

TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY DISCOURSE
A CRITICAL EVALUATION

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Turkish Foreign Policy Discourse A Critical Evaluation

Turkish foreign policy have undergone a critical transformation in the last two decades. This change also affected the discourse adopted by Turkish officials and institutions operating in the foreign affairs domain. Understanding the dynamics of this discursive change is critical in terms of understanding the future course of foreign policy of the country. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, this study undertakes a discourse analysis of the written statements published by Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 2010 and 2020 on the relations with the United States. The thesis argues that there is a discursive change in the Turkish foreign policy vis-à-vis the United States: Turkish Foreign Ministry adopted a more reactionary language in its written public statements in the last decade.

ÖZET

Türkiye'nin Dış Politika Söylemi Eleştirel Bir Değerlendirme

Türk dış politikası son yirmi yılda kritik bir dönüşüm geçirmiştir. Bu değişim, dış ilişkiler alanında faaliyet gösteren Türk yetkililerin ve kurumların söylemlerini de etkilemiştir. Bu söylemsel değişimin dinamiklerini anlamak, ülkenin dış politikasının gelecekteki seyrini anlamak açısından kritik öneme sahiptir. Bu çalışma, nicel ve nitel yöntemler kullanılarak, Türkiye Dışişleri Bakanlığının 2010-2020 yılları arasında ABD ile ilişkiler konusunda yayınladığı yazılı açıklamaların söylem analizini gerçekleştirmektedir. Tez, Türk dış politikasında Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ne karşı söylemsel bir değişim olduğunu savunurken, Türk Dışişleri Bakanlığı, son on yılda yaptığı yazılı açıklamalarda daha tepkisel bir dil benimsediği görülmektedir.

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CHAPTER 1:

A REACTIONARY TURN? TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY DISCOURSE

VIS-À-VIS THE UNITED STATES

Foreign Ministries all around the world produce and disseminate huge troves of public and confidential information on a continuous basis. The public portion mostly reveals itself in the form of press releases, announcements, and other forms of written declarations. As the end-product of a long, multi-stakeholder, institutional and deliberative process, such public releases constitute an integral and almost constitutive part of the overall discourse of countries in the foreign policy domain. These highly structured texts utilize a unique language that was developed over time within these institutions. Therefore, even small changes in these public written materials have the potential to signify drastic changes in terms of foreign policy perceptions and orientations of countries.

Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is no exception in terms of its use of written statements as one of the fundamental tools for its public outreach activities. It delivers a number of public announcements each year in the form of press releases, statements, declarations, and responses to the specific questions. These written releases, hand in hand with verbal statements from high-level policy makers, constitutes one of the formative components of the Turkish foreign policy discourse. Similar to other foreign offices around the world, Turkish Foreign Ministry also developed its own format, vocabulary and linguistic character throughout its long history.

Literature on foreign policy discourse develops over two main strands. On the one hand, it focuses on the implications of discursive practices in foreign policy on domestic politics. This line of work mainly perceives foreign policy discourse as an identity formation tool especially at the hands of regimes with populist leanings. On the other hand, a second body of work concentrates upon the repercussions of discourse on the foreign policy choices and leanings. Such work essentially focuses on how countries enable their grand strategies in foreign policy through their utilization of discursive mechanisms. This type of research also deals with the ways in which discursive practices limit or expand foreign policy alternatives a country can resort to. In this study, both functions of the foreign policy discourse would be touched upon as the statements of the ministry try to serve both domestic and international purposes.

A threefold classification would be used in order to discern the written materials produced by the Turkish Foreign Ministry on bilateral relations with the US. The main line of inquiry would be the reactionary materials defined as the discursive practices of the authoritarian regimes that prefer to remain within the realm of international system while refusing the basic tenets and rules of the establishment due to a sense of injustice. Regular statements of the ministry on mundane events such as high-level visits or phone calls would be grouped under a neutral category. Constructive statements are defined to cover the releases in which Turkey would take a pro-active stance in order to overcome a challenge or underline the positive dynamics in terms of bilateral relations.

A critical evaluation of the releases of Turkish Foreign Ministry on the country's relations with United States between 2010-2020 would indicate whether there is a meaningful change in the discursive practices employed by the Turkish foreign

policymakers. Such an analysis would enable to what extent the foreign policy discourse is affected by the contextual changes and to what extent it was being used as an identity formation tool. A multi-year effort that spans through the tenures of different ministers could also shed extra light on the reflection of personal differences of major decision-makers on the general discourse of the institution.

In this study, the public announcements made by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the last decade are examined with a discourse analysis methodology. The analysis is conducted using the discourse-historical strand of the method and is complemented by quantitative research to better supplement the qualitative triangulations. The main reason for the adoption of this method is that it provides room of maneuver for focusing on more significant pieces rather than sparing an equal span of attention and work for all the statements produced by the Turkish Foreign Ministry. This methodology allows to easily compare and assess statements on similar events at different times without necessarily going through all the statements released in between. Discourse analysis also enables a better contextualization of the statements as it takes the externalities into account and have a clear agenda for uncovering the real power dynamics behind the discursive practices.

On the other hand, the study is not limited to a qualitative evaluation of the statements. In order to better justify the research and the case selection, a quantitative survey is employed with a specific focus on US related statements. In the first section of the analysis, all written statements by Turkish Foreign Ministry are numerically evaluated to better assess the differing practices of the ministry in terms of its outreach through written releases within the last decade. In the second part, the

statements on Turkey's relations with the US are quantitatively assessed to see whether a similar trajectory is observable in this sub-category as well.

The relations with the United States represent one of the most critical, if not the most, bilateral relations for Turkey since the end of the Second World War. By its nature and particular history, this relationship is not always stable and steady, but have occasional ups and downs depending on the contextual changes. Therefore, it would be possible to observe different kinds of discursive strategies, namely constructive, reactionary and neutral, adopted by Turkish Foreign Ministry vis-à-vis the same country. These different strategies of discourse could fall in a very short timeline or also shows itself in very similar events occurring at different periods. Such examination would also shed light on the increased polarization of the statements.

Qualitative analysis would show that even the handling of the neutral events has changed over times from a discursive perspective. It would also indicate that rare positive elements have started to disappear, and constructive statements remained limited to peripheral issues. It would also be observed that the ministry utilized a different rhetoric for similar events and its discourse has been largely shaped by the general context of the Turkey-US relations. This contextual change had its impact on the tone of the reactionary statements that reflects itself as even stronger language in reactionary statements. It finally reached to a point where the Turkish statements on the US would fundamentally differ from comparable examples especially in the Western world.

The study would ultimately argue that Turkish foreign policy discourse, in general, and its rhetoric on the relations with the US, in particular, has taken a reactionary turn after 2016. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis indicates that a more

reactionary format and vocabulary became dominant in Turkish ministry's written statements. This fact could be both attributed to the change in international context and domestic calculations of Turkish decision makers.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on foreign policy discourse and different discursive strategies could be examined in two main strands. On the more domestic front, the literature generally deals with issues pertaining to the identity formation or regime consolidation impact of the discourse on the general society. The external strand, on the other hand, more specifically focuses on the effect of a certain discourse in terms of its implication over the foreign policy trajectory of a state.

As far as this study is concerned, while the domestic effects of public statements of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs could be regarded as minimal, they still constitute an integral part of the general governmental discourse and should be analyzed for this aspect. The repercussions of these statements in terms of foreign policy implementations are inherently more pronounced.

2.1 Foreign policy discourse and domestic calculations

Campbell (1992) articulates that foreign policy rhetoric is ‘an integral part of the discourses of danger that serve to discipline the state’ (p.51). In this framework, discourse is seen an important part of the toolset that makes imagined communities more real by providing society a general sense of belonging and unity of purpose (Dijkink, 1996). Ceydilek (2012) argues that the discourse has ‘a significant role in this imagining process as it asserts a homogenous inner group as against to the rest of the world’ (p.74). Such utilization of discursive strategy also serves the dual purpose of the portrayal of the country as a homogenous whole towards external parties.

In the case of Turkey, enlistment of foreign policy discourse of such identity formation purposes is analyzed in line with the ever-changing ideological choices of the governing party. Earlier writings focused on the emphasized nature of Ottoman-Islamic identity of Turkey (Ceydilek, 2012), while more recent studies are dealing with the nationalistic tone in the overall foreign policy discourse (Benhaim&Oktem, 2015). Seemingly this smooth transition between innately opposing discourses could also be considered as a further manifestation of the pragmatic and eclectic nature of the governing party in Turkey which partially reflected itself in the statements of Turkish Foreign Ministry.

Apart from its sociological impact, foreign policy discourse is also exploited for its more immediate political returns. Leading ideologues of the governing party defended a ‘return of the political’ (Aktay, 2010) to the foreign policy realm as part of a highly contested hegemonic struggle in the Turkish politics especially in the early years of the JDP (Justice and Development Party) rule. Its policymakers successfully implemented their discursive strategies that would provide a sense of novelty while dismantling the codes and institutional structures of the past. For instance, the first half of the JDP rule has experienced an increasing reference to such terms as ‘soft power’ and ‘Turkey as a model’. Both terms are deliberately utilized both for the justification of the new active foreign policy of JDP and to dilute the power of the military bureaucracy over Turkish politics (Benhaim&Oktem, 2015). The penetration of the JPD’s new understanding of nationalism into the well-established domain of foreign policy discourse also signifies the hegemonic position gained by the governing party over the years (Saracoglu&Demirkol, 2015).

In this process of domestic utilization of foreign policy discourse, certain events or policy choices are intentionally accentuated for their suitability with the agenda of

discourse-setters. Even seemingly neutral events of natural disasters in foreign countries could trigger different levels of rhetoric depending on their potential for domestic political consumption (Ceydilek, 2012). Beyond the cherry-picking of certain events, policymakers also resort to selective historical justifications for their foreign policy decisions and discursive strategies associated with them. In times of major crises, the need for such justification could increase and lead the policymakers to go beyond their political comfort zone such as Republican presidents trying to legitimize their actions by referring to a Democratic predecessor such as Truman in the context of the US (Edwards, 2009). A comparable example in the Turkish case would be the rare references given to the fundamental dictums of the foreign policy strategies of the early Republic or emphasis given to the EU accession process, a long-time pillar of Turkish foreign policy, when they overlap with the domestic agenda (Aydin-Duzgit, 2017).

2.2 Foreign policy discourse and international affairs

With regard to international relations, discourse is assessed in terms of its impact of the grand strategy and more short-term foreign policy objectives of a country. In this sense, scholars of constructivist strand hold the view that analysis of discourse is better able to explain and anticipate change and continuity in terms of foreign policy choices where other alternatives remain short-handed in terms of their analytical tools.

Realist tradition perceives discourse as a mere reflection of material factors at a rhetorical level (Mearsheimer, 1994). However, for constructivist scholars such as Bauman (2002), “most foreign policy behavior, in fact, consists of speech acts” and therefore discourse and material foreign policy is one and same. Larsen (1997)

argues that the framework for understanding foreign policies based on discourse would be a better analytical tool to recognize the long-term trends in international relations.

Ole Wæver (1995) argues that, especially in short to medium terms, foreign policy of a certain country is dictated by the parameters set in its foreign policy discourse. The discourse actively shapes the decision making by demarcating the lines of legitimate and illegitimate for a foreign policy actor (Bratberg, 2011). In this understanding, the discourse is seen as an ever-changing phenomenon and regarded as one of the solid signifiers to predict the timing and direction of a change in foreign policy. In this framework, the discourse is considered to be the element of continuity and change as far as the international affairs of a country is concerned (Hellman, 1996). Therefore, it is subject to continuous re-interpretation and re-orientation in the hands of norm entrepreneurs (Bratberg, 2011).

The selection of a certain discourse also has immediate impact on the possible avenues and resources to be utilized as in the example of Germany's reliance on multilateral forums as the dominant discourse actively encourages such a course of action (Garton Ash, 1994). Even when using the same kind of multilateral platforms, the discursive strategies utilized in these forums and discourse for the justification of the use of these platforms could change over time and provide insights regarding the foreign policy postures and self-image of a country (Bauman, 2002). In this understanding, discourse shapes identities which in turn guides foreign policy by changing the operational codes of policy making process (Hellman 1996).

Beyond longer term impacts of discursive strategies, scholars also examine the operational results of different discourse mechanisms deployed in comparable cases. As Howard (2004) puts it "in viewing international politics as a game, language

defines the ‘logic of possibility’ and ‘create possibilities’. Discourse, for Howard, also leads countries to react very differently when facing fundamentally similar issues and offers a better analytical tool for scenarios that could not be otherwise explained by realist or institutionalist schools.

Especially in the Turkish context, foreign policy discourse of a country is “generally considered to be an extension of the state’s official ideology, which is more stable, rigid and general compared to party ideologies which are more populist, pragmatic and flexible” (Saracoglu, 2015, p.302). It has been long considered that the Turkish Foreign Ministry and its official website has a unique position as a strong bastion of this discourse especially with respect to international audiences (Ceydilek 2012). However, this position of the ministry and its public relations departments are fast eroding with the transition to an presidential system in 2018 and growing cloud of presidential departments, most notably of Spokesperson and Directorate of Communications. Therefore, an analysis of the change in Turkish foreign policy discourse has great potential to understand the mechanisms of change in the country’s foreign affairs.

The central position of former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu is often underlined as a norm-entrepreneur. He introduced self-invented terms such as ‘zero problems with neighbors’ or ‘Turkey as regional power’ to the vocabulary of the Turkish foreign policy rhetoric (Ozkan, 2014). By constant repetition to both domestic and foreign audience, also enabled by his long tenure as Foreign Minister, he became an important agent to make this rhetorical position part of the general discourse of the Turkish foreign policy (Daddov, 2015).

Similar to the above-mentioned terms, the general policy discourse of Turkey has seen the boom and bust of other discursive materials. It is also extensively discussed

that Turkey's harsh rhetoric often impeded the backtracking of costly foreign policy choices by limiting the future room of maneuver for Turkish policymakers (Saracoglu, 2015). The discrepancy between the foreign policy rhetoric and diametrically opposed domestic policies also obstructed pursuing an ambitious foreign policy especially during the Arab Spring (Benhaim&Öktem, 2015). A similar rhetorical change vis-à-vis the EU is also highly discernible when a comparison of earlier periods of the JDP is made with the current discourse (Aydin-Duzgit, 2017). All these discursive swings also came along with real-life consequences which are only exacerbated by the shortcomings in terms of material capabilities.

This study would be one of its kind as it encompasses a whole range of public statements of a Turkish institution in the foreign policy domain. It would also serve as a novel perspective in order to understand the changing dynamics in the course of Turkey-US relations by careful examination of the publicly available data and would pave the way for the future researchers as they get access to confidential information when the archives are opened.

2.3 Conceptual framework

An inductive examination of the material would suggest that most of the discursive elements in the statements could be covered by a three-fold classification under the titles of constructive, neutral and reactionary. In order to limit the number of selected statements, only the public announcements made by Turkish Foreign Ministry on the relations with the United States will be covered in the main analysis.

On the one end of the spectrum, constructive statements, which would be defined as the discursive materials containing a constructive approach on behalf of Turkey to overcome an emerging issue or to mediate crisis, would be placed. This line of

discourse would signify a direct and positive action by Turkey aimed at improving its relations with the US by supporting US-led international initiatives or by employing discursive strategies in a way to give a positive spin to otherwise neutral or negative developments. Such statements would be of the nature to prevent a crisis before its anticipated happening or signify an active effort by Turkey to minimize the impact of a certain development harming its relations with the US.

The middle ground would be covered by neutral statements outlining the long-held positions of Turkey vis-à-vis the international events. Statements of this kind would not necessarily precipitate any action. Statements of this sort would be expected to include mundane events such as ministerial or other high-level visits or press releases issued after natural disasters.

The main line of inquiry for the study would be the increase in the reactionary elements in the public statements by Turkish Foreign Office. This would sanction a more concise definition of a reactionary discourse and its basic elements. Orellana (2019) defines reactionary internationalism as the vision of authoritarian leaders to dismantle the current liberal and rules-based structure and to change it with a system based on transactionalism. Therefore, reactionary internationalists, rather than isolation, prefer to remain within the realm of the current international system while simultaneously arguing against its founding principles. Reactionary internationalism is mainly fueled by a sense of injustice constantly and continuously committed against its proponents and the urge to react to these unfair practices.

In a similar vein to reactionary internationalism, a reactionary discourse, for the purposes of this paper, would be defined as the discursive elements which either refutes or negates the developments outside of the actor's control as they are deemed to be unjust and unfair. This line of discourse would easily be identified as it would

contain elements of outright rejection of the preceding incidents or statements. Such statements also would underline the unjust nature of the international issue of concern from a Turkish standpoint.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a discourse-based analysis is utilized to better discern the evaluation of the Turkish foreign policy discourse over the last decade. In order to better justify the selection of this specific methodology, some brief knowledge regarding discourse analysis methodology and its application in the foreign policy domain is provided below. The discussion would then be steered toward the advantages of discourse analysis over other methodologies for the purposes of this research.

3.1 Discourse Analysis and its Roots

Discourse based analyses have started to get increased visibility in the 1970s as a promising subdivision of the constructivist school and emphasized the “constructive role of language” in social domain (Bondarouk&Ruel, 2004). Such line of analyses define discourse as a “complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts, which manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens” (Reisigl&Wodak, 2001: 66). In other words, the definition of discourse covers “all forms of spoken interaction, and written texts of all kinds” (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.7).

As a methodology originally designed to “critically analyse those in power” (van Dijk, 1986: 4), discourse analysis has its roots in the studies of linguistics. While acknowledging the importance of the language, discourse analysis also considers it as a social practice. In political science literature, discourse analysis mostly deals

with “structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 2001: 2). According to Bondarouk & Ruel (2004, p.4) the “goal of the discourse analyst (...) is to explore the relationship between discourse and reality, interpret a hidden meaning, and mediate it between the past and present”.

Any discursive analysis necessitates the utilization of linguistic theories such as argumentation, grammar, rhetoric for a comprehensive analysis. Despite such reliance of linguistic tools, no rules of thumb on the selection of linguistic devices could be given as they are mostly tailored for specific research questions (Meyer, 2001). Intelligible interpretations and explanations (Titscher et al 2000), trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln and Guba 1985), a transparent process of data collection and analysis (Van Dijk, 1985) are considered as the good quality criterion for discourse analysis research. Triangulation methods are also heavily utilized with a view to bringing additional trustworthiness to the research (Wodak, 2001). Discourse analysis also “postulates inductive-deductive development” (Bondarouk & Ruel 2004, p.6).

In the study of discourse, texts are seen as one of the fundamental reflections of discourse and it is strongly argued that “detailed textual analysis will always strengthen discourse analysis” (Fairclough, 1992 p.193). However, discursive units, such as texts, are deemed only to be meaningful if they are taken in an interconnected context (Van Dijk 1997, Titscher et al 2000). [Discourse analysis](#) tries to examine to what extent social reality affects and is influenced by the prevailing discourses (Jager, 2001). Therefore, its analysis of actors, propositions, devices, discursive strategies, linguistic means, and linguistic realizations constantly remains context dependent (Wodak, 2001). In other words, “exploration of the interplay

between discourse, text, and context builds the focus of the discourse analysis” (Bondarouk & Ruel 2004, p.4).

Discourse analysis also investigates the utilization of discourse and language as tools for construction of social reality and identity formation (Van Leeuwen, 1993). Scholars of this strand lean towards a mutually constitutive claim between discourse and social reality. In this sense, all events take place within certain discursive contexts. On the other hand, there are certain discursive events that would ultimately alter the prevailing discourse. Identification of such events is also seen crucial for discourse analysis research (Jager, 2001, Wodak, 2001). Therefore, a certain order of discourse is not understood as a rigid or closed system but maintained constant interaction with actual society (Fairclough, 2001). Discourse analysis is also preferred as a viable alternative to other rigid social analyses and comes with a strengthened explanatory power of social changes (Fairclough, 1992).

Identity formation is mostly done by demarcating a clear line between us and others through methods of collective symbolism or defining the limits of what could be said on certain subject (Jager, 2001). Van Dijk (2001:103) underlines that “... [discourse] research is often interested in the study of ideologically biased discourses, and the ways these polarize the representation of us (ingroups) and them (outgroups)”. This function of discourse analysis is also important in terms of the reflexive self-construction purposes of the discourse on behalf of its generators (Fairclough, 2001).

In this framework, the media and politicians are given special importance in terms of their discourse setting powers. Politicians are also considered as a tool of articulation for specific public opinion matters in the form of discourse. Discursive practices with identity focus could serve for a wide range of goals such as identity construction, transformation, preservation, reproduction or destruction (Wodak, 2001). For

discourse analysts, “language is not powerful on its own, it gains power by the use powerful people make of it” (Wodak, 2001:10). Discourses that are backed up by institutions and their ever-increasing technological capabilities constitute a historically determined rationality (Pedersen, 2009).

One of the basic assumptions of discourse analysis is that “not only individuals, but also institutions and social groupings have specific meanings and values, that are expressed in language in systematic ways” (Wodak, 2001, p.6). In this sense, texts and other communicative materials are also regarded as the fields of struggle and negotiation for different agents and ideologies. Such an understanding of discourse also brings along a parallel acknowledgement that discourses are inherently “institutionalized and regulated” (Jager, 2001:34). Discourse analysis as a methodology would enforce its adherents to look beyond the immediate linguistic characteristics of a discourse. Fairclough (1992) proposes a three-dimensional view of discourse analysis and argues that analysis of context, production of the text and its content should all be incorporated into the research. That is, “the task of discourse analysis is to find the nodal points which give other signs their meaning, and to observe the process through which the allocation of meaning is taking place” (Pedersen, 2009 p.7). With this in mind, by the late 1980s, “the relevance of investigating language use in institutional settings is reiterated, and a new focus on the necessity of a historical perspective is introduced” (Wodak, 2001:7).

Wodak (2001:66) puts the aim of this approach as “investigating historical, organizational and political topics and texts, the discourse-historical approach attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields” as “it analyses the historical dimension of discursive actions by exploring the ways in which particular

genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change”. In other words, “discourse analysis is the study of rationality and how it is expressed in a particular historical context” (Pedersen, 2009 p.4). Such a long-term analysis would enable the researcher to better assess the real strength and density of certain discourse (Jager, 2001). It would also enable a way to deduct grand theories from an immediate analysis of texts within the systemic steps of triangulation articulated by Wodak (2001).

Discourse analysis is marked with a great heterogeneity of methodological and theoretical approaches (Wodak, 2001, Pedersen, 2009) and could be regarded as essentially an interdisciplinary procedure (Van Dijk, 2001). Its emphasis on the notion of context forces the practitioners to involve social, political, economic and ideological dynamics while conducting research. Its interdisciplinary nature is further strengthened by the eclectic nature of the methodology (Meyer, 2001). It is common to observe discourse-based studies that involve other qualitative or quantitative methods in their analysis. It is understood as one of the advantages of discourse analysis as the method has the potential to be combined with “any approach and subdiscipline in the humanities and social sciences” (Van Dijk, 2001:96).

“Discourse analysis investigates whether – in statements or texts - it is possible to establish any regularity in the objects which are discussed” (Pedersen, 2009 p.4). More commonly, quantitative methods are utilized to identify thematic concerns or certain regularities within a certain discourse strand (Jager, 2001). As a critical method, discourse analysis is equally cognizant of the themes excluded from the vocabulary as the ones included. Utilization of quantitative techniques is seen as a reliable and repeatable way of indicating such absences and presences. It is underlined that “content analysis can, through its focus on being systematic and quantitative, play a potentially useful role in expanding our understanding of the role

of discourse in constructing the social” (Hardy et. al, 2004:20). However, even the proponents of such combinations are aware of the fact that quantitative studies would be no replacement for the careful analysis and examination of discourse analysis methods (Bennett, 2015).

Overall, discourse analysis is a pragmatic, problem oriented and practical methodology (Fairclough, 2001). It does not prescribe specific tools for research but argues that these should be decided and tailored on the basis of the research question. It easily incorporates the work of other fields into its analysis or use such work as a point of departure for narrowing down its scope.

3.2 Application of Discourse Analysis in Foreign Policy

Discourse analysis in the foreign policy domain was first introduced by post-structuralist scholars and then moved to more mainstream thanks to the works of constructivist researchers. Today, discourse analysis is “employed by a broader range of scholars, in some cases in tandem with quantitative approaches to textual analysis, as part of a wider mixed-methodological toolkit” (Aydın-Düzgit&Rumelili,2018:2). Researchers of post-structuralist strand strictly maintained a historical perspective while conducting their analyses, a premise that is in line with the general principles of discourse analysis. However, inclusion of the discourse into the framework of the prevailing structure limited the outreach of their research and they have been criticized for their lack of methodological rigor (Keohane, 1988).

Constructivist scholars utilized discourse analysis methods for interpretative rather than critical purposes. Some of the methods used by these scholars, such as predicate analysis, paved the way for examination of discourse traits in terms of their effect on the establishment of relational differences and hierarchies (Aydın-Düzgit &Rumelili,

2018). By combining the identity formation traits of discourses and statehood features of foreign policy, scholars of discourse analysis strongly argued that foreign policy discourse has a critical role in terms of the establishment of the state identity state identity especially through the delineating the boundaries between Self and Other in official documents (Campbell, 1992). “In that sense, the discourses of state officials enjoy a powerful position in constructing the identity of the state as representatives who speak for us due to their access to information from the state, their constitutional legitimacy, and privileged access to the media” (Aydin-Duzgit, 2017, p.5).

In the process of utilization of discourse analysis in foreign policy domain, the discourse historical approach has been preferred as its main method of inquiry. The analyses followed a top to bottom approach where the topics and context are analyzed before the examination of discursive strategies and linguistic means (Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2018). Discourse-historical method is particularly useful for equipping the researchers with an analytical toolbox with high levels of sophistication that could examine the methods of argumentation and legitimation through linguistic tools (Wodak, 2001).

It is accepted that many “specific foreign policy decisions cannot be explained by political discourse” (Larsen, 1997 p.21) but also argued that discourse analysis could provide a frame in which most of the subject of middle-range theories could be better appreciated (Wæver, 1990). In this sense discourse analysis also bring additional value to the rationalist scholars since it deepens our understanding of rational as a “temporary hegemony of a particular discourse” and also our understanding of interest formation (Larsen, 1997 p.22) In addition, discourse analysis offers a powerful explanatory tool to better comprehend the transmission between the

international and domestic and the transformation of internal impulses into foreign policy choices (Moravcsik, 1991).

Studies of discourse analysis started to be supplemented with computer-assisted content analysis methods or other quantitative techniques as researchers found complementary traits that could enhance the explanatory power of the research. It is argued that “observational statistical studies can convey information about patterns within large populations, but they have difficulty unpacking issues of causal direction, measuring concepts in context, and making explanatory or interpretive claims about individual cases” and “interpretive and case study methods are strong at the latter three tasks and at uncovering the meaning participants attach to symbols and interaction, but they are weaker where statistical methods are strong: assessing whether the findings from individual cases apply to broader populations” (Bennett, 2015:985). In this sense, techniques such as frequency analysis or word clouds are heavily utilized to better contextualize the arguments on the qualitative end of studies.

Most of the discourse analysis in the field of international relations is conducted through an examination of official documents such as speeches, declarations, debates, diplomatic documents, interviews or other communications materials (Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2018). Such a reliance is understandable as these types of materials constitutes to a more elaborate and institutional reflection of the official discourse. On the other hand, there are also other studies where the discourse in focus groups is utilized as an approximation for the overall public. (Aydın-Düzgit, 2017).

3.3 Criticisms Against Discourse Analysis Methodology

Discourse analysis in general and critical discourse analysis in particular is criticized for its hermeneutic method in text analysis, wide range of textual interpretation and opinionated analysis (Wodak, 2001). In a large majority of discursive studies, the selected texts to be critically analyzed remain rather limited or at least far from covering the whole database. In addition, it is also admitted that “there is no typical (...) way of collecting data” (Meyer, 2001 p.24) in discourse analysis. Therefore, the method is criticized for cherry-picking in its case selection (Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2018). On the other hand, its theoreticians strongly argue that such case selection is based on extensive reading of the relevant texts and need for detailed documentation before proceeding with the critical evaluation. It is also pointed out that data collection and analysis is never clearly demarcated in discourse analysis and it is a process of constant back and forth that supplements one another. In that sense, completeness in discourse analysis is assessed not on the basis of the coverage of the database but the marginal value of new findings (Jager, 2001).

In the sense of opinionated analysis, particularly, critical discourse analysis is known for its different research questions and its pronounced role of advocacy on behalf of discriminated groups (Meyer, 2001). It is blamed for being an ideological interpretation rather than an objective account (Widdowson, 1995). Rather than refuting such claims by counter narratives, critical discourse scholars defends such traits on the basis of transparency (Fairclough, 1996) and argues that it is impossible to gain insight from pure data without using any frame of reference (Meyer, 2002). However, at every step of the analysis, its practitioners are advised to justify their case and data selection and interpretation procedures (Jager, 2002).

3.4 Utilization of Discourse Analysis in the Turkish Foreign Policy Context

This employs a historical strand of discourse analysis methodology. The selection of the methodology is based on its understanding of institutional discourse as a field of negotiation and struggle before it is shared with the wider public. Discourse studies on the foreign policy issues also underline the importance of such official discursive practices as a state-identity creation mechanism.

Discourse-historical methodology enables this thesis to adopt a more context-sensitive and long-term perspective. With the selection of this specific method, the study is able to look beyond the linguistic traits and offer more comprehensive explanations for the change in the Turkish foreign policy discourse. Relatively longer time frame of the research paves the way for a better assessment of the incremental changes over the years, before a certain discourse is consolidated. The study also tries to explain to what extent the Turkish Foreign Ministry utilizes discourse to establish a new identity for the Turkish state and how the lines of demarcation between us and the outsiders were drawn.

In addition, the study also allows for evaluating the impact of change of actors and their influence on the overall discourse. In the last decade, two different ministers remained at the helm of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for extended periods of time that would put them in position to dictate their own preference over the foreign policy discourse. Given the emphasis put by discourse analysis on the politicians for their discourse setting powers, the adoption of this approach, coupled with the study's time frame, enables to observe and analyze the change and evolution of Turkish foreign policy discourse under different leaderships.

Benefiting from the digitalization of the publicly available information, this research uses a quantitative analysis that would cover the whole range of press releases to

better pinpoint the discourse changing events or time periods. The comprehensive and quantitative content analysis would ensure the whole data set is covered without exceptions. It would benefit the study for overcoming the criticisms against discourse analysis for cherry-picking the data by providing a solid justification for the selection of cases.

3.5 Troubled or Model Partnership? Brief History of Turkey-US Relations

Despite early contacts dating back to the Ottoman era, bilateral relations in the modern era started to develop in the aftermath of the Second World War. President Woodrow Wilson's emphasis on self-determination and Fourteen Points declaration had found receptive ears in Turkey and the US was invited to the Lausanne Peace Negotiations as an impartial arbiter (Oran, 2001). However, for most of the interwar period, Turkey's relations with the US were overshadowed by its relations with European countries. The Second World War has changed the power dynamics in Europe as well as in the world and pushed Turkey to adjust foreign policy leanings.

During the Second World War, Turkey has rigorously implemented a policy to stay out of the war at all costs by not committing to either side. Therefore, immediately after the end of WWII, the biggest problem of Turkish foreign policy was the isolation of the country in international sphere (Yilmaz, 2014). Following the demise of the Hitler threat and retreat of European powers such as the Great Britain and France, Turkey was left alone with one of the two emerging superpowers of the post-war era, the USSR. The demands and the accompanying threats by the Soviet leaders (Bağcı, 2004) have forced Turkey to seek security guarantees for its protection and economic cooperation for the reconstruction of the country. In this context, the US and the alliances it led emerged as the only viable and capable option that could

possibly deter the claims of the USSR on Turkey, particularly on the straits and other territorial claims in the East. (Kınacıoğlu & Gürzel Aka,2018).

A highly symbolic show of support came when the USS Missouri, an American warship, has visited Turkey to deliver the remains of the Turkish Ambassador who passed away in the US. This symbolic gesture was followed by a more concrete steps as President Truman asked the US Congress for support Turkey and Greece by 400 million USD in economic and military aid in 1947 in a move highly appreciated by Ankara (Inat, 2005). Turkey was also included in the Marshall Plan, a US economic program for the reconstruction of European economies after the war, and “received almost \$140 million economic assistance in three years” (Yilmaz, 2014 p141).

Even with this substantial economic aid, Turkey was still looking for more pronounced guarantees in the security and military realms. From the beginning, Turkish policymakers were adamant to join the newly established NATO and adjusted the country’s foreign policy accordingly in a pro-Western fashion (Uslu, 2003). These efforts yielded results when Turkey decided to join the Korean War on the side of the US forces. Turkey was admitted as a member of NATO on 18 February 1952 thanks to the great sway of the US over the alliance. This membership came despite considerable hesitance by the other NATO members and constituted one of the main and strongest axes of Turkish-US relations for the rest of the decade as Turkey concluded over 30 bilateral military agreements with the US (Gonlubol, 1996).

Hence, it is safe to argue that the fast-paced development of Turkey-US relations has more to do with contextual reasons rather than due to shared visions and values despite studies underlining the ideological and moral affinities between the two countries (Gulmez, 2020). As the context has changed, so did the Turkish foreign

policy inclinations and choices. First shock of confidence came when the US decided to pull the strategic Jupiter missiles from Turkey as part of deal struck by the USSR in the context of the Cuban Missile Crisis (Guney, 2008). Turkish leaders were clearly upset about the way in which this process was handled by the US decision makers without any consultations with the host country (Bal, 2006). A more serious challenge with long term consequences has emerged around the events in Cyprus. Irritated by the increasing pressure of the Greek Cypriots over their Turkish compatriots, Turkey first tried to garner international support and then tried to militarily intervene in a unilateral fashion as a guarantor country. However, Turkey was unable to get the required support from international community due to its pro-Western stance (Yilmaz, 2014).

On the account of military intervention, Turkish relations with the US was tested even to a greater extent when President Johnson threatened Turkey against any military involvement and even raised doubts regarding the commitment of the US vis-à-vis Soviet threats in 1964. This led to the first questioning of the nature of the relations with the US and Turkish foreign policy was adjusted accordingly in several key domains such as the Middle East and the ties with USSR (Fuller, 2008). Ten years later, Turkey decided to undertake a military intervention despite strong US urgings and faced with the first embargo from its staunchest ally. This led to a counter-reaction by Turkey in the form of abolishment of military cooperation and closure of the US bases (Harris, 2001). The relations were tested on other occasions such as opium production but managed in a way that Turkey remained institutionally and structurally in the Western Camp (Hale, 2000).

After this infringement of relations due to the embargo and Turkish countermeasures, once again contextual changes brought along another period of rapprochement

between Turkey and the US. The Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has provided the necessary background for a more enhanced cooperation between the two countries (Gulmez, 2020). The military coup in 1980 also eased the transition for a more pro-US foreign policy stance (Hale, 2000). However, the demise of biggest denominator of the bilateral relations, the threat posed by the USSR, required Turkey to bring additional benefits to the table in order to retain its value as an ally at a time of US retrenchment from the region. Therefore, for the rest of the millennium, Turkey has actively supported the US initiatives and military interventions such as the First Gulf War by opening up its bases (Sayari, 2004) and enhancing its relations with another critical US ally, Israel (Atmaca, 2009).

With the gradual decline of military threats and security concerns, the focus of Turkey-US relations shifted to economic domain. President Clinton's visit to Turkey in 1999 and his emphasis on strategic partnership between two countries reinstated the confidence of Turkish leaders and the public regarding the future course of the bilateral relations (Ovali, 2019). Amidst the banking crisis in 2001, the US also actively helped to ensure that Turkey has received the necessary IMF loans (Miller, 2006). The Clinton Administration also supported the critical Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Project that helped Turkey's aims to become an energy hub for the region and Western markets (Sayari, 2013). Turkey, in her part, continued to support the US-led NATO mission in Afghanistan with sizeable number of troops on the ground in a move similar to the involvement of Turkish Armed Forces in the Korean War.

In the post-Cold War period, Turkey adopted a more active foreign policy especially in the Middle East and Central Asia. In return, the US decision_makers started to regard Turkey as a bridge between East and West and potential role-model for newly

independent ex-Soviet Republics (Atmaca, 2009). Turkey has utilized its relations with the US as ‘multiplier’ in its foreign policy initiatives to have stronger relations with the countries in the Balkans, the Middle East and the post-Soviet Turkic Republics and even in the service of its long-sought full membership into the EU. However, especially two countries views on the Middle East, especially on Iraq and Syria, has brought divergent threat perceptions within the US-Turkey alliance. The alliance persisted despite the changes of leadership on both sides and subsequent shifts in terms of foreign policies (Gulmez, 2020). This policy change was more noticeable in the case of Turkey where twenty-years long JDP rule brought sweeping transformations in almost every field, including foreign policy. This new foreign policy orientation, favoring a more independent outlook, was one of the main drivers of the divergence of perception of threats and interest as far as the US and Turkey are concerned (Sayari, 2013)

The first shock in the JDP era in terms of Turkey-US relations appeared when US requested to use Turkish military facilities and enabling of transit passage of roughly 60.000 soldiers for its planned intervention against Iraq. These requests were rejected in a contentious vote in the Turkish parliament and triggered a series of crises between the two countries that culminated into the ‘Suleymaniyah incident’ during which US soldiers apprehended members of Turkish special forces (Guney, 2008). The incident was defined as the “greatest crisis of confidence” between the two countries by the Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces and arguably turned the alliance into a “troubled partnership” (Sayari, 2013). Despite the challenges due to the US invasion of Iraq, Turkey continued its supporting role in the framework of NATO operations in Afghanistan and the Balkans. Turkey also agreed to be one of the co-sponsors of the US-led ‘Greater Middle East Initiative’

(Altunisik, 2013). Efforts such as the signing of “Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership” in 2006 remained futile amidst the lack of genuine efforts (Atmaca, 2009).

Despite occasional challenges due to issues such as its relations with Hamas, the 1915 events and Iran’s nuclear program, Turkey exerted efforts to sustain this critical alliance even when its perception of the US has shifted into a more negative one (Gulmez, 2020). Beginning of the tenure of President Obama has signaled an era of closer cooperation and greater alignment between the two countries, especially after his speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly where the President defined the relations between Turkey and the US as a “model partnership”. The hopes for a more ‘comprehensive partnership’ by Turkish policymakers have soon ceded after a brief honeymoon in the early days of the Arab uprisings (Kinacioglu, 2018). The relations, especially in the declaration level, turned sour following the events in Syria and the domestic turmoil in Turkey since 2013 (Atmaca, 2009). In the economic domain, Turkey was also concerned to be excluded from the US-led Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership deal (Kirisci, 2013).

At a more operational level, Turkey was careful enough to sustain its institutional ties with the US and NATO by agreeing to host a critical component of NATO’s missile defense program and actively taking part in NATO’s mission in Afghanistan and Libya as well as opening its bases of anti-ISIS operations led by the US (Kardas, 2013). In other words, despite harsh rhetoric, Turkey was keen on maintaining its relations with the US and utilized NATO for this purpose. Overall, the term of President Obama marked with divergent threat perceptions between two allies (Gulmez, 2020). However, institutional bonds were strong enough to prevent a total clash despite strong disagreements on issues such the YPG presence in Northern

Syria and Turkey's willingness to acquire Russian made S-400 missile systems. Quick deterioration of the relations between Israel and Turkey has also contributed to the decay in Turkish relations with the US (Arbell, 2014, Sayari, 2013). Overall, the reframing of the relations as model partnership was not enough to cover the fundamental divergences between two allies (Atmaca, 2009).

With the arrival of President Trump after 2016 elections, the nature of Turkey-US relations went through another round of transformation. Despite early hopes that Trump would be more sympathetic to Turkish security concerns (Kocamaz, 2019) and less vocal in terms of issues of human rights and fundamental freedoms, it was soon understood that the US approach to Turkey would be highly inconsistent. While being more acquiescent against Turkey's military actions in Syria, President Trump personally threatened to "obliterate the Turkish economy" in the same context in a move similar to President Johnson's letter of 1964. President Trump, on the other hand, put the blame on previous administrations for Turkey's procurement of Russian missile systems and tried to intervene in judicial processes against a Turkish state bank for busting US sanctions against Iran.

The institutional character of the bilateral relations has quickly eroded and replaced with a dynamic in which the relations between two leaders is the main driver of the alliance. This highly personalized relations had to endure crises such as the detainment of an American pastor in Turkey, US hosting of the leader of the FETO terror group and increasing pressure from the US Congress for imposing sanctions due to the acquisition of S-400 systems. These crises also have shown the fact that Turkey could be pressured, especially in economic domain (Lindenstrauss, 2018), and sanctions became a policy tool in Turkey-US relations. This further accelerated

the erosion of trust between the countries and “increased the unpredictability of the bilateral relationship” (Sayari, 2013, p130).

Relations with Turkey are defined as “strategic” or “model” partnership by different US presidents on different occasions. Judging historically, it is far from being a model partnership as observed by the roller coaster trend (Sayari, 2013) in the last two decades. The strategic component has also eroded significantly as the Soviet threat has disappeared and the interest of the US in the Middle East has diminished. NATO remains the most critical component of the alliance, while even defense and military issues, a domain of long-term and steady cooperation, became more antagonistic. In the absence of a game-changing initiative by either side, the trajectory of the relations could be more precisely defined as troubled or unsettled (Sayari, 2013 and Beyoghlou, 2020).

CHAPTER 4:

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY DISCOURSE

In an online world, public communications of the Turkish Foreign Ministry heavily rely on electronic means to spread its message as widely as possible. At the pinnacle of this outreach program, stands its official website. It is regularly updated with a variety of materials ranging from the statements by the Minister or other high-ranking officials, public announcements and useful information for Turkish citizens abroad or brief policy papers on the main axioms of the Turkish foreign policy. The website and its related portals also function as one of the gateways of the diplomatic missions to interact with the ministry in an electronic environment.

One of the most central and easily accessible sections of the website homepage is dedicated to the press releases made by the Ministry. Such strong emphasis on the press releases is by no means exceptional to Turkish Foreign Ministry. A quick glimpse on the websites of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council shows similar inclinations in terms of the positioning of the sections dealing with the external public messages of the ministries. Given such emphasis, it is safe to assume that the messages given through this medium constitutes an important part of the discourse of foreign offices and by extension the foreign policies executed through them.

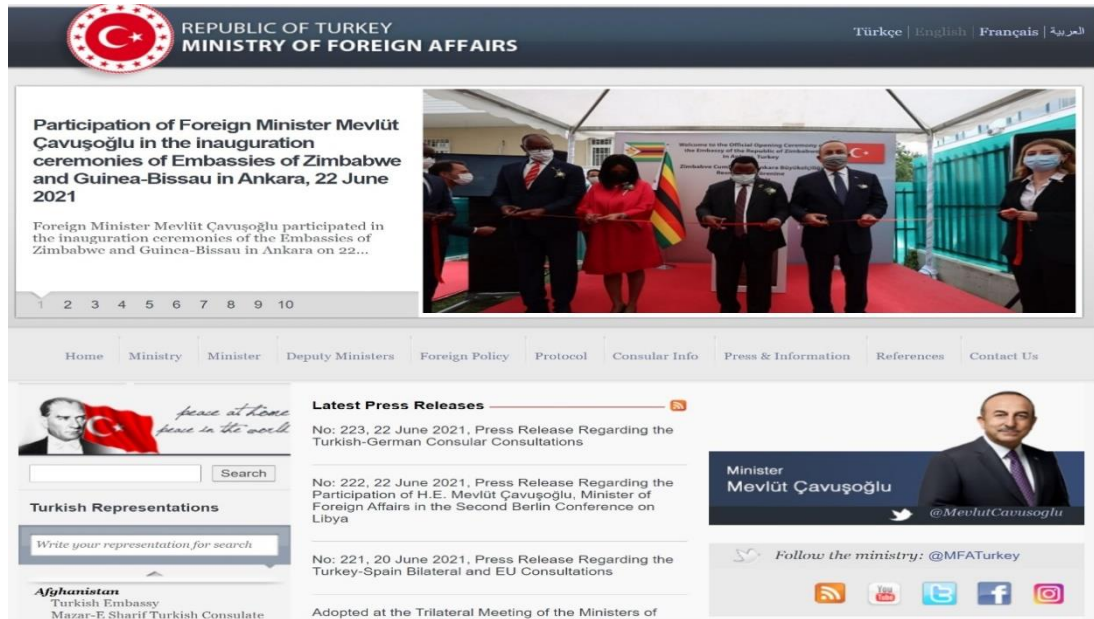


Figure-1: Homepage of Turkish Foreign Ministry's web page

As compared to especially its American, Russian and Chinese counterparts, it could be said that Turkish Foreign Ministry, at the institutional level, gives precedence to written communications rather than a verbal or visual transmission of its messages. All three foreign offices put a heavy emphasis on the regular press briefings held by their respective spokesperson and give considerable coverage to these events. On the other hand, spokesperson of the Turkish Foreign Ministry holds infrequent press conferences, and their emphasis remains much more limited. The best reflection of the underemphasis given to this verbal communication channel could be found in the fact that the transcripts of these conferences can only be accessed through Turkish version of the website¹.

Despite some outlier years such as 2014 in which a total of 14 press conferences were held² by the spokesperson or the personnel of the Information Department of

¹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official Website, accessed on 31 May 2021 at <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.tr.mfa?e5f4c44a-442a-4627-b16d-cb8a42c4feb3>

² Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official Website, accessed on 31 May 2021, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.tr.mfa?22c8eac3-4d92-459b-a356-57c10475b3a1>

the ministry, the numbers of the conferences remained in single digits for most of the years in the last decade. A snapshot of the figures in the preceding years shows that this was not always the case for the ministry. For example, in 2005 and 2006, there were quite regular and almost weekly press conferences of the spokesperson. In 2019, when the website was last updated for these type of press conferences, there were only a total of four press events by the spokesperson. In 2020, there were no press conferences of such nature recorded by the ministry which stands as an exception in 15 year timeline during which such occasions have found coverage in the official website.

Given the considerable space dedicated to the press and public communications sections and the compared neglect of the verbal and visual components at the institutional level, it is safe to argue that Turkish Foreign Ministry heavily relies on written public relations materials to deliver its message to targeted audiences.

4.1 An Examination and Classification of the Written Statements

A closer look into the Press&Information section of the website provides better insights regarding the overall strategy of the Turkish Foreign Ministry in shaping its messages towards domestic and international audiences. Traditionally, the ministry produces two main types of written communications materials, press releases and QAs by the spokesperson, that can be used depending on the specifics of the occasion and the level of importance attached to the particular issue. Apart from these two types, the website lists other types of written documents such as joint declarations or press lines. However, their frequency, which happens to be only one for press lines, and coverage renders them almost irrelevant in the overall messaging of the ministry.

There remain two other sections that are given space in the press domain, namely Joint Press Conferences and Latest Developments. These two classifications mostly deal with the press events or the upcoming visits and meetings of the minister himself. By their nature, the statements that fall into these two categories are far from reflecting the institutional discourse of the ministry. Furthermore, it seems that the ministry itself has also stopped updating the joint press conferences section since 2015. For that year, a total of two events were uploaded to this section which covers the transcripts of the press events by the Minister.

As noted, the main bulk of the communication materials falls into the categories of the press releases and QAs. As this separate classification indicates, there are some fundamental differences between two categories that made them useful on different circumstances. On the other hand, both forms of written communication materials reflect a certain degree of institutional character and generally adhere to a set of format and content structures. Therefore, both press releases and QAs could be used as the best possible approximations for understanding the change in the official and institutional change of discourse in Turkish foreign policy.

The basic form of public outreach material is the standard press releases for any institutional body, whether governmental or private. These releases reflect the official stance of an institution vis-à-vis a relevant development. In this regard, foreign ministries are no exception. Annually, Foreign Offices all over the world prepare and publish a number of press releases some of which are rather routine while some others are fairly political and hence critical by their nature. As compared to other governmental departments, the targeted audience of press releases by Foreign Ministries is mainly their international interlocutors.

However, in recent years, it is observed that even the releases by the most outward-looking of governmental bodies are utilized for domestic political consumption including and especially in Turkey. Due to its international nature, the press releases by the Foreign Ministries are expected to follow a higher structural integrity and to stick to certain linguistic standards and content more than any other institution. Foreign Ministries' exclusive right to represent their countries in international domain also brings an additional burden to their actions in public communications as these are deemed to speak for the whole country.

Press releases of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, similar to their counterparts in other countries, are highly structural documents. In most of the cases, press releases are utilized for announcing almost mundane events such as ministerial visits or high-level political consultations. These routine releases, which consists of 2-3 paragraph length sentences gives information regarding the date, location and participants of the events and briefly touches its contents in a neutral tone. In addition, press releases by the Turkish Foreign Ministry are also used for declaring the country's position on matters of international substance such as terror attacks, natural disasters or critical political developments that are particularly important for Turkey like statements on 1915 events or terrorism.

Press releases of this latter kind are generally longer in their content and use a very specific language as they are designed to make clear the position of Turkey in sometimes politically highly contested issues such Cyprus, the EU, or the relations with the United States. These releases also are not attributable to any specific person or department within the ministry. Despite being shared with the public by the Information Department headed by the Spokesperson, the press releases made neither on behalf of the minister nor the spokesperson himself. This could be regarded as an

intentional choice for press releases to carry the institutional messages of the ministry as a whole.

By their nature, press releases generally carry a neutral tone. Even politically charged type of press releases could be considered more conciliatory as compared to the messages given through verbal channels. This, by no means, implies that they are free of tone. On the contrary, their attitude could easily be discerned by following key phrases. Press releases by Turkish Foreign Ministry, especially in the later part of the decade, communicate the underlying tone in their content, either negative or positive, through use of specific phrases and legal idioms such as “welcoming”, “condemning” or being “null and void”.

The second main group of written communications by the Turkish Foreign Ministry is labeled as Question&Answer. These QAs are basically the responses of the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson to questions of journalist on contemporary international events. One striking feature of the QAs is that the questions are almost never disclosed in the text. Therefore, besides the title and the use of a slightly less formal language, QAs very much resembles to standard press releases in the case of Turkish Foreign Ministry. One additional characteristic of the QAs is that they are attributable to the spokesperson as an individual. In this sense, they give the impression of one-sided statements by the spokesperson on daily events. It would be safe to argue that their institutional character is somewhat diluted due to this feature despite the institutional support to craft the message before it is delivered by the spokesperson.

One defining and distinct trait of the QAs in the case of Turkish Foreign Ministry is their heavily confrontational tone. A closer look into QAs in the last decade shows a trend that most of the statements of this type include reactionary phrases and idioms.

The ministry started to resort to QAs for purposes of retaliation against statements by other Foreign Ministries, speeches of foreign politicians and leaders or some assertions in foreign press and even in social media when they are delivered by high-profile figures.

4.2 Reactive or Constructive: A Guide for Classifications

Inherently, press releases of the Turkish Foreign Ministry are more inclined to have a neutral tone as they are structured and more formalized texts. However, even in these highly structured releases the Ministry is able to give their intended message through utilization of certain words and phrases. Especially, in politically sensitive releases, the Ministry vocabulary is clear enough to discern the negative and positive attitude regarding the issue.

QAs, by their nature, are more prone to be non-neutral as the issue of concern is forcing the spokesperson to adopt a stance. Hence, it is only natural that most of the QAs carry an either negative or positive tone depending on the context. It could also be argued that it would be easier to take a stance in a QA as it was ultimately attributable to the spokesperson and could technically be backtracked if needed. It should be also underlined that no such action was taken by the Ministry in the last decade neither for press releases not for QAs. In other words, the Ministry remained unwavering when it comes to its written communication material.

Since both types of statements are ultimately the end-product of the same institutional mechanism, the vocabulary included in the press releases and the QAs are not very far from each other. Therefore, it would be relatively easier to apply a similar categorization for both kinds of statements. In this paper, a threefold

classification, namely neutral, constructive and reactionary, will be utilized for the written statements of the Foreign Ministry.

The classification will be made largely by tracking certain words and phrases that define the tone of a given statement. Utilization of such words and phrases constitutes the main point of distinction for the classification of three types of written communication materials. Especially in the last decade, the Turkish Foreign Ministry developed a well-structured vocabulary to transmit its sentiment through very specific phrases and words. Recurring nature of such phrase leave no room for uncertainty in terms of the way in which the phrase is used in the dictionary of Turkish Foreign Ministry.

Constructive statements are easily discernible by their general tone without necessarily resorting the details of the specific combination of words. A general definition of constructive statements could be given as the ones carrying positive connotations with regard to a certain international development. In this regard, the statements that declares the position of Turkey can also be fall into this category if and when they represent a new approach by Turkey to long-standing disputes or if and when they offer a way to resolve an ongoing dispute by reaching a settlement in negotiations.

Reactionary press releases and QAs differentiate themselves from others by the emphasis on words with negative connotations. Press materials of such vein are categorized by their inclusion of negating terms such as “refusing” or “opposing” are grouped under the reactionary statements by which Turkey is trying to clarify its stance while outlying its counter claims against a statement by a foreign country or a recent international development. The QAs are more prone to fall into reactionary

category as they constitute the main retaliatory tool of the ministry with respect to daily international developments.

Neutral category would be covering the statements of factual nature. Unsurprisingly, a greater bulk of press releases are expected to be under this categorization as they are the main medium utilized by the Ministry to announce regular and value-free events such as high-level visits or consultations. A neutral classification could be regarded almost futile for the QAs. Nonetheless, some QAs are also limited to the outlining of factual topics without necessarily implying positive or negative connotations and therefore could be labeled under this category.

Naturally, there might be some statements that could involve elements of more than one or all three categories. In such circumstances, the classification would be made according to dominant tone. That is, a statement with constructive and reactionary elements will be judged by the prevailing sentiment in the written material. However, such material will not be categorized as neutral as it involves phrases from both end of the spectrum. In any case, the number of such statements would be rather limited as both press releases and QAs are short texts dedicated to specific issues with a clear perspective by the Foreign Ministry.

CHAPTER 5:

A LOUDER MEGAPHONE? QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

OF PRESS STATEMENTS BETWEEN 2010-2020

An analysis of the number of the written press statements over the years is promising in terms of shedding light of the way in which such materials have been used the Turkish Foreign Ministry in order to disseminate its public message. Apart from the mere numbers, the breakdown between different types of statements has the potential to offer insights about the shaping of the public discourse of the Ministry throughout the decade. The increasing numbers of overall press releases and changing frequencies of QAs could signify a greater effort by the Turkish Foreign Ministry to steer the public perception in its favor and to react the fast-paced international developments.

Total number of press releases and QAs fluctuates in a limited interval in the first half of the decade with the notable exception of 2014 as an outlier. That particular year, Turkish Foreign Office has produced a total of 448 press statements. In the remaining years of the first half of the decade, the total number of written statements remained between a minimum of 317 in 2012 and a maximum of 379 in 2013. Judging by the years of the first five-year period, it is safe to assume that a combined average of roughly 350 statements were seen enough to spread the message of the ministry.

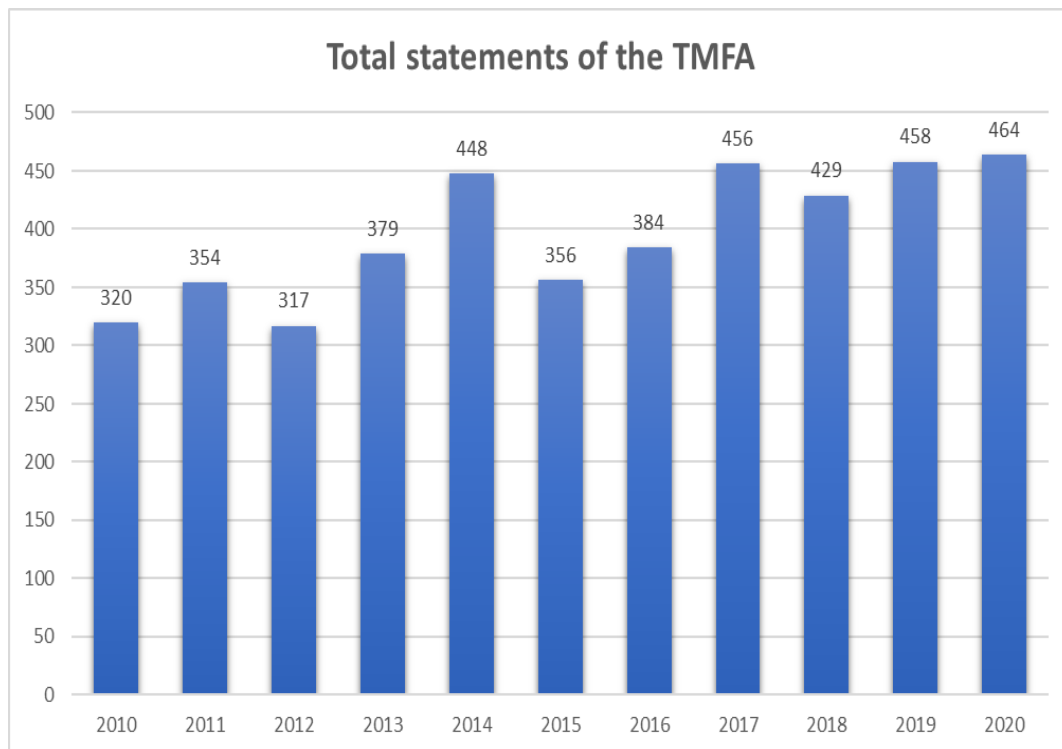


Figure-2: Total number of statements by years (Source: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official Website)

Starting with the year of 2016, the overall number of statements has gone through a serious and seemingly permanent transformation. In the second half of the decade, the average number of total written statement has gone up by 30% and has been realized above 450 for three consecutive years in this period. As a further sign of this heightened emphasis on written statements, the year 2020 has experienced the release of 464 written communication material by the Turkish Foreign Ministry. This figure is striking in two accounts. Firstly, it represents an all-time high figure for the decade and comes as a result of steady increase in the last five years. Secondly, this record number was achieved in a period of relatively low-activity due to limiting effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Within this general picture, the share of QAs deserves attention as this type of statements are more suitable for transmitting reactionary sentiments of the Turkish

foreign policy. The share of QAs shows greater volatility in terms of changes over the years. Despite this increased volatility, the year of 2016 again emerges as a turning point in terms of their portion in the overall written statements by Turkish Foreign Ministry.

As far as the first half of the decade is concerned, the average ratio of QAs in overall written releases stands roughly at 8.5%. The only year where the ratio stood above 10% threshold by a small margin was 2015 which was followed by an almost 10% QAs in 2011. The other years, have a relatively lower share of QAs which fluctuates around 8%. In 2010, a mere 7% of total written statements were composed of QAs released by the spokesperson. Judging by the numbers of the first five years, it is safe to assume that, under normal circumstances, 8% of all written statements would consist of QAs, which are more leaning towards being reactionary by their format and nature.

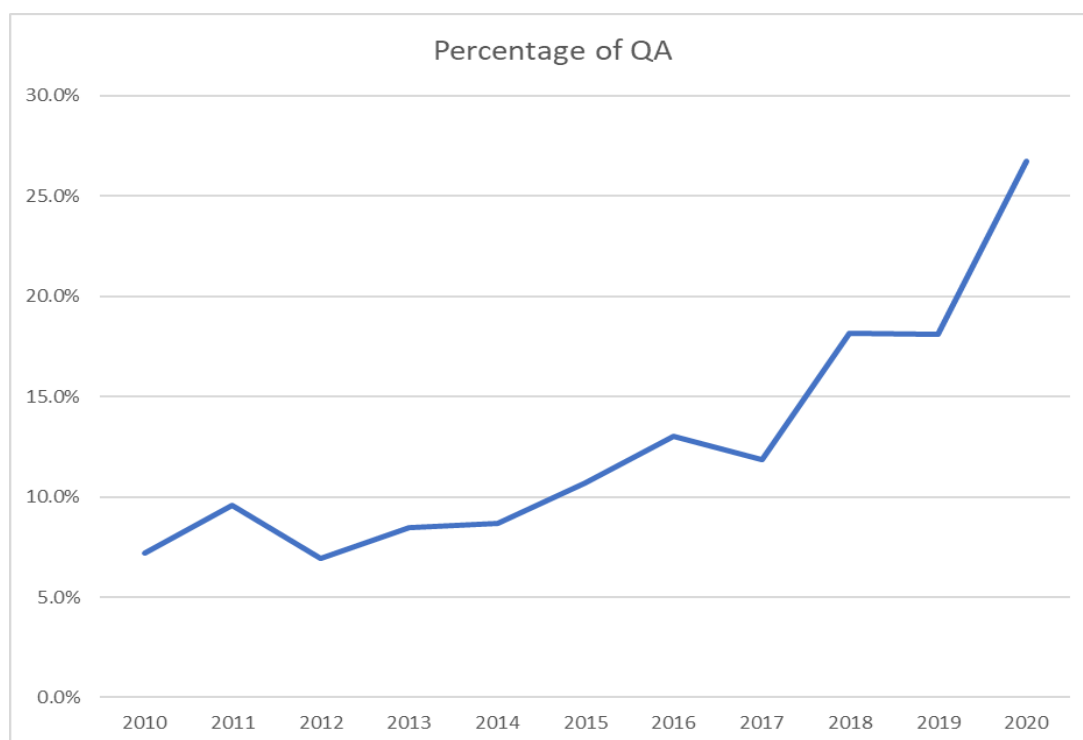


Figure-3: Percentage of QAs by years (Source: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official Website)

In a very similar trend to the overall number of statements, starting with 2016, the ratio of QAs have underwent a serious transformation. In 2016, the share of QAs has topped the peak in the first half of the decade and, after a negligible decline in 2017, continued to unprecedentedly increase especially in 2018 and 2019. A quick glimpse on the titles of the QAs suggests that this form of statements have been given precedence as a way of quick reaction by the Turkish Foreign Ministry. The average for the second half of the decade doubled the earlier period and reached to a 17%. Towards the end of the decade, their share has experienced their biggest uptick in a year when the Ministry has released a total of 124 QAs. This number also represented a fivefold increase in the span of a decade and tripled the figures from five years earlier. Accordingly, the share of QAs in overall statements has reached an unmatched figure of 26.7%. This means that more than one in every four written communication material published by the Turkish Foreign Ministry was in the format of a QA which is more friendly to reactionary discourse.

A quantitative look into overall number of written statements by the Ministry and the share of QAs within them underlines two ongoing dynamics in the Turkish foreign policy discourse. First of all, it is safe to assume that especially after 2016, the TMFA and Turkish policy makers started to rely more on written statements as compared to earlier periods. This may be triggered partly due to the fact that the Turkish Foreign Ministry statements remained one of the few outlets that the Turkish decision makers were able to express themselves without any questioning and reservations. Both the press releases and QAs, in the case of Turkish Foreign Ministry, are one-sided statements that tells the perspective of Turkish side.

The second underlying dynamic is that the format of the statements has become more prone to reactionary attitudes. In stark contrast to the press releases, the QAs, by their

format, needs to be prompted by a certain and possibly disturbing development. For example, ministerial visits or high-level phone conversations are rarely disclosed by a QA format press statement. These types of events are announced by formal statements which are almost always neutral in their tone. Therefore, the increase in the sheer numbers of QAs and their proportion within the total number of statements could be considered as an early yet non-conclusive sign of a reactionary turn in the Turkish foreign policy discourse. The reactionary could be more convincingly shown only by a qualitative analysis of the text which will be undertaken in the next chapter of the research.

5.1 Even a Much Louder Megaphone? Quantitative Analysis of Statements with respect to the Relations with the United States

As mentioned, the relationship with the United States constitutes one of the most critical and probably equally volatile alliance within the framework of Turkish foreign policy. This special relationship, with all its ups and downs, naturally occupy a sizeable portion of the foreign policy discourse. Beyond the bilateral track, the international incidents that the United States are involved in are commonly regarded as major issues which prompts some sort of written statement by many other Foreign Offices including the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

A close reading of the written communication material produced by the Ministry shows that a grand total of 227 statements with direct reference to the United States has been published over the course of the last decade. Parallel to the number of statements and the share of the QAs, the number of the statements that are concerned with the United States started to increase and capture a bigger share in the written discourse of the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

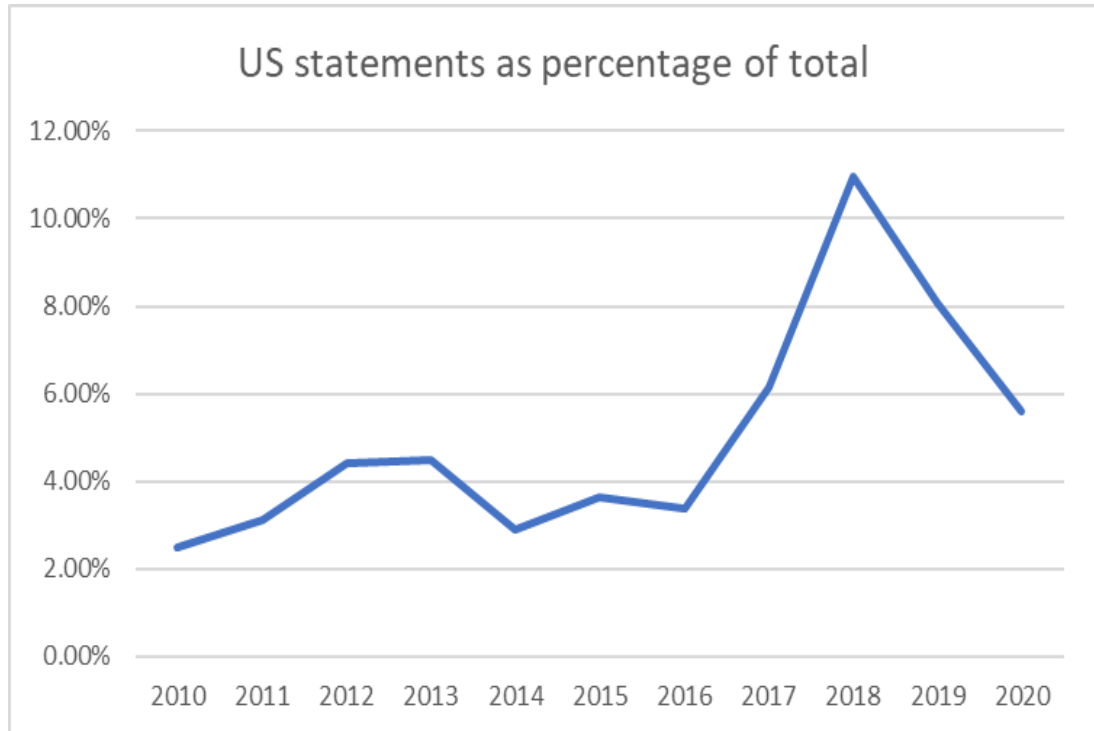


Figure-4: US related statements as percentage of total by years (Source: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official Website)

Until 2016, the number of statements regarding the United States was hovering around an average 13 per year, before it jumped to 28 in 2017, 47 in 2018 and 37 in 2019. In 2020, it has come back to 26 written statements. Even this figure was more than the double of the average in the first half of the decade. It could be argued that the upwards trend in terms of the statements concerning the United States became much more visible after 2017 which is a year later than the similar trends in the total number of statements and the share of QAs within these.

As mentioned, the share of QAs is also one of the important indicators of the changing sentiment of the foreign policy discourse. Hence, a close look into the shares of QAs within the written communication material with respect to the United States is well justified. Such an analysis indicates that 2016, again, became a turning point in terms of the portion of QAs.

In the first half of the decade, the average share of QAs in the US-related statements was roughly 17% despite two exceptional figures in 2012 and 2014 which are 23% and 31% respectively. The raw number of QA-type statements were changing between 1 and 4 in this period with their average standing at 2.1 QAs per year. The number of QAs started to increase exponentially and even exceeded the number of standard press releases in 2019 during when a total of 17 press statements were made while the Ministry was issuing a total of 20 QA-type statements.

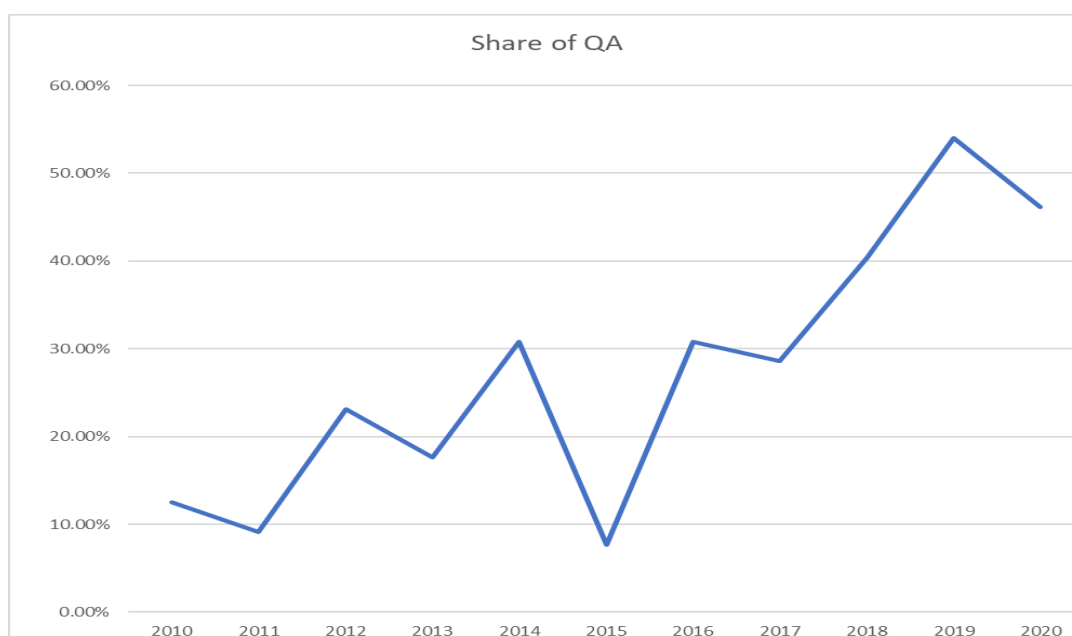


Figure-5: Percentage of QAs in the US-related statements by years (Source: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official Website)

The transformation in the share of QAs in the statements with respect to the United States is more striking and significant. Despite the exceptional figures in 2012 and 2014, the average share of QAs was roughly 17% in the first half of the decade. Without these two particular years, it even decreases to 13% which is still way above the share of QAs within the overall statements, roughly 9%. This discrepancy hints

that the written statements concerning the United States have a higher tendency to include QAs than the general average of the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

In the second half of the decade, the picture becomes more visible as the QAs has started to occupy a bigger portion of the statements. In 2016, the shares of QAs reached the peak of the earlier period at 31% and, following a negligible decrease in 2017, climbed to 40% in 2018. In 2019, this ratio became 54% which means that the Turkish Foreign Ministry issued more QAs than press releases when it comes to Turkish relations with the United States. In the last year of the decade, the ratio was 46% which is almost three-times higher than the normalized average in the first half of the decade. Much like the first half of the decade, the average share of QAs remained more than two-times higher in the US-related statements, 40%, than in general, 17%.

Two brief observations could be inferred from the quantitative analysis of the statements with respect to the United States. Firstly, the issue concerning the relations between Turkey and the United States has started to occupy a bigger portion of the Turkish foreign policy discourse. Despite a considerable decrease in 2020, the average numbers remain relatively higher when it comes to the portion of the US-related statements in the overall picture as it comes to the last years of the decade. Secondly, even beyond the general tendency of Turkish policymakers for QAs, the statements with respect to the United States has started to take form of QAs which are more confrontational and retaliatory.

5.2 Increased Polarization: A Closer Look into the US-related Statements

Following the guidelines outlined in the previous section, 227 statements related to the Turkey-US relations have put into further inquiry with a view to better

understanding the discursive change in Turkish foreign policy. All press releases and QAs have been analyzed in-depth before being assigned a neutral, reactionary or constructive classification. As mentioned, the key phrases and words in the vocabulary of the Ministry were the main signifiers during this categorization phase. In general, it can be said that there is an increased polarization in the discourse of the US-related statements as hinted by the bigger share of the QAs.

One of the most remarkable changes in the decade has been observed in the number of neutral statements. In 2010, 25% of all US-related statements were of neutral tone. This figure remained well over 35% for the next five years and in average 40% of statements used to have a neutral discourse when it comes to the relations with the United States. In 2013, the neutral statements were even an absolute majority during when such type of statements, counted at 10, constituted 59% of the total.

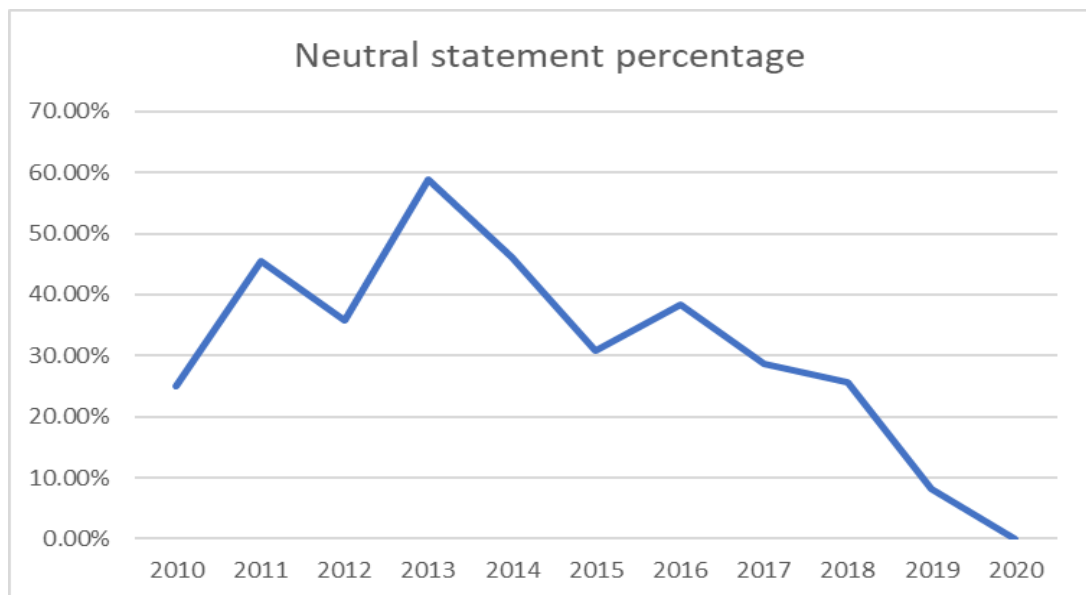


Figure-6: Percentage of neutral US-related statements by years (Source: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official Website)

Following the slight uptick in 2016, this has started to change in a drastic manner. By 2017, the share of neutral statements has dropped below 30% after a five-year interval. Their shares have kept decreasing for the rest of the decade and ultimately hit its bottom in 2020. During this particular year, none of the written statements, a total of 22 which is relatively high number, made by the Turkish Foreign Ministry was marked as neutral. It is more surprising that this year has also witnessed that for the first time in a decade, a sitting Secretary of State visited Turkey and the announcement for the visit was made by a QA type of statement.

The increased polarization of the statements could be better contextualized in the backdrop of a growing number of US-related statements. Despite increasing volumes of written communication materials, the neutral discourse started to fade away and was replaced by the options in the two ends of the spectrum. Convincingly enough, the timing of the disappearing of the neutral statements is also in line with the period of increased share of QAs both in general and the US-related releases. Expectedly, as the QAs became the dominant form of written communication material, there remained a much smaller room for a neutral discourse. This trend was especially visible in the case of the US-related statements between 2018 and 2020 during when the QAs were increasing exponentially while the statements with neutral tones were taken out of the context.

While the neutral discourse was fading away, the reactive statements started to become the norm in the Turkish-US foreign policy discourse. Up until 2017, the share of reactionary discourse in the written communication materials with respect to the United States never reached to 50%. Most notably, in 2015, only 8% of Turkish Foreign Ministry statements had a reactionary tone as far as the issues related with the US are concerned. The average share of the reactive statements for the first half

of the decade was nearly 25%. This considerably high figure for two allies was also a further testament to the volatile nature of the Turkish-US relations and some structural problems such as 1915 events and issues pertaining to the US Congress.

However, this noticeably high share of reactive statements remained relatively low when they are compared with the numbers in the second half of the decade. Starting with 2016, the share of reactive statements has kept continuously increasing to unprecedented levels. By 2017, the reactionary discourse became the norm in the Turkish-US relations as more than 53% of written statements were of this strand. After this uptick, the reactionary rhetoric even became more dominant as its share further increased to 81% and 85% in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

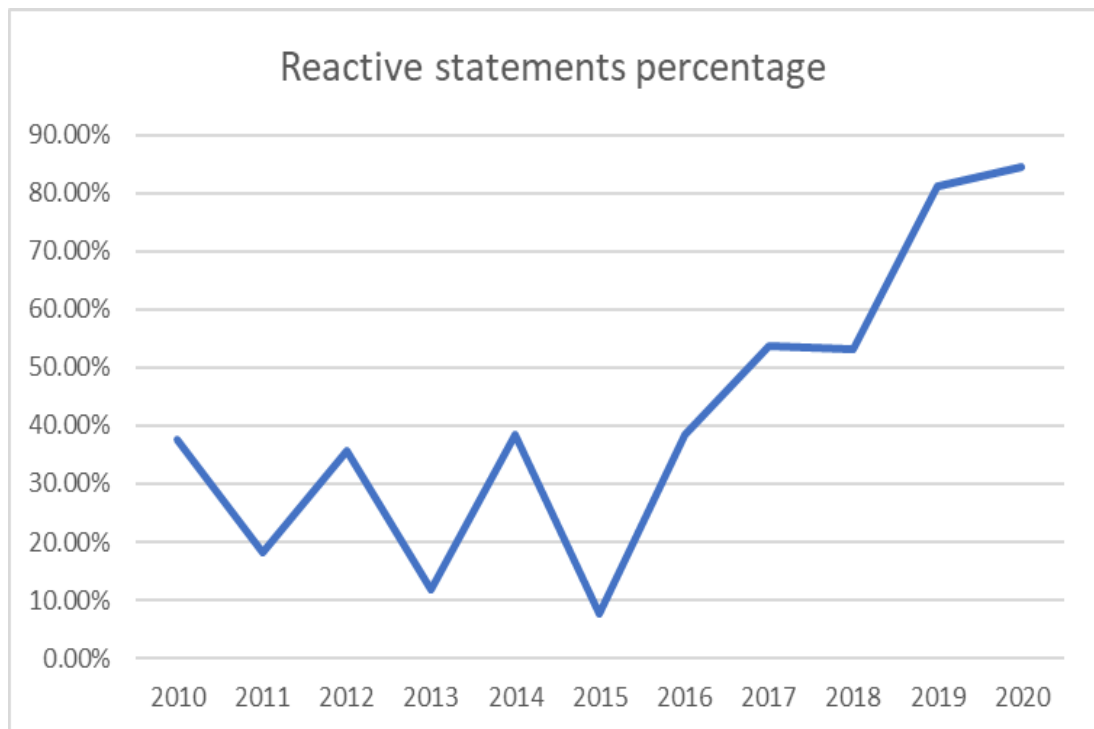


Figure-7: Percentage of reactionary the US-related statements by years (Source: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official Website)

With the skyrocketing of the reactive statements and disappearing of neutral releases, the room for constructive elements have been significantly narrowed down. The statements with positive connotations have been in a constant downward spiral with the exception of 2015 during when over 60% of written statements were of constructive nature. Apart from such rare and mostly small increases, the share of constructive elements has dropped from 38% at the beginning of the decade to 15% in 2020. The year 2019 was remarkable in terms of the low share of constructive statements which stand just above 10%. As expected, this year also represents the higher share of QAs when it comes to the statements related to the Turkish-US relations.

A careful examination and coding of the written statement of the Turkish Foreign Ministry with respect to the United States reveals two points. The statements in the last decade started to rely on polarized language more and more. This trend is also evident by the increase in the share of non-neutral QAs, which is parallel trend observable in the overall statements of the Ministry. Secondly, the polarization became highly skewed towards reactionary end of the spectrum especially after 2017. Despite the uptick in 2016, this figure was within the bounds of past observations. However, after 2017, the share of reactive statements has reached to extreme level and became the dominant form of discourse.

CHAPTER 6:

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

NOT ONLY THE MERE NUMBERS? THE CHANGE OF TONE AND DISCOURSE

As pointed out, the numbers outline a convincing theory regarding the change of institutional attitude of Turkish Foreign Ministry vis-à-vis the US. However, for a better substantiation of the argument, a closer and a critical look into the text and context of the individual statements is essential. Such a complementary examination would also have the potential to highlight the gradual changes that may be overseen in a quantitative analysis. Such a critical and qualitative analysis of the discourse would enable a better appreciation of the sensitivities of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs especially in the post-2016 period during which the number of statements remarkably started to diverge from the earlier periods.

Qualitative analysis would be conducted mostly in a comparative fashion putting together the topical texts from earlier periods with the post 2016. It would give a better understanding how the same issues are differently addressed by the Turkish Foreign Ministry over the years. In this genre, the handling of routine statements on bilateral visits and other mundane events will shed light on the general change of attitude of the Ministry. This analysis would also facilitate which issues are included in and which ones are excluded from the discursive portfolio of the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

6.1 Changing tone in neutral statements

As mentioned, the Ministry often announces ministerial and high-level visits through press statements. Most of these announcements, exclusively in the form of press statement with one notable exception, are labeled as neutral due to their tone and context in the quantitative section. However, a closer examination gives hints regarding the subtle and gradual change in the discourse which is related to the overall atmosphere the Turkish-American relations.

At the outset, one quantitative issue of interest should be handled before going into the purely qualitative examination. The word count in the announcement of every subsequent ministerial level meeting kept decreasing throughout the decade. While the statement on the visit of Secretary Clinton in 2011³ was composed of 166 words, the last press statement on the visit of Secretary Pompeo⁴ only contained 57 words. This could be easily construed as a signal of the Ministry willingness to brush up the announcements and even cut out the parts that could give visits a higher publicity such as other high-level meetings.

In 2011, Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of the State at the time, was scheduled to visit Turkey in the framework of a meeting of the Contact Group on Libya. Despite the visit being part of a multilateral gathering, the ministry put out a press statement emphasizing the invitation of the minister extended before the visit and the additional meetings the Secretary will be having with the President and the prime minister. Apart from this instance, the US Secretaries of State had almost regular audiences with the president and the prime Minister, depending on their availability, and such items remained part of the official press statements in a bigger chunk of the decade.

³ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No:161, 8 July 2011

⁴ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 275, 17 October 2018

This particular statement also had a unique paragraph that delves into the nature of the relations between Turkey and the US in its last section which reads as

‘... Turkey and the United States are two friendly and allied countries. Intensive contacts that behoves the concept of Model Partnership are being conducted at all levels. During Mrs. Clinton's visit, bilateral relations as well as some global and regional issues which figure on our common agenda are expected to be reviewed’.

The paragraph is striking for two main reasons. First, in none of the press issuing of the decade there exists such a section even when the visit is purely of bilateral nature and the US Secretary of State was expected to be received by the President and the Prime Minister. Secondly, the statement refers to the specific phrase of ‘model partnership’, a term coined by President Obama to reflect the nature of relationship between two countries in his first trip overseas. Emphasis on the term could be understand as another manifestation of the effort by Turkish Foreign Ministry in order align the terminologies even in the seemingly negligible announcement of a ministerial visit.

The statement on the visit of Secretary Clinton represents a good case of comparison with the announcement of the visit then Minister Davutoglu a few months later in February 2012. In this statement, the reference for model partnership and alliance have already been dropped, even in the absence of a particularly challenging issue in terms of bilateral relations and it merely states that

‘... meetings ... will provide an opportunity for exchanging views on bilateral, regional and global issues of interest to both countries’.

On the other hand, in linguistical terms there is still an effort by the Turkish Foreign Ministry in order to adopt and reflect an affinity with the U.S public. The statement reads

‘...H.E. Mr. Davutoğlu will also have meetings on the Hill’

when referring to the minister's visit with the American lawmakers. In an official announcement by an institutional body such the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is expected that the official names of the institutions, the United States Congress, to be used rather than the terminology mostly used by the news outlets and Washington DC insiders, the Hill. A comparable equivalent of this utilization would most probably take the form in a US statement if it refers to Secretary will have a meeting in 'Cankaya', a neighborhood which is home the previous presidential residences.

In the second term of President Obama, his new Secretary of State, John Kerry became a frequent visitor to Turkey partly due to loaded agenda on Syria and partly due to a number of multilateral meetings. In each statement released on the occasion of his visits to Turkey, there was a reference to his meetings with the Prime Minister and the President followed by almost standard expression on the expected content of the meetings⁵. These meetings with the President and the Prime Minister remained on the itinerary during the visit of Secretary Tillerson in the early period of the Trump administration. In a similar fashion, Secretary Pompeo met with President Erdogan in his visit on 17 October 2018⁶. However, this meeting was uniquely dropped from the official announcement by the Foreign Ministry.

A more telling situation has emerged when Secretary Pompeo visited Turkey during the last days of the Trump administration and his tenure. On the occasion of this visit, the ministry has refrained from putting a press statement, a more elevated from of public communication material. Rather the spokesperson announced and simultaneously responded to the official release of the US Department of State

⁵ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 49, 28 February 2013, No: 97, 5 April 2013, No: 291, 11 September 2014

⁶ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 275, 17 October 2018

through a QA loaded with reactionary terminology and sentiment⁷. In the statement, no reference has been made to the meetings of Secretary Pompeo with Turkish officials or his counterpart.

In its public agenda, the visit was focused on religious freedom issues and included a politically sensitive meeting with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Fener in Istanbul. Having been irritated enough, the ministry reacted to the press release of the Department of State by underlining that

‘It would be more suitable for the U.S. to first look in the mirror and show the requisite sensitivity towards human rights violations in the country such as racism, Islamophobia and hate crimes’.

And such use of terminology was one of the reasons that, despite the existence of neutral-prone events like a ministerial visit, there were no constructive statements in 2020. Even such incidents were, for some reason or another, were contextualized in a way to give a negative spin on the press statements.

The change of tone in the nature of neutral statements was not limited to the ministerial visits alone. The Turkish Foreign Ministry regularly released press statements or QAs following terrorist attacks or shooting incidents that took place in the United States or that affected American personnel, citizens or facilities such as diplomatic missions. In a similar fashion to the statements dealing with ministerial visits, the content of this genre of press releases narrowed down and their sentiment took a less emphatical turn as the statements in the beginning and the end of the decade are compared. In this context, it should be underlined that the ministry has produced almost identical statements when it comes to homicide shootings in the US, with the exception of Las Vegas shooting in 2017 during which a special reference

⁷ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-108, 11 November 2020

was made to the possibility of Turkish citizens being deceased or injured and to the solidarity with US and American people⁸.

The ministry put out a statement in 2010 following an attack on a USAID office in Afghanistan by which the grief of the families who lost their loved ones has been shared and the dangers posed by the attacks against the stability and security of Afghanistan has been underlined⁹. Two years later, following the terrorist attack on the US Consulate in Benghazi, Turkish Foreign Ministry has released a highly empathetic statement condemning the attack and extending condolences to the families of the victims, chief among them is Ambassador Christopher Stevens¹⁰. While doing so, the ministry made a concerted effort to harmonize the previous attacks on Turkish diplomats with the incident and stated that

‘As a country that had lost many of its diplomats in terrorist attacks, we are awaiting for the perpetrators of this attack, which targeted an Ambassador who is under the protection of the international law, to be brought to justice as soon as possible’.

In 2013, when the US Embassy in Ankara was targeted and a Turkish security personnel lost his life, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a similar statement with detailed content and emphasized the need for common struggle against terrorist threats¹¹.

However, in 2015, a much shorter statement was deemed sufficient when the US Consulate in Istanbul was targeted¹². In this instance the ministry, rather than putting emphasis on common values and past experience, briefly stated that Turkey has increased the security measures for the mission and will continue its common struggle against terrorism. Three years later, following another attack on the US

⁸Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 303, 2 October 2017

⁹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No:150, 02 July 2010

¹⁰ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 215, 12 September 2012

¹¹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 26, 1 February 2013

¹² Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 228, 10 August 2015

Embassy in Ankara, even a shorter statement, in the form of a QA¹³, has been released and the main emphasis was put on the investigations to capture the perpetrators. In later years, a number of US installations were targeted in a number of countries, most notably in Iraq, and such incidents went unnoticed in the written public statements.

It is safe to argue that even the most regular statements of neutral tone have been affected from the general atmosphere of Turkish-American relations. Ministerial visits, normally seen as opportunities of public diplomacy and image posturing, started to be given less space and publicity and ultimately became the subject of outright reactionary statements especially after 2016. Albeit in a lesser degree, a similar trend is also observable when it comes to attacks on US diplomatic missions and facilities. However, it will be an overstretch to argue that this became an institutional norm immune from any changes, as any warming up of rhetoric by the Turkish Foreign Ministry could be expected to start with neutral statements rather than a wholesome change in deeply entrenched reactionary statement.

6.2 Withering away of rare positive elements

Since the end of the Second World War, the relations between Turkey and the US have gained a multifaceted nature with various cooperation mechanisms were put in place to cover various fields such as commerce and defense industry. Such mechanisms are generally handled by the bureaucratic cadres of two countries meeting on regular intervals in order to monitor the progress and negotiate issues of common interests.

¹³ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-59, 20 August 2018

One such mechanism was the Economic Partnership Commission established in 2002. It was generally co-chaired by a Deputy Undersecretary or a Director General from the Foreign Office on the Turkish side and by an Assistant Secretary of State on the American side. The meetings of the commission have been regularly announced with a written press statement by the Turkish Foreign Ministry between 2011 and 2015¹⁴. These statements are generally of neutral tone but at the same time carry a positive agenda of improving the commercial relations between two countries as they stated

‘... creating new areas of cooperation such as contributing to the establishment of Istanbul as a global financial center will be on the agenda of the meeting’.

The statements also included a standard line regarding the commission’s work being important for future work of ‘Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation (FSECC) which was established in 2009 with a view to developing economic and commercial relations between Turkey and the United States’. In 2015, the last statement on the Economic Partnership Commission released by the Ministry, this reference has been dropped off. More strikingly, since 2015, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has stopped releasing statements on the workings of the commission and eliminated a constructive element from its overall discourse.

A similar yet slightly different story can be told about the Turkey-U.S. Defense Industry Trade Dialogue meetings. The program, launched initially in 2014, was meant to promote trade in military industries domain by bringing high-level bureaucrats from both sides. Turkish Foreign Ministry was not very eager to publicize these meetings till 2018. However, at the peak of crisis due to Turkey’s acquisition of Russian made S-400 missiles, the ministry put out statement

¹⁴ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No:221, 30 September 2011, No: 272, 26 November 2012, No: 146, 22 May 2013, No: 50, 06 February 2015

announcing that the 5th session of the program is expected to be held in Ankara on March 2018¹⁵.

The statement is revealing in terms of the overall discourse of the ministry on Turkish-American relations on two accounts. First, it clearly shows that Turkish Foreign Ministry is pragmatic enough to use previously unnoticed occasions when the political atmosphere necessitated such course. This is mainly due to the fact that previous meetings went unnoticed while the 5th one was dedicated with a press statement containing constructive elements such as

‘Participants reaffirmed the commitment of Turkey and the United States to address shared security and defense trade goals for the benefit of each nation, and discussed current developments in the Turkish-U.S. defense industry, possibilities for cooperation between the two countries, and potential joint undertakings’

Secondly, even after such positive spin on the 5th meeting, the ministry was flexible enough to drop this item from the overall discourse in the coming years as none of the subsequent meetings, if any, were announced either by a press statement or a QA.

One additional contextualization could be made when it comes to phone conversations at the ministerial level. As a unique incident, Turkish Foreign Ministry has released a QA form statement on 29 March 2010 detailing the contents of the phone conversation between Minister Davutoglu and Secretary Clinton¹⁶. The statement is unique because in the rest of the decade no such release, press statement or QA, has been made regarding the phone conversations at this level. Rather such occasions are announced as simple news items mostly through social media channels.

¹⁵ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 95, 30 March 2018

¹⁶ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA:13, 29 March 2010

In this one-of-a-kind statement, the ministry was sensitive enough to underline that this conversation took place at the initiative of the American side. In order to further pin the importance attached to Turkey, it also makes a special reference to conversation's duration which was approximately one hour. While handling a number of highly sensitive issues such as resolution in the Foreign Relations Committee of the US House of Representatives, the closing part of the statement is dedicated to a possible visit of Prime Minister Erdogan to Washington DC. According to the statement Minister Davutoglu remained non-committal when Secretary Clinton

‘...underlined that Prime Minister Erdoğan’s participation in the International Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Washington on 12-13 April 2010 carried great importance in every respect and reminded that they expect Prime Minister Erdoğan in Washington’.

This particular item is revealing in the sense that Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was more than willing to highlight the close relations with the US even in the context of a phone conversation. However, such conversation remained out of the official discourse in the coming years and replaced with reactionary statements regarding to content of bilateral meetings.

In 2019, after the bilateral meeting between Minister Cavusoglu and Secretary Pompeo, the US State Department released a readout regarding the issues discussed during the meeting. Following this statement, Turkish Foreign Ministry was quick to put its own¹⁷ and underline that

‘The readout published today by the Department of State and obviously prepared before the meeting ... not only fails to reflect the content of the meeting, but also contains matters that were not even raised during the said meeting ... Our alliance naturally requires that such statements are prepared with greater care, while avoiding to include matters that were not raised during meetings’.

¹⁷ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-23, 4 April 2019

6.3 Constructive only on peripheral issues?

Despite the erosion in terms of the tone of statements on bilateral visits, mutual cooperation and solidarity, there were occasions in which a more constructive attitude has prevailed. Most of such issues has remained peripheral to bilateral relations despite their changing urgency and toxic potential for Turkey-US relations. Even when these peripheral issues are concerned, it is possible to observe a deterioration in terms of the constructive tone in the statements.

One relatively stable topic when it comes to the tone of general discourse is the North Korea and its nuclear activities. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was sensitive to any nuclear activity by North Korea and issued regular statements of condemnation after such incidents¹⁸. In statements covering North Korean long range missile tests or other nuclear activities, Turkish Foreign Ministry consistently referred to the US-led Six Party Talks or direct US talks with North Korea. When the talks bore fruit and a settlement was reached in 2018 in a bilateral summit, the ministry commended the agreement by stating that

‘...the decisions and commitments made during the Summit and regard them as a milestone in the diplomatic process, which has been going on since early this year’.

The ministry also emphasized its historical ties to the region in a reference to the participation of Turkish Armed Forces in the Korean War before full membership to NATO. Turkish Foreign Ministry was also quick to react when North Korea decided to pull out from the agreement through a QA issued by the spokesperson. Overall, the discourse on North Korea and its nuclear activities, a peripheral issue for Turkey at best, carried a constructive tone as far as the Turkish-American relations are concerned.

¹⁸ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 70, 03 March 2012, No: 287, 12 December 2012, No: 281, 4 December 2012, No: 166, 12 June 2018

Another peripherally constructive dynamic could also be observed in the context of the negotiations between the Taliban and the US. First, the ministry issued a constructive statement regarding the understanding of a reduction in violence between the two parties and encouraged them to fully adhere to the terms of the agreement¹⁹. Subsequently, Turkish Foreign Minister personally attended the ceremony for the signing of the agreement and the ministry released another statement to announce this visit²⁰.

In a similar fashion to the US talks with the Taliban, Turkey was enthusiastic about the changing American policy on Sudan. In 2017, Turkish Foreign Ministry welcomed the US announcement regarding the revocation of sanctions. The release²¹ stated that

‘We welcome this development that constitutes a turning point in US-Sudanese bilateral relations ... Turkey stands ready to contribute to the normalization process of US-Sudanese relations to the best of its ability’.

Following the removal of Sudan from the list of State Sponsor of Terrorism, the ministry put another supporting statement and underlined Turkey’s strong ‘desire’ for such an outcome²².

Another issue which was more geographically closer and more urgent was the nuclear activities of Iran. In the last decade, the issue remained high on the agenda and became an important part of the Turkish-American relations. In the beginning of the decade, Turkish foreign policy adopted a proactive approach to the issue and hosted several meetings between Iran and P5+1 countries as a facilitator. Turkey also conducted its separate line of diplomacy with Brazil and concluded a deal in 2010.

¹⁹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 54, 22 February 2020

²⁰ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 59, 28 February 2020

²¹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 310, 8 October 2017

²² Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-121, 17 December 2020

Despite the occasional bumps in this process, the official press statements carried a constructive tone with respect to relations with the US as they generally gave precedence to the US-led talks. Even when Turkey reached an agreement with Iran, the ministry was careful enough to refer that

‘... implementation of this agreement will be subject to arrangements to be determined between Iran on the one hand and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), USA, the Russian Federation and France on the other’²³

Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs kept issuing regular statements even when the talks resumed without Turkey’s facilitation. The ministry released several statements emphasizing its positive attitude towards the deal struck between the US and Iran while underlining its previous efforts for a negotiated settlement. Following the years-long diplomacy and the ultimate settlement, it could be expected that Turkey would adopt a harsher stance when President Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the agreement and put a sanctions regime back in place. The ministry reacted to this development as an ‘unfortunate step’ by the US and kept its emphasis on diplomatic means²⁴. Despite some disagreements in the process, Turkey, overall, adopted a constructive discourse vis-à-vis the US on Iranian nuclear activities and consciously tried to avoid any reactionary language in its written statements.

To a lesser extent, the events in Syria also responded with a similar discursive practice by Turkish Foreign Ministry especially in its early years. Both countries adopted a similar stance in terms of the political future of President Assad and they coordinated their policies through bilateral channels as well as multilateral fora. However, this positive trajectory distracted by the increased reliance of the US on PYD forces to counter ISIL and Turkey’s objection to this cooperation as it sees

²³ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 101, 17 May 2010

²⁴ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 129, 8 May 2018

PYD as an extension of PKK, recognized as a terrorist organization by both countries.

Despite the subsequent disagreement, the events in Syria propelled a constructive discourse by Turkish Foreign Ministry. Even after the strengthening of cooperation between the US and PYD, Turkey was able to partly align its goals with the US. For example, the ministry issued an almost congratulatory statement²⁵ after the US, the UK and France launched attacks on certain targets in Syria. The statement was read as

‘Turkey considers the operation carried out early this morning by the United States, United Kingdom and France to be an appropriate response to the chemical attack which caused the deaths of many civilians in Douma on 7 April. We welcome this operation which has eased humanity’s conscience in the face of the attack in Douma, largely suspected to have been carried out by the regime’.

The ministry also released constructive statements when the US helped with augmenting the air defense capabilities of Turkey by positioning Patriot missile against threats from Syria²⁶. In a similar vein, Turkey and US joint strikes on ISIL targets brought along constructive statements²⁷. The ministry also issued constructive statements on several US-led initiatives such as deconfliction mechanism with Russia or other targeted attacks on Syrian regime targets²⁸.

In addition to these sporadic events, the US and Turkey held several meetings even after 2016 and produced written documents that could be largely labeled as constructive. Even as late as 2018, the joint declaration by two countries iterated that

‘... Turkey and the United States share a commitment to address effectively the security concerns of both countries consistent with their obligations to one another as allies and

²⁵ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 105, 14 April 2018

²⁶ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 2, 7 January 2013

²⁷ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 239, 29 August 2015

²⁸ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 245, 14 September 2013, No:107, 7 April 2017

‘look forward to continued progress on issues of mutual interest regarding the ongoing crisis in Syria’²⁹.

The ministry also shared the joint declaration by Minister Cavusoglu and Secretary Pompeo, with constructive elements, as a press statement. Setting aside highly conflictual issue of collaboration between the US and PYD, the events in Syria, especially in their early phases, brought Turkey and the US closer. Therefore, a number of constructive statements were produced by Turkish Foreign Ministry even during the overall discourse turned sour.

Overall, Turkey tried to adopt a constructive discourse as much as possible when it comes to the issues not related to bilateral relations or politically sensitive issues. The ministry was keen on releasing regular statement supporting US initiatives and emphasizing the contributions made by Turkey or the historical ties of the country to the issue depending on the occasion. However, the closer the issue gets geographically and politically to bilateral relations, the harder it got to sustain the constructive discourse as in the case of events in Syria.

6.4 Different rhetoric for similar events

In its war against terrorism, especially after September 11 attacks, the US placed a special importance on eliminating the ringleaders of terrorist groups. Under some certain circumstances, the US definition terrorist groups and their leadership differed from Turkey. American military and intelligence organizations undertook operations to kill Usama Bin Laden, leader of Al-Qaeda, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of ISIL and Qassem Soleimani, Head of the Quds Force of Iran at different times. The latter’s position was controversial as the unit Soleimani was heading was part of the

²⁹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 330, 7 December 2018

Iranian Armed Forces and Soleimani was high-level military figure of a recognized state. Nonetheless, the US designated him as a terrorist leader through unilateral action.

Following each US operation, Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a statement in order to clarify its position. The statement after the killing of Usama Bin Laden was of unequivocal support³⁰. The ministry also underlined the losses Turkey has suffered due to Al-Qaeda attacks in 2003 and renewed its determination for a common fight against terrorism. On the other hand, when Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was killed in 2018, Turkish statement became considerably wry as it took the form of a QA rather than a formal press statement³¹. In this QA, there were no references to the US but only to the Global Coalition Against ISIL. Despite strong support for the elimination of this terrorist leader, Turkish Foreign Ministry also could not keep itself from adding a paragraph that makes reference to PYD, possibly with a view to underlining that its possible future actions against this group would fall under the same category. The operation against Qassem Soleimani was a different story for Turkey both geopolitically and discursively. The press statement³² by the ministry neither welcomed nor condemned the killing of the Iranian commander. It vaguely expressed an opposition to the operation while listing other items as it stated

‘Turkey has always been against foreign interventions, assassinations and sectarian conflicts in the region’.

However, the statement carried a more precise language on the impact on the killing in terms of regional security and stability. In this context, Turkish Foreign Ministry of Foreign Affairs made every possible effort to indicate its opposition to the operation while refraining from any direct condemnation.

³⁰ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No:118, 2 May 2011

³¹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-67, 27 October 2019

³² Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 2, 3 January 2020

Overall, it could be easily argued that the ministry became less enthusiastic about the operations against the US designated terrorist leaders. In two very similar contexts of Bin Laden and Baghdadi, Turkish Foreign Ministry released two different type statement with noticeable tone differences and references. In the case of Soleimani, the ministry put considerable effort to give a reactionary tone without necessarily resorting to a purely reactionary terminology.

6.5 Change of tone in traditionally reactive statements

One of the chronic points of tension in Turkish-American relations have been the political and legal battle fought around the 1915 incidents. Highly influential Armenian lobby groups in the US put pressure on executive and legislative bodies to recognize these events as a genocide. Turkey, on the other hand, tried to leverage its geopolitical importance and, up to certain extent, other friendly lobby groups to prevent such an outcome. The main battlefield for these two groups became the annual Presidential statements released by the White House. Trying not to alienate both sides, US Presidents from both major parties have tried to strike a different balance through carefully crafted statements that traditionally avoids the use of the keyword ‘genocide’ but refer to events as genocidal in every other way.

In the immediate aftermath of the Presidential statement coming from the US, Turkish Foreign Ministry puts out a counter press release to express its disappointment or regrets regarding the one-sided statement which distorts the historical facts. Despite changing Presidents and their nuanced approaches to the issue, Turkish Foreign Ministry continued to release same kind of reactionary statements with similar contents and linguistic features with one notable exception in the first half of the decade.

The ministry refrained from issuing such a statement in 2014, a year of unprecedented initiatives to resolve the conflict between Turkey and Armenia. With a view to not distracting the positive atmosphere, Turkish Foreign Ministry decided to ignore the annual statement published by President Obama and tried to turn its focus on the positive momentum created by the protocols signed between Turkey and Armenia. Much like the case with the Defense Industry Trade Dialogue meetings, the ministry showed its flexibility to step out from its institutional norms and soften its discourse when the conditions are favorable.

Centennial of the 1915 incidents was also another critical year in terms of the battle fought around the Presidential statements as it was seen one of the last and best opportunities for President Obama, who had previously acknowledged the events as genocide during his presidential campaign, to get his views under record as a sitting President. However, President Obama decided to remain attached to his traditional wording and used the Armenian idiom ‘the Meds Yeghern’ to define the events while making references to its genocidal characters. Turkish Foreign Ministry, turning back to its institutional norms, quickly released its classic rebuttal³³ with heavy emphasis on the initiative to resolve the issues by Turkish leaders and urged that

‘Each country that makes a just contribution toward the path of reconciliation between Turks and Armenians will take its place in history as a partner in this “project of friendship”. In this regard, it is clear that the role of friends and allies carry particular importance’.

In the last year of President Obama and the whole tenure of President Trump, the White House issued statements that avoids using the term ‘genocide’. Turkish Foreign Ministry continued with its counter statements mimicking the earlier versions with small additions such as the sufferings of Muslim and Turkish populations during the same time frame. Despite being out of the time horizon of the

³³ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 131, 24 April 2015

quantitative research, an important break was reached when the newly sworn in President Biden decided to use the term in his first 24 April statement. As can be expected, the ministry went nuclear in the face of this much feared endgame and was quick to issue a highly reactionary statement³⁴ with a loaded content saying that

‘We reject and denounce in the strongest terms the statement of the President of the US regarding the events of 1915 made under the pressure of radical Armenian circles and anti-Turkey groups on 24 April. the statement made by the President of the US, who is neither legally nor morally authorized to judge historical matters, has no value’.

The press release also went on the demand a correction from the President for the first time in the context of such statements when the ministry underline that

‘...the US President's statement will not yield any results other than polarizing the nations and hindering peace and stability in our region ... We call on the US President to correct this grave mistake...’.

However, Turkish Foreign Ministry was also careful enough not to include the seemingly comparable events in American history in its statement, while it showed no such reservations when similar statements came from countries such Russia, France or Germany³⁵.

A journey through the categorically reactionary statements of the Turkish Ministry on the occasion of US Presidential statements regarding the 1915 events reveals two important points. First, even when the reactionary statements are highly institutionalized and became an almost reflex when triggered, they are in no way irreplaceable as seen in the year of 2014. Secondly, even after occasional and intentional skipping of such statements, the ministry was quickly able to return back to its default settings once the conditions went back to normal and it was ready to take things further when the situation dictated.

³⁴ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 160, 24 April 2021

³⁵ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 130, 24 April 2015, No: 132, 24 April 2015, No: 129, 24 April 2015

6.6 Reactive agenda resulting in a reactive discourse

As mentioned, despite the events in Syria emerging as a temporary issue of constructive discourse, the tension continued to build up around the US support for YPG which is seen as a terrorist organization by Turkey. Ultimately, Turkey has decided to undertake several cross-border operations in North Syria with a view to curbing the increasing influence of this group. The operations and the news reports and statements by the US officials remained a point of contention especially in the second half of the decade. This issue became a fixed notion of a diverse range US related statement giving even neutral statements a reactive twist. Therefore, it was also one of the main drivers of the quantitative increase in the reactionary statements. The YPG issue first appeared in a QA³⁶ in the context of the Operations Euphrates Shield when the spokesperson reminded the US of its commitments for the withdrawal of the YPG forces from the west of Euphrates River. The statement also included the reactionary response from the ministry with respect to the statements by US officials as it underlined that

‘... the necessary demarche with the US Ambassador in Ankara has been made at a high level and we emphasized that such statements are not in conformity with the code among allies and cannot be acceptable in any way’.

The subsequent statements given by US officials regarding the US relations with YPG and Turkey’s position on Northern Syria remained a source of reactionary discourse. Spokesperson of the Turkish Foreign Ministry regularly issued QAs following statements by US officials such as Spokespeople of State Department and Department of Defense as well as US Special Envoys, National Security Adviser, and cabinet level officials.

³⁶ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-31, 30 August 2016

The issue was toxic enough to turn the neutral or constructive statements into reactionary ones. The announcement of the visit by a deputy minister to Washington DC in 2018 was heavily affected by the YPG as Turkey puts its opposition to US engagement with the group on record and demanded the ending of this support³⁷. In March 2019, Turkey welcomed the continuation of the listing of PKK as a designated terrorist organization but also underlined that its expectation to designate YPG as a terrorist group as well³⁸.

Discursive tensions around the issue became more apparent following the decision of Turkey to establish a safe zone, an idea strongly opposed by the US. Turkey, without naming any particular official, issued a statement³⁹ and blamed the US for not being able to jointly implement the safe zone measures and expressed that

‘We are at a point where the commitments of the US military authorities have not been fulfilled. During the course of the talks, the US security bureaucracy has intensified its engagement with the PYD/YPG terrorist organization which keeps the east of Euphrates under occupation, and acted in a way which is incompatible with its existing Allied relationship with Turkey, let alone putting an end to this engagement’.

Taking the reactionary tone of the statement even to a higher level, the ministry also underlined that the same concerns are also conveyed at a presidential level.

The ministry issued statement⁴⁰ with similar tones when the news reports regarding the plans for the establishment of an YPG-led ‘Syrian Border Security Force’ have surfaced. The ministry also did not hesitate to put details of its diplomatic engagements into written statements as to emphasize its determination to oppose such initiatives. The tensions around the issue culminated into an episode where Turkey almost accused the US of financing terrorism upon press reports on a

³⁷ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 294, 3 November 2018

³⁸ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-10, 2 March 2019

³⁹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-59, 7 October 2019

⁴⁰ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 15, 14 January 2018

possible oil deal between a US based company and YPG. While blaming YPG for its separatist intentions, the ministry focused its statement⁴¹ on the US and communicated in rarely observable reactionary language that

‘We deeply regret the US support to this step, disregarding international law, violating territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of Syria, as well as being considered within the scope of financing terrorism. This act, which cannot be justified by any legitimate motive, is utterly unacceptable’.

Apart from the more consistent issues of tension, such as YPG or the 1915 incidents, the Turkish foreign policy discourse was also affected by events such the relocation of the US Embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the clashes between Turkish security officials with protestor during a visit of President Erdogan in 2017, events in Venezuela, legal lawsuits against a Turkish state bank and the case of human rights advocates in Turkey. Each of the events paved the way for a more reactionary language by Turkish Foreign Ministry and such features became deeply entrenched in its institutional vocabulary.

In the first half of the decade, Israeli-Palestinian conflict was a source of constructive rhetoric. Turkish Foreign Ministry regularly issued supporting statements on possible resumption of talks at the initiative of the US⁴². However, during the Trump Administration the position of the US changed dramatically. This triggered a similar change in Turkish rhetoric. In 2017, the ministry strongly opposed to the US announcement that recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and its decision to move the embassy from Tel Aviv. The statement⁴³ stated that

‘We condemn the irresponsible statement of the US Administration that we learnt with great concern, declaring that it recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and it will be moving the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem’.

⁴¹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 159, 3 August 2020

⁴² Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 222, 12 August 2013

⁴³ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 378, 6 December 2017

The subsequent moves by the US, such as blocking a UN resolution on Jerusalem or encouraging other friendly countries to move their embassies in parallel fashion, have drawn similar reactions from Turkish Foreign Ministry and turned the issue into another source of reactionary discourse. The Ministry blamed the US trying to buy off the Palestinian land and people and underlined its dismay with the US policies by saying that

‘The so-called US peace plan is stillborn. This is an annexation plan aiming to destroy the two-state solution and seize the Palestinian territories. The people and the land of Palestine cannot be bought off. Jerusalem is our red line. We will not allow any step seeking to legitimize Israel’s occupation and atrocities’⁴⁴.

Such increased tension also led to resurfacing of some of the problems that used to be handled such Turkey’s relations with Hamas, a group officially designated as a terrorist entity by the US. Turkey put out a harsh press statement⁴⁵, after the meeting of President Erdogan with Hamas leaders were criticized by the State Department spokesperson and stated that

‘Today, the Spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State has released an impertinent statement regarding the meeting of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with the Hamas representatives. We fully reject this statement. ... Moreover, a country which openly supports the PKK, that features on their list of terrorist organizations and hosts the ringleader of the FETO has no right whatsoever to say anything to third countries on this subject’.

In addition to this growing tension around the issue of Jerusalem and Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a less expected source conflict emerged when the protests against Maduro government started in Venezuela. While the US was firmly behind the opposition, Turkey chose to side with Maduro and preferred to do so in a very public fashion. Turkish Foreign Ministry first reacted against the statements s by

⁴⁴ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 28, 28 January 2020

⁴⁵ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 181, 25 August 2020

Elliott Abrams, US Special Representative for Venezuela⁴⁶ and then went on the record to say that

‘Turkey is against attempts to replace legitimate governments through foreign intervention and by resorting to undemocratic means’

Later on Turkey also put a statement against the US decision to block the properties of Government of Venezuela and underlined that it would hinder the talks and negatively affect the people of Venezuela⁴⁷.

Another point of tension has emerged when there was clash between the protestors and Turkish security officials during a visit of President Erdogan. The ministry summoned the US Ambassador and lodged a formal complaint regarding the misbehavior and unfit security measures during the visit while demanding a full investigation⁴⁸. On the other hand, the atmosphere in the US was contrary to the understanding of the US and a formal criminal investigation has been opened up against the security personnel involved in the incident. Furthermore, the incident also became the subject of a number of congressional acts which triggered a counter statement by the ministry⁴⁹. This added another item to the already long list of sources for reactionary rhetoric in terms of Turkish-American relations.

Apart from these political issues, legal cases also became platforms for reactionary rhetoric. The case against one of the biggest state-owned banks, Halkbank, in Turkey and one of its top executives, Deputy Director Hakan Atilla, took the shape of years-long judicial battle. Despite the case being under the purview of the US judiciary, the context was highly political. Turkey, from the beginning, argued that the case is based on forged evidence provided by FETO members, a terrorist organization for

⁴⁶ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-19, 29 March 2019

⁴⁷ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-51, 9 August 2019

⁴⁸ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 151, 22 May 2017

⁴⁹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 189, 15 June 2017

Turkey as the main culprit of 15 July coup attempt. In its statement⁵⁰, the ministry argued that the US is providing logistical and financial support to this terrorist group. It questioned the reliability of trial by stating that

‘... the credibility of the trial has vanished, since some members of the Fetullahist Terrorist Organization (FETO), who received financial and logistical support from the US, were granted the opportunity to make unsubstantiated allegations and provide fabricated evidence to the court ...’.

After repeating the reactionary language in a subsequent statement following the sentencing, the ministry used the case of Hakan Atilla in other occasions as well. When the case for the release Osman Kavala, a human right activist and philanthropist jailed despite rulings by European Court of Human Rights, was raised by the State Department, Turkish Foreign Ministry, after demanding respect for the ongoing judicial process, expressed that

‘... It is paradoxical for those who have used legal proceedings as an excuse when it comes to the extradition of the FETÖ ringleader, and kept Deputy Director General of Halkbank, Hakan Atilla in detention for months before initiating a judicial process, to interfere in an ongoing case in Turkey’⁵¹.

6.7 War of attrition

Various US agencies, most notably Department of State, prepare and publish annual reports on topical issues like human rights, religious freedoms or human trafficking. The reports outline the conditions in a specific country with respect to the issue and occasionally involves recommendations. A canvassing of the statements released by Turkish Foreign Ministry clearly shows that there was a change of discursive policy

⁵⁰ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 4, 4 January 2018

⁵¹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-70, 28 July 2020

vis-à-vis such reports especially after 2017. It is obvious that the ministry took a firm stance for not letting any of such reports going unanswered. The response of the ministry usually took the form a QA type statement detailing how the report is biased against Turkey and included a reactionary terminology. Several annual reports get a special coverage in the statement of Turkish Foreign Ministry, namely the report of U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Human Rights Report, Terrorism Report and International Religious Freedom Report of the US Department of State.

The ministry objections to the International Religious Freedom Report of the US Department of State revolves around its lack of recognition of FETO as a terrorist organization and hosting its ringleader. The statement in 2019⁵² reads as

‘It is a very telling example of hypocritical approach for a country who pretends to be the defender of democracy in the world to define those behind the coup attempt against an ally democracy as innocent religious cleric’.

This particular statement also details the case of Pastor Brunson, an issue of grave tensions between two countries, and underlines that he was not charged due to his religious belief but because of his affiliation with terrorism. In a further attempt to cement the reactionary language, the ministry expresses that

‘The fact that the US Department of State does not bring forward a single criticism about Israel's aggression towards Haram al-Sharif, one of Islam's holiest sites of worship, in the chapter on Israel of the same report while presenting the reaction in our country against Israel's killings of dozens of Muslims in Gaza last year as "anti-Semitic rhetoric" reveals the frivolous nature of the report’.

In 2020, the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque became a more pressing concern in the context of the report. While dropping references related to FETO, Turkish Foreign Ministry underlined that Hagia Sophia is a property of the Turkish

⁵² Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement International Religious Freedom Report

State and the decision regarding its status is not matter other states can have a say⁵³.

The ministry also responded with a separate statement when the Department of State released a press issue airing its concern regarding the future preservation of Hagia Sophia⁵⁴.

Issues pertaining to religious freedom was also raised and responded with a reactionary language in the context of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Report. Much like the report of the State Department, the reaction of Turkey was focused around FETO-related issues and labeling of its leader as a US-based cleric. The ministry accused the report of condoning terrorism and directed a criticism against the US for not fighting with Islamophobia and ‘preventing attacks against its own minorities’⁵⁵.

In 2020, Turkish response to this report also included elements related with YPG in Syria as the report defined the Turkish operation fields as zones of occupation. Turkish Foreign Ministry also strongly opposed the recommendation of the report to place the country in US State Department’s Special Watch List of countries repressing religious freedoms and states that

‘It is clear that the Commission, which has been accused of being anti-Muslim in the past, has drawn up this report based on its unwarranted agenda and priorities under the influence of circles that are hostile to Turkey, rather than objective criteria. We recommend the authors of this report to look in the mirror and engage in self-criticism’.

Apart from these reports on religious freedoms, Turkish Foreign Ministry responded in a similar way to the State Department report on human rights and terrorism. The ministry consistently claimed that the reports are not objective and labels Turkey’s fight against terrorism as human rights violations. Accordingly, each of the

⁵³ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-45, 11 June 2020

⁵⁴ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-61, 1 July 2020

⁵⁵ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-28, 1 May 2019

statements contained a highly reactionary language and contributed to the further deterioration of the discourse. In the context of the reports on terrorism, despite a constructive language adopted on struggle against ISIL and PKK, Turkey blamed the US for not explicitly defining YPG as the Syrian arm PKK and underlined that

‘This approach amounts to the abstention of explicitly emphasizing the terrorist identity of the YPG, and moreover confirms the cooperation between the USA and this terrorist organization’⁵⁶.

The ministry also publicly aired its disapproval of the position taken by the US on the issue of FETO and its activities in the country. Turkish Foreign Ministry, while noticing the positive elements in the report, has posted a reactionary response to State Department human trafficking report on the basis of its lack of emphasis on the trafficking activities of PKK and YPG.

Most of the mentioned reports by different US agencies have been prepared and published for long periods of time and it is safe to assume that some of them contained critical language on Turkey before 2017. However, after this year, Turkish Foreign Ministry, rather than privately communicating its reservations about the reports, decided to take a more public stance and put its counter arguments in record through written statements. The war attrition between the US agencies and Turkish Foreign Ministry did not remain limited to this annual reports. As shown in the quantitative section, the spokesperson started to issue an ever-increasing numbers of QA form statements most of which are dedicated to responding the remarks, comments or statements by various US officials. Increase in the number of such statements and the addition of several reports of US governmental agencies have aggravated the reactionary rhetoric.

⁵⁶ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-56, 25 June 2020

6.8 Discourse in the context of actual clash: Mutual sanctions and cancellation of joint defense programs

In the course of US-Turkey relations, occasional periods volatilities were commonly observed. However, impositions of sanctions and counter sanctions remained limited to a couple of rare events such as Turkey's military operation in Cyprus in 1974. On the other hand, on three different occasions such measures were imposed unilaterally or reciprocally. This unprecedented diplomatic activity also brought along the accompanying reactionary discourse.

The first episode has arrived when a local employee of the US Consulate in Istanbul was detained again on terror charges. On 8 October 2017, the US Embassy in Ankara released a short statement saying that it will immediately suspend all non-immigrant visa service at all diplomatic facilities in Turkey.



Figure-8: US Embassy statement on visa services

In return, while producing one of the rarest examples of a reactionary rhetoric in every sense of the word, Turkey has decided to issue its response through the Turkish

Embassy in Washington DC⁵⁷, most probably due to concerns of reciprocity. In its word-by-word copy of the US statement, Turkish Embassy said that it would suspend all visa services in the US due to concerns of security. Only after a full copying of the US statement, it was realized that the US citizens do not need a real visa service at Turkish diplomatic missions, and it added that such measures will also cover e-visas and border visas which do not necessarily related with the original reason in the statement for limiting the visa services.

While copying the US statement in the discursive domain, Turkey put in effect a very restrictive visa regime against the US passport holders. In effective terms, the Turkish visa restrictions were more comprehensive than its US version as most American citizens do not hold long-term visas for Turkey but just get their visa upon arrival or online. In addition, the US also announced that Turkish citizens could apply for visa in neighboring countries while no such remedy was offered for Americans. In due course, these reciprocal measures have been eased and lifted without much publicity. In this episode, the term of sanctions was not uttered despite the fact that an effective sanctioning of visas was put in place by both countries.

As briefly mentioned, Andrew Brunson, an American pastor residing in Turkey, has been detained on terror charges. Thanks to intense lobbying in the US, his case became one of the top priorities of not the Trump administration but President Trump himself personally. In July 2018, both President Trump and his Vice President Pence gave messages through their social media accounts for an immediate release of Mr. Brunson. In response, the spokesperson of the Turkish Foreign Ministry noted in QA statement⁵⁸ that

⁵⁷ Turkish Embassy Statement, <http://washington.emb.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/ShowAnnouncement/336037>

⁵⁸ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-51, 26 July 2018

‘Turkey is a sovereign state with a deep-rooted democratic tradition and political order which upholds the supremacy of law. No one can give orders to Turkey and threaten our country. The rhetoric of threat against Turkey is unacceptable’.

While the case dragged in the judicial halls, Trump administration has escalated the situation when the US Treasury announced that it will sanction two Turkish ministers based on their roles in unjust detention of Pastor Brunson. The personal sanctioning of Turkish Ministers of Justice and Interior, two strong cabinet figures, naturally warranted a reactionary response from Turkish Foreign Ministry in which the decision was strongly protested, and an equivalent response was promised⁵⁹. Turkey has acted on this promise when it sanctioned the respective US officials, Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security and these sanctions were only lifted when the sanctions imposed by the US Treasury were revoked.

In a further attempt to expedite the release of Pastor Brunson, President Trump announced additional tariffs on Turkish steel and aluminum exports. Turkey threatened the US with a ‘befitting response’ which remained to be announced and reminded that ⁶⁰

‘... The United States should know that they cannot get any results through such kind of sanctions and pressures and that these will only harm our alliance which was forged by hardest challenges’.

The impact of the first round of sanctions remained relatively limited after Pastor Brunson has been released from jail and gotten an audience by President Trump. However, this event became an opening salvo both in political and discursive terms that the sanctions now became a part of the agenda of Turkey-US relations.

As the tensions regarding the US cooperation with YPG and Turkey’s cross border operations peaked, the US has announced another round of sanctions on 14 October

⁵⁹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 207, 1 August 2018

⁶⁰ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-58, 10 August 2018

2019. In this round, two ministries, Ministry of National Defense and Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, were targeted with sanctions. In addition, Minister of National Defense, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources as well as Minister of Interior were personally designated under the sweeping sanctions. Despite this unprecedented sanctions, Turkish Foreign Ministry remained silent in their immediate aftermath. The only public response given to the sanctions was limited with a QA by the spokesperson concerning the Treasury's announcement of preparation for possible sanctions and it urged that steps will be taken based on reciprocity⁶¹. Almost ten days later, it was announced that the sanctions have been lifted following a phone conversation between President Trump and President Erdogan. This brief episode showed that reactionary rhetoric is not the only solution and more tangible results could be achieved without necessarily resorting to such means.

Since these administrative sanctions, the US Congress has also taken into its agenda several resolutions that envisages of imposing sanctions related with issues such as Turkey's military operations in Northern Syria or Turkish acquisition of Russian made S-400 missile systems. Such initiatives were countered by reactionary statement by Turkish Foreign Ministry condemning their adoption by the either wing of the US Congress. In these statements, the ministry underlined that the US is not appropriately appreciating the difference between an ally and a terrorist organization. After the acquisition of S-400 systems had been completed, the US administration declared another round on sanctions within the framework of Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. The latest round of sanctions mainly targeted Presidency of Defense Industries of Turkey, a body responsible for foreign arms

⁶¹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement QA-61, 11 October 2019

sales and imports and put Turkey in a group of countries including Russia, Iran and North Korea which are also targeted under the same legal framework. In parallel with the verbal statements on this issue, the press release of Turkish Foreign Ministry urged the US to address the issue through dialogue and diplomacy rather than coercive means. However, this time Turkish counter response⁶² was more calibrated as the statement expressed that

‘Turkey will take the necessary steps against this decision, which will negatively affect our relations and will retaliate in a manner and timing it deems appropriate. Turkey will never refrain from taking the necessary measures to safeguard its national security’.

Overall, the unprecedented imposition of unilateral and reciprocal sanctions and sanctions-like measures added new elements already harsh reactionary discourse prevailing in the US-Turkey relations. However, the tone and timing of reactionary statements were adjusted by the ministry depending on the context and the promising nature of diplomatic negotiations.

6.9 The Climax

Despite being out of the original scope of the research by a margin of a week, a critical discourse analysis study would remain incomplete without the statement of 6 January 2021 by Turkish Foreign Ministry. On this day, the US Congress was overrun by a group of protestors questioning the legitimacy of elections which brings Joe Biden as the next President. In an attempt to block the vote to formalize the election results, the group interrupted the proceedings in the US Congress by occupying the premises. In a rare event with potential to disrupt the traditional

⁶² Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 321, 14 December 2020

transfer of power and huge reverberations in the US politics, Turkish Foreign Ministry took a curious initiative and released the following statement⁶³

‘We are following with concern the internal developments happening in the U.S. following the Presidential elections which culminated in the Capitol Hill building being breached by protesters today.

We call on all parties in the U.S. to maintain restraint and prudence. We believe the U.S. will overcome this internal political crisis in a mature manner.

We advise Turkish citizens in the U.S. to avoid crowded areas and places where protests are taking place’

This statement was clearly inspired by its American versions when public protests erupted in foreign countries. It was also a reference to the statements coming from the US in the early hour of 15th July coup attempt cautioning for peace and stability. However, the statement also reached to unique level of mockery when it referred to all parties and Turkey’s belief that the US will overcome this in a mature manner and urged its citizens to avoid crowded areas and places in a similar fashion to US travel advisories for Turkey. The only kind of statement which did not condemn the violence by the protestors in the Western world could also be the clearest manifestation of the discursive direction of the Turkish Foreign Ministry when it comes to the relations with the US.

⁶³ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement No: 7, 6 January 2021

CHAPTER 7:

CONCLUSION

Turkish Foreign Ministry has produced a considerable amount of written public material over the last decade. It is easily observable that Turkey started to resort to more and more of these kinds of public statements in its communication efforts. Thus, this material has become an important, if not constitutive, part of the overall discourse of Turkish foreign policy. Despite being highly structured and institutionalized body of texts, the statements issued by Turkish Foreign Ministry has undergone an important transformation and gained a more reactionary characteristic. This trend reflected itself in quantitative terms in the form of decreasing number of neutral leaning press statements under institutional umbrella and increasing number of naturally reactionary QAs attributable to spokesperson.

A significant chunk of the written communication material released by the Turkish Foreign Ministry was dedicated to or related with the country's relations with the US. The share of US related statements has steadily increased in the last decade, so has the share of reactionary QAs among them. That is, Turkey started to devote a greater effort when it comes to its public diplomacy with the US, but the main bulk of this effort was devoted to air its concerns and reactions towards various US policies and statements rather than following a constructive agenda.

In this context, the tone in neutral statements deteriorated and even mundane events in terms of press statements became issues of tension. Few remaining constructive topics of discourse slowly withered away. Despite Turkey's efforts to adopt a constructive discourse on peripheral issues, the problems related with the core of bilateral relations has rendered such efforts obsolete. The toxic agenda also had its

reverberations in the discursive domain and ministry statements became more reactionary even on contextually similar issues.

There were already issues of tensions and reactionary rhetoric in the US-Turkey relations such as the 1915 incidents. The tone in this kind of statements further deteriorated as the general discourse turned sour. Additional issues have emerged, like the US relations with YPG, and further cemented the reactionary rhetoric. Especially after 2016, the discursive practices of both sides started to resemble a war of attrition as Turkish Foreign Ministry adopted and diligently implemented a policy of retribution for almost every written and verbal statement coming from the US agencies and officials. In addition, the insistence of the ministry to respond through written statements against the various topical reports by the US agencies aggravated the reactionary tone.

The analysis clearly indicates that the year of 2016 is a critical turning point both in terms of the number of statements and their reactionary tone. However, it would be misleading to think that 2016 is the exact date of the transformation of the discourse. As both qualitative and quantitative analyses indicate, there were already underlying tensions in the US-Turkey relations due to the events of 1915, Gezi Park protests and other bilateral issues. In 2016, a perfect storm created by the coup attempt, increased reliance of Turkey to Russia for arms procurement and enhanced support of the US for the Syrian arm of PKK has brought a transformational change both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The public opinion vis-à-vis the US has drastically changed especially after the July 15th coup attempt as the country continued to host the leader of the responsible cult despite repeated requests by Turkish authorities for extradition. Ruling over such heightened sensitivity, the government also resorted to a sharper tone when it comes

to its communication in its dealings with the US. In this regard, it is safe to argue that Turkish government has utilized its foreign policy discourse as an identity enhancing tool in the face of this unprecedented challenge to its rule and benefited from it in the referendum for transition to a presidential system and then the actual election of the first executive president.

This reactionary tone also narrowed down the options for Turkish policymakers. Turkey's decision to choose a Russian-made anti-missile system, even at the prospects of sanctions and expulsion from the F-35 fighter jets program, is a clear manifestation of the limiting impact of the discursive mechanisms on the actual foreign policy choices. This procurement, in return, further aggravated the reactionary tone in terms of the general discourse.

A similar dynamic was in place when it came to the US relations with the YPG. Turkey has resorted to reactionary public statements instead of increasing its cooperation with the US mostly due to the lack of trust in the aftermath of July 15th. This led to further collaboration between the US and YPG against the growing threat of ISIL. In the eyes of the Turkish decision makers, the US became the supporter of not one but two terrorist organizations, FETO and PKK, at the same time and such a framework of perception has made harder to advance the cooperation between the two NATO allies.

In line with Larsen (1992), the rhetoric of Turkish foreign policy has brought along a limited space for the country to maneuver in post-2016 period. Not all foreign policy decisions could be boiled down to this reactionary rhetoric, but the backdrop largely created by this rhetoric is instrumental in terms of understanding most of the decisions taken in the same time period. The exceptions to this deteriorating rhetoric

also coincide with the period where the silent diplomacy was able to bear fruits such as the episode of sanctions in 2019.

The reactionary tone has peaked when the sanctions became a much-resorted instrument in bilateral relations. Turkish Foreign Ministry utilized a heavily reactionary discourse in its statements on the US sanctions against Turkey as well as Turkey's counter sanction in some of the occasions. The issue of sanctions has occupied an even greater space in the discourse as various bills and draft resolutions are introduced at the US Congress and has drawn a counter statement by Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The climax of this war of attrition was reached in early 2021 when Turkish Foreign Office released a statement almost reaching the level of mockery on one of the most tragic incidents in recent political history of the US. During the occupation of the US Congress by protestors disputing the legitimacy of elections, Turkey decided to urge for calm and patience on both parties while other Western nations were releasing statements of support. The dragging effect of the rhetoric was so powerful that Turkish Foreign Ministry could not help itself from releasing the statement following the violent protests in Washington DC. This statement has positioned Turkey apart from the rest of the Western world who shared their sympathies with the US and also put the country on a possible collision course with the incoming US administration.

The main line of inquiry in the research was reactionary elements in the context of Turkish foreign policy discourse. In this sense, the research presents one of the first studies of systemic examination of an institutional body, rather than a personality, from reactionary internationalism perspective over an extended period of time through an archive of written statements. The study has enabled a close observation of the dynamics through which the reactionary discourse takes precedence over its

alternatives in an incremental fashion. In this regard, it should be expected that reactionary rhetoric would take over through incremental steps especially in the written discourse as compared to its verbal version. This could be attributed to the more institutionalized nature of written discourse as the development of the particular vocabulary would take certain amount of deliberation.

The study also showed the ways in which such reactionary discourse would affect the domestic standing and international posture of a certain country. Judging by the Turkish case, it could be argued that increased reliance on a reactionary discourse could also be regarded a signifier for a change in terms of foreign policy course. It could also signal a more transactional approach to certain bilateral relations rather than an understanding shaped around common values and interest. In this sense, Turkish foreign policy and its discourse became more transactional as the reactionary internationalism suggests. On more sanctions related fields and YPG related issues, Turkish Foreign Ministry decided to emphasize the commitments made by the US while mentioning Turkey always ready to hold up its end of the bargain.

Turkish foreign policy discourse in the last decade also carries other hallmarks of a reactionary discourse as it contains more elements of injustice committed against the country through historical references. In line with main features of a reactionary discourse, the written statements have never taken a direction of total refusal of the international system or the importance of the Turkey's relations with the US. To the contrary, even in reactionary statements, there were references to the critical nature of the relations between Turkey and the US. However, as in the case of the demand for a correction of the grave mistake committed by President Biden on his statement on the 1915 events was textbook implementation of a reactionary discourse since it

simultaneously underlining an injustice and also demanding a transactional retribution without questioning the essence of the relations.

This study presents a comprehensive and detailed examination of the Turkish Foreign Ministry written statements on the country's relations with the US. However, it is far from covering the whole range of discourse as a considerable portion of the discourse was also formed through verbal statements by senior level policymakers. Given Turkey's transition to an executive presidential system, discourse-setting statements should be expected from the Office of the Spokesperson or the Directorate of Communications, two powerful presidential offices dealing with foreign policy issues.

Due to the limitations of time and space, this study also omits a comparison of written statements of Turkey on other countries on similar issues. Turkey's relations with the US has a unique position in terms of its depth and strategic importance, but an intertextual analysis of statements around thematic issues, such as the 1915 events or parliamentary decisions against Turkey, has the potential to indicate the different leanings of Turkish foreign policymakers with respect to similar issues in the US and other countries such France or Germany.

Another venue that has the potential to complement this research is a systematic study of the US statements on Turkey in the same period. Such a study would enable to better understand whether the dynamic was mutual or there was a unilateral decision from one of the parties to consciously opt for a more reactionary rhetoric. It would also magnify the difference between two countries on issues of mutual concern and could provide additional insights on the deterioration of the rhetoric.

The study represents a plain discourse analysis of the Turkish Foreign Ministry statements in the last decade. But it could be better contextualized, especially in

terms of the domestic politics, through a more critical analysis of the discourse. Such analysis also needs to cover the verbal statements since the Turkish Foreign Ministry's website has limited internal outreach when it comes to its written statements.

APPENDIX A

CODING OF THE STATEMENTS BY TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTRY

Year	No	Subject	Coding
2010	QA:13	Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question	Reactionary with milding elements (Congress)
2010	No: 90	Press Release Regarding the Statement Issued by President Obama	Reactionary (1915 events)
2010	No: 100	Press Release Regarding the Decision of the United States of America to Join the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations	Constructive (supporting the US for certain policy choices)
2010	No: 101	Press Release Regarding the Agreement on Iran's Nuclear Programme	Constructive (encouraging the US for certain policy choices)
2010	No: 109	Press Release Regarding the Letter Submitted by Iran to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in accordance with the Joint Declaration	Constructive (encouraging the US for certain policy choices)
2010	No:150	Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack Targeted the USAID Office in Kunduz	Neutral with supporting elements
2010	No: 208	Press Release Regarding the Resolution of the US House of Representatives	Reactionary (Congress)
2010	No: 262	Press Release Regarding the Turkey-U.S. Consultations on Counter-Terrorism	Neutral
2011	No: 6	Press Release Regarding the Attack Against Representative Gabrielle Giffords	Neutral
2011	No: 28	Press Release Regarding the Meeting Between P5+1 and Iran in Istanbul on 21-22 January 2011	Constructive
2011	No: 41	Press Release Regarding the Completion of the Ratification Process by the Russian Parliament of the New US-RF Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START)	Constructive
2011	No:112	Press Release Regarding the Statement of President Barack Obama	Reactionary (1915 events)
2011	No:118	Press Release Regarding the Killing of Osama Bin Laden, the Leader of Al-Qaeda	Constructive
2011	No:161	Press Release Regarding the Visit of the US Secretary of State H.E. Mrs. Hillary Clinton to Turkey	Neutral with positive elements
2011	No:221	Press Release Regarding the Seventh Meeting of Turkey-United States Economic	Neutral with positive elements

		Partnership Commission	
2011	No:236	Press Release Regarding the Conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East	Constructive
2011	No: 245	Press Release Regarding the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan	Neutral
2011	No:246	Press Release Regarding The Armed Attack Against the US Embassy in Sarajevo	Neutral
2011	QA: 34	Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question	Reactionary (relations with Israel)
2012	QA: 1	Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question	Reactionary (presidential elections)
2012	No: 35	Press Release Regarding the “Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers” Update issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury	Constructive
2012	No: 39	Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey to the United States of America	Neutral - comparison with Clinton visit
2012	No: 58	Press Release Regarding the Burning of the Holy Quran by Some ISAF Elements at the Bagram Base in Afghanistan	Reactionary with milding elements
2012	No: 70	Press Release Regarding the Latest Developments in North Korea’s Nuclear Activities	Constructive
2012	No:116	Press Release Regarding the Statement of US President Barack Obama on the Occasion of 24 April	Reactionary (1915 events)
2012	No: 154	Press Release Regarding the Second Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of Global Counterterrorism Forum	Constructive
2012	No: 139	Press Release Regarding the Chicago Summit Meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government	Neutral
2012	No: 165	Press Release Regarding the Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference in Kabul	Neutral
2012	No: 215	Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack to the U.S. Mission in Benghazi	Neutral with supporting elements
2012	QA-12	Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question	Reactionary (1915 events)

2012	No: 272	Press Release Regarding the Ninth Meeting of the Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission	Neutral with positive elements
2012	QA-22	Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question Regarding the Press Reports on the Mavi Marmara Incident	Reactionary (US press)
2012	No: 282	Press Release Regarding the North Atlantic Council's Decision to Augment Turkey's National Air Defence	Constructive (NATO)
2013	No: 2	Press Release Regarding the Technical Preparations for Patriot Batteries to be Sent to Augment Turkey's National Air Defense	Constructive (NATO)
2013	No: 26	Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack Perpetrated Against U.S. Embassy in Ankara	Neutral with supporting elements
2013	QA-1	Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question Regarding the Petition Launched on the Web Site of the White House with a Demand for Turkey to Open Its Border with Armenia for Refugees of Armenian Origin Fleeing from Syria to Armenia	Constructive
2013	No: 49	Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. John Kerry, US Secretary of State, to Turkey	Neutral
2013	No: 6	Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to the USA	Neutral
2013	No: 97	Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. John Kerry, US Secretary of State, to Turkey	Neutral
2013	No: 119	Press Release Regarding the Statement of US President Barack Obama on the Occasion of 24 April	Reactionary (1915 events)
2013	No: 113	Press Release Regarding the Meeting at the level of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs on Syria	Neutral
2013	No: 111	Press Release Regarding the Attacks Perpetrated in Boston, the U.S.A.	Neutral with supporting elements
2013	No: 146	Press Release Regarding the Tenth Meeting of the Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission	Neutral with positive elements
2013	No: 145	Press Release Regarding the Meeting at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on Syria in Amman	Neutral

2013	QA-11	Answer of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey to a Question Regarding the Regime's Use of Chemical Weapons in Syria	Constructive (Syria)
2013	No: 194	Press Release Regarding the Denial of the Request for Release on Parole of the terrorist Hampig Sasunyan, who assassinated Kemal Arıkan, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Los Angeles	Neutral
2013	QA-15	Answer of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey to a Question Regarding the Allegations that Turkish Diplomatic Missions were eavesdropped by the US National Security Agency (NSA)	Reactionary
2013	No: 245	Press Release Regarding the Agreement Reached Between the United States and the Russian Federation Concerning the Chemical Weapons Possessed by the Syrian Regime	Constructive (Syria)
2013	No: 222	Press Release concerning the initiation of talks between Palestine and Israel to prepare the ground for direct negotiations in the Middle East Peace Process	Constructive
2013	No: 280	Press Release Regarding the Ministerial Meeting On Syria	Neutral
2014	No: 11	Press Release Regarding the Agreement on the Implementation of Iran's nuclear Programme	Constructive
2014	No: 63	Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. William Burns, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States to Turkey	Neutral
2014	No: 189	Press Release Regarding the Working Visit of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the United States	Neutral
2014	No:245	Press Release Regarding the Working Visit of the H.E. Mr. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to the United States	Neutral
2014	QA-20	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Response to a Question Regarding the Reports in the Press Related to Kurecik Radar Base	Reactionary
2014	No: 291	Press Release Regarding the Visit of United States Secretary of State John Kerry to Turkey	Neutral
2014	QR-28	Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tanju Bilgiç in Response to a Question	Reactionary (US press)

2014	No: 356	Press Release Regarding General Allen's Visit	Neutral
2014	QA-38	Statement of Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tanju Bilgiç in Reponse to a Question Regarding the Assault on Some US Officials	Reactionary (US press)
2014	No: 398	Press Release Regarding the US-Cuba Relations	Constructive
2014	No: 387	Press Release Regarding the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report on CIA Detention and Interrogation Program	Reactionary
2014	No: 113	Press Release Regarding the Draft Resolution Adopted by the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee	Reactionary (1915 events)
2014	QA-19	Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Response to a Question	Neutral
2015	No: 67	Press Release Regarding the Visit of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the United States	Neutral
2015	No: 50	Press Release Regarding the Eleventh Meeting of the Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission	Neutral with positive elements
2015	QA-13	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tanju Bilgiç, In Response to a Question Regarding the Inaugural Meeting of the Counter DAESH/ISIL Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Istanbul, Turkey	Constructive
2015	No: 102	Press Release Regarding the Agreement on the Nuclear Program of Iran	Constructive
2015	No: 131	Press Release Regarding the Statement Made by US President Obama on the Occasion of 24 April	Reactionary
2015	No: 118	Press Release Regarding the Visit of Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to the USA	Neutral
2015	No: 205	Press Release Regarding the Agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between the P5 + 1 and Iran Related to Iran's Nuclear Program	Constructive
2015	No: 228	Press Release Regarding the Attack against the US Consulate General in Istanbul	Neutral
2015	No: 212	Press Release Concerning Turkey-US Understanding On Countering DEASH	Constructive
2015	No: 239	Press Statement on Joint Air Operations against DEASH Targets	Constructive
2015	No: 233	Joint Statement from the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the United States	Constructive

2015	No: 267	Joint Declaration on Recent Military Actions of the Russian Federation on Syria	Constructive
2015	N/A	Joint Statement on Libya, 19 October 2015	Constructive
2016	No: 76	Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu's Visit to the United States	Neutral
2016	No: 70	Press Release Regarding the visit of Antony Blinken, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State	Neutral
2016	No: 107	Press Release Regarding the Participation of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey in the Meeting on Syria	Neutral
2016	No: 98	Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Obama on the 1915 Events	Reactionary (1915 events)
2016	No: 111	Press Release Regarding the Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be held on Libya and Syria	Constructive
2016	No: 134	Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack in Orlando City of the US	Neutral - comparison with Boston and others
2016	QA-24	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Tanju Bilgiç, in Response to a Question Regarding the Comments of the Spokesperson of the US Department of State Claiming that Turkey Prevents the Investigations in South-Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey	Reactionary
2016	QA-31	Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tanju Bilgiç, Responding to a Question in Relation to Public Remarks by US Secretary of Defense, Defense Department Spokesperson, White House Press Secretary and Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter DAESH, Regarding Operation Euphrates Shield	Reactionary
2016	No: 225	Press Release regarding the Arrangements between the US and RF on Cessation of Hostilities and Humanitarian Access to Besieged Areas	Constructive
2016	No: 322	Press Release Regarding the Decision to Grant Parole to Hampig Sassounian Who Assassinated Consul-General of Turkey in Los Angeles, Kemal Arıkan	Reactionary
2016	QA-47	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding the Congressional Approval of the Authorization of the US Government to Provide Entities Fighting in Syria with Some	Reactionary

		Sensitive Military Equipment	
2016	No: 315	Press Release Regarding the Participation of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, in the Syria meeting in Paris on 10 December 2016	Neutral
2016	QA-50	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry Within the Context of the Middle East Peace Process	Constructive
2017	No: 15	Press Release Regarding the Participation of the Foreign Minister H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu in the Middle East Peace Conference in Paris	Constructive
2017	No:51	Press Release Regarding the Participation of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, in the Syria meeting in Bonn on 17 February 2017	Neutral
2017	No: 80	Press Release Regarding the visit of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to the United States in Order to Participate in the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Global Coalition Against DAESH	Constructive
2017	No:107	Press Release Regarding the US' Military Operation Targeting the Syrian Regime's Shayrat Airbase in Homs	Constructive
2017	No: 94	Press Release Regarding the Visit of Mr. Shannon, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, to Turkey	Neutral
2017	No: 93	Press Release Regarding the Visit of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to Turkey	Neutral
2017	QA-18	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding the Contacts of Greek Cypriot leader Mr. Anastasiades with a Hydrocarbon Company in the USA	Reactionary
2017	No: 127	Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Trump on the 1915 events	Reactionary
2017	No: 111	Press Release Regarding the Participation of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, in the Syria meeting in Lucca, Italy on 11 April 2017	Neutral

2017	QA-21	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in response to a question regarding the statements of the Deputy Spokesperson of the US State Department alleging that the Turkish Air Force conducted the air operation of April 25 targeting the PKK/PYD/YPG positions in Syria and Iraq without proper coordination	Reactionary
2017	QA-26	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in response to a question regarding the Resolution voted in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the USA	Reactionary
2017	No: 151	Press Release Regarding the Summoning of the US Ambassador to the Ministry	Reactionary
2017	QA-30	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in response to a question regarding the security message that has been published by the US Consulate General in Istanbul	Neutral
2017	No: 189	Press Release Regarding the Arrest Warrants Issued in the US	Reactionary
2017	QA-29	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in response to a question regarding the resolution passed in the US House of Representatives	Reactionary
2017	QA-44	Statement Of The Spokesperson Of The Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, In Response To A Question Regarding The Statement Of The US Special Envoy For The Global Coalition To Counter Daesh Made During A Speech He Delivered At A Think Tank	Reactionary
2017	No: 275	Press release regarding the indictments issued by the Washington D.C. Superior Court	Reactionary
2017	QA-50	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding US State Department Spokesperson's comment on Turkey's statement about the KRG Referendum as threatening	Reactionary
2017	No: 296	Press Release Regarding the Antalya Memorandum endorsed at the Global Counter Terrorism Ministerial Meeting	Constructive

2017	No: 310	Press Release Regarding the Revocation of US Economic Sanctions imposed on Sudan	Constructive
2017	QA-53	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding a statement of the US Embassy in Ankara	Reactionary
2017	No: 303	Press Release Regarding Las Vegas Shooting	Neutral
2017	No: 341	Press Release regarding the attack that took place in Texas, USA	Neutral
2017	No: 337	Press Release regarding the terror attack in New York City	Neutral
2017	No: 348	Press Release Regarding the Secret Deal That the Terrorist Organization PYD/YPG Reached with DEASH for the Evacuation of DEASH Terrorists from Raqqa	Reactionary
2017	No: 391	Press Release Regarding the US Veto of Draft Resolution on Jerusalem Submitted to the United Nations Security Council	Reactionary
2017	No: 384	Press Release regarding US National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster's Remarks on Our Country and Government	Reactionary
2017	No: 378	Press Release Regarding the Statement of the US Administration Declaring That It Recognizes Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel and It will Move Its Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem	Reactionary
2018	No: 4	Press Release regarding the decision of the Court of Southern District of New York about Mehmet Hakan Atilla	Reactionary
2018	No: 11	Press Release Regarding the Visit of Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to the U.S. and Canada	Neutral
2018	No: 15	Press release regarding the statements on the establishment of a so-called "Syrian Border Security Force" under the PYD/YPG terrorist organization's command	Reactionary
2018	QA-5	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding unfounded allegations published recently by certain foreign media organs, claiming that civilians are being targeted during Operation Olive Branch	Reactionary

2018	QA-4	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding decision of the United States to add Hamas Leader Ismail Haniya to the list of “Global Terrorists”	Reactionary
2018	QA-2	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the Statements by U.S. President Trump on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Status of Jerusalem at His Joint Press Conference with Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu	Reactionary
2018	No: 48	Press Release regarding the shooting at a high school in Florida, USA on 14 February 2018	Neutral
2018	No: 47	Press Release Regarding the Working Visit of U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson	Neutral
2018	QA-11	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question on the remarks made by Mr. Jim Mattis, Secretary of Defence of the United States, regarding depiction of PKK terrorism as an “active insurgency”	Reactionary
2018	QA-9	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question on the remarks of U.S. State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert claiming Serkan Gölge being convicted with insufficient evidence	Reactionary
2018	QA-19	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the reference made by the Spokesperson of the US Department of State to Turkey in relation to the UN Security Council Resolution 2401 on the humanitarian situation in Syria	Reactionary
2018	QA-17	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the claim by the Spokesperson of the US Department of Defense that Turkey and USA are conducting diplomatic talks concerning de-escalation options in the Afrin region	Reactionary
2018	No: 92	Press Release Regarding the Visit of Undersecretary Yalçın to the U.S.	Neutral
2018	QA-23	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the statement by the Spokesperson of the US Department of State on the situation in Afrin	Reactionary

2018	No: 105	Press Release Regarding the Military Operation Against Certain Points in Syria by the US, the UK and France	Constructive
2018	No: 95	Press Release Regarding the 5th Turkey-U.S. Defense Industry Trade Dialogue	Constructive
2018	No: 129	Press Release Regarding The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran	Reactionary
2018	QA-36	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the statement of the US State Department Spokesperson claiming that the people of Afrin are not allowed to return	Reactionary
2018	No: 119	Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Trump on the 1915 events	Reactionary
2018	No: 115	Press Release Regarding 2017 Human Rights Report of the US Department of State	Reactionary
2018	QA-32	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question on the remarks of U.S. State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert expressing concerns that the early elections in Turkey will be held under the state of emergency	Reactionary
2018	QA-42	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding Turkey chapter of the “International Religious Freedom Report for 2017” published by the US Department of State	Reactionary
2018	No: 152	Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs to the United States	Neutral
2018	No: 147	Joint Statement adopted at the end of the Turkey-US Working Group on Syria meeting held today in Ankara	Constructive
2018	No: 141	Press Release Regarding the Attack in Texas,USA	Neutral
2018	No: 140	Press Release regarding the Decision of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York	Reactionary
2018	QA-38	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding an article on the capture of 5 DAESH leaders published on the New York Times	Constructive
2018	No: 166	Press Release Regarding the Summit between the US-DPRK Leaders	Constructive

2018	No: 160	Joint Press Statement Regarding the Meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo	Constructive
2018	No: 157	Press Release Regarding the US Veto of Draft Resolution on the Palestinians Submitted to the United Nations Security Council	Reactionary
2018	No: 187	Joint Statement adopted at the end of Turkey-US Joint Working Group meeting on Judicial and Legal Issues held today (July 13) in Ankara	Constructive
2018	No: 207	Press Release Regarding the US Treasury Department's decision to sanction our country	Reactionary
2018	QA-51	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the social media messages by President Trump and Vice President Pence of the United States of America	Reactionary
2018	No: 228	Press Release regarding the United States ending its financial contributions to UNRWA	Reactionary
2018	QA-59	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in response to a Question Regarding the Attack Against the U.S. Embassy in Ankara	Neutral
2018	QA-58	Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in response to a question regarding the tweet of the U.S. President Trump on additional tariffs targeting our country's steel and aluminum exports to the United States.	Reactionary
2018	QA-62	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the closure of the Office of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Washington, DC	Reactionary
2018	No: 275	Press Release Regarding the Working Visit of U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo	Neutral
2018	No: 294	Press Release Regarding the Visit of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sedat Önal to Washington, D.C.	Neutral with positive elements
2018	QA-70	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Decision on Lifting Sanctions Against U.S. Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security	Constructive

2018	No: 284	Press Release Regarding the Attack Targeting a Synagogue in Pittsburgh, USA	Neutral
2018	QA-75	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Exploration Activities of ExxonMobil off the Island of Cyprus	Reactionary
2018	No: 312	Press Release Regarding the Attendance of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey to the 8th Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations and Working Visit to Washington D.C.	Neutral
2018	No:305	Press Release Regarding the Wildfires in California, USA	Reactionary
2018	No:301	Press Release Regarding the Armed Attack in California, USA	Neutral
2018	QA-72	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding A Decision Taken by the Department of State of the United States	Constructive
2018	No: 330	Turkey-U.S. Joint Statement on Syria	Constructive
2019	QA-1	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding US Secretary of State Pompeo's Remarks in an Interview	Reactionary
2019	No:28	Turkey-U.S. Joint Statement	Constructive
2019	No:25	Press Release Regarding Turkey-U.S. Working Group meetings which will be held in Washington D.C, on February 5th, 2019	Constructive
2019	QA-10	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US State Department statement on the continuation of PKK's listing as a Terrorist Organization	Constructive
2019	No: 55	Press Release Regarding Turkey 2018 Human Rights Report of the U.S. Department of State	Reactionary
2019	QA-13	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Press Release of the US Embassy in Pristina Regarding the Deportation of Six FETÖ Affiliated Individuals to Turkey	Reactionary

2019	QA-23	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the Readout of the U.S. Department of State on the Bilateral Meeting Between Minister Çavuşoğlu and His U.S. Counterpart	Reactionary
2019	QA-22	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of the Spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State on the Local Elections in Turkey	Reactionary
2019	No: 84	Press Release Regarding the Visit of Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to the United States on the Occasion of the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting	Neutral
2019	QA-19	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statements by Elliott Abrams, US Special Representative for Venezuela, as the Guest of US Department of State's 'LiveatState' Social Media Program on 28 March	Reactionary
2019	No: 77	Press Release Regarding the Decision of the US Administration to Recognize Israel's Sovereignty Over the Golan Heights Under Occupation	Reactionary
2019	QA-18	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statements Delivered at the Annual Conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) by the Leaders of Certain States on Moving Their Embassies to Jerusalem	Reactionary
2019	No: 128	Press Release Regarding the Press Statement of the US Department of State, Dated 5 May 2019	Reactionary
2019	QA-28	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Turkey Chapter of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom 2019 Report	Reactionary
2019	No: 113	Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Donald Trump on the events of 1915	Reactionary

2019	QA-38	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Draft Resolution, Titled "Expressing Concern for the United States-Turkey Alliance" which was Approved on 22 May at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives	Reactionary
2019	QA-30	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statements Made by the Spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State Morgan Ortagus and the Members of the U.S. Congress About the Re-run of Municipal Elections in Istanbul	Reactionary
2019	No: 160	Press Release Regarding the Resolution "Expressing Concern for the United States-Turkey Alliance" Approved at the United States House of Representatives	Reactionary
2019	QA-39	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding reports in some media outlets about Turkey evaluating to postpone the S-400 system	Constructive
2019	QA-44	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Chapter on Turkey of the "2018 Report on International Religious Freedom" Published by the US Department of State	Reactionary
2019	No: 210	Press Release Regarding the U.S.'s removing of Turkey from F35 Program	Reactionary
2019	QA-48	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of the Spokesperson of U.S. Department of State, Mrs. Morgan Ortagus, on July 9 about the procurement of Turkey's S-400 air defense system	Reactionary
2019	No: 194	Press Release Regarding the Publication of an Article by one of the Terrorist Ringleaders in the Washington Post Newspaper	Reactionary
2019	QA-51	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US Executive Order "Blocking Property of the Government of Venezuela"	Reactionary
2019	No: 263	Press Release Regarding the Travel Advisory for Turkey Issued by the US Department of State	Reactionary

2019	QA-62	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Fate of DEASH Detainees and Their Families within the scope of Operation Peace Spring	Neutral
2019	QA-61	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question on the Statement made by the U.S. Department of the Treasury Concerning the Development of New Authorities to Target Turkey with Sanctions	Reactionary
2019	QA-59	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding Remarks by Foreign Officials on the Safe Zone to be Established in the East of Euphrates	Reactionary
2019	No: 316	Press Release Regarding the Draft Bill (H.R. 4695) Adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives Envisaging Sanctions Against Turkey on the Basis of Operation Peace Spring	Reactionary
2019	No: 315	Press Release Regarding the Resolution Entitled “Affirming the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide” Passed by the U.S. House of Representatives	Reactionary
2019	QA-67	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Killing of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, Ringleader of the DAESH Terrorist Organization	Neutral
2019	No: 336	Press Release Regarding the Statement of the US Administration on the Israeli Illegal Settlements	Reactionary
2019	QA-68	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US State Department Report on Terrorism of 2018	Reactionary
2019	No: 362	Press Release Regarding the Resolution (S.Res.150) Passed by the U.S. Senate	Reactionary
2019	No: 358	Press Release Regarding the Passage by the U.S. Senate’s Foreign Relations Committee of Draft Bill S. 2641 Aiming to Impose Sanctions on Turkey	Reactionary
2019	No: 373	Press Release Regarding the Decision to Grant Parole to Hampig Sassounian Who Assassinated Consul-General of Turkey in Los Angeles, Mr. Kemal Arkan	Reactionary

2019	QA-78	Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Approval by the U.S. Congress of Draft Appropriations Bills	Reactionary
2020	No: 2	Press Release Regarding the Death of Qassem Soleimani, Commander of the Special Forces 'Quds' Corps of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, in an Air Strike by the US Forces near Baghdad Airport	Reactionary
2020	No: 28	Press Release Regarding the Plan Released by the US Administration on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	Reactionary
2020	No: 59	Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Qatar on the Occasion of Signing Ceremony of the U.S.-Taliban Agreement	Constructive
2020	No: 54	Press Release Regarding the Understanding of a Reduction in Violence between the USA and Taliban	Constructive
2020	No: 72	Press Release Regarding Turkey 2019 Human Rights Report of the U.S. Department of State	Reactionary
2020	QA-29	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Turkey Chapter of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2020 Report	Reactionary
2020	No: 90	Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Donald Trump on the Events of 1915	Reactionary
2020	No: 107	Press Release Regarding the Reversing of the Decision to Parole Hampig Sassounian, Who was Sentenced for the Terrorist Attack in Which Consul-General of the Republic of Turkey in Los Angeles, Mr. Kemal Arıkan was Martyred	Constructive
2020	QA-39	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US Decision to Withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty (OST)	Reactionary
2020	QA-47	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the Statements of the USA Authorities against the Court Decision regarding Metin Topuz, Ex-Employee of the USA Istanbul Consulate General	Reactionary

2020	QA-45	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Chapter on Turkey of the "2019 Report on International Religious Freedom" Published by the US Department of State	Reactionary
2020	QA-61	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US Department of State's Press Release on the Status of the Hagia Sophia	Reactionary
2020	No: 133	Press Release Regarding the Section on Turkey of the US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report	Reactionary
2020	QA-56	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019" of the U.S. State Department	Reactionary
2020	QA-51	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of the US International Commission on Religious Freedom (USCIRF) on the "Claw-Eagle" and "Claw-Tiger" Operations Carried out Against the PKK Terrorist Organization	Reactionary
2020	QA-64	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US Decision to Provide IMET to the Greek Cypriot Administration	Reactionary
2020	No: 173	Press Release Regarding the Joint Statement by the United States, Israel and the United Arab Emirates	Reactionary
2020	No: 159	Press Release Regarding the Announcement of the Oil Contract Signed by the "Syrian Democratic Forces" , Which is Led by the PKK/YPG Terrorist Organization	Reactionary
2020	QA-70	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding a Statement of the U.S. Department of State Concerning Osman Kavala	Reactionary
2020	No: 181	Press Release Regarding the Statement by the Spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State About the Meeting of President Erdoğan with the Representatives of Hamas	Reactionary

2020	No: 194	Press Release Regarding the US Decision to Lift the Arms Embargo on The Greek Cypriot Administration	Reactionary
2020	QA-98	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of the Spokesperson of the US State Department on Turkey's Seismic Survey Activities in the Eastern Mediterranean	Reactionary
2020	QA-108	Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's Visit to Turkey	Reactionary
2020	No: 298	Press Release Regarding the US Secretary of State Pompeo's Visit to an Illegal Settlement Unit in the West Bank	Reactionary
2020	QA-121	Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the U.S. Decision to Rescind the Sudan from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism	Constructive
2020	No: 321	Press Release Regarding the U.S. Decision to Impose Sanctions Against Turkey	Reactionary

APPENDIX B

TEXT OF THE CODED STATEMENTS

QA:13, 29 March 2010, Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question

Secretary Clinton called Foreign Minister Davutoğlu yesterday. The main agenda item of the phone conversation that took place upon the request of US side, and which lasted about an hour, was the resolution that was adopted by the Foreign Relations Committee of the US House of Representatives with regard to the events of 1915.

As co-chair of the Minsk Group Secretary Clinton informed Minister Davutoğlu about her recent visit to the RF and also about the developments in the Minsk process. In addition to these, the two Ministers exchanged views on all the tracks of the MEEP and within this context about the revival of the Syria-Israel track; developments on the subject of Palestine; results of the Iraqi elections and other regional issues.

On the main agenda item of the conversation, Minister Davutoğlu explained the reasons of the deep disappointment and strong reaction by the Turkish public opinion to the adoption of the resolution in the Foreign Relations Committee of the US House of Representatives.

Minister Davutoğlu underlined that it is critically important that the adopted resolution is not brought to the floor of the House of Representatives in order to be able to dispel its negative effects on the peace efforts in Southern Caucasus and upon Turkish-US relations and that politicians do not pass judgement on history.

Secretary Clinton stated that she understood Minister Davutoğlu's concerns, and stressed that the US administration is opposed both to the Committee's decision and to further action on it in the US House of Representatives.

Secretary Clinton underlined that Prime Minister Erdoğan's participation in the International Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Washington on 12-13 April 2010 carried great importance in every respect and reminded that they expect Prime Minister Erdoğan in Washington.

Minister Davutoğlu stated that the evaluation process on this subject was still continuing and that Prime Minister Erdoğan would take his final decision on this matter in the coming days.

No: 90, 24 April 2010, Press Release Regarding the Statement Issued by President Obama

Written statements issued regularly each year on the 24th of April by the Presidents of the United States has been repeated by President Obama this year as well.

We deeply regret this statement which reflects an incorrect and one-sided political perception.

The toughest enemy of the historical facts are subjective memory records. No nation has the right to impose its memory records on another nation.

Third countries neither have a right nor authority to judge the history of Turkish-Armenian relations with political motives.

No: 100, 14 May 2010, Press Release Regarding the Decision of the United States of America to Join the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations

We are pleased with the decision of the United States of America to join the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations, and to take part in the Rio Forum.

The Alliance of Civilizations, co-sponsored by the Turkish Prime Minister, is a United Nations initiative launched in 2005 to bolster mutual respect, harmony and tolerance among cultures. The Group of Friends brings together those countries and international organizations supportive of the Alliance of Civilizations' goals and objectives. With the United States, membership in the Group of Friends has risen to 120.

The last annual Forum where the Alliance's progress is reviewed at the highest level was held on 6-7 April 2009, in Istanbul. Turkey will attend the Third Forum, to take place on 28-29 May 2010 in Rio de Janeiro, with a delegation led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, also comprising Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and Minister of State Prof. Dr. Mehmet Aydın.

This latest addition to the Group of Friends will make a major contribution to the enhancement and progress of the Alliance.

No: 101, 17 May 2010, Press Release Regarding the Agreement on Iran's Nuclear Programme

The resolute endeavours, which have been pursued for long time by Turkey with a view to overcoming the problems related to Iran's nuclear program, have reached an important phase with the Joint Declaration signed by H.E. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Mottaki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran and H.E. Mr. Amorim, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil in the presence of H.E. Prime Minister Erdoğan, H.E. Mr. Ahmedinejad, President of Iran and H.E. Mr. Lula, President of Brazil in Tehran today (17 May 2010). We would like to express our thanks to the people of Iran for their confidence bestowed upon Turkey throughout this process.

In accordance with the Declaration, Iran has accepted to deliver 1200 kg Low Enriched Uranium from its stocks to Turkey in exchange for the provision of nuclear fuel for medical purposes to Tehran Research Reactor. The implementation of this agreement will be subject to arrangements to be determined between Iran on the one hand and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), USA, the Russian Federation and France on the other. With a view to implementing the said agreement, Turkey will not fail Iran's, nor the international community's trust in her and through an arrangement, details of which will be determined, will fully fulfill her responsibilities.

Thanks to the Joint Declaration, a new and important opportunity has been created to re-start the dialogue between Iran and the international community and to conclude this process with a lasting reconciliation in conformity with the rights and obligations based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

With the acceptance of the Joint Declaration, Iran has met the expectations of the international community. Persistent diplomatic efforts and the negotiation process have been effective in producing this outcome. At the same time, this development has demonstrated once again that resolution could be reached through diplomacy and that all means should be mobilized to that effect. We appreciate the support lent by Brazil to Turkey in this process.

Turkey looks forward to the implementation of the understanding outlined in the Joint Declaration and to the international community's active contributions in taking this process forward.

No: 109, 24 May 2010, Press Release Regarding the Letter Submitted by Iran to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in accordance with the Joint Declaration

Iran has submitted today (24 May), within the envisaged time frame, a formal letter to H.E. Yukiya Amano, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), reconfirming its agreement with the Joint Declaration signed in Tehran on 17 May 2010 by Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Ahmet Davutoğlu and his Iranian and Brazilian counterparts, H.E. Mottaki and H.E. Amorim. Turkish Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Vienna and the Brazilian Chargé d'Affaires were present during the delivery of the said letter.

The above mentioned Joint Declaration offers a confidence building measure that would improve the psychological atmosphere needed for the success of the negotiation process between the P5+1 and Iran towards a diplomatic solution to the disagreement on Iran's nuclear programme.

Following this significant step by Iran, we have full confidence that the Vienna Group, namely the IAEA, the USA, France and the Russian Federation, will also respond positively in order to put the measure into action, and will use the opportunity, ground and the dynamic created by the Joint Declaration in the best way.

The safekeeping in Turkey of the Low Enriched Uranium that will be exchanged with the nuclear fuel needed for medical purposes at the Tehran Research Reactor was part of the Joint Declaration. Turkey is ready to continue her contributions to the peaceful solution of the issue, including those with regard to the implementation of the Joint Declaration.

No:150, 02 July 2010, Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack Targeted the USAID Office in Kunduz

We have learnt with deep sorrow that a terrorist attack targeted the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) office located in Kunduz. Turkey strongly condemns this heinous attack.

The attack against USAID humanitarian assistance workers laboring to increase the welfare of the Afghan society has also targeted Afghanistan's unity and integrity.

Turkey will resolutely continue her efforts to strengthen international solidarity and cooperation to achieve success in combating terrorism.

Turkey wishes mercy upon those who lost their lives, conveys condolences to the bereaved families of the victims and wishes speedy recovery to the injured ones.

No: 208, 30 September 2010, Press Release Regarding the Resolution of the US House of Representatives

The US House of Representatives adopted a Resolution (1631) with the heading: “Protection of religious sites and artifacts from and in Turkish-occupied areas of northern Cyprus as well as for general respect for religious freedom” on 28 September 2010.

The resolution has been drafted in a biased way, taking only Greek Cypriot allegations into consideration. Moreover, the text of the resolution includes many factual errors which may harm the credibility of the House of Representatives.

It should be kept in mind that adopting biased resolutions based on falsified facts may harm the ongoing UN settlement process on the island and the reconciliation efforts between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

**No: 262, 30 November 2010, Press Release Regarding the Turkey-U.S.
Consultations on Counter-Terrorism**

Regular Turkey-U.S. consultations on counter-terrorism for which preparations have been long underway, will be held between the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Department of State on November, 30 2010 in Ankara. The relevant Turkish institutions will also be represented at this meeting to be conducted through the coordination of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Reha Keskin-tepe Director General for Security and Research will be the co-chair of the meeting. Ambassador Daniel Benjamin, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, the U.S. Department of State, is leading an interagency delegation including representatives of the Defense, Justice and Treasury Departments as well as other agencies. Consultations will focus on all relevant aspects of terrorism, including combating PKK and other terrorist organizations; and bilateral cooperation on counterterrorism issues between Turkey and the U.S.

No: 6, 10 January 2011, Press Release Regarding the Attack Against Representative Gabrielle Giffords

We strongly condemn the heinous attack against Representative Gabrielle Giffords and her constituents that occurred in Arizona last weekend.

On this very sad occasion, we wish a speedy recovery to Representative Giffords who is struggling for her life and all others who were wounded, and convey our deepest condolences to the bereaved families of those who lost their lives as well as to the people of the United States of America.

No: 28, 22 January 2011, Press Release Regarding the Meeting Between P5+1 and Iran in Istanbul on 21-22 January 2011

P5+1 (USA, Russian Federation, China, United Kingdom, France, Germany) and Iran convened at a meeting hosted by Turkey in Istanbul on 21-22 January 2011. The Parties held contacts with a view to finding a common ground for cooperation on nuclear issues and on this occasion voiced their mutual expectations.

During the talks, the Vienna Group countries (USA, Russia, France) and Iran also had a separate meeting for the first time in this process.

In the course of the talks, Turkey stayed in contact with the Parties when requested and made constructive suggestions. Naturally, the essence of the matter in this process is that the Parties themselves reach a compromise.

We are pleased that the Parties have left the door open for further talks in the time ahead with a view to addressing problematic issues on the basis of the results of the Istanbul meetings. We expect the Parties to reflect on the proposals made in Istanbul in depth.

Turkey will continue her efforts, as before, towards taking the process forward and eventually reaching a peaceful resolution to the issue.

We would like to extend our thanks to H.E. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission, and the representatives of P5+1, as well as H.E. Saeed Jalili, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council for their open-minded approach at the Istanbul talks and cooperation with Turkey. We wish them every success in their future efforts.

No: 41, 31 January 2011, Press Release Regarding the Completion of the Ratification Process by the Russian Parliament of the New US-RF Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START)

Following the ratification by the US Senate on 22 December 2010, Turkey welcomes the completion of the ratification process by the Russian Parliament of the new US-RF Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which was signed on 8 April 2010 by US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dimitry Medvedev after long standing negotiations.

Considering the new START as a significant step towards the objective of enhancing global security and achieving a nuclear weapons-free world, Turkey from the beginning has been encouraging the early entry into force of the Treaty. We hope that this positive development will be followed by steps towards mutual reduction of nuclear weapons in other categories.

As a firm supporter of the three main pillars of the international non-proliferation regime, founded on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), namely the reduction and eventually total elimination of nuclear weapons, prevention of the proliferation of these weapons and the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Turkey, on this occasion, once again reaffirms its commitment to the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world and its support to all noteworthy steps taken to this end.

No:112, 24 April 2011, Press Release Regarding the Statement of President Barack Obama

President Obama's statement issued on April 23, 2011, takes a one sided approach reflecting Armenian views regarding the dispute between Turks and Armenians on the painful part of their common history.

This statement distorts the historical facts. Therefore, we find it very problematic and deeply regret it.

Issued by domestic political considerations, such statements serve no purpose but making it difficult for Turks and Armenians to reach a just memory. One-sided statements that interpret controversial historical events by a selective sense of justice prevent understanding of the truth.

We expect the United States not to render difficulty but to facilitate the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia, and the studies on the historical dimension. Holding a partisan view on historical pains, such statements do not serve peace or the common future of peoples.

Despite all attempts to interfere with the writing of history based on calculations of current political interests, we will maintain our determination to reach a just memory and to build our common future with Armenia on that basis.

No:118, 2 May 2011, Press Release Regarding the Killing of Osama Bin Laden, the Leader of Al-Qaeda

The President of the United States has announced that Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, was captured dead as a result of an operation conducted in Pakistan.

We consider this development as an extremely important step in the fight against terrorism.

Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden were responsible for several terrorist attacks, including 9/11, which have ensanguined different parts of the world and have cost thousands of innocent lives. They were also behind the terrorist bombings in Istanbul in November 2003.

Al-Qaeda and bin Laden have been making an unacceptable effort to legitimize their planned or fostered terrorist activities by abusing Islam. Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden have induced an unjustified and groundless identification of Islam with terrorism and, have thereby, provided grounds for those who aim at harming Islam. Turkey is strongly against the association of Islam with terrorism in any way, as well as to those who act with this purpose. It is crucial that the international community make this distinction.

The end of Bin Laden demonstrates that crimes against humanity committed by terrorists who claim the lives of innocent people will not remain unpunished and that justice will ultimately be served. This is a lesson not only for Al-Qaeda, but for all other terrorist organizations.

The fundamental objective in combating terrorism at the global level is to defeat all types of terrorism. In line with this objective, it is important to sustain international efforts with determination, cooperation and in solidarity. Turkey will always do her best to support these efforts.

No:161, 8 July 2011, Press Release Regarding the Visit of the US Secretary of State H.E. Mrs. Hillary Clinton to Turkey

US Secretary of State H.E. Mrs. Hillary Clinton will visit Turkey on 15-16 July 2011 upon the invitation of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu. Secretary of State Clinton will attend the Fourth Contact Group Meeting on Libya to be held on 15 July 2011 in Istanbul and conduct bilateral contacts.

During this bilateral visit, in addition to the meeting chaired by Minister Davutoğlu, it is expected that the US Secretary of State will also be received by the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister.

Turkey and the United States are two friendly and allied countries. Intensive contacts that behoves the concept of Model Partnership are being conducted at all levels. During Mrs. Clinton's visit, bilateral relations as well as some global and regional issues which figure on our common agenda are expected to be reviewed.

No:221, 30 September, Press Release Regarding the Seventh Meeting of Turkey-United States Economic Partnership Commission

The Seventh Meeting of the Economic Partnership Commission, which has been regularly held since 2002 between Turkey and the United States, will be organized in Ankara on 3 October 2011 under the co-chairmanship of Deputy Undersecretary for Bilateral Political Affairs and Public Diplomacy Ambassador Selim Yenel and United States Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs, Mr. Jose Fernandez.

Mutual development of economic, commercial and investment relations between Turkey and the United States and creating new areas of cooperation such as contributing to the establishment of Istanbul as a global financial center will be on the agenda of the meeting.

The Seventh Meeting of the Economic Partnership Commission is also expected to contribute to the future work of the Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation (FSECC) which was established with a view to developing economic and commercial relations between Turkey and the United States.

No:226, 7 October 2011, Press Release Regarding the statements by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy

We are astounded and deeply regret the statements by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy during his visit to Armenia on the 6-7 October, requesting Turkey to review its history and recognize, by the end of his own term of office, Armenian allegations regarding the events of 1915. The President also said that he would be in favour of taking further steps to support Armenian claims if Turkey fails to do this.

Attempts to exploit controversies between Turkey and Armenia by third parties for their domestic political agenda and even to see in themselves the right to connect this to their electoral calendar point to a misperception of their own political power. The French people will judge whether such approaches, based on electoral calculations, are compatible with the French democratic culture and state tradition.

Such an inconsistent and imprudent handling of this serious matter that has human and moral dimensions is unfortunate. Political declarations based on one-sided information and reflecting accusatory judgments regarding historical events are very far from the fair approach that this issue requires and demonstrate a failure to even comprehend Turkey's approach on the matter. This painful part of our long history with the Armenians can be freely debated in Turkey, unlike in some countries that are party to this issue or others that are not, including France.

Turkey will continue its constructive approach on how to improve its relations with Armenia, overcome the controversy over the events of 1915 and reach a just memory.

What is expected from France is to make a positive contribution to this process and to adopt a responsible approach and discourse that would show care to avoid both damaging the multi-dimensional relationship between Turkey and France and offending the Turkish community in France.

No:236, 19 October 2011, Press Release Regarding the Conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East

Turkey welcomes the recent announcement by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States - the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution proposing a Middle East free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction - that Finland will host the conference to be held next year on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We also welcome the appointment of Mr Jaakko Laajava, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs of Finland, as the facilitator for the 2012 conference.

Firmly committed to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means, Turkey worked towards the adoption of the decision in the Final Document of the NPT 2010 Review Conference to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Turkey pledges its full support to Finland and Undersecretary Laajava for the successful convening of the 2012 conference.

Turkey views the 2012 conference as an initial step in a long process, the success of which will depend on the genuine political engagement of all states in the Middle East. We, therefore, encourage countries of the region to participate in the conference and constructively contribute to the process.

No: 245, 30 October 2011, Press Release Regarding the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan

Turkey will host the “Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan” on 2 November 2011. The conference will be inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey, and H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the United Arab Emirates , Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United States of America, Britain, France, Germany, Australia, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Poland, Canada, Italy, the UN, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Economic Cooperation Organization, CICA, EU, NATO, OSCE, SCO and SAARC have been invited to attend the Conference.

H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, and H.E. Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, will co-chair the Conference, which will be held to promote regional cooperation in order to ensure peace, welfare and prosperity in Afghanistan.

On the occasion of the Conference, a document that aims to strengthen regional security and cooperation is expected to be adopted and made public. The abovementioned document is aimed to contribute also to various regional initiatives and mechanisms regarding Afghanistan which are currently being implemented.

No:246, 30 October 2011, Press Release Regarding The Armed Attack Against the US Embassy in Sarajevo

We strongly condemn the armed attack occurred on October 28, Friday, against the US Embassy in Sarajevo. We wish quick recovery to the injured security officer, and welcome the arrest of the perpetrator right after that attack.

We consider this shameful attack as an act of violence targeting not only the brotherly and friendly nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the common values of this country, but also its friends.

On this occasion, we would like to reiterate our firm commitment towards sovereignty and territorial integrity of BiH, and towards having a functioning state structure within its internationally recognized borders. We also wish to invite all local political leaders to solve the problems of the country with common sense and restraint, and within the spirit of cooperation.

QA: 34, 13 December 2011, Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question

A news report published in the Israeli press claims that the United States has made some efforts in order to reconcile Turkey and Israel (in the context of the Israeli attack on the Gaza humanitarian aid convoy).

The news report in question is not correct.

In fact, it is very well-known what Israel needs to do for progress in Turkish – Israeli relations. Our position and expectations on this matter remain unchanged.

No: 22, 23 January 2012, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to Moscow

H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, will pay a visit to Moscow on 25 January 2012 in order to attend the second meeting of the Joint Strategic Planning Group held in the framework of the High Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) which was founded between Turkey and the RF on 12 May 2010 under the co-chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, and H.E. Mr. Dimitri Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation (RF). The first meeting of the Group held in Istanbul on 20 January 2011 was chaired by H.E. Mr. Davutoğlu and H.E. Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RF.

The abovementioned meeting of the Joint Strategic Planning Group to be held under the co-chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Davutoğlu and H.E. Mr. Lavrov serves as preparation for the third HLCC meeting which is envisaged to be organized within 2012.

During the meeting, recent developments and cooperation opportunities in bilateral relations are expected to be taken up. Furthermore, a comprehensive exchange of views on major regional and international developments is also foreseen.

QA: 1, 17 January 2012, Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question

We strongly condemn the unfounded and inappropriate allegations expressed yesterday evening about our country during a debate held in South Carolina by Texas Governor Rick Perry, who is running for Republican Nomination for the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election.

Those individuals who are candidates for positions requiring responsibility such as the U.S. Presidency are expected to be more knowledgeable on global affairs and more careful in their statements.

Turkey became a member of NATO when the Governor was just two years old. It is a member which contributed significantly to the Transatlantic Alliance's history of braving many challenges and it will continue to do so. Turkey has also been among the front line countries in the fight against terrorism. Turkey is co-chairing with the U.S. the Global Counterterrorism Forum. Our leaders are respected political figures whose opinions are highly valued not only in the U.S. but also in our region and throughout the world.

In any case, the weak support that Mr. Perry received at the opinion polls and the primaries has revealed that his unfortunate views are not shared by the Republican Party grassroots.

This reflects the commonsense of the U.S. electorate. The U.S. has no time to lose with such candidates who do not even know America's Allies.

No: 35, 2 February 2012, Press Release Regarding the “Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers” Update issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury

The press release issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) stated that Moldova-based PKK members Zeyneddin Geleri, Çerkez Akbulut (a.k.a Cernit Murat) and Ömer Boztepe were listed as “Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers” under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act) due to their drug trafficking activities in Europe. Furthermore, it was stated that Ömer Geleri and three Romania-based companies were included in the above list due to their activities related to Zeyneddin Geleri. As a result of this action, U.S. persons are prohibited from conducting financial or commercial transactions with the designees and any assets they may have under U.S. jurisdiction are frozen.

OFAC had previously listed the ringleaders of the PKK Murat Karayılan, Ali Rıza Altun and Zübeyir Aydar on 14 October 2009, and Cemil Bayık, Duran Kalkan, Remzi Kartal, Sabri Ok and Adem Uzun on 20 April 2011 respectively as “Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers.” The number of PKK members included in this list has now reached 12 with the final decision of the U.S. Department of Treasury.

We welcome this step taken by the U.S. authorities. We would like to stress again the importance of and the need to ban all activities of the PKK terrorist organization and its affiliated structures, which are known to be directly involved in all kinds of organized crime, including drugs trafficking for terrorism financing.

No: 39, 8 February 2012, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey to the United States of America

H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, upon the invitation of Her Excellency Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State of the United States of America, will pay a working visit to the United States of America on 8-14 February 2012.

During the visit, H.E. Mr Davutoğlu will meet H.E. Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State of the United States of America and H.E. Mr. Thomas Donilon, National Security Adviser. H.E. Mr. Davutoğlu will also have meetings on the Hill.

Furthermore, on the occasion of his visit to the United States, H.E. Mr. Davutoğlu will have meetings with representatives of various think tanks and opinion leaders and will give interviews to some leading media organizations.

The meetings in the United States will provide an opportunity for exchanging views on bilateral, regional and global issues of interest to both countries.

No: 46, 16 February 2012, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping, Vice President of the People's Republic of China, to Turkey

Upon the invitation of H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping, Vice President of the People's Republic of China (PRC), will pay an official visit to Turkey on 20-22 February 2012 in the framework of his tour comprising the USA, Ireland and Turkey.

During the meetings to be held with President Gül on 21 February, bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues will be taken up. The Chinese Vice President is envisaged to meet with H.E. Mr. Cemil Çiçek, Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, and H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey the same day.

The Chinese Vice President will attend the Turkey-China Business Forum to be held in Istanbul on 22 February and address Turkish and Chinese businessmen and investors.

Relations between Turkey and the PRC have gained impetus with the recent high-level visits and were elevated to the level of “strategic cooperation” in 2010. 2011 was celebrated as the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, furthermore, 2012 and 2013 have been declared as “the Year of China in Turkey” and “the Year of Turkey in China” respectively

H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping’s first ever visit to Turkey as the Vice President of the PRC will provide an opportunity to exchange views on issues on the bilateral agenda at a first hand basis and will contribute to the diversification of the relations on the basis of strategic cooperation in the coming period.

No: 58, 24 February 2012, Press Release Regarding the Burning of the Holy Quran by Some ISAF Elements at the Bagram Base in Afghanistan

We have learned with great indignation and sorrow that some ISAF elements have burned the Holy Quran at the Bagram Base in Afghanistan. We strongly condemn this misdeed perpetrated.

The subjection of the Holy Quran to such a treatment has disturbed the entire world public opinion and hurt its conscience.

Our reaction to the event in question was conveyed to Admiral James Stavridis, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, who visited Turkey on 22 February 2012.

Necessary warnings were made in NATO in order to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents and General John Allen, Commander of ISAF, apologized also for the incident.

Furthermore, we consider the apologies conveyed later by the US President Barack Obama to the people of Afghanistan for this incident, as a development indicating that the USA has approached this incident with sensitivity.

Turkey will continue to follow closely this matter and issue necessary advices and warnings in order to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents.

No: 70, 03 March 2012, Press Release Regarding the Latest Developments in North Korea's Nuclear Activities

The risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is among the prominent threats to international peace and security. Turkey encourages and actively supports international efforts for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Within the framework of our policy, we welcome the announcement by North Korea to halt its long-range missile and nuclear tests and uranium enrichment activities following the third round of talks held between the delegations of the USA and North Korea. The announcement that North Korea will accept the return of IAEA inspectors to the country is also satisfactory. We hope that the commitments in question will be implemented as soon as possible and these important developments will pave the way for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks Process interrupted in 2009 without further delay.

No:116, 24 April 2012, Press Release Regarding the Statement of US President Barack Obama on the Occasion of 24 April

In his statement issued on 24 April 2012, US President Obama demonstrated this year once again an unfounded approach which reflects the Armenian views regarding the dispute between Turks and Armenians on the painful part of their common history. We regard this statement, which distorts the historical facts, as very problematic in every aspect and deeply regret it.

Issued upon domestic political considerations and interpreting controversial historical events with a selective sense of justice, such one-sided statements are not only misguided, but also render the normalization of the relations between Turkey and Armenia difficult.

What should be done by the US, as an important ally of Turkey, is not to further deepen the problem with such an approach, which also damages Turkish-American relations, but to provide constructive contributions for its resolution and, in this regard, to encourage the Armenian side, which avoids joint historical research, to be more realistic and conciliatory.

It should also be known that the pain experienced during the World War I is a shared one and the memory of that period is as sensitive for the Turkish people as for the Armenians. Despite all the prejudiced attempts to interfere with the writing of history, we will maintain our efforts to reach a just memory.

No: 117, 24 April 2012, Press Release Regarding the Statements Delivered by the President of France Sarkozy and Presidential Candidate Hollande in Paris

The statements delivered by the President of France Nicolas Sarkozy and by the Presidential candidate François Hollande on the occasion of the commemoration ceremony in Paris on 24 April and which apparently reflect electoral considerations in the country, provide the latest examples of the abuse of controversial historical issues for the purpose of internal political calculations.

Politicization of history for different motivations is highly unfortunate. Prejudiced and discriminatory approaches can serve neither justice nor a correct understanding of history. What is expected from prominent French politicians is not to foment hatred, but to act on the basis of facts and in accordance with the responsibility of statesmen by giving messages to encourage Turks and Armenians to reach together a just memory.

It is not possible to obtain results through artificial external impositions on an issue which should be settled between the concerned countries. Such statements also impede efforts to establish peace and tranquillity in the region.

No: 154, 04 June 2012, Press Release Regarding the Second Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of Global Counterterrorism Forum

On 7-8 June 2012, Turkey will host the Second Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) in Istanbul. The Committee is the highest decision-making body of the Forum, which was formally launched in September 2011 and is co-chaired by Turkey and the USA. 29 nations including Turkey and the EU are members of the Forum.

GCTF members represent different geographies around the world, sharing a common ground in fighting terrorism. Participation in the Forum and its cooperation activities are on voluntary basis. GCTF is intended to become a platform to contribute to the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It aims at bringing together the national experiences knowledge and ongoing efforts in this field in a civilian-oriented perspective. In this vein, the Forum provides an opportunity for interaction among relevant experts. In the Second meeting of the Coordinating Committee, various documents are to be adopted and projects to be announced in line with GCTF's objectives.

The majority of the GCTF Members will attend the meeting in Istanbul at ministerial level. The UN which has contributed to the process since its inception will also participate at the meeting.

The Ministerial Session of the 2nd Meeting of the Coordinating Committee will be held on June 7, which will be followed by sessions to be conducted by senior officials on June 7 and 8.

Global Counterterrorism Forum with its multi-dimensional perspective on a global scale, constitutes a significant initiative in the fight against terrorism.

No: 139, 17 May 2012, Press Release Regarding the Chicago Summit Meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government

The Summit Meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government will be hosted by the United States on 20-21 May 2012 in Chicago.

Turkey will be represented in the Summit by a delegation headed by H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic, which will include also H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Mr. İsmet Yılmaz, Minister of National Defense.

On the margins of the Summit, a working session and lunch attended by NATO Heads of State and Government will be held; the leaders of the countries contributing to NATO's ISAF operation and representatives of related international organizations will come together during the meeting on Afghanistan; and a meeting will be organized with the participation of some partner countries. Furthermore, separate working lunches will be held for NATO Foreign and Defense Ministers.

It is expected that priority topics on the agenda of the Alliance will be discussed and certain important decisions will be taken regarding them. Defense Package and Smart Defense, Ballistic Missile Defense System, Alliance's Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR), partnerships and Afghanistan are the priority items on the agenda of the Summit.

At the Chicago Summit, NATO's Ballistic Missile Defence Interim Capability is expected to be declared. The main objective of this decision is to eliminate risks and dangers emanating from the spread of global ballistic missile and to ensure the security and defense of each ally. In this regard, Turkey has made a significant contribution on the basis of Alliance solidarity by hosting an early warning radar in Malatya's Kürecik district.

The meeting to be held with the participation of the leaders of the countries, contributing to the ISAF operation will provide an opportunity to exchange comprehensive views on establishing stability and security in Afghanistan.

In the special meeting that the Allied countries will hold with thirteen partner countries, it is expected to thank these countries which have made political, financial and military contributions to the Alliance, to discuss common security threats and to take decisions on further strengthening relations between the Alliance and these partners.

No: 165, 13 June 2012, Press Release Regarding the Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference in Kabul

The Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference to be held in Kabul on 14 June 2012 will be attended by a delegation headed by H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

H.E. Mr. Davutoğlu will co-chair the Conference along with H.E. Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

It is envisaged that along with Turkey, Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan as the countries in the region, and Australia, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Iraq, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States as countries supporting the process, as well as the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia will participate in the Conference.

Turkey believes in the importance of regional cooperation for ensuring peace and stability in the region and for promoting Afghanistan as a self-sufficient and prosperous country. In this respect, since it did so for the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan held on 2 November 2011 initiating the Istanbul Process, Turkey provides every possible contribution to the Kabul Ministerial Conference which constitutes the continuation of this process.

H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu will meet with Ministers of Foreign Affairs of other participating countries and hold talks with Afghan authorities in Kabul on the margins of the Conference.

No: 215, 12 September 2012, Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack to the U.S. Mission in Benghazi

We condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist attack which took place in the city of Benghazi in Libya on September 11, 2012 and took the lives of Mr. Christopher Stevens, U.S. Ambassador to Tripoli, and the three other staff.

We convey our message of solidarity and condolences to the relatives of those who lost their lives in this heinous attack, as well as to the people of the United States.

As a country that had lost many of its diplomats in terrorist attacks, we are awaiting for the perpetrators of this attack, which targeted an Ambassador who is under the protection of the international law, to be brought to justice as soon as possible.

This terrorist act on the U.S. Ambassador has also targeted the security and stability of Libya, as well as the Libyan people's aspirations for peace and tranquility.

Turkey has consistently emphasized that terror has no religion or nationality, and is a crime against humanity. Turkey continues to believe that the effective combating of terrorism requires the unity and the solidarity of the international community.

We hope that security and stability can prevail in Libya as soon as possible so that such terrorist attacks will not take place in the country again. We will resolutely continue our support for the Government of Libya and its people in their efforts to this end.

QA-12, 5 September 2012, Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question

We are perplexed that the reactions by the Armenian diaspora in the United States, following the extradition by the Hungarian authorities and subsequent pardoning by the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev of Ramil Safarov, who had been serving a life sentence in a Hungarian jail for killing an Armenian officer Gurgen Margaryan during a NATO training event in Budapest are also being directed at Turkey.

These efforts and baseless claims targeting Turkey, which has not been involved at any stage of the process, are nothing more than another attempt at defamation by ill-intentioned circles that habitually confront Turkey in every platform.

No: 271, 26 November 2012, Press Release Regarding the Decision to Postpone the International Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and All Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Turkey is disappointed to be informed of the decision to postpone the international Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which the 2010 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty had foreseen to be organized this year.

It is Turkey's sincere expectation that the Conference takes place at the earliest convenience, since this initiative would represent not only an important confidence building measure at this critical stage in the Middle East, but also a significant stimulus to the NPT Review Process.

To this end, we call on all states to adopt a constructive approach and deploy genuine efforts for the organization of the Conference at the earliest convenience.

Turkey appreciates and continues to fully support the efforts of the Facilitator, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava of Finland, and his team.

No: 272, 26 November 2012, Press Release Regarding the Ninth Meeting of the Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission

The Ninth Meeting of the Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission, which has been convened regularly since 2002, will be organized in Washington DC on 28-29 November 2012 under the co-chairmanship of Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Gücük and Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, Jose Fernandez.

Mutual development of economic, commercial and investment relations between Turkey and the United States and cooperation opportunities in third countries will be on the agenda of the meeting.

The Ninth Meeting of the Economic Partnership Commission is also expected to contribute to the future work of the Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation (FSECC) which was established in 2009 with a view to developing economic and commercial relations between Turkey and the United States.

QA-22, 22 December 2012, Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question Regarding the Press Reports on the Mavi Marmara Incident

Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question on the accuracy of press reports - which were reflected by international press as if an inquiry has been conducted on Jewish citizens of Turkey - stating that some institutions in Turkey, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, recently prepared a study and presented it to a court in order to identify some individuals from Turkey who participated in the Mavi Marmara raid.

There is no basis for this news published with reference to some Turkish institutions. It is clear that these press reports which have been picked up by the foreign press, particularly in the U.S., have been exploited and led to some misperceptions.

In this context, it is only normal that both national and international legal proceedings are held regarding the attack by Israel armed forces on the humanitarian aid convoy to Gaza on May 31, 2010. These legal processes will continue.

We are also saddened to see that the way the developments regarding these legal proceedings in Turkey are presented has been discomfoting and troubling our Jewish citizens. We cannot accept generalization and presentation of allegations regarding possible perpetrators of the incident in a way that targets the Turkish Jewish community who are a part of our society and equal citizens of Turkey.

In no point in Turkey's history has there been any anti-Semitism; there is none today, and there will be none in the future. Racism has no place in our nation's culture or traditions. It is well known that Turkey for centuries has been a safe-haven for Jews and others fleeing from persecution. Moreover, Turkish authorities have on numerous occasions underlined at the highest levels that we regard anti-Semitism and racism as a crime against humanity.

We strongly reject recent efforts - based on some news reports in the international press - to try to create a perception that there exists a specific attitude towards our Jewish citizens in Turkey.

No: 287, 12 December 2012, Press Release Regarding the Long Range Rocket Launched by North Korea

Turkey strongly condemns today's long range rocket launch using ballistic missile technology, undertaken by North Korea in violation of this country's international obligations. We are deeply concerned by the possible negative implications of this irresponsible step taken by North Korea despite all international warnings. We urge North Korea to fully comply with its obligations under the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions without delay.

Turkey attaches importance to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and encourages the immediate resumption of the of Six-Party Talks to this effect.

No: 282, 4 December 2012, Press Release Regarding the North Atlantic Council's Decision to Augment Turkey's National Air Defence

In response to our formal request of 21 November 2012 in the light of threats and risks directed against our national security by the ongoing crisis in Syria, the North Atlantic Council has agreed, at its meeting held on 4 December 2012 at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, to augment our national air defence in order to defend the Turkish population and territories and to contribute to the de-escalation of the crisis along the Alliance's border. In this framework, the North Atlantic Council has welcomed the intention of Germany, the Netherlands and the United States to deploy Patriot batteries in our country.

Within the framework of the Council decision, all Allies have voiced their grave concern regarding the situation along NATO's southeastern border, and declared their determination to deter threats towards, and to defend, our country. They have also reiterated their commitment to the security of NATO, and their full solidarity and resolve to protect the Allied populations and territories.

Turkey welcomes this decision by NATO Foreign Ministers, which was taken as a consequence of the consultation process initiated by the North Atlantic Council meetings on 26 June and 3 October upon our request within the framework of Article IV of the North Atlantic Treaty. This decision is important, as it demonstrates and re-confirms Allied solidarity and unity in practical terms.

The measures to be taken are in no way offensive. These measures are defensive and aim to augment our national air defence.

These defensive measures have nothing to do with the establishment of a no-fly-zone. The locations in which these assets will be deployed are determined in light of the necessary military-technical analysis.

Turkey will continue the initiatives she has been undertaking with a view to solve the Syrian crisis through peaceful ways, with the same resolve as before.

No: 281, 4 December 2012, Press Release Regarding the News Pertaining to a Possible Long-Range Missile Test by North Korea

We are concerned about the news pertaining to a possible long-range missile test by North Korea in the coming days, in the name of a “working satellite”.

Such a development will not only be a provocation that undermines international expectations from North Korea for acting responsibly, but also be a clear violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874.

Turkey actively supports international efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and attaches importance to the demilitarization of the Korean Peninsula, thereby generating welfare and stability, and the resumption of the Six-Party Talks at the earliest convenience.

To this end, we expect North Korea to refrain from such steps like long-range missile tests, that would have negative regional and global effects.

No: 2, 7 January 2013, Press Release Regarding the Technical Preparations for Patriot Batteries to be Sent to Augment Turkey's National Air Defense

As it would be recalled, pursuant to the official request on November 21, 2012 by our side, the North Atlantic Council has agreed to augment Turkish national air defenses in its meeting held at Foreign Affairs Ministerial level on 4 December 2012, with an aim to defend the population and the territory of Turkey and to contribute to the de-escalation of the crisis along the Alliance's border while emphasizing that this measure would be only for defensive purposes and it would in no way support a no-fly zone or any offensive operation. Thereafter, the U.S.A., the Netherlands and Germany declared their intention to provide two Patriot batteries each.

In the subsequent stage, site survey and analysis studies were conducted in relevant localities that had been pre-determined in accordance with the security assessments of the Turkish General Staff Headquarters and NATO military officials, taking into consideration Turkey's priorities with a view to establish the positions where Patriot batteries will be deployed . As a result of this preparatory work, the batteries from Germany, Netherlands and the U.S.A. are decided to be deployed respectively near Kahramanmaraş, Adana and Gaziantep.

Patriot batteries' deployment positions have been determined by taking into account the military-technical characteristics of these systems to ensure the widest possible coverage and protection for the civilian population.

These batteries have been planned to be transferred to Turkey in January 2013, and become operational as soon as possible by rapidly completing technical preparations. For this purpose, within the scope of the implementation of the North Atlantic Council's decision dated December 4, 2012 and the necessary military-technical preparations, the Allied personnel responsible for the operation of the batteries in question are arriving in Turkey. In this context, the German technical personnel have already visited Kahramanmaraş and the Dutch technical teams Adana, while the U.S. technical personnel are expected to arrive in Gaziantep in order to conclude the technical preparations. All stages of this process are implemented under the control of Turkey and the supervision by Turkish military authorities.

No: 26, 1 February 2013, Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack Perpetrated Against U.S. Embassy in Ankara

We strongly condemn the heinous terrorist attack perpetrated against U.S. Embassy in Ankara on 1 February 2013 and express our full and cordial solidarity with all members of the Embassy, especially Ambassador Frank Riccardone.

We wish God's mercy upon our citizen who lost his life in this hateful attack and convey our condolences to his bereaved family. We also wish a speedy recovery to our two wounded citizens, including Didem Tuncay, the distinguished member of press.

The attack against U.S. Embassy in Ankara is an aggressive terrorist act against the democratic values that Turkey upholds along with the USA and other allies.

Turkey believes that the effective fight against terrorism should be carried out in unity and solidarity with the international community. In this process, we will resolutely continue our fight against terrorism in a spirit of full solidarity and cooperation with the USA and other allies.

No: 4, 11 January 2013, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to Moscow

H.E. Mr. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, paid a visit to Moscow on 9-10 January 2013 upon the invitation of H.E. Mr. Mikhail Bogdanov, Special Representative of the President for the Middle East and Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation.

In the meeting which was a follow up to the visit of H.E. Mr. Bogdanov to Ankara on 22 November 2012 and held in a candid atmosphere on the developments in the Middle East and the North Africa, a comprehensive exchange on the situation in Syria took place. In this vein, the importance of opening up the way for the transition process as soon as possible to enable political transformation through eliminating differences of opinion about the Geneva Declaration was underscored in order to stop the bloodshed in Syria. To this end, it was indicated that the current efforts must be carried out on the basis of a realistic ground taking into account the aspirations of the Syrian people.

At the talks, it was also agreed that these consultations between Turkey and the Russian Federation on the regional issues should continue on a regular basis.

QA-1, 16 January 2013, Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Response to a Question Regarding the Petition Launched on the Web Site of the White House with a Demand for Turkey to Open Its Border with Armenia for Refugees of Armenian Origin Fleeing from Syria to Armenia

The Turkish nation has kept the tradition of extending a helping hand to those who have been in a dire need without any religious, lingual, racial and ethnical discrimination, which has been a natural manifestation of the conscientious understanding it had inherited from its ancestors.

As a reflection of this understanding, Turkey did not hesitate to be amongst the main countries extending a helping hand to Armenia in face of its difficulties due to natural disasters. Moreover, Turkey has provided every kind of facilities in transmitting of humanitarian assistance sent from Armenia to the ethnic Armenians living in Syria. On the other hand, it is considered to be beneficial to emphasize then again that Turkey has opened its arms to more than 150 thousand people who were forced to leave their country because of the clashes in Syria without making religious, lingual, racial and ethnical discrimination. Finally it must be also emphasized that a great number of Armenians fleeing from Syria have already reached Armenia from various routes including through Turkey.

Turkey will preserve its sensitivity for humanitarian issues without discrimination in the forthcoming period as well.

It is obvious that the scope, method and conditions of any steps to be taken in meeting possible demands regarding humanitarian issues, will be determined by Turkey.

No: 49, 28 February 2013, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. John Kerry, US Secretary of State, to Turkey

H.E. Mr. John Kerry, Secretary of State of the United States of America, will pay a visit to Turkey on March 1-2, 2013 upon the invitation of H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

On the occasion of the visit, in addition to meetings to be held between the delegations of the two countries, the Secretary of State will be received by H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey and H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

Bilateral relations as well as various regional and global issues will be discussed during the visit.

No: 55, 5 March 2013, Press Release Regarding the Visit to Moscow of H.E. Ambassador Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

H.E. Ambassador Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and H.E Mr. Grigory Karasin, State Secretary and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation will hold consultations on Eurasia in Moscow on March 7 , 2013 within the framework of regular contacts and consultations between the two countries.

On the occasion of the consultations, developments in the South Caucasus and Central Asia as well as opportunities for cooperation in Eurasia will be discussed.

No: 6, 12 January 2013, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to the USA

H.E. Mr. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, will pay a visit to the United States on 14-16 January 2013 upon the invitation of H.E. Mr. William Burns, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States, to take up bilateral issues and regional developments on the agenda of the two countries. This visit will be a follow up of the regular political consultations between the two countries.

No: 97, 5 April 2013, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. John Kerry, US Secretary of State, to Turkey

H.E. Mr. John Kerry, Secretary of State of the United States of America, will pay a visit to Turkey on April 6-7, 2013.

The Secretary of State will meet with H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and will be received by H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey in Istanbul.

Bilateral relations and recent developments regarding international and regional issues will be discussed during the talks.

No: 119, 24 April 2013, Press Release Regarding the Statement of US President Barack Obama on the Occasion of 24 April

In his statement issued on 24 April 2013, US President Obama has unfortunately demonstrated this year once again a one-sided approach which reflects the Armenian views regarding the dispute between Turks and Armenians on the painful part of their common history.

We regard this statement, which distorts the historical facts, as problematic in every aspect and deeply regret it.

Issued under the influence of domestic political considerations and interpreting controversial historical events on the basis of one-sided information and with a selective sense of justice, such statements damage both Turkish-American relations, and also render it more difficult for Turks and Armenians to reach a just memory.

Our expectation from an important ally of Turkey such as the US is not to further deepen the problem, but to provide constructive contributions for its resolution, and to encourage the Armenian side, which avoids objective and scientific research of the issue, to be more realistic and conciliatory.

It should also be known that the pain experienced during the World War I is a shared one and the memory of that period is as sensitive for the Turkish people as it is for the Armenians. Despite the prejudiced attempts to hinder a correct understanding of history, Turkey approaches the issue with self-confidence and an open-mind, and wants the truth to be investigated in all its aspects.

No: 113, 19 April 2013, Press Release Regarding the Meeting at the level of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs on Syria

A meeting at the level of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, with the participation of some member countries of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People will be hosted by Turkey in Istanbul on 20 April 2013.

The current situation in Syria is the result of the regime's policies based on the suppression of the legitimate demands of the people through violence. The international community is making effort to support the people of Syria and to enable the establishment of peace and stability in this country as soon as possible. The Istanbul meeting is being organized with the purpose of contributing to the coordination of efforts in this direction and taking concrete steps.

H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and senior officials of the USA, the United Kingdom, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, the UAE, Italy, Germany and France, as well as the representatives of the Syrian National Coalition will participate in the meeting.

No: 111, 17 April 2013, Press Release Regarding the Attacks Perpetrated in Boston, the U.S.A.

We are deeply saddened by the fact that three people lost their lives and many were injured as a result of the bomb attacks perpetrated in Boston, in the United States of America on 15 April 2013.

President Barack Obama stated that the attack is investigated as an act of terrorism. We strongly condemn this heinous attack targeting many innocent people, including children. The Republic of Turkey, with its Government and people, wholeheartedly shares the pain faced by the Government and people of the U.S.A.

We convey our condolences to the relatives of those who lost their lives in the attack and wish speedy recovery to the wounded. We express once again our strong feelings of solidarity with the Government and people of the U.S.A.

No: 120, 25 April 2013, Press Release Regarding the Bomb Attack against the French Embassy in Tripoli

We have learned with sorrow that two French security guards and a Libyan citizen were wounded during the bomb attack perpetrated on April 23rd 2013 against the French Embassy in Tripoli.

We condemn this heinous terrorist attack which targets the security and stability of Libya as well as France and wish a speedy recovery to those injured.

Turkey, stating on every occasion that terrorism has no nationality or religion and that it constitutes a crime against humanity, believes that an effective fight against terrorism can be achieved through the unity and solidarity of the international community.

Turkey will continue to support the establishment of security and stability in Libya, in cooperation with the international community.

No: 146, 22 May 2013, Press Release Regarding the Tenth Meeting of the Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission

The Tenth Meeting of the Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission, which has been convened regularly since 2002, will be organized in Ankara on 23 May 2013 under the co-chairmanship of Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Tuğrul Gücük and United States Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, Jose Fernandez.

Mutual development of economic, commercial and investment relations between Turkey and the United States and cooperation opportunities in third countries will be on the agenda of the meeting.

The Tenth Meeting of the Economic Partnership Commission is also expected to contribute to the future work of the Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation (FSECC) which was established in 2009 with a view to developing economic and commercial relations between Turkey and the United States.

No: 145, 21 May 2013, Press Release Regarding the Meeting at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on Syria in Amman

A meeting at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs will be convened with the participation of some member countries of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People in Amman, capital of Jordan, on May 22, 2013.

This meeting which aims for coordinating the efforts by the international community for the resolution of the ongoing conflict in Syria by peaceful means within the framework of the legitimate demands of the Syrian people and for the establishment of peace and stability in this country as soon as possible, is also a follow-up to the Istanbul meeting held on April 20, 2013.

Besides H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Foreign Minister of Turkey, Foreign Ministers and senior officials from the USA, the United Kingdom, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, the UAE, Italy, Germany and France and the representatives of the Syrian National Coalition will take part in the meeting to be hosted by Jordan.

QA-11, 14 June 2013, Answer of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey to a Question Regarding the Regime's Use of Chemical Weapons in Syria

The regime's brutal war against its own people in Syria has gained a new dimension by the allegations of use of chemical weapons. These allegations which caused great concern in the international community have been rigorously investigated by various countries, including Turkey.

A recent statement released by the United States in this regard confirmed that the allegations of use of chemical weapons by the regime had been verified without any grain of doubt. This conclusion overlaps with the findings possessed by the Turkish authorities.

The war carried out by the regime by engaging all kinds of heavy weapons against its own people, including fighter aircraft and ballistic missiles, has taken tens of thousands of lives so far.

This time, disclosure of its usage of chemical weapons reveals clearly the threat that this regime poses to the world peace as well as its cruelty and mercilessness.

The war waged by the regime by means of using chemical weapons is a crime committed against humanity. The barbarian practices of the regime bring grief to the Syrian people and drive Syria into darkness day by day. The international community should unite against this atrocity and make its position unequivocally clear. Attacks of the regime should immediately be stopped and the democratic transformation process should be initiated in accordance with the legitimate demands and will of the Syrian people as soon as possible.

Turkey will continue to stand by the friendly and brotherly people of Syria and render its support in accordance with these purposes.

No: 194, 5 July 2013, Press Release Regarding the Denial of the Request for Release on Parole of the terrorist Hampig Sasunyan, who assassinated Kemal Arıkan, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Los Angeles

The request for release on parole of the terrorist Hampig Sasunyan, who brutally assassinated Kemal Arıkan, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Los Angeles on 28 January 1982 has been denied by the Parole Board on 3 July 2013. It was decided to hold the next parole hearing three years later. This request had previously been denied in 2006 and 2010.

We consider that the decision to deny the request for parole to the terrorist Sasunyan is in line with the principles of justice and the fight against terrorism and we welcome it.

On this occasion, we pay tribute once again to our fallen diplomat Kemal Arıkan as well as to all our martyrs who fell victim to terrorism. May they rest in peace.

QA-15, 3 July 2013, Answer of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey to a Question Regarding the Allegations that Turkish Diplomatic Missions were eavesdropped by the US National Security Agency (NSA)

Allegations reported by some prominent European media that the United States National Security Agency (NSA) eavesdropped on confidential phone calls of embassies and diplomatic missions of 38 countries, including Turkey, and tracked their internet records, are a source of concern.

Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu discussed this matter with the US Secretary of State John Kerry in Brunei, where he was participating in the ASEAN Meetings, and stated that Turkey is expecting an explanation concerning these allegations.

Besides the meeting between Minister Davutoğlu and Secretary of State Kerry, in absence of US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, Mr. Jess Baily, Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy in Ankara was invited today (3 July 2013) to the Ministry by Ambassador Ömer Önhon, Deputy Undersecretary for General Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Önhon reiterated our expectation for clarification on this matter.

Taking into account our long-standing relations of alliance based on mutual trust, cooperation and transparency, it is self-evident that these allegations need to be clarified. Necessary assessments on these allegations will be carried out in light of the response which will be received from the US authorities.

No: 245, 14 September 2013, Press Release Regarding the Agreement Reached Between the United States and the Russian Federation Concerning the Chemical Weapons Possessed by the Syrian Regime

Turkey welcomes, as a matter of principle, the dismantling of all weapons of mass destruction in the world and in our region, the chemical weapons in particular. Therefore, the agreement reached today in Geneva between the United States and the Russian Federation regarding the chemical weapons possessed by the Syrian regime was welcomed as a positive step and assessed carefully.

Placing the chemical weapons in the Syrian regime's inventory under international control and destroying them is extremely important as it will enable the elimination of a threat to regional and global peace and security.

This agreement must not be exploited by the Syrian regime and must not turn to a process by which the regime would gain time to carry out new massacres against its people. The announced timeframe is lengthy and susceptible to the exploitation of the regime.

The sanctions that will be imposed in case the regime does not rapidly and strictly fulfill its obligations and the agreement comes to naught should be spelt out clearly from the start.

The implementation of this agreement must be ensured by the United Nations Security Council.

On the other hand, this agreement should not be perceived as the final solution to the Syrian crisis and the massacres committed by the regime without resorting to chemical weapons must absolutely be prevented.

The ultimate goal in Syria must be to end the crimes against humanity that have been perpetrated in this country by the regime over nearly three years, to fulfill the legitimate demands of the population and to enable the people of Syria to establish a legitimate administration.

Thus, the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon declared in a statement made yesterday that “Bashar al-Assad has committed many crimes against humanity over the last two years” and that “there will be surely the process of accountability for those who committed these crimes in Syria”. We totally agree with this statement of the Secretary General.

No: 222, 12 August 2013, Press Release concerning the initiation of talks between Palestine and Israel to prepare the ground for direct negotiations in the Middle East Peace Process

We welcome the initiation of talks as a result of the initiatives of the US between Palestine and Israel to prepare the ground for direct negotiations in the Middle East peace process.

The release of 26 Palestinian prisoners as a first stage before the second round of talks expected to be held on 14 August 2013, which constitutes the continuation of the talks organized in Washington at the end of July will constitute an important step.

However, the recent announcement of Israel on the construction of 1.187 new units in the illegal settlements in East Jerusalem and West Bank is far from making a positive contribution to the peace negotiations. Within this context, we believe that it is necessary to refrain from such and similar steps which may complicate the talks.

No: 280, 21 October 2013, Press Release Regarding the Ministerial Meeting On Syria

A Ministerial Meeting will be held in London on October 22th, 2013 with the participation of leading countries on the issue of Syria.

A delegation headed by H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey will represent Turkey at the meeting in which Ministers of Foreign Affairs and senior officials of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Qatar, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Jordan will participate as well. The leadership of the Syrian National Coalition, representing the people of Syria, will also attend part of the meeting.

Efforts to end the conflict in Syria and to meet the legitimate demands of the Syrian people will be discussed during the meeting.

No: 311, 24 November 2013, Press Release concerning the agreement on Iran's nuclear program reached in Geneva

We welcome the positive outcome of the negotiation process held with P5+1 countries in Geneva regarding Iran's nuclear program after three rounds of negotiations. In this framework, we congratulate Iran and the P5+1 countries for their constructive efforts in the process.

The agreement reached today between the parties constitutes the first concrete positive development concerning Iran's nuclear program since the Tehran Declaration of 2010. This agreement constitutes the initial step and a confidence building measure.

We call on the parties to continue their constructive approaches aiming at furthering the process. We hope the parties take the necessary steps agreed on at this stage, so that a durable solution to the issue is found in a mutually acceptable manner through diplomacy. Turkey, having made every effort until today to keep the process alive will stand ready to provide all support as necessary.

Turkey continues to support the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy emanating from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) under the condition that the obligations provided therein are fulfilled. Moreover, Turkey will also continue its support towards the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

No: 11, 13 January 2014, Press Release Regarding the Agreement on the Implementation of Iran's nuclear Programme

Turkey welcomed the Joint Plan of Action, signed between Iran and the P5+1 towards solving the issue of Iran's nuclear programme in Geneva on 24 November 2013.

The decision to begin implementing the Joint Plan of Action as of 20 January 2014 as a result of the technical negotiations conducted between the parties last weekend constitutes another positive development.

Our expectation is that the provisions of the Joint Plan of Action will be implemented carefully by the parties so that maximum efficiency will be achieved during the first period of six months, thus increasing mutual trust between the parties.

As before, Turkey is ready to provide every kind of support for the success of the process.

No: 63, 24 February 2014, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mr. William Burns, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States to Turkey

H.E. Mr. William Burns, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States will visit Turkey on 24 February 2014 to hold consultations with H.E. Mr. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

The consultations to be held within the framework of the close political dialogue between Turkey and the United States are planned to address in detail the bilateral and regional issues on the common agenda of the two allies, particularly the crisis in Syria, Cyprus negotiation process and the fight against terrorism.

No: 189, 7 June 2014, Press Release Regarding the Working Visit of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the United States

Ambassador Feridun H. Sinirlioglu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey will pay a working visit to the United States on 8-10 June to discuss current bilateral, regional and global issues.

Ambassador Sinirlioglu is scheduled to meet with senior counterparts from various agencies, notably the State Department and the National Security Council.

No:245, 20 July 2014, Press Release Regarding the Working Visit of the H.E. Mr. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to the United States

A delegation headed by Ambassador Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey will pay a working visit to the United States on 21-23 July 2014 to discuss current bilateral, regional and global issues.

As part of the visit, the delegation is scheduled to meet with senior counterparts from various agencies, notably the United States Department of State and the National Security Council.

QA-20, 20 July 2014, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Response to a Question Regarding the Reports in the Press Related to Kurecik Radar Base

While Turkey is in an intense struggle for stopping Israel's attack on Gaza and ensuring a permanent ceasefire, we observe that the NATO radar in Kurecik has been brought into question in the context of some unfounded claims regarding Turkey's position.

The NATO missile defense system and the radar in Kurecik, which is a part of this system, have entirely been established within the framework of the needs of our national security, and are aimed at protecting the populations, territories and forces of Allied countries. In this framework, Turkey is also under the protective coverage of the system.

On the other hand, the system cannot provide protection to any country which is not a member of NATO. As is known, Israel is not a member of NATO. Information obtained from the NATO system is shared among the Allies within the framework of NATO's existing procedures and is used for the defense of the Alliance. It is out of question to share this information with countries which are not NATO Allies. This was explicitly emphasized in public by the Secretary General of NATO when he visited Turkey in February 2012.

No: 270, 18 August 2014, Press Release Regarding the News in German Press on the activities of the Federal Intelligence Agency

The allegations in the German press on 16 August 2014 regarding the activities of the Federal Intelligence Agency on Turkey are worrying.

If there is even a small grain of truth in the allegations in question, then a grave situation would appear that requires explanation on the part of Germany. In an environment where mutual trust and respect should form the basis between friends and allies, such practices cannot be accepted under any circumstances.

It should also be known that this practice, which is at variance with the historically deep rooted relations of friendship and alliance between Turkey and Germany, would damage our joint struggle against the real challenges threatening international security and stability.

It is expected that the German authorities will present an official and satisfactory explanation regarding the allegations in the German press and if these allegations prove to be true, put an end to these activities immediately. Our views and expectations about this issue have also been strongly emphasized to the German Ambassador who was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today.

No: 291, 11 September 2014, Press Release Regarding the Visit of United States Secretary of State John Kerry to Turkey

United States Secretary of State John Kerry, will visit Turkey on 12–13 September 2014.

In Ankara, Secretary of State Kerry is scheduled to meet with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and be received afterwards by the President and the Prime Minister.

In these meetings, bilateral, regional and global issues on our joint agenda, as well as opportunities for further developing our relations and cooperation will be elaborated on.

QR-28, 9 September 2014, Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tanju Bilgiç in Response to a Question

A fictional account of the bilateral meeting between President Erdoğan and US President Obama that took place on the margins of the NATO Wales Summit has been published in a newspaper on 8 September 2014.

That report, which has no basis in reality, constitutes yet another example of irresponsible journalism.

No: 318, 10 October 2014, Press Release Regarding the Visit of Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to New York for the United Nations Security Council Elections for non-permanent seats for the term 2015-2016

The elections for non-permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council for the period 2015-2016, for which Turkey is also a candidate, will be held in New York on 16 October 2014 at the UN General Assembly.

Turkey contributes comprehensively to a wide range of issues on the agenda of the United Nations, from climate change to human rights, from development to peacekeeping operations, from global health security to counter-terrorism. Turkey supports and is an advocate of the UN, its specialized agencies as well as the values the UN represents.

Having served on the UN Security Council during 2009-2010, Turkey announced its candidature from the Western European and Other States Group on 18 May 2011, in light of the significant developments emerging in our region and the world in the realms of peace, stability and security. Spain and New Zealand are also candidates for the two seats allocated to this Group for the same term.

With the election day approaching, Foreign Minister Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will visit New York on 10-17 October 2014 in order to have further contacts and to draw the attention of the UN Member States once again to Turkey's candidature.

The contacts of Foreign Minister Mr. Çavuşoğlu on the occasion of this visit will allow for the follow-up of the issues discussed both at the bilateral and multilateral levels during the 69th Session of United Nations General Assembly held between 22 September-1 October 2014, and will provide a further opportunity to strongly emphasize Turkey's candidature.

Foreign Minister Mr. Çavuşoğlu will chair the Meeting of the Consuls General in North America on 11 October 2014 and will meet with the representatives of the Turkish non-governmental organizations in the USA during the visit.

Foreign Minister Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will also inaugurate the 'Safe Harbor Turkey Exhibition', depicting various communities which sought shelter in the territories of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey throughout history. The exhibition will be open to visitors at the UN Headquarters on 13-22 October.

No: 356, 19 November 2014, Press Release Regarding General Allen's Visit

Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, General (R) John Allen visited Turkey on 19th November and met with Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Ambassador Feridun Sinirlioğlu to discuss the situation in Syria and Iraq. General Allen left Ankara the same day for Brussels.

QA-38, 12 November 2014, Statement of Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tanju Bilgiç in Reponse to a Question Regarding the Assault on Some US Officials

Press reports indicate that some US officials visiting Istanbul were assaulted today, under the guise of a peaceful protest. We condemn this disrespectful act, which is in no way tolerable.

No: 398, 19 December 2014, Press Release Regarding the US-Cuba Relations

Turkey welcomes the will demonstrated by the US and Cuba to normalize their relations after more than half a century.

Turkey congratulates all parties who contributed to this process and wishes that the initiated process rapidly produces concrete results for the benefit of the friendly US and Cuban people in all fields.

No: 387, 11 December 2014, Press Release Regarding the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report on CIA Detention and Interrogation Program

The comprehensive report prepared by the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, on the interrogation of suspects by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) following September 11, 2001 was released to the public. The preparation and release of this controversial report by the US authorities is a positive step in terms of transparency.

The first assessments of the report indicate that grave violations of human rights were perpetrated by US official authorities in the period concerned.

The protection of fundamental rights and freedoms is one of the most basic responsibilities of contemporary democracies. Therefore, the practices enumerated in the report cannot be condoned in any way. Torture and other brutal, inhuman or degrading treatments or punishments are unacceptable under any circumstance. Besides being a humanitarian and legal responsibility, the protection of human rights is also extremely important in obtaining results in combating terrorism.

To avoid the repetition of such acts, it is necessary to bring to justice those who, as stated in the report, violated laws and democratic practices by completely ignoring established universal norms.

After the perusal of the report, our would-be assessments may be shared with the public.

No: 113, 11 April 2014, Press Release Regarding the Draft Resolution Adopted by the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee has acted beyond its position, competence and responsibility by adopting by majority vote a hastily and ineptly prepared draft resolution (S.Res.410). We reject this attempt at a political exploitation that distorts history and law, and we condemn those who led this prejudiced initiative, which is devoid of any legal ground.

In actuality, how Turks and Armenians, as the owners of this common history, can together, through dialogue and empathy, reach a just memory of the tragic events of 1915, which occurred during the great human sufferings of World War I, is already being examined thoroughly and in all its dimensions. In this context, our proposal to establish a Joint Historical Commission, also reflected in the Turkish-Armenian protocols, remains on the agenda.

In the forthcoming period, it is essential that the U.S. Congress engages in efforts aimed at strengthening our historic alliance and partnership, which are more important than ever in the present circumstances, instead of damaging Turkish-American bilateral ties; and that this draft resolution and similar ones are not moved any further in the legislative agenda.

QA-19, 17 July 2014, Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Response to a Question

The acts of violence perpetrated against the İftar dinner hosted by the U.S. Consulate General of Adana on 15 July in Diyarbakır are in no way compatible with the spirit of the holy month of Ramadan. We condemn this isolated incident.

No: 8, 07 January 2015, Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack Against "Charlie Hebdo" Magazine in Paris

We strongly condemn the heinous terrorist attack perpetrated today in Paris against the "Charlie Hebdo" satirical magazine and resulted in the death of 12 and the injury of 20 innocent persons.

The attack has demonstrated once again the savage character of those who have adopted violence as a means to preserve and disseminate their views and notions.

This attack is above all an aggression against humanity and its universal values. The perpetrators of this attack have grossly betrayed the civilization that they claim to belong. It is obvious that this vicious attack will serve no other purpose than providing ground to islamophobic, racist and xenophobic circles.

Terror has no religion, nationality or any value that it can represent. Terrorism is a crime against humanity and cannot be justified under any circumstances.

It is the duty of all humanity to prevent the expansion and deepening of the culture of violence, to consider in the most serious manner how to eliminate it from daily life and to determine and implement the necessary measures for this purpose. No delay should be allowed in this task. Otherwise, the notion of universal tolerance which offers the cure for the ever expanding culture of confrontation in today's world will be further eroded. Undoubtedly, this has been one of the aims of the perpetrators of this heinous attack in Paris.

We convey our condolences to the friendly French nation with whom we stand in solidarity in this difficult time that they pass through. We wish strength and fortitude to those who lost their relatives and speedy recovery to those injured.

**No: 67, 19 February 2015, Press Release Regarding the Visit of the
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the United States**

H.E. Ambassador Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey will pay a working visit to the United States on 20-24 February 2015 to discuss current bilateral, regional and international issues.

In the framework of his visit, H.E Ambassador Sinirlioğlu will hold meetings with high level counterparts from various government bodies, particularly the Department of State.

No: 50, 06 February 2015, Press Release Regarding the Eleventh Meeting of the Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission

The Eleventh Meeting of the Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission, which has been convened regularly since 2002 between Turkey and the United States, will be organized in Washington on 11-12 February 2015 under the co-chairmanship of Director General for Multilateral Economic Affairs Ambassador Hakkı Emre Yunt and United States Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, Ambassador Charles Rivkin.

Mutual development of economic, commercial, investment and energy relations between Turkey and the United States and cooperation opportunities in third countries will be on the agenda of the meeting, which will be attended by the representatives of the relevant institutions of Turkey and the USA.

QA-13, 9 April 2015, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tanju Bilgiç, In Response to a Question Regarding the Inaugural Meeting of the Counter DAESH/ISIL Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Istanbul, Turkey

The inaugural meeting of the Counter-DAESH/ISIL Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (WGFTF) was held in Istanbul, on 7 April 2015 under the co-chairmanship of Turkey and the Netherlands.

The WGFTF discussed an Action Plan to counter the threat posed by the FTFs.

The WGFTF Action Plan to be adopted soon, notes the terrorist threats posed by DAESH/ISIL to the region and beyond, identifies and lays down the measures that Coalition members and the international community should undertake in the fight against the phenomenon of the FTFs associated with DAESH/ISIL.

The Action Plan contains also a variety of arrangements which will promote the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions specifically targeted at FTFs, DAESH/ISIL and other al-Qaida associated groups in Iraq and Syria, and will contribute to the efforts of the other Coalition Working Groups.

The next meeting of the WGFTF is scheduled to take place in June 2015.

No: 102, 3 April 2015, Press Release Regarding the Agreement on the Nuclear Program of Iran

We are very pleased that the negotiations held between P5+1 and Iran in Lausanne on Iran's nuclear programme have culminated in a political understanding on the general framework of a final agreement. We congratulate the parties for their reasonable, flexible and constructive approach during this difficult negotiation process.

Turkey views diplomacy as the only option for the solution of the problem related to Iran's nuclear programme. Turkey has actively supported the processes for a peaceful solution through dialogue and has contributed to them including through finalising of the Tehran Joint Declaration in 2010.

We express our hope that the ongoing negotiations between P5+1 and Iran will result in a comprehensive agreement that will satisfy all parties concerned and will contribute to the peace, stability and security of the region. We stand ready to continue to render our active support to this process.

No: 131, 24 April 2015, Press Release Regarding the Statement Made by US President Obama on the Occasion of 24 April

We have noted with disappointment that President Barack Obama's statement on April 23, 2015 is highly far from assessing, based on a just memory, the painful period of the shared history between the Turks and Armenians.

It is problematic that the statement is not only disconnected from the fact that what happened during World War I was as sensitive for the Turkish people as it was for the Armenians, but also that it reflects a unilateral point of view. We reject this selective and biased understanding of justice.

The message of condolences issued by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on April 23, 2014 during his tenure as the Prime Minister, and the subsequent statements made by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu on January 20, 2015 and April 20, 2015, are texts that carefully reflect Turkey's perspective on this issue.

The said statements are sincere calls to share, without denying, the sufferings of the past with accurate definitions and attitudes, to collectively and respectfully commemorate all our losses including those of the Ottoman Armenians, and above all to rebuild our common future.

We hope that our call to act with commonsense and the hand that we reach out in friendship will be reciprocated.

Each country that makes a just contribution toward the path of reconciliation between Turks and Armenians will take its place in history as a partner in this "project of friendship".

In this regard, it is clear that the role of friends and allies carry particular importance.

No: 132, 24 April 2015, Press Release Regarding the Speech Delivered By President of France Hollande at the Ceremony in Yerevan and the Declarations of Prime Minister Valls in Paris

French President François Hollande participated, as he had announced long time ago, at the ceremony held in Yerevan on 24 April 2015, which instead of being a commemoration for the losses incurred in the past, turned out to be an occasion to slander Turkish identity, history and society. Regrettably, he once again reiterated his support to the Armenian nationalist narrative.

Similarly, Prime Minister Valls, in a speech he gave today in Paris, distorted historical facts and violated legal principles at an event he participated which was not held with the understanding of harvesting peace and friendship from history but rather hostility.

It would have been expected from President Hollande that during these ceremonies he would acknowledge that, regardless of religion or ethnicity all Ottoman citizens endured tragic sufferings during the process of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Such an approach which does not discriminate between the sufferings of those who belong to different religions would have undoubtedly been seen as a positive and embracing attitude by the six hundred thousand Turks living in France .

However, France unfortunately preferred to continue its discriminatory approach.

Turkey unequivocally rejects and condemns France's unjust and partial attitude.

No: 130, 24 April 2015, Press Release Regarding the Statement of President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Joachim Gauck

President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Joachim Gauck participated in a ceremony held in Berlin Cathedral on April 23rd 2015, during which baseless allegations were directed towards Turkish identity, history and society.

Contrary to law and historical facts, President Gauck has not the right to attribute on the Turkish people a crime which they have not committed. It is expected from the authorities who represent social unity, integrity and harmony, to take the sensitivities of all the members of the society into consideration and express a more embracing approach. In this sense, it is astonishing that President Gauck has also disregarded the opinions of hundreds of thousands of Turkish-German citizens whom he also represents.

Turkish history and identity is an integral part of Turkish-German society. Members of this community will not remain silent against initiatives aimed at defaming their identity. Turkish nation will not forget and forgive President Gauck's statements.

We hope that Bundestag, which plans to discuss a resolution on the events of 1915 in the forthcoming days, takes a neutral and constructive stance and does not present an approach which would have long term negative repercussions on Turkish-German relations.

No: 129, 24 April 2015, Press Release Regarding the Approach of the Russian Federation on the 1915 Events

We reject and condemn the labelling of the 1915 events as “genocide” by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, despite all our warnings and calls. Such political statements, which are flagrant violation of law, are null and void for Turkey.

Taking into account the mass atrocities and exiles in Caucasus, in the Central Asia and Eastern Europe committed by Russia for a century; collective punishment methods such as Holodomor as well as inhumane practices especially against Turkish and Muslim people in Russia’s own history, we consider that Russia is best-suited to know what exactly “genocide” and its legal dimension are.

We are aware that Duma makes political statements supporting the one-sided Armenian allegations on a routine basis in every 10 years since 1995. Not breaking this tradition, the Duma has issued a new statement on 24 April 2015, in accordance with their previous decisions. We also condemn this statement.

The participation of the Russian President in the April 24th ceremonies in Yerevan, the show stage of the centennial propaganda campaign of Armenia, should be considered in this context as well.

While we expect Russia to attach importance to Turkey’s friendship and take into consideration Turkey’s sensitivities, its insistence on wrongdoing will not help peace, prosperity and welfare in our region.

The only thing that Russia can do in this issue is to leave its biased attitude aside and encourage Armenia and the Armenians to respond positively to the calls of Turkey for peace and friendship.

No: 118, 16 April 2015, Press Release Regarding the Visit of Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to the USA

Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will pay a working visit to Washington on 18-21 April 2015 upon the invitation of the Secretary of State John Kerry, to have official talks on current bilateral, regional and global issues.

Within the scope of his visit, Minister Çavuşoğlu will meet with his counterparts in the U.S. Administration, get together with senior members of the Congress and address the “Carnegie Endowment for International Peace”. Minister Çavuşoğlu will also participate in a round table meeting with the executives of several think-tanks and opinion leaders in Washington and receive representatives of Turkish and Muslim communities.

In his comprehensive meetings, Minister Çavuşoğlu is expected to discuss with his counterparts the developments in the region, notably Ukraine, Libya and Yemen along with all aspects of our cooperation on fight against DEASH, Syria, Iraq and also the critical issues such as Cyprus, 1915 events, the fight against terrorism and energy security.

No: 205, 14 July 2015, Press Release Regarding the Agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between the P5 + 1 and Iran Related to Iran's Nuclear Program

Turkey, which has always considered diplomacy as the only option for the solution of the problem related to Iran's nuclear program, welcomes the consensus reached as a result of the long-standing negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran through the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

We congratulate the parties for their efforts that made this possible. We attach great importance to the implementation of the agreement with all of its elements and expect the cooperation envisaged in the agreement with the international community to be realized on the basis of full transparency, with the International Atomic Energy Agency assuming a central role in supervising its implementation in the upcoming period.

In this context, we deem it necessary to reiterate that uninterrupted and full implementation of the agreement in a manner that inspires confidence is of vital importance for peace, security and stability in the region.

No: 228, 10 August 2015, Press Release Regarding the Attack against the US Consulate General in Istanbul

An armed attack was perpetrated against the US Consulate General in Istanbul early this morning. We strongly condemn this terrorist attack and present our well-wishes to US mission members in Turkey, particularly the staff of the Consulate General.

We have increased security measures for the US missions in Turkey. Turkey, in solidarity with our friend and ally the USA, will resolutely maintain its fight against terrorism.

No: 212, 24 July 2015, Press Release Concerning Turkey-US Understanding On Countering DEASH

Turkey and the US are two NATO allies who have extensive experience on joint assessment and joint action concerning collective defense and national security matters.

Inherent to this aspect of our relationship, being able to respond to common threats through collective efforts has always constituted a priority for both our countries.

When necessary, these matters are taken up at the level of Heads of State, as evidenced by the telephone conversation between President Erdoğan and President Obama on July 22.

The DEASH problem is a primary national security threat for Turkey. The dimensions of this threat are constantly growing.

While the wounds caused by the abhorrent terror attack that has claimed the lives of 32 of our citizens on July 20 are still fresh, the DEASH terrorist organization carried out an armed attack on July 23 against our troops assigned to a military-border post at Elbeyli, martyring a non-commissioned officer.

It is clear that these threats and attacks directed against our national security will receive the response they deserve.

Eliminating the threat posed by DEASH both within our borders as well as to our security has been an important aspect of the joint operational work conducted between Turkey and the US for some time now.

As a member of the International Coalition, Turkey had already been contributing to the Coalition's efforts in Syria and Iraq during the past 10 months through the use of its own national assets and capabilities. It should be recalled that Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu announced in late June the granting of clearance for the deployment of armed UAVs.

As a continuation of this process, Turkey and the US have decided to further deepen their ongoing cooperation in the fight against DEASH.

In this context, the Council of Ministers, based on the mandate provided by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on October 2, 2014, has granted clearance for the deployment of manned and unmanned aircraft from the US and other Coalition members participating in air operations against DEASH, including a number of regional countries subject to Turkish approval. Naturally, elements of the Turkish Air Force will also be tasked with the same objective in these operations.

As of this morning, our jets have targeted certain DEASH elements in Syria, based on our right of self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Details of this new cooperation, which is expected to provide significant contributions to the Coalition operations against DEASH, will not be disclosed at this time due to operational considerations.

In addition to ensuring Turkey's security and through the increased presence of airborne elements, permanently ensuring and bolstering the safety of the inhabitants who now live in areas under DEASH control will naturally be one of the expected outcomes of this cooperation.

These operations are carried out in accordance with international law. As such, the necessary notification has been communicated to the United Nations Security Council.

No: 239, 29 August 2015, Press Statement on Joint Air Operations against DEASH Targets

The public had been informed with respect to the decisions taken on further deepening the existing cooperation between Turkey and the US to counter DEASH.

Also, the technical document regarding the participation of the Turkish Air Force in the ongoing air operations carried out by the International Coalition in the context of Operation Inherent Resolve against DEASH was signed between Turkey and the US on 24 August 2015.

Our fighter aircraft, together with Coalition fighter aircraft, began carrying out joint air operations as of yesterday evening against DEASH targets in Syria that also present a threat to our national security.

Countering terrorist organizations is a national security issue of priority for Turkey. Our efforts to combat terrorism will continue resolutely.

Turkey will continue its active support to the efforts towards eliminating the threats presented by DEASH, which Turkey put in its own list of terrorist organizations in 2013, both at the national level and as a part of the Coalition with a firm determination.

No: 233, 16 August 2015, Joint Statement from the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the United States

The United States has informed the Turkish government that the U.S. deployment of Patriot air and missile defense units in Turkey which expires in October will not be renewed beyond the end of the current rotation. Other relevant Allies have also been consulted.

The U.S. Patriots have been in Turkey as part of a broader NATO mission since 2013. They will be redeployed to the United States for critical modernization upgrades that will ensure the U.S. missile defense force remains capable of countering evolving global threats and protecting Allies and partners – including Turkey. This decision follows a U.S. review of global missile defense posture.

The U.S. and NATO commitments to the defense of Allies – including Turkey – are steadfast.

The United States and NATO are committed to supporting Turkey's security and regional stability. As the United States deploys additional air assets and partners with Turkey to counter ISIL, the United States will also continue to work closely with Turkey on how to support Turkey's air defense capabilities, including against ballistic missile risks and threats.

The United States will maintain in-theater capability to rapidly transport and support emergent Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) requirements, and is prepared to sustain the current deployment site in a cold-basing status to facilitate future deployments of U.S. Patriots. If needed, the United States is prepared to return Patriot assets and personnel to Turkey within one week.

The United States will also retain a persistent presence of U.S. Navy multi-role Aegis ships in the eastern Mediterranean. These ships offer a range of capabilities to support the defense of Turkey and NATO missions, including support for NATO air and missile defense. U.S. Naval Forces in Europe will continue their close cooperation with the Turkish Navy in the region in support of Turkish defense needs.

The United States and Turkey are consulting on possible other steps that we can take bilaterally to reinforce Turkey's security.

The United States and Turkey will consult with NATO Allies on the best means for the Alliance to address security concerns at NATO's southeastern border, and on the future of the air defense augmentation mission in Turkey in line with Alliance solidarity.

No: 267, 1 October 2015, Joint Declaration on Recent Military Actions of the Russian Federation on Syria

We, the Governments of France, Germany, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America state the following in view of the recent military actions of the Russian Federation in Syria:

We express our deep concern with regard to the Russian military build-up in Syria and especially the attacks by the Russian Air Force on Hama, Homs and Idlib since yesterday which led to civilian casualties and did not target Da'esh.

These military actions constitute a further escalation and will only fuel more extremism and radicalization.

We call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease its attacks on the Syrian opposition and civilians and to focus its efforts on fighting ISIL.

Joint Statement on Libya, 19 October 2015

The Foreign Ministers of Algeria, France, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Qatar, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States, and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs call upon all parties to the Libyan Political Dialogue to immediately approve the political agreement brokered by UN Special Representative Leon following the meetings of the parties in Skhirat and Geneva.

The parties to the dialogue face a stark choice. They can delay approval of the text and annexes beyond October 20 or attempt to make further amendments, and put at risk the stability of the country. To secure Libya's future, we urge the Libyan parties to immediately approve the hard fought political compromise set forth in the political agreement, which will provide a period of stability to the country until a new constitution can be agreed. New elections can then be held which will finally give Libya a fully representative, inclusive and democratic parliament whose legitimacy is acknowledged across the country and the world.

The Libyan people have made it clear that they want an end to instability in their country, instability which has led to the loss of lives, allowed terrorism to grow, and severely damaged the economy of the country. The international community stands ready to support the Libyan people and the leaders they choose.

The international community looks forward to working with the Government of National Accord, at their request, in supporting the fight against terrorism, particularly DEASH and Ansar Al-Sharia, and in helping Libya face up to its many challenges.

We urge all participants in the dialogue to seize the opportunity to end this instability by approving, and faithfully implementing, the political agreement without introducing further amendments.

No: 76, 27 March 2016, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu's Visit to the United States

Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will pay a working visit to the United States on 28-29 March 2016.

During his visit, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu will discuss important bilateral and regional issues on the agenda with the Secretary of State of the U.S, John Kerry and his other U.S. counterparts, address to students at a university in Washington D.C. and get together with the representatives of Turkish-American community, media, academic circles and opinion leaders.

No: 70, 22 March 2016, Press Release Regarding the visit of Antony Blinken, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State

The U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, will pay a working visit to Turkey on 22-23 March 2016.

H.E. Ambassador Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, will hold consultations with the visiting Deputy Secretary regarding bilateral and regional issues.

The Deputy Secretary is also expected to be received by H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

No: 107, 8 May 2016, Press Release Regarding the Participation of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey in the Meeting on Syria

H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey will participate in the ministerial meeting to be held at Paris on 9 May 2016 to discuss the developments in Syria. Apart from Turkey, France, the USA, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Germany, Jordan, Italy and the EU are invited to participate in the meeting, a certain part of which Mr. Riad Hijab, the Coordinator of the High Negotiations Committee is also expected to attend.

No: 98, 22 April 2016, Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Obama on the 1915 Events

U.S. President Obama's statement on 22 April 2016 is yet another example of the assessments on the sufferings endured under the circumstances of the First World War on the basis of a one-sided narrative.

Turkey demonstrates a sincere desire to establish a common future in peace between the Turkish and Armenian people based on their centuries-long experience of co-existence. It is saddening that friendly and allied countries, rather than supporting this call, prefer to encourage those who advocate the deepening of the confrontation.

It is a fact that efforts to exploit the sufferings of the past for political manipulation have not brought any benefit to any one so far.

This being the case, those who seek to draw advantage from the political stances taken by third countries every year at certain dates, not only harm the prospects of peace and friendship but also show disrespect to the common pain of that period.

In this context, we call upon the U.S. Administration to adopt an objective, prudent and constructive approach, which takes the sufferings of all sides into consideration, by evaluating the historical realities on the basis of a just memory.

No: 111, 13 May 2016, Press Release Regarding the Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be held on Libya and Syria

H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey will attend the Ministerial Meeting on Libya to be held under the co-chairmanship of the US and Italy on May 16th, as well as the meeting of International Syria Support Group under the co-chairmanship of the US and the Russian Federation on May 17th, in Vienna.

Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu will also hold bilateral talks with his counterparts on the margins of these meetings.

No: 134, 12 June 2016, Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack in Orlando City of the US

We condemn the terrorist attack perpetrated in Orlando city of the US today (June 12th), resulting reportedly in the death of many people. We convey our condolences to the people of the US.

QA-24, 14 July 2016, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Tanju Bilgiç, in Response to a Question Regarding the Comments of the Spokesperson of the US Department of State Claiming that Turkey Prevents the Investigations in South-Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey

International human rights organizations can visit the South-Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey without any impediment. Recently, in March 2016, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances in April 2016, Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe and in May 2016, Co-Rapporteurs of Turkey from the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly visited South-Eastern Anatolia region of Turkey and held various contacts.

Being party to the main UN Conventions in the field of human rights, Turkey maintains its uninterrupted constructive cooperation with all UN mechanisms on human rights including treaty-based bodies and special procedures.

As one of the 116 countries that offered open invitation to the UN special procedures since 2001, Turkey cooperates closely with the thematic rapporteurs. In this context, Turkey has accepted all recent visit requests, and necessary scheduling has been made for each one. In addition, our invitation extended on 10 May 2016 to Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Turkey including the South-Eastern Anatolia is a standing one.

The comments made by Mr. John Kirby, the Spokesman of the US Department of State, in his press briefing on 12 July 2016 to the effect that Turkey prevented the investigations in South-Eastern Anatolia Region do not reflect a thorough knowledge of all these aspects and constitute a clear misrepresentation of realities.

QA-31, 30 August 2016, Statement of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tanju Bilgiç, Responding to a Question in Relation to Public Remarks by US Secretary of Defense, Defense Department Spokesperson, White House Press Secretary and Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter DAESH, Regarding Operation Euphrates Shield

The aim of the Operation Euphrates Shield is clear. The operation will continue until such time when the terrorist elements based in Syria cannot threaten Turkish citizens any more. The operation is being carried out within our right of self-defense and with due respect to the territorial integrity of Syria.

Turkey awaits the US, its ally, to fulfil right away its commitment given to Turkey before the operation in Manbij city – that began in June and completed by cleaning all DAESH elements therein - stipulating that no PYD/YPG element would remain in west of Euphrates River after the Manbij operation has been completed.

Upon the statements by US officials with regard to the scope and objectives of the Operation Euphrates Shield, the necessary demarche with the US Ambassador in Ankara has been made at a high level and we emphasized that such statements are not in conformity with the code among allies and cannot be acceptable in any way.

No: 225, 10 September 2016, Press Release regarding the Arrangements between the US and RF on Cessation of Hostilities and Humanitarian Access to Besieged Areas

We welcome the announcement of the arrangements between the US and the RF after long negotiations that aims to establish a comprehensive cessation of hostilities environment and facilitate humanitarian access to those in need.

It is critically important that these arrangements, which is to take effect by the first day of Eid al-Adha, be implemented successfully, so that there is cessation of hostilities across Syria and immediate access of humanitarian aid to those in need.

H.E. President Erdoğan strongly urged President Obama during their meeting alongside the G20 Summit in China and President Putin, again in a separate meeting during G20 Summit and a follow up telephone conversation later, that the parties announce the arrangements before the Eid al- Adha begins, that the scope of the arrangements be comprehensive and humanitarian access cover all of Aleppo. H.E. Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu impressed upon his counterparts the same points through an intensive telephone diplomacy. President Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu followed this process very closely from the beginning.

Preparations are underway to deliver humanitarian aid to Aleppo from Turkey through the UN.

Turkey will continue its efforts to alleviate the humanitarian suffering in Aleppo and other parts of Syria, facilitate the effective implementation of the cessation of hostilities and extension of this new arrangements to positively impact the efforts on the political solution to end the conflict

No: 322, 15 December 2016, Press Release Regarding the Decision to Grant Parole to Hampig Sassounian Who Assassinated Consul-General of Turkey in Los Angeles, Kemal Arıkan

We regret that Hampig Sassounian, who assassinated Mr Kemal Arıkan, the Turkish Consul-General in a heinous attack on January 28, 1982 has been granted parole as a result of a parole hearing held on December 14, 2016 in California. We strongly denounce and reject this decision which is subject to the approval of the Governor of California and will be open to appeal.

This unfortunate decision, which is based on local political dynamics instead of universal principles of justice, is not only unjust but also does not comply with the spirit of cooperation and the fight against terrorism. In order to rectify this mistake before it is finalized, we expect that the US authorities lodge an appeal and the release of Sassounian be averted.

During the trial, it was established without any doubt that Sassounian, had acted knowingly and deliberately, and had murdered Consul-General Arıkan in coldblood simply because he was a Turkish national. Sassounian, throughout his incarceration, has not shown any remorse for the crime he committed, but also has continued to glorify the distorted ideology which drove him into this terrorist act.

It is clear that the release of terrorist Sassounian, will first and foremost hurt deeply the family of our martyred diplomat, as well as the Turkish nationals, and will also lead to public indignation.

Consul-General Arıkan was a victim of a terrorist mindset targeting not only him but all Turkish diplomats who strive to serve their country. The pertinent US authorities, who suffered similar losses and with whom we cooperate on counter-terrorism, need to assess the gravity and delicacy of the matter thoroughly, as well as what the finalization of the decision would stand for.

We hereby remember with respect and gratitude our martyred diplomat Kemal Arıkan and all our martyres who fell victim to terrorism.

QA-47, 9 December 2016, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding the Congressional Approval of the Authorization of the US Government to Provide Entities Fighting in Syria with Some Sensitive Military Equipment

We understand that the US government has been granted authorization to provide entities fighting in Syria with some sensitive military equipment within the framework of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act and that this provision is conditional on certain caveats, including the consent of Congress. It is not clear yet whether this authorization will be used and if so in what context and towards which entities. In any case, we have reiterated our well-known views and sensitivities to the US side and cautioned against the mentioned military equipment falling into the wrong hands, in particular those terrorist organizations that target Turkey. We will monitor this matter closely.

No: 315, 9 December 2016, Press Release Regarding the Participation of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, in the Syria meeting in Paris on 10 December 2016

H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will attend the meeting on Syria which will be hosted by H.E. Jean-Marc Ayrault, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France, on 10 December 2016, in Paris. Alongside Turkey, UK, USA, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Germany, Jordan, Italy, the EU and H.E. Riyad Hijab, General Coordinator of the High Negotiations Committee of the Syrian opposition are also invited to the meeting. Latest developments regarding the Syrian conflict including the situation in Aleppo are to be addressed at the Ministerial level during the meeting.

QA-50, 29 December 2016, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry Within the Context of the Middle East Peace Process

We consider the statement made yesterday by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, including the principles he envisaged for the Middle East Peace Process, important within the context of the revitalization of the peace process on the basis of the two state solution.

We share, together with the international community, the view included in Kerry's speech that illegal settlement activities are progressing towards the elimination of the possibility for a two state solution and therefore a lasting peace.

Following the UN Security Council Resolution 2334 and the speech delivered by U.S. Secretary of State Kerry yesterday, we believe that the Middle East Peace Conference that will be held in Paris on 15 January 2017 will give a significant impetus for the revival of peace process.

We deem the immediate end of the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories and the emergence of a sovereign and independent State of Palestine, within the 1967 lines with East Jerusalem as its capital, indispensable for the peace and stability of the region.

No: 15, 13 January 2017, Press Release Regarding the Participation of the Foreign Minister H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu in the Middle East Peace Conference in Paris

The Middle East Peace Conference will be held in Paris on 15 January with the purpose of settling the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state solution and add impetus to the efforts to establish just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

The Foreign Minister H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will depart for Paris on 14 January to attend the Conference. He will also hold bilateral meetings with certain counterparts on the margin of the Conference.

No:51, 16 February 2017, Press Release Regarding the Participation of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, in the Syria meeting in Bonn on 17 February 2017

H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will attend the meeting on Syria which will be held on the margins of the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting, on 17 February 2017, in Bonn. Alongside Turkey, UK, Germany, France, USA, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Jordan, Italy and the EU are also invited to the meeting. Latest developments on the Syrian conflict, particularly matters related to the next round of Geneva negotiations planned to be started on 23 February 2017, are to be addressed at the meeting.

No: 80, 20 March 2017, Press Release Regarding the visit of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to the United States in Order to Participate in the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Global Coalition Against DEASH

Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will visit the United States on 21-22 March 2017 in order to participate in the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Global Coalition Against DEASH.

At the meeting, the Ministers will take stock of the progress achieved and discuss further steps to be taken in the fight against DEASH in light of the experience acquired to this date.

During his visit to Washington D.C., Minister Çavuşoğlu will also hold bilateral meetings with his American counterparts, deliver a speech at a meeting organized by a think-tank and meet the members of the American press as well as opinion leaders.

Following his contacts in Washington D.C., Minister Çavuşoğlu will meet the Turkish community living in New York.

No:107, 7 April 2017, Press Release Regarding the US' Military Operation Targeting the Syrian Regime's Shayrat Airbase in Homs

We welcome the US operation early this morning targeting the Syrian regime's Shayrat air base in the aftermath of the regime's Khan Sheikhoun chemical weapons attack which constituted the latest example of the regime's crimes against humanity and war crimes, committed in the last six years with both conventional and chemical weapons, and confirmed by the findings of the relevant international organizations as well as by the conscience of the humanity. Turkey will fully support the steps that will be taken to ensure accountability and to prevent impunity in case of such crimes.

As a country hosting three million Syrians, Turkey will continue its cooperation with the international community to prevent the regime's continued practices of terror and mass punishment directed at its own people and to pave the way for the advancement of a political solution in Syria.

No: 94, 31 March 2017, Press Release Regarding the Visit of Mr. Shannon, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, to Turkey

Ambassador Ümit Yalçın, Undersecretary, will hold political consultations with US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon, who will visit Turkey on 3-4 April 2017.

During the consultations, bilateral relations between Turkey and the USA, as well as regional and international developments will be discussed.

No: 93, 29 March 2017, Press Release Regarding the Visit of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to Turkey

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will pay a visit to Turkey on 30 March 2017 upon the invitation of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

Secretary Tillerson and H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will exchange views on all aspects of Turkey-US bilateral relations and discuss current regional and international issues.

Secretary Tillerson will also be received by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey.

QA-18, 24 March 2017, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding the Contacts of Greek Cypriot leader Mr. Anastasiades with a Hydrocarbon Company in the USA

There have been reports in the press that the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Anastasiades, met on 22 March, during his visit to the USA, with representatives of one of the hydrocarbon companies that took part in the Greek Cypriot Administration's third international tender within its so-called exclusive economic zone. These contacts clearly demonstrate yet again how the Greek Cypriot Administration disregards, in its unilateral pursuit of hydrocarbon-related activities, the inalienable rights on natural resources of the Turkish Cypriot people, the co-owners of the Island.

Most recently, at the 17 March meeting of its Council of Ministers, the Greek Cypriot Administration approved the signing of exploration and exploitation contracts for three separate areas with several companies, including the abovementioned one.

This attitude shows that the Greek Cypriot Administration is still not able to grasp the win-win-based potential for economic cooperation that can ensue on the Island and in the Eastern Mediterranean from a comprehensive settlement, towards which the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkey have been expending intensive efforts.

We expect the Greek Cypriot side, which refuses to accept the Turkish Cypriots as politically equal partners on the Island, to refrain from acting as though it were the sole owner of the Island's natural resources and to cease its hydrocarbon-related activities. It will be recalled in this context that in previous years, such activities have led to the failure of efforts aiming towards a comprehensive settlement. We also make use of this opportunity to remind once again that Turkey will take all necessary measures to protect its interests in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as the rights of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

No: 127, 24 April 2017, Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Trump on the 1915 events

We consider that the misinformation and false definitions contained in U.S. President Trump's written statement of April 24, 2017 regarding the 1915 events are derived from the information pollution created over the years by some Armenian circles in the U.S. by means of propaganda methods.

We expect from the new U.S. Administration not to accredit the one-sided historical narrative of these circles which are known for their tendency to violence and hate speech and to adopt an approach which will take into consideration the sufferings of all sides.

We would like to remind the U.S. Administration that the Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives during the First World War, were commemorated again this year on April 24 at a ceremony held by the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, with the respect they deserve.

The statement conveyed to this ceremony by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan reflects the approach of Turkey on this issue.

No: 111, 10 April 2017, Press Release Regarding the Participation of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, in the Syria meeting in Lucca, Italy on 11 April 2017

H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will attend the meeting on Syria which will be held on the margins of the G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Lucca, Italy on 11 April 2017.

The latest developments on the Syrian conflict are to be addressed at the meeting to which, alongside Turkey; Italy, Germany, France, UK, USA, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Jordan and the EU are also invited.

QA-21, 26 April 2017, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in response to a question regarding the statements of the Deputy Spokesperson of the US State Department alleging that the Turkish Air Force conducted the air operation of April 25 targeting the PKK/PYD/YPG positions in Syria and Iraq without proper coordination

Upon the remarks by the Deputy Spokesperson of the US State Department during the daily press briefing of April 25, the need to clarify certain points has arisen regarding the military operation carried out earlier on the same day by the Turkish Air Force on PKK/PYD/YPG targets in Syria and Iraq.

Prior to the commencement of the air operation of April 25 targeting the terrorist organization's positions located in parts of northern Iraq and northern Syria that are adjacent to our borders, the USA, the Global Coalition to Counter DEASH/ISIL and the Russian Federation were duly informed through both military and diplomatic channels. In this regard, prior to the operation;

-The US and the Russian Federation Military Attachés were informed in Ankara by the Turkish military authorities in line with the bilateral deconfliction arrangements regarding Syria and Iraq,

-Turkish Chief of General Staff had telephone conversations with his American and Russian counterparts,

-Combined Air Operations Center in Qatar, which conducts the command and control of air operations of the Global Coalition to Counter DEASH/ISIL, was notified,

-The Representatives currently in Charge of the Embassies of the USA and the Russian Federation in Ankara were informed in person through diplomatic channels.

In fact, our resolve to retaliate the terrorist organization's cross-border attacks carried out from northern Iraq and northern Syria targeting our border and national security had clearly been expressed and the necessary warnings to third parties conducting Counter-DEASH/ISIL operations within the depth range of 30 kilometers stretching from our borders into Syria and Iraq to stay clear from the terrorist organization's positions, training camps and areas of activity had been issued to the USA and the Russian Federation through both military and diplomatic channels.

On one hand, as a member of the Global Coalition to Counter DEASH/ISIL, Turkey will continue to support the Coalition's efforts to eliminate the DEASH terrorist organization while on the other hand it will also continue its fight against terrorism of all kinds in line with its inherent right of self-defense as defined in Article 51 of the UN Charter and through underlining the fact that terrorist elements cannot be legitimate partners in the fight against terrorism.

QA-26, 25 May 2017, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in response to a question regarding the Resolution voted in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the USA

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives today (May 25th) hastily voted and passed a one-sided resolution which distorts the facts. We reject the said resolution.

The incident that took place in front of the Turkish Ambassador's Residence during the visit of President Erdoğan to Washington D.C., was caused as a result of the refusal of US authorities to take necessary security measures, despite repeated official warnings.

There is no answer to the question why the US authorities did not take tight security measures in front of the Ambassador's Residence as they did in other stages of the visit.

Likewise, no explanation has so far been provided for the incident that took place afterwards in front of the Chancery, caused by extreme and aggressive actions of the US security authorities and was officially protested by our Ministry.

Further advancement of this resolution in the legislative process with a view to changing the basis will not help the settlement of the matter. We would like to keep our hope that the developments regarding this matter, which we will be following closely, will not overshadow the visit which we consider was productive.

No: 151, 22 May 2017, Press Release Regarding the Summoning of the US Ambassador to the Ministry

The Ambassador of the United States of America in Ankara was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today and a written and verbal protest was delivered due to the aggressive and unprofessional actions taken, contrary to diplomatic rules and practices, by US security personnel towards the close protection team of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, in front of the Turkish Embassy Chancery in Washington DC during the visit of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last week. It has been formally requested that the US authorities conduct a full investigation of this diplomatic incident and provide the necessary explanation.

During the meeting with the Ambassador, it was emphasized that the lapses of security experienced during our President's stay in Washington, which were caused by the inability of US authorities to take sufficient precautions at every stage of the official program, will not overshadow what in every other aspect was a very successful and important visit.

QA-30, 17 June 2017, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in response to a question regarding the security message that has been published by the US Consulate General in Istanbul

US Consulate General in Istanbul has published a message regarding the security measures that were taken in Şişli and Mediciyeköy Districts in Istanbul.

The issuance of this statement by the US authorities was based upon regular measures taken by our security authorities, not in regard to any concrete intelligence.

No: 189, 15 June 2017, Press Release Regarding the Arrest Warrants Issued in the US

The Ambassador of the United States of America in Ankara has been invited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Undersecretary of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Ambassador Ümit Yalçın, upon learning that the US authorities have issued arrest warrants for some Turkish citizens and some of the security personnel of our President, due to the incident that took place in front of the Turkish Ambassador's Residence in Washington, D.C. on May 16th.

It has been conveyed to the Ambassador that this decision taken by US authorities is wrong, biased and lacks legal basis; that the brawl in front of the Turkish Ambassador's Residence was caused by the failure of local security authorities to take necessary measures; that this incident would not have occurred if the US authorities had taken the usual measures they take in similar high level visits and therefore that Turkish citizens cannot be held responsible for the incident that took place.

The Ambassador of the United States of America in Ankara has also been informed that the tolerance of the US authorities towards the so-called protesters to approach as close as a few meters to the Turkish Residence with flags and symbols of terrorist organization and their assault to innocent citizens, as well as the lack of any action taken against the US security personnel who assaulted the security guards of our Minister in front of the Chancery run counter to any understanding of justice.

It has been emphasized that the decision, which clearly was not taken as a result of an impartial and independent investigation, is unacceptable.

QA-29, 7 June 2017, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in response to a question regarding the resolution passed in the US House of Representatives

The US House of Representatives last night (June 6) put on its agenda and passed an undue resolution that was previously voted by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. A similar resolution was introduced in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week.

The steps taken by the US legislative branches to distort and politicize the matter are not constructive. This is also against the spirit of alliance and partnership between Turkey and the US.

SC-44, 30 July 2017, Statement Of The Spokesperson Of The Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, In Response To A Question Regarding The Statement Of The US Special Envoy For The Global Coalition To Counter Daesh Made During A Speech He Delivered At A Think Tank

Our reaction to the statements of Brett McGurk, US Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter DAESH, in which he associated Turkey with the presence of terrorist organizations in Idlib was brought to Mr. McGurk's attention at a high-level démarche and his statements, which could be characterized as provocative, were protested. In addition, Mr. McGurk was reminded of both the fact that the root causes enabling terrorist organizations to find foothold in Syria and Iraq could only be eradicated only if the deeds and actions of all relevant actors do not contradict one another, and our expectation that the Syria-based terrorist organization PYD/YPG is not supported for whatever the reason may be.

Our reaction to Mr. McGurk's statements will also be reiterated to the US authorities by the Turkish Embassy in Washington.

No: 275, 30 August 2017, Press release regarding the indictments issued by the Washington D.C. Superior Court

The announcement of the Washington D.C. Superior Court about the indictments issued in relation with the incident in front of the residence of the Turkish Ambassador on 16th of May 2017 is regretted.

We protest in strongest terms, the issuance of this unjust and partial indictment, that blames even the people who were not present or who have never traveled to the US. This indictment was issued, despite the explanations previously provided to the US authorities at various levels and multiple times that the incident resulted from the serious neglect of US local security authorities and the provocations of the followers of PKK terrorist organization under the disguise of protestors. Our reaction on this issue has been communicated to the US Ambassador to Turkey.

We reserve the right to pursue legal avenues regarding this development which we perceive as part of the efforts of some political circles in the US to escalate and which is brought to this point by a purely political approach and in a baseless and unjust manner.

QA-50, 28 September 2017, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding US State Department Spokesperson's comment on Turkey's statement about the KRG Referendum as threatening

Turkey has adopted an explicit and clear attitude before and after the illegitimate referendum held by the KRG. This attitude is based on the principle that favors the peace and prosperity of the Iraqi people, upholds international law and the Iraqi Constitution, and prioritizes the protection of regional peace and stability.

At this stage, the international society should act in a coherent, unequivocal and unambiguous manner with regard to the preservation of the political unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

No: 296, 20 September 2017, Press Release Regarding the Antalya Memorandum endorsed at the Global Counter Terrorism Ministerial Meeting

Meeting in New York today (September 20), the Foreign Ministers of Global Counter Terrorism Forum endorsed the Antalya Memorandum”, a guiding document consisting of new ways and measures on the protection of soft targets from terrorist attacks.

This document is the product of a year-long process, kicked-off in Antalya under the co-leadership of Turkey and the US, and elaborated through a number of workshops held in different countries.

Turkish National Police and the Gendarmerie contributed to the Memorandum by sharing their experiences and the good practices they developed to protect soft targets against terrorist attacks.

Turkey has long been exerting efforts to strengthen international cooperation in countering terrorism. We played a leading role in the foundation of the GCTF which has now become one of the main platforms in raising international awareness against the evolving threat of terrorism. We will continue to contribute to the GCTF.

No: 310, 8 October 2017, Press Release Regarding the Revocation of US Economic Sanctions imposed on Sudan

According to a press statement issued by the United States (US) State Department on 6 October, US economic sanctions imposed on Sudan have been revoked and that the said decision will be effective as of 12 October 2017.

We welcome this development that constitutes a turning point in US-Sudanese bilateral relations.

We believe that the revocation of the sanctions on Sudan will positively reflect on peace, stability and welfare in Sub-Saharan Africa.

We fully appreciate the efforts of all sides that contributed to this outcome.

Turkey stands ready to contribute to the normalization process of US - Sudanese relations to the best of its ability.

QA-53, 5 October 2017, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding a statement of the US Embassy in Ankara

The US Embassy in Ankara issued a statement regarding the arrest of a Turkish citizen. In the statement the said Turkish citizen is called a “local employee” of the US Consulate General in Istanbul.

The above mentioned person was detained on September 25 and subsequently arrested based on terror related charges. He is neither a staff of the US Consulate nor does he have any diplomatic or consular immunity.

No: 303, 2 October 2017, Press Release Regarding Las Vegas Shooting

We are deeply saddened by the shooting that took place during an open-air music festival at a hotel in Las Vegas in the United States which claimed many lives and left many people injured.

We follow the developments regarding the incident. Our Consulate General in Los Angeles is in contact with the local security authorities and hospitals to find out whether there are Turkish citizens among the deceased or the injured.

We condemn this heinous attack and share the grief of the people of the US. We convey our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and wish speedy recovery to those who are wounded.

We reiterate our solidarity with the US in the face of this grave attack.

No: 341, 6 November 2017, Press Release regarding the attack that took place in Texas, USA

We are deeply saddened by the loss of lives of tens of people and many more wounded in the attack that took place in a church in Texas, USA.

We strongly condemn the attack and extend our condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives and the American people.

No: 337, 1 November 2017, Press Release regarding the terror attack in New York City

We are deeply saddened by the terror attack that took place in New York City on the 31st of October that claimed the lives of 8 people and left more than 10 wounded.

We strongly condemn the attack and extend our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the attack.

No: 348, 14 November 2017, Press Release Regarding the Secret Deal That the Terrorist Organization PYD/YPG Reached with DEASH for the Evacuation of DEASH Terrorists from Raqqa

It is an extremely grave and eye-opening revelation that the so-called “Syrian Democratic Forces” dominated by PYD/YPG, the Syrian extension of the terrorist organization PKK, brokered a deal with the terrorist organization DEASH to evacuate a large number of DEASH terrorists from Raqqa while the operation to clear DEASH from Raqqa was already underway.

As we have emphasized on every occasion, the purpose of PYD/YPG in Syria is not to fight against DEASH, but to create illegitimate faits-accomplis on the ground, to occupy territories and to alter their demographic structures.

The deal sets a new example of the fact that fighting one terrorist organization with another would eventually result in these terrorist organizations colluding with each other.

We also deplore the statements of the spokespersons of the Global Coalition Against DEASH and the US Department of Defense whereby they not only did not deny the existence of the deal, but, on the contrary, expressed their “respect” for it.

No: 391, 18 December 2017, Press Release Regarding the US Veto of Draft Resolution on Jerusalem Submitted to the United Nations Security Council

We regret learning the veto of draft resolution on Jerusalem submitted to the UN Security Council with one opposing vote against 14 supporting votes.

US veto of the draft that was drawn up considering the international law and legitimacy and calls for all countries to follow the relevant UN Resolutions on Jerusalem reveals once again that this country is no more objective.

The fact that the USA is the sole opposing vote is the most tangible indicator of the illegality of decision on Jerusalem. It is unacceptable that UN Security Council is left non-functional in a contradictory manner to the will of international community for such an issue that will have implications on regional peace and stability.

We will continue to stand by the State of Palestine and its people and support the fair struggle of Palestine and efforts thereof in all international fora particularly in the UN General Assembly.

No: 384, 13 December 2017, Press Release regarding US National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster's Remarks on Our Country and Government

It has been learned with regret that the U.S National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster made remarks targeting our country and government during his speech at the meeting organised by a think tank yesterday (12 December) in Washington D.C.

The allegations made by Mr. McMaster, who is best placed to judge Turkey's ceaseless combat against terrorism and radicalism in all its forms and manifestations, are astonishing, baseless and unacceptable.

We expect the United States, which we continue to recognize as our friend and ally, to display the same stance to our country, to cease all forms of cooperation with terrorist groups such as YPG and provide more concrete and effective support in our ongoing determined fight against terrorism and radicalism in line with our traditional ties of alliance and international legitimacy.

No: 378, 6 December 2017, Press Release Regarding the Statement of the US Administration Declaring That It Recognizes Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel and It will Move Its Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem

We condemn the irresponsible statement of the US Administration that we learnt with great concern, declaring that it recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and it will be moving the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

This decision is against international law and relevant UN Resolutions, as the annexation of Jerusalem by Israel has been rejected by international community and the UN.

It has been recurrently emphasized by various UN Resolutions that Palestinian question can only be settled through the existence of an independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. It is unacceptable that the US, a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, ignores this fact. Attainment of independence by Palestine is a historical, conscientious and humanitarian obligation. Turkey will continue to advocate this.

The said decision, that will have negative reflections on the peace and stability in the region, also bears the risk of completely destroying the ground for peace.

We call upon the US Administration to reconsider this faulty decision which may result in highly negative outcomes and to avoid uncalculated steps that will harm the multicultural identity and historical status of Jerusalem.

These developments regarding Jerusalem will be taken up extensively at the OIC Leaders Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting that will be held on 13 December 2017 in İstanbul upon the call made by H.E. President Erdoğan as the Summit Chair of the OIC.

No: 4, 4 January 2018, Press Release regarding the decision of the Court of Southern District of New York about Mehmet Hakan Atilla

It is an unjust and unfortunate development that the Deputy Director General of Halkbank was found guilty by the jury on five counts of the six charges in the case that was initiated on the superseding indictment No. SR 15 Cr.867 (RMB) prepared by the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

Based on the so-called “evidence”, which are forged and susceptible to political manipulation, and dwelling on Turkey’s internal affairs on a fictitious basis, the U.S. court has been drawn into Turkey’s domestic affairs in an unprecedented way.

Meanwhile, the reliability and the credibility of the trial has vanished, since some members of the Fetullahist Terrorist Organization (FETO), who received financial and logistical support from the US, were granted the opportunity to make unsubstantiated allegations and provide fabricated evidence to the court to obstruct a fair trial.

Our heartfelt wish is the correction of the said decision, which has clearly turned into a judicial shame.

No: 11, 11 January 2018, Press Release Regarding the Visit of Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to the U.S. and Canada

H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey will attend the "Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Security and Stability on the Korean Peninsula", jointly hosted by the Canadian and US Foreign Ministers in Vancouver on 15-16 January 2018. Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu will also have bilateral meetings with his counterparts in the margins of the meeting.

Prior to the Foreign Ministerial, Minister Çavuşoğlu will visit Los Angeles and Vancouver on 11-14 January 2018 and meet with business, press and local political circles and participate in the events organized by think-tanks and universities. Within the framework of the visit, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu will also come together with Turkish citizens and officially open the new chancery of the Turkish Consulate General in Vancouver.

No: 15, 14 January 2018, Press release regarding the statements on the establishment of a so-called “Syrian Border Security Force” under the PYD/YPG terrorist organization's command

Upon reports in the international press on allegations regarding the establishment of a so-called “Northern Army” by the PYD/YPG with US support, the Chargé d’Affaires of the US Embassy had been summoned to our Ministry on January 10 and requested to provide further explanation on the matter.

This time, in reference to a statement made by the spokesman for the Global Coalition against DEASH, news have emerged that the Coalition is working with the PYD/YPG-dominated so-called “Syrian Democratic Forces” (SDF) to form a 30,000-strong so-called “Syrian Border Security Force”, comprised partly of PYD/YPG elements, that would operate under "SDF" command.

Turkey has reiterated repeatedly at all levels and platforms that fighting DEASH on the ground and conducting stabilization activities in areas liberated from DEASH in cooperation with another terrorist organization, PYD/YPG, is simply wrong and dangerous.

On the other hand, Turkey, as a member of the Coalition, was not consulted with regard to the establishment of the so-called “Syrian Border Security Force”. It is also unknown by the approval of which Coalition members this decision was taken. Announcing unilateral steps by attributing it to the Coalition is an utterly wrong move that can also harm the fight against DEASH.

Such initiatives endangering our national security and Syria’s territorial integrity through the continuation of cooperation with PYD/YPG in contradiction with the commitments and statements made by the US are unacceptable. We condemn the insistence on this flawed approach and remind once again that Turkey is determined and capable to eliminate any threats targeting its territory.

QA-5, 2 February 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding unfounded allegations published recently by certain foreign media organs, claiming that civilians are being targeted during Operation Olive Branch

News which have nothing to do with reality and bearing characteristics of black propaganda, have been published recently by foreign media organs, alleging that civilians have been targeted during Operation Olive Branch and that civilian casualties have occurred.

During the planning and execution of the operation, terrorist organisations PKK/KCK/PYD-YPG and elements of DEASH deployed in Afrin and their shelters, emplacement, weapons, vehicles and equipment have been targeted, and all necessary measures have been taken in order to ensure that the civilian population is not harmed.

In fact, PKK/KCK/PYD-YPG uses civilians as human shields, does not allow civilians to leave the region, recruits even children by force and brings them into the conflict area, and recruits DEASH members to fight on its side.

The terrorist organization is trying to present terrorists neutralised during the operation as innocent civilians. Since the beginning of the operation, the same terrorist organization led to the death of five Turkish citizens and injury of many others up to now as a result of its numerous rocket attacks targeting Hatay and Kilis provinces.

Contrary to the allegations, any ammunition prohibited by international law and agreements is strictly not used by the Turkish Armed Forces. Moreover, religious and cultural edifices, historical monuments, archaeological remains and public facilities located in the operation area have never been targeted since the beginning of the operation.

It is essential not to give any credit to the black propaganda of the terrorist organization and its supporters.

As it did show utmost care towards civilians when clearing DEASH terrorists from the region during Operation Euphrates Shield, Turkey shows the same sensitivity towards civilians also when clearing PYD/YPG terrorists from Afrin through Operation Olive Branch.

It is rather ironic that those who made no claims regarding civilians when the target was DEASH resort to such slanders when the target is PYD/YPG.

QA-4, 2 February 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding decision of the United States to add Hamas Leader Ismail Haniya to the list of “Global Terrorists”

We are concerned that this decision of the U.S. Administration, which disregards the realities on the ground, could undermine the Middle East Peace Process, including the efforts for intra-Palestinian peace and reconciliation. We also hope that the decision will not have a negative impact on our country’s humanitarian assistance and economic development activities towards Gaza.

It is obvious that this decision, which overlooks the the fact that Hamas is an important reality of Palestinian political life, cannot make any contribution to the just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

QA-2, 26 January 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the Statements by U.S. President Trump on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Status of Jerusalem at His Joint Press Conference with Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu

We are concerned with the statements of President Trump on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on the status of Jerusalem at his joint press conference with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel in Davos on 25 January 2018.

These statements show how aloof the U.S. President and his entourage are from the realities of the region and the dynamics of the conflict.

The final status of Jerusalem has been unequivocally among the most fundamental components of the peace process towards the comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the outset. The established parameters of the international community with regards to the settlement process cannot be amended by the U.S. Administration through a unilateral decision which contravenes the international law, primarily UN Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions, and which, as a matter of fact, has already been rejected by the international community.

By the same token, it is obvious that one cannot contribute to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by fulfilling the demands and expectations of only one of the parties to the conflict, while isolating and even punishing the other. Such a shallow and short-sighted frame of mind cannot be expected to act as a mediator on an issue which directly pertains to peace and stability in the Middle East.

We call on the United States, as a matter of urgency, to respect the strong determination of the international community on this matter, particularly the resolutions of the UN Security Council, of which it is a permanent member.

No: 48, 15 February 2018, Press Release regarding the shooting at a high school in Florida, USA on 14 February 2018

We are deeply saddened by the loss of lives of 17 people and many wounded in the attack that took place yesterday (14 February) in Florida, USA.

We strongly condemn the attack and extend our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and the American people.

No: 47, 14 February 2018, Press Release Regarding the Working Visit of U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will pay a working visit to Turkey on 15-16 February 2018.

Minister Çavuşoğlu and Secretary Tillerson will discuss important issues on the common agenda of Turkey-US bilateral relations and exchange views on international issues.

Secretary Tillerson will also be received by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey.

QA-11, 13 February 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question on the remarks made by Mr. Jim Mattis, Secretary of Defence of the United States, regarding depiction of PKK terrorism as an “active insurgency”

We believe, in his statement, the US Secretary of Defence Jim Mattis was referring to terrorist activities of PKK. However, this is not the appropriate term to put it. PKK’s activities targeting Turkey are clearly acts of terrorism. The United States also deems these acts as such and recognizes PKK as a terrorist organization.

Turkey, being targeted by both the PKK and its off-shoots in Syria, PYD/YPG, is committed to fighting against this terrorist organization that poses a threat to our national security.

On the other hand, Turkey is not the sole NATO ally under the threat of terrorism. Last year, other allied countries suffered from major terrorist attacks as well.

QA-9, 9 February 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question on the remarks of U.S. State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert claiming Serkan Gölge being convicted with insufficient evidence

Serkan Gölge, a Turkish national, was tried before independent Turkish court and was convicted following a fair trial. It is not possible to take seriously the biased remarks as to the Turkish judiciary from the U.S. State Department Spokesperson who does not have the knowledge of case's substance and the evidence used within this case.

Turkish judiciary does not make indictments depending on the wishes of others or interventions by third parties, but decides on the basis of the Turkish Constitution, relevant laws and the collected evidence.

We expect our counterparts in the U.S. to respect the decisions of the independent Turkish courts.

QA-19, 28 February 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the reference made by the Spokesperson of the US Department of State to Turkey in relation to the UN Security Council Resolution 2401 on the humanitarian situation in Syria

The focus of the UN Security Council Resolution 2401 is the cessation of the regime's attacks that have caused the slaughter of hundreds of civilians within a week and the destruction of civilian facilities such as hospitals and schools as well as providing humanitarian access to the people condemned to starvation by the regime's siege policy.

In response to the worsening humanitarian situation in Syria, particularly in Eastern Ghouta, the resolution demands the cessation of hostilities without delay and calls for a humanitarian ceasefire to become effective at least for 30 days in order to allow access to emergency humanitarian aid and medical evacuations.

In the resolution, Afrin is not cited among the areas where the humanitarian situation is considered to be alarming. This is due to the fact that what is occurring in Afrin is not a conflict which does not differentiate between civilians and terrorists as meant by the resolution, but a combat against terrorist organizations which target the integrity of Syria and the national security of Turkey.

Turkey is not a party to the conflicts in Syria. Turkey exercises its right to self-defense on the basis of Article 51 of the UN Charter through Operation Olive Branch carried out in Afrin.

Against this backdrop, the statement of the Spokesperson of the US State Department suggesting that Turkey should thoroughly read the UN Security Council Resolution is completely groundless and it reveals that the Spokesperson either fails to grasp the focus of the resolution or intends to distort it.

Implementing the resolution without distorting its objective or targets should be the priority of all sides. Assuming that the resolution has been adopted with a view to protecting innocent people, utmost precaution must be exercised to avoid any distorted or double-standard interpretations which may be perceived as defending terrorists.

Within this framework, we recommend the US to focus on stopping the regime's attacks on innocent civilians instead of making statements that support terrorists.

Turkey, as it has done so far, will continue to do its part for alleviating the suffering of the Syrian people.

SC-17, 27 February 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the claim by the Spokesperson of the US Department of Defense that Turkey and USA are conducting diplomatic talks concerning de-escalation options in the Afrin region

The claim made yesterday by the Spokesperson of the US Department of Defense that Turkey and the US are conducting diplomatic talks on de-escalation options in Syria's Afrin region is not true.

Turkey is not involved in any diplomatic talk or process with the United States regarding Afrin.

It should be reminded that, in a statement made during his latest visit to Turkey on 15-16 February, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson declared that a mechanism would be established between the two states with a view to overcoming problems related to Syria, and that Manbij would be given priority within this context.

No: 92, 28 March 2018, Press Release Regarding the Visit of Undersecretary Yalçın to the U.S.

Ambassador Mr. Ümit Yalçın, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey will pay a working visit to the U.S. on 30 March 2018.

Turkey-US relations, regional and international issues as well as the outcome of the Working Group meeting, held in Washington D.C. on 8-9 March 2018, will be reviewed at the meetings of Undersecretary Yalçın with John Sullivan, Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of State.

QA-23, 19 March 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the statement by the Spokesperson of the US Department of State on the situation in Afrin

The statement made today by the Spokesperson of the US Department of State regarding the situation in Afrin reveals that the US authorities still cannot or unfortunately do not want to comprehend the reason, purpose and nature of Operation Olive Branch. Operation Olive Branch is a counter-terrorism operation. The operation in no way targets civilians. On the contrary, it aims to rescue the civilian population from the oppression and tyranny of a terrorist organization. Moreover, all precautions have been taken to avoid harming civilians and the civilian population has been provided with access to humanitarian aid.

The claim that the operation conducted against terrorists in Afrin would endanger the combat against DEASH is completely groundless. The approach that actually undermines the combat against terrorism in Syria is the use of one terrorist organization against another and allowing this particular terrorist organization to create faits accomplis on the ground by pushing forward its separatist agenda and to make demographic changes.

No: 105, 14 April 2018, Press Release Regarding the Military Operation Against Certain Points in Syria by the US, the UK and France

Turkey considers the operation carried out early this morning by the United States, United Kingdom and France to be an appropriate response to the chemical attack which caused the deaths of many civilians in Douma on 7 April. We welcome this operation which has eased humanity's conscience in the face of the attack in Douma, largely suspected to have been carried out by the regime.

Attacks with weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, that indiscriminately target civilians constitute crimes against humanity. The Syrian regime, which has been tyrannizing its own people for more than seven years, be it with conventional or chemical weapons, has a proven track record of crimes against humanity and war crimes. The conscience of the international community carries no doubt to that effect.

Turkey believes that it is of critical importance that such crimes do not go unpunished and that accountability is ensured in order to prevent the recurrence of similar crimes.

In light of this experience, it is essential for the international community, in particular the members of the UN Security Council, to agree upon joint steps to ensure that the use of chemical weapons does not go unpunished.

No: 95, 30 March 2018, Press Release Regarding the 5th Turkey-U.S. Defense Industry Trade Dialogue

The 5th session of the Turkey-U.S. Defense Industry Trade Dialogue, initially launched in Washington, D.C., in 2014, was held in Ankara on March 30, 2018.

Representatives of the Turkish General Staff, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Economy, and Defense Industry Undersecretariat, and officials from the U.S. Department of State, Department on Defense, and Department of Commerce participated in the first session, which was organized by representatives from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and U.S. Department of State. Several U.S. and Turkish defense industry companies participated in the afternoon for the second session of the day.

Participants reaffirmed the commitment of Turkey and the United States to address shared security and defense trade goals for the benefit of each nation, and discussed current developments in the Turkish-U.S. defense industry, possibilities for cooperation between the two countries, and potential joint undertakings.

No: 129, 8 May 2018, Press Release Regarding The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

Turkey has always maintained that diplomacy and negotiations are the only way to resolve the problem on Iran's nuclear program and made intensive efforts to this end at the time.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was adopted in 2015, is a significant step taken in the area of non-proliferation. The Plan demonstrated that even the toughest challenges could be resolved through negotiations.

All periodic reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), mandated to monitor the implementation of the deal in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, confirm Iran's compliance with the deal. We thus consider the decision of the US to withdraw from the JCPOA as an unfortunate step.

We continue to believe that any issue should be addressed in appropriate fora, through the appropriate mechanisms and diplomatic means. The Joint Commission mechanism foreseen in the JCPOA should be operational in resolving issues regarding the Plan.

The JCPOA should be preserved and implemented fully and without interruption, in a transparent manner and under the monitoring of the IAEA.

QA-36, 5 May 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the statement of the US State Department Spokesperson claiming that the people of Afrin are not allowed to return

The Spokesperson of the US State Department, under the influence of the smear campaign of the PYD/YPG terrorist organization and by referring to unverified assumptions, has made an unfortunate statement about the Operation Olive Branch at the press briefing on 3 May.

First and foremost, it is the PYD/YPG that prevents local people from returning to Afrin. This terrorist organization tries to gather material for its black propaganda campaign against Turkey through such activities. On the other hand, it is a known fact that a large number of mines and improvised explosive devices planted by PYD/YPG in the city creates a security threat that complicates returns. In any case, Turkey continues its efforts for the normalisation of the situation in Afrin and the facilitation of the safe return of local people.

The claim that the humanitarian situation in Afrin is a source of “grave concern” is completely baseless. The main source of concern in northern Syria is that the countries we consider as our allies maintain their cooperation with PKK/PYD/YPG terrorists.

In fact, the Operation Olive Branch has shown how a counter-terrorism operation can be conducted without giving any harm to civilians. Furthermore, the addressee of the call for providing access for the international aid organizations to Afrin is not Turkey. As a matter of fact, Turkey already provides every assistance to the UN for its humanitarian convoys towards Afrin.

No: 119, 25 April 2018, Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Trump on the 1915 events

We reject the inaccurate expressions and the subjective interpretation of history in the written statement by Mr. Donald Trump, President of the USA, released on 24 April 2018 regarding the events of 1915.

Our expectation from the US Administration is a fair assessment of a period during which all the peoples of the Ottoman Empire suffered tremendously.

In this context, we remind President Trump that during the same period more than 500.000 Muslims were slaughtered as a result of the events in which Armenian insurgents took part.

Turkey continues to offer the establishment of a Joint Historical Commission in order to shed light on this painful period of history and has opened its archives to researchers.

On the other hand, Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives in the conditions of World War I were commemorated this year once again on 24 April in a ceremony held at the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul suiting the respect they deserve and befitting the 800-year long friendship between Turks and Armenians. We recommend the US Administration to consider the message by our President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sent to the ceremony at the Patriarchate of Istanbul on 24 April 2018 addressing the descendants of Ottoman Armenians, which reflects Turkey's approach to this sensitive issue.

Besides all these points, we think it is in line with common sense that the statement made by the US President remained within international legal norms and did not refer to baseless genocide allegations.

No: 115, 22 April 2018, Press Release Regarding 2017 Human Rights Report of the US Department of State

Turkey resolutely maintains its commitment to the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law while intensively struggling against diverse and severe terrorist threats.

The U.S. Department of State's 2017 Human Rights report on Turkey is one of the routine documents being prepared annually on more than 190 countries to be submitted to the US Congress. The parts of latest report regarding Turkey, as released on 20 April 2018, is again full of false portrayals, unacceptable accusations and allegations.

The necessary and proportionate measures taken within the context of our rightful and legitimate struggle against terrorist organizations such as DAESH, PKK-YPG, FETÖ and DHKP-C are once again presented in a biased manner which does not reflect realities.

In particular, our fight against the radical terrorist organization FETÖ, which has tried to infiltrate into state institutions in order to capture the Turkish state from within, and ultimately staged a bloody coup attempt has been ignored.

It is not a coincidence that the said report, which repeats the narratives of terrorist affiliated groups and recklessly misrepresents the fight against terrorism as "internal conflict", was prepared by a country that hosts the ringleader of FETÖ.

It is expected that countries that genuinely adhere to fundamental rights and freedoms should act responsibly on such an important subject of human rights which must be kept away from politicization. We are deeply saddened that the said report has been drafted in a way inconsistent with this responsibility by presenting the allegations and accusations of terrorist affiliated organizations as reality.

On this occasion, it has been also confirmed that Turkey's decision to cease its previous cooperation in the preparation of the said report was right as its credibility was tarnished being far from meeting impartiality and objectivity criterias.

Furthermore, we recommend the countries which raise unfair allegations against Turkey firstly to put an end to the systematic violations of human rights against their own citizens.

As we have always been reiterating , while we resolutely continue to fight against terrorism which is a human rights violation per se, we will continue to abide by our international obligations and we will work uninterruptedly for further strengthening the fundamental rights and freedoms.

QA-32, 20 April 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question on the remarks of U.S. State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert expressing concerns that the early elections in Turkey will be held under the state of emergency

The fact that all the elections in Turkey have been conducted in a democratic, free, fair and transparent manner has been confirmed by relevant international monitoring reports. The constitutional referendum of 2017 which was held under the state of emergency is the latest proof of this fact. Disregarding this truth and claiming that the state of emergency will make the upcoming elections fall behind the democratic standards is an approach with ulterior motives.

The state of emergency targets nothing but the activities of the terrorists who threaten the unity of our country and the survival of our state. In Turkey, nobody's fundamental rights and freedoms have been limited with the exception of the terrorists.

I also would like to remind that elections were held under the state of emergency in many other countries.

One of the latest example of this fact is the elections held in France in 2017. Such prejudiced comments of those countries who claim to have adopted democracy and supremacy of law, demonstrate another example of the double standards which apply when it comes to Turkey.

Furthermore, making statements on the elections that are yet to be held constitutes an intervention on the free will of the people and is unacceptable.

QA-42, 30 May 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding Turkey chapter of the “International Religious Freedom Report for 2017” published by the US Department of State

The sections of the “International Religious Freedom Report for 2017” of the US Department of State concerning Turkey have been viewed. This annually published report is a routine study prepared by the US Department of State in line with its own perspective.

Most parts of the text in connection with Turkey constitute a repetition of the certain baseless claims already raised in previous years. The citation of FETÖ/PDY as a terrorist organization only in reference to our Government, and the deficient allusion to the terrorist coup attempt of July 15th 2016 and the damages inflicted on our country and our nation by the said terrorist organization are grave and serious flaws.

On the other hand, as we have reiterated on various occasions, it is certain that in Turkey no individual is subjected to any legal or administrative action on grounds such as religion or ethnic origin. Therefore representing ongoing legal procedures about certain individuals charged with connecting to terrorist organizations as such is unacceptable. In fact, all these points were relayed several times to the relevant US official who is in charge of the preparation of the said report, during his visit to Turkey in April 2018.

Moreover, it is noted that the said report also includes claims concerning certain demands of our Assyrian citizens related to immovable property issues. As is known, the Law on the Amendment of Tax Laws and Certain Laws and Decree Laws enacted on 21 March 2018, legally enabled the transfer of 56 pieces of immovable property from the General Directorate of Foundations to the Assyrian foundations. With this step, Turkey has affirmed once again its constructive and open-minded attitude regarding freedom of worship and religion.

No: 152, 30 May 2018, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs to the United States

Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will pay a working visit to the United States on 3-4 June 2018 upon the invitation of the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

During the meetings of Minister Çavuşoğlu, matters related to Syria, including the Road Map on Manbij, as well as bilateral relations and other regional and international issues of mutual interest will be discussed.

Minister Çavuşoğlu will also meet the representatives of Turkish and Muslim Community in the United States as well as American business circles, think tanks and members of the press in Washington.

No: 147, 25 May 2018, Joint Statement adopted at the end of the Turkey-US Working Group on Syria meeting held today in Ankara

The Turkish-US Working Group on Syria met today in Ankara to continue ongoing conversations regarding Syria and other issues of mutual interest and cooperation. The two sides outlined the main contours of a Road Map for their further cooperation in ensuring security and stability in Manbij. Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu and Secretary Pompeo will meet on June 4 to consider the recommendations of the Working Group.

No: 141, 18 May 2018, Press Release Regarding the Attack in Texas, USA

We are saddened by the loss of lives of 8 people and many wounded in the attack that took place today (18 May) in Texas, USA.

We condemn the attack and extend our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and the American people.

No: 140, 16 May 2018, Press Release regarding the Decision of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York

Today (May 16th) the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York sentenced Mehmet Hakan Atilla, the Deputy Director General of Halkbank, despite being not guilty, to 32 months of imprisonment after an entirely feigned process which is inconsistent with the principle of fair trial.

By convicting a foreign government official, this court made an unprecedented decision regarding the implementation of the U.S. sanctions legislation.

The Court's reliance on forged evidence and false statements fabricated by the members of the Fetullahist Terrorist Organization, eradicated the legitimacy of the trial. The credibility of the legal proceedings has vanished completely.

QA-38, 11 May 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding an article on the capture of 5 DAESH leaders published on the New York Times

Turkey has mobilized all its national capacity in the fight against DAESH. We are pleased to see that the international cooperation established in this regard is yielding important results.

The operation referred to in the New York Times article published on May 9 initially started with the apprehension of a leading member of DAESH, Ismail Alwaan al-Ithawi, by the Turkish intelligence and law enforcement agencies in Sakarya and his subsequent deportation to Iraq.

We are pleased by the success of the operation that also benefited from Turkey's contribution. Turkey shall continue its efforts in countering DAESH in cooperation with the US, Iraq and other countries.

No: 166, 12 June 2018, Press Release Regarding the Summit between the US-DPRK Leaders

We welcome the agreement reached by the leaders of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through a Joint Declaration on 12 June 2018 in Singapore, aiming to build lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, to establish new US-DPRK relations and to work for complete denuclearization of the Peninsula.

We commend the decisions and commitments made during the Summit and regard them as a milestone in the diplomatic process, which has been going on since early this year.

Following the agreement reached by the leaders of South and North Korea in April, it is essential that the historic opportunity created by the political will of the US and DPRK leaders be culminated by new positive steps for regional and global peace.

Bearing in mind her historical ties, Turkey will continue to support efforts toward establishing stability and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

No: 160, 4 June 2018, Joint Press Statement Regarding the Meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met on June 4 in Washington, D.C. They reaffirmed that Turkey and the United States remain committed to addressing their common concerns in a spirit of allied partnership.

Minister Çavuşoğlu and Secretary Pompeo exchanged views on bilateral and regional issues. They reaffirmed their joint resolve to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

They considered the recommendations of the Turkey-U.S. Working Group on Syria pertaining to the future of our bilateral cooperation in Syria on issues of mutual interest, to include taking steps to ensure the security and stability in Manbij. They endorsed a Road Map to this end and underlined their mutual commitment to its implementation, reflecting their agreement to closely follow developments on the ground.

Minister Çavuşoğlu and Secretary Pompeo also discussed Turkey-U.S. relations and agreed to hold further meetings of the working group mechanism to resolve current outstanding issues in the bilateral relationship. An initial session of the Working Group on Judicial and Other Issues took place immediately after the meeting of the Minister and the Secretary.

No: 157, 2 June 2018, Press Release Regarding the US Veto of Draft Resolution on the Palestinians Submitted to the United Nations Security Council

We deplore the US veto of Draft Resolution submitted to the UN Security Council by Kuwait, following the massacre that took place in Gaza on 14 May.

There is no explanation for the veto of a draft resolution which condemns the massacre against the innocent civilians who are exercising their legitimate right of peaceful protest and calls on the UN Secretary General to submit his recommendations, including the international protection mechanism, aimed at ensuring the security, protection and well-being of the Palestinians living under occupation, in the UN Security Council, the institution that is primarily in charge and responsible for protecting the international peace, stability and security.

The inefficiency of the UN Security Council in ensuring the accountability and deterrence in terms of the violence against the Palestinians has displayed that the reform of the UN is an irrecusable necessity.

Turkey will continue to be the pursuer of the Palestinian cause in all platforms primarily in the UN General Assembly.

No: 187, 13 July 2018, Joint Statement adopted at the end of Turkey-US Joint Working Group meeting on Judicial and Legal Issues held today (July 13) in Ankara

On July 13, 2018, the Joint Working Group on Judicial and Legal Issues met in Ankara. Turkish and American officials from all relevant Ministries and Departments came together and held substantial discussions on judicial and legal matters important to both sides. We look forward to progress on these issues.

No: 207, 1 August 2018, Press Release Regarding the US Treasury Department's decision to sanction our country

We strongly protest the US Treasury Department's decision to sanction our country.

This decision, which targets two of our honorable Ministers, neither complies with state seriousness, nor it is explicable within the terms of law and justice.

There is no doubt that the decision, which disrespectfully intervenes with our judicial system, stands in contrast to the essence of our relations and will seriously damage the constructive efforts made in order to resolve problems between the two countries.

We call upon the US administration to go back on this wrong decision.

An equivalent response to this aggressive attitude will be given without delay.

QA-51, 26 July 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the social media messages by President Trump and Vice President Pence of the United States of America

Turkey is a sovereign state with a deep-rooted democratic tradition and political order which upholds the supremacy of law . No one can give orders to Turkey and threaten our country. The rhetoric of threat against Turkey is unacceptable.

In order to improve its relations with the United States, our country has displayed necessary political will and did its part more than enough. It is impossible to accept the U.S. Administration's threatening messages, which totally disregard our alliance and friendly relations between our countries.

As regards the Brunson case, necessary information has been provided to our U.S. counterparts on various occasions and it has been clearly expressed that this issue is totally within the competence of the independent Turkish judiciary.

We invite the U.S. Administration to leave aside this wrongful rhetoric and come back to the existing framework of constructive dialogue that we have been engaged in so far.

No: 228, 1 September 2018, Press Release regarding the United States ending its financial contributions to UNRWA

The unfortunate statement that the United States will stop financial contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has been a major disappointment.

Since its establishment, UNRWA has been one of the symbols of the international community's solidarity with the oppressed people, which has undertaken the function of meeting the basic needs of Palestinian refugees in a wide range of sectors, from education and health to employment.

Today more than 500 thousand Palestinian children receive education in UNRWA schools and nearly 1 million Palestinians are living in need of UNRWA's urgent food aid.

The decision of the United States will affect the lives of over 5 million Palestinians in a negative way. At the same time, this decision will harm the vision of finding a two-state solution to the Palestinian issue; regional peace and stability.

Under these circumstances, UNRWA's continuing uninterrupted operation has become a legitimacy test and a conscientious task in terms of the international community.

This issue will be discussed in detail during UN General Assembly High Level meeting in New York, on September 27, 2018, with the co-chairmanship of Turkey Jordan, Japan, Sweden and the EU, and participation of UN Secretary-General and UNRWA General Commissioner.

Turkey, who has been in full solidarity with the Palestinian people from the beginning in all fields, as the president of UNRWA's Advisory Commission, is determined to continue to make every effort to support the Agency.

QA-59, 20 August 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in response to a Question Regarding the Attack Against the U.S. Embassy in Ankara

We condemn the attack perpetrated against the U.S. Embassy in Ankara this morning.

Investigations have been started by our relevant authorities to capture the perpetrators and to shed light on all aspects of the attack.

Measures have been increased to ensure the security of the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, other U.S. missions and their personnel in our country.

QA-58, 10 August 2018, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in response to a question regarding the tweet of the U.S. President Trump on additional tariffs targeting our country's steel and aluminum exports to the United States.

President Trump's decision on imposing additional tariffs targeting our country's steel and aluminum exports, in complete disregard of World Trade Organization rules, cannot be associated with seriousness expected from a state.

The United States should know that they cannot get any results through such kind of sanctions and pressures and that these will only harm our alliance which was forged by hardest challenges.

All the steps taken against Turkey will be given a befitting response as they have been given before.

In order to bring solutions to the existing problems, Turkey will always side with diplomacy, dialogue, good will and mutual understanding.

QA-62, 11 September 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in response to a question regarding the closure of the Office of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Washington, DC

The decision on the closure of the Office of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Washington, DC is worrying and also another indication of the United States' loss of impartiality in the Middle East Peace Process.

This decision will serve no purpose other than encouraging the attempts aimed at damaging the vision of a two-state solution.

Turkey will continue standing by the Palestinian people in their rightful cause and supporting the international efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question.

No: 275, 17 October 2018, Press Release Regarding the Working Visit of U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo

U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo will pay a working visit to Turkey on 17 October 2018.

Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu and Secretary Pompeo will discuss Turkey-U.S. bilateral relations and exchange views on regional and international issues, in particular Syria.

No: 294, 3 November 2018, Press Release Regarding the Visit of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sedat Önal to Washington, D.C.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sedat Önal visited Washington on 1-2 November and had meetings with U.S. Under Secretary of State David Hale and Under Secretary of Defense John Rood.

In the meetings, the ways of enhancing relations between the two allied countries and coordination on regional issues were discussed. In this context, the need for making the existing cooperation mechanisms functional was also emphasized.

During the meetings, both sides expressed their satisfaction for launching joint patrols in accordance with the previously agreed Manbij Roadmap between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the importance of full implementation of the Roadmap was emphasized.

In this respect, it has been underlined that the ending of the U.S. engagement with PYD/YPG was a fundamental necessity, not only for Turkey's national security, but also for establishing sustainable peace and stability in Syria.

It has also been affirmed that provocative actions of PYD/YPG near our Syria border have been retaliated strongly in accordance with our rules of engagement and that no terrorist activities would be tolerated whomever they may come from as we had already expressed.

Our sensitivities regarding the presence of FETÖ and particularly its leader in the U.S. have once again been made clear and our expectation that the need for concrete steps to be taken on this subject soon was registered.

QA-70, 2 November 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Decision on Lifting Sanctions Against U.S. Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security

In accordance with the principle of reciprocity that constitutes the essence of diplomatic practices, we responded in the same fashion when the United States Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions against Minister of Interior, Mr. Süleyman Soylu, and Minister of Justice, Mr. Abdülhamit Gül on August 1st, 2018. Hence, we imposed sanctions against the United States Attorney General Mr. Jeff Sessions and the United States Secretary of Homeland Security Ms. Kirstjen M. Nielsen.

In parallel with the decision of the United States Department of the Treasury to lift the said sanctions against Minister of Interior, Mr. Süleyman Soylu and Minister of Justice Mr. Abdülhamit Gül, we have decided to lift sanctions against the United States Attorney General Mr. Jeff Sessions and the United States Secretary of Homeland Security Ms. Kirstjen M. Nielsen on the following:

The entry ban to Turkey,

The blocking of their assets in our country,

The ban by any real persons and legal entities in Turkey to enter into any kind of financial transactions and commercial dealings with Mr. Sessions and Ms. Nielsen.

No: 284, 27 October 2018, Press Release Regarding the Attack Targeting a Synagogue in Pittsburgh, USA

We have received the news with sorrow that many people were killed and injured in an armed attack targeting a synagogue today (27 October) in Pittsburgh, USA.

We strongly condemn this heinous attack and express our condolences to the grieving families, the American Jewish community and the people of the United States.

QA-75, 18 November 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Exploration Activities of ExxonMobil off the Island of Cyprus

Exploration activities of ExxonMobil off the Island of Cyprus within the so-called "block" 10 upon the license given by the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus do not contribute to the stability of the region. They may also change certain sensitive balances with regard to the resolution of the problem.

We had warned the Greek Cypriot Administration to halt its unilateral hydrocarbon exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean region, stating that the natural resources around the Cyprus Island belong not only to the Greek Cypriot side, but to both sides. We seize this opportunity to reiterate our warning towards the companies involved in the unilateral exploration and exploitation activities of the Greek Cypriot Administration. We remind that the sharing of the natural resources of the Cyprus Island is related to the essence of the Cyprus issue.

As in the past, we will continue to take necessary diplomatic and political steps, in coordination with the TRNC, with a view to protecting the rights and interests of the Turkish Cypriot people, as the equal owners of the Island, stemming from international law. We will start activities in the areas licensed by the Turkish Cypriots to the Turkish Petroleum, in addition to our continental shelf.

No: 312, 17 November 2018, Press Release Regarding the Attendance of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey to the 8th Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations and Working Visit to Washington D.C.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will attend the 8th Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations to be hosted by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the United Nations Headquarters on 19-20 November 2018 in New York.

Following his program in New York, Minister Çavuşoğlu will pay a working visit to Washington on November 20th, 2018.

During the meetings of Minister Çavuşoğlu, bilateral relations, as well as regional and international issues on our common agenda, in particular Syria, are expected to be discussed.

No:305, 12 November 2018, Press Release Regarding the Wildfires in California, USA

We are saddened by the loss of many lives and great material losses caused by wildfires in the State of California, U.S.

We extend our condolences to the relatives of those who lost their lives and to the people of the United States and wish a speedy recovery to the injured.

No:301, 8 November 2018, Press Release Regarding the Armed Attack in California, USA

We have received the news with sorrow that many people were killed and injured in an armed attack today (8 November) in California, USA.

We condemn this attack and express our condolences to the grieving families and the people of the United States.

QA-72, 7 November 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding A Decision Taken by the Department of State of the United States

We consider the U.S. Department of State's authorization of rewards for information on identification or location of three leading members of the PKK terrorist organization as a positive development.

We expect this step to be supported with concrete actions in Iraq and Syria in the context of countering PKK and its extensions.

No: 330, 7 December 2018, Turkey-U.S. Joint Statement on Syria

On December 7, 2018, the Turkish-U.S. High-Level Working Group on Syria met for the third time, in Ankara.

High level officials from Turkey's Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Defense and from the U.S. Departments of State and Defense convened to continue to discuss the promotion of stability and security in Syria.

Both sides affirmed their commitment to Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity and underscored the importance of sustained and irreversible progress on a political solution to the Syrian conflict consistent with UNSCR 2254.

They reiterated their shared commitment to provide humanitarian assistance to Syrians in need and acknowledged substantial efforts by both governments in this regard.

Both sides reaffirmed their resolve to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations originating from within Syria and beyond.

They committed to accelerated and concrete progress on the Manbij Roadmap by the end of the year.

They agreed to continue to work on joint planning with regard to other areas as mentioned in the Manbij Roadmap.

Turkey and the United States share a commitment to address effectively the security concerns of both countries consistent with their obligations to one another as Allies, and look forward to continued progress on issues of mutual interest regarding the ongoing crisis in Syria.

For this purpose, both sides agreed to increase the frequency of Working Group meetings on Syria.

They decided to convene the next High-Level Working Group on Syria meeting in Washington, D.C. no later than February 2019.

QA-1, 4 January 2018, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding US Secretary of State Pompeo's Remarks in an Interview

We reject, in terms of both substance and language, the remarks made by US Secretary of State Pompeo in an interview given to an online news channel yesterday (3 January) about Turkey in relation to Syria. Secretary Pompeo's identification of the PYD/YPG terrorist organization with Kurds, if not deliberate, indicates a worrying lack of information.

Turkey is determined to continue its fight against PKK/PYD/YPG and DAESH terrorist organizations which pose existential threat to its national security and target the political unity and territorial integrity of Syria. Misrepresenting Turkey's fight against a terrorist organization as an attempt to target a particular group in Syria is totally unacceptable, given that Turkey embraces the entire Syrian people, including Kurds. We strongly condemn treating a terrorist organization as a partner in fighting DAESH.

Turkey will continue to safeguard the rights of the Syrian Kurds both in its fight against terrorism and in its efforts for finding a political solution to the Syrian conflict. It should be recalled that Turkey is currently hosting hundreds of thousands of Syrian Kurds who fled the oppression of PYD/YPG and cannot return to their own lands because of PYD/YPG's pressure.

No:28, 6 February 2019, Turkey-U.S. Joint Statement

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Sedat Önal and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale met on February 5, in Washington, D.C. to launch working groups on bilateral and regional affairs.

They reaffirmed the strategic importance of the U.S.-Turkish relationship and committed to addressing shared concerns as allies. Following a plenary meeting, senior U.S. and Turkish officials met in working group formats to discuss bilateral cooperation on Syria; counterterrorism; defense matters; and judicial and consular issues. The two sides expressed their determination to continue to work together to achieve further progress on all these areas.

No:25, 4 February 2019, Press Release Regarding Turkey-U.S. Working Group meetings which will be held in Washington D.C, on February 5th, 2019

Turkey-U.S. Working Group meetings will be held in Washington D.C, on February 5th, 2019.

Meetings will be co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sedat Önal and the U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale.

QA-10, 2 March 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US State Department statement on the continuation of PKK's listing as a Terrorist Organization

The US State Department announced that the PKK, designated by the US as a terrorist organization since 1997, will continue to remain on the Foreign Terrorist Organizations List.

We attach importance to the US State Department's emphasis on commitment to the fight against PKK in its statement. It is our expectation that our ally, the US will also adopt the same approach towards PKK's regional extensions PYD/YPG.

No: 55, 14 March 2019, Press Release Regarding Turkey 2018 Human Rights Report of the U.S. Department of State

Protection and promotion of human rights are among our country's indispensable priorities. Our efforts to safeguard the fundamental freedoms of both our citizens and millions of people in all corners of the world, and to prevent the human rights violations they face, is the greatest proof to this.

The US Department of State's Turkey 2018 Human Rights Report, published on 13 March 2019, which is one of the customary documents that is submitted to the US Congress on over 190 countries every year, contains unfounded allegations, dubious information and biased interpretations, as it did in previous years.

We observe with disappointment that in this year's report, the US once again failed to recognize our country's rightful fight against brutal terrorist organizations, in particular, PKK, FETO, DAESH, and DHKP-C. The report has not refrained from portraying our counter-terrorism efforts to ensure national and regional security, executed in full compliance with international law and human rights as human rights violations. We strongly reject this approach.

The report, which contains the views of those, describing supporters of terrorist organizations and circles behind the 15 July terrorist coup attempt as "political prisoners", is clearly biased. Prepared by the country that shelters the head of FETO, the report strengthens the perception regarding the identity of those behind the 15 July terrorist coup attempt against our country. We condemn this characterization that serves no other purpose than politicizing human rights and thereby impairing the efforts towards the promotion of human rights principles.

It is absolutely unacceptable for those responsible of thousands of civilian casualties in the course of operations across the world, to accuse the Turkish Armed Forces, which have gained even the appreciation of the people of the region that they liberated without harm to any civilians during the Operation Olive Branch, of civilian casualties.

The ironic accusations towards Turkey by a country whose dark history in human rights is known by the entire world and whose mistreatment of migrants including children has been widely reported even in the past year, is frivolous, to say the least.

The report's omission of steps taken in the past year following the termination of the state of emergency, towards the reforms in the areas of judiciary and fundamental rights, which have been confirmed at the meetings of the Reform Action Group, cannot be considered to be in good faith.

It is clear that this report, which is far from being objective, has been shaped by political incentives of the US. Turkey 2018 Report, as such, is damaging to the credibility of its decades-old tradition of annual country reports on human rights practices, which it claims to serve as a mechanism to monitor globally the situation of human rights. We will continue our fight against terrorism, as before, with the first and foremost aim of protecting our citizens' human rights; and we will maintain our

continuous efforts to preserve and strengthen, in accordance with democracy and the rule of law, the fundamental rights and freedoms.

QA-13, 13 March 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Press Release of the US Embassy in Pristina Regarding the Deportation of Six FETÖ Affiliated Individuals to Turkey

We achieve concrete results in our fight against the Fetullah Gülen Terrorist Organization's (FETÖ) links abroad in cooperation with many other countries. The fact that FETÖ poses a security risk not only against Turkey, but against all countries it operates, is gradually becoming more and more apparent.

Accordingly, following the decision of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Pakistan has also recently declared FETÖ as a terrorist organization. FETÖ linked schools have either been closed down, taken over by the host country or transferred to the Turkish Maarif Foundation (TMV) in over 20 countries in different parts of the world. Many countries, including some in the Balkans, have deported FETÖ affiliated individuals. There are also ongoing legal investigations against FETÖ elements in numerous countries.

All these measures have been carried out within the legal framework of these countries and in accordance with the rules of international law.

One of the basic requirements for countering terrorism is sincere international cooperation based on legal principles.

Balkans is a region particularly dear to us and we attach importance to the continuation of this solid approach by the countries of the region which have taken measures against FETÖ, an existential threat against Turkey. We call upon other partners and allies to display the same judicious approach, instead of attempting to prevent measures against FETÖ.

QA-23, 4 April 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the Readout of the U.S. Department of State on the Bilateral Meeting Between Minister Çavuşoğlu and His U.S. Counterpart

The readout published today by the Department of State and obviously prepared before the meeting held between Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo not only fails to reflect the content of the meeting, but also contains matters that were not even raised during the said meeting.

Similar issues were encountered during past meetings. Our alliance naturally requires that such statements are prepared with greater care, while avoiding to include matters that were not raised during meetings.

QA-22, 3 April 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of the Spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State on the Local Elections in Turkey

Turkey is a democratic state governed by the rule of law. The local elections on 31 March were conducted peacefully in a democratic and transparent atmosphere. It is essential that voter's will is reflected in the polls and everyone should respect the legal and democratic efforts made in this context.

The source of legitimacy of the elections is the people's will. The Supreme Election Council is the sole authority to determine how this will is manifested at the polls, and evaluate and finalize the process in relation to the objections.

No country has the authority to intervene in the election results of another country in a manner against law and democracy and to regard itself as the source of legitimacy of the results. Anti-democratic approaches and habits, cannot, in any way, overshadow Turkey's democratic maturity.

Turkish people demonstrated their commitment to democracy through a high turnout on 31 March local elections. On the other hand, people's choice in favour of stability and trust has also been confirmed by the poll results.

No: 84, 1 April 2019, Press Release Regarding the Visit of Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to the United States on the Occasion of the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting

H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey will visit the United States to participate in the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Washington D.C. on 3-4 April 2019, to be held on the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the Alliance.

At the meeting, Allied Ministers of Foreign Affairs will discuss the importance of the Transatlantic bond as well as of allied solidarity and coherence. They are also expected to underline the significance of preserving NATO's ability to respond to contemporary security challenges, building on past experiences.

During his visit to the United States, Minister Çavuşoğlu will hold bilateral meetings in Washington, D.C. and gather with Turkish-American community, business circles, local authorities as well as representatives of the Muslim community in New York, Miami and North Carolina.

Minister Çavuşoğlu will also participate in the UN General Assembly meeting and address the Assembly on the occasion of the presentation of a resolution upon the initiative of a group of countries led by Turkey to condemn the recent terrorist attacks in New Zealand against Muslims and to take necessary measures against such acts.

QA-19, 29 March 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statements by Elliott Abrams, US Special Representative for Venezuela, as the Guest of US Department of State's 'LiveatState' Social Media Program on 28 March

We regret the statements by Elliott Abrams, US Special Representative for Venezuela, regarding Turkey's relations with Venezuela.

Turkey, like many countries, recognizes Maduro Government, which came to power through elections, as the legitimate government of the country in accordance with international law and as represented in the UN.

Turkey is against attempts to replace legitimate governments through foreign intervention and by resorting to undemocratic means. Besides, Turkey conducts its trade with Venezuela in accordance with international trade regulations and in a transparent way.

Turkey will continue to maintain its relations with all Latin American countries, as cooperation partners, on the basis of mutual respect, friendship and interest.

No: 77, 25 March 2019, Press Release Regarding the Decision of the US Administration to Recognize Israel's Sovereignty Over the Golan Heights Under Occupation

We deplore and strongly condemn the decision of the US Administration to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, held under Israeli occupation since 1967.

This unfortunate decision, which constitutes a grave violation of international law, particularly the United Nations Security Council Resolution 497 (1981), demonstrates that the US Administration continues its approach to be part of the problem, rather than part of the solution in the Middle East.

This decision is completely null and void for Turkey and for responsible members of the international community that attach importance to the territorial integrity of Syria and of all the countries in the region.

Instead of further destabilizing the region with futile attempts to justify Israel's acts against international law, it is an essential responsibility of all members of the international community to comply with the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and UN Security Council Resolutions.

QA-18, 25 March 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statements Delivered at the Annual Conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) by the Leaders of Certain States on Moving Their Embassies to Jerusalem

We are concerned by the irresponsible statements made by the leaders of certain states at the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), held yesterday (24 March) in Washington, about moving their Embassies in Israel to Jerusalem.

As we have stated time and again, the relocation by any country of its Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem would constitute a clear violation of international law.

The annexation of Jerusalem by Israel has been rejected by the international community and the United Nations (UN). It was repeatedly underlined by various UN resolutions that the question of Palestine could only be solved by the establishment of an independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We call upon all countries to comply with the UN Resolutions on this matter, to respect the historical and legal status of Jerusalem and to refrain from acts that would further destabilize our region.

No: 128, 6 May 2019, Press Release Regarding the Press Statement of the US Department of State, Dated 5 May 2019

The press statement of the US Department of State dated 5 May 2019 concerning Turkey's drilling activities in its own continental shelf is unrealistic.

Turkey has made its position explicitly clear regarding its continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean since 2004.

Since then, we have brought to the attention of the relevant countries and the international community that the Greek Cypriot Administration's EEZ delimitation agreements with the countries in the region are not valid for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots and one of these agreements violates Turkey's continental shelf rights. Similarly, Turkey has announced to the international community and registered with the UN its continental shelf in the region. Delimitation agreements based on equitable principles in accordance with the international law have not yet been concluded among all relevant coastal states in the region.

Therefore, the attempts of the third parties to act as an international court in determining maritime boundaries is unacceptable. In this context, the statement of the US calling Turkey by expressing that "there exists Greek Cypriot claims over the area" is neither constructive nor compatible with international law, given the fact that there is no valid maritime delimitation agreement in the region.

Our drilling and seismic vessels will resolutely continue their activities in our continental shelf in the areas where our Government granted the Turkish Petroleum licenses in 2009 and 2012.

Likewise, unless the Greek Cypriots include the Turkish Cypriots, as the equal partners of the Island, into the decision making mechanisms regarding hydrocarbon resources or cease their unilateral hydrocarbon activities, Turkey will continue to protect the continental shelf rights of the Turkish Cypriots as well.

QA-28, 1 May 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Turkey Chapter of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom 2019 Report

We have examined the chapter on Turkey of the “2019 International Religious Freedom Report” published by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. This report is annually published by the said Commission in order to make policy recommendations to the U.S. Government regarding religious freedoms.

The mention of the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETÖ) as “Sunni Muslims” that face persecution in the report, reveals from the very beginning how biased and detached from reality it is and how it was drawn up under the influence of certain sources of evil. The depiction of FETÖ as “Gülen and his followers accused by the Turkish Government for the coup attempt” is equivalent to condoning terrorism, in view of dozens of court rulings establishing it as a terrorist organization.

The joint declaration published last year by the representatives of Turkey’s religious communities, proclaiming that they live without being subject to any pressure, is the best confirmation of the climate of religious freedom in Turkey. Groundless allegations in the report that the said declaration, which was signed by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, General Vicar of the Armenian Patriarch of Turkey, Chief Rabbi of Turkey as well as Syriac, Chaldean and Protestant representatives, “may have been coordinated” by our Government, exposes the political motives behind the report.

It is a contradiction of the U.S. Government and Congress to criticize Turkey, when it has been unable to come to terms with the election of Muslim members to the House of Representatives, to demonstrate the will to fight against Islamophobia and to prevent the attacks against its own minorities.

During this difficult period when the threat posed by terrorist organizations against religious freedoms is at a peak, Turkey sets an example to the world with its society in which various religions and beliefs coexist peacefully.

No: 113, 24 April 2019, Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Donald Trump on the events of 1915

We reject U.S. President Donald Trump's statement dated 24 April 2019 with regard to the events of 1915.

This statement, based on the subjective narrative fictionalized by Armenians, is of no worth. Distortion of history for domestic political considerations can never be accepted.

We remind pains of more than 500 thousand Muslims slaughtered by Armenian rebels in the same period and invite President Trump to be fair.

Turkey is still behind its proposal to establish a Joint Historical Commission to shed light on all aspects of the events that took place 104 years ago.

Radical Armenians, who want to ensure their responsibilities in the events of 1915 are overlooked, do not show the courage to respond positively to this proposal.

On this occasion, we commemorate with respect Muslims, Christians, Jews, and all other Ottoman communities who lost their lives during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

QA-38, 22 May 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Draft Resolution, Titled "Expressing Concern for the United States-Turkey Alliance" which was Approved on 22 May at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives

We observe that the anti-Turkey circles in the United States have recently intensified their activities in the U.S. Congress. The Draft Resolution, titled "Expressing Concern for the United States-Turkey Alliance " which was approved on 22 May at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, is another example of this.

Turkey and the U.S., have deep rooted allied relations, based on common values and mutual interests. They work together to contribute to the peace and security in various regions in the world. Resolutions as such, that undermine this fact and the rightful reasons behind the steps taken by Turkey for its national security, are inconsistent with the allied relationship between our countries.

In this respect, there is no need for concern by the American people and their representatives, whose friendship we value. In fact, friendship and alliance require to demonstrate a constructive and sincere effort by supporting the working group we proposed.

QA-30, 9 May 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statements Made by the Spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State Morgan Ortagus and the Members of the U.S. Congress About the Re-run of Municipal Elections in Istanbul

Free and democratic elections are an indispensable part of Turkey's state tradition. The high turnout in every election demonstrates, in the best way, our people's commitment to democracy and their trust in the electoral system.

The reason for the decision to re-run the municipal elections in İstanbul is because certain unlawful elements in the elections held on 31 March 2019 were identified, and it is not related to the election results. Everyone should respect this decision taken by the Supreme Election Council, whose authority to administer and supervise elections is enshrined in our Constitution and whose members are elected out of the judges of the high courts. It should be kept in mind that similar processes took place in the U.S. and other countries and were resolved in accordance with democratic principles.

Accurate reflection of the Turkish people's will in the election results is a requirement of our national laws and international commitments. It will be Turkey's priority, as it has been in the past elections, to fulfill this requirement in the 23 June elections.

No: 160, 11 June 2019, Press Release Regarding the Resolution “Expressing Concern for the United States-Turkey Alliance” Approved at the United States House of Representatives

As previously stated, the Resolution titled "Expressing Concern for the United States-Turkey Alliance", which was approved at the United States House of Representatives, on 10 June, is not consistent in anyway with the deep rooted friendship and alliance between Turkey and the US. It is impossible to accept the unfair and unfounded allegations raised in the Resolution about Turkey's foreign policy and judicial system.

As we have always emphasized, the most effective way of eliminating disagreements between friendly and allied countries is dialogue and respect for the sovereign decisions of the countries. Instead, approving such resolutions which are not binding and which do not serve to enhance mutual trust; using the language of threat and sanctions and putting some artificial deadlines are not acceptable.

QA-39, 31 May 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding reports in some media outlets about Turkey evaluating to postpone the S-400 system

The news recently published in the media that Turkey is considering to postpone its S400 acquisition upon the request of the U.S. does not reflect the truth.

The process of our S400 procurement continues as planned.

On the other hand, our proposal to convene a Working Group with the U.S. authorities, in order to discuss the concerns of the U.S. with regard to the interoperability of the S400 system with NATO and F35 systems, is still valid.

QA-44, 22 June 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Chapter on Turkey of the "2018 Report on International Religious Freedom" Published by the US Department of State

In the "2018 Report on International Religious Freedom" published by the US Department of State on 21 June 2019, the fact that the leader of FETÖ terrorist organization is referred to as a "Muslim cleric and political figure" is a clear indicator of the ulterior motives and the circles behind it . Such portrayal of the leader of the terrorist organization which murdered 251 of our citizens is equal to turning a blind eye to the 15 July heinous coup attempt or supporting it. It

is a very telling example of hypocritical approach for a country who pretends to be the defender of democracy in the world to define those behind the coup attempt against an ally democracy as innocent religious cleric.

Pastor Brunson was convicted because of his affiliation with terrorism, not because of his faith. He has returned to the US after serving his time in accordance with a judicial decision, not as a result of sanctions and threats. Still, covering his case extensively and presenting it as a violation of religious freedom in the report is nothing but an attempt by the US to exploit the matter and wrongfully criticize our country.

The fact that the US Department of State does not bring forward a single criticism about Israel's aggression towards Haram al-Sharif, one of Islam's holiest sites of worship, in the chapter on Israel of the same report while presenting the reaction in our country against Israel's killings of dozens of Muslims in Gaza last year as "anti-Semitic rhetoric" reveals the frivolous nature of the report.

Turkey reiterates its objective to protect and promote the freedom of religion and worship with every step it takes. Various religions and beliefs will continue to coexist peacefully in Turkey.

On the other hand, had the US obtained information from minorities in Turkey beforehand, the outcome would have been a much more realistic and reputable report.

No: 210, 17 July 2019, Press Release Regarding the U.S.'s removing of Turkey from F35 Program

The White House and the U.S. Department of Defense announced today (17 July) that Turkey will be removed from the F35 Program due to the procurement of S-400 air and missile defense system.

This unilateral step contradicts with the spirit of alliance and does not rely on any legitimate justification.

It is not fair to remove Turkey, a main partner, from the F-35 Program and also the claim that S-400 system would jeopardize the F-35s is baseless.

The fact that our proposal to form a working group with the participation of NATO on this issue has been left unanswered, is the most obvious evidence of the prejudice on the U.S. side and the lack of will to resolve the issue in good faith.

The U.S. should display commitment to its friendship with Turkey not only in rhetoric, but through action and particularly in the fight against DEASH, PKK/PYD/YPG and FETÖ terrorist organizations.

It is of great importance to maintain the understanding reached at the meeting between President Erdoğan and President Trump in Osaka, held in the margins of the G20 Summit.

We call upon the United States to return from this mistake that will cause irreparable wounds in our strategic relations.

QA-48, 10 July 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of the Spokesperson of U.S. Department of State, Mrs. Morgan Ortagus, on July 9 about the procurement of Turkey's S-400 air defense system

The statement made by the US State Department spokesperson on July 9th regarding our procurement of the S-400 air defense system does not conform with the content and spirit of the meeting between the two Presidents at the G20 Summit.

The conditions that led Turkey to procure S400 are well known. President Trump confirmed this at the G20 Summit and made it clear that our country was not fairly treated.

From the very beginning, Turkey has shown a transparent approach on this matter. We have proposed to establish a technical working group, that could include NATO, to address U.S. concerns regarding the potential effects of the S400 system on F35s. However our proposal has been left unanswered so far.

We call upon the U.S. side to refrain from taking wrong steps, that would harm relations, by excluding diplomacy and dialogue.

No: 194, 3 July 2019, Press Release Regarding the Publication of an Article by one of the Terrorist Ringleaders in the Washington Post Newspaper

One of the ringleaders of PKK which has brutally killed tens of thousands of innocent people and officially designated as a terrorist organization in many countries, including the USA, overtly engaged in terrorist propaganda by making use of the Washington Post. Through the said publication, one of the core commitments undertaken by the international community, namely the principle of the prevention of incitement to terror has heavily been violated. It is essential that no distinction should be made among the terrorist organisations.

The aforementioned stance has been capitalized on by PKK as a tool of terrorist propaganda and is in contravention of the sensitivity displayed regarding other terrorist organisations such as DAESH and Al Qaida. Hence, it constitutes a new and fatal example of hypocrisy in the fight against terrorism.

QA-51, 9 August 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US Executive Order “Blocking Property of the Government of Venezuela”

We disapprove the US Executive Order “Blocking Property of the Government of Venezuela” envisaging comprehensive sanctions on Venezuela was signed on 5 August 2019, at a time when talks facilitated by Norway were continuing in Barbados between the Venezuelan government and the opposition.

We are concerned that the said Executive order will worsen the economic hardship already faced by the Venezuelan people and negatively impact the initiatives aimed at finding a political solution in Venezuela.

In this regard, we would like to reiterate once again that in order to find a lasting solution, all parties need to continue contributing to the political dialogue process.

No: 263, 7 September 2019, Press Release Regarding the Travel Advisory for Turkey Issued by the US Department of State

The travel advisory for Turkey issued recently by the U.S. State Department contains generally positive evaluations as a result of the solid security conditions in Turkey, but the assessments regarding our eastern and southeastern cities do not reflect the reality. This approach, which is far from understanding Turkey's fight against terrorism, will not disrupt the determination of our Government on this matter.

This statement, which puts forward remarks exceeding the purpose and context of a travel advisory, could not have been written in good faith.

Claims that do not accurately reflect the security environment in our country are repeated and unfounded assessments suggesting a threat and a security gap are made in the advisory.

Our citizens and our guests live in peace and safety in every city in Turkey.

On the other hand, being elected does not mean having the freedom to support terrorism and terrorist organizations. Our country is determined to fight against terrorism effectively. The measures we take on legal and legitimate grounds against those who support terror are the manifestation of our country's determined fight against this threat.

We call upon the U.S. authorities to abandon this ideological approach and take the realities of our country as reference and correct this assessment, which is far from common sense and logic.

QA-62, 12 October 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Fate of DEASH Detainees and Their Families within the scope of Operation Peace Spring

We are closely following the attempts to cast shadow on Turkey's efforts to establish a safe zone by clearing the northeast of Syria of terrorists within the context of Operation Peace Spring.

As President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated in his last phone conversation with US President Trump, we will take over the custody of DEASH elements and their family members being held in detention facilities and camps in areas to be freed from terror by Operation Peace Spring.

Turkey will make efforts to keep DEASH members and their families whose custody it will take over, at this stage, in areas freed from terror within Syria.

We are ready to work together with the countries of origin and international organizations for the rehabilitation of spouses and children who have not been involved in crimes committed by foreign terrorist fighters affiliated with DEASH.

On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that the sustainable solution to this issue is repatriation, prosecution and rehabilitation by countries of origin of all foreign terrorist fighters and their families detained in Syria. We attach utmost importance to the joint efforts of the international community in this regard. Turkey will continue to support in every possible way the international community's efforts to this end.

QA-61, 11 October 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question on the Statement made by the U.S. Department of the Treasury Concerning the Development of New Authorities to Target Turkey with Sanctions

The U.S. Department of the Treasury made a statement today regarding its preparations to enact sanctions against Turkey in connection with the Operation Peace Spring.

The U.S. Administration has been informed at all levels at the start of Operation Peace Spring. The target and scope of the operation have been shared with the international community in full clarity with the statement made by our Ministry today. Turkey has been fighting against terrorist groups which pose a serious threat to its national security and this fight will be resolutely pursued.

There shall be no doubt that, any step that will be taken in opposition to this, will be met with a multi-folded response in the context of full reciprocity.

QA-59, 7 October 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding Remarks by Foreign Officials on the Safe Zone to be Established in the East of Euphrates

It is our fundamental right based on international law to take measures as required by our national security against any terrorist threat emanating from Syria.

We have exerted maximum effort so far to implement the aforementioned measures jointly with our Allies in particular the US.

We have, in a constructive way and good faith, spared no effort to establish a safe zone in north of Syria with a view to addressing our legitimate security concerns and paving the way for the safe and voluntary return of hundreds of thousands of displaced Syrians to their homes.

We are at a point where the commitments of the US military authorities have not been fulfilled. During the course of the talks, the US security bureaucracy has intensified its engagement with the PYD/YPG terrorist organization which keeps the east of Euphrates under occupation, and acted in a way which is incompatible with its existing Allied relationship with Turkey, let alone putting an end to this engagement.

As a responsible member of the international community, Turkey is determined to fight all kinds of terrorism. We cannot sit idly and watch the PYD/YPG terrorist organization, which is the soulmate of DEASH and the mirror-image of crimes against humanity committed against the Syrian people as well as our country and people, grow stronger and create fait-accomplis on the Syrian side of our border.

Turkey remains firm to establish the safe zone in order to counter threats to its existence and to protect its security by clearing the east of Euphrates from terrorists, as well as to foster peace, security and stability in Syria. A serious threat against the territorial integrity and unity of Syria will thus be eliminated and a strong basis will be built to prevent the resurgence of DEASH or similar entities in the future.

President Erdoğan reiterated all the above to President Trump once again during their phone conversation on 6 October.

**No: 316, 29 October 2019, Press Release Regarding the Draft Bill (H.R. 4695)
Adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives Envisaging Sanctions Against
Turkey on the Basis of Operation Peace Spring**

We strongly condemn the adoption of a draft bill that envisages sanctions against Turkey on the basis of Operation Peace Spring in the U.S. House of Representatives today (29 October).

The draft bill, which targets our senior officials and our Armed Forces, is incompatible with the spirit of our NATO Alliance, and contradicts with the agreement reached on Syria with the U.S. Administration on 17 October.

The U.S. officials, who have been even disregarding the difference between an Ally country and a terrorist organization and have been carelessly legitimizing a terrorist with their rhetoric and actions in the past days, should understand that they cannot achieve anything with the threats of unilateral sanctions.

We urge, the U.S. Congress, not to exploit bilateral issues for domestic political consumption and to act in line with the spirit of our Alliance and partnership. We call on the U.S. Administration to take necessary steps to prevent the further deterioration of our relations.

No: 315, 29 October 2019, Press Release Regarding the Resolution Entitled “Affirming the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide” Passed by the U.S. House of Representatives

We reject the resolution H.Res.296 entitled “Affirming the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide” that is adopted today by the U.S. House of Representatives as expressing the sense of the Latter.

The resolution which has apparently been drafted and issued for domestic consumption is devoid of any historical or legal basis.

The resolution itself is also not legally binding. As a meaningless political step, its sole addressees are the Armenian lobby and anti Turkey groups.

Those who felt defeated for not being able to forestall Operation Peace Spring would be highly mistaken should they thought that they could take vengeance this way.

Since in the eyes of the Turkish government and the people, this resolution is totally null and void.

There can be no further delusion than an attempt to rewrite history according to the “sense” of a political body.

The resolution as it stands is both against the U.S. and international law as it is an incrimination against the principles defined in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. There is no verdict of a competent court with regard to the 1915 events that establishes the crime of genocide. On the contrary, European Court of Human Rights delivered a milestone judgment which stipulates that 1915 events constitute a legitimate subject for debate.

Hence, the debate on the events that occurred in 1915 belongs to the realm of history, not politics.

It should be remembered that Turkey’s proposal on the establishment of a Joint Historical Commission made in 2005 was rejected by the Armenian side.

The U.S. Administration and politicians as well as the American people are best placed to consider the damages this resolution seeking to disrupt Turkey-U.S ties does and will inflict upon the U.S. interests at an extremely fragile time in terms of the international and regional security. On the other hand, it is also noted that the attitude of the U.S. Administration on 1915 events remains the same.

Undoubtedly, this resolution will negatively affect the image of the U.S. before the public opinion of Turkey as it also brings the dignity of the U.S. House of Representatives into disrepute.

We believe that American friends of Turkey who support the continuation of the alliance and friendly relations will question this grave mistake and those who are responsible will be judged by the conscience of the American people.

QA-67, 27 October 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the

Killing of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, Ringleader of the DAESH Terrorist Organization

Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi is one of the biggest enemies of humanity, Islam and Turkey.

Turkey, being one of the most active members of the The Global Coalition Against DAESH, has engaged in hand to hand combat in the forefront of the fight against the terrorist organization founded by this terrorist and the wicked ideology that it represents.

Our struggle against terrorist organizations such as DAESH and PKK/PYD will continue uninterrupted also in the future.

No: 336, 19 November 2019, Press Release Regarding the Statement of the US Administration on the Israeli Illegal Settlements

The United States Administration, which has positioned itself against the entire international community with its unlawful acts concerning Jerusalem and Golan Heights that are occupied by Israel, has now claimed that the illegal settlements in the West Bank were not inconsistent with international law. This is yet another example of the blatant and unlawful attitude of the US Administration aiming to legitimize the illegal practices of Israel.

In this regard, the unfortunate statement made by Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State of the United States, openly disregards the international law, especially the Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016).

Illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories constitute the biggest obstacle to the vision of a two-state solution which is based on the established international parameters for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Just as the international law system cannot be changed by an arbitrary act of a single country, such an action will have no validity with respect to international law.

Turkey, acting together with all responsible members of the international community, will continue to defend the independence of the State of Palestine and the legitimate rights of the brotherly people of Palestine.

QA-68, 3 November 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US State Department Report on Terrorism of 2018

The US State Department Report on Terrorism of 2018 has put forth the terrorist threat posed to Turkey by both DAESH and the PKK, and emphasized Turkey's efforts to counter these terrorist organizations and its active contributions to the international efforts on this matter, particularly as part of the Global Coalition against DAESH. The report has acknowledged that the PKK, enlisted as a "Foreign Terrorist Organization" by the US, has been responsible for martyring more than 1200 security officials and civilians in Turkey during the period 2015-2018.

Using the expression "the PKK affiliated groups in Syria" instead of mentioning the YPG in name, is an attempt to cover up the unlawful position of the US authorities that do not hide their cooperation with this terrorist organization.

On the other hand, presenting the ringleader of FETÖ, another terrorist organization targeting Turkey, as "self-exiled cleric" signifies that the heinous July 15 coup attempt is either ignored or supported. It is also a manifestation of the effort to overleap the fact that this terrorist has found safe haven on US soil. It should not be forgotten that FETO terrorist organization, which is behind the heinous July 15 coup attempt that left 251 of our innocent citizens martyred and thousand others wounded, is not only a threat to Turkey but to all countries where it exists, and it should be known that the international cooperation in countering terrorism is of great importance.

**No: 362, 12 December 2019, Press Release Regarding the Resolution (S.Res.150)
Passed by the U.S. Senate**

The resolution adopted by the U.S. Senate on 12 December 2019 on the events of 1915 is devoid of historical awareness and any legal base. The resolution itself is neither legally binding nor valid

This resolution of the Senate is one of the disgraceful examples of politicisation of history. However, those who exploit history by disregarding reality for their political interests will never achieve their aims.

This resolution, at the same time, is a damaging effort aiming at interrupting the endeavors to develop Turkish-U.S. relations.

Turkey's efforts to protect her vital interests in the region will resolutely continue without being affected from such unjust and tactless resolutions.

No: 358, 12 December 2019, Press Release Regarding the Passage by the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee of Draft Bill S. 2641 Aiming to Impose Sanctions on Turkey

The reasons why the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee passed a draft bill aiming to impose sanctions against our country under the pretext of Operation Peace Spring and the S-400 system are obvious. It is the deep resentment felt by some circles after the heavy blow we dealt to the project which was being meticulously planned for a long time.

The initiatives conducted in both houses of the Congress through internal political considerations and supported by known anti-Turkish circles, are yet another manifestation of the disrespect shown towards our sovereign decisions concerning our national security. Those initiatives have no other function than to harm Turkish-U.S. relations.

We had already given the necessary response to a similar draft bill passed by the House of Representatives on 29 October. Attempts to bring this new draft bill to the Senate floor show that our explanations fall on deaf ears.

We call upon the U.S. Congress to adopt a constructive approach safeguarding our common objectives to develop Turkish-U.S. relations which were confirmed at the highest level in recent weeks and to act in a reasonable manner.

No: 373, 28 December 2019, Press Release Regarding the Decision to Grant Parole to Hampig Sassounian Who Assassinated Consul-General of Turkey in Los Angeles, Mr. Kemal Arıkan

We regret that Hampig Sassounian, the terrorist who assassinated Mr. Kemal Arıkan, the Turkish Consul-General in a heinous attack on January 28, 1982, has been granted parole during the hearing held in California on December 27, 2019 despite our attempts. We strongly condemn and reject this decision which is subject to the approval of the Governor of California and is open to appeal.

This decision paving the way for the release of the murderer of our martyred diplomat is not only against universal principles of law and justice, but also contradicts the spirit of cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Sassounian has not shown any remorse throughout his incarceration for the crime he deliberately planned and committed, which was based on a distorted ideology fostered by animosity against Turks. It was not a simple murder, but a hate crime and a terrorist act.

Turkey, which has lost 58 lives as victims of Armenian terrorism, 31 of which were diplomats, will resort to all legal means to prevent the entry into effect of this troubling decision, which would establish an extremely dangerous precedent at a time when the need for international solidarity is at its height in response to the re-escalation of hate crimes. In this regard, the biggest share of responsibility falls upon the US authorities, who also suffered from similar losses.

We once again remember with respect and gratitude our martyred diplomat Kemal Arıkan and all our martyres who fell victim to terrorism.

QA-78, 20 December 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Approval by the U.S. Congress of Draft Appropriations Bills

Draft appropriation bills regarding budget allocations for U.S. federal institutions in 2020 which were approved by the U.S House of Representatives and Senate, contain negative language targeting Turkey. This is the latest outcome of the agenda pursued by Members of Congress who are bent on damaging our bilateral relations by any means.

Turkey condemns the exploitation of even an ordinary budgeting process for the sake of the short term political ambitions of U.S. politicians.

Foremost, U.S. Members of Congress are damaging their own reputations and credibility by allowing themselves to be used by their anti-Turkish colleagues' drive to hollow out the notion of "Alliance". Those circles who try to unfairly block the delivery of F-35 aircrafts to Turkey, while attempting to hamper efforts for a solution on the Island of Cyprus and cooperation opportunities in the Eastern Mediterranean, will realize in due time that their initiatives are actually harming the U.S.'s own interests and not serving regional peace and stability.

No: 2, 3 January 2020, Press Release Regarding the Death of Qassem Soleimani, Commander of the Special Forces 'Quds' Corps of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, in an Air Strike by the US Forces near Baghdad Airport

We are deeply worried about the escalating tension between the US and Iran in the region.

We strongly reiterate that turning Iraq into a conflict zone will harm peace and stability not only in Iraq, but also the entire region.

In this context, the US air operation targeting the Commander of the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps Qassem Soleimani and his entourage in Baghdad this morning will obviously further aggravate insecurity and instability in the region.

It should also be noted that such escalatory moves threatening regional stability will further exacerbate the cycle of violence and gravely harm all parties' interests.

Turkey has always been against foreign interventions, assassinations and sectarian conflicts in the region.

We invite all parties concerned to act with restraint and discretion, to avoid unilateral steps that can endanger peace and stability in our region, and prioritize diplomacy.

QA-2, 3 January 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Concerning the End of the Moratorium on Nuclear and Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) Tests

We are concerned by the statement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) that has indicated the end of the moratorium on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests.

It is important to resume the dialogue process initiated in 2018 with the aim of achieving lasting peace and complete and verifiable denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and refrain from provocative actions which would lead to further escalation in the region.

No: 28, 28 January 2020, Press Release Regarding the Plan Released by the US Administration on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The so-called US peace plan is stillborn. This is an annexation plan aiming to destroy the two-state solution and seize the Palestinian territories. The people and the land of Palestine cannot be bought off.

Jerusalem is our red line. We will not allow any step seeking to legitimize Israel's occupation and atrocities. We will always stand by the brotherly Palestinian people and will continue to work for an independent Palestine on Palestinian land.

We will not support any plan that does not have the support of Palestine. There will not be any peace in the Middle East without ending Israel's occupation policies.

No: 59, 28 February 2020, Press Release Regarding the Visit of H.E Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Qatar on the Occasion of Signing Ceremony of the U.S.-Taliban Agreement

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs will pay a visit to Qatar on 29 February 2020, upon the invitation of H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, to attend the signing ceremony of the agreement between the U.S. and the Taliban and to hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts on the margins of the said ceremony.

No: 54, 22 February 2020, Press Release Regarding the Understanding of a Reduction in Violence between the USA and Taliban

We are pleased that the United States and Taliban have agreed on a seven-day nationwide reduction in violence in Afghanistan as of the 22nd of February.

It is important that during this period, provisions of the agreement are meticulously adhered to, and acts of violence are avoided.

We hope that the agreement, which is foreseen to be signed between the United States and Taliban, will pave the way to lasting peace that will be attained through inter-Afghan negotiations. We once again stress that for this process to be successfully completed, it must be inclusive in nature encompassing all segments, and everyone should demonstrate a constructive approach.

We invite all international actors, first and foremost regional countries, to provide the necessary support for the establishment of lasting peace in Afghanistan.

In this direction, Turkey will continue to support the friendly and brotherly people of Afghanistan.

No: 72, 13 March 2020, Press Release Regarding Turkey 2019 Human Rights Report of the U.S. Department of State

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, which are drafted every year by the US Department of State for more than 190 countries and submitted to the US Congress, were published on 11 March 2020. “Turkey 2019 Human Rights Report” which is prepared in this context, is far from being objective, is politically motivated and contains unfounded accusations based on ambiguous sources.

By referring as the “Gülen movement” to Fetullahist Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), which is the perpetrator of the 15 July coup attempt and an existential threat to our country, the report tries to portray FETÖ as an innocent civilian organization. This approach, which reveals that the US still fails to understand our rightful fight against this terrorist organization, amounts to disregarding the most fundamental right - the right to life - of hundreds of our citizens martyred by FETÖ. The fact that all the evidence presented regarding this terrorist organization were disregarded in this year’s report shows that it is once again drafted on the basis of the allegations of certain hostile circles against Turkey.

Allegations in the report regarding the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure during the Operation Peace Spring are far from reality. There can be no explanation for including such allegations that have not been confirmed by independent, reputable sources and are clearly for propaganda. Those who have razed Syrian cities to the ground in the name of fighting against DAESH have no lesson to give to Turkey, which has given utmost care to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in its counter-terrorism operations in Syria and carried out exemplary stabilization efforts in its operation areas. Even the Global Coalition against DEASH itself admits killing 1370 civilians in its air strikes until the end of 2019.

Information about and responses to many allegations in the report could be found in the National Report of Turkey published in October 2019 as part of Turkey’s third Universal Periodic Review (UPR). It is ironic that the most comprehensive international human rights review mechanism, the UPR, and the tangible information shared with the world by Turkey within the UPR process were not even mentioned in the report.

Turkey has taken significant steps to protect and promote human rights and the positive results of these steps are already seen in practice. The new Judicial Reform Strategy and the first Legislative Package pursuant to the Strategy as well as preparations for the Human Rights Action Plan are the most concrete examples of Turkey’s sincerity in this regard.

Turkey will resolutely continue to pursue its reform agenda based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

QA- 29, 29 April 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Turkey Chapter of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2020 Report

We are used to seeing the chapters on Turkey to contain a language that is biased and far from objective in the US Commission on International Religious Freedom's reports, which are drawn up annually in order to make policy recommendations to the U.S. Government regarding religious freedoms. However, the fact that, in this year's report, the Commission recommended Turkey for the US State Department's "Special Watch List", designated for countries "engaging in or tolerating severe violations of religious freedom" is a clear indication of the biased mindset behind it and the circles under whose influence it was drawn up.

The report contains baseless, unaccredited and vague allegations as in the past years while trying to portray isolated incidents as violations of religious freedoms through far-fetched accusations. This biased and unsubstantiated approach casts doubt on the credibility of the report. The importance attached by Turkey to protect religious freedoms, including those of religious minorities, is expressed at the highest level by our Government officials. Our authorities make it clear that any harm to the religious freedoms of our citizens will not be tolerated. The message of our President in his letter dated 24 April 2020 to the Armenian Patriarch of Turkey is the best testimony to this end.

The fact the leader of FETÖ is mentioned as a "US-based cleric" throughout the report amounts to deliberately turning a blind eye to the heinous coup attempt against democracy in Turkey and 251 of our innocent citizens martyred by FETÖ. We invite the US authorities to earnestly examine the evidence we have provided regarding FETÖ and to engage in effective cooperation in line with the spirit of alliance in order to reveal the true nature of this terrorist organization.

Turkey combats all forms of terrorism in northern Syria, including in the Operation Peace Spring area. In fact, Turkey's legitimate security concerns on its Syrian border as well as the legitimacy of the Operation Peace Spring were acknowledged by the US itself in the joint US-Turkish statement made on 17 October 2019. The labeling of the Operation Peace Spring area as an "occupation zone" nevertheless is a contradictory and inconsistent approach. The authors of this report must first reveal the crimes against humanity, including ethnic cleansing, committed by PKK/YPG. Just yesterday in Afrin, this terrorist organization slaughtered more than sixty civilians including children.

In the report that is supposed to include global trends that threaten religious freedoms, the Commission does not mention a single word about xenophobia, Islamophobia and discrimination on religious grounds that is on the rise in the West and the US. This clearly reveals that the purpose of the report is not to protect religious rights and freedoms. It is clear that the Commission, which has been accused of being anti-Muslim in the past, has drawn up this report based on its unwarranted agenda and priorities under the influence of circles that are hostile to

Turkey, rather than objective criteria. We recommend the authors of this report to look in the mirror and engage in self-criticism.

No: 90, 24 April 2020, Press Release Regarding the Statement by the U.S. President Donald Trump on the Events of 1915

US President Trump's statement dated 24 April 2020 with regard to the events of 1915 is based on a subjective narrative which Armenians try to turn into a dogma.

This statement, made with domestic political considerations has no validity for us. We reject the claims put forward in this statement.

We observe that the suffering of more than 500 thousand Muslims who were massacred by Armenian rebels in the same period was insistently ignored in this statement. This understanding which is deprived of justice and equity needs to be changed from now on.

Our proposal to establish a Joint Historical Commission on the events of 1915 is still on the table. We believe that the truth will be unveiled if this Commission is established.

Those who try to take this proposal off the agenda are radical Armenians who want to make their responsibilities forgotten on the events of 1915. The US Administration should realize this fact and act accordingly.

On this occasion, we commemorate with respect Muslim, Christian and Jewish civilians of the Ottoman communities who lost their lives during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

No: 107, 27 May 2020, Press Release Regarding the Reversing of the Decision to Parole Hampig Sassounian, Who was Sentenced for the Terrorist Attack in Which Consul-General of the Republic of Turkey in Los Angeles, Mr. Kemal Arıkan was Martyred

The terrorist attack, in which Consul-General of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Kemal Arıkan was martyred, was perpetrated by terrorists Hampig Sassounian and Krikor Saliba in the name of the Armenian terrorist organization. Hampig Sassounian was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. The escapee terrorist Krikor Saliba allegedly died in the Lebanese civil war in 1982.

Terrorist Sassounian, with an intention to push the US laws, has once again applied to avail himself of the right to conditional parole. In the parole hearing on December 27, 2019, Sassounian was found suitable for parole.

Our expectation of non implementation of this decision has been brought to the attention of the US authorities with its justifications. The Governor of California, with his final decision dated 26 May 2020, reversed the decision to parole.

The murder that terrorist Sassounian shamefully committed and for which has not shown any sign of remorse throughout his prison term, will never be forgotten as a crime demonstrating the appalling dimensions of an ill and a twisted ideology.

This decision is welcomed as it once again indicated that terrorist attacks, as the utmost point of hate speech and extremism in the world, will not go unpunished.

On this occasion, we once again remember with respect and gratitude our martyred diplomat Kemal Arıkan and all our martyrs who fell victim to terrorism.

QA-39, 23 May 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US Decision to Withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty (OST)

The Open Skies Treaty (OST), which Turkey is a party to, is one of the main pillars of Euro-Atlantic conventional security architecture.

We attach importance to the implementation of the Treaty in full and in accordance with its purpose by all States Parties. We wish the continuation of the Treaty to serve the stability and security.

QA-47, 12 June 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the Statements of the USA Authorities against the Court Decision regarding Metin Topuz, Ex-Employee of the USA Istanbul Consulate General

Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court, in its verdict released yesterday (11 June), has sentenced Metin Topuz, ex-employee of the US Istanbul Consulate General for 8 years and 9 months imprisonment for “Aiding FETÖ Terrorist Organisation”. Metin Topuz is legally entitled to appeal this decision in seven days.

As a matter of fact, Metin Topuz is not the only FETÖ affiliated person employed by the US missions in our country. Arif Yalçın, who was dismissed from the Turkish Military Academy following the July 15 Coup Attempt, started working at the US Embassy in October 2018. Yalçın was also arrested and transferred to Silivri Prison for FETÖ related charges. This shows that FETÖ members did not only infiltrate into Turkish government institutions but have also infiltrated or were allowed to infiltrate into the US missions in Turkey.

We are yet to receive a positive reply from the USA authorities regarding the extradition requests made by Turkish judicial authorities following the July 15 Coup Attempt for FETÖ members who are known to be in the US, including the FETÖ ringleader. This actually demonstrates the indifference of the USA towards the FETÖ terrorist organisation. As a result of such approach, we observe with deep concern that the USA has become a safe haven for the members of the FETÖ terrorist organisation.

Rule of law prevails in Turkey and the Turkish judiciary is independent. Turkey is resolute in continuing its fight guided by the principles of universal law, against the FETÖ terrorist organisation that aims at abolishing our constitutional order and national solidarity. We invite the US authorities to respect the independence of the judiciary as well as abstain from attempts to interfere with it and in addition, refrain from attributing political meanings to independent court rulings. It is thought-provoking that our allies, who see themselves as the guardians of the universal principles of democracy, freedoms and rule of law, ignore these fundamental principles when it comes to Turkey and inhuman terrorist organisations.

QA-45, 11 June 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Chapter on Turkey of the "2019 Report on International Religious Freedom" Published by the US Department of State

Chapter on Turkey of the "2019 Report on International Religious Freedom" published by the US Department of State on 10 June 2020 is once again drawn up in a language that is far from objectivity and it contains unfounded accusations based on ambiguous sources.

Turkey continues to support, through concrete steps, its goal to protect and promote the freedom of religion and worship for all citizens without any discrimination. Different religions and faiths co-exist in Turkey in peace and harmony.

In the last 20 years, Turkey has taken significant steps to enhance the rights and freedoms of its non-Muslim citizens, and to foster an environment of tolerance and mutual understanding. It is without a doubt that, as part of the objective to further advance our democracy, important progress has been achieved in this period, both in law and practice, to enable each of our citizens to enjoy their rights equally and to prevent all forms of discrimination.

We are puzzled by the remarks made in the report regarding Hagia Sophia and Chora in the context of the statements issued lately.

Hagia Sophia and Chora are the properties of the Republic of Turkey and any right to disposition is a subject solely of Turkey's domestic affairs. Any decisions made or to be made on these cultural assets can not be a matter of other states.

Turkey is well aware of the outstanding value of all cultural and religious properties in its territories and is duly protecting them.

While Turkey's will to protect and promote religious freedoms and the concrete steps it takes to this end are evident; it is tragicomic for the US to try to steer the attention of the international public opinion away from its domestic turbulences during a time Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia are on a rapid rise in the US.

We reject all inconsistencies in the report as well as the intentional statements without any basis and invite the US to focus on its internal affairs regarding religious freedoms and human rights.

QA-61, 1 July 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US Department of State's Press Release on the Status of the Hagia Sophia

We are astonished by the press release issued by the U.S. Department of State on the status of the Hagia Sophia.

Our government took silent revolutionary steps to protect the freedom of religion and belief, which is guaranteed by our constitution and laws, for all our citizens without any discrimination.

In this context, we protect meticulously all cultural properties that we own without any distinction, including Hagia Sophia, within the framework of the tradition of tolerance stemming from our culture and history.

Turkey has been delicately cherishing the historical, cultural and spiritual value of Hagia Sophia since its conquest.

On this occasion, we remind once again a reality that we have to repeat constantly. The Hagia Sophia is the property of Turkey, like all our cultural assets located on our land.

Every kind of power disposition regarding Hagia Sophia is also an issue concerning our internal affairs within Turkey's sovereignty rights.

Naturally everyone is free to express their own opinion. However, it oversteps the mark to talk about our sovereignty rights using a language of “warning and imposition”.

No: 133, 28 June 2020, Press Release Regarding the Section on Turkey of the US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report

In the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report of the US Department of State, it is confirmed that Turkey has increased its efforts in the fight against human trafficking. However, it is disappointing that Turkey has not been elevated to the upper category.

Turkey is hosting almost 4 million displaced persons and shouldering the migratory burden, which is increasing disproportionately every year due to the ongoing instabilities in our region. Nevertheless, Turkey fights against human trafficking in a determined manner. In this regard, Turkey continues to implement the conventions it is party to as well as the related laws with its qualified personnel, to increase awareness in the society in this field, to identify and protect victims effectively, to bring criminals to justice and to cooperate with the civil society and the international organizations.

On the other hand, the findings in the report clearly reveals that PKK/YPG is a terrorist and criminal organization with its criminal acts, including child abduction. Therefore, the data in this report also shows that the US should give up accepting this terrorist organization as a legitimate partner. The fact that, while the report mentions children abducted by PKK but makes no reference to the 140 families who have been protesting in Diyarbakır for 303 days and 13 families, who were reunited with their children, is a great flaw; if it is not done on purpose.

Turkey is committed to making every effort for the punishment of crime of human trafficking, which is a serious human rights violation and to protect victims as well as to develop international cooperation.

QA-56, 25 June 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the “Country Reports on Terrorism 2019” of the U.S. State Department

In the “Country Reports on Terrorism 2019” of the U.S. State Department, Turkey’s fight against DEASH and her efforts with respect to the prevention of the movements of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) are reflected and the continuation of PKK’s terrorist attacks towards internal and external interests of our country is emphasized. In fact, Turkey is the only country whose security forces engaged in hand-to-hand combat against DEASH. Besides, Turkey provides crucial contributions to the security of the international community by fulfilling her duties with regards to the prevention of FTF movements. On the other hand, while conducting cross-border operations in the fight against terrorist organizations, Turkey takes utmost precautions in order to prevent civil casualties.

The report attempts to conceal the fact that YPG is the same terrorist organization as PKK, by indicating that our country views YPG as the Syrian arm of PKK. This approach amounts to the abstention of explicitly emphasizing the terrorist identity of the YPG, and moreover confirms the cooperation between the USA and this terrorist organization. On the other hand, the statements of US officials, military officers and institutions indicating that YPG and PKK are the same organizations are publicly accessible. The USA needs to realize that cooperating with a terrorist organization while countering another is not right.

In this report, it is noticable that the terrorist nature of FETÖ is being questioned and legitimate measures we have taken in our fight against FETÖ are criticized as it is used to be as in previous years. This situation is a proof of the continuation of US’s negligent attitude regarding the heinous coup attempt of 15th July. The myriad of evidence presented in relation to this treacherous terrorist organization is overlooked once again. This attitude demonstrates that there is a reluctance to comprehend our fight against FETÖ, which was behind the heinous coup attempt of 15 July that martyred 251 innocent citizens. The measures mentioned in the report are those taken legally by our country against FETÖ.

QA-51, 21 June 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of the US International Commission on Religious Freedom (USCIFR) on the “Claw-Eagle” and “Claw-Tiger” Operations Carried out Against the PKK Terrorist Organization

The statement by the US International Commission on Religious Freedom (USCIFR) on the operations "Claw-Eagle" and "Claw-Tiger" being carried out against the PKK terrorist organization nested in Iraq, is yet again another unfounded remark by this commission.

It is disgraceful, to say the least, for this commission which pretends to defend religious freedom, to criticize our fight against terrorism and become an instrument in the black propaganda of PKK, a terrorist organization also designated by the US as such, by ignoring its atrocities in Iraq and its offshoots PYD/YPG in Syria against local populations including Kurds who do not embrace its divisive policies and terror methods.

Today, Ezidi activists and the local authorities also state the fact that tens of thousands of Ezidis cannot return their homelands due to PKK's oppression, and those who achieved to resettle face atrocities of the terrorist organization which has nested in Sinjar by taking advantage of the fight against DAESH. Arameans also suffer from systematic persecution by this terrorist organization, their schools are closed, their children are recruited forcibly and taken away from their families. It is unfortunate that so-called human rights defenders have been turning a deaf ear to these facts of the region. As such we can never accept the said Commission championing the terrorist organization by distorting the truths.

QA-64, 8 July 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the US Decision to Provide IMET to the Greek Cypriot Administration

The US has announced that it will provide International Military Education and Training (IMET) to the Greek Cypriot Administration in accordance with the 2020 fiscal year appropriations act.

We support the position of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus authorities on this issue.

We would like to remind our ally, the US, that equal treatment of both sides on the Island is a basic UN principle.

As we have repeatedly emphasized before, this and similar steps do not contribute to the efforts towards the settlement of the Cyprus issue, but on the contrary, lead to strengthening the intransigent attitude of the Greek Cypriot side.

It is obvious that steps disregarding the balance between the two sides will not help create an atmosphere of trust on the Island, and ensure peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

No: 173, 14 August 2020, Press Release Regarding the Joint Statement by the United States, Israel and the United Arab Emirates

We deem the strong and unified reaction of the people of Palestine and the Palestinian Authority to the joint statement announced by the United States, Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that envisages full normalization of relations between Israel and the UAE, as a righteous response.

The unilateral attempt by the UAE to eliminate the Arab Peace Initiative, put forth by the Arab League under the leadership of Saudi Arabia and also supported by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in 2002, is extremely concerning.

This being the case, the attempts to present this trilateral statement as an act of support to the Palestinian cause are anything but convincing.

By using the US plan, which is already stillborn and completely invalid, as an instrument to pursue its hidden agendas, the UAE disregards the will of Palestine.

It goes without saying that the UAE has no authority whatsoever to negotiate with Israel and make concessions on vital issues for Palestine on behalf of the people and leadership of Palestine against their consent.

While pursuing its narrowly defined interests, the UAE has attempted to present its betrayal to the Palestinian cause as an act of altruism. The history and the conscience of the people in the region will never forget or forgive this hypocritical act.

No: 159, 3 August 2020, Press Release Regarding the Announcement of the Oil Contract Signed by the “Syrian Democratic Forces” , Which is Led by the PKK/YPG Terrorist Organization

It is reported in the press that the "Syrian Democratic Forces", which is led by PKK/YPG terrorist organization, signed a contract with "Delta Crescent Energy LLC", a US-based company, for oil extraction, processing and trade in north eastern parts of Syria.

By this step, the PKK/YPG terrorist organization has clearly demonstrated its ambition to advance its seperatist agenda by seizing the natural resources of the Syrian people. The natural resources of Syria belong to the Syrian people.

We deeply regret the US support to this step, disregarding international law, violating territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of Syria, as well as being considered within the scope of financing terrorism. This act, which cannot be justified by any legitimate motive, is utterly unacceptable.

QA-70, 28 July 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding a Statement of the U.S. Department of State Concerning Osman Kavala

The statement of the U.S. Department of State calling for the release of Osman Kavala is not in line with the principle of the rule of law. There is an ongoing legal process regarding Osman Kavala. Everybody must respect this process, which is being carried out by independent courts. In fact, a decision of acquittal was issued regarding Osman Kavala last February. He is currently in detention on a different charge based on new evidence.

It is paradoxical for those who have used legal proceedings as an excuse when it comes to the extradition of the FETÖ ringleader, and kept Deputy Director General of Halkbank, Hakan Atilla in detention for months before initiating a judicial process, to interfere in an ongoing case in Turkey.

Turkey is a state governed by the rule of law. No country or person can give orders to Turkish courts regarding legal processes.

No: 181, 25 August 2020, Press Release Regarding the Statement by the Spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State About the Meeting of President Erdoğan with the Representatives of Hamas

Today, the Spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State has released an impertinent statement regarding the meeting of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with the Hamas representatives. We fully reject this statement.

Branding as a terrorist the legitimate representative of Hamas, which has come to power in Gaza through democratic elections and which constitutes an important reality of the region, will not contribute to efforts geared towards peace and stability in the region.

Moreover, a country which openly supports the PKK, that features on their list of terrorist organizations and hosts the ringleader of the FETO has no right whatsoever to say anything to third countries on this subject.

The US Administration designated Hamas, which is also a party to the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process, as a terrorist organization, and subsequently closed the office of Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington DC. By doing so, the U.S. Administration has severed its contact with all Palestinian authorities and the people of Palestine, thereby demonstrating the extent to which it has isolated itself from the realities of our region.

Taking this opportunity, we call upon the U.S. Administration to sincerely work towards the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of international law, justice and equity by pursuing balanced policies, instead of using its power and influence in the region to serve the interests of Israel rather exclusively.

No: 209, 11 September 2020, Press Release Regarding the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain

We express our concern for and strong condemnation of the decision of the Kingdom of Bahrain to follow the United Arab Emirates by establishing diplomatic relations with Israel in contravention of its commitments under the Arab Peace Initiative and within the framework of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

This step would deal yet another blow to the efforts to defend the Palestinian cause and would further embolden Israel to continue its illegal acts and attempts to perpetuate the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Lasting peace and stability in the Middle East can only be achieved through just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian issue in accordance with international law and UN resolutions. Irresponsible concessions made on the basis of narrowly-defined interests and upon pressure and coercion from external actors cannot erase or substitute this reality.

No: 194, 1 September 2020, Press Release Regarding the US Decision to Lift the Arms Embargo on The Greek Cypriot Administration

The U.S. decision announced today (September 1) to lift the arms embargo against the Greek Cypriot Administration ignores the equality and balance between the two peoples on the Island.

It is certain that this decision will also have negative effects on the efforts to reach a settlement to the Cyprus issue.

In a time, where efforts are spent to reduce the tension in the Eastern Mediterranean, the US's approval of such a decision, which poisons the peace and stability environment in the region, does not comply with the spirit of alliance.

We expect the US to reconsider this decision and support the ongoing efforts to establish peace and stability in the region.

Otherwise, Turkey, as a guarantor country, will take the necessary decisive counter steps to guarantee the security of the Turkish Cypriot people, in line with its legal and historical responsibilities.

QA-98, 13 October 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of the Spokesperson of the US State Department on Turkey's Seismic Survey Activities in the Eastern Mediterranean

The US has already declared that the Seville Map, representing the maximalist maritime jurisdiction claims of the Greek/Greek Cypriot duo, does not have any legal significance. It is thus a serious contradiction for the US to criticize Oruç Reis' seismic survey activities as carried out within the Turkish continental shelf. This inconsistency is also being observed in the statements of some EU member states.

The party increasing tensions in the Aegean and the Mediterranean is not Turkey, but rather the GCA and Greece. As a matter of fact, escalatory steps of Greece since September 12 have already been made public by the Ministry.

QA-108, 11 November 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's Visit to Turkey

A press statement released yesterday (10 November) by the U.S. Department of State mentions that Secretary of State Pompeo will, in the framework of a regional tour, meet with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Fener in Istanbul in order to discuss “religious issues in Turkey and the region and to promote strong U.S. stance on religious freedom around the world”.

We see no objection in having foreign official guests meet with representatives of religious communities in the countries they visit. In fact, foreign guests visiting Turkey have always met freely with representatives of various religious communities. Turkey enjoys a unique place in the world for being home for centuries to many different faiths.

Furthermore, Turkey's progress in the field of religious freedoms over the past 20 years is widely acknowledged. Whereas religious minorities throughout the world, and especially Muslims, have been forced to perform their worship under unfavorable conditions and constant threats, non-Muslim Turkish citizens have been able to freely perform their religious duties. The freedom of worship of Turkish citizens from different faiths is being protected. Consequently, the language employed in the press statement regarding the State Secretary's visit is completely irrelevant.

It would be more suitable for the U.S. to first look in the mirror and show the requisite sensitivity towards human rights violations in the country such as racism, Islamophobia and hate crimes.

Our reaction to this effect has been duly conveyed to the U.S. side, together with our advice to focus instead primarily on increasing the cooperation between our countries regarding regional and global matters.

No: 298, 19 November 2020, Press Release Regarding the US Secretary of State Pompeo's Visit to an Illegal Settlement Unit in the West Bank

Today's (19 November) visit by US Secretary of State Pompeo to an Israeli settlement unit in the occupied West Bank as part of his ongoing trip to Israel constitutes a grave step against the UN resolutions that underline the illegality of Israel's settlement activities in the Palestinian territories under international law, particularly the Resolution 2334 (2016) of the UN Security Council, where the US serves as a permanent member.

Behind this visit lies the purpose of legitimizing Israel's illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territories. These irresponsibly unilateral steps will not succeed in undermining the established parameters for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the UN resolutions and the rights and freedoms of the Palestinian people. Such premeditated actions are doomed to fail.

We will continue to protect the legitimate rights of our Palestinian brothers and sisters based on international law and to defend the just cause of Palestine.

QA-121, 17 December 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in Response to a Question Regarding the U.S. Decision to Rescind the Sudan from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism

We consider the U.S. decision to rescind the Sudan from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, which we have been desiring for a long time, as a step in the right direction. Indeed, Turkey is against unilateral sanctions, as it has been stressing from the outset.

Our country will continue to support the transition process in the Sudan, the reform efforts carried out within this scope, and to stand by the brotherly Sudanese people.

No: 321, 14 December 2020, Press Release Regarding the U.S. Decision to Impose Sanctions Against Turkey

We condemn and reject the decision to impose unilateral sanctions against Turkey as announced today by the U.S. in the context of Turkey's acquisition of S-400 air defense systems.

The conditions which compelled Turkey to acquire S-400 systems are well known. President Trump himself has admitted on many instances that Turkey's acquisition was justified.

U.S. allegations that S-400 systems will jeopardize NATO systems are devoid of any technical merit. Moreover, Turkey has repeatedly proposed to address this issue in an objective, realistic and politically unbiased manner through a working group with the participation of NATO.

Therefore, the U.S. recourse to unilateral sanctions, by refusing our proposal to solve this matter through dialogue and diplomacy as befitting two allies, is completely senseless.

Turkey will take the necessary steps against this decision, which will negatively affect our relations and will retaliate in a manner and timing it deems appropriate. Turkey will never refrain from taking the necessary measures to safeguard its national security.

With this understanding, we urge the U.S. to reconsider this unfair decision as announced today and to rectify this grave mistake as soon as possible, while emphasizing once again that Turkey stands ready to address this issue through dialogue and diplomacy in conformity with the spirit of alliance.

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