

Area and International Studies in Turkey: The Case of the United States¹

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Abstract

Area studies in the international relations discipline have evolved in response to specific needs of countries and particular conditions of the world affairs at a given time. This article addresses a set of conditions and needs that influenced the development of area studies in international relations with a focus on the emergence and growth of studies on the United States in Turkey. Accordingly, it is argued that Turkey has historically conceptualized external relations as state-to-state relations and not prioritized initially a research program on area studies. However, the shift from import substitution to export-led growth and the end of the Cold War created an environment in which Turkey's needs to research about other societies have intensified. This has led to the establishment of research programs and centers at universities as well as the opening of think tanks, some funded by the public, others privately. In light of the assessment of the growth of these research and teaching institutions focusing on the United States, it is concluded that American studies are less developed than what might be expected given Turkey's close relationship with the United States. Some explanations are also offered for such an observation.

Keywords: Area studies, foreign policy, research centers, think tanks, United States, Turkey

1. Introduction

A brief glance at the history of the Turkish Republic shows that the country has generally been inward looking, displaying little interest in other parts of the world. For decades, neither state or private institutions nor Turkish academic institutions were engaged in area studies about other societies or regions of the world. The growing number of think-tanks, research centers at universities as well as intensifying efforts of private enterprise to collect and evaluate information about different regions of the world in recent years point to a new and growing Turkish interest in the external world.

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This article examines the underlying factors that influenced the slow progress in the emergence and development of teaching and research programs at various institutions in Turkey that focus on the United States. American studies in Turkey are modest and appear to be in need of further development. Rather than being a product of willful negligence, however, this has been simply a consequence of a general pattern that is only beginning to change now. Accordingly, it is important to elucidate why Turkey showed such little interest in external developments in its earlier history and the reasons that have stimulated the current rising interest.

These questions can be addressed within a broader framework of understanding area studies as a response to specific conditions and needs of a country at a given time. Thus, the article is organized into five sections. After the introduction the next section presents the specific conditions and needs that led to the development of area studies in international relations discipline. The third section assesses the reasons for the emergence of academic and research programs on area studies in Turkey. While the fourth section focuses on the development of American studies, its scope and a general survey of publications about the United States, the following section previews the research institutions and think tanks that have American studies as part of their area studies. The article concludes that American studies are less developed than what might be expected given Turkey's close relationship with the United States; and some explanations are offered for such an observation.

2. Development of Area Studies as Responses to Needs

A particular country's interest in the history, politics, economics, culture, art, literature of other countries and world regions is not an accidental development but rather a product of specific conditions and response to specific needs at a given time. There may be no single specific need and condition to be observed across the board. However, a set of conditions and needs may vary in each case. Therefore, an examination of the countries in which area studies have developed and the stage in their history during such development has taken place, may help us uncover the patterned nature of this evolution.

Within this framework, six major reasons are offered to examine the emergence and growth of area studies in international relations. To begin with, we may note that colonial countries have chosen to study the countries that they have colonized if for no other reason than enhancing their competence in sustaining their rule over them. Such interest has continued even after decolonization since former colonial powers have often striven to maintain their existing ties or develop new privileged relationships with their former colonies. A major instrument that has constituted the informational and the intellectual basis of this endeavor has been area focused think tanks, teaching programs and research centers at universities. It is no accident that interest in area studies and institutional developments occurred most comprehensively in Britain and France which were the leading colonial powers until almost the first half of the twentieth century.

Second, those countries whose economic prosperity depends on engaging in extensive economic relations with the outside world, those countries whose volume of external trade and investments abroad reach sizable quantities, understandably, develop an interest in building institutions that collect and process information that will enable them to

know and understand the economic, political and the sociological peculiarities of societies in which they operate, and predict what is likely to transpire in the future. A similar need also exists with regard to the rules, the institutions and the workings of the contemporary international economic and political system and how it is likely to evolve in the future. The Institute of Developing Economies in Tokyo, for example, serves exactly these purposes, focusing on countries, regions and the international system. The support that some American multinationals extend to area studies and similar research centers at universities as well as foundations, intends to produce similar outcomes. It is also important to remember that some multinationals develop their own research teams and expertise to meet their needs.

Third, those countries that tend to perceive themselves to be world powers, judging that it is natural or incumbent on them that they reach all countries and the regions of the world, both encourage and support the development of area studies oriented academic and research programs as well as institutions pursuing such purposes. Expressed differently, the self perception of a state as an important international or global actor brings with it a need to develop capabilities to know, interpret and influence the developments in all countries and regions of the world. It is not coincidental that area studies programs in the United States flourished after the Second World War when the United States decided to break out of its historical isolationism and claim a place in the world as a superpower. In a similar fashion, the proliferation of area study institutes and programs in the Soviet Union, in addition to other factors such as being the ideological leader of the communist world, derived from the Russian perception that they were a superpower and as such had global interests and responsibilities.

Fourth, any country may set up country or area studies programs to achieve specific or meet specific needs. For example, the establishment of a chair of Hungarology in the Faculty of Language and History, and Geography at Ankara University, rather than deriving from major economic or security interests Turkey might have in connection with Hungary, derived from Turkey's search to find relatives of Asian origin in an effort to develop a Turkish national identity as distinct from the Arabo-Islamic identity with which the population of Turkey often associated itself during the life of the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, the efforts of the well known Hungarian composer Bela Bartok, joining the Turkish composer of renown Ahmet Adnan Saygun, in transcribing Turkish folksongs by traveling throughout Anatolia, appears to have been motivated strongly by the search of the Hungarian composer for common cultural roots of his people with other Asian origin peoples in the region, to help strengthen a Hungarian identity in what appeared to be a Slavic Sea.

Fifth, area oriented institutions, particularly those in the nature of think tanks, are sometimes promoted or welcome by governments because they constitute for a through which ideas that they do not want to express officially are developed, discussed and debated, often also by involving actors the legitimacy of which states are even reluctant to recognize. In addition, governments may develop their own non-official and unofficial organizations to serve similar ends. Such institutions may facilitate communications between contesting actors who are not on speaking terms with each other, they may search to find common ground between what appears to be irreconcilable positions, explore the possibilities for devising creative solutions. Furthermore, some of these institutions may produce reliable research

that governments use in the development and advancement of their own foreign policies. The Brookings Institution and the German Marshall Fund constitute such examples on the American side. Swedish Institute of Peace Research and German Foreign Policy Institute are examples in Western Europe. One should also recall here the Institute for the Study of the United States and Canada headed by its powerful director Georgii Arbatov, during the times of the Soviet Union which offered information and advice to the Soviet government on running smooth relations with the United States. The Institute also served as a channel of informal communication between the United States and Russia to prepare the ground for official contacts.

Sixth, the growth of area and international studies programs and research institutions in a country may be promoted by another country. Some countries work to build institutions in others that correspond to those that they themselves possess in order to insure the presence of suitable counterparts with whom cooperation is undertaken. Some German foundations, to cite an example, have extended support to the establishment of similar organizations in Turkey, in order that they may plan joint activities to conduct research, as well as to discuss and debate topics of common interest, exchange information and popularize ideas. Another related reason as regards why one country encourages the development of area and international studies and research centers in another country is to initiate a circle of people in the latter who are familiar with the former, so that it is better known, understood and appreciated. As we examine in the next sections, the United States supported the establishment and the growth of American Studies programs at some Turkish universities after the two countries became allies after the Second World War. In a similar fashion, in recent years, Turkey has turned to the establishment of endowed chairs of Turkish history, society and politics in the United States and in Great Britain as well as extending support to the teaching of Turkish language, literature and history at colleges and universities.

A combination of the reasons cited above may be operating in any specific instance. A program or an establishment, after all, may constitute a response to more than one need and perform more than one function. Furthermore, the performing of one function may facilitate the discharging of another. In some instances, the emergence of multi-purpose programs and institutions may be an outcome of the small size of a society or a lack of sufficient means to support many programs and establishments.

3. Academic and Research Programs on Area Studies in Turkey

Turkey compares unfavorably with countries that have a strong tradition of research centers on area studies. It is only within the last two or three decades that interest in area studies has begun to grow in a significant way in Turkey. What were the reasons behind Turkey's late entry into this domain of activity?

First, Turkey has only recently begun to engage in comprehensive relations with foreign countries. This is not to say that earlier Turkey was closed to the outside world, but contacts had been less frequent and their content narrow, often confined to matters of security. International relations were conceived to be a "state to state" matter in which the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were considered to be sufficient. As new needs developed over time, diplomatic missions were expanded to include attachés with different

specializations. After large number of workers was sent to Germany, for example, labor and religion attachés were sent to expand the services that the embassy and the consulates offered. After Turkish diplomats began to constitute targets of terrorist attacks, security attaches were added to the list of support personnel that Turkish diplomatic missions housed.

Two events, the so-called 24 January Decisions of the Turkish Council Ministers in 1980 and the end of the Cold War, transformed both Turkish foreign policy and the way Turkey related to foreign affairs. The 24th of January decisions of 1980 moved Turkey from a strategy of import-substitution oriented industrialization to one of export-led growth. The change of economic policy necessitated that Turkey expand its exports to existing markets, search for new ones, and hence get to know the external world in multiple ways. The end of the Cold War, on the other hand, expanded the both the geographical and substantive content of foreign policy to cover areas in addition to that of security which had previously given direction to Turkey's international relations. When Turkey's growing relationship with the European Union was added to these developments, it became apparent that a model of "state to state" relationship that had provided the institutional framework for Turkish foreign policy thus far was no longer sufficient to meet its contemporary needs. Multidimensional links had to be established, different segments of society had to be brought into foreign policy making and implementation, and instruments of public diplomacy had to be developed.

These developments intensified the need of both government and the expanding private enterprises to have information and knowledge about other countries and regions. For example, as the prospect of Turkish membership in the EU gained currency, many universities introduced European Studies programs that offered bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees as well as opening research centers at various universities. These programs and institutions received support not only from the Turkish government but the EU as well. Private enterprise was also supportive. Similarly, the growth of exports and the search for new linkages in a changing global security environment promoted the growth of think tanks focusing on Eurasia, the Middle East, Africa and other parts of the world. These were sometimes financed by the government as in the case of the Strategic Research Center of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SAM) but more often quasi official sources such as the Union of the Chamber of Industries, Commerce and Commodity Exchanges and private sources.

The growth of academic programs, research centers and think tanks were supported by the expansion of the Turkish university system after 1980. Many young Ph.D.s who had studied abroad privately or under government (mainly Council on Higher Education) scholarship programs and well trained to do research, found employment in the newly opened state and foundation run universities. The more stringent rules about research and publication promoted a greater volume of research in all fields, area and international studies not excepted.

To conclude, the changes in the Turkish economy and the international system produced new information and knowledge needs for Turkey that were met by developing academic programs and research institutions on area studies.

4. American Studies in Turkey

The United States was one of the major countries with which Turkey had developed extensive relationships after the Second World War. It was through American efforts that Turkey was incorporated into the Western defense system. It was American economic assistance that stimulated significant economic growth during the 1950s. However, the growth of American studies in Turkey has been somehow slow. In the following subsections historically the start of American studies, its scope and a general survey of publications on the United States are defined.

4.1. The start of American studies in Turkey

The first development in the field of teaching and research about the United States with whom relations grew rapidly after the Second World War took place with the opening of an American Culture and Literature chair at the Ankara University in 1957.² During those years, the number of universities in Turkey was indeed limited and further expansion of such programs had to await the growth of new universities in the country. For example, one had to wait until 1982 for yet another similar program to open at Hacettepe University³, also in Ankara. Table I gives a list of Turkish universities at which there are American Culture and Literature programs and the year of their founding. Currently, ten universities have such programs while Istanbul University (not listed) offers a Master's degree without a corresponding undergraduate program.

Table 1- American Culture and Literature Programs at Turkish Universities

Institution	Founding year
Ankara U.	1957
Hacettepe U.	1982
Bilkent U.	1986
9. Eylül U.	1991
Ege U.	1992
Başkent U.	1995
Haliç U.	1998
Fatih U.	2000
Kadir Has U.	2001
Bahçeşehir U.	2006

Source: The web pages of the universities.

² “Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı,” Ankara Üniversitesi, accessed January 9, 2012, http://www.dtcf.ankara.edu.tr/akademik_birim.php?amerikan-kulturu-ve-edebiyati-anabilim-dali&icerik=bolum_hakkinda&bid=8

³ “Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Bölümü,” Hacettepe Üniversitesi, accessed January 9, 2012, <http://www.ake.hacettepe.edu.tr>

The sudden expansion of the American Culture and Literature Programs during the 1990s and 2000s after a slow beginning in 1957 may reflect a combination of two forces at work. The opening of the initial program in 1957 aimed at strengthening the cultural dimension of the growing political and economic relations between Turkey and the United States, supported in part by American faculty and library support. It is also to be remembered that in 1957, the distribution of foreign language competence among the Turkish educated was skewed in favor of German and French, reflecting pre-Second World War realities. There was a shortage of persons who had English language competence that needed to be remedied. The learning of English was in high demand. To the extent that English language competence continues to be in high demand today, it is understandable that new institutions have chosen to incorporate American Culture and Literature programs in their curricula.

That six of the ten universities that have American Culture and Literature programs are foundation universities suggest that a second force may be at work. These institutions, in contrast to virtually tuition-free state universities that enjoy high demand, are interested in attracting students to fill their classrooms. While the foreign language teaching at state high schools is usually unsatisfactory, most major cities have a number of private high schools where English is taught reasonably well. The graduates of these schools generally obtain high scores in the foreign language test which renders it relatively easy for them to enroll in an American Culture and Literature program. Thus, if other scores of a middle class student indicate that his or her chances of gaining admission to another department of their choice are not good, then using the language option is a way of getting a university education.

The establishment of American Culture and Literature programs at ten universities has constituted a background against which an American Studies Association of Turkey has been established. Since 1995 the Association has been publishing the *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* which, according to the information provided in the journal, focuses on such diverse topics as literature, history, the arts, music, cinema, popular culture, institutions, politics, economics, and geography among others.⁴ An examination of the table of contents of all issues since the journal started its publication reveals that almost all contributions in the field of literature and culture, while little has been written on politics or economics.

In one of the institutions that have an American Culture and Literature program, Bahçeşehir University, an American Research Center (AMERS) that focuses on American domestic and international politics as well as Turkish-American Relations has been recently established.⁵ There seems to be no similar development at other institutions.

4.2. Publications focusing on the United States

An examination of publications related to the United States would be helpful since institutional developments are limited and have only begun to flourish during the recent years.

⁴ "Journal of American Studies of Turkey," American Studies Journals, accessed January 9, 2012, http://www.theasa.net/journals/name/journal_of_american_studies_of_turkey/; "Journal of American Studies of Turkey," Ege Üniversitesi, accessed January 9, 2012, <http://ake.ege.edu.tr/new/publications/jast/>

⁵ "Amerikan Araştırmaları Merkezi," Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, accessed January 9, 2012. <http://www.bahcesehir.edu.tr/amer/>

4.2.1. Academic and scholarly journals

The growing relations between Turkey and the United States after the World War constituted the background against which articles about American foreign policy, political institutions and political life have appeared in Turkish academic journals. Furthermore, the U.S. government has lent support to reforming the public administration in Turkey, promoting the publication of articles in that domain.

A beginning point in examining academic publications may be to look at the *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi* (Journal of the Faculty of Political Science of Ankara University) that has been published with reasonable regularity from before the Second World War until now. Between 1943 and 2010, 34 items related to the United States comprised of original articles, translated articles and book reviews were published in the quarterly journal. The first article appeared in 1947 and a total of thirteen articles were reached by 1960 focusing on foreign policy, public administration and aspects of the American political system. Interestingly, the number of articles written between 1961 and 1980 has decreased to only seven, with interest moving into economics. From 1981-2010, the number of articles has again risen to 14, with focus on foreign policy and security issues.

Remembering that the Faculty of Political Science of Ankara University constituted the center of research on foreign policy, international relations and public administration in the country for a long time, it is not surprising that the Journal is not the only publication of the institution. The Faculty also published with reasonable regularity an annual called the *Uluslararası İlişkiler Türk Yıllığı* (Turkish Yearbook of International Affairs) which contained writing on American foreign policy and Turkish-American relations on a yearly basis.

A new institution called the Institute of Public Administration for Turkey and the Middle East (TODAİE) was opened in Ankara in 1958 as a part of an American assistance program intended to help reform Turkey's public administration system⁶. The Institute soon initiated a quarterly periodical, the *TODAİE Amme İdaresi Dergisi* (The Journal of Public Administration). In 1979 an additional publication, *TODAİE İnsan Hakları Yıllığı* (Annual of Human Rights) and in 1992 *Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler* (Contemporary Local Government) was added to its publication activities.⁷ Although some writing on American public administration appeared in these journals, their numbers were surprisingly low. For example, during the 1968-2010 interim, only seven articles about the United States appeared in the *Amme İdaresi Dergisi*. Between 1992 and 2010 carried only three articles concerning American local government. It is equally surprising that among the books the Institute published, none was about American public administration. Despite the fact that the United States was closely involved in the founding of the Institute, the limited attention American public administration has received may derive from the fact that the American system, being very different from the Turkish, which is based on the French model, failed to arouse the interest of the Turkish administrators. It may also owe to the fact that a strong wave of anti-Americanism swept the country after the mid-1960s, reducing interest in "things American."

Most Turkish academic institutions publish journals although their publication

⁶ Law 7163 published 5 July 1958. Article 1 explains that the Institute is established in conformity with the Technical Assistance Program.

⁷ For publications cf. TODAİE, accessed January 9, 2012, <http://yayin.todaie.gov.tr>.

schedule has not always been regular. While a thorough search of such publications has not been conducted, there seems to be no convincing reason to expect that these publications would contain a wealth of articles focusing on the United States. For example, an examination of the volumes of the quarterly *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* (Journal of the Faculty of Economics of Istanbul University) during the 2001-2009 period shows that only one article pertaining to taxation in the United States was published.

Naturally, a number of articles, focusing especially on the American economy and foreign policy have been published in a variety of non-academic journals. It is known that during the last decade, the number of think tanks that on foreign policy and international relations, many with active research and publications programs, have registered significant growth. The United States is included in much of the security analyses, in discussions of NATO strategy, peacekeeping and peace building activities under the auspices of the United Nations, energy politics etc. What is interesting is that it is very difficult to find research or even description how American institutions work, how policy domestic or foreign policy is made, the questions of state and local government, civil society political activism in the United States and other similar topics. Yet, as is well known, American domestic actors tend to influence foreign policy significantly and often in directions which is not necessarily to the liking of the Turks. This observation in itself may be judged sufficient to show that there is greater need for the development of further American Studies programs in Turkey.

4.2.2. Books

An examination of the stock of a major bookstore in Istanbul⁸ presents a contrasting picture to the paucity of articles in scholarly journals. Leaving aside the five books in stock that were written before 1990, no less than 189 books published after 1990 are listed as being in stock. The first observation to be made is that most of these are about American foreign policy and international politics, although books on American culture and literature, travel-ogues, memoirs and descriptions of life in the United States are also available.

The second observation relates to the fact that most of the available books would not qualify as being scholarly in nature. Books with scholarly orientations tend to be in the realm of culture, literature and film. In the social sciences, those with an academic orientation are history books containing archival materials. Examples of these publications include the late Fahir Armaoğlu's *Turkish-American Relations as Reflected in Documents*⁹; Çağrı Erhan's *The Historical Roots of Turkish-American Relations*¹⁰; Nasuh Uslu's *Cyprus in Turkish-American Relations*¹¹; Şenol Kantarcı's *Armenian Lobby and the Armenians in the United States*¹²; Yusuf Sarıay and Recep Karakaya's work *Armenian-American Relations in Ottoman Documents*¹³ and Nurdan Şafak's *Ottoman-American Relations*¹⁴. There also

⁸ PANDORA, accessed April 27, 2011, <http://www.pandora.com.tr>

⁹ Fahir Armaoğlu, *Belgelerle Türk-Amerikan Münasebetleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991)

¹⁰ Çağrı Erhan, *Türk Amerikan İlişkilerinin Tarihsel Kökenleri* (Ankara: İmge, 2001)

¹¹ Nasuh Uslu, *Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinde Kıbrıs* (İstanbul: 21. Yüzyıl, 2000)

¹² Şenol Kantarcı, *Amerika Birleşik Devletlerinde Ermeniler ve Ermeni Lobisi* (İstanbul: Alfa, 2004)

¹³ Yusuf Sarıay and Recep Karakaya, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Amerikan İlişkileri* (Ankara: Başbakanlık, 2007)

¹⁴ Nurdan Şafak, *Osmanlı-Amerikan İlişkileri* (İstanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı, 2003)

some but fewer studies of a contemporary nature such as Tayyar Arı's *American Political Institutions: The Lobbies*¹⁵ as well as translations of some important works by American authors such as Samuel Huntington's *Who Are We: The Challenges to America's Identity*¹⁶, Joseph Nye's *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Superpower Can't Go It Alone?*¹⁷, and Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Decline of American Power: America in a Chaotic World*¹⁸.

The third observation is that the most frequently published books are those of a non-academic nature that aim to popularize positions and bearing highly accusatory tones even in their titles. Some among them are translations of works in English, but not all necessarily written by Americans. It does appear that the writings of American and European authors pursuing "causes" generate major interest among Turkish readers. The strongly worded titles of the following written by Turks constitute striking examples: Yücel Kaya's *America is Collapsing: America's Imperialist History*¹⁹; Nihat Genç's *American Dogs: What's Your Business in Iraq*²⁰; Nedret Arsanel's *Pardes Guide to the Spirit American Interests*²¹; Hakan Yılmaz Cebi's *The American Deep State: The Secret Masters of the World Empire*²² and Yılmaz Polat's *American Hawks and American Crows*²³. A similar tendency may be observed in books that have been selected for translation. Rowland Morgan and Ian Hansall's (Salyangoz, 2006) *9/11 Revealed: The Unanswered Questions*²⁴ and Jonathan Neale's *What's Wrong with America: How the Rich and Powerful have Changed America and Now Want to Change the World*²⁵ are examples. Not all the names of non-academic works are, of course, "exciting" as those in the examples we have cited. Non academic but serious works include analyses written by journalists and diplomats such as Ulagay and Abramowitz²⁶.

This brief survey of books on the United States points to a need for serious academic research on the United States. This leads us to the next question of who shall do this research?

5. Research Institutions and Think Tanks

The number of research institutions has registered impressive growth in Turkey during the

¹⁵ Tayyar Arı, *Amerika'da Dış Politika ve Dış Politika: Lobiler* (Bursa: MKM Yayınları, 2009)

¹⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *Biz Kimiz: Amerika'nın Ulusal Kimlik Arayışı*. transl. Aytül Özer (İstanbul: CSA Yayınları, 2004)

¹⁷ Joseph S. Nye, *Amerikan Gücünün Paradoksu: Dünyanın Tek Süper Gücü Amerika Neden Tek Başına Davranamaz*. transl. Gürol Koca (İstanbul: Literatür, 2003)

¹⁸ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Amerikan Gücünün Gerileyişi: Kaotik Bir Dünyada ABD*. transl. Tuncay Birkan

¹⁹ Yücel Kaya, *Amerika Yıkılıyor: Amerika'nın Emperyalist Tarihi* (İstanbul: Güçlü Yayıncılık, 2006)

²⁰ Nihat Genç, *Amerikan Köpekleri: Irak Senin Neyine* (İstanbul: Cadde, 2004)

²¹ Nedret Arsanel, *Amerikan Ruhunun Menfaat Fihristi Pardes* (İstanbul Hayy Kitap, 2006)

²² Hakan Yılmaz Cebi, *Amerikan Derin Devleti: Dünya İmparatorluğu'nun Gizli Efendileri* (İstanbul: Karakutu, 2006)

²³ Yılmaz Polat, *Amerikan Şahinleri, Amerikan Kargaları* (İstanbul: Alfa, 2003)

²⁴ Rowland Morgan and Ian Hansall, *Amerikan Yalanları: 11 Eylül ve Medeniyetler Çatışması*. transl. Bora Alioğlu and Güneş Ayas (İstanbul: Salyangoz, 2006)

²⁵ Jonathan Neale, *Amerika'nın Derdi Ne?* transl. Arhan Nur (İstanbul: Ayraç, 2008)

²⁶ Examples of such works would include Osman Ulagay, *Hedefteki Amerika* (İstanbul: Timaş, 2002) and Morton Abramowitz, *Türkiye'nin Dönüşümü ve Amerikan Politikası* (İstanbul: Liberte, 2001)

recent years. However, if we go by names only, there is only one research center that focuses on the study of the United States, the American Studies Center at Bahçeşehir University. Even that center is of reasonably recent vintage and it is too early to judge whether it will serve as a genuine center of research on America.

The most frequently seen research centers in Turkey are those that either focus on the European Union or the Eurasia (meaning non-EU Eastern Europe, Russia, Caucasus, Central Asia). There are also a number of general purpose research organizations whose names include the words sociological, political and economic. They do produce policy papers, policy research, and other documents of interest both regarding domestic and international politics. In recent years, the Turkish Council on Higher Education has encouraged the establishment of the so called Strategic Research Centers at universities, another instrument that may at some future point lead to more foreign policy and security research.

When we look at centers at universities, we may note that the word “strategic” is employed with little care. Increasingly the meaning of term is blurred. What is clear, however, is that many of the centers that bear the name “strategic” do little in the way of actual research but serve as instruments for accommodating visiting lecturers and organizing conferences that come under the broadest sense under the umbrella of strategic, often meaning nothing more than issues having to do with foreign policy. It is also the case some of these centers exist only on paper and do not offer much activity.

On the other hand, research institutions and think tanks that are not associated with universities are comprised of four types: 1) those that are part of government, 2) those that are directly or indirectly funded by the government; 3) privately funded establishments, and 4) those that are funded by public or private foreign foundations. In addition, some foreign foundations have local branches and representative offices.

An example of a fully funded center that is reasonably autonomous from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that supports it, is the Strategic Research Center (SAM)²⁷ which has published since its foundation the quarterly journal *Perceptions* as well as occasional reports on specific foreign policy questions. Since its beginning in 1995, *Perceptions* has published nine articles that have focused specifically on American foreign policy and its relations with Turkey and other countries. Additional articles in which the United States does not constitute the major focus but frequently mentioned also abound.

Another fully government funded but considerably less independent center is the Strategic Research and Studies Center (SAREM) attached to the Turkish General Staff. The work of the center is entirely security oriented. Since 2003 when the center was initiated, its journal *Stratejik Araştırmalar Dergisi* (Journal of Strategic Research) has published three articles that examine topics related to the United States. Appearing in 2003 and 2004, two of the articles discuss the changes in the global strategy of the United States while one looks at Turkish-American relations. Much of the writing in the journal is devoted to the study of other regions and topics such as Eurasia, European Union, terror, and energy security with little reference to America per se.

²⁷ Cf. Center for Strategic Research , accessed January 9, 2012, <http://sam.gov.tr/>

The oldest think tank in the domain of foreign policy is the Foreign Policy Institute (DPE) established in 1974²⁸. Especially prior to the establishment of its own Strategic Research Center (SAM), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended support to the DPE in order to organize conferences with foreign think tanks. The Institute has had an arrangement with the Council of Europe, sending out a periodical internet bulletin on the activities of the Council.

During the recent years, two new institutions, each receiving some of their funding from government sources, have entered the research arena. The first, Political, Economic and Social Research Foundation or SETA, is a very active organization that publishes policy papers as well as descriptive and analytical research on matters of both domestic and foreign policy.²⁹ It also publishes the quarterly journal *Insight Turkey*. Similar to other foundations, SETA does not have a specific American focus but differs from others in that it does have an office in Washington, D.C. which organizes lectures, conferences on matters that relate to American foreign policy and Turkish-American relations.

The second partly government funded organization is the Eurasian Strategic Research Center of Turkey or TASAM. Although TASAM focuses on Asia, it does actually have a research desk on America³⁰. The responsibilities of the desk include “studying American political institutions and culture, voting behavior, election campaigns and political communication.” The desk is of recent vintage and has not yet published reports or similar documents.

Those institutions which are financed by private sources are many. A well known think tank is International Strategic Research Establishment or USAK. USAK houses a center for American Studies AMERAM³¹ that aims to study the domestic and international politics of the United States, America’s global policies and Turkish-American relations in order “to keep the citizens, the decision makers, the business world and the media informed about the United States.” USAK publishes on the internet a weekly bulletin which often carries items about the United States. A similar observation may be made regarding the journal *USAK Stratejik Gündem* (Strategic Agenda) that has included articles on the US. In addition to producing occasional reports, USAK has also published a book by Ömer Kurtbağ: entitled *Amerikan Yeni Sağı ve Dış Politikası* (The New American Right and American Foreign Policy)³².

In 2004, another privately funded center called Turkish Center for International Relations and Strategic Analyses or TURKSAM was established. The center has an American Studies Division³³. Although the internet page of the center contains a number of articles on American foreign policy and Turkish-American relations, much of this writing comes from the pen of the same individual. Similarly, the website of another institute, 21st Century Turkey Institute (21.Yüzyıl Türkiye Enstitüsü) established in 2006 contains a section with

²⁸ Dış Politika Enstitüsü, accessed January 9, 2012, <http://www.dispolitika.org.tr/>

²⁹ Siyaset Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı, accessed January 9, 2012, <http://www.setav.org/en.aspx>

³⁰ Türk Asya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, accessed January 9, 2012, <http://www.tasam.org>

³¹ “International Strategic Research Organisation,” USAK, Accessed January 9, 2012, <http://www.usak.org.tr/EN/>

³² Ömer Kurtbağ, *Amerikan Yeni Sağı ve Dış Politikası* (Ankara: USAK, 2010)

³³ “Turkish Center for International Relations and Strategic Analysis,” TÜRSAM, accessed January 9, 2012, <http://www.turksam.org/en/>

articles on American politics and foreign policy on their website.³⁴

The four year old Wisemen Strategic Studies Center or BILGESAM has shown some interest in the United States. The journal of the Center, currently in its second year of publication, has contained two articles about the United States. Among the short reports that the center publishes, 62 has been about the domestic politics of the United States or its foreign policy³⁵. It has also published a report on the United States. It does appear that BILGESAM takes deeper interest in America than similar organizations such as USAK.

Two other institutions organize roundtables and conferences on topics relating to Turkey's foreign policy and external relations that often include the United States. These are the Ankara based Institute of Strategic Thinking (Stratejik Düşünce Enstitüsü) and the Foreign Policy Forum of Turkish Businessmen's and Industrialists' Association (TÜSİAD). Turkish Economic and Political Studies Foundation (TEPAV) in Ankara funded by the Unions of the Chambers of Industry, Commerce and Commodity Exchanges has also recently announced the opening of an American Studies Center. The nature of the activities of this center will only become known in the future.

6. Conclusion

After the Turkish economy turned to export led growth and began to grow rapidly and after the end of the Cold War, the way was opened for Turkey to develop multilateral relations with almost all regions and countries of the world. This has been accompanied by the emergence of research centers and think tanks focusing on the economies, politics and external relations of the societies with which Turkey's relations have been expanding. In this context, it is surprising that research centers on the United States have not expanded rapidly and ahead of others. Some reasons may be offered for such an observation.

First, this may derive in part from the fact that there exists a body of individuals in Turkish society comprised of academics, businessmen, diplomats, journalists etc., many having studied in America, who are very familiar with the United States and who did not feel the need for information that would be made available by centers. While more systematic information might be useful, as long as the need was not felt, progress on the research front may be modest.

A second reason for the modest growth of research centers might be that Turkey's trade with the United States is not big and is limited to specific areas in which defense dominates. Trade with the United States is gradually expanding but Turkey's trade orientation has mainly been toward the European Union with which Turkey has a Customs Union.

Third, some of the growth of research centers and think tanks owes to the idea that Turkey should take a greater interest in the regions surrounding it where it aspires to exercise leadership. This proclivity is occasionally enhanced by Islamist or Turkish ideological considerations. Regions like the Middle East and Central Asia have been quite present in some of the political ideologies that have prevailed in parts of the Turkish political spectrum.

³⁴ "Amerika Araştırmaları Merkezi," 21. Yüzyıl Türkiye Enstitüsü, accessed January 9, 2012, <http://www.21yyte.org/tr/bolum25-Amerika.html>

³⁵ "Bilge Adamlar Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi," BILGESAM, accessed November 27, 2011, <http://www.bilgesam.org/tr/index.php>

Currently, Turkey's relations with the United States is expanding and coming to cover many areas in addition to defense, they are becoming more complex. Therefore, we may expect that there will soon be an expansion of research on the United States in Turkey, much in line with the general direction of development research centers and think tanks in Turkey as the country becomes a more important actor in the global system.

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