesion depending on the intensity and duration of a common statist threat- the Soviet Union- during the first sup-phase of the alliance. In the same manner, BoT theory explains two allies' balancing act against a statist threat-Saddam regime under the Turkish-American alliance during the Gulf Crisis. However, it failed to clarify the new typology of alliance formations (i.e. the US-KDP/PUK alliance against Saddam regime) and left some areas unexplained in the third sup-phase with the emergence of non-statist threats. BoT theory's state-centric understanding cannot address why Turkey's perceived level of threat from the PKK was higher than the Saddam regime in the 2003 Iraq War. BoT theory's focus on level of threat by not paying attention to the nature of threat (statist/non-statist (ethnic, religious) demonstrated me that both level of threat and nature of threat has determinative role in threat perceptions perceived from an "external threat". Moreover, Walt's four variables for the level of threat is adequate only for statist external threats, but these variables should be adapted to non-statist external threats.

Moreover, Turkey's prioritization of its three-pronged threat (PKK/PYD/YPG) and the US's ISIS-first policy fall behind the assumptions of Walt's functions for the level of threat perceived from these VNSAs. The explanation lies behind Milburn's assumptions that the perception of threat by the target can differentiate based on three main elements: (1) acts of the source of threat, (2) history of the relationship between target and the source of threat, (3) target's recent memories and culture

regarding the source of threat (Milburn, 1969). These three criteria help me to understand Turkey and the US's diverging threat perceptions of the PKK/PYD. Moreover, based on Milburn's assumptions, I determined how Turkey and the US have identified and qualified the significance of the PYD/YPG and ISIS as threat perceptions, respectively. Based on diverging threat perceptions of the PKK/PYD with the emergence of ISIS, the Turkish-American alliance has not found a common threat to be balanced against due to the two allies' different views regarding the PYD/YPG. The reason behind the decrease in cohesion is different perception of threat from these non-statist threats and diverging threat management ways.

BoT theory does not explain why Turkish-American alliance has experienced a low cohesion since the Kobane siege. According to realist and neorealist scholars, the intensity and duration of an external threat is determinative for the cohesion of an alliance. However, the intensity and duration of the PKK/PYD threat has not increased the cohesion of the Turkish-American alliance despite its recent empowerment. On the contrary, evolving threat perceptions of the PKK/PYD and diverging threat management played a vital role in the cohesion of Turkish-American alliance. Moreover, the functions of level of threat (aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, aggressive intentions) do not address properly why Turkey and the US perceived a common threat from Assad regime before the US's ISIS policy shift. Walt's four variables (geographic proximity, aggregate and offensive and aggressive intentions) that determines the level of threat from an external enemy state, do not adequate to explain Turkey's increased level of threat from Assad regime. According to the variables of threat perception discussed in chapter two, breaching the international norms (actually reflected motivation) and political culture (real motivation) were the main elements of Turkey's perception of

threat from Assad and the PYD/YPG. Assad regime's violation of international law by using chemical weapons and oppressing its citizen at the expense of staying in power is reflected as a reason for Turkey's threat perception. However, this is the exposed face of the prioritization of perceived threat from Assad regime, real motivation is the political culture that constructed the equation of the PKK= PYD/YPG= Assad Regime. Assad's alleged ties and turning a blind eye to the ascent of the PKK and its Syrian branch the PYD/YPG since regime's withdrawal from Northern Syria creates reasonable grounds for Turkey's assumptions behind its political culture.

6.3. Revision of BoT Theory: Walt's Critique and Suggestions

Throughout this study, I analyzed Turkish-American alliance formation and maintenance based on the BoT theory's "external threat" concept. The way Walt determines the nature and level of threat carries solely state-centric characteristics. In the new transnational era, in which VNSA has increased their voice more than ever due to systemic and global variables, there is a tendency among states to wield them as a bridge or as an instrument to fulfill their aims. Thus, balance of threat should take into account the significant status of VNSAs both in terms of new actors that shapes alliance formations and in terms of alliance cohesion due to clash of national security priorities among states. Balance of threat theory's limitation of external threats with states left areas of gap while explaining the US's balancing efforts to form alliances against ISIS. Ruling out "non-statist threats" from the external threat concept in the formation of alliances cannot address real-life alliances. The BoT theory introduced by Walt into alliance literature, requires a revision in two issues:

"diverse-actored alliances" and "mobile threat perception" to compensate the lack of "non-statist" threat emphasis.

There is a complex web of alliances formed against a range of actors from states to NSAs and diversified agenda of threats from statist to non-statist. Thus, oversimplifying the balancing act against an aggressive state that has offensive military capacity is remote from (or inadequate for) the current dynamic and variables of transnational alliances formed between state and VNSAs or among-states against VNSAs. The rise of ISIS threat has triggered new type of alliances: Turkey's alliance with religious-based rebel groups and the FSA, the US and Syrian Kurdish entities, Russia's multi-dimensional alliances from Assad regime to Syrian Kurds, Iran's alliance with Popular Mobilization Forces. The intricate partnership between state and VNSAs has required a revision in BoT theory in a way that integrate "diverse-actored alliances" into the alliance literature. Thus, it is difficult to explain the alignment behaviors seen in the chaotic atmosphere of the Middle East based on the existing state-centric assumptions of balance of threat theory.

Both allies have focused on diverge mobile threats which have distance-free and transitive nature originated from VNSAs' de-territorialized and dynamic structure. The PKK/PYD/YPG's ability/capacity of internal disturbance (infiltration) of Turkey's territorial integrity and security has led Turkey to prioritize its three-pronged threat over ISIS threat. Walt's "geographic proximity" assumption to determine the level of threat is not adequate to explain Turkey's perceived level of threat from the PKK and its derivatives as well as the fear for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. The PKK's capacity to disturb the security atmosphere and represent itself as the tutelary of Kurds living inside Turkey has increased the

level of threat perceived by Turkey. From the US perspective, ISIS and other religious-based groups' degree of mobility increased the level of threat perceived from these VNSAs. Geographic proximity assumption is not also adequate to explain US's prioritization because here the US perceives a threat from a dynamic VNSA that nullifies the proximities between a target and a source of threat. Thus, the ability/capacity of disturbance (infiltration) and the degree of mobility suits better for being a function of the level of threat. ISIS's increasing recruitment activities and the ability to use social media to attract more foreign fighters to fight at its ranks in different parts of the world mobilize the nature of threat and increased the perceived threat level. Hence, I propose that Walt's geographic proximity variable should be complemented by a "mobile threat concept" to address better states' increased threat perception from VNSAs.

I propose that the external threat is not the only concept to maintain the cohesion of an alliance, internal threats can also affect the cohesion of an alliance, albeit inverse proportion. This argument is based on three cases in Turkish-American alliance: (1) Protracted "Kurdish Question", (2) "the PKK terrorism" and (3) "15 July Coup Attempt". These issues are related to internal sensitivities of Turkey and, in contrast to external threats, there is an inverse proportion between alliance cohesion and internal danger. When the perception of threat from an internal issue increases, the cohesion of the alliance can decrease related to survival instinct of one ally or diverging interests regarding this internal issue. In the case of 15 July coup attempt, Turkey's perceived level of threat from the Gulenist movement has increased sharply and when Turkey's extradition request was not met by the Obama administration, I have witnessed a weakening in the cohesiveness of the alliance. Another significant cases in this regard were Turkey's interrelated existential threats-

the PKK and the possibility of an independent Kurdish state. Whenever Turkey's perceived level of threat has increased due to internal terrorist activities of the PKK, Turkey has risen its counter-terrorism (CT) measures and this created an intransigence between Washington and Ankara. If I look at the decisions of the US Congress regarding limiting the arm sale to Turkey due to its heavy-handed CT measures to deal with the increased internal danger- the PKK-, I notice the inverse proportion between the alliance cohesion and internal danger.

6.4. Policy Implications and Future Prospects

Based on my qualitative analysis which aims to measure the alliance cohesion by looking the two allies' threat perceptions and threat management of the PKK/PYD in the long-run, I determine the cohesion degree between the US and Turkey once more, as I determine in the 2003 Iraq War, as a "low cohesion". The meaning of the "low cohesion" for the Turkish-American alliance is that the long-standing partnership shows signs of faltering in the sense that the alliance's interests are no more important than each ally's individual interests. In this regard, the US and Turkey's evolving threat perception of the PKK/PYD have led each ally to adopt different threat management which in turn has created a divergence in their policy. The Kobane siege is where the US restarted to differ the PKK from the PYD/YPG in order to fight effectively against the ISIS threat. The US's evolving threat perception of the PKK at the expense of its ally has caused the loss of the spirit of the Turkish-American alliance. The frequency of addressing as "friends" to each other in the presidential level has decreased. Furthermore, according to Pew Research Center, while the US favorability in Turkey in 2015 was %29, in the beginning of Trump administration the figure declined to %11 ("Tracking the US favorability", 2017).

This decline demonstrates us to what extent the anti-Americanism has increased in Turkey in two years.

Moreover, the "low cohesion" means the damaged trust atmosphere as a result of the two allies' conflictive policy practices. If this mistrust deepens and turns out to a long-term confidence crisis between two allies, then it will complicate the formation of a confluence in terms of their threat perceptions and strategies in the long-term. In this regard, one of the implications of this "low cohesion" is that the discord between two allies will feed the past misperceptions in two sides and will facilitate the violation of norms and principles which they have bounded since 1950s at the expense short-term tactical interests. Unless the US pay attention to Turkey's cooperation and sensitivities or increases the common grounds where the long-term alliance function, the US policies that aims to bring stability to the problematic regions will fail in the long-term. In the same perspective, unless Turkey develops a multi-dimensional strategy to draw its strategic ally's attention which focuses on to converge threat perceptions and strategies, Turkey will be the losing party in terms of its national priorities and security interests.

To date, the damaged relations between the US and Turkey have been tried to restored with new branding attempts in order to give a new breath to the alliance or renovated through high level visits by military and political figures. Thus, restoring the alliance to a previous state depends on two sides' mutual political efforts. The critical thing in these political efforts is to adopt a discursive and practical reconciliation that has reflections on the alliance cohesion. In the short-term, concurrence of threat perceptions and threat management of the PKK/PYD threat seems to be an arduous issue due to the two sides' differing views about the

PYD/YPG. The US's recent decision to arm with heavy weapons the SDF, which the YPG constitutes the main skeleton, may be seen as a US strategy to compel Turkey to resume the negotiation (solution) process with the PKK. Turkey's concerns about the PYD/YPG's increasing military capacity has emanated from the fear of the PKK's accession to these weapons. Nevertheless, this strategy can also create a backlash in Turkey's perspective and compel Turkey to adopt a more heavy-handed military strategy both inside the country and abroad. While Turkey's decision to sit on a negotiation table with the PKK will increase the maneuver of the US in its fight against ISIS, on the other hand, the latter consequence of the SDF's armament can deepen more the strained ties between the US and Turkey by further lowering the alliance cohesion.

It is very hard to forecast that the low cohesion will lead to a breaking in the alliance because the analysis since Kobane siege covers only the three-year period which is open to new developments. The low cohesion experienced between two allies regarding the Kurdish issue aftermath of the 2003 Iraq war was restored nearly after six years by giving a special status under the "the model partnership". Thus, it can be false to argue that low cohesion in the short-term will lead to the disintegration of the 60-year alliance, as claimed abundantly both in the US and Turkish media sources since 2014. However, one thing is clear from my analysis that, whenever the alliance experiences a low degree or ambivalence in alliance cohesion, the main reason behind this low level of cohesiveness between two states is the protracted Kurdish issue and the interrelated PKK terrorism. The Kurdish question of Turkey is no longer a national security issue, but has transformed into a transnational issue that gained new dimensions in other Kurdish populated areas in the neighborhood of Turkey. Thus, Turkey should develop a fast adaptation process

in response to growing Kurdish power as was achieved towards the Iraqi Regional government. Managing this adaptation process solely with political discourse and blending in one repository all threat perceptions from the PKK/PYD to ISIS, from ISIS to Assad and recently adding the FETO will cause a mal-adaptation, and in turn will trigger much more confusion between two allies about perceptions and strategies.

I argue that there is a "veiled trilateral relationship" between three actors, which harbors a tactical alliance between the US and the PYD/YPG and an existing formal alliance between Turkey and the US under NATO formal structure. While there is the possibility to upgrade the Turkish-American alliance to its strategic status, I argue that the PKK/PYD-US alliance will maintain its tactical status in the long-term due to the following reasons: (1) Historical instrumentalization behind the US's perception of the PKK/PYD as a tactical ally; (2) Non-formal structure and mechanisms; (3) The type of actors and the over-emphasis on the military dimension; (4) The longevity and the nature of threat.

First of all, I noticed that generally there has been an historical instrumentalization regarding certain Kurdish entities as part of the global power struggle for the US. This view relies on several historical facts: Firstly, to break the Soviet threat in Iraq, the US approached to Molla Mustafa Barzani, the leader of the KDP in the 1960s and 1970s; Secondly, aftermath of treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Iraq, Nixon administration had provided arm and financial support to armed Kurdish groups between 1972 and 1975; Thirdly, to keep Turkey in the Western satellite in the post-Cold War, the US again used the Kurds living in Turkey and also used Iraqi Kurds against Saddam regime in the 1990s; Fourthly, the US

approached once again to the KDP and the PUK in the 2000s to manage the Saddam threat. However, these partnerships did not go beyond temporary alliances due to the US's policy shift that annoyed certain Kurdish entities while drawing other allies' attention. Several historical facts stand out: (1) after the demise of the Qasim regime in 1963, the Kennedy administration backed the Ba'th Party that launched a brutal war against certain Kurdish groups in Iraq (Gibson, 2016: xiv); (2) the designation of the PKK as a foreign terrorist organization by the US; (3) the US's assistance to Turkey in the capture of Ocalan; (4) the US's rapprochement with Baghdad regime at the expense of certain Iraqi Kurdish entities in the 2010s to circumvent Iran's influence. Hence, the afore-mentioned facts demonstrates how certain Kurdish entities were used as a bargaining issue and how Kurdish card was hold by the US for strategic purposes. This historical instrumentalization is based on the US's foreign policy culture that considers (V)NSAs as pragmatic factors which can be sacrificed if necessary. This situation leads to the low level of trust between partners and positioned the established partnerships merely for meeting particular needs. The US is not the only side that has considered this partnership as an instrument, the PYD/PKK also has tried to benefit from great power rivalry between the US and Russia. Moreover, the short-term alliance between Assad regime and the PYD/YPG has demonstrated to what extent the PYD/YPG is inclined to make tactical moves to realize its aspirations. Hence, when it comes to military installations in Turkey, specifically Incirlik, the PYD/PKK aware of the fact they do not have a chance when both Turkey and them put into a scalepan. As such, the US will be ready to make concessions regarding Kurdish rights and aspirations to keep Turkey into the equation of the veiled trilateral relationship.

The second factor that positions the partnership between the US and the PYD/YPG as a tactical alliance is its less institutionalized and less formal structure in contrast to the formal affiliations between Turkey and the US under NATO structure and international agreements. The partnership between the US and the PKK/PYD has been maintained in obscure conditions without direct contact with each other. The formation of a multi-ethnic umbrella group-the SDF- and canalizing military assistance through the SDF is the reflection of this situation. Another concrete example for indirect mechanism between the PKK/PYD and the US is some US combat charities' (SOLI and HDA) assistance to the PKK/PYD. These combat charities have ensured military equipment, have provided foreign volunteers and have taught the forces on the ground how to improve their operational security and combine field intelligence via online social media platforms. Furthermore, even though the US has specified the PYD/YPG's vital role against the ISIS threat, we have not witnessed so far a formal meeting between the PYD's leader Salih Muslim and a high state official of the US government. There were rumors that a US official met with Muslim to discuss the YPG's role in the anti-ISIS coalition; however, this meeting did not approve by the White House. Even the photos that show some US soldiers' wearing the YPG insignia were explained that this is only a military measure to protect the US soldiers on the ground. Due to the maintenance of this partnership through indirect canals, undeclared type of relationship, and lack institutional mechanisms that guarantees the future of the partnership, the alliance between the PYD/PKK and the US will maintain its tactical status.

Thirdly, the type of entities or actors and their activities in a partnership also determine the type of the alliance (strategic or tactical) and the future of the alliance. The existence of the US's military wing in the field and the role of the Pentagon has

been determinative in the course of events. The increasing status of the US-CENTCOM under anti-ISIS coalition and enquiry agents have facilitated the tactical partnership between the PYD/PKK/YPG and the US. The lack of diplomatic ties and non-existence of diplomatic personnel in this partnership have caused the formation of short-term commitments and temporary trade-offs between two sides. The short-term commitments are based on the US's military and logistic support and the PYD/PKK's usage of this support on the ground against the ISIS. These commitments do not have an economic or political dimension. The political dimension refers to establishing political ties through high-level visits of the state officials, diplomats and publicize the alliance by making joint declaration. The economic dimension is the consolidation of the partnership through trade agreements that increase the longevity, dependency and trustworthiness of the two allies in an alliance. However, while Turkey and the US's alliance carries all these dimensions (military, political and economic), the partnership between the PYD/PKK/YPG relies solely on military victories which in turn positions this as a tactical alliance. In every vital military victories the US upgraded the PYD/YPG's status. For instance, after Kobane victory the PYD/YPG was transformed from "friendly forces" to the "reliable ally" and in Tal-Abyad victory the latter status evolved into "the most effective ground ally". This evolution gives us a clue that the US has defined its partnership based on the PYD/YPG's tactical capability.

Moreover, the understanding of the "mission completed" in the military wing creates a swift transformation from war-time conditions to peace-time conditions in cases where (V)NSAs are utilized as a substitution strategy. This transformation causes that there is no need for non-states ally on the ground and the existing alliance with them can be discarded in peace-time conditions. Thus, the high possibility of

being abandoned by states leads (V)NSAs to form alliances with several states and to employ other tactical moves. For instance, the empowerment of the PKK/PYD stems from its flexible partnership with other global and regional actors (i.e. Russia and Syria) at the expense of its partnership with the US. The PYD/PKK's such affiliations have prevented the US to establish systematic and extensive cooperation. When I looked at the US military wing's official statements, I notice that the US has evaluated its partnership with the PKK/PYD through the lens of victories gained on the ground. When required the US urged the PYD/YPG to accommodate with Turkey's redlines in northern Syria and has given limited scope of responsibilities for abstaining from extensive cooperation. The lack of systematic and extensive cooperation showed itself on April 25, 2017 after the Turkish military airstrikes conducted in Qamishli and in the Sinjar region of Iraq against Turkey's three pronged threat the PKK/PYD/YPG. It has been reported that some YPG officials complained that the US did not make an early warning for the evacuation of the buildings targeted in these airstrikes (Bonsey, "Will the Americans Abandon Us?", 2017). The heavy loss of the PYD/YPG reminded them once again that despite being called as "the most effective ally" on the ground, the US ignored to stop Turkey that is ready for any moment to attack to its primary threat perception. The two ways to prevent such attacks have been seen as giving verbal warnings to its NATO-ally and developing a habit of increasing the US military personnel's appearance publicly in the YPG/PKK areas to deter Turkey to cause damage.

Fourthly, as generally seen in the US's foreign policy, the US's alliance with states and (V)NSAs is also based on the endurance and the nature of threat. If the US's threat perception carries non-statist features and has been regarded to be wiped out in the short-term, then there is a high tendency to see as temporary instruments

for managing this non-statist threat perception. The alliance between the US and the PKK/PYD is based on the longevity of the ISIS threat. Due to the non-statist characteristic of the ISIS threat, both the US and the PKK/PYD knows the reality that when the ISIS threat comes to an end, which seems an attainable result when one consider the military success in Mosul and Raqqa operations, then the rationale that brought two sides together can disappear easily. Nearly in every official statements, the US state and military officials have uttered their "ISIS-first" policy. Thus, the US has not determined what will happen to its critical ground partners after "degrading and defeating the ISIS threat". It seems that the more ISIS loses ground, the more the PYD/YPG has become a valuable asset in the eyes of the US; however, this situation can also wane the partnership between the US and the PYD/YPG, which in turn may left the latter unprotected against Turkey and other pro-Turkish religious-based groups (Bonsey, "Will the Americans Abandon Us?", 2017).

REFERENCES

Akgün, M., Gündogar, S. S., & Görgülü, A. (2014). *Politics in Troubled Times: Israel-Turkey Relations.* Retrieved from Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation Website: http://tesev.org.tr/en/yayin/politics-in-troubled-times-israel-turkey-relations/.

Altfeld, M. (1984). The Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test, *The Western Political Quarterly*, 37(4), 523-544. doi:10.2307/448471.

Altunişik, M. B. (2006). Turkey's Iraq Policy: The War and Beyond, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 14(2), 183-196.

Altunışık, M. B. (2013). The Middle East in Turkey–USA relations: managing the alliance, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 15(2), 157-173.

Aras, B. (2009). The Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy, *Insight Turkey*, 11(3), 127-142.

Arıogul, I. (2003). American Turkish relations 1945-1960: the roots of a long-term alliance (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Bilkent University.

Athanassopoulou, E. (2001). American-Turkish relations since the end of the Cold War, *Middle East Policy*, 8(3), 144-164.

Atmaca A. O. (2017). Turkey-US Relations (2009–2016): A troubled partnership in a troubled world?. In P. G. Ercan (Eds.), *Turkish Foreign Policy: International Relations, Legality and Global Reach*, (pp. 63-83). Palgrave Macmillan.

Aydın A. and Emrence C. (2016). Two Routes to an Impasse: Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Policy. The Center on the United States and Europe (CUSE).

Aydın, M. (2009). Reconstructing Turkish-American relations: Divergences versus convergences. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 40, 125-146.

Aydıntasbas A. and Kirisci K. (2017). The United States and Turkey Friends, Enemies, or Only Interests. The Center on the United States and Europe (CUSE).

Aykan, M. B. (1996). Turkish perspectives on Turkish-US relations concerning Persian Gulf security in the post-Cold War era: 1989-1995, *The Middle East Journal*, 50(3), 344-358.

Bacon, T. (2015). Hurdles to International Terrorist Alliances: Lessons from al Qaeda's Experience, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 29(1), 79-101.

Bailes, A. J., Thayer, B. A., & Thorhallsson, B. (2016). Alliance theory and alliance 'Shelter': the complexities of small state alliance behavior, *Third World Thematic: A TWQ Journal*, 1(1), 9-26.

Balik, G. (2016). Turkey and the US in the Middle East: Diplomacy and Discord during the Iraq Wars. IB Tauris.

Bapat, N. A., & Bond, K. D. (2012). Alliances between militant groups, *British Journal of Political Science*, 42(4), 793-824.

Barkey, H. J. (2003). The endless pursuit: improving US–Turkish relations. In M. I. Abramowitz (Eds.), *The United States and Turkey: Allies in Need*, (pp. 207-249). Washington: The Century Foundation.Barkey, H. J. (2016). Syria's Dark Shadow over US-Turkey Relations, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 14(4), 25-36.

Barnett, M. N., & Levy, J. S. (1991). Domestic sources of alliances and alignments: the case of Egypt, 1962–73, *International Organization*, 45(3), 369-395.Bennett, D. S. (1997). Testing alternative models of alliance duration, 1816-1984, *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(3), 846-878.

Beres, L. R. (1972). Bipolarity, multipolarity, and the reliability of alliance commitments, *The Western Political Quarterly*, 25(4), 702-710.

Bernstein, B. J. (1980). The Cuban missile crisis: trading the Jupiters in Turkey?, *Political Science Quarterly*, 95(1), 97-125.

Bolukbasi, S. (1988). *The Superpowers and the Third World: Turkish-American Relations and Cyprus* (Exxon Education Foundation Series on Rhetoric and Political Discourse (15th ed). London: University Press of America.

Booth, K., & Wheeler, N.J. (2008). *The security dilemma: Fear, cooperation and trust in world politics.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brown, C. S. (2007). Turkey in the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003, *Turkish Studies*, 8(1), 85-119.

Brown, J. (1991). *Delicately poised allies: Greece and Turkey. Problems, Policy Choices and Mediterranean Security*. London: Brassey's.

Byman, D. (2005). *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Byman, D. (2005). Passive sponsors of terrorism, *Survival*, 47(4), 117-144.

Byman, D. (2006). Remaking alliances for the war on terrorism, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 29(5), 767-811.

Byman, D., Chalk P., Hoffman B., Rosenau W., & Brannan D. (2001). *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Campany, R. C. (1986). *Turkey and the United States: The Arms Embargo Period*, New York: Praeger.

Carpenter, T. G. (1991). America Entangled: The Persian Gulf Crisis and Its Consequences. Washington DC: Cato Institute.

Chase, R. S., Hill, E. B., & Kennedy, P. (1996). Pivotal states and US strategy, *Foreign Affairs*, 75 (33).

Chaudhry, R. (2013). Violent Non-State Actors: Contours, Challenges and Consequences. *CLAWS Journal*.

Cooper, S. (2003). State-Centric Balance of Threat Theory: Explaining the Misunderstood Gulf Cooperation Council, *Security Studies*, 13(2), 306-349.

Coufoudakis, V. (1981). Turkey and the United States: The Problems and Prospects of a Post-War Alliance, *JPMS: Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 9(2), 179-196.

Couloumbis, T. A. (1983). *The United States, Greece, and Turkey: The Troubled Triangle*. Praeger Publishers.

Crawshaw, N. (1978). *The Cyprus revolt: An account of the struggle for union with Greece*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Crenshaw, M. (1990). Is International Terrorism Primarily State-Sponsored? In C. W. Kegley (Eds.), *International Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, and Controls*, Jr. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Criss N. B. (1993). US Forces in Turkey. In W. Krieger (Eds.), *US Military Forces in Europe: The Early Years, 1945-1970*, (pp.331-351). Westview Press.

Criss, N.B. (1995). International Institutions and European Security: A Turkish Perspective. In M. Carnovale (Eds.), *European Security and International Institutions after the Cold War* (pp. 198-214). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

David, S. R. (1991). Explaining third world alignment, *World Politics*, 43(2), 233-256.

Davutoğlu, A. (2008). Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007, *Insight Turkey*, 10(1).

De Mesquita, B. B. (1981). Risk, power distributions, and the likelihood of war, *International Studies Quarterly*, 25(4), 541-568.

Ehrlich, T. (1974). *Cyprus, 1958-1967*. London: Oxford University Press.

Eligür, B. (2006). Turkish-American relations since the 2003 Iraqi war: a troubled partnership. *Crown Center for Middle East Studies* (Middle East Brief, No.6).

Erdogan asks Americans: Who's your partner, Turkey or Kurds?. (2016, February 7). Retrieved from http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=75103.

Erhan, Ç., & Aydın, M. (2004). *Turkish-American Relations: Past Present and Future*. Routledge.

Erickson, E. J. (2004). Turkey as regional hegemon-2014: Strategic implications for the United States, *Turkish Studies*, 5(3), 25-45.

Farnham, B. (2003). The theory of democratic peace and threat perception. *International studies quarterly*, 47(3), 395-415.

Fearon, J.D. (2011). Two states, two types, two actions, *Security studies*, 20(3), 431-440.

Fedder, E. H. (1968). The concept of alliance, *International Studies Quarterly*, 12(1), 65-86.

Ferris, J., & Self, A. (2016). Dead Men Tell No Lies: Using Killed-In-Action (KIA) Data to Expose the PKK's Regional Shell Game, *Defense against Terrorism Review*, 8(1), 9-35.

Friedman, J. R., Bladen, C., & Rosen, S. (1970). *Alliance in international politics*. Allyn and Bacon.

George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. MIT Press.

George, M. G. (1990). *The US Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection*. London: Macmillan.

Gibler, D. M., & Sarkees, M.R. (2004). Measuring alliances: The correlates of war formal interstate alliance dataset, 1816–2000, *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(2), 211-222.

Gibler, D. M., & Vasquez, J. A. (1998). Uncovering the dangerous alliances, 1495–1980, *International Studies Quarterly*, 42(4), 785-807.

Gibson, B. R. (2016). *Sold Out? US Foreign Policy, Iraq, the Kurds, and the Cold War*. Springer.

Gillis, P. F. (2004). US-Turkish Relations: The Road to Improving a Troubled Strategic Partnership. USAWC Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks Pennsylvania.

Glaser, C.L. (1977). The security dilemma revisited, *World politics*, 50(1), 171-201.

Gleditsch, K. S. (2007). Transnational Dimensions of Civil War, *Journal of Peace Research* 44 (3), 293–309.

Gleditsch, K. S., Salehyan, I., & Schultz, K. (2008). Fighting at home, fighting abroad: How civil wars lead to international disputes, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52(4), 479-506.

Global Research (2011), NATO's Eastern Anchor. 24 NATO bases in Turkey. Retrieved from http://www.globalresearch.ca/nato-s-eastern-anchor-24-nato-bases-in-turkey/23205, Accessed on December 25, 2016.

Gönül, V. (2010). Turkey-NATO Relations and NATO's New Strategic Concept. *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 9(1), 15-21.

Gresh, A. (1998). Turkish-Israeli-Syrian relations and their impact on the Middle East, *The Middle East Journal*, 52(2), 188-203.

Gulick, E. V. (1955). Europe's classical balance of power: A case history of the theory and practice of one of the great concepts of European statecraft (No. 413). New York, Norton.

Gunes, C., & Lowe, R. (2015). The impact of the Syrian war on Kurdish politics across the Middle East. Chatham House (The Royal Institute of International Affairs), Middle East and North Africa Program.

Guney, A. (2005). An anatomy of the transformation of the US–Turkish alliance: from "Cold War" to "War on Iraq", *Turkish Studies*, 6(3), 341-359.

Gunter, M. (2004). US Foreign Policy towards the Kurds. In M. Lokman (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in U.S. Foreign Policy: A Documentary Sourcebook*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Gunter, M. M. (2005). The US-Turkish alliance in disarray, *World Affairs*, 167(3), 113-123.

Haass, R. N. (1986). Managing NATO's Weakest Flank-The United-States, Greece, and Turkey, *ORBIS-A Journal of World Affairs*, 30(3), 457-473.

Hale, W. (1992). Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf crisis, *International Affairs*, 68(4), 679-692.

Hale, W. (1992). Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf crisis. *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), 68, 679-692.

Hale, W. (1993). Turkish foreign policy after the cold war, *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, 1, 231-248.

Hale, W. (2000). *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000*. London: Frank Cass.

Harris, G. S. (1972). *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American problems in historical perspective, 1945-1971*. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Harris, G. S. (1985). *Turkey: Coping with Crisis*. Westview Press.

Hellmann, G. & Reinhard W. (1993). Neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, and the future of NATO, Security Studies, 3(1), 3-43.

Holsti, O. R., Hopmann, P. T., & Sullivan, J. D. (1973). *Unity and disintegration in international alliances: Comparative studies*. John Wiley & Sons.

Hopf, T. (2002). *Social construction of international politics: Identities and foreign policies, Moscow 1955 and 1999*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Idler, A. (2012). Exploring Agreements of Convenience Made among Violent Non-State Actors, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 6(5).

Isyar, O. G. (2005). An analysis of Turkish-American relations from 1945 to 2004: Initiatives and reactions in Turkish foreign policy, *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 4(3).

Jervis, R. (1978). Cooperation under the security dilemma, *World politics*, 30(2), 167-214.

Karaosmanoglu, A. L. (1999). NATO Enlargement and the South: A Turkish Perspective, *Security Dialogue*, 30(2), 213-224.

Kardas, S. (2011). Turkish-American Relations in the 2000s: Revisiting the Basic Parameters of Partnership?, *Perceptions*, 16(3), 25-52.

Kaufman, R. G. (1992). To Balance or To Bandwagon? Alignment Decisions in 1930s Europe, *Security Studies*, 1(3), 417-447.

Keyman, E. F. (2009). Turkish foreign policy in the era of global turmoil. SETA Policy Brief, 39, 1-16.

Kuniholm, B. R. (1980). The origins of the cold war in the Near East. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Kuniholm, B. R. (1991). Turkey and the West, *Foreign Affairs*, 70(2), 34-48.

Kushner, D. (1996). Turkey: Iraq's European Neighbor. In A. Baram, B. Rubin (Eds.), *Iraq's Road to War*, (pp. 205-218). Palgrave Macmillan.

Kydd, A. (1997). Sheep in sheep's clothing: Why security seekers do not fight each other, *Security studies*, 7(1), 114-155.

Lake, D. (2011). Two cheers for bargaining theory: Assessing rationalist explanations of the Iraq war, *International security*, 35(3), 7-52.

Larrabee, F. S. (2007). Turkey Rediscovers the Middle East, *Foreign Affairs*, 86(4), 103-115.

Larrabee, F. S. (2008). Turkey as a U.S. Security Partner. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG694.html.

Larrabee, F. S. (2016). Turkey and the Changing Dynamics of the Kurdish Issue. Survival, 58(2), 67-73.

Lebow, R. N. (2010). *Why nations fight: Past and future motives for war*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leffler, M. P. (1985). Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945-1952, *The Journal of American History*, 71(4), 807-825.

Liska, G. (1962). *Nations in alliance: The limits of interdependence*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Makarenko, T., & Mesquita, M. (2014). Categorizing the crime–terror nexus in the European Union, *Global Crime*, 15(3), 259-274.

Makovsky, A. (2000). *Turkey's transformation and American policy*. New York: Twentieth Century Foundation.

Maoz, Z., & Mor B. D. (2002). In A. Arbor (Eds.), *Bound by Struggle: The Strategic Evolution of Enduring International Rivalries*. MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Maoz, Z., & San- Akca, B. (2012). Rivalry and State Support of Non- State Armed Groups (NAGs), 1946–2011, *International Studies Quarterly*, 56(4), 720-734.

Meho, L. I. (2004). *The Kurdish question in US foreign policy: A documentary sourcebook*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Mercer, J. (1996). *Reputation and international politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Meyer, C. O. (2009). International terrorism as a force of homogenization? A constructivist approach to understanding cross-national threat perceptions and responses, *Cambridge review of international affairs*, 22(4), 647-666.

Mickolus, E. F. (1981). Combatting international terrorism: a quantitative analysis (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). Yale University.

Miguel, F. M. S. (2013). Threat Perception in International Relations: The Realist and the Liberal Accounts, *Brazilian Journal of International Relations*, 2(3), 483-509.

Milburn, T. W. (1969). Intellectual history of a research program. In D. G. Pruitt, R. C. Snyder (Eds.), *Theory and research on the causes of war*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Miller, E. A., & Toritsyn, A. (2005). Bringing the leader back in: Internal threats and alignment theory in the Commonwealth of Independent States, *Security Studies*, 14(2), 325-363.

Miller, G. D. (2003). Hypotheses on reputation: alliance choices and the shadow of the past, *Security studies*, 12(3), 40-78.

Modelski, G., Liska, G., Osgood, R. E., & Zagoria, D. S. (1963). The Study of Alliances. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 7(4), 769-776.

Morandeira A. C. (2016). The effects of Kobane in the reconfiguration of the popular geopolitical codes of Turkey's Kurdish movement (Unpublished Master Thesis). Autonomous University of Madrid.

Morbach, G. W. (1998). Terrorism and organized crime: the alliance of tomorrow? How to counter a possible future threat (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School.

Morgenthau, H. (1948). *Politics among Nations*, Knopf, New York.

Morris, B. (2008). *1948: A history of the First Arab-Israeli War*. Yale University Press.

Morris, R. (1977). *Uncertain greatness: Henry Kissinger and American foreign policy*. HarperCollins Publishers.

Morrow, J. D. (1991). Alliances and asymmetry: An alternative to the capability aggregation model of alliances, *American journal of political science*, 35(4), 904-933.

Morrow, J. D. (1993). Arms versus allies: Trade-offs in the search for security. *International Organization*, 47(2), 207-233.

Müftüler-Bac, M. (1996). Turkey's predicament in the post-cold war era. *Futures*, 28(3), 255-268.

O'Reilly, C. (2014). Crime and Dissent: Northern Irish Paramilitaries Rely on Criminality, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 26(3), 50–53.

Oest, K. J. N. (2007). The End of Alliance Theory? A Literature Review of Realist Alliance Theory. Working Paper 2007/03, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Oğuzlu, T. (2013). Testing the strength of the Turkish–American strategic relationship through NATO: convergence or divergence within the Alliance?, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 15(2), 207-222.

Ortiz, R. D. (2002). Insurgent strategies in the post-cold war: the case of the revolutionary armed forces of Colombia. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 25(2), 127-143.

Ozel, S. (2011). Indispensable even when unreliable: An anatomy of Turkish-American relations. *International Journal*, 67(1), 53-64.

Padelford, N. J., Lincoln, G. A., & Olvey, L. D. (1976). *The dynamics of international politics*. Macmillan Publishing Company.

Pakel, A. B. (2007). Turkish-American relations (1945-1980): quest for security and adapting to change (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). Bilkent University.

Parlar, D. E. (2017). Impact of the transnationalization of the Syrian civil war on Turkey: conflict spillover cases of ISIS and PYD-YPG/PKK, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 29(4), 1396-1420.

Paul, T. V. (1995). Time Pressure and War Initiation: Some Linkages, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 28(2), 255-276.

Polyviou, P. G. (1975). *Cyprus: the tragedy and the challenge*. American Hellenic Institute.

Prager, R. (2003). *Turkish-American relations: Historical context and current issues. Washington (DC)*, Georgetown University Publication.

Press, D.G. (2005). *Calculating credibility: How leaders assess military threats*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Rasler, K., & Thompson, W. R. (2000). Explaining rivalry escalation to war: Space, position, and contiguity in the major power subsystem, *International Studies Quarterly*, 44(3), 503-530.

Rothstein, R. L. (1968). *Alliances and small powers*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rousseau, D. L. (2006). *Identifying threats and threatening identities: The social construction of realism and liberalism.* Stanford University Press.

Rubin, B. (1985). Middle East Policy in the Turkish Context. In Harris, G. S. (Eds.), *The Middle East in Turkish-American Relations*. The Heritage Foundation.

Rubin, M. (2005). A comedy of errors: American-Turkish Diplomacy and the Iraq War. *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 4(1), 113-123.

Rubin, M. (2016). Kurdistan Rising? Considerations for Kurds, Their Neighbors, and the Region. American Enterprise Institute (Washington, DC).

Rustow, D. A. (1989). *Turkey: America's forgotten ally*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press.

Saideman, S. M. (2002). Discrimination in International Relations: Analyzing External Support for Ethnic Groups. *Journal of Peace Research*. 39(1), 27–50

Salehyan, I. (2007). Transnational Rebels: Neighboring States as Sanctuary for Rebel Groups, *World Politics*, 59(2), 217–242.

Salehyan, I. (2008). No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict, *Journal of Politics*, 70 (1), 54–66.

San Akca, B. (2009). Supporting non-state armed groups: a resort to illegality?, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32(4), 589-613.

Sayari, S. (1992). Turkey: the changing European security environment and the Gulf Crisis, *Middle East Journal*, 46(1), 9-21.

Sayari, S. (2004). Turkish-American Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: Issues of Convergence and Divergence. In M. Aydın, Ç. Erhan (Eds.), *Turkish–American Relations: Past, Present, and Future*, (pp. 91-106). Routledge.

Schroeder, P. W. (1976). Alliances, 1815–1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management. In K. Knorr (Eds.), *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*, (pp. 227–262). Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Schweller, R. L. (1994). Bandwagoning for profit: Bringing the revisionist state back in, *International Security*, 19(1), 72-107.

Selden, Z. (2013). Balancing against or balancing with? The spectrum of alignment and the endurance of American hegemony, *Security studies*, 22(2), 330-364.

Seydi, S. (2010). Turkish–American Relations and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1957–63, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 46(3), 433-455.

Sezer, D. B. (1995). Turkey's new security environment, nuclear weapons and proliferation, *Comparative Strategy*, 14(2), 149-172.

Singer, J. D., & Small, M. (1966). Formal alliances, 1815—1939: A Quantitative Description, *Journal of Peace Research*, 3(1), 1-31.

Snyder, G. (1991). "Alliance theory: A neorealist first cut". In R. L. Rothstein (Eds.), The evolution of theory in international relations. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Snyder, G. H. (1984). The security dilemma in alliance politics, *World politics*, 36(4), 461-495.

Snyder, G. H. (1991). Alliances, balance, and stability, *International Organization*, 45(1), 121-142.

Snyder, G. H. (1997). *Alliance Politics*. Ithaca Cornell University Press.

Snyder, J. (1990). Chain gangs and passed bucks: predicting alliance patterns in, *International Organization*, 44(2), 137-168.

Sorokin, G. L. (1994). Arms, alliances, and security tradeoffs in enduring rivalries, *International Studies Quarterly*, 38(3), 421-446.

Spain, J. W. (1975). The United States, Turkey and the Poppy, *Middle East Journal*, 29(3), 295-309.

Stearns, M. (1992). Entangled allies: US policy toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus, *Foreign Affairs*, 71(4).

Stein, J. G. (2013). Threat perception in international relations. In L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, and J. S. Levy (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (2th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Taniş. T. (2016). US-Turkey Relations at a Breaking Point over the Kurds, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 14 (4), 67-75.

Tarazona-Sevillano, G., & Reuter, J. B. (1990). *Sendero Luminoso and the threat of narcoterrorism*. Praeger Publishers.

Tekdemir, S. (2004). The contours of post-Cold War Turkish-American relations: 1990-2001 (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). Bilkent University.

Tertrais, B. (2004). The changing nature of military alliances, *Washington Quarterly*, 27(2), 133-150.

Thornton, R. (2015). Problems with the Kurds as proxies against Islamic State: insights from the siege of Kobane, Small Wars & Insurgencies, 26(6), 865-885.

Tür, O. (2009). Türkiye-İsrail İlişkilerinde Kriz–Davos ve Sonrası, *Ortadoğu Analiz*, 1(11), 35-40.

Turkey's growing security concerns (2015). Strategic Comments, 21:6, i-iii, doi: 10.1080/13567888.2015.1112603.

Türkmen, F. (2009). Turkish–American relations: a challenging transition, *Turkish Studies*, 10(1), 109-129.

Uslu, N. (2003). *The Turkish-American relationship between 1947 and 2003: the history of a distinctive alliance*. Nova Publishers.

Ustun, K., and Kanat, K. (2012). US-Turkey relations: Arab spring and the search for model partnership. *SETA Foundation Perspective*, 1-6.

Walker, J. (2008). Reexamining the U.S.-Turkish Alliance, The Washington Quarterly, 31(1), 93-109.

Walt, S. M. (1985). Alliance formation and the balance of world power, *International security*, 9(4), 3-43.

Walt, S. M. (1987). *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca. NY: Cornell University.

Walt, S. M. (1988). Testing theories of alliance formation: the case of Southwest Asia, *International Organization*, 42(2), 275-316.

Walt, S. M. (1990). The origins of alliance. Cornell University Press.

Walt, S. M. (1997). Why alliances endure or collapse. *Survival*, 39(1), 156-179.

Walt, S. M. (2009). Alliances in a unipolar world, *World politics*, 61(1), 86-120.

Waltz, K. (1979). *Theory of international relations*. Addison-Wesley.

Weitsman, P. A. (1997). Intimate enemies: The politics of peacetime alliances, *Security Studies*, 7(1), 156-193.

Weitsman, P. A. (2003). Alliance Cohesion and Coalition Warfare: The Central Powers and Triple Entente, *Security Studies*, 12(3), 79-113.

Weitsman, P. A. (2004). *Dangerous alliances: proponents of peace, weapons of war*. Stanford University Press.

Welch Larson, D. (1991). Bandwagoning Images in American Foreign Policy: Mith or Reality?. In R. Jervis, J. Snyder (Eds.), *Dominoes and Bandwagons.*

Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian Rimland, (pp. 85-111). New York : Oxford University Press.

Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics, *International organization*, 46(2), 391-425.

Williams, P. (2002). Cooperation among criminal organizations. In M. Berdal, Monica Serrano (Eds.), *Transnational organized crime and international security: Business as usual?* (pp. 67-80). London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Williams, P. (2008). *Violent non-state actors and national and international security*. International Relations and Security Network.

Williams, P., & Godson, R. (2002). Anticipating organized and transnational crime, *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 37(4), 311-355.

Williams, P., & Savona, E. U. (1996). *The United Nations and transnational organized crime*. Taylor & Francis.

Wivel, A. (2008). Balancing against threats or bandwagoning with power? Europe and the transatlantic relationship after the Cold War, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 21(3), 289-305.

Wohlforth, W. (2009). Unipolarity, status competition, and great power war, *World politics*, 61(1), 28-57.

Wolfers, A. (1962). The balance of power in theory and practice. In A. Wolfers (Eds.) , *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*, (pp.117-133). Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Wolfers, A. (1968). Alliances. In D. L. Sills (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of the social sciences*, (pp.268-271). New York: Macmillan.

Xu, R. (2017). *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Yavuz, M. H. (2013). *Toward an Islamic Enlightenment: The Gülen Movement*. Oxford University Press.

Yavuz, M. H., & Esposito, J. L. (2003). *Turkish Islam and the secular state: The Gulen Movement*. Syracuse University Press.

Yavuz, M. H., & Koç, R. (2016). The Turkish Coup Attempt: The Gülen Movement vs. the State, Middle East Policy, 23(4), 136-148.

Yavuz, T. (1993). *ABD'nin Kürt Kartı*. Milliyet Yayınları.

Yılmaz, Ş. (2012). Turkey's quest for NATO membership: the institutionalization of the Turkish–American alliance, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 12(4), 481-495.

Yin, R.K. (1994). *Case study research: design and methods* (2th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Website articles, speeches and reports used for reference:

Bonsey, N. (2017). Will the Americans Abandon Us?. *International Crisis Group*. Retrieved from https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria/will-americans-abandon-us.

Lesser, I. O. (1992). Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West after the Cold War. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R4204.html.

Grimmett, R. F. (1986). US military installations in NATO's southern region: Report. U.S. House of Representatives the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Retrieved from https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b4232719;view=1up;seq=11.

Clinton (1999). Remarks to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara (November 15, 1999) retrieved from http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=56935.

Combined Joint Task Force (2016). Operation Inherent Resolve Fact Sheet. Retrieved from http://www.inherentresolve.mil/Portals/1/Documents/Mission/History.pdf?ver=2016-03-23-065243-743.

Turkey will fight terror but not for temporary solutions. (2014, October 10). *Hürriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from < http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-will-fight-terror-but-not-for-temporary-solutions erdogan.aspx?pageID=238&nID=72430&NewsCatID=338>.

TEV-DEM Rep: Kobanê Has Upset Their Plans', interview with Alder Xelil, The Rojava Report. (2014, October 24). Retrieved from <https://rojavareport.wordpress.com/2014/10/25/tev-dem-rep-kobane-has-upset-their-plans/>.

ISIS increased their attacks in West Kurdistan (Syria) with the support of Turkey, Kurdistan National Congress Information File III, KNK: Brussels. (2014, September 23). Retrieved from < http://www.kongrakurdistan.net/en/481/>.

Obama Rejects Proposal to Meet Erdogan during Turkish Leader's Visit to US. (2016, March 28). *Sputnik*. Retrieved from < https://sputniknews.com/politics/201603281037076092-obama-erdogan-visit/>.

Obama rejects private meeting with Turkey's Erdogan – US media. (2016, March 28). *RT*. Retrieved from < https://www.rt.com/usa/337431-obama-denies-erdogan-meeting/>.

US troops' use of YPG insignia in Syria 'unauthorised'. (2016, May 28). *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/ypg-emblem-syria-160527185041767.html.

Turkey can start new operation if necessary as Euphrates Shield ends: PM. (2017, March 29). *Hurriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from< http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-can-start-new-operation-if-necessary-as-euphrates-shield-ends-pm.aspx?pageID=238&nID=111401&NewsCatID=352>.

Turkey won't embark on adventure in Syria: PM Davutoğlu. (2015, October 14). *Hurriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from < http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-wont-embark-on-adventure-in-syria-pm-davutoglu.aspx?pageID=238&nID=72953&NewsCatID=510>.

Turkey will not cooperate in US support for Kurds in Syria says Erdogan. (2014, October 19). *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/19/turkey-will-not-cooperate-us-support-kurds-erdogan.

Ulgen, S. & Ergun, D. (2016). Is Trump Good for the Turkey-US Relationship?. Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM). Retrieved from http://www.edam.org.tr/en/File?id=3203.

Our ally Turkey is in crisis and needs our support: Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn. (2016, November 8). *The Hill*. Retrieved from http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/foreign- policy/305021-our-ally-turkey-is-in-crisisand- needs-our-support.

White House Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest and Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, Brett McGurk, December 13, 2016.

Syrian Kurds as a US ally: Cooperation and Complications (ed.) Clawson P. (2016, November). *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Retrieved from < http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus150_Clawson.pdf>.

Director of National Intelligence J. R. Clapper, Statement for the Record, Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community, Senate Armed Services Committee. (2016, February 9). Retrieved from < https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Clapper_02-09-16.pdf>.

CIA Director J. Brennan. (2016). Statement by Director Brennan as Prepared for Delivery Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Retrieved from < https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2016-speeches-testimony/statement-by-director-brennan-as-prepared-for-delivery-before-ssci.html>.

Park, B. (2014). Turkey-Kurdish regional government relations after the US withdrawal from Iraq: putting the Kurds on the map?. U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks Strategic Studies Institute. Retrieved from < https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/PUB1190.pdf>.

Stephens, M. (2014). Analysis: YPG - the Islamic State's worst enemy. *Jane's 360*. Retrieved from <http://www.janes.com/article/43030/analysis-ypg-the-islamic-state-s-worst-enemy>.

Sobir, S. (2017). Trump's Decision to Arm YPG Angers Ankara. *Bas News*. Retrieved from < http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/middle-east/349502>.

Pecquet, J. (2017). Congress unsure what's next after Trump decides to arm Syrian Kurds. Retrieved from < http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/fr/contents/articles/originals/2017/05/congress-unsure-trump-decision-arm-ypg-kurds-syria-turkey.html>.

George Bush: "Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait," August 3, 1990. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=18738.

Larrabee, F. S. (2008). *Turkey as a US security partner* (Vol. 694). Rand Corporation.

United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. (2002) *Next steps in Iraq: hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Seventh Congress, second session, September 25 and 26, 2002*. [Washington: U.S. G.P.O.: For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., Congressional Sales Office] [Online Text] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://lccn.loc.gov/2003387162.

Yalcınkaya, H. (2015). Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Turkey: An Assessment at the First Year of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178. *Orsam Review of Regional Affairs* No.31.

Arango, T. & Yeginsu, C. (2014). Turkey Seeks Buffer Zone on the Border With Syria. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/10/world/middleeast/turkish-support-of-coalition-fighting-isis-centers-on-border-buffer-zone-.html>.

Ulgen, S. & Kasapoglu, C. (2017). Operation Euphrates Shield: Aims and Gains. *Carnegie Europe*. Retrieved from < http://carnegieeurope.eu/2017/01/19/operation-euphrates-shield-aims-and-gains-pub-67754>.

Hussein, S. (2017). Raqqa campaign cements rising profile of Syria's Kurds. *France 24*. Retrieved from < http://www.france24.com/en/20170607-raqa-campaign-cements-rising-profile-syrias-kurds>.

McCann, D. (2015). The Sins of Sultan Erdogan. *Quadrant Online*. Retrieved from https://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2015/10/sins-sultan-erdogan/.

Kahl, C. (2017). The United States and Turkey Are on a Collision Course in Syria: An insider's view on how we got here — and what Trump can do about it. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from < http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/12/the-united-states-and-turkey-are-on-a-collision-course-in-syria-trump/>.

YPG-dominated SDF crosses west of Euphrates, raises Turkey's concerns. (2016, June 2). *Daily Sabah*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2016/06/02/ypg-dominated-sdf-crosses-west-of-euphrates-raises-turkeys-concerns>.

Tahiroglu, M. (2016). Turkey's Operation Euphrates Shield is a message to the Kurds. *The Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD)*. Retrieved from <http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/merve-tahiroglu-turkeys-operation-euphrates-shield-is-a-message-to-the-kurds/>.

Pamuk, H. (2017). Turkey Sets Out Raqqa Operation Plans to U.S. *U.S News*. Retrieved from < https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2017-02-18/turkey-sets-out-raqqa-operation-plans-to-us-report>.

Tastekin, F. (2017). Is Turkey trying to disrupt Raqqa operation?. *Al Monitor*. Retrieved from < http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/04/turkey-opened-new-fronts-in-syria-and-iraq.html>.

Toner, M. (2017). US Department of State. Department Press Briefing. Retrieved from https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2017/04/270439.htm.

Elicin, I. (2013). PYD'ye üç şart. Yeni Safak. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z77RIGb_mG4&list=PL0xv5Qr8DjG1Ob3e_UDuJm7j5RrCSEkrc&index=3.

Pew Research Center (2017). Build your own chart: Tracking U.S. favorability and confidence in the U.S. president, 2002 to 2017. Retrieved from < http://www.pewglobal.org/interactives/us-image/#>.

A friendship on hold. (2003, March 27). *The Economist*. Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/node/1667322.

U.S. releases Turkish troops. (2003, July 7). *CNN*. Retrieved from http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/07/06/turkey.us/.

Howard, M. & Goldenberg, S. (2003, July 8). US arrest of soldiers infuriates Turkey. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jul/08/turkey.michaelhoward

ABD Delili İkna Edici Değil. (2003, July 11). *Hurriyet*. Retrieved from http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/abd-delili-ikna-edici-degil-38480940.

Shanker, T. (2011, September 15). U.S. Hails Deal With Turkey on Missile Shield. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/16/world/europe/turkey-accepts-missile-radar-for-nato-defense-against-iran.html

Tejel, J. (2012, October 16). Syria's Kurds: Troubled Past, Uncertain Future. *Carnegie Middle East Center*. Retrieved from < http://carnegie-mec.org/2012/10/16/syria-s-kurds-troubled-past-uncertain-future-pub-49703>.

Entous, A. (March, 2013, March 29). Inside Obama's Syria debate. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from http://online.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323639604578368930961739030

Main bloc quits Syrian National Coalition over Geneva. (2014, January 21). *The Times of Israel*. Retrieved from http://www.timesofisrael.com/main-bloc-quits-syrian-national-coalition-over-geneva/.

Atassi, B. (2014, January 19). Explaining the Geneva II peace talks on Syria. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from < http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/01/explaining-geneva-ii-peace-talks-syria-201411814285393772 6.html>.

Van Wilgenburg, W. (2014, January 20). The Kurds and Geneva II. *Carnegie Middle East Center*. Retrieved from < http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/54247?lang=en>.

Noack, R. (2014, July 8). "The long, winding history of American dealings with Iraq's Kurds". *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/08/07/the-long-winding-history-of-american-dealings-with-iraqs-kurds/?utm_term=.dfd1c8a3af6b.

The Rojava Report (2014, September 28). Interview with Meysa Ebdo, YPG Commander by Ersin Caksu. Retrieved from < http://rojavareport.wordpress.com/2014/09/28/interview-with-ypg-commander-on-the-attack-on-kobane-and-its-objectives/>.

Allam H. & Gutman R. (2014, October). In policy shift, U.S. opens direct talks with Syrian Kurds. *McClatch DC Bureau*. Retrieved from < http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24774877.html>.

IŞİD ne ise PKK da odur. (2014, October 4). *Al Jaazera*. Retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/isid-ne-ise-pkk-da-odur.

Taylor, A. (2014, October 6). Behind Biden's Gaffe Lie Real Concerns about Allies' Role in Rise of the Islamic State. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/10/06/behind-bidensgaffe-some-legitimate-concerns-about-americas-middle-east-allies/.

Rohde, D., & Strobel, W. (2014, October 9). Special report: How Syria policy stalled under the "Analyst in Chief. *Reuters*. Retrieved from http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/10/09/us-usa-diplomacy-obama-special-report-idINKCN0HY1QC20141009

DeYoung, K. (2014, October 10). U.N envoy invokes Srebrenica massacre in call for help for Syrian town of Kobane. *Washington post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/un-envoy-invokes-srebrenica-massacre-in-call-for-help-for-syrian-town-of-

kobane/2014/10/10/0190e856-50a3-11e4-babe-e91da079cb8a_story.html?utm_term=.70db603f1db3.

US Department of State. (2014, October 20). *Daily Press Briefing*. Retrieved from http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2014/10/233166.htm.

Kalın, I. (2014, October 20). What Turkey wants in the war on ISIS, *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from < https://www.wsj.com/articles/ibrahim-kalin-what-turkey-wants-in-the-war-on-isis-1413758083>.

Letsch, C. (2014, October 20). US Drops Weapons and Ammunition to Help Kurdish Fighters in Kobani. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/20/turkey-iraqi-kurds-kobani-isis-fighters-us-air-drops-arms.

Turkey to let Iraqi Kurds join Kobane battle. (2014, October 21). *Al-Jazeera*. Retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/10/turkey-allow-kurds-join-fight-against-isil-201410209361060352 7.html. Retrieved: 12/6/2016.

Idiz, S. (2015, February 18). Questions remain over Turkey's training of Syrian opposition. *Al Monitor*. Retrieved from http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/02/turkey-usa-train-equip-syrian-opposition.html#ixzz4fxLBtgLO.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (2015, June). Pentagon disputes Turkey's stance on Syrian forces. Retrieved from < http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=19706>.

Blanchard, C. M. & Belasco, A. (2015, June). Train and Equip Program for Syria: Authorities, Funding, and Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service. Retrieved from < https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R43727.pdf>.

Thousands flee as Kurds near IS-held Syria town. (2015, June 15). *Gulf Times*. Retrieved from http://www.gulf-times.com/story/443305/Thousands-flee-as-Kurds-near-IS-held-Syria-town.

Pamuk, H. & Bektas, U. (2015, June 16). Turkey sees signs of 'ethnic cleansing' by Kurdish fighters in Syria. *Reuters*. Retrieved from < http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-kurds-turkey-idUSKBN0OW1SA20150616>.

Earnest, J. (2015, June 16). White House Press Briefing. Retrieved from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=110330>.

Topal, A., Sengul, E., & Ates, H. (2015, June 19). PYD, DAEŞ'ten çok daha tehlikeli. *Sabah*. Retrieved from < http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2015/06/19/pyd-daesten-cok-daha-tehlikeli-1434663598>.

Peker, E. (2015, July 20). Suicide Bomb Killa at least 31 People in Turkish Border Town, *The Wall Street Journal*, Retrieved from <

https://www.wsj.com/articles/turkish-town-of-suruc-hit-by-deadly-blast-1437388272>.

Al Jazeera (July 22, 2015). "Kurdish group claims 'revenge murder' on Turkish police". *Jadaliyya*. Retrieved from < http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/kurdish-group-claims-revenge-murder-turkish-police-150722132945249.html>.

Yeginsu, C. & Cooper H. (2015, July 24). U.S. Jets to Use Turkish Bases in War on ISIS. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from < https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/24/world/europe/turkey-isis-us-airstrikes-syria.html?_r=0>.

Barnard, A., Gordon, M. & Schmitt, E. (2015, July 27). Turkey and U.S. Plan to Create Syria 'Safe Zone' Free of ISIS. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/28/world/middleeast/turkey-and-us-agree-on-plan-to-clear-isis-from-strip-of-northern-syria.html?_r=0.

Bozcali, F. (2015, August 31). Turkey's Three-Front War?. Retrieved from http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/22513/turkey%E2%80%99s-three-front-war.

Dettmer, J. (2015, September 30). Russia's buildup in Syria may thwart idea of safe haven. *Voice of America*. Retrieved from http://www.voanews.com/content/russias-buildup-in-syria-may-thwart-idea-of-safe-haven/2985387.html.

Starr, B. (2015, October 12). U.S. delivers 50 tons of ammunition to Syria rebel groups. *CNN*. Retrieved from < http://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/12/politics/syria-rebel-groups-ammunition-50-tons/>.

Orton, K. (2015, October 20). Why Solely Backing the PYD against the Islamic State is a Mistake. Retrieved from https://kyleorton1991.wordpress.com/2015/10/20/why-solely-backing-the-pyd-against-the-islamic-state-is-a-mistake/

Jones, S. & Shahid, A. S. (2015, November 6). Here's The Latest Potentially Fatal Flaw in Obama's ISIS Strategy. *Huffingtonpost*. Retrieved from < http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/american-airstrikes-from-turkey-help-kurds_us_563ba049e4b0307f2cac7267>.

Steele, J. (2015, December 3). The Syrian Kurds are winning!. *The New York Review of Books*. Retrieved from < https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/12/03/syrian-kurds-are-winning/>.

Lovely, E. & Kayaoglu, B. (2016, January 7). The National Interest. Improving trade with Turkey could bring the estranged ally back into Washington's fold. *The National Interest*. Retrieved from http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-secret-better-us-turkey-relations-14828.

Stein, A. & Foley, M. (2016, January 26). The YPG-PKK Connection. *Atlantic Council*. Retrieved from http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/the-ypg-pkk-connection.

Argentieri, B. (2016, January 26). Are the Syrian Democratic Forces any of the above?. *Reuters*. Retrieved from < http://www.reuters.com/article/idIN63515744920160126>.

US Department of Defense (February, 2016). Inherent Resolve Commander: Strikes, Indigenous Forces Grind Down ISIL. Retrieved from https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/647881/inherent-resolve-commander-strikes-indigenous-forces-grind-down-isil/.

Botelho, G. (2016, February 10). Turkish leader: U.S. responsible for 'sea of blood' for supporting Syrian Kurds. *CNN*. Retrieved from < http://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/10/middleeast/turkey-erdogan-criticizes-us/>.

Al-Khalidi, S. (2016, March 6). U.S. builds two air bases in Kurdish-controlled north Syria: Kurdish report . *Reuters*. Retrieved from https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R44513.html#fn56.

Jenkins, G. (2016, April 20). The PKK and the PYD: Comrades in Arms, Rivals in Politics?. *The Turkey Analyst*. Retrieved from https://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/535-the-pkk-and-the-pyd-comrades-in-arms-rivals-in-politics?.html.

Lubold, G. & Entous, A. (2016, April 24). U.S. to Send 250 Additional Military Personnel to Syria. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from < https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-to-send-250-additional-military-personnel-to-syria-1461531600>.

Abdulla, N. (2016, April 29). Washington sends mixed messages about YPG fighters. *Rudaw*. Retrieved from <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/29042016>.

Ustun, K. (2016, July 14). ABD-PYD ittifakı, Türkiye ile ilişkileri bozuyor. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/gorus/abd-pyd-ittifaki-turkiye-ile-iliskileri-bozuyor.

Obama Supports Erdogan. (2016, July 15). *US News*. Retrieved from http://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2016-07-15/obama-all-parties-in-turkey-should-support-erdogan-govt.

Bishara, M. (2016, July 19).Turkey-US: What's the problem?. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/07/turkey-problem-160719110009819.html

Biden: US Had No Prior Knowledge of Turkish Coup. (2016, August 24). *Voice of America*. Retrieved from <http:// www.voanews.com/a/biden-likely-to-face-pressure-during-turkey-visit/3477875.html>.

Hudson, J. (2016, August 8). Erdoğan Allies Accuse Leading Washington Think Tank of Orchestrating Coup. *Foreign Policy*. Retrived from

http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/08/08/erdogan-allies-accuse-leading-washington-think-tank-of-orchestrating-coup/.

The Manbij timeline: Call it a coincidence. (2016, August 15). *Hurriyet Daily News.* Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-manbij-timeline-call-it-a coincidence.aspx?pageID=238&nid=102842>.

Zaman, A. (2016, August 24). Turkish Troops Enter Syria to Fight ISIS, May Also Target U.S.-Backed Kurdish Militia. *Woodrow Wilson Center*. Retrieved from < https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/turkish-troops-enter-syria-to-fight-isis-may-also-target-us-backed-kurdish-militia>.

Tahiroglu, M. (2016, August 24). Turkey's Operation Euphrates Shield is a message to the Kurds. *Longwar Journal*. Retrieved from http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/08/turkeys-operation-euphrates-shield-is-a-message-to-the-kurds.php.

Tastekin, F. (2016, August 24). Fehim Taştekin: Cerablus operasyonunun beş nedeni var. *BBC*. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-37179115.

The White House Press Briefings. (2016, August 25). Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden and Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim at a Press Availability. Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/08/25/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-and-turkish-prime-minister-binali.

The White House. (2016, September 4). Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/04/remarks-president-obama-and-president-erdogan-turkey-after-bilateral.

Schmitt, E. (2016, September 22). Obama Administration Considers Arming Syrian Kurds Against ISIS. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from < https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/22/world/middleeast/obama-syria-kurds-isis-turkey-military-commandos.html>.

Falk, R. (2016, September 23). A Warming of US-Turkish Relations*?*. *Foreign Policy Journal*. Retrieved form http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2016/09/23/a-warming-of-us-turkish-relations.

Department of Defense, Office of Press Operations. (2016, October 26). "Department of Defense Press Briefing by Lt. Gen. Townsend via Teleconference from Baghdad, Iraq.". Retrieved from https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/TranscriptView/Article/987897/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-lt-gen-townsend-viateleconference-from.

Jager, J. (2016, October 17). Turkey's Operation Euphrates Shield: An Exemplar of Joint Combined Arms Maneuver, *Small Wars Journal,* Retrieved from < http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/turkey%E2%80%99s-operation-euphrates-shield-an-exemplar-of-joint-combined-arms-maneuver>.

Başbakan'dan Trump'a 'Gülen' çağrısı. (2016, November 9). *Sabah*. Retrieved from http://www.sabah.com.tr/webtv/ turkiye/basbakandan-trumpa-gulen-cagrisi.

Niyego, P. & Wilson, G. (2016, November 10). In Trump, Turkey Sees Hope for a New Era with the United States. *Atlantic Council*. Retrieved from < http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/in-trump-turkey-sees-hope-for-a-new-era-with-the-united-states>.

Hakura F. (2016, December 11). What Next for U.S.-Turkey Relations Under a Trump Presidency?. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from < http://www.newsweek.com/what-next-us-turkey-relations-under-trump-presidency-520275>.

Aydogan, M. (2016, December 31). NATO's annual journal reveals affiliation between terrorist PKK, PYD/YPG. *Daily Sabah*. Retrieved form < https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2016/12/31/natos-annual-journal-reveals-affiliation-between-terrorist-pkk-pydypg>.

Barkey, H. (2017, January 11). Putin and Erdogan's Marriage of Convenience. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from < http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/11/putin-and-erdogans-marriage-of-convenience/>.

Yetkin, M. (2017, January 19). There is hope' for Turkey-US relations under Trump. Retrieved from < http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/there-is-hope-for-turkey-us-relations-under-trump.aspx?pageID=449&nID=108706&NewsCatID=409>.

Entous, A., Greg J., &Missy R. (2017, February 2). Obama's White House worked for months on a plan to seize Raqqa. Trump's team took a brief look and decided not to pull the trigger. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/obamas-white-houseworked-for-months-on-a-plan-to-seize-raqqa-trumps-team-deemed-it-hopelesslyinadequate/2017/02/02/116310fa-e71a-11e6-80c2-30e57e57e05d_story.html?utm_term=.0ea30547b86c.

Wasilewski, K. (2017, March). Prospects for Turkey-U.S. Relations in the Context of the Syrian Civil War. The Polish Institute for International Affairs (PISM) Bulletin No.27. Retrieved from https://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=22994.

Kosnáč, P. (2017, April). Combat charities or when humanitarians go to war: Influence of non-state actors on local order of partially governed spaces, *Brookings Local Orders Paper Series*, Paper 6. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/fp_201704_combat_charities.pdf.

Humud, C.E., Blanchard, C. & Nikitin M. (2017, April). Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response. Retrieved from https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33487.pdf.

Copp, T. (2017, April 3). US expands air base in northern Syria for use in battle for Raqqa. *Stars and Stripes*. Retrieved from < https://www.stripes.com/news/us-

expands-air-base-in-northern-syria-for-use-in-battle-for-raqqa-1.461874#.WTFqOWjyhqN>.

Acun, C. & Keskin, B. (2017, April 14). The PKK's Branch in Northern Syria PYD-YPG. *SETA*. Retrieved from < http://www.setav.org/en/the-pkks-branch-in-northern-syria-pyd-ypg/>.

Aslan, O., Kıyıcı, H. & Soner, B.A. (2017, May). PKK's Regional Franchise of Terror. *International Center for Terrorism and Security Studies (UTGAM)*. Retrieved from https://www.pa.edu.tr/Project/Files/News/2017/05/10/PKK%E2%80%99S%20REGIONAL%20FRANCHISE%20OF%20TERROR_01.05.17.pdf.

Gordon, M. and Schmitt, E. (2017, May 9). Trump to Arm Syrian Kurds, Even as Turkey Strongly Objects. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from < https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/09/us/politics/trump-kurds-syria-army.html>.

Hensch, M. (2017, May 10). Trump to meet with Turkey's Erdogan. *The Hill*. Retrieved from < http://thehill.com/policy/international/middle-east-north-africa/332874-white-house-turkeys-erdogan-to-visit-dc>.

Cockburn, P. (2017, May 10). Donald Trump's decision to arm Kurdish fighters could have profound impact on the Syria crisis. *Independent*. Retrieved from < http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/donald-trump-isis-syria-crisis-kurdish-fighters-turkey-raqqa-ypg-a7728741.html>.

Kurt, V. (2016). 5 Questions: The July 15 Coup Attempt. *Insight Turkey*. Retrieved from http://www.insightturkey.com/5-questions-the-july-15-coup-attempt/articles/9511.