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## THREAT PERCEPTION AND TURKEY'S OFFENSIVE FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR IN THE SYRIAN CRISIS

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### ABSTRACT

This essay explores the perspective of Turkey's aggressive behavior on the Syrian crisis in an exploratory way with Stanford's school perspective. So the main question is, what is the reason behind Turkey's changing behavior or foreign policy in the Syrian crisis and making it more aggressive? The provisional answer is that key Turkish decision-makers understand the potential for instability and extremism to overtake Turkey's inland borders, the likelihood of Syrian Kurdish autonomy and the threat to security of Turkey's internal borders, as well as the country's geopolitical ambitions, foreign policy. They have been more aggressive in the face of the Syrian crisis since 2016. The findings of the Stanford School study suggest that Turkish decision-makers have intensified Turkey's maximal violence against the Syrian crisis by intensifying its understanding of the threats to Turkey's national interests. In other words, there was a positive correlation between the amount of violence received in Turkey and the amount of violence used in the Syrian crisis. The method of data collection in this research is based on the library method which consists of simultaneous use of internal and external scientific articles.

### INTRODUCTION

Syria is one of the countries where the interaction of the three factors of geography, power and politics has created a kind of international competition to influence and manage its internal events. Syria is part of the Great Levant, which borders Lebanon, Cyprus, occupied Palestine, Jordan,

Iraq and Turkey. The country has had ideological and political rivalry in the region for years with the Iraqi Ba'athist government, and has disputed with the Turkish government over Kurdish issues as well as geographical factors. Because of Syria's strategic role, many international relations scholars call Syria "the largest small country in the world." Thus, with the onset of the crisis in 2011, many regional and transnational actors have chosen a variety of approaches and orientations based on geographical interests, goals and geographical location. Meanwhile, efforts by some governments to push for the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government are one of the hallmarks of the Syrian developments. Turkey, with its history, culture, religion and many other commonalities, is one of the countries that has played an active role in these developments and is trying to present itself as a role model. Direct the current direction in a way that is in line with the wishes of the Turkish government. With the coming of the AKP in 2002, a new era in Turkish political life appears to have begun, and the Turkish government has begun new regional policies by modifying extremist westernism. New regional developments also confirmed the decision by Turkish leaders. As the Syrian crisis affected Turkey's national security and interests at the domestic, regional and international levels, it led to a renewed political life and ups and downs in its foreign policy decisions. Turkey's approach at the beginning of the crisis by inviting Syrian opposition groups to negotiate and carry out political reforms by Bashar al-Assad has gradually turned into outright opposition to the Assad government and the start of Turkish military operations in Syria. Now the question is, why is Turkey's foreign policy changing in the Syrian crisis? The provisional answer given by the Stanford School Application is that Turkey, by perceiving the severity of the threats to its national security and interests during the Syrian crisis, adopted a more violent approach to addressing the threats to its national interests in Syria. Applied. Threatening threats to Turkey's threatened national interests include the likelihood of extremists spilling over into Turkish borders, Kurdish autonomy, and attempts to annex parts of Syria to their territory. The independent variable of the research is the perception of the Turkish government threat and the dependent variable of the research is the aggressive foreign policy of Turkey. The content collection method is also based on a library method that involves the simultaneous use of authentic Persian and English Internet resources.

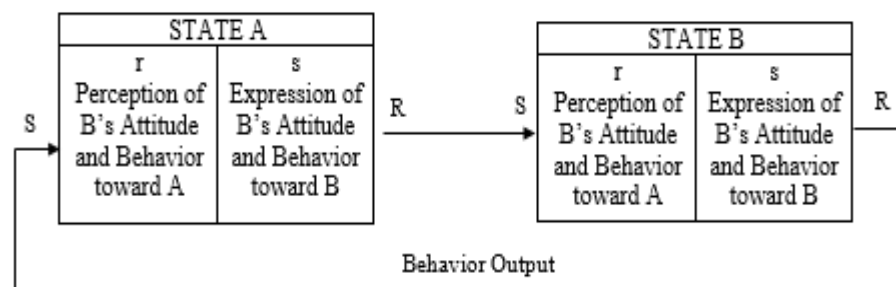
## LITERATURE REVIEW

To date, numerous researchers have investigated the conduct of Turkish foreign policy. For example, Hossein Moradian, in an article entitled "The Potential Threat Threat against C. A. Iran »measures Turkey's national power and its neighbors. Based on the Fox model, the researcher identified Turkey as the regional power among the eight neighboring countries of Turkey and itself, first Turkey and then Iran. Also, in a 1986 article, "New Turkish Policies in the Middle East, Turkey's New Role Based on New State Definitions of Its Position in the Region," Muhammad Ibrahim Pour assesses the impact of this component on Turkish foreign policy. On the Influence of the Structure of the International System on the Behavior of States and on the Position of Governments in the International System, Haji Yousefi in a book entitled Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the light of Regional

Developments (2001-2001) examines the impact of systemic changes on national security. The Islamic Republic of Iran has paid attention. Also in Saeed Jahangiri and Nasser Grossi's article entitled "Reviewing and Comparing Iranian and Turkish Foreign Policy on Syrian Developments (Dimensions and Approaches), these authors discuss the consequences of the Syrian crisis for the Turkish and Iranian governments and believe that the Syrian crisis in relations" Regional governments have created tensions. The implications of these two behaviors require different and different orientations.

### The Stanford School Analysis Framework

Analyzing and studying the behavior of governments in situations of conflict and crisis and the alignment between violent provocation and violent response are the basis of the Stanford school. The stimulus-response model, along with the perception variable, are the key variables in explaining this question why threat governments behave violently in international crises (Holsti, Brody and North, 1975, p. 15). The perception of threat in this School stems from the perception of role that governments who involved in the crisis define for themselves. This perception of role extract from the power sources of governments (Zinnes, 1980, p. 150). The school's pattern of hostile response or reciprocal action emphasizes that hostility or tension expressed by government "A" to government "B" and confrontation similar to government "B", at a higher level of conflict leads to spiral of growing hostility and escalating tensions that it leads to another war. So, due to interpretation of the stanford school "conflict-conflict" model that it bring a new war so, told government' s behavior is like human behavior when he faced with a threat,he has an appropriate response to environmental stimuli. Conflict performed against all parties must be exactly the same as the conflict received (Wilkenfeld, 1991, p. 37).



**Figure 1: The Interaction Model**

Source: (Holsti, Brody, North, 1962)

It is obviously hostile physical actions in a crisis more stressful than hostile verbal actions. The crises often started with violence more likely attracted by the attention of the great powers than non-violent crises, because violent crises have a stronger potential for making changes. It has fundamental and long-term implications for both its participants and for international systems



**Figure 2. A model of Trigger – Behavior Transitions in Crisis**

Source: (Wilkenfeld, 1991, p. 148).

The operationalizing of violent behavior that associated with crisis management in Stanford School is the intensity of violence that used by governments to manage crisis, so this intensity of violence plays an important role in crisis management. The intensity of violence due to Stanford school has threefold: full-blown war, serious conflict, and low or no violence. Lack of violence or low-level violence includes minor incidents that result in limited casualties, and serious conflicts include the real threat of violence and direct military intervention in crises (Brody and North, 1964, p. 125). Full-scale warfare is often a threat to the superpowers that they use of their nuclear weapons. The severity of the violence used due to importance that decision makers for certain interests, that they have in a crisis and perceive it as a serious threat (Holsti, Brody and North, 1962, p. 171).

Threat of values is a threat felt by decision makers or actors involved in the crisis (Boulding, 1959, p. 118). It is classified as follows: (Strong) threat: including the threat to the country's existence, threat of serious damage to infrastructure, threat of infiltration (superpowers), threat of territorial integrity and threat of the political system, threat of extensive damage (global bombing, occupation), threat of low or weak, including: threat of infiltration (for non-superpowers) or influence of the international system (diplomatic isolation, discontinuation of support for friends), threats to economic interests and threats to population and property (Shechelling, 1966, p. 116). Actor's threat perception of each other depends on many factors such as their capacity, their relative power capabilities, accumulation of power, weapons and their military skills, geographical location, population of the country and another forms of power and even its distribution of power method, that will be directly effect on the hierarchy and power configuration and changing or balancing power in crises, as well as the emergence of cooperative or hostile behavior in international crises (North, 1967, p. 12).

### **Turkey's Foreign Policy**

In recent decades, Turkish leaders have adopted different perceptions of different foreign policy with different perceptions and perceptions. For a long time privately during the Cold War, the West and the West became the main focus of Turkish foreign policy, and despite its historical, cultural and geographical commonalities, the East and the Middle East did not have much of a place in this country and its foreign policy. This can be attributed, in part, to the Cold War-era features imposed by the structure of the international

system on the political and security orientations of the countries, and Turkey was relatively indifferent to the Middle East under these conditions and the end of the Cold War. It provided an opportunity to rethink its leaders. To draw new goals and interests with a new understanding of international and regional developments.

With the advent of Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, the design of the "strategic depth" doctrine of Turkish foreign policy has taken a new turn. The shift in Turkey's foreign policy following the AKP's rise from its elite resistance to international and regional realities has been influenced by domestic and foreign factors. Turkey's new behaviors in the region are strongly influenced by Ahmad Davood's ideas and norms. Davutoglu subjective assumptions about foreign policy offerings are influenced by his academic activities and perceptions of Turkish history during the Cold War decade. Turkey's new foreign policy and its perception of Turkey's role as a regional power are crystallized in an important strategic depth book (Kardash, 2017, p. 124).

For Davutoglu, Turkey needs to change step by step to expand its regional influence to achieve a global role (Davutoglu, 2006, p. 142). It has been hypothesized that the AKP took an important step in tensions with neighbors in the region by zeroing in on problems with its neighbors, but the adoption of contradictory barriers to action within and with the criticism and opposition of political parties and civil society groups has become commonplace. Is. Turkish government support for terrorists raises serious doubts in the public opinion and elites of the region about the true nature of Turkey's foreign policy goals. In addition to Muslim countries in the Middle East, including Iran, Ankara's inconsistent stance has also angered Turkey's party allies, especially the United States. The problem began when Turkey faced three rounds of cooperation with terrorists and joining the anti-IS coalition. On the one hand, Turkey had to support the military operations of the coalition against ISIL and al-Nusra terrorist groups, while on the other hand it sought to lay the groundwork for the fall of the Iraqi and Syrian governments with the support of terrorists (Ghahremanpour, 2008).

Ankara, after despairing of Damascus to begin the process of structural reform and escalating violence, ignored all considerations of the principle of tensions in regional relations and established camps in various ways, such as hosting Syrian opposition within the Syrian National Council. Syrian refugees, the reception of some refugee troops and the armament of the Free Syrian Army and the holding of international summits are seeking to overthrow Bashar al-Assad, a change that has taken place in Syria as Erdogan's government has seen the most significant wider relations in the past few years. Political and economic cooperation with Damascus and substantial support Trust Syria out of diplomatic isolation, Damascus after the assassination of Rafik Hariri did (Cornell, 2017, p. 14). On this basis, Turkey's positions and approach are at odds with the geopolitical and security interpretation of some of Turkey's ruling party leaders and their perception of the Syrian crisis (Barkey, 2016, p. 18).

### **Turkey's Foreign Policy Behavior in the Syrian Crisis**

Turkey has been a major regional actor in the face of the Syrian crisis and its orientation has played an important role in deepening the crisis.

According to the founding philosophy of the Republic of Turkey, the West's policy of attitude as the first principle of Kemalism had greatly influenced Turkey's foreign policy stance towards the region, such that after World War II, the Middle East region and its developments in the region. Secondly, the importance of Turkey's foreign policy play was at stake.

Global developments, especially after the onset of Islamic awakening in the Arab and North African countries, have shifted Turkey's policy in 2011 from a zero-neighbor policy to a "neighborly tensions". To this end, it must be acknowledged that Turkey's foreign policy towards Syria's internal developments has taken a different course than other actors. From the very first days of the protests against the Assad opposition, the Turkish government began to support the opposition and, while persuading and pressuring the Syrian government to undertake reforms, in some cases took relatively strong stances with the opposition. The Turkish government has a common position on the Kurdish issue and the fight against terrorism with the Syrian government, but has taken steps to support opposition to Bashar al-Assad's government, which can establish refugee camps for opponents inside its borders with Syria and hold meetings. The Syrian opposition leaders in Istanbul, under the name of the Syrian National Liberation Council and made diplomatic efforts to persuade Syria to carry out democratic reforms. Concerned over instability on the Syrian frontier, the country has also deployed a Patriot missile system to defend against Syrian air threats on its southern border. In a statement released by the Pentagon, it was stated that the aim of the Turkish government was not only to thwart security threats from Syria, to counteract Russia's military presence in Syria and to prevent the strengthening of its air defense system (Asgarian and Tajri, 1977, p. 26)

It may be argued that Turkey's foreign policy in the face of the Syrian crisis is a kind of "acceptance of reality" that has forced Ankara to rethink its interventionist policies. Understanding the danger led to more military intervention and action. In addition to transporting armed elements from various countries to Syria along the kilometers of the border, Turkey also provided the Pegasus with these elements, and a number of commanders of the armed forces operating in Syria were leading the bases. Training courses for these groups were also held in Turkey, and even some of the gunmen were transported to Turkey for treatment.

Turkey supported the terrorist and extremist groups in Syria, including ISIS, at the start of the Syrian crisis. After ISIL emerged as a terrorist group internationally, Turkey preferred to change its official position. To date, Turkey's strategic priority has been the overthrow of the Syrian government and considers mere action against ISIS as a means of increasing the likelihood of ISIL's retaliatory attacks on Syrian soil and making the Syrian government more powerful. ISIL, also an enemy of the Syrian government, continues to serve Turkey's interests. In the case of the Kurds, Turkey's policy is to prevent the empowerment of the Syrian Kurds, who are in an unwritten coalition with the Syrian government. Especially since the Turkish government is fundamentally opposed to empowering the Kurds in the region.

In analyzing Turkey's approach to the Syrian crisis, two important points are to be considered: the first period from the beginning of the crisis (2011) to (2016), which over the years has been Turkey's attempt to change

the regime in Syria without military intervention. From August 2016 until now, 2020, Turkish military intervention aimed at controlling the activities of militants and extremists, as well as the PKK. It should be noted, of course, that Turkey was ready to cooperate with the Assad government in the face of a mutual confrontation against the Kurdish movement known as Rojava, given the more serious and imminent threats to the Syrian government by armed militias (al-Nusra, ISIS). And Ahrar al-Sham) The Syrian government made no mention of the Turkish deal. To this end, Turkey launched a military intervention in Syria called Operation Euphrates, taking into account its security and interests. The operation was carried out in partnership with the Free Syrian Army and has so far taken over an area of about 2,000 square kilometers in northwestern Syria (Alaranta, 2017, p. 2).

In fact, Turkey's military entry into the Syrian crisis was the result of the deadlock of their strategies and goals during 2011-2016. It pursued Assad's three strategies over the years, arming the opposition, helping to empower the Muslim Brotherhood and prevent the formation of an autonomous Kurdish state in northeastern Syria. All three of these strategies failed completely. Assad's position has stabilized. The flow of the Muslim Brotherhood disappeared as a result of the rise of ISIL and al-Nusra in Syria's political and military space altogether, while Turks watched the growing power of the Kurds on the border. As a result of these events, it created this conclusion in the AKP that there is no other way than direct intervention to operationalize the strategies (Alaranta, 2017, p. 2).

Therefore, the close association of the conflicting parties with Turkey has provided the basis for a greater role for Syria. Turkey sought to find a future model similar to the Iraqi federal system, given the similarity of the Syrian situation to Iraq in terms of existing social gaps. Thus, the potential of the Syrian Kurds' potential threat is partly managed. On the other hand, Turkey hopes for the future Syria has a strong presence in terms of economic investment due to the destruction of its infrastructure due to the civil war (Hessam Ghazi and Nouri, 2017, p. 90).

### **Threatening Turkey's Interests in the Syrian Crisis**

#### **Syrian Instability and Extremism Spill Over into Turkish Interior**

The attraction and presence of Turkish citizens in the heart of this terrorist group heralds the spread of terrorist crises in Turkey in the near future. Some AKP leaders may have tried to exploit the Nusra Front and ISIS in pursuit of their foreign policy, though they did not believe in the ideology and beliefs of these groups, but today they appear to be hostages. They have become the hands of these extremist groups. The most important legacy of ISIS for Erdogan's new foreign policy and for the presidency include: 1. endangering Turkey's public image in the world from a human rights perspective, 2. polarizing Turkish society and its devastating consequences on economic, social and political security, 3. Expanding the range of extremist and jihadist groups in Turkey while Kurdish militant groups are gathering; 4. Further isolating Turkey in the Middle East and deepening its challenge to effective Middle East powers like Iran; 5. Challenging ISIS's being dragged into Turkey by delusional analyzes of the caliphate (Khalili Nejad Kakkashi and Dehshiyar, 1979, p. 98).

The aftermath of extremist groups and Syrian unrest has also blamed Turkey; for example, a bomb blast in Istanbul's 14-million-strong metropolis killed 10 people, nine of whom were German tourists. Istanbul, of course, is constantly witnessing other incidents, such as the burning of public cars and government buses by supporters of P. K. It was also k. But the suicide bomber hit the headlines worldwide. Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and leader of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) said at a press conference that the terrorist attack was linked to ISIS Takfiri groups. In assessing the political and security importance of the Coach attack, several points can be made: 1. A terrorist attack in the big city of Istanbul means threatening the security of Turkey's most important political, cultural, and economic city and attacking its tourism industry. ISIL launches terrorist attacks on Turkish soil from two Kurdish cities of Diyarbakir and Perseus and then arrives in Ankara and finally Istanbul, but the important point in these four terrorist attacks is that the ISILs are still in the offensive. The Turks themselves have not been attacked. 3. The terrorist attack in Istanbul reflects the fact that Turkey is heavily and easily exposed to ISIS terrorist attacks, and given the 900-kilometer-long border between Turkey and Syria, the likelihood of such a repeat in Turkey is not out of the question (Khalilinejad Kashkooi, Dehshyar, 2017, p. 123).

This proves the fact that we need to have a clear understanding of the fears and security concerns of Turkish officials about the existence of ISIS, and it is natural that Turkey will stick to ISIS. Although Turkey has been in the forefront of the fight against ISIS in coalition with the US and Europe, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries, one cannot expect that Turkey's actions against this Takfiri group will be swift, cruel and decisive, as it will inevitably do. His military and security calculations take into account ISIL's reaction inside Turkish territory

### **Turkey's Geopolitical Ambitions During the Syrian Crisis**

Turkey is seeking to break up Idlib in Syria. Turkey annexed Alexandria province into its territory in 1939, but now seeks to attach Adlib to Alexandria so it can have a transit route to Syria and Jordan and the entire Middle East, Also, in a general assessment, it can be pointed out that the Turkish authorities belong to Kirkuk with its historical past, which at times reveal their territorial claims to the cities of Mosul and Kirkuk, and even symbolically annually funds them from parliament. This country is intended for these areas. These areas were in fact separated from Turkey by the British in the wake of World War I, which left Turkish politicians unhappy. Because the inhabitants of these areas are made up of Arab, Kurdish, and Turkish ethnicities, and the Turks, after separating from this discourse, attach the Kurdish areas to Turkish soil (Karimi Fard, 1986, p. 78).

Turkey's excesses have led to more military action in Syria. On October 7, 2017, Turkey dispatched its troops to Adlib province for the second time. This was Turkey's second invasion of Syria in 14 months, after the Euphrates Shield operation. Turkey's serious adventurous policy will most likely lead to its regional isolation in the near future, as well as its distance from powerful NATO allies (Babali, 2018).

### **Syrian Kurdish Autonomy and Turkish Border Threats**



As Moton and Aramovywitz argue, the study of the "Kurdish pros" of the Syrian crisis has been Ankara's main concern. Turkey had hoped that the Syrian Kurds would become a passive and neutral force under intense jihadist attacks and could not achieve a strategic and progressive coalition, but Turkey did not achieve this hope, but the region once again sprouted its ideas and ideas. Look at Kurdish (Williams, 2016). Not only did ISIL fail to overthrow the Kurds, but the group's attacks led to a sudden coalition of dispersed Kurds and other Kurdish armed groups against a common enemy and the establishment of its operations and command and mobilization and organization centers in Syria. In fact, it meant achieving strategic depth. When the Kurds shifted the battlefield of Cuban against ISIS in their favor, they were able to strengthen their presence along the Turkish-Syrian border, so no one can deny that they are one of the most important winners in the Syrian-Kurdish process. The victory of the Kurds has several advantages for them and a threat to Turkey (Babri and Ibrahimi, 2018, p. 170).

By highlighting the position of the Kurds at the scene of the Syrian crisis, Turkey found itself with two enemies of the Syrian Assad and Kurdish governments. Meanwhile, with the imminent Kurdish threat to Turkey's border security, the positions of justice and development statesmen have become softer than Assad's. To this end, the Turkish government has focused primarily on preventing the strengthening of Kurdish currents in northeastern Syria. It is therefore not unreasonable that the Turkish military has in recent years placed the attack on Syrian Kurdish military bases as its main agenda. The height of these tensions came when the strategic city of Mumbai, which was the corridor for the transfer of ISIL supplies and troops from Turkey, was captured by the Syrian Democratic Coalition. Kurdish troops in Turkey, Turkish leaders deeply concerned about Cavusoglu's statement in March 2, 2017 Turkish leaders strongly concerned about the need for Kurdish forces to leave the city, and Cavusoglu's statement in the second month March 2017 stresses the need for Kurdish forces to leave the town of Mabaj, saying Turkish troops are ready to enter the city (Babri and Ibrahimi, 1979, p. 170).

Therefore, Turkey's new policy in Syria at present (2019) is focused on Kurdish military forces (YPG), mainly based on the use of force directly or threatening to use military force. Ankara seeks to gain supremacy Political upheavals are forthcoming in military operations, although Turkey has maintained diplomatic momentum and made a flexible government in negotiations with Russia and the United States to better achieve its ambitious goals (Stiftung, 2019, p. 5).

Also on October 17, 2019, an agreement was signed between the United States and Turkey for an immediate ceasefire. The agreement was in fact intended to strengthen Turkey-NATO relations as well as strengthen ISIL's positions, thereby legitimizing the United States in favor of Turkey on the Syrian southern border (Kirby, 2019, p. 4). This legitimization of the Turkish military actions was a great victory and a great achievement for Turkey. And then the US lifted many of Turkey's sanctions. On 22 October 2019, an agreement between Turkey and Russia was also signed in Hayman, which was a confirmation of Turkey's military action in Syria (McKernan and Borger, 2019). Syria's ten-kilometer depth advanced to create a safe zone. And brought Kurdish regions under its military control (Cetinsaya, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

As stated at Stanford's analysis of the behavior of governments in crises, it largely emphasizes the understanding that governments have of threatening stimuli. According to this school of government, the more aggressive their foreign policy behavior and crises will be, the more aggressive they will be in times of crisis. In other words, violent stimuli will have a violent response, and especially when they affect the security, territorial integrity, prestige, and primary or vital interests of governments, they will be even more violent. Violence also ranges from low-intensity violence such as military maneuvering to severe violence such as serious conflict and ultimately high-profile violence. The extent of the violence present in crises is therefore a function of the extent to which the threats to the national interests of governments are understood. Thus, it can be said that the policy of attitude towards the West of Turkey, which continued with little attention to regional considerations until the early 1960s, with the Turkish political system confronting new domestic and international variables, as well as crises. Regionalism has led to a new foreign policy with regional trends in foreign policy making. As the AKP came to power, the Turkish government shifted its focus to the Middle East and sought to play a more active role in the region. Of course, Turkey's focus on Middle East affairs meant turning away its Western allies. Thus, with the onset of the Syrian crisis in March 2011, Turkey, unlike in the past, sought to play a special role in regional politics and the Syrian crisis, using its geopolitical position and connection with the West and the Middle East. Hence, Turkey's foreign policy, which at the beginning of the Syrian crisis was to support and support Syrian terrorist and extremist groups including ISIS, with the spread of violence and conflict and the influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey, and the rise of ISIS to As a terrorist group internationally, and under pressure from Turkish public opinion, key decision-makers in the country preferred to change their official positions and begin to expand military action against terrorists. Therefore, Turkey's foreign policy towards the Syrian crisis has been a function of understanding the threatening motives of its national interest, so that, by realizing the danger of extremism and instability within society, Turkey has stepped up its military actions on Syrian soil. It launched a missile near the Syrian border. Turkish troops have also been targeting Syrian Kurdish military bases in recent years, and the culmination of these clashes and military actions was when the strategic bombardment town that was the lane for the transfer of ISIL equipment and troops from Turkey. The Syrian Democratic Coalition gained, and the Turkish government moved to suppress the Kurds up to ten kilometers deep in Syrian territory and sought to attach parts of the territory to its territory so that it could be added to its strategic depth.

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