

# The Weakening Relations between Turkey-America in The Field of Defence and Security in 2015-2019

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## **Abstract.**

*Turkey and the United States of America have long built cooperation in the security and defense sector since the Cold War. Turkey was a strategic region for the USA as a path to stick to the hegemony in the Middle East. The Weakening cooperation between Turkey and the USA happened since the USA was no longer on the same path as Turkey. The coup d'état that happened in Turkey was also one of the reasons for weakening cooperation between Turkey and the USA. Turkey then built cooperation with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and actively involved in the war against ISIS. The withdrawal of the USA's Missiles from Turkey's borders caused Turkey then bought missiles from Russia, which has been so only criticized by NATO and the USA. In the research, the writer analyzed the factor causing the weakening cooperation between Turkey and the USA in the security and defense field. The researcher used Neorealism theory, in which neorealism believed that anarchy in the international system would make a country build the relations of cooperation with another country, then the balance of power concept was also used to see the interest of the USA in building cooperation with Turkey.*

**Keywords:** Turkey-United States of America, Security, cooperation, and Defense

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Diplomatic relation of Turkey and The United States of America was established during the cold war and was focused on the field of military and defence. During the cold war era, the diplomatic relation of Turkey and other western countries went well. Turkey is one of the European countries supporting the western block which was under the leadership of the USA. The diplomatic relation with Turkey is based on the USA's importance in the middle east in order to contain the influence of the Soviet Union, especially in Syria, Iraq and Iran. The defence cooperation carried out by Turkey and the USA could be proven by the support shown by the USA for TAF (Turkish Armed Force). About 80 % of defence related activities, were run by the USA. It was also estimated that the aid given by the USA to Turkey during 25 years, starting from the year of 1950 until 1975, was about 4,3 Million Dollar. In the year of 1980, Turkey and the USA signed the defence and economic Cooperation Agreement or DECA. The USA was committed to preparing all the necessary equipment, training and also defence aid to the Turkish government. The USA's policies in the strategy of defence in Turkey also included preparing an adequate also an appropriate system of defence in the Turkish borders also sending reserve forces to the domestic or regional areas, currently under foreign threat. The relation between these two nations in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1949. The purpose of the establishment of the relation was to serve as an instrument for the member countries in order to be able to implement peace, security as well as stability in the region. After the end of the Cold War, NATO became an international organization which was responsible of keeping and securing peace by using any political or militaristic approach.

Despite its role as a peace keeper organization among its member countries, NATO is also involved in the prevention of conflicts and crisis among its member countries. After the event of the second world war, Turkey tended to side with the western countries and underwent a political reformation. Turkey then applied and implemented a multi-party general election system in the country. Turkey and the USA were two of the many countries which joined in the membership of NATO. Having joined NATO, Turkey then decided to establish a bilateral relation with The United States of America. This was caused by the fact that the USA and Turkey had the same vision: keeping peace and stability among the member countries. NATO played its role as the mediator of conflict between the USA and Turkey. In spite of that, the USA still utilized its repressive and oppressive authorities in interfering with the Islamic states located in the regional areas of Turkey. Turkey and the USA commenced the cooperation against terrorism. Such cooperation could be depicted as the General of the USA, John Allen visited Turkey and decided to fight ISIS, which was known as one of the biggest terrorist organizations in the world and fighting ISIS would be considered as the only way in order to restore peace and stability in the conflict affected regions. Turkey meant a lot to the USA as its role to protect the political importance of the USA in the Middle East (Athanasopoulou, 2011). The USA utilized its opportunity to maintain stability in the Middle East. Efforts done by Turkey in order to support the stability of the USA in the Middle East are :

1. Turkey took role as a mediator between Sunni members of the Iraqi parliament and the USA concerning The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)
2. Turkey was the host of training program concerning the democratization and the good governance for the Political Iraqi Parties.
3. Turkey cooperated with United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq in order to hold a conference in Istanbul concerning Iraqi constitution.
4. Turkey held a meeting of foreign affairs ministers from the neighbouring countries of Iraq in Istanbul.

The meeting was attended by 16 countries, such as The USA, Canada, France, Germany, England, Italia, Japan, China and Russian. In addition to that, international and regional organizations also attended the meeting, like the UN, OKI, Arab League and the EU. Under the leadership of head of the state of the USA, Barrack Obama, the relation between Turkey and the USA was carried out thanks to the aid of technological and military cooperation. The aid given to Turkey by the US was expected to help with security in facing conflictual situations in the Middle East. Since then, the security and defence approach of Turkey tended to move towards the US and also tended to move based on the decisions made by NATO. Turkey and the USA had the same political vision. One of them is in the field of the nuclear proliferation. Such things could be carried out thanks to the cooperation agreement, namely “Agreement for Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation. This kind of cooperation offered an opportunity for both countries to exchange technology in the field of nuclear. Turkey is crucial to the US in re-establishing diplomatic relations in the Middle East. It was said by Barrack Obama himself in 2009, that Turkey could potentially become the spokesman and a leading model role for the Middle East and the Muslim world, so that Turkey could help President Obama in improving the diplomatic relation of the US with the Middle East. The diplomatic relation of Turkey and the US can not be separated from the fact that the US has some crucial political importance in the Middle East, especially in Syria [4]. The Arab Spring turmoil, started in Tunisia in 2011, then spread to other regions, such as Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan and Syria. When mapping the actors involved in the Syrian war, those who would like to topple the Bashar al-Ashad administration in Syria are no more than Turkey and the US (bbc.com 2017).

The US and Turkey assumed that the Bashar al-Assad administration in Syria has committed various kinds of human rights violation and must step down immediately. In the year of 2014, the US created a coalition in order to fight ISIS. Turkey also contributed as one of the parts of the international coalition by permitting the coalition member countries origin aircraft to use the Turkish airway and the military base of Incirlick (Turkish Presidency, 2015). Syrian conflict is perceived as one of the biggest problems ever faced by Turkey. Turkey's

geographical position bordering Syria forces Turkey to ask NATO for protection against ISIS. The US welcomed Turkey by sending patriot missiles to Turkey in order to be free of the threat from Syria. NATO also conducted a forum in order to discuss about the possibility of giving aids. The foreign affairs ministers from 28 different member countries of NATO stated that as the response to the request of Turkey, the alliance has decided to increase the capability of air defence of Turkey in order to protect its region from the spreading of crisis in Syria. The secretary of defence of the US stated that patriot missiles delivery in Turkey was the part of defence effort of North Atlantic and as the part of air defence of Turkey in the middle of tension, taking place in the bordering area of Turkey and Syria(bbc,2012). The attack which took place in Turkey by Syria was considered as a serious threat by the members of NATO. Such things could cause Turkey as the country directly adjacent to Syria to possess special attention and treatment from its allied countries, especially the US. In November 2012, NATO announced the delivery as well as the installation of Patriot Missiles which had to be carried out and finished immediately in the territorial region of Turkey.

The secretary of defence implied that the Patriot Missiles delivery in Turkey was the defence effort of North Atlantic and not forgetting the fact that the air defence of Turkey was one of the priorities in the middle of the growing tension in the bordering region of Turkey and Syria (Rika, 2016). The installation of patriot missiles was expected to suppress the number of Turkish people who willingly joined ISIS. The Turkish administration also emphasized that the installation of patriot missiles was only aimed for defence purposes. Next, Turkey and the US reached an agreement on the installation of Patriot Missiles. The location of the installation took place in Gazantep, Turkey. The installation of the missiles would serve as the protection of Turkey's regions from the foreign threat especially from Syria, which could put Turkey in danger every time. The Patriot Missiles arrived in Turkey in January, 2013 on a ship docked at Iskenderun, in the northern region of Turkey (Rika, 2016). The delivery process also included 400 active US soldiers in order to secure the delivery process. The Patriot Missiles installed by the US in the Turkish regions were modern missiles which were believed to have been able to counter enemy air or land attack. Missile MIM-104 was one of the kinds of Patriot Missiles possessing an ability of antiballistic missiles. The dynamics relation between Turkey and the US began when the US decided to interfere with the countries in the Middle East which were the neighbouring countries of Turkey, like Syria. The gradually weakening role of the US in Turkey was the main reason of this research by looking at the direction of political policies applied by the US and Turkey in the cooperation.

## **II. RESEARCH METHOD**

In this research, the author uses a well-structured methodology. The author then shall use the descriptive method. The data available in this research will be analyzed qualitatively, considering the fact that the title and the method of the research are more suitable to qualitative analytics. Qualitative approach places human as the primary subject in the cultural or social event.

## **III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The cooperative relation of Turkey and the US is based on the effort of Balance of Power of the United States of America in the Middle East region. The US would like to expand its influence in the Middle East in the field of security and economic. NATO plays a crucial role in the cooperative relation of Turkey and the US. The cooperation between Turkey and the US can not be separated from the Syria's influence, it is because Syria is directly adjacent to Turkey. Besides, Syria is under a conflictual circumstance which causes harm to Turkey indirectly.

### **1. The Cooperation of Turkey and the US**

Turkey is a country possessing a strategic position in the Middle East region. The strategic position of Turkey becomes one of the main reasons why other countries in the world are willing to conduct cooperation and instil hegemony and stability of security in the Middle East. This would become the reasons why the US are so

willing to cooperate with Turkey. Judging from the military power, Turkey doesn't even have enough fire power to match countries like the USA., but Turkey will be a decisive as well as a crucial position for the western countries to hold as well as to keep their grasp in the Middle East. The establishment of diplomatic as well as cooperative relation of Turkey and the US since the era of Cold War has successfully transformed the Turkish administration into a secular one; a system of administration in which religion or any religious principles should and must be separated completely from the Turkish administration, meaning that any religious participations are not allowed or forbidden in the political matters in the Turkish administration. Such transformation took place in the regime of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.



**Fig 1.** Map of Turkey

*Source: Russian Today*

During the regime of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, there had been some kinds of Coup D'état and renewal processes. This was caused as the caliphate had some weaknesses and adversities (Turkish Parliament, 2015). Based on the national parliament, the caliphate was officially abolished in the year of 1922. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk successfully turned Turkey into a secular country. The secular Turkey did everything in its power to integrate itself with the European region culturally, politically, economically as well as geographically. The relation of Turkey with the United States and the orientation on the countries in Europe were the main purpose of its foreign policy. The cooperation carried out by Turkey and the US was focused on the field of military, as Turkey was in a desperate need for military power in order to help secure the state from the conflictual circumstances from its neighbouring country, Syria. Turkey gave access to the US to the placement of several US troops in the Middle East. Currently at that time, Turkey even received 90 nuclear warheads, stationed at the air field Incirlik. The air field Incirlik plays a great and crucial role to the US in facing the crisis in the Middle East.

## **2. Turkey and NATO against ISIS**

The diplomatic relation of Turkey and the US cannot be separated from the fact that the US has some crucial political importance in the Middle East, especially in Syria (Nafi'aturrofi'ah, 2017). The Arab Spring turmoil, started in Tunisia in 2011, then spread to other regions, such as Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan and Syria. When mapping the actors involved in the Syrian war, those who would like to topple the Bashar al-Ashad administration in Syria are no more than Turkey and the US (Nafi'aturrofi'ah, 2017). The US and Turkey assumed that the Bashar al-Assad administration in Syria has committed various kinds of human rights violation and must step down immediately. In the year of 2014, the US created a coalition in order to fight ISIS. Turkey also contributed as one of the parts of the international coalition by permitting the coalition member countries origin aircraft to use the Turkish airway and the military base of Incirlick (Adzani, 2015). Graham T. Allison stated in international relation that rational choice has such a point of view that a nation or a country is the primary unit in analysis (Ngabekti, 2017). The mechanism of foreign policy making is aimed to serve as a solution to the problem faced by the country or the nation itself, especially related to the international issues. The

Turkey's policy permitting member country origin aircrafts to use Turkish airway and the airbase of Incirlik is one of the efforts to find a solution to the conflicts with Syria.

Syrian conflict is one of the greatest problems ever faced by Turkey. The geographical position of Turkey directly adjacent to Syria has forced Turkey to ask NATO for protection against the threat from ISIS. The United States of America warmed the request by delivering patriot missiles to Turkey in order to be free and secured from the threat of Syria. NATO also conducted a forum in order to discuss the delivery of patriot missiles to Turkey. Based on the Treaty of NAT, should any of the members country be under a foreign threat and ask for help, the other member countries, must immediately discuss of giving aids to those who are in need, immediately. The foreign ministers of 28 member countries of NATO stated that as the response to the request made by Turkey, the alliance has decided to increase the air defence capability of Turkey in order to be able to protect its region from the spread of crisis from Syria.

The Department of Defence of the US stated that the delivery of patriot missiles in Turkey was one of the defence efforts of Northern Atlantic and as the air defence effort of Turkey in the growing tension in the bordering region of Turkey and Syria (BBC,2012). The attack which occurred in Turkey by Syria was considered as a serious level threat for all members of NATO. It had successfully forced Turkey as a country directly adjacent to Syria, to obtain special attention from the allied countries, especially from the US. John J. Mearsheimer, stated that the system structure will determine how countries behave with one another and how countries perceive each other could impact the anarchical international system, (Mearsheimer, 2001). In the anarchical international system, countries in the world tend to cooperate in order to protect and to maintain their existence in the system by creating a coalition and delivering patriot missiles in order to secure the region. In November 2012, NATO announced the delivery as well as the installation of Patriot Missiles which had to be carried out and finished immediately in the territorial region of Turkey. The secretary of defence implied that the Patriot Missiles delivery in Turkey was the defence effort of North Atlantic and not forgetting the fact that the air defence of Turkey was one of the priorities in the middle of the growing tension in the bordering region of Turkey and Syria (Rika, 2016). The installation of patriot missiles was expected to suppress the number of Turkish people who willingly joined ISIS. The Turkish administration also emphasized that the installation of patriot missiles was only aimed for defence purposes.

Next, Turkey and the US reached an agreement on the installation of Patriot Missiles. The location of the installation took place in Gazentep, Turkey. The installation of the missiles would serve as the protection of Turkey's regions from the foreign threat especially from Syria, which could put Turkey in danger every time. The Patriot Missiles arrived in Turkish in January, 2013 on a ship docked at Iskenderun, in the northern region of Turkey (Najah, 2013). The delivery process also included 400 active US soldiers in order to secure the delivery process. Bannius and Budi Rachman in the Journal of International Studies has stated that the national interest is the ambition and the goals of a nation, whether economic, military or cultural (Bainus, Budi Rachman, 2018). The term of international interest is closely related to power of a country as the goals or as the constituent instrument. National interest serves as an instrument in order to strengthen the country as the effect of the anarchical system. The placement of Patriot Missiles in the border of Turkey and Syria was one of the efforts carried out by the Turkish administration in defending as well as maintaining its national interest, by cooperating with NATO and the United States in order to maintain peace and stability in its region from the chaos in Syria. Patriot Missiles installed by the US in the region of Turkey were modern missiles expected to counter any land as well as air attack by the enemy. The missile MIM-104 was one of the Patriot Missiles, possessing the capability of anti-ballistic missiles. The cooperation between Turkey and the US was carried out by strengthening the bond of the two countries through NATO. Turkey, having joined NATO, had the right to ask and demand for protection to keep and maintain its region from the foreign threat, as Waltz stated that International system consists of massive power and tries to survive as it runs anarchically, (Ishiyama and

Breuning, 2013). Anarchist is a condition resulted from the absence of central authority to rule. In such anarchical condition, every country will try to defend itself against various kinds of foreign threat.

### **3. The Role Played by The US in Syria.**

The involvement of the US in Syria could be recognized by the issues of the existence of weapons of mass destruction, owned by Syria (Agastya, 2013). The US and countries like The United Kingdom and France spread the issue that the Syrian administration was planning on using chemical weapons against the armed rebel forces. The head of state of Syria then responded to such issue by sending an official letter to the UN and refused such issue. The former US President, Barrack Obama, stated that there would soon be a military aggression against Syria, concerning the issue that Syria possessed some kind of weapons of mass destruction (Agastya, 2013). Barrack Obama assumed that he had the authority to instruct an attack against Syria. As explained by Robert Keohane in his writing, *After Hegemony*. He assumed that the characteristic of international politics is anarchical. The anarchical system has created an international environment with egoistic actors (Keohane, 1984). The issue of weapons of mass destruction was a threat to US and successfully forced the US to intervene Syria. The US also actively played its role against terrorism in Syria.

The President of the United States of America announced that Russia had to prepare for a missile attack on its ally, Syria as the response to the issue of the chemical gas attack which took place in the capital city, Damascus (BBC, 2018). The US deployed USS Destroyers Donald Cook in the region of Mediterranean. The aircraft will head directly to the chemical facilities in Syria to prevent the risk of being shot down. The US played its role more actively more than ever in fighting against ISIS in Syria since the year of 2014. The former US President, Barrack Obama stated that Assad had to step down from his position as the head of state of Syria. In the year off 2014, the US formed a coalition of 60 countries, including Germany to attack the extremist in Syria (Hasugian, 2018)

The role played by the US in Syria was aimed to topple Bashar al-Ashad's administration, considered as a dictatorial one, which led to the death of many innocents as the result of the never-ending conflict in the country. The US actively played its role in the struggle against ISIS in Syria (Hasugian, 2018). Under the leadership of Donald Trump, the US still carries out the same policies in order to put up a fight against ISIS in Syria. President Trump has coordinated a massive air attack on the Syrian air base which is accused of utilizing chemical weapons (Hasugian, 2018). Coleman on his Rational Choice Theory, ignores the actor's choice. But the most important thing stated by him on his theory is that the actions have been carefully considered in order to be beneficial to the actors (Christina, 2018). The struggle against ISIS by the US and the attempt to topple Bashar Al-Assad are the two of many intentions of the US foreign Policies in order to achieve the national goals in Syria.

Apart from being involved in the struggle against ISIS in Syria, the US has also formed opposition groups in Syria, such as Free Syrian Army (FSA), Syrian National Council (SNC) and Syrian National Council for Opposition and Revolutionary Forces (SNCORF). The formation of the opposition groups is based on the US initiative (Fahham and Kartaatmaja, 2014). The coalition of the opposition consists of 60 members, each originating from the representative of the big cities in Syria and a handful of opposition figures are foreigners. The created US opposition groups are intended to rebel against the regime of Bashar Al Assad. The US and some other countries have recognized the coalition as the only representative of the Syrian society. Bainus and Budi Rachman on the *Journal of International Studies* stated that national interest is the goals and the ambition of a nation, whether economic, military as well as cultural. The concept of national interest is crucial in doing international relation related researches. National interest is closely related to power of a country as one of the goals as well as an instrument, especially those that are hard power. The formation of the opposition groups by the US is considered could help realize the US national interest in Syria in order to be able to obtain support in the struggle against the regime of Assad.

The opposition groups formed by the US are perceived as potential groups to instil US influences in Syria, the existence of the opposition in Syria would enable The US to obtain its political interest so that the US could carry out another interest in the Middle East, especially in Syria (Atika, 2017). Based on the explanation of Bainus and Budi Rachman, national interest is closely related to power of a country, serving as one of its goals or an instrument, especially those that are hard power. The formation of the opposition in Syria creates a real challenge for the regime of Assad in Syria. The power utilized by the US through the opposition in Syria, campaigning against Assad, is intended to achieve US interest in Syria. The US believes that the Opposition is potentially capable of affecting the political condition in Syria, as the opposition is one of the internal parts of Syria and possesses structured and organized institutions. The opposition also creates an opportunity for the foreign involvement in Syria as most of the members of the opposition domicile outside of Syria, that the opportunity of obtaining foreign support is widely open, especially for the US. The opposition formed by the US announced the world to intervene. The SNC opposition group ordered on a military intervention by the UN, as the result of the never-ending conflict in Syria (Atika, 2017). Such things could be seen as the successful implementation of US influence in Syria.

Concerning the US government's support for the opposition in Syria, the US sees the needs of the opposition groups, namely FSA and SNC to obtain sponsors and to fund their activities and in order to support the direct intervention in Syria as a part of the resistance against the Regime of Assad (Atika, 2017). The US is the main reason of the involvement of its allied countries in Syria. The presence of the alliance could help US achieve its national interest in Syria.

#### **4. The US Intervention in The Syrian Conflict**

As explained above, the US formed the opposition groups in order to topple the regime of Bashar al Assad. In an effort to topple the so called Syrian head of state, the US commenced and carried out an air attack on the regime of Assad in order to support the opposition. The US utilized and fired the missiles in a purpose to launch an assault on the targets, considered important to Assad, such as the Shelter used by Assad.

In an effort to interfere with the conflict in Syria, the US formed and established

1. No fly zones. For the US, the no fly zones are crucial to the destruction of the Syrian air defence, as those zones could limit the movement of the attacking force of Syrian army.
2. Buffer zones. These zones could create massive power along the bordering area of Turkey and Jordan. The medical services are also available here. These zone are specially prepared for the injured civilians.
3. Chemical weapons control zones. The US with the opposition are planning on destroying or taking over any chemical weapons or any combat equipment in Syria, such as shipping vehicles etc.

In addition to that, the US also supports the Free Syrian Army by giving weapons supplies as well as food, training, cash and some kinds of intelligent information. The US helped create a military training program for the rebels in Syria during the civil war in 2011. Yet the support did not last long after spending about \$ 500 Million dollars and producing some trained troops (New York Times 2017).

The Pentagon Pers secretary stated that the US and the other partnering countries have carried out the assault against the regime in Syria by deploying jet fighters and missiles approved by the President of the US, Barrack Obama in September 2016. Besides, the US targeted the front of al Nusra, which was also one of the parts of Al Qaeda in Aleppo an Idilb, Syria (Reuters, 2017).

The US also carried out an air attack on some facilities owned by IIS in ISIS with the help of coalition. The air attack successfully devastated the oil production, under control of ISIS. The oil production was used to fund the terror spreading activities by ISIS in order to achieve the goals in Syria (Martinez, 2014). The US also launched an air assault on the military bases in Syria (Collad and Murphy, 2014). According to the Pentagon

(2017), the air assault launched by the US on ISIS has reached about 32.000 targets, including oil infrastructure, tanks and killing 50.000 militants(CNN, 2017)

### **5. Failed Coup Effort**

In July 2016, Turkey experienced a coup effort by a group of soldiers who were the members of FETO/PSS (Fetullah Terrorist Organization /Parallel State Structure), with the aim of assassinating the president of Turkey, RecepTayyipErdogan (BBC, 2018). It was with the aim of replacing constitutional order and parliamentary democracy with the military junta. More than 2000 were wounded and 248 were killed in the failed coup effort. The coup effort which occurred in Turkey, spread the issues of bringing back the death penalty in Turkey. The issues were originated by a group of people in front of the Erdogan's mansion. They wanted to execute the FETO soldiers, attempting on usurp the power of the Turkish administration, previously (Nafi'aturofi'ah). Erdogan responded to the issues by uttering that Turkey is a democratic country and does not ignore the demand of the people. The issues of bringing back death penalty was decided to be discussed in the parliament. If the parliament approves to execute the soldiers, committing horrible crimes against the Turkish government, Erdogan will sign the death sentence.

Erdogan demanded to the US to extradite FetullahGulen, the leader of FETO, settled currently in Pennsylvania. The demand was based on the event in which the US demanded to extradite anyone with no condition (Turkish Presidency, 2016). After the failed Coup Attempt, Turkey declared a state of emergency in the country in order to accelerate the democratization process and the cleansing of FETO and other terrorist organization in the country. The state of emergency in Turkey received various statements that Erdogan would have the access to the great power. The state of emergency continued with the arrestations of ten thousand of educators, officials, judges, prosecutors, soldiers as well as police. This was later responded by Frederica Mogherini as one of the representatives of EU. She stated that the way how Turkey responded to the state of emergency was unacceptable and requested the Turkey's obedience towards the existing regulation of Human Rights and Individual Freedom. Yet the spokesman of the Turkish president ,Kalin responded to such critics by comparing the State of emergency occurring in Turkey to that occurring in France, by stating "No one ever says that the Human Rights are disappearing from France or about the failed market. That is why, no one can ever say such things to Turkey." (Goulard, 2016)

Expression of condolences were conveyed by the western countries through various kinds of criticism of how Erdogan treated his people after the Coup d'états attempts on July 15, such as the arrestation of soldiers and functionaries. Coup d'état occurring in Turkey was able to be immediately solved by Erdogan, thanks to the various information given by the Russian Federation before the Coup d'état (Kompasiana, 2017). Thus, it weakened the relation between Turkey and the US, as Turkey assumed that the US is not in line with Turkey.

### **6. Turkey as the Balance of Power Actor against the US in the Middle East.**

As discussed in the previous chapter that the US has interests in the Middle East region, especially in Syria. The revolution in Syria is slow compared the countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. It was made possible as the western countries have such massive and huge interests in Syria. The US has a huge role in instilling its hegemony in the Middle East. One of the US' interests is creating and instilling hegemony in the Middle East. Such interest can not be separated from the Turkish government's efforts, considering the fact that Turkey is directly adjacent to Syria. The bordering land to the south with Syria makes it strategical and imperative for Turkey, as the easiest route to Syria is through Turkey [30]. As discussed previously, the Syrian conflict creates a negative impact on Turkey, as it would later create an inevitable Threat of ISIS, the rapidly growing number of refugees as well as security threat. It then caused countries like the Us and Russian volunteered themselves in order to solve the problematic as well as conflictual situation in Syria. Turkey is the key to delivering the aid to Syria. It was then used by the US to execute the mission through the bordering region of Turkey.

In the relation with the US, Turkey has joined the alliance of NATO. Turkey is one of the active NATO members (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) since 1952. Since then, Turkey assumes that the challenges faced

by NATO are growing rapidly and even bigger. Since joining the alliance, Turkey benefits especially from the national security [31]. Currently Turkey is one of the key figures in the Middle East and acts as a limiting gate between Europe and the East. Besides, Turkey is directly adjacent to the conflicting state, Syria, causing Turkey to be under Syrian threat as the result of the regional conflict. The basic assumption of Neorealism is that the international system is anarchical. The anarchical situation does not mean chaos. The state of anarchy could be explained as the absence of central authority, regulating how countries behave with one another. In such condition and the absence of central authority, it is clearly necessary for Turkey to protect itself by joining NATO.

Turkey then requested the addition of missiles defense system to NATO in order to protect the region from the upcoming Syrian threat. The request issued by the Turkish government would soon be completely fulfilled by NATO by placing 6 missile units in order to assist Turkey in building as well as establishing the defense in the area from the Syrian threat. The missiles were brought from the other member countries of NATO: Germany, The United States of America, the Netherlands. But in the year of 2015, the US and Germany decided to pull the Patriot Missiles from Turkey, as the defense mission had been successfully carried out. The absence of the missiles then forced Turkey to possess some kinds of defense system by purchasing the S-400 missiles from Russia. The purchase of weapons by Turkey has met with the opposition from the US. It results in the military threat against the US. On the other side, the purchase of S-400 missiles by Turkey hints that Turkey as a country does not bow to the US. NATO on the other side could accept all the risks, probably happening in the future in the relation of the two states. The US would sanction Turkey for purchasing the S-400 Missiles. Erdogan responded to the statement by saying "Sanctioning one of the member countries of NATO is unacceptable, we have our own sanction!"

Turkey is an important as well as strategical region for the East. Besides, Turkey has some kinds of historical, cultural as well as traditional bond with the countries located in the Middle East. Turkey is also known as the country playing a huge role in stabilizing the relation with the middle east. Turkey is one of the crucial regional actors in the peace-making process in the Middle East. According to the Institute for Islamic Strategic Affairs, since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, the foreign policy of Turkey in Syria, consists of three things : protecting the bordering region and the Turkish sovereignty, controlling the internal security so that it could not harm Turkey, toppling the Regime of Assad by supporting those who favor Turkey in Syria. But the policy has changed as the result of the widely spreading Syrian conflict. Currently, Turkey sees a beneficial chance for the country. According to T. V Paul, in his article "Introduction: The Enduring Axioms of Balance of Power Theory and Their Contemporary Relevance" he states that the main purpose of every balancing strategy is to reduce the battling capability of a very powerful country or a threatening actor, in other words, countries in the world adapt another system in increasing military capability or creating an alliance [33]. The action of the US to reach and instill hegemony depends on the Turkey's position. The struggle of the US for total domination in the Middle East is still related to the assumption of neorealism. Countries are constantly worried about their real opponents threatening them. This brings us to the definition of Security Dilemma, which explains that every step they take to increasing the security and reducing other countries' security. That attribute is forcing the countries to balance the power position, that in certain conditions, they have to attack or invade other countries in order to be on the secured position.

It resulted in the action of Turkey by securing beneficial position for the country. Besides, Haas stated that Balance in the sense of hegemony, stating that countries are not seeking for balance but for hegemony. There is no real security except that of powerful states, potentially creating hostilities. Turkey then decided to be on the secured position, as the powerful states will potentially create hostilities against Turkey, as they could change their policies anytime. It was also based on the dynamics of the relation between Turkey and Russia. Russia is a powerful state which is going to instill hegemony in the Middle East by using Turkey as a strategical area to the Middle East. Besides, the US will not sit idly by, waiting for Russia to successfully instill its

hegemony in the Middle East. Turkey will become a neutral state and will constantly seek for secured position, based on the assumption of Neorealism that the cooperation of the states could be made possible as the result of the anarchical system. According to Hans J Morgenthau, national interest is the minimum capability owned by the states in order to defend as well as to protect physical, political as well as cultural identity from the interference of other states. It then caused the leader of a state could annulate a specific policy towards other states whether it is cooperative or conflictual policy.” In establishing relation with other states, Turkey is not willing to have any kind of attachment to other states, but rather based on the national interest of Turkey in determining the direction of the foreign policies.

### **7. The Weakening Role of the US in Turkey**

Turkey is a crucial country to the US, as Turkey serves as stabilizer for the US and the Middle East. but the relation between Turkey and the US currently does not go so well. The relation of the two countries worsened during the leadership of Obama and Trump. It was caused by the Syrian conflict. The US assumed that Turkey did not fulfill the obligation as one of the members of NATO, as Turkey slows down the effort to fight against ISIS by bombarding the Kurdish militia. In contrast, Erdogan perceived the US as a master whose desire must be fulfilled by the slaves. It was then made as basis of anti-America political movement in Turkey, campaigned by Erdogan. National interest is the minimum capability of protecting and preserving physical, political as well as cultural identity. It shows us the leader of a country can anytime change the direction of specific policies towards other countries, whether it is cooperative one or conflictual one” (Dwitya, 2014). Erdogan assumed that the US was no longer friendly nor helpful to the national interests of Turkey.

Erdogan assumed that the US had done terrible mistakes in its strategy in Syria. At the beginning of the war, Erdogan proposed no fly zone in order to protect the rebels in Syria, but it was then refused by Obama. At the Some time, the US preferred to support the Kurdish militia (BBC, 2016).

In August 2018, the Turkish president, Erdogan criticized the US for prioritizing more a priest than its ally. The statement was made after the US sanctioned a couple of Turkish ministers and after increasing the tariff of metal production in order for the US to be able to free the priest, Andrew Brunson. He had been arrested since 2016 on the charge of cooperating with Kurdish militia and FethullahGullen (VOA, 2018).

In November 2018, Erdogan made critical diplomatic statements to the US, as the US regularly patrolled the bordering area of Turkey and Syria alongside Kurdish militia, which was later considered that Turkey is a terrorist organization. According to Erdogan, the patrol by the US caused some inevitable negative impacts (Girit, 2018). Deteriorating relations with the US have led to the collapse of the currency of Lira (BBV, 2018). It was primarily caused by the deteriorating relations between Turkey and the US. The deteriorating relations can then be seen from the embargo applied by the US to Turkey.

The US foreign policies to Turkey changed over time, due to the arrestation of Brunson. Trump applied some kinds of economic embargo to Turkey. The US already showed its dearest support to the Kurdish militia in Syria. It was considered as a threat to turkey. In Neorealism, states perceive that states cooperate with each other based on the anarchical system. The US-Turkey cooperation was made possible due to the mutual interest of the two countries as the result of the anarchical system especially related to the conflicts in Syria. If the interests of the two countries are not in line anymore, both countries can either sever diplomatic relations with each other or either establish relations with any states in the world. It was based on the national interests’ concept by Hans J Morgenthau that the state leaders in the world can alter the policies anytime, whether it is cooperative or conflictual one” (Dwitya, 2014).

### **8. The Shift in Turkey’s Foreign Policy from the US to Russia and Turkish Region.**

The United States has a large role in Turkey in conducting bilateral cooperation. This is because the interests of the United States in the Middle East region. In its interest, the United States made a policy for Turkey which was considered by Turkey to cause problems and potentially new changes and turmoil in the Middle East region. Turkey believes that the US policy in the Middle East region in promoting democracy in the

Islamic world does not have any impact in the region but it causes chaos. In addition, the interests of the United States in Syria are not in line with Turkey. The shift in Turkey's foreign policy from the United States to Russia and its regions is seen in the Syrian peace efforts launched by Turkey, Russia and Iran. Peace efforts undertaken by the three countries resulted in a de-escalation zone in Idlib Province and other parts of the Latakia, Hama and Aleppo regions. The de-escalation zone is expected to be able to create conditions to end the war in Syria, and the formation of this zone can help Syrians return to normal life [29]. In the view of President Vladimir Putin, the existence of the zone is not only important for Syrians and Middle Easterners but also for the whole world as it can create the conditions needed for Syrian refugees to return home. Besides improving relations between Turkey and Russia is also one of the factors weakening US relations with Turkey.



**Fig 2.**De-escalation Zone

*Source: Russia Today*

In addition to the above, the purchase of S-400 missile weapons by Turkey to Russia is also a form of Turkish foreign policy shift. That is because in the purchase Turkey received strong criticism from the United States and NATO, but Turkey did not pay attention to it and still bought the missile.



**Fig 3.**Missile S-400

*Source: Russia Today*

The S-400 missile air defense system is a sophisticated missile system designed to destroy various objects in the air, such as fighter planes, ballistic missiles and various other types. This system was developed and produced by Russia in 2007. The S-400 is a further development of its predecessor, the S-200 and S-300 (CSIS, 2017).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The weakening of Turkey's Cooperative Relations with the United States in the field of defense and security is strongly influenced by the interests of each country. Turkey and the United States have started cooperative relations since the Cold War, in conducting cooperative relations Turkey has assisted the United States in opening mediation in the Middle East region. In addition, the two countries also began relations by cooperating in combating terrorism. Besides that, Turkey and NATO also played an active role in fighting ISIS in Syria. The relations between Turkey and the United States in the field of defense and security are weakened due to the fact that the interests of the United States in the Middle East Region actually worsen the situation. In addition, the withdrawal of patriot missiles on the Turkish border by the United States made Turkey turn to Russia to buy S-400 missiles. In this case Erdogan's view assumes that the United States is not a reliable partner in protecting his country. In these conditions Turkey chose to purchase Russian-owned missiles despite criticism from the United States. If Turkey had to choose to guard its borders, Turkey had to sacrifice the United States as its partner due to the purchase of Russian-owned S-400 missiles.

Turkey has security problems due to the internal conflict in Syria which causes Turkey to always remain vigilant of all possible threats in the country. Actions taken by Turkey in accordance with neorealist basic assumptions state that states are willing to maintain sovereignty and independence, so the survival of the state becomes the most basic motivation for state treatment as the result of an anarchical system. In addition, Turkey cooperated with Russia and Iran in peace efforts for Syria without involving the United States, in the negotiation of the cooperation efforts the three countries produced a de-escalation zone. This is certainly very detrimental to the United States as Turkey plays an important role in the United States relations with the Middle East region. If Turkey, Russia and Iran had collaborated in peace efforts in Syria, then the position of US hegemony would have been threatened. If Turkey had not bought Russian S-400 missiles, Turkey's sovereignty would have been threatened by the conflict in Syria. The weakening of Turkey-United States cooperation in the field of defense and security is influenced by the interests of the two opposing countries, especially in dealing with the conflict in Syria. This research proves that the weakening cooperation between Turkey and the United States in the field of defense and security is due to differences in interests in the Syrian conflict.

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