



## INTERPRETATION OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TURKISH-AMERICAN BILATERAL AFFAIRS AND ELABORATION OF THESE ELEMENTS BETWEEN 2009-2016\*

Mehmet DİREKLİ\*\*, Ege Volkan YILDIRIM\*\*\*

### Abstract

*The goal of this article is to better grasp and interpret the elements for a specific term that influence Turkish-American bilateral affairs, which throughout the previous few years have experienced a roller coaster. Turkish foreign policy formerly followed a Western-based course in accordance with the state's goal of westernization. Turkish foreign policy, on the other hand, has changed gradually as it turned out to be evident that the protracted EU admission efforts would not come to a conclusion. Therefore, current foreign policy of Türkiye, which is less Western centric and intimately tied with the geography of the former Ottoman Empire, has had an impact on bilateral affairs with the United States.*

*Common interests are the most essential element influencing bilateral ties between Türkiye and the United States. The article investigates how bilateral connections are sustained when two countries have mutual concerns, as well as the implications of this if the two states have opposing concerns. As a result of the research conducted for this study, the international organizations of which the two states are a part have been ineffective in changing the interest-oriented framework of the bilateral relationship.*

**Article Type:** Research Article

**Keywords:** Turkish Foreign Policy, US Foreign Policy, Bilateral Affairs, Westernization, International Organizations.

**JEL Codes:** F50, F59

**Author's Note:** *This study has been prepared in accordance with scientific research and ethical rules. In this study, there is no content that requires ethics committee permission or legal/special permission. I, as the first author of the article, signed my declaration certifying that there was no conflict of interest within the article preparation process.*

---

\* This article is based on the master's thesis of the second author conducted under the supervision of the first author.

\*\*Yrd. Doç. Dr. Uluslararası Kıbrıs Üniversitesi, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölüm Başkanı, [mdirekli@ciu.edu.tr](mailto:mdirekli@ciu.edu.tr), ORCID: 0000-0002/3173/7756

\*\*\* Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi, Uluslararası Kıbrıs Üniversitesi, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Geliş Tarihi/Arrived: 15.03.2023

Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 04.12.2023

## 2009-2016 Dönemi Türk-Amerikan İkili İlişkilerini Etkileyen Faktörlerin Yorumlanması ve Bu Unsurların Detaylandırılması

### Öz

*Bu makalenin amacı, son yıllarda inişli çıkışlı bir seyir izleyen Türk-Amerikan ikili ilişkilerini etkileyen unsurları belli bir dönem üzerinden daha iyi kavramak ve yorumlamaktır. Türk dış politikası önceleri devletin Batılılaşma hedefi doğrultusunda Batı merkezli bir seyir izlemiştir. Buna mukabil Türk dış politikası uzun süredir devam eden AB üyelik çabalarının sonuç vermeyeceğinin ortaya çıkmasıyla çok yönlü bir şekilde değişmiştir. Sonuç olarak, Türkiye'nin daha az Batı merkezli ve eski Osmanlı İmparatorluğu coğrafyasına sıkı sıkıya bağlı olan mevcut dış politikası, ABD ile ikili ilişkilerde etkili olmuştur.*

*Ortak çıkarlar, Türkiye ile ABD arasındaki ikili ilişkileri etkileyen en temel unsurdur. Makale, iki ülkenin karşılıklı kaygıları olduğunda ikili bağlantıların nasıl sürdürüldüğünü ve bunun yanı sıra iki devletin karşıt kaygıları varsa bunun sonuçlarını araştırmaktadır. Bu çalışma sonucunda iki devletin parçası olduğu kuruluşların, ikili ilişkinin çıkar odaklı çerçevesini değiştirmekte etkisiz kaldığı anlaşılmıştır.*

**Makalenin Türü:** Araştırma Makalesi

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk Dış Politikası, Amerikan Dış Politikası, İkili İlişkiler, Batılılaşma, Uluslararası Örgütler.

**Jel Kodu:** F50, F59

**Yazarın Notu:** Bu çalışma bilimsel araştırma ve etik kurallarına uygun olarak hazırlanmıştır. Bu çalışmada etik kurul izni veya yasal/özel izin gerektirecek bir içerik bulunmamaktadır. Çalışma ile ilgili herhangi bir çıkar çatışmasının bulunmadığı SAVSAD Savunma ve Savaş Araştırmaları Dergisine yazar imzası ile beyan edilmiştir.

## INTRODUCTION

Although the term alliance has a variety of connotations, this research will concentrate on the state-centered approach. Despite the fact that non-state organizations are getting significantly more prominent in the field of international relations, states continue to be the most decisive actors. As Türkiye and the US' alliances are the primary center of attention, the state-based perspective is more applicable within this study.

### Research Question

In 2009, when Barack Obama was elected president of the United States, affairs between Türkiye and the United States shifted dramatically. Turkish-American affairs were portrayed as a model collaboration instead of a strategic partnership at the start of the Obama administration. The Obama administration's model partnership idea, which is constructed on three components: strategy, economy, and social values, is used to describe

relations with Türkiye (Turkmen, 2016). As a result, the focus of this academic research is on a set of proposals for main and sub questions that help to portray the research's core concept:

### **Main Research Question(s)**

1) How are bilateral connections sustained when Türkiye and the US have mutual or opposing interests?

2) What were the main characteristics of the Obama administration's foreign policy principles while conducting its bilateral affairs with Türkiye?

### **Hypothesis of the Research**

The research was done with the assumption that bilateral connections are sustained when two countries have mutual interests, as well as the implications of this if the two countries have opposing interests. The research hypothesis is as follows:

If there was not an interest-driven structure between Türkiye and US bilateral affairs, it would be easier to set foreign policy goals, and there would be an opportunity to use the international organizations of which the two countries are members in the most effective way.

### **Methodology**

To grasp the overall pattern of Türkiye-US affairs, this research used historical analysis, process tracing, and case studies. Platforms such as publications, reports, articles, and journals served as secondary sources from which data and information were gathered. Electronic and internet platforms have made these readily available. In addition to that, several websites, as well as books and the materials included in these books, were accessible. These were supplemented by the use of academic texts and web pages accessed via the Internet, which made the research process easier. Consequently, various situations from different times were compared in the study. The research was carried out utilizing qualitative research techniques.

### **Problem Statement and Significance of the Study**

While considering the meaning of alliances, it is clear that many academics employ various structures and intentions to explain the notion of an alliance. The underlying argument for heterogeneity is because different theories of international relations have varied viewpoints on the meaning of alliances and how they are formed. From a realist theory perspective,

alliances are created by bringing the notion of power to the core. In the process of conceptualizing alliances, Stephen Walt claims that, along with the notion of power, security also plays a significant role in encouraging states to establish alliances as a result of the neo-realist approach (Walt, 2007).

Interstate and international systems are being threatened because of the ever-destructive nature of power (Morgenthau, 1973). This, in turn, brings with it the need for security. A balance of power is not a mechanism that operates by itself or automatically (Claude, 1962). These states try to achieve their goals by appropriating, maintaining, increasing, or even demonstrating power, and in this sense, power is exploited in the international system as a general concept (Morgenthau, 1973). Consequently, while international law is part of the system, it is not effective in mediation and decision-making due to its lack of assertiveness. After all, from the perspective of military power, political influence, natural resources, and geographical location, the enemy is at an advantage. This is a fear of the enemy, because not all states go into balancing activities, but only those who are threatened. However, this is not superiority in the sense of armed conflict. From a military point of view, a weak country can use political pressure in the international system to transform this disadvantage into an advantage. According to the theory of Walt, a state behaves according to its perception of the behavior of its enemy or competitor (Walt, 1985). A weak state must therefore find some form of shelter. This danger forces the state to attach itself to the strengths or to put it in other words, start bandwagoning (Direkli, 2022). In his theory, Walt examined what the weak state needs protection against, and the answer is danger (Direkli, 2022). This means that a state is looking for security from its perceived threat.

For realists, survival is also a primary concern for states. The creation of an alliance by states, as well as the involvement of states in an established alliance, occur in this context. Meanwhile, states' main goal is to survive; interest and power maximization are their secondary goals. Realists, thus, assert that states' engagement in alliances is only motivated by these considerations. (Ozluk, 2017). The fundamental motivation for weaker states joining alliances under the umbrella of major states is because another great power poses a threat to their survival. When alliances are viewed through the lens of realism, under the anarchic framework of international relations, there is an interest-oriented structure. As a result, realists believe that states' primary motives for creating an alliance are security and power.

Some implications may arise as a result of the state's participation in the alliances in this regard. To begin with, a weaker state might acquire the status of Bandwagoning country by joining an alliance with a strong state (Schweller, 1994). In order to ensure its survival, the state must define its foreign policy harmonized with the great power's approach (Ozluk, 2017). This scenario, which arose regularly at the time of the Cold War, might be related to a colonial bond that went beyond forming an alliance. In fact, when a state can no longer afford to survive, it surrenders all of its foreign policy inclinations to a major power and joins within its protective roof.

Furthermore, states might aim for balance by forming alliances. Particularly in neo-realist theory, the notion of balancing occupies so much room. The core element of balancing, according to Kenneth Waltz, is to give help to the weak side in order to avoid the strong power from becoming a hegemon (Waltz, 2010). Waltz's main ideas are framed by defensive realism, which explains why his characterizations of alliances are on this pathway. In contrast, neo-realist Randall Schweller, proposes a concept that emphasizes military force in balancing. As mentioned by him, balance is a type of defense instrument used by a state towards another state or alliance, with largely military implications (Schweller, 1994). The balancing country can then challenge the political or military force of the state it considers a danger in this respect. To rephrase it, for Schweller, balancing is a momentary action that will be important during times when the feeling of danger is at its peak (Ozluk, 2017).

The notion of balancing is approached by neo-realist academics in two ways: defensive realism and offensive realism. As an illustration, offensive realism scholars like John Mearsheimer assert that nations construct regional hegemonies irrespective of their capacity and power. On top of that, Mearsheimer states that only regional hegemonies are within the realm of possibility. As a result, they reject Waltz's balancing notions, arguing that the defensive realist image he offers is more of a status quo compared to a balancing exercise (Mearsheimer, 2002).

The structural realist approach was based on the assumption that states can never be sure about the intentions of other states. So a state's policy of maximizing its power against other states is found understandable. The military capability of a state can be assessed through intelligence activity and monitoring, but the intentions of the decision-makers can never be predicted unless they are stated openly (Mearsheimer, 2007). Of course, this approach provides an endless doubt and constant perception of mutual threat between the states.

Another option is making alliances in order to balance the superiority of the potential enemy. But classical realists recognize that military power and alliances are double-edged swords, as sometimes they are likely to provoke a conflict instead of preventing it (Lebow, 2007). Because alliances cannot be concealed easily, once they are revealed, they might be regarded as an aggressive preparation against them by the adversaries.

To ensure their survival, countries are forming alliances inside the international system, as attested by Waltz. The balance of power concept's key objective in this regard is to sustain the survival of the countries. From Mearsheimer's point of view, nations do not need to increase their power if Waltz's concept is correct. Within this frame of reference, supposing Waltz is correct, there is no necessity for countries to try to increase their power. In order to maintain the system in balance, great powers will be taking the required measures (Ozluk, 2017). Based on this, Mearsheimer has criticized Waltz's theories regarding the importance of components in the international system. As attested by him, the crucial element that governs the anarchic framework of the international system is power maximization. But despite that, Waltz places more weight on balancing (Mearsheimer, 2009).

Power-based approaches to the motivations for states forming alliances have been criticized. A few academics claim that as time went by, the balance of power went downhill. While criticizing the notion of a balance of power, the term balance of threat arisen. As such, Stephen Walt revised the premise that balancing is used to counteract power, saying that balancing is used to counteract threats, not power (Walt, 2007).

Taking everything into consideration, in the anarchic framework of international relations, realist thinkers have been unable to establish a common ground on why states form alliances. The method that arose in line with neo-realism and stated that the system's framework drove countries to seek power, and the objectives of alliances created by countries under an anarchic system have also been narrowed to the notions of security and power to a great degree.

Bilateral affairs between Türkiye and the United States have a long history, dating back to the late 1800s. Considering their geographical locations, the two countries maintained bilateral connections, which were concentrated on the armaments trade, after World War I. (Gencer, 2008). Turkish-American affairs, on the other hand, grew stronger after World War II. Subsequently, due to the Second World War, Türkiye paired with the

Western alliance orchestrated by the United States to combat the Soviet Union's menace.

Following the successful implementation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and Türkiye's membership in NATO in 1952, remarkable developments have been accomplished in the fields of political, economic, and military partnership between the two countries. Moreover, throughout the Cold War, the United States had a direct or indirect influence on the foreign policy actions of Türkiye. And to this day, the most critical topics in Turkish foreign policy, such as the Syrian Civil War, the July 15 coup attempt, the Cyprus problem, and Northern Iraq, are regarded in the context of affairs with the US.

NATO cooperation is, without a doubt, the organizational foundation of Türkiye-US bilateral affairs. Despite Türkiye became a member of Western organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF after World War II, North Atlantic Treaty Organization constantly has been the focal point of bilateral affairs. The fact that Türkiye is positioned at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, and the Caucasus is the primary cause of this circumstance. Additionally, due to its geopolitical significance, Türkiye, which set up NATO's southeastern dividing lines at the time of the Cold War, grew into one of NATO's important members in this period. Nevertheless, it may be claimed that bilateral affairs between Türkiye and the United States were one-sided throughout the Cold War.

In the early stages of the Cold War, Türkiye did not practice an independent foreign policy from the US. Türkiye's participation in the Korean War can be given as an example of this situation (Vander Lippe, 2000). Türkiye, which gained NATO membership as a result of its participation in the Korean War, both ensured its security and tried to eliminate the threat of the USSR. This situation enabled Türkiye to get closer to America and the West and, in the long run, to become the second largest army in NATO after the American army. According to the concept of bandwagoning, Türkiye placed its reliance on the United States, the pioneer of the Western alliance, to protect its security, and act in accordance with it. Additionally, despite attempts in the 1960s and 1970s to adopt independent actions on problems such as Cyprus, Türkiye stayed within NATO's control until the conclusion of the Cold War.

Based on this, Turkish policymakers believed that the ideal way to democratize and modernize was to create excellent relations with the European Union and the United States. For the purpose of becoming a permanent member state of the European Union, Türkiye matched its laws

and liberalized its economy with those of European states during the 1980s and 1990s. Additionally, Türkiye has not established deep relations with states in the Middle East as a political choice for ages, and it has not intervened in disputes among these states with the intention of affecting itself (Bilgin, 2017). Türkiye's main strategic aim during the 1980s and 1990s was to join the European Union by adopting a Western-centric foreign policy. Türkiye felt that this was the ideal way for becoming a developed country, and it has followed this approach for ages. As a result, Türkiye's organizational affairs with the Western Hemisphere are based on its military participation in NATO and political status as a candidate state for admission to the European Union.

Following the September 11th attacks, the United States' foreign policy was drastically changed. Due to the September 11th attacks, the Bush Doctrine was proclaimed by the US. In addition to the Bush Doctrine, the United States adopted a policy of preemptive operations to neutralize possible threats (Wheeler, 2003). Accordingly, US foreign policy during the George W. Bush administration might be viewed as an instance of offensive realism. As a result, the Bush administration did not waver to react towards states it deemed dangerous to the United States in order to fully cement American hegemony in the post-Cold War unipolar order. Within this perspective, the sanctions against Iran and invasion of Iraq might be given as examples.

At those times, the Bush administration introduced the Greater Middle East project, which aimed to reshape the region. Türkiye was shown as a model of a Middle Eastern country with a democratic and secular system that aspires to be governed by moderate Muslims (Stewart, 2005).

When the AK Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi- Justice and Development Party) took power under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Türkiye in 2002, the country embraced a new foreign policy strategy that differed from its previous approaches. Additionally, Türkiye, whose relations with the European Union have deteriorated over time, has grown increasingly interested in the Middle East and started to pursue an independent foreign policy.

While considering Turkish-American affairs, it is clear that the nature of the affairs constantly evolves as the time passes by. Türkiye follows an autonomous foreign policy from the United States and NATO throughout its strengthening period. In the Syrian Civil War, for example, Türkiye has taken a different foreign policy framework than the US. Furthermore, Türkiye has resisted imposing sanctions on Iran and has made



an effort to mediate disputes between Iran and Western states. In order to counterbalance Western countries, Russia also exploits the Middle East and China (Demir & Yılmaz, 2020).

In its foreign policymaking procedure, Türkiye has traditionally placed a high value on its affairs with the United States. Moreover, while Türkiye is forming its foreign policy, one of the first factors to consider is the United States' policies regarding Türkiye. As a result, Turkish politicians have sought to adjust to the post-Cold War world order by cooperating with the United States in order to avoid being ignored, as they have been for decades (Oran, 2010).

The Turkish economy was significantly stronger in the 2000s than it had been previously. The most important aspect in the formation of a developing Turkish economy based on exports was the Turkish economy's liberalization phase, which got under way in 1980 with assistance from the US and the IMF. Türkiye, by attempting to improve its affairs with the US and the EU, aims to preserve its foothold in the post-Cold War economic order (Sayari, 2000).

### **Theoretical Frame**

In international relations theory, alliances play a significant role. States form alliances in order to achieve a variety of purposes; nonetheless, security and power are the most prominent ones. The perspective of realism theory on the notion of alliance will be compared in the following sections of the research. Before beginning this comparative analysis, in international relations, it is critical to grasp the meaning of the notion of alliance.

Although the term "alliance" has a variety of connotations, this research will concentrate on the state-centered approach. Despite the fact that non-state organizations are getting significantly prominent in the field of international relations, states continue to be the most decisive actors. As Türkiye and the US' alliances are the primary center of attention, the state-based perspective is more applicable within this study.

While considering the meaning of alliances, it is clear that many academics employ various structures and intentions to explain the notion of an alliance. The underlying argument for heterogeneity is because different theories of international relations have varied viewpoints on the meaning of alliances and how they are formed. From a realist theory perspective, alliances are created by bringing the notion of power to the core. In the process of conceptualizing alliances, Stephen Walt claims that, along with

the notion of power, security also plays a significant role that encourages states to establish alliances as a result of the neo-realist approach (Walt, 2007).

In the post-World War II era, realist theory started gaining momentum in the field of international relations. The setback of idealism theory, which reigned supreme in the course of World Wars I and II, prepared the route for realism to take over as dominant theory in international relations (Behr & Heath, 2009).

According to realism, the state is the most significant entity in international relations, which behaves under the premise that international relations occurs within an anarchic system. As a result, one of the most fundamental realism premises is that the international order is an anarchical system as it does not acknowledge any higher authority (Morgenthau, 1973).

For realists, survival is also a primary concern for states. The creation of an alliance by states, as well as the involvement of states in an established alliance, occur in this context. Meanwhile, states' main goal is to survive; interest and power maximization are their secondary goals. Realists, thus, assert that states' engagement in alliances is only motivated by these considerations. (Ozlu, 2017). The fundamental motivation for weaker states joining alliances under the umbrella of big powers is because another great power makes threat to their survival. When alliances are viewed through the lens of realism, under the anarchic framework of international relations, there is an interest-oriented structure. As a result, realists believe that states' primary motives for creating an alliance are security and power.

Some implications may arise as a result of the state's participation in the alliances in this regard. To begin with, a weaker state might acquire the status of Bandwagoning country by joining an alliance with a strong state (Schweller, 1994). In order to ensure its survival, the state must define its foreign policy harmonized with the great power's approach (Ozlu, 2017). This scenario, which arose regularly at the time of the Cold War, might be related to a colonial bond that went beyond forming an alliance. In fact, when a state can no longer afford to survive, it surrenders all of its foreign policy inclinations to a major power and joins within its protective roof.

Furthermore, states might aim to balance by forming alliances. Particularly in neo-realist theory, the notion of balancing occupies so much room. The core element of balancing, according to Kenneth Waltz, is to give

help to the weak side in order to avoid the strong power from becoming a hegemon (Waltz, 2010). Waltz's main ideas are framed by defensive realism, which explains why his characterizations of alliances are on this pathway. In contrast, neo-realist Randall Schweller, proposes a concept that emphasizes military force in balancing. As mentioned by him, balance is a type of defense instrument used by a state towards another state or alliance, with largely military implications (Schweller, 1994). The balancing country can then challenge the political or military force of the state it considers a danger in this respect. To rephrase it, for Schweller, balancing is a momentary action that will be important during times when the feeling of danger is at its peak (Ozluk, 2017).

The notion of balancing is approached by neo-realist academics in two ways: defensive realism and offensive realism. As an illustration, offensive realism scholars like John Mearsheimer assert that nations construct regional hegemonies irrespective of their capacity and power. On top of that, Mearsheimer states that only regional hegemonies are within the realm of possibility. Countries cannot become global hegemonies because of water. As a result, they reject Waltz's balancing notions, arguing that the defensive realist image he offers is more of a status quo compared to a balancing exercise (Mearsheimer, 2002).

To ensure their survival, countries are forming alliances inside the international system as attested by Waltz. Balance of power concept's key objective in this regard is to sustain the survival of the countries. From Mearsheimer's point of view, nations do not need to increase their power if Waltz's concept is correct. Within this frame of reference, supposing Waltz is correct, there is no necessity for countries to try to increase their power. In order to maintain the system in balance, great powers will be taking the required measures (Ozluk, 2017). Based on this, Mearsheimer has criticized Waltz's theories regarding the importance of components in the international system. As attested by him, the crucial element that governs the anarchic framework of the international system is power maximization. But despite that, Waltz places more weight on balancing (Mearsheimer, 2009).

Taking everything into consideration, on the anarchic framework of international relations, realist thinkers have been unable to establish a common ground on why states form alliances. The method which arose in line with neo-realism and stated that the system's framework drove countries to seek power and the objectives of alliances created by countries under an anarchic system have also been narrowed to the notions of security and power to a great degree.

### **The Obama Administration and the Instability of Bilateral Affairs**

In 2009, when Barack Obama was elected president of the United States, affairs between Türkiye and the United States shifted dramatically. Turkish-American affairs were portrayed as a model collaboration instead of a strategic partnership at the start of the Obama administration. The Obama administration's model partnership idea, which is constructed on three components: strategy, economy, and social values, is used to describe relations with Türkiye (Turkmen, 2016). The strategic aspect accounts for a significant portion of bilateral ties. The economic connections between the two states must be strengthened. In bilateral affairs, however, the social values aspect, which is regarded as the third pillar of the model partnership notion, has practically no role (Turkmen, 2016). This pillar, which was pushed aside in bilateral affairs at the time of the Bush administration, demonstrates that terms like human rights and democracy are not that effectual in bilateral ties. In the early years, the Obama administration and its political maneuvers contributed positively to US-Türkiye relations. In the meantime, the US started to construct tighter connections with Türkiye, which it described as a positive role partner. During this time, nevertheless, the two countries' concerns are vastly aligned.

Consequently, the election of the Obama administration in the United States has started a new era in global politics. Unilateral offensive ideologies of the Bush Doctrine dominated world politics for a long time. However, after a lengthy break, the notion of soft power has revived.

#### **Foreign Policy Principles of Obama Administration**

After the Bush administration, international public opinion had lost faith in American foreign policy. According to a 2008 poll, the number of people who favor American foreign policy around the world has decreased dramatically. Allegiance to American foreign policy is rated at 52% in the United Kingdom, 41% in France, and 30% in Germany. Middle Eastern countries had substantially lower rates. For example, 22% in Egypt and 12% in Türkiye (Pirincci, 2011).

New foreign policy objectives were established by the Obama administration in order to develop an effective foreign policy plan after noticing American foreign policy losing credibility. The first of these texts, which was labeled as the Obama Doctrine, released in 2010 and then modified in 2015 to reflect changing global realities.

Despite its idealist attitude, the Obama administration has demonstrated a strong commitment to maintaining US global leadership. It was underlined in the National Security Strategy Plan that the United States should concentrate on economic growth and leave the economic crisis behind for the purpose of developing a new policy to maintain its global leadership and counter China's growing power (Byrd & Murty 2013).

Rather than unilateral military involvement in the new era, the Obama administration has opted to foster global justice and democracy with its partners. Consequently, one of the most significant realizations made by the Obama administration is that worldwide challenges are larger than the United States can manage individually (Politico, 2009). The Obama administration felt that international institutions, international law, and diplomacy could be used to tackle global challenges. When the Obama administration's decisions are examined, it becomes clear that the UN and NATO are the two most frequently employed institutions in the resolution of global issues.

Unlike the Bush Doctrine, the Obama Doctrine has distinctive conditions for the use of force. The notion of a preemptive strike was fully abandoned by the Obama administration. Based on this, the use of force can be conceivably employed to sustain regional and worldwide peace, avert the weapons of mass destruction and the destructive impacts of terrorism, protect trade and energy, and address humanitarian crises. In this sense, the "use of force" concept's boundaries were depicted by the Obama administration. The Obama administration has pursued a policy of gaining allies' backing before employing action and avoiding utilizing US soldiers as ground troops as much as feasible in Libya and Syria (Chesterman, 2011).

Since its publication in 2015, the National Security Strategy documentation has been updated to reflect shifting global politics. The United States has said in this document that it is still strong and that it intends to preserve its worldwide leadership status. The fundamental purpose for this focus is the rise of China, along with the danger put forth by Russia with its military force, which is becoming more involved in world affairs. These two incidents are increasingly working against US interests. Within this framework, the Asia-Pacific zone is clearly the fundamental emphasis of the 2015 National Security Strategy file. This document, which puts the Middle East's challenges aside, focuses on formulating measures to counter aggressive Russia and rising China.

Despite the fact that the Obama administration's 2010 national security strategy was focused on maintaining the US's global leadership position, it established a plan that would react to domestic policy demands. Nevertheless, in 2015, changing global dynamics redirected the primary threat perception of Obama administration towards the Asia-Pacific area, resulting in adaptation of a counter-threat policy.

### **Politics in Middle East and Role of Türkiye during Obama's Administration**

Following the Bush administration's war-oriented and counter-terrorism Middle East policies, the Middle East public's greatest hope for Obama was a resolution to the challenges left over by the Bush administration. The US was distanced from core ideals like human rights because of the foreign policy strategy of the Bush administration, and this has dealt serious harm to US-Islamic affairs (Ovali, 2019).

American national security gets threatened by radical Islamic terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda, as attested by the 2010 National Security Strategy Document. The Obama administration was forced to establish a new Middle East politics as a result of the failure of the war on terrorism and the emotional split among the United States and the Islamic world. Iran's nuclear weapons development efforts and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are two of the most major challenges in the Middle East, according to President Obama.

With the intention of reviving Türkiye-US affairs in the aftermath of the Bush period, the Obama administration came up with the concept of a model partnership while conducting its bilateral affairs with Türkiye. Consequently, the Obama administration declared that Turkish-American affairs are meant to be combined into a large framework that encompasses joint cooperation in many economic, social, and cultural areas under the concept of Model Partnership (Ovali, 2019). The portrayal of Türkiye as a model state for Muslim Middle Eastern states is another aspect of the Model Partnership idea used to define Turkish-American bilateral affairs. Notion of Model Country highlights that Türkiye, with its Muslim population, has an industrialized economy and a functioning democracy.

The administration of Erdogan shared identical views on the Middle East as the administration of Obama. From Obama's point of view, dictatorships should be abolished and a democratic system should be constructed in the Islamic world. Moreover, the Obama administration preferred that these adjustments can be achieved through internal reforms

rather than military operations. Statements between 2011 and 2017 show that Obama believes that North Africa and the Middle East are chronically destabilized regions, and US intervention there is mostly pointless. Therefore, it does not make sense for him to militarily intervene in Syria (Ateş, 2021). This is the primary driving force for promotion of Türkiye as a model Middle Eastern state. After observing that changes through military means have had detrimental implications, the Obama administration has pushed for domestic democratic reforms in Middle Eastern states.

Furthermore, the closed economic systems of Middle Eastern states were anticipated to be reconstructed when autocratic regimes went away, with free market economies in harmony with the global liberal economy. Working with Erdogan's government was seen as a way for Islamic groups in the Middle East to become more democratic, according to the Obama administration. (Kurtbag, 2015). Moreover, the state and societal framework of Türkiye, which combines Islam and democracy, could serve as a model for other Muslim states. The new government in Türkiye welcomed the Model Country idea because throughout the Middle East, it allowed Türkiye to extend its political area of influence.

Shortly after taking office, Obama made his first overseas international visit to Türkiye in April 2009. This fact is critical to understanding the Obama administration's regard for Türkiye. Obama stressed that the notion of Model Partnership has the capacity to renew and alter the world during his speech to the Turkish Parliament. The democratic and secular system established under Ataturk's leadership, according to Obama, is Türkiye's most vital feature (Hurriyet, 2009). Obama went on to remark that Türkiye, whose population consists of Muslims as majority, and the US, whose population consists of Christians as majority, could work together to create a modern and international community.

The relationship framework that the US intends to construct with Türkiye is one-sided, similar to that of the Cold War, according to Richard Falk (Falk, 2014). According to Falk, with the intention of bilateral affairs remaining a model partnership, Türkiye must acknowledge the United States' strategic aspirations by prioritizing them over its own.

Efforts by Obama to strengthen connections with Muslims went beyond the Model Country concept and Türkiye. President Obama paid a visit to Cairo, Egypt's capital, and delivered a speech to the entire Islamic world. He cited the Qur'an, Islam's sacred text, to assert that Islam is a part of the US. Obama addressed a number of issues, including the Iraq War, the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Iran, and stated that the best way to solve them is to reach a mutual agreement (The New York Times, 2009).

While looking at the speeches presented to the public during Obama's journeys to Egypt and Türkiye, it's clear that the US aims to use soft power to tackle contemporary challenges within the structure of neoliberal ideology. One of the main neoliberal philosophers, Joseph Nye, defined soft power in a way that is worth remembering. Though the United States possesses the world's most powerful army and weapon arsenal, it should control world affairs and be able to enforce its will on other states (Nye, 2009). Consequently, he contends that if the US wishes to keep its ability to shape global affairs, it must pay attention to and develop its soft power (Nye, 2009).

In one sense, soft power refers to the desire for diplomacy over armed measures. As a result, the effectiveness of soft power is determined by the target's level of belief. Soft power topics like discourse and culture are equally crucial for convincing the target.

Based on this, the Bush administration's The Greater Middle East Project was considered a soft power tool. However, it failed as it was unsustainable with the dynamics of the Middle East. The people of the Middle East, on the other hand, viewed Obama's use of soft power during his visits to Egypt and Türkiye, which was intended for rapprochement with the Islamic world, as beneficial.

In order to enhance Middle Eastern people's hearts and minds in the US, the United States required to take several actions. Correspondingly, a choice was made by Obama which will be welcomed in domestic politics of the US while also changing people's perceptions in the Middle East about the US.

In the United States, the continuation of the Iraq War has long been a source of public dissatisfaction. On top of that, human rights abuses at the Guantanamo Bay detention center had a negative impact on America's image in the Middle East. The Obama administration reported the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq and the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention center (Kurtbag, 2015).

For the Obama administration's Iraq withdrawal plan to be implemented successfully, Türkiye was in a crucial position. The invasion of Iraq at the time of Bush administration, has been called a huge catastrophe in US foreign policy by President Obama. Iraq was invaded



without a thorough examination of the country's domestic characteristics, and the United States' military was forced to remain in Iraq for an extended period of time to reestablish stability (Brenman, 2015). During the Saddam time period, there were religious disputes between the Sunni minority, which occupied the country's administration, and the Shiites, who form the majority of the country's population. Moreover, in northern Iraq, there was an ethnic struggle between Arabs and Kurds (Brenman, 2015). Türkiye could be a mediator in the journey of building democracy in Iraq because of its religious closeness with the Sunni minority and solid ties with the Kurdish administration in northern Iraq, as believed by the Obama administration. Conversely, Iraq, which has a Shiite majority of 55 percent, might easily fall into sphere of control of Iran (Lipka, 2014).

The concentration was switched to the Asia-Pacific zone by the Obama administration, and the aim was to quickly finish the wars acquired during the Bush era. The Bush administration, which failed to consider the characteristics of Middle Eastern states, brought rising anti-Americanism to the Islamic world and an end its term in instability. In contrast, the Obama administration has made a journey to Egypt in order to reach out to deepen relationship with the Islamic world. . As the foreign policy priority of the US has shifted to the Asia-Pacific area, the model state idea was developed, which prioritizes Türkiye with the intention of defending its concerns in the Middle East and avoiding a power void. Therefore, Türkiye and the United States share mutual interests and objectives as Erdogan's administration becomes more interested in increasing its area of influence in the Middle East.

### **The Arab Uprising and Syria's Civil War's Effects on Bilateral Affairs**

Uprisings that began in Tunisia in December 2010 regarding economic challenges have expanded to involve concerns about human rights, freedom, and democracy, and have spread throughout the Arab world. Despite the fact that the US intends to value democracy and human rights, it required and backed the existence of authoritarian governments in order to maintain its policies in the Middle East. While looking at US Middle East policy from a realistic perspective, it can be claimed that the US prioritizes three concerns. These are the fight against terrorism, the protection of Israel, and the energy supply safety (Kurt, 2018). Nevertheless, the flow of uprising in the Middle East that started with the Arab Uprising has compromised the long-term viability of US policy in the Middle East, which has been based on these three pillars for many years.

Following the start of the Arab revolutions, the Obama administration struggled to decide how to respond. Despite having liberal aims such as human rights and democracy, the United States' interests in the field frequently ran counter to these aspirations. Moreover, it is reasonable to argue that when the Arab upheavals started, the Obama administration devised a policy tailored to each country's individual interests (Gerges, 2013). For instance, as a consequence of the Arab Uprising, Egypt's Islamist leader Morsi won elections. It has demonstrated that democracy does not always provide the outcomes that the United States desires. The previously mentioned election consequence, however, is clearly a danger to security of Israel and US interests in the Middle East (Kurt, 2018). Subsequently, despite Obama's declaration of support for democratic governments, the military coup that overthrew Morsi's government in 2013 was acknowledged by the Obama administration. The approach of the Obama administration to Arab uprising differs significantly from that of the Bush administration in the Middle East. At the time of Arab Uprising, the United States avoided, as far as possible, arranging the reconstruction of countries. Since it was the most difficult challenge in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. The policies of Obama administration at the time of the Arab Uprising claimed that it simply backed public responses. In the case of Libya, the Obama administration was aiming to avoid unilateral American military engagement and to adhere to its own ideology. Furthermore, with the help of its allies, the United States has attempted to tackle challenges through international organizations such as the United Nations and NATO.

On top of that, with the intention of fulfilling its foreign policy aims in the Middle East, Türkiye has made attempts to create solid bilateral relations with Syria and Egypt. Once Türkiye realized the European Union would not approve it, it began to refocus its foreign policy priorities eastward instead of westward, with the intention of broadening its influence area. Consequently, Türkiye began supporting the insurgents since it felt this might potentially lead to new administrations established by the insurgents. Due to this, in the Syrian Civil War, Türkiye has backed Sunni insurgents rather than the Shiite government (Ataman & Ozdemir, 2018).

Türkiye's backing for Egypt's moderate Islamist Muslim Brotherhood administration, which is deemed the Arab world's political center, is grounded in the same logic (Kuru, 2015). Correspondingly, Erdogan's government shares the Muslim Brotherhood's viewpoints. As a result, Türkiye has thrown its weight behind the Morsi administration and the Muslim Brotherhood, which rose to power in Egypt as a consequence of the Arab Uprising. The military coup which toppled Egypt's Morsi

administration in 2013 and the eight-year Syrian Civil War have struck great harm on the Middle East politics of Türkiye, which it was attempting to develop as a regional force.

Despite Türkiye's desire to pursue an autonomous foreign policy, when the Arab Uprising occurred in 2011, Türkiye and the US shared interests in the Middle East, which paved the way for bilateral affairs to blossom once again. For example, in January 2012, Obama stated that Erdogan is one of the five presidents with whom he has the best connections when he conducted an interview with Time magazine (Rogin, 2012). Despite there were several areas in which they differed, the two countries opted to focus on mutual interests. Several political analysts, like Gerges, suggest that the Obama administration did not see Türkiye's strengthening Middle East connections and expanding influence as a danger, but rather welcomed them. Although the administration of US was turning its focus from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific area, they believed that Türkiye could occupy a potential power vacuum in the region, which would be in parallel with US goals (Gerges, 2013).

Despite the fact that Obama's model country metaphor during his 2009 visit to Türkiye was not executed, democratic and secular Türkiye was seen as a country capable of filling the power vacuum left by the US retreat from the Middle East. The United States' pullout from the Middle East may be able to keep Iran from gaining an edge (Gerges, 2013).

Türkiye's assistance for the missile defense program, which NATO aims to construct over Russia and Iran, was the first concrete sign of improved Türkiye affairs. Türkiye, as a part of this program, has consented to put detections on Turkish soil to surveil the whole Middle East area (Shanker, 2011). Based on this, Türkiye has been condemned by Russia and Iran for its support of this program.

With the Arab Uprising's accomplishment in overturning administrations in some countries, the notion of a model state, where Türkiye is presented as a model state to these new administrations, has revived, and its purpose has become evident (Yilmaz, 2011). Considering Türkiye's attempts to pursue an independent foreign policy, its involvement in the Syrian Civil War and adoption of the missile shield deteriorated Türkiye's affairs with Iran and Syria, leading to a deeper relationship with the US.

The Obama administration has followed a democratic and human rights-based approach throughout the Arab Uprising. The Obama

administration has advocated for central government changes and stressed that protestors should not be subjected to violence. Due to its negative impression as a consequence of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States did not wish to be at the center of things. Due to this, it has formulated a policy of "leading from behind". Libya is the first illustration of the United States' approach of leading from behind. The US conducted its actions in Libya through France and only delivered minimal assistance to military actions. Türkiye was considered appropriate for this duty in the early phases of Syria's civil conflict (Duran, 2017).

Once the first uprisings in Syria erupted, the US government did not expect them to have any different results than those experienced in other Arab Uprising-affected states. Having said that, Syria is uncertain in comparison to other states due to its unstable ethnicity, and use of force to pacify demonstrators, and the Assad regime's refusal of reform proposals. In line with its overall agenda, the Obama administration has pursued pro-democratic policies in Syria (Cankurtaran & Genckaya, 2017). Nevertheless, different from other states in Syria, according to daily circumstances, the Obama administration has modified the parties it supports and its policies, and in this case, it has not been consistent. For example, during the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, it was stated by the Obama administration that the Assad regime should step down. Nonetheless, as time went on, the US viewed the formation of a Syrian interim administration favorably where the Assad regime was participating (Cankurtaran & Genckaya, 2017).

Türkiye and the US have proclaimed that they oppose the existence of the regime of Assad, in line with closely related policies followed during the first phase of Syria's civil war. Despite that, the Syrian civil war was spreading and turning into a proxy war, and the truth that Russia and Iran were supporting Assad regime in the civil war has bolstered the Assad administration's hand and allowed it to stay in power. For that reason, the incidents did not align with the policies of the Türkiye and the United States in Syria.

Türkiye has anticipated that the US to become increasingly engaged in the conflict, as the crisis in Syria turned into a civil war. All things considered, the US wished to be as unengaged as possible in the Middle East's political and military issues, as it was stated in the 2010 National Security Strategy Document. Additionally, it is fair to argue that Obama, who intended to pursue a more careful foreign policy in the run-up to the 2012 elections, was using a wait-and-see approach in Syria. In contrast,

Türkiye has begun to experience the impacts of the Syrian civil war in its own soil, with little option except to wait and watch what happens.

Türkiye has had an open-door policy for Syrian refugees escaping the war since April 2011. As attested by the UNHCR, Türkiye has turned out to be the biggest refugee host country in the world, hosting 3.5 million Syrians in 2019 (UNHRC, 2019). As of September 2019, more than 40 billion dollars had been spent on these refugees by Türkiye (TimeTurk, 2019). The foreign policy of Türkiye has begun to distinguish itself from that of the US related to Syria's relevance. Therefore, Türkiye has begun to regard Syria as a national security concern.

The concern about chemical weapons might be used to demonstrate the US' unwillingness to interfere in the Syrian situation. The deployment of chemical weapons has been a "red line" for the Obama administration since the start of the Syrian conflict. The US has also stated that if chemical weapons are used against enemies, they will engage in the conflict. In August 2013, the Assad regime executed a chemical assault in Syria, killing around 1,400 civilians. Following this assault, the US has remained silent on the Assad regime's actions. For this reason, Obama's response to the use of chemical weapons in Syria has failed miserably (Kasapoğlu, 2019). Conversely, as a result, allies such as Türkiye were losing faith in the United States.

According to Obama, if Assad were driven from office through direct American government engagement, the United States would subsequently encounter Assad's allies. The Obama administration has criticized this as a poor policy (Sen, 2013). Türkiye, contrastingly, was experiencing the security threats and economic costs caused by the large numbers of asylum seekers awaiting at its borders from Syria and was becoming dissatisfied with the US policy on the country. Türkiye viewed the ongoing presidency of Assad as a circumstance that would endanger his developing Middle East reputation (Kurtbag, 2015).

Following the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the Middle East, the Obama administration's cautious attitude toward the Syrian civil war has shifted (Cankurtaran & Genckaya, 2017). Obama has stated that the US will fight ISIS with regional forces rather than its military capabilities, and that the US will eliminate ISIS by air assaults. The Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG), the Syrian extension of the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK), which functions as a terrorist organization in Türkiye and kills civilians, is the force Obama has labeled as a regional

actor. This incident marked the beginning of the long-running conflict between Türkiye and the US (Duran, 2017).

In connection with the Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat (PYD) and its military branch, the YPG, providing international aid, the ISIS's Kobani invasion in 2014 was a major turning point. Following the Kobani attack, the US bolstered its assistance to the PYD. On top of that, worried that the ISIS danger may spread throughout the Middle East, the United States has delivered air assistance and substantial amounts of arms to the PYD. In comparison to other opposition parties in Syria, the PYD has grown and achieved a prominent foothold thanks to US funding. Hence, with the US's assistance, the power balance in Syria has shifted substantially in favor of the PYD (Letsch, 2014).

The growing strength of the PYD and its military branch, the YPG, in Syria has caused plenty of difficulties for the foreign policy of Türkiye. To begin with, the YPG, which Türkiye refers to as the Syrian wing of the terrorist organization PKK, has been backed by powerful countries in its fight against ISIS as a legitimate player. A further significant issue is the PYD's growing territorial dominance over Syrian land. The PYD has taken control of 14% of Syrian land and aspires to expand this percentage even more (Turkmen, 2016). Türkiye sees the PYD's establishment further away from its boundaries as a threat to its national security. Türkiye was anxious over its own national security and worried that the PKK, which has been designated as a terrorist group by all Western powers, may gain from the PYD's legitimacy (Turkmen, 2016).

Türkiye believed that handing up authority over northern Syria to the PYD would open a path for the PKK to access the Mediterranean Sea, endangering its national security and territorial integrity (Daily Sabah, 2019). That being the case, Türkiye, which fights against the PYD's desire to shift the region's ethnic composition, which is characterized by Sunni and Arab populations, has started to send guns and equipment to the separatists. Türkiye's claim was bolstered by the reality that the PYD set up provinces and proclaimed an autonomous administration in places where the Kurdish population is a minority.

A relationship was established by Türkiye with the Iranian and Russian camps in Syria due to the divergent concerns between the US and Türkiye in the Syrian Civil War, (Ovali, 2019).

Terrorist attacks in Türkiye have increased as a result of Syria's civil war. In addition to this, both ISIS and the PKK, which were attempting to

gain territorial control in Syria, have labeled Türkiye as a foe and have performed terrorist attacks in Türkiye. In contrast, due to the damages inflicted by these terrorist attacks, Türkiye has committed to engage militarily in Syria. Due to this, in August 2016, Türkiye initiated a military campaign in Syria with moderate opponents, claiming UN resolutions on combating ISIS as well as Article 51 of the UN Convention. Türkiye has de facto created a buffer zone along its boundaries in Syria, where Russia and the US have been fighting a proxy war through the groups they backed.

Following the operation, which occurred within the area of control of Russia, Türkiye stated that the buffer zone would be stretched to contain Manbij, which fell under the control of the United States. As a result, relations between Türkiye and the United States have deteriorated to levels not seen in previous years.

With the intention of securing American interests in both Syria and Iraq, the Kurds have emerged as the most crucial partner on the ground. The reconciliation between the US and the Kurds, particularly those Kurdish formations within the PKK's area of control, has sparked a dilemma of trust between the US and NATO member Türkiye.

Türkiye's disappointment with the fact that the US was collaborating with a branch of the organization that Türkiye deemed to be its major national security threat instead of its NATO ally Türkiye, in executing its strategies in the region. Huge arms transfer to this organization, Türkiye believes, constitute a big danger to its national security (Cankurtaran & Genckaya, 2017).

Though the United States desires a scenario where Türkiye accepts the PYD, this appears to be impossible. Therefore, it may be said that bilateral affairs between Türkiye and the US are deteriorating rapidly. Because the dynamics in Syria's war have remained stable for many years, the tension between Türkiye and the US is still present today.

Despite the fact that the Middle East was supposed to be transformed into a wealthier and more democratic region by the Arab Uprising, this vision has yet to be achieved. On the other hand, in several states, such as Libya and Syria, the Arab Uprising has resulted in the beginning of lengthy civil wars. Consequently, for other Middle Eastern states, the Obama administration has regarded Türkiye as a model state with its economic success and democratic framework. However, as this regard's theme has not been decided and has turned out to be inefficient. Additionally, a shift in the policies of the US took place due to the rise of ISIS in the Middle East.

Subsequently, the Obama administration has looked for partners to further American interests, as the US does not intend to have direct involvement in the region. The most fitting entity for this circumstance was the PYD which was functioning as the Syrian wing of the PKK. However, it was the terrorist group that has been combated by Türkiye ceaselessly.

During the early phases of the Syrian civil war, Türkiye and the US, who agreed on the removal of Assad from power, have ended in failure to reach an agreement on Syria now that it is clear that Assad will stay in power with assistance of Russia. Additionally, Türkiye has developed good connections with Russia, intending to offset the US's relationship with the PYD, which Türkiye perceives as a major threat to its own security.

Hence, the Syrian Civil War began as a result of uprisings calling for Assad's removal from power, and the civil war became a proxy war where the US and Russia intervened through forces they backed. It appears challenging for Türkiye and the US to recover to their former good days of bilateral affairs on the condition that the Syrian civil war remains in this state of flux.

### **Türkiye's and the US' Different Interests**

When the Soviets were not posing a danger anymore, the Western bloc's capability to coexist in any condition was substantially lost. In the 1990s, as the European Union got more institutionalized, its political affairs with the US became more different. Particularly since the September 11 attacks, trans-Atlantic division has been more visible. Although the EU pursued a more harmonious and dialogue-oriented foreign policy, the United States pursued a unilateral interventionist strategy (Sinkaya, 2011).

In the execution of Turkish foreign policy in the first half of the 2000s, relations of Türkiye with the European Union became a primary concern. The EU began accession talks with Türkiye in 2005 as a consequence of improving compliance of Türkiye with the EU and its growing degree of democracy. Additionally, the standard framework of Turkish foreign policy has begun to evolve due to the accession negotiations of Türkiye with the EU. For many years, Türkiye's foreign policies and practices were based on the pillar of security. The major factor was that at the time of the Cold War, Türkiye shared a border with the Soviet Union. Türkiye had to fight with separatist terrorism after the Cold War ended in the 1990s. After 2005, however, Türkiye adopted a foreign policy based on cooperation and centered on economic relations with the Middle East. This policy shift in Türkiye has been viewed as fitting with the EU's Middle East



strategy and Neighborhood Policy by Western European countries (Oran, 2013).

While looking at Türkiye's bilateral affairs with the US throughout the 2000s, a fluctuating path emerges, with relationships fluctuating between positive and negative. Despite Türkiye-USA was a strategic ally against Soviet danger during the Cold War, the circumstances introduced by the globalizing world have transformed the framework of bilateral affairs, bringing a new chapter of interest-based cooperation. The administration of Erdogan, which came to power in Türkiye in 2002, pursued a foreign policy aimed at regional and more independent leadership.

Once Erdogan's administration started running the office, he made an effort to establish positive connections with the US government. Moreover, in executing its Middle East policy, Türkiye was considered an ideal regional force by the US, and gaining the assistance of Türkiye was seen as a vital factor during this time (Sinkaya, 2011). The Iraq War, on the other hand, was the first starting point for foreign policy of Türkiye to begin to develop an autonomous foreign policy free of US control. The truth that the Turkish Parliament refused to permit the US to utilize Turkish soil to invade Iraq came as a surprise to the US.

Following the Iraq War, the terrorist organization PKK increased its presence in the north of Iraq due to a lack of authority. Nevertheless, for a long time, permission for Türkiye to make a move against the PKK in northern Iraq has been refused by the US government. As a result, Türkiye has strengthened its ties with other regional states, such as Iran and Syria, with the intention of safeguarding its national security, as it believes the PKK, which it regards as its major national threat, is being supported by the US. Apparently, different interests between the two states and differences in threat perceptions resulted in trust issues and new difficulties in affairs.

Regardless of the truth that Türkiye has achieved many democratic improvements, the European Union's unconvincing claims for blocking Türkiye's admission talks have caused Türkiye to drift away from the EU (İnaç, 2016). Consequently, before delving deeper into this topic, it is vital to note that the notion of identity has played a significant role in the affairs of Türkiye with the European Union. With its modern and new republican system, Türkiye has begun the journey of developing a western identity. With the intention of creating this Western-Turkish character, it has prioritized integration with Europe while ignoring the Middle East (Aslan, 2000). Meanwhile, foreign policy interests of Türkiye have shifted due to the growth of moderate Islamist politics in the country and the European

Union's rejection of allowing Türkiye to become a full member because of its large Muslim population. As a result of the halting of Türkiye's EU membership procedures and the conflicts with the US, Türkiye's foreign policy is dominated by a revisionist viewpoint.

Türkiye has a Muslim population with Western ideals as a consequence of these identity-constructing efforts. Meanwhile, Türkiye, the Middle East's largest military and economy, as well as the region's sole democratic republic outside of Israel, shifted its foreign policy goals after 2008.

Some argue that desire of Türkiye is to expand its impact over the former Ottoman Empire's geography, which represents neo-Ottoman politics (Walton, 2010). With Erdogan's authority, though, the new elites in Türkiye's foreign policy have seen this as Türkiye's revival of brotherhood relations with Middle Eastern states with which it shares similar history and culture (Altunisik, 2009).

The axis shift was criticized as Türkiye left its Westernization-focused foreign policy. Moreover, the US is responsible for a major portion of these critiques. As a consequence, Türkiye, which does not wish to abide by the United States' solitary foreign policy as it did at the time of the Cold War, has established a new foreign policy road that it thinks essential for its own goals. Consequently, being a significant regional force, but on the other hand, through the emergence of new global dynamics, Türkiye aspires to grow into a global actor. Based on this, the Arab Uprising may have introduced the opportunity of the establishment of the new foothold that Türkiye desires.

Syria is the finest instance of the US and Türkiye's divergent interests in the Middle East from a political standpoint. Additionally, considering the two states' divergent interests as a result of the Syrian Civil War, it is clear that the divergence of the two states' interests, as well as evolving views of dangers, has harmed bilateral affairs. During the early phases of the civil war, the Obama administration, which did not desire to be actively engaged in the Middle East's challenges, and Türkiye collaborated around mutual interests and sought to extend its area of influence, but as the civil war continued, the two states came to regard one another as a danger.

Türkiye views US collaboration with the PYD in Syria's combat against ISIS as a serious threat to its own security. President Erdogan, for example, has stated that the PYD and ISIS are both terrorist organizations

from Türkiye's perspective and that if one is eliminated, the other should not be assisted (Hurriyet, 2015). As the US persisted in assisting the PYD, Türkiye began to move closer to Russia.

Türkiye and the US have come to regard one another as a danger as their interests have differentiated over time. Türkiye, for example, collaborates with Russia to counterbalance the threat posed by the US. In return, the US reformed the PYD into a formal army, training and supplying it. Countries only balance against countries that they regard as a danger to themselves, as Walt asserts (Walt, 2007).

### CONCLUSION

When the bilateral affairs between Türkiye and the United States are evaluated, it is clear that principles such as a liberal economy, human rights, and democratic progress have less of an impact on bilateral affairs than interests. Whenever Türkiye has pursued foreign policy in line with US interests, bilateral affairs have always been on a positive track. Consequently, as Türkiye implemented policies that were incompatible with US interests, bilateral affairs deteriorated, irrespective of Türkiye's democratic progress. While considering the path of bilateral affairs, it is critical to grasp the political environments of the two states as well as their viewpoints. On subjects like the Syrian Civil War, the two states have sharp differences. Because of these differences, the two states have adopted new strategies and acquired new allies. Due to their different interests, Türkiye and the US came to see one another as a danger rather than an ally.

The primary goal of this article is to grasp more about "How bilateral connections are sustained when Türkiye and the US have mutual or opposing interests?" and "What were the main characteristics of the Obama administration's foreign policy principles while conducting bilateral relations with Türkiye?" To discover this, case studies and the process tracing method were used to analyze the path of bilateral affairs throughout 2009-2017, when Barack Obama was in charge. Consequently, pivotal moments in US political history, such as the Iraq War and September 11, have generated outcomes that will alter the framework of bilateral affairs between Türkiye and the US. Based on this, it was investigated if the shifts in bilateral affairs were caused by the foreign policy of the US or shifting foreign policy tendencies of Türkiye.

From 2008 to 2016, notions of international cooperation, international organizations, and liberal values were given a lot of attention under the Obama administration. Türkiye-US affairs, on the other hand,

have remained interest-based. Two important case studies were analyzed in the article: the Syrian civil war and Türkiye's portrayal as a model country. Despite this, the US continues to favor an unbalanced bilateral relationship framework, as it did at the time of the Cold War. The singular path system demands the US to align its foreign policy with its own concerns, and Türkiye to adopt this policy although it does not fully align with its own. As a result, a Western-based foreign policy was abandoned by Türkiye in favor of pursuing an independent foreign policy, putting bilateral affairs at risk. Moreover, with the awareness that Türkiye will not be able to join the EU, it has established strong ties with Middle Eastern states and sought new partners to help adjust its bilateral affairs with the EU and the US.

For the purpose of coming to a reasonable conclusion, the article looked into the causes of the constantly evolving dynamic in bilateral affairs. The impact of Türkiye's democratic progress on relations was analyzed. For example, bilateral affairs were easily damaged by situations such as Iraq in the early stages of the 2000s. In addition, bilateral affairs were on a strong track in 2010, when the Obama administration portrayed Türkiye as a model state for Middle Eastern states. Türkiye, on the other hand, renounced its EU aspirations and halted its democratic reforms during that time.

Unless Türkiye pursues an autonomous foreign policy strategy, bilateral affairs between Türkiye and the United States will be conducted within the framework of a strategic partnership. Türkiye's withdrawal from a Western-oriented foreign policy strategy has resulted in a division of interests between Türkiye and the US. Nonetheless, Türkiye's drift away from a Western-centric foreign policy has been aided by the United States' unilateral foreign policy decisions, such as in Syria and Iraq. Consequently, the two NATO partners are viewed as a danger to one another due to their foreign policy methods and divergent interests. To mitigate the danger they sense from one another, the two states are establishing alliances with other state and non-state entities in the Middle East.

**REFERENCES**

- Adam, L. B. (2012). Türkiye's Foreign Policy In The Akp Era: Has There Been a Shift In The Axis? *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 11(3).
- Altunışık, M. B. (2009). Worldviews and Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East. *New Perspectives on Türkiye*, 40, 169-192. doi:10.1017/s0896634600005264
- Arango, T. and Schmitt, E. (2015). "Türkiye Uneasy as U.S. Support of Syrian Kurds Grows," *New York Times*. Retrieved June 21, 2022, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/30/world/middleeast/Türkiye-uneasy-as-us-support-of-syrian-kurds-grows.html>
- Arı, O., and Kiran, A. (2011). Uluslararası İlişkilerde Sosyal İncilik. *Ekev Akademi Dergisi*, 15(46), 49-64.
- Ataman M., and Özdemir, Ç O. (2018). Türkiye's Syrian Policy: Shifting Priorities, Constant Objectives. *Türkiye Ortadoğu Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 5(2), 13-35. doi:10.26513/tocd.466046
- Ateş, A. (2021). Understanding the Obama Administration's Syria Policy . *MANAS Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 10 (2), 1436-1448. doi: 10.33206/mjss.855298
- Aslan, R. (2000). Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği: Sancılı gelişen ilişki. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi* , 55 (03) , - . DOI: 10.1501/SBFder\_0000001887
- Atmaca, A. Ö. (2014). The Geopolitical Origins of Turkish-American Relations: Revisiting the Cold War Years. *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace*, 3(1), 19-34. doi:10.20991/allazimuth.167319.
- BBC. (2018). Andrew Brunson: Türkiye Releases US Pastor After Two Years. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45841276>
- Behr, H., and Heath, A. (2009). Misreading in IR theory and Ideology Critique: Morgenthau, Waltz and Neo-Realism. *Review of International Studies*, 35(2), 327-349. doi:10.1017/s0260210509008547.

- Bilgin, M. S. (2017). Türkiye's Foreign Policy towards the Middle East in the 1950's and Its Impact On Turco-Arab Relations. *Gazi Akademik Bakış*. doi:10.19060/gav.379629.
- Bipartisan Policy Center (2018). The Alternatives to Incirlik. Retrieved June 21, 2022, from, <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/incirlik-alternative-airbase/>
- Brennan, R. (2014). Withdrawal Symptoms: The Bungling of the Iraq Exit. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/withdrawal-symptoms>
- Byrd, D., & Murty, K. S. (2013). Foreign Policy Accomplishments in Obama Era. *Race, Gender & Class*, 20(3/4), 147–165.
- Cankurtaran B. S., and Gençkaya F. Y. (2017). Suriye Krizi Bağlamında Obama Dönemi Türkiye-Abd İlişkilerinde Değişen Güvenlik Ortaklığı. *Journal of Academic Value Studies (JAVStudies)*.
- Chesterman, S. (2011). "Leading from Behind": The Responsibility to Protect, the Obama Doctrine, and Humanitarian Intervention after Libya. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 25(3), 279-285. doi:10.1017/s0892679411000190
- Claude, L. (1962). *Power and International Relations*. New York: Random House, 48.
- Daily Sabah. (2019). Türkiye Determined to Eliminate Terror Corridor From Its Borders. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2019/07/27/Türkiye-determined-to-eliminate-terror-corridor-from-its-borders>
- Demir S, Yılmaz M (2020). An Analysis of the Impact of the Syrian Crisis on Türkiye's Politic-Military, Social and Economic Security. *Gazi Akademik Bakış*, 13(26), 1 - 19.
- Direkli, M. (2022). From the United Cyprus Republic to Two-State Solution. *International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies*, 15(1).
- Erdemir, A. and Tahiroglu, M. (2017). Türkiye's Drift from the West: From Transactionalism to Hostility, in: *War on the Rocks*. Retrieved June

- 21, 2022, from <https://warontherocks.com/2017/08/Türkiyes-drift-from-the-west-from-transactionalism-to-hostility/>
- Erhan, C. (2001). *Historical Origins of Turkish-American Relations*. Kızılay, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi.
- Falk, R. (2014). Can the US Government Accept an Independent Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East? *Insight Türkiye*, 16(1), 7-18.
- Foreign Policy. "Obama names his world leader best buddies!". 19.1.2012. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/01/19/obama-names-his-world-leader-best-buddies/>.
- Gencer, A. I., Örenç, A. F., and Ünver, M. (2008). *Türk-Amerikan Silah Ticareti Tarihi*. İstanbul: Doğu Kütüphanesi.
- Gerges, F. A. (2013). The Obama Approach to the Middle East: The End of America's Moment? *International Affairs*, 89(2), 299-323. doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12019
- Hurriyet Daily News. (2009). Full Text of the US President's Speech at Turkish Parliament. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/full-text-of-the-us-presidents-speech-at-turkish-parliament-11376661>
- Hurriyet Daily News. (2017). "After the US, Russia also pressing Türkiye on the YPG," Retrieved June 21, 2022, from <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/murat-yetkin/after-the-us-russia-also-pressing-Türkiye-on-the-ypg-116505>
- Hurriyet Daily News. (2019). US efforts to sway judicial process not HELPFUL: Türkiye - Türkiye news. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-efforts-to-sway-judicial-process-not-helpful-Türkiye-143525>
- İnaç, H. (2016). Türkiye-AB ilişkileri: entegrasyonu zora sokan saiklar . *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* , - Sayı: 25 , 229-246
- Jackson, R. H., and Sørensen, G. (2013). *Introduction to international relations theories and approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Karci, A., and Ermagan İ. (2017). Neorealizm ve Neoliberalizm Kuramlarının Güvenlik Yaklaşımları. In S. Turan (Ed.), *Uluslararası*

- İliskilerde Güvenlik Kuramları (pp. 133-154). London, UK: Transnational Press.
- Kasapoğlu, C. (2019). Beyond Obama's Red Lines: The Syrian Arab Army and Chemical Warfare. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/beyond-obamas-red-lines-the-syrian-arab-army-and-chemical-warfare>
- Keohane, R. O. (2012). Twenty Years of Institutional Liberalism. *International Relations*, 26(2), 125-138. doi:10.1177/0047117812438451.
- Keohane, R. O., and Nye, J. S. (1996). Realism and Complex Interdependence. *International Political Economy*, 53-63. doi:10.1007/978-1-349-24443-0\_5.
- Kurt V. (2018). Ortadoğu'da Güvenlik Stratejileri. Ankara: SETA.
- Kurtbag, O. (2015). Turkish-American Relations under Obama: Ups and Downs and Diverging Interests from the Model Partnership to the Axis Shift Debate. *Siyaset, Ekonomi Ve Yönetim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 3(2), 185-207.
- Lebow, R. (2007). Classical realism, international relations theories discipline and diversity, edited by Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, Steve Smith, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Letsch. (2014). US drops weapons and ammunition to Help Kurdish fighters In Kobani. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/20/Türkiye-iraqi-kurds-kobani-isis-fighters-us-air-drops-arms>
- Lipka, M. (2014). Iraq's Unique Place in the Sunni-Shia Divide. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/18/the-sunni-shia-divide-where-they-live-what-they-believe-and-how-they-view-each-other/>
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2002). *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. WW Norton &.
- Mearsheimer, J. (2007). Structural realism, international relations, theories, discipline and diversity, edited by Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, Steve Smith, Oxford: Oxford University Press.



- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2009). Reckless States and Realism. *International Relations*, 23(2), 241–256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117809104637>.
- Morgenthau, H. J. (1973). *Politics Among Nations*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Nye, J. S. (2009). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Onuf, N. G. (1989). *World of our making: Rules and rule in social theory and international relations*. Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge.
- Oran, B. (2010). *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1919-2006: Facts and Analyses With Documents*. Salt Lake city (Utah): University of Utah Press.
- Oran, B. (2013). *Türk Dis Politikasi: Kurtulus Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Ovali, A. S. (2019). Stratejik Ortaklık, Kriz, ve Restorasyon. *International Journal of Social Inquiry*, 12(1), 155-190.
- Ozel, S. (2009). *Rebuilding A Partnership: Turkish-American Relations For A New Era A Turkish Perspective (Issue brief No. T/2009-04/490)*. İstanbul: TÜSİAD.
- Ozlu, E. (2017). Balancing vs. Bandwagoning?: Rethinking Foreign Policy Strategies. *Akademik Bakış*, 10(20), 221-263.
- Pirincci, F. (2011). Amerikan Dis Politilasında Dinamizm ve Başkanlar: Retorik ve Uygulama. In C. Çakmak (Ed.), *Yakın Donem Amerikan Dis Politikasi: Teori ve Pratik* (pp. 79-114). Ankara .: Nobel Yayın.
- Sayari, S. (2000). *Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era: The Challenges of Multi-Regionalism*. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24357694>.
- Schweller, R. L. (1994). Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In. *International Security*, 19(1), 72-107. doi:10.2307/2539149.
- Shanker T. (2011). U.S. hails deal with Türkiye on missile shield. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/16/world/europe/Türkiye-accepts-missile-radar-for-nato-defense-against-iran.html>

- Sinkaya, B. (2011). Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East From the Past to the Present and the Impact of the West. *Adam Akademi*, (1), 79-100.
- Spiro, D. E. (1994). The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace. *International Security*, 19(2), 50-86. doi:10.2307/2539196
- Starr, P. (2007). War and Liberalism. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from [https://www.princeton.edu/~starr/articles/articles07/Starr\\_War\\_and\\_Liberalism\\_TNR07.pdf](https://www.princeton.edu/~starr/articles/articles07/Starr_War_and_Liberalism_TNR07.pdf)
- Stewart, D. J. (2005). The Greater Middle East and Reform in the Bush Administration's Ideological Imagination. *Geographical Review*, 95(3), 400-424.
- Tanis, T. (2015). ABD Hâlâ Bu Silah Sistemlerini Türkiye'ye Vermiyor. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/abd-hala-vermiyor-30267905>
- The New York Times. (2009). Text: Obama's Speech in Cairo. Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/04/us/politics/04obama.text.html>
- The Region (2018). Türkiye's Purchase of Russian S-400 may lead to sanctions, impact F-35 program – State Dept., in: The Region. Retrieved June 21, 2022, from <https://theregion.org/article/13298-Türkiye-s-purchase-of-russian-s-400-may-lead-to-sanctionsimpact-f-35-program-state-dept>
- Tisdall, S. (2018). Türkiye's ever-closer ties with Russia leave US lacking key ally on Syria, in: The Guardian. Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/11/Türkiye-ever-closer-ties-with-russia-leave-us-lacking-keyally-on-syria>
- Turkmen, F. (2016). Obama Dis Politikasının Genel Değerlendirmesi ve Türkiye (pp. 1-15, Rep. No. 0-459-2016042559). Ankara: Bilgesam.
- UNHCR Türkiye. (2022). Retrieved May 06, 2022, from <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/refugees-and-asylum-seekers-in-Türkiye>
- Vander Lippe, J. (2000). Forgotten Brigade of the Forgotten War: Türkiye's Participation in the Korean War. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 36(1), 92-102.

Walt, S. M. (2007). 'Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power.' *International Security*, 9 (4): 3-43.

Walt, S. M. (2007). *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.

Walton, Jeremy F. 2010. 'Practices of Neo-Ottomanism: Making Place and Space Virtuous in Istanbul.' In: *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?*, edited by Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal and İpek Türel, 88-103. New York and London: Routledge

Waltz, K. N. (2010). *Theory of International Politics*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Wheeler, N. J. (2003). The Bush doctrine: the dangers of American exceptionalism in a revolutionary age. *Asian Perspective*, 27(4), 183–216.

## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### 2009-2016 Dönemi Türk-Amerikan İkili İlişkilerini Etkileyen Faktörlerin Yorumlanması ve Bu Unsurların Detaylandırılması

#### Giriş

Türkiye ile ABD arasındaki ikili ilişkiler 1800'lerin sonlarına kadar uzanan uzun bir geçmişe sahiptir. İki ülke coğrafi konumları gereği I. Dünya Savaşı'nın sonuna kadar silah ticareti merkezli ikili ilişkilerini sürdürdüler (Gencer, 2008). Türk-Amerikan ilişkileri ise İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra güçlendi. Daha sonra, İkinci Dünya Savaşı nedeniyle Türkiye, Sovyetler Birliği tehdidiyle mücadele etmek için ABD tarafından yönetilen Batı ittifakıyla eşleşti. 1947'de Truman Doktrini'nin başarıyla uygulanması ve Türkiye'nin 1952'de NATO'ya üyeliğinin ardından iki ülke arasında siyasi, ekonomik ve askeri ortaklık alanlarında önemli gelişmeler kaydedildi. Ayrıca, Soğuk Savaş boyunca ABD, Türkiye'nin dış politika eylemleri üzerinde doğrudan veya dolaylı bir etkiye sahip oldu.

NATO İşbirliği, hiç şüphesiz Türkiye-ABD ikili ilişkilerinin örgütsel temelidir. Türkiye, 2. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra Dünya Bankası ve IMF gibi Batılı kuruluşlara üye olmasına rağmen, Kuzey Atlantik Antlaşması Örgütü sürekli olarak ikili ilişkilerin odak noktası olmuştur. Türkiye'nin Avrupa, Ortadoğu ve Kafkasya'nın kavşağında yer alması bu durumun başlıca sebebidir. Ayrıca, Soğuk Savaş Dönemi'nde NATO'nun güneydoğu bölücü hatlarını oluşturan Türkiye, jeopolitik önemi nedeniyle bu dönemde NATO'nun önemli üyelerinden biri hâline gelmiştir. Bununla birlikte, Soğuk Savaş boyunca Türkiye ile ABD arasındaki ilişkilerin tek taraflı olduğu iddia edilebilir.

Soğuk Savaş'ın ilk aşamalarında Türkiye, ABD'den bağımsız bir dış politika izlemedi. Genel görüşe göre Türkiye, güvenliğini korumak için Batı ittifakının öncüsü ABD'ye bel bağlamış ve ona göre hareket etmiştir. Ayrıca, 1960'larda ve 1970'lerde Kıbrıs gibi sorunlarda bağımsız hareket etme girişimlerine rağmen Türkiye, Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesine kadar NATO'nun kontrolünde kalmıştır (Erhan, 2001). Bazı uzmanlar Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesiyle oluşan yeni dünyada Türkiye'nin etkisinin azaldığını iddia etmişlerdir. Bu koşullar altında birçok uzman, Türkiye'nin Sovyetler Birliği tehdidini bertaraf eden Batı güvenlik çerçevesi içindeki öneminin azaldığını iddia etmiştir (Atmaca, 2014). Ancak Soğuk Savaş sonrası küresel uluslararası düzenin dayattığı yeni kısıtlamaların bir sonucu olarak Türkiye'nin Batı paktındaki önemi artmıştır. Türkiye'nin jeopolitik

konumu, terörle mücadele, güvenlik, enerji ve insan kaçakçılığı da dahil olmak üzere yaklaşan tehlike dalgasıyla mücadelede çok önemlidir.

Türkiye 1980 ve 1990'lı yıllarda, demokratikleşmenin ve modernleşmenin ideal yolunun Avrupa Birliği ve ABD ile mükemmel ilişkiler kurmak olduğuna inanmıştır. Türkiye, Avrupa Birliği'ne daimi üye olmak amacıyla 1980'ler ve 1990'larda yasalarını Avrupa ülkeleri ile eşleştirdi ve ekonomisini liberalleştirdi. Ayrıca Türkiye, Orta Doğu'daki devletlerle yüzyıllardır siyasi bir tercih olarak derin ilişkiler kurmamış ve bu devletler arasındaki anlaşmazlıklara kendisini etkilemek amacıyla müdahale etmemiştir (Bilgin, 2017). 1980'ler ve 1990'larda Türkiye'nin temel stratejik hedefi, Batı merkezli bir dış politika benimseyerek Avrupa Birliği'ne katılmaktı. Türkiye, gelişmiş ülke olmanın en ideal yolunun bu olduğunu hissetmiş ve asırlardır bu yolu izlemiştir. Sonuç olarak, Türkiye'nin Batı ile örgütsel ilişkileri, NATO'ya askeri katılımına ve Avrupa Birliği'ne kabul için aday ülke olarak siyasi statüsüne dayanmaktadır.

11 Eylül 2000 saldırıları sonrasında Bush yönetimi, bölgeyi yeniden şekillendirmeyi amaçlayan Büyük Ortadoğu projesini devreye soktu. Türkiye, demokratik ve laik sisteme sahip, ılımlı Müslümanlar tarafından yönetilmek isteyen bir Ortadoğu ülkesi modeli olarak gösterildi. 2002 yılında Türkiye'de Erdoğan yönetimi iktidara geldiğinde, ülke önceki yaklaşımlarından farklı olarak yeni bir dış politika stratejisi benimsedi. Zaman geçtikçe Avrupa Birliği ile ilişkileri bozulan Türkiye, Ortadoğu'ya büyük ilgi duymuş ve özerk bir dış politika izlemeye başlamıştır.

Türkiye ekonomisi 2000'li yıllarda eskisinden çok daha güçlüydü. Gelişmekte olan, ihracata dayalı bir Türkiye ekonomisinin oluşmasındaki en önemli unsur, 1980 yılında ABD ve Uluslararası Para Fonu'nun desteğiyle başlayan liberalleşme sürecidir. Türkiye, ABD ve AB ile ilişkilerini düzeltmeye çalışarak, Soğuk Savaş sonrası ekonomik düzende tutunmayı hedeflemekteydi (Sayari, 2000).

### **Teorik Çerçeve**

Uluslararası ilişkiler teorisinde, ittifaklar önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Devletler çeşitli amaçlara ulaşmak için ittifaklar kurarlar. İttifak terimi çeşitli çağrışımlara sahip olsa da bu araştırma devlet merkezli yaklaşıma odaklanmıştır. Uluslararası ilişkiler alanında devlet dışı kuruluşlar önemli ölçüde öne çıksa da devletler en belirleyici aktör olmaya devam ediyor. Türkiye ve ABD ittifakları birincil ilgi odağı olduğundan bu makalede devlet temelli bakış açısı ele alınmıştır.

İttifakların anlamı ele alınırken birçok akademisyenin ittifak kavramını açıklamak için çeşitli yapı ve niyetleri kullandığı açıktır. Heterojenliğin altında yatan argüman, farklı uluslararası ilişkiler teorilerinin ittifakların anlamı ve nasıl oluştukları konusunda farklı bakış açılarına sahip olmasıdır. Stephen Walt (1990), ittifakları kavramsallaştırma sürecinde, neo-realist yaklaşımın bir sonucu olarak güç kavramının yanı sıra güvenliğin de devletleri ittifak kurmaya teşvik eden önemli bir rol oynadığını iddia etmektedir. Walt, güvenlik için oluşturulan devlet ittifaklarında dengelemenin gücü değil tehdide karşı koymak için kullanıldığını söyleyerek dengelemenin güce karşı koymak için kullanıldığını önermesini revize etti (Walt, 1990).

Uluslararası ilişkilerin anarşik çerçevesinde her şeyi göz önünde bulunduran realist düşünürler, devletlerin neden ittifak yaptıkları konusunda ortak bir zemin oluşturamamışlardır. Neo-realizm doğrultusunda ortaya çıkan ve sistemin çerçevesinin ülkeleri güç arayışına ittiğini ve anarşik bir sistem altında ülkelerin oluşturduğu ittifakların amaçlarını da büyük ölçüde güvenlik ve güç kavramlarına indirgediğini ifade eden yöntem olduğu bu araştırma neticesinde de kabul görmüştür.

### **Obama Yönetimi ve İkili İlişkilerin İstikrarsızlığı**

2009 yılında, Barack Obama ABD başkanı seçildiğinde, Türkiye ile ABD arasındaki ilişkiler dramatik bir şekilde değişti. Türk-Amerikan ilişkileri, Obama yönetiminin başlangıcında stratejik bir ortaklık yerine model bir İş birliği olarak gösterildi. Obama yönetiminin strateji, ekonomi ve sosyal değerler olmak üzere üç bileşen üzerine inşa ettiği model ortaklık fikri, Türkiye ile ilişkileri anlatmak için kullanılmaktadır (Turkmen, 2016). Stratejik boyut, ikili ilişkilerin önemli bir bölümünü oluşturmaktadır. İki ülke arasındaki ekonomik bağlar güçlendirilmelidir. İkili ilişkilerde ise model ortaklık kavramının üçüncü ayağı olarak kabul edilen toplumsal değerler boyutunun pratikte hiçbir rolü yoktur. Bush döneminde ikili ilişkilerde kenara itilen bu değerler; insan hakları, demokrasi gibi kavramların ikili ilişkilerde pek etkili olmadığını gösteriyor. İlk yıllarda Obama yönetimi ve siyasi manevraları ABD-Türkiye ilişkilerine olumlu katkı yaptı. Bu arada ABD, model ortak olarak nitelendirdiği Türkiye ile daha sıkı ilişkiler kurmaya başladı. Ancak bu süre zarfında, iki ülkenin endişeleri büyük ölçüde örtüşmekteydi. Sonuç olarak, ABD'de Obama yönetiminin seçilmesi küresel siyasette yeni bir dönemi başlatmıştır. Bush Doktrini'nin tek yanlı saldırı ideolojileri dünya siyasetine uzun süre egemen oldu. Ancak uzun bir aradan sonra yumuşak güç kavramı yeniden canlanmıştır.

## Yöntem ve Sonuç

Türkiye ile ABD arasındaki ikili ilişkiler değerlendirildiğinde, liberal ekonomi, insan hakları ve demokratik ilerleme gibi ilkelerin ikili ilişkileri çıkarılardan daha az etkilediği açıktır. Türkiye ne zaman ABD çıkarları doğrultusunda dış politika izlese ikili ilişkiler her zaman olumlu bir seyir izlemiştir. Sonuç olarak Türkiye, ABD çıkarlarıyla bağdaşmayan politikalar uyguladıkça Türkiye'nin demokratik gelişimi ne olursa olsun ikili ilişkiler zayıfladı. İkili ilişkilerin gidişatını değerlendirirken iki devletin siyasi ortamlarını ve bakış açılarını kavramak önemlidir. Suriye İç Savaşı gibi konularda iki devletin keskin farklılıkları vardır. Bu farklılıklar nedeniyle iki devlet yeni stratejiler benimsemiş ve yeni müttefikler edinmiştir. Günümüzde Türkiye ve ABD, farklı çıkarları nedeniyle birbirlerini müttefikten çok tehlike olarak görmeye başladılar.

Bu makalenin öncelikli amacı, "Türkiye ve ABD'nin karşılıklı veya karşıt çıkarları varken ikili ilişkiler nasıl sürdürülür?" ve "Obama yönetiminin Türkiye ile ikili ilişkiler yürütürken dış politika ilkelerinin temel özellikleri nelerdi?" sorularına cevap aramaktır. Barack Obama'nın görevde olduğu 2009-2017 yılları boyunca ikili ilişkilerin seyrini analiz etmek için vaka çalışmaları ve süreç izleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, Irak Savaşı ve 11 Eylül gibi ABD siyasi tarihindeki çok önemli anlar, Türkiye ile ABD arasındaki ikili ilişkilerin çerçevesini değiştirecek sonuçlar doğurmuştur. Buradan hareketle ikili ilişkilerdeki kaymaların ABD'nin dış politikasından mı yoksa Türkiye'nin değişen dış politika eğilimlerinden mi kaynaklandığı araştırılmıştır.

2008'den 2016'ya kadar uluslararası İş birliği, uluslararası örgütler, liberal değerler kavramlarına Obama yönetimi altında büyük önem verilmiş ancak Türkiye-ABD ilişkileri ise çıkar odaklı olmaya devam etmiştir. Ayrıca, Türkiye AB'ye giremeyeceğinin bilinciyle Ortadoğu ülkeleriyle güçlü bağlar kurmuş, AB ve ABD ile ikili ilişkilerini düzeltmeye yardımcı olacak yeni ortaklar aramıştır. Buna mukabil Türkiye'nin Batı merkezli bir dış politikadan vazgeçerek bağımsız bir dış politika izlemesi ABD ile ikili ilişkileri riske atmıştır.

Türkiye özerk bir dış politika stratejisi izlemediği takdirde, Türkiye ile ABD arasındaki ikili ilişkiler stratejik ortaklık yapısı içinde yürütülecektir. Türkiye'nin Batı eksenli bir dış politika stratejisinden çekilmesi, Türkiye ile ABD arasında çıkar ayrılığına neden olmuştur. Bununla birlikte, Türkiye'nin Batı merkezli bir dış politikadan uzaklaşmasına ABD'nin Suriye ve Irak gibi tek taraflı dış politika kararları

sebepl olmuştur. Sonuç olarak, iki NATO ortağı, dış politika yöntemleri ve farklı çıkarları nedeniyle birbirlerini tehdit olarak görmektedir. İki devlet, birbirlerinden sezdikleri tehditleri azaltmak için Ortadoğı'daki diğer devlet ve devlet dışı kuruluşlarla ittifaklar kurmaktadır.