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# Centre for Turkey Studies

Building bridges between Turkey and the UK

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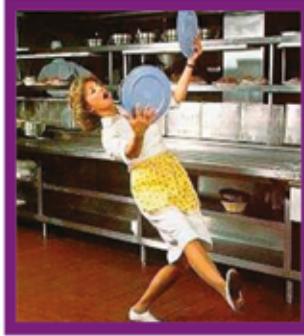
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**Ibrahim Dogus**

*Founder and Director,  
Centre for Turkey Studies*

I am delighted to present to you, on behalf of the staff and volunteers of the Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS), our 4th Annual report of activities.

We established Centre for Turkey Studies four years ago with two simple goals: to provide an independent, non-party political forum for discussion about Turkey and the region for the British people and the communities within the UK originating from Turkey and secondly, to create a dialogue between experts from Turkey and the UK to build bridges between the two countries and their peoples.

Since then, we have marvelled at the warm reception we've enjoyed, at the highest levels of business and politics, from across the communities represented here today. The packed meetings and seminars, and the high-level speakers we heard, are testament to the success of the CEFTUS.

In retrospect, it seems obvious. The United Kingdom and Turkey are allies. Two million Britons visit

Turkey every year, for holidays or business. Britain is second only to Germany as a trading partner to Turkey. And, we all hope, that one day soon Turkey will be able to join the UK in the European Union.

Since the UK General Election, we have sought to work with new Parliamentarians, and with the new Government and Opposition front-benches. We enjoy support from David Cameron and Jeremy Corbyn.

There have been Turkish and Kurdish people living in England since the 1500s. Today, as many as 400,000 people can claim Turkish, Kurdish or Turkish Cypriot origins in the UK. There is a huge diplomatic and academic interest in Turkey. Turkey throughout history has been at the intersection between worlds, set between three seas, the Mediterranean, the Aegean and the Black Seas.

Today, Turkey borders eight countries, including Iraq, Iran, Syria and Greece. Given the instability of the region, you can see why Turkey matters so much; why building bridges is such important work. This has been brought home to all of us by the refugee crisis, which serves to remind us how fragile and precious life is.

CEFTUS has no political bias – our role is to work with all political parties including whichever party is in power in Turkey and in the UK. Centre for Turkey Studies will continue to provide the meeting point for politicians, journalists, business leaders, community champions and academics to monitor the situation, to debate the solutions and to allow dialogue and

understanding.

Given the amount of events and seminars we produce, it is sometimes a surprise to people that we do it all with such a small staff team. And it is sometimes a surprise to people when they learn that Centre for Turkey Studies is not funded by any government, nor by a University or institution.

We rely on the generosity of our partners and donors. So many are here with us this evening. We couldn't work without them.

Again, this brochure shows you the kinds of impressive events which our donors' money pays for. Of course to be sustainable, we need regular donations and financial support, so I hope you and your organisation will consider becoming a partner and support us.

We can't do what we do without your support. Friends, the Centre for Turkey Studies is growing. Its influence is expanding. The number of supporters is going up. It reflects the warm relations between our nations, and also the strong support for the Turkish and Kurdish people..

It reflects the real desire of British people to understand more about Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot societies and politics.

In a world of conflict, we bring understanding. In a world of disagreement, we bring dialogue.

In a world of prejudice, we break down barriers.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continuous support.



**Rt Hon David Cameron**  
*Prime Minister and  
Leader of the Conservative Party*

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“Anglo-Turkish relations have continued to flourish in recent years. I have fond memories of the Turkish President’s State visit to Britain in November 2011 and my own visit to Turkey last year.

I am looking forward to visiting Antalya this November for the G20 Summit, where we will have the opportunity to enhance our co-operation on the economic and security issues that affect us both.

As Britain looks to strengthen its links with Turkey, the role of the Centre for Turkey Studies remains as important as ever. I am convinced that the organisation will continue to go from strength to strength and I welcome their continued work on significant issues important to both Turkey and the UK.”



**Jeremy Corbyn**  
*Leader of the Labour Party*

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Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn MP sends his apologies for not being able to attend CEFTUS Gala. His support message will be read out on the night.



**Boris Johnson**  
*Mayor of London*

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“I want to congratulate the Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) on its 4th Anniversary and commend the organisation for its work to develop dialogue between peoples of Turkey, London and the UK. The Turkish heritage community in London contributes greatly to the capital’s

economic and cultural vibrancy, and ensures that London and Turkey enjoy a strong relationship. I welcome efforts by CEFTUS to develop these links further, and offer my best wishes to the projects and events it is organising over the coming year. “



### **Yvette Cooper MP**

*Labour MP*

“Kurdish, Turkish and Turkish Cypriot communities over the years have made huge contributions to the social, cultural and economic life of the UK.”

Promoted by the team at CEFTUS, who work incredibly hard to build relationships between a wide range of people with an interest in the relationship between the UK and Turkey, this contribution continues to thrive.

I hope we can continue to strengthen the bonds between our two nations and I look forward to working with the Centre for Turkey Studies to achieve this.”



### **Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP**

*Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport*

“Turkey’s economic, cultural and geopolitical importance will continue to grow through the 21st century.

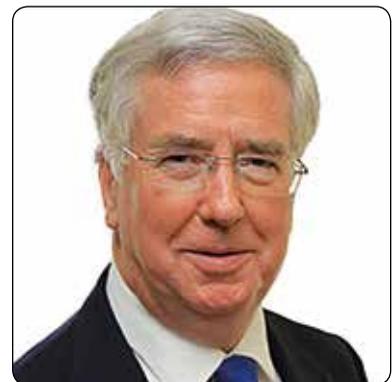
The Centre for Turkey Studies plays a crucial role in fostering a dialogue between the UK and Turkey.”



### **Tom Brake MP**

*Foreign Affairs Spokesman for the Liberal Democrats*

“The role of the Centre for Turkey Studies in providing a forum for intellectual debate and discussion has been fundamental in helping to strengthen important ties between Turkey and the UK. With the Turkish community contributing so much to UK business and culture over the last few decades, it is fantastic that the CEFTUS engages a range of institutions and stakeholders to discuss this relationship and Turkey’s development. The Liberal Democrats are of the firm belief that Turkey’s accession into the EU is a strategic necessity and we will continue to express this support through our work with CEFTUS and during this Parliament.”



### **Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP**

*Secretary of State for Defence*

“The UK and Turkey have a strong bilateral Defence relationship, underpinned by the 2011 Framework Agreement on Defence Cooperation. As a key NATO ally and valued security partner we will continue to work closely with Turkey as we address our shared defence and security challenges.”



**Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP**

*Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office*

“The UK and Turkey continue to enjoy a strong bilateral relationship, underpinned by 2010 ‘Strategic Partnership’ agreement. Turkey is Europe’s Emerging Power, an important NATO ally and a valued security partner to the UK. We work closely with Turkey on a range of foreign policy challenges in the Middle East, most notably on addressing the problems stemming from the continuing conflict in Syria and cooperating against the threat posed by ISIL.

Turkey is also integral to the success of the UK’s prosperity goals,

reflecting its record of sustained economic growth. Turkey’s long term economic prospects offer substantial opportunities for UK firms, and UK expertise can help Turkey realise its grand ambitions for its role in the region and the world by 2023; the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic. It is in this context that I welcome the Centre for Turkey Studies’ efforts in 2014 to help us deepen cultural, political and business links between our two countries.”



**Kate Osamor MP**

*Labour Party for Edmonton*

“I am proud to be on the advisory board of the Centre for Turkey Studies. Over the last four years, CEFTUS, has provided a vital forum for debating economic issues, social developments and foreign affairs in Turkey and the Middle East through its forums, round table and panel events.

Recent developments in Turkey and the Middle East make the work of CEFTUS in these areas more relevant and important than ever.

The Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities make an

invaluable contribution to the society, culture and economy of the UK, including in my own constituency of Edmonton. CEFTUS does an important job in bringing people from a range of backgrounds together to build stronger links between the UK and Turkey.

I wish the Centre for Turkey Studies every success over the coming year and look forward to continuing to work with the organisation.”



**Lord Mohamed Sheikh**

*House of Lords*

“I am a friend of Turkey and I am pleased to be a member of the Board of advisors of CEFTUS. Ibrahim Dogus and his colleagues have worked very hard over the last four years to maintain a productive dialogue and built excellent relationships with various institutions and other stakeholders to establish and strengthen United Kingdom’s relationship with Turkey.

The Turkish, Turkish Cypriot and the Kurdish communities have generally being successful in this country and they have contributed to the advancement and well being of the

United Kingdom. This is appreciated by us.

CEFTUS are to be congratulated on their achievements and I am sure that they will progress forward and go from strength to strength.

I have hosted some of CEFTUS’s events in the House of Lords which I have found to be interesting and fruitful. I wish them well in their future activities.

Kind Regards and Best Wishes to you all.”

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# Centre for Turkey Studies

Building bridges between Turkey and the UK

## OUR PEOPLE



**Ibrahim Dogus**



**Raife Aytek**



**Timur Ekingen**



**Buket Bora**



**Merve Akansel**



**Jonathan Friedman**



**Edward Rowe**



**Zeynep Kosereisoglu**



**Lissie Simpson**



**Serdar Sengul**



**Alexander Segall**



**Iva Spahiu**



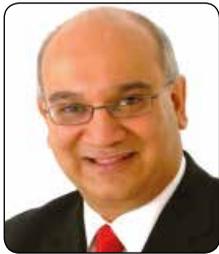
**Mehmet Sahbudak**



**Bisi Kale**

# OUR ADVISORS

## Members of the Houses of Parliament and of the European Parliament



Keith Vaz MP



Diana Johnson MP



Jean Lambert MEP



Andrew Slaughter MP



Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece



Julie Ward MEP



Baroness Sarah Ludford



Lord Sheikh



Stephen Kinnock MP



Kate Osamor MP



Sir David Amess MP



Lord Northbrook

## Academics/Journalists/Business People



Professor Fuat Keyman



Dr Soner Cagaptay



Dr Katerina Dalacoura



Dr Tunc Aybak



Dr Pelin Kadercan



Sara Whyatt



Dr Zeynep Banu Dalaman



Mr Bill Park



Mr Gareth Winrow



Dr Caroline Tee



Ayle Gol



Dr Deniz Cifci



Mr Rusen Cakir



Mr Mustafa Topkaya



Mr Jonathan Fryer



Cllr Ertan Hurer



Ibrahim Sirkeci

# Our 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*We raised funds via our anniversary galas and Turkish, Kurdish, Cypriot Community Achievement Awards and other small scale networking receptions. We also hosted the British Kebab Awards 2015, which contributed to our funds.*



Please support and be part of our community!  
Volunteer with us or take part in our internship programme!  
Consider making a donation! No amount is too small and any contribution will be appreciated.

**email** or **call us** on  
**info@ceftus.org** or  
**02071834272**

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The Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) is delighted to celebrate another year of remarkable achievements. We would like to extend our deepest thanks to all of you for your interest in and support of our work in strengthening ties between Turkey and the United Kingdom.

In the past year, we hosted numerous events that provided a platform for academics, politicians, journalists and other experts to come together and examine issues of great significance for Turkey. Leading figures from Turkey and Britain discussed issues ranging from domestic political transformation, structural changes of state apparatuses, women's and minority rights, Turkey's path to a civil constitution and the Kurdish Peace Process to regional developments and Turkey-EU relations. We organised a public forum on the Cyprus dispute with Cypriot politicians in attempt to provide a platform for all parties to discuss issues and share their analysis with the public.

CEFTUS held joint forums and exclusive roundtables with Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) SOAS Turkish Society and the Centre for Kurdish Progress.

You will see summaries of CEFTUS Westminster Debates and of our Joint Forums/Roundtables in the following pages.

Our guests and supporters came from across the political spectrum in both Turkey and the United Kingdom, with representatives of Turkey's Justice and Development Party, Republican People's Party and Peoples' Democratic Party

participating in our events. In the United Kingdom, members of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Parties have provided invaluable assistance to us. We are hard at work at putting together a schedule of speakers for events over the next year. We will organise women's nights and community & business receptions as well as our public and exclusive forums, Westminster Debates and Joint Forums/Roundtables.

Since 2011, we have been able to create opportunities for vibrant and enlightening analysis and discussion of issues regarding Turkey. Support from Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot communities in the past has been essential to our success. We raised funds via our anniversary galas and Turkish, Kurdish, Cypriot Community Achievement Awards and other small scale networking receptions. We also hosted the British Kebab Awards 2015, which contributed to our funds. We are committed to improving transparency for our followers and supporters and we have always been open about our work and finances. Please refer to our accountant's report in the following pages to review our accounts over the last year.

We encourage all who are interested in the Centre for Turkey Studies and strengthening relations between Great Britain and Turkey to become CEFTUS members and support us in our efforts. Please contact us via email ([info@ceftus.org](mailto:info@ceftus.org)) for more information on how to join our community.

We look forward to the continuing support of our current members and hope to welcome many more in 2015 and beyond.



# Mission

The Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) is an independent and non-partisan organisation inaugurated in April 2011 with the support of former Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg in London. CEFTUS provides an open forum promoting expert opinions and debates focusing on Turkey-UK

relations, foreign affairs, economic issues and social developments in Turkey and the region. The centre hosts experts, leading politicians, academics and opinion-formers from Britain, Turkey and beyond. As a policy forum, CEFTUS organises monthly speaker series, panel discussions and dinner events at UK

Parliament, think tanks, academic institutions and locations in the City of London. It also conducts case studies at the requests of think tanks, public institutions and the private sector interested in the economic, political and social development of Turkey and the region.

# Objectives

1. To host forums, panel discussions dealing with subjects related to the analysis of Turkey's:
  - Domestic politics, foreign affairs and economic development;
  - Accession process to the European Union;
  - Relationship with the UK, EU, Middle East and North Africa, Black Sea region, Central Asia and the Caucasus;
  - Role as an energy conduit for Europe;
  - Interplay of Islam, democracy and secularism;
  - Civil society, human rights and minority issues
  - Potential as role model for the Islamic world;
  - Diaspora communities and their economic, social and political relationship with their countries of origin.
2. To create contacts and strengthen relationships between experts, politicians and opinion-formers from Turkey, Britain and Europe; and between migrant communities and the majority population.
3. To publish conference reports, policy briefs and recommendations concerning Turkey and the neighbouring region.
4. To act as a non-party political and non-governmental institution with the aim of providing expert opinion and advice.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary and the Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot Community Achievement Awards 2014

The Centre for Turkey Studies celebrated the third anniversary of its founding in April 2014 at London Marriott Hotel Grosvenor Square. Over 500 distinguished guests from both the UK and Turkey attended the reception and dinner, including about 100 members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Among them were former Minister Kenneth Clarke QC Conservative MP, Keith Vaz Labour MP and Chairman of Home Affairs Select Committee, David Burrowes Conservative MP, Andy Love former Labour MP, and former MEP Baroness Sarah Ludford.

Politicians from Turkey included Republican People's Party (CHP) Deputy Chairmans and MPs Gursel Tekin and Sezgin Tanrikulu, Ali Demircali CHP MP and Altan Tan Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) MP. Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) former representative to the UK, Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, was also present.

Politicians, journalists, academics, business people as well as representatives of Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot communities enjoyed a delightful evening.

Mustafa Topkaya, Ali Matur, Metin Pekin, Sercan Erkaslan, Hasan Dikme, Ergun Binbay, Rami Ranger, Munir Tatar and Sadiye Arslan were some of the business people attended.

CEFTUS also announced the winners of the Annual Community Achievement Awards 2014 during the event. The awards aim to improve solidarity among local Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities and to promote positive role models for youth and aspiring entrepreneurs.





# 3<sup>rd</sup> Ceftus Turkish, Kurdish & Turkish Cypriot



**Haci Akdogan**  
*Male Business Role Model*



**Serpil Ersan**  
*Female Business Role Model*



**Ahmet Guven**  
*Male Role Model in Community Work*



**Ferhat Dirik**  
*Media & Digital Media Award*



**Seyfettin Ceki**  
*Tuition Centres & Music Schools*



**Ahmet Sayar**  
*Best Professional Award*



**Mehmet Mercan**  
*Business Role Model*



**Ozgecan & Gulcan Ardic**  
*Arts & Culture*



**Mustafa Ozcan**  
*Young Male Entrepreneur*



**Ebru Macavoy**  
*Young Female Entrepreneur*

**Mustafa Gencsoy**  
*Lifelong Achievement Award*

# Community Achievement Awards Winners



**Alev Adil & Suna Hurman**  
*Female Role Model in Community Work*



**Taylan Cavus**  
*Retails Award*



**Alev Adil**  
*Female Role Model in Community Work*



**Turkish Cypriot Community Association**  
*Non-Profit Organisation/Charity Awards*



**Dervis Aslan on behalf of Onder Sahan**  
*Outstanding Contribution to Education*



**Firat Ozkan**  
*Business Development Winner*



**Munit Tatar**  
*Best Professional Award*



**Riza Yelden**  
*Wholesale Business Award*



**Ergun Binbay**  
*Wholesale Business Award*



**Mehmet Ergen**  
*(Award was received by his colleague)  
Arts and Culture*

**Kelami Dedezade**  
*Education Award*

# 2014 - 2015 Westminster Debates



**Religious Conservatism and the AKP before Snap Elections of 1st November 2015**

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**'new Turkey': Democratisation Process and Challenges**

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# Religious Conservatism and the AKP before Snap Elections of 1st November 2015

*With Mr Levent Gultekin,  
Columnist and Journalist*

*5 October 2015, Unite the Union*

The Centre for Turkey Studies' public forum with columnist Mr Levent Gultekin welcome many members of the Turkish and Kurdish communities in London.

Mr Gultekin began his speech by elaborating on the fact that states often create an "other" so as to advocate or prescribe the adoption of an ideal identity. He said that the Turkish state and its espoused Kemalist ideology created the notion of its own enemy, i.e. religious conservatives and non-Turkish peoples such as Kurds, which has traumatised people and communities over many decades. According to Mr Gultekin, religious conservatives were affected by this approach. Although they had to go through a struggle for freedom from state oppression for decades, after gaining power through elections, they lost their innocent intentions of advocating further democratisation. Mr Gultekin stated that Turkey's state structure is based on power



relations that only favour the strongest party, and curtails the development of ethical individuals in the wider society. Instead, he said, these individuals lose their potential and become ideological and closed-minded. He said that Turkey's current situation was terrible and feared that it would get worse. He also expressed concern that Kurds might increase their share of power and may, like the religious conservatives upset the balance and abuse their power as well.

He argued that the nature of Turkish politics has traditionally been to

cover one's own back, rather than take care of the wider the society. He continued stating that now President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has immense power, even absolute power over the political system in place, which is designed to preserve such positions.

Mr Gultekin stated that at the same time, the opposition has failed to provide a viable alternative, and had only criticised the President. He also accused the opposition of lacking integrity and intellect to carry out their roles in opposition effectively.

Mr Gultekin argued that the key outcome in Turkey as a whole ought to be the creation and preservation of a functioning democracy, and that classifying and compartmentalising issues into categories such as "Kurdish" or "Alevi" runs counter to this process as it presents a distraction from the overall goal. He finished, stating that Turkey's current undemocratic condition presented a problem to people of all ethnicities and political, ideological and religious orientations in the country.



# Bridges between Turkey and UK: From Immigration to Integration

*With Keith Vaz MP (Former Minister for Europe, 1999-2001), former Turkish Attache for Labour and Social Security in Stockholm, Rotterdam, Brussels and London Mrs Aysegul Yesildaglar and immigration lawyers, Ms Maria Patsalos and Mrs Serpil Ersan*

*Chaired by Michael Daventry, Journalist  
Hosted by Keith Vaz MP*

*10 September 2015,  
House of Commons*

Keith Vaz opened the event discussing the importance of CEFTUS' work in building bridges between the UK and Turkey especially in the light of the refugee crisis caused by the Syrian conflict. He was critical of the lack of support for Turkey in its taking a huge burden in accepting large numbers of refugees and announced that the Home Affairs Parliamentary Select Committee, of which he is Chairman, would be travelling to Turkey to visit refugee camps there. Mrs Yesildaglar gave a presentation on social and legal aspects of Turkish Migration. She noted that around 5.5 million Turks (including Kurds and Turkish Cypriots), are in Western Europe, and that around 250,000 Turkish speakers are found in the United Kingdom, this figure however, she said, was more formal and she continued to state that there could be up to 500,000. She stated that other European countries often made bilateral labour agreements with Turkey and Turkish workers came in large numbers to fill gaps in the labour market. She



stated that Turkish migrants have a quasi-status in the privileges afforded to them by the Ankara Agreement, not quite the same as an EU member state but greater than that of other non-member states, for instance Turkish citizens are able to take their cases to the European Court of Justice.

Expert in immigration rules, lawyer Ms Patsalos stated that immigration has changed immensely over the last ten years and that immigration rules have become stricter, she noted that the recent coalition and Conservative governments have aimed to restrict as many visas as possible, but have not restricted the

Ankara Agreement.

Immigration solicitor Mrs Ersan stated that while EU accession negotiations with Turkey have resumed, successful accession is unlikely, despite Turkey's accession being strongly supported by the UK, especially given the resumption of the conflict between the Kurdish guerilla movement the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and Turkish military forces. She noted that Turkey has taken around 1.7 million refugees from Syria and noted that European countries including the UK stand to gain by taking in refugees in higher numbers, as these individuals are likely to start businesses and use their often high levels of skills to benefit the wider societies checks and balances in Turkey, which include placing EU ascension as a national priority, increased respect for the rights and wishes of Kurdish and Alevi citizens, and redrafting the laws on elections and political parties.



# New World: New Perspective on Civilisations

*With Professor Dr Bekir Karliga, Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister of Turkey, Coordinator of Alliance of Civilisations, and Chairman of the International Istanbul Civilisation Studies Centre*

*Hosted by Lord Sheikh with the assistance of Lady Sheikh  
Chaired by Lord Temple-Morris  
Translated by Andrew Penny*

*24 June 2015, House of Lords*

Temple-Morris opened the event, expressing interest in Turkey and noting the significance of the role of CEFTUS, given Turkey's importance in the contemporary Middle East. He stated that Turkey's role in the region is crucial, and domestic satisfaction in the country is necessary for it to be able to play a balancing role amid the current crisis. Lord Temple-Morris continued to state that Professor Dr Bekir Karliga and his work on civilisation is key in this, and noted the importance of the role of Islam and Islamic civilisation in particular in promoting peace and humanitarian values.



After discussing historical changes in Europe from the Renaissance to the colonial period, Prof Karliga quoted Leslie Lipson, saying that since the second half of the 20th Century, Western civilisation has never needed moral revolution as much as at present. He quoted further, saying that the West has become intoxicated with consumerism and materialism. Professor Dr Karliga then stated that this situation, coupled with growing populations in underdeveloped areas, will make the planet uninhabitable. He stated that freedom and rights are the main concerns of the 21st Century.

Freedom according to Professor Dr Karliga is a value combining humane virtues of peace, friendship and tolerance, without this and the protection of rights, equilibrium cannot exist in society.

Professor Karliga stated that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan advocates the new alliance of civilisations worldview, which is presently being developed by scholars in Turkey and elsewhere, is a strong step towards peace and universalisation.

Professor Dr Karliga continued, noting that 127 countries and 20 international institutions have joined and support this effort. He continued stating that a committee has been set up in Turkey to help the movement's progress. Research centres have been established at different universities offering Master's programmes in English, Turkish, Arabic and Spanish since 2012. Discussing his own efforts and initiatives, he also stated that the International Istanbul Civilisation Studies Centre he established is carrying out various research projects.



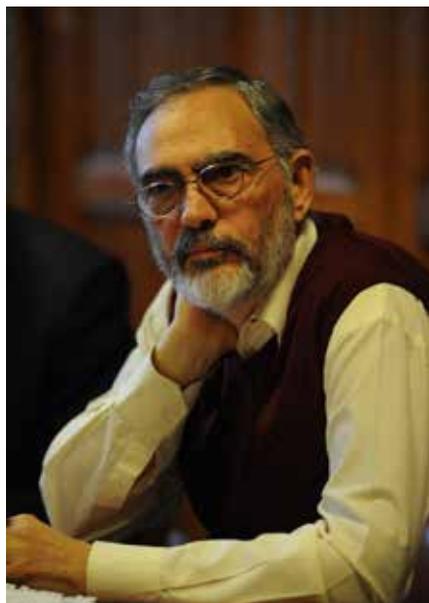
# Understanding the Transformation; AK Party Era in Turkey

*With Mr Etyen Mahcupyan, former Senior Advisor to the Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu Hosted and chaired by Lord Howell of Guildford*

*27 March 2015, House of Lords*

The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted a roundtable with Mr Etyen Mahcupyan discussing Turkey's transformation since the start of the AKP era in 2002. Introducing the topic, he claimed that the AKP was the only viable option to bring about and sustain reform. Analysing Turkish Republican History, he argued that before 2002, the state marginalised various ethnic and religious groups, especially conservative Muslims. He stated that AKP policies have helped foster religious reform in Turkish society, and are responsible for greater moderation in conservative Muslim attitudes. He continued, saying that this demographic, as the majority of the population will be instrumental in Turkey's democratisation and future prosperity.

Mahcupyan argued that despite natural political and media



polarisation at election time in Turkey, this did not occur in society at large. He added his view that class differences were gradually disappearing.

Mahcupyan also expressed that he feels more "Ottoman" than Armenian in identity, and likened pro-active Turkish acceptance of Syrian refugees to Ottoman rule. On the wider subject of Syria, he claimed that Turkey views ISIS as the greatest threat to its sovereignty and would prefer a



Kurdish neighbour so long as a peace agreement could be made. He noted that between 700-1000 ISIS members had come from Turkey but added that fighting this organisation was the responsibility of Europe as well as Turkey.

When questioned on his views about the events of 1915 in relation to Armenians, he stated that what happened to them was by definition a genocide, but also commented that genocide is a legal term and not a historical formulation.



# Structural Changes Ahead of the 2015 General Elections in Turkey

*With Dr Zeynep Karahan Uslu, AKP MP for Sanliurfa and AKP Constitutional Committee member Professor Osman Can. Chaired by Mrs Aysegul Yesildaglar of Docklands Academy*

*Hosted by John Woodcock Labour MP for Knowsley Translated by Zeynep Kosereisoglu*

*23 February 2015, House of Commons*

The Centre for Turkey Studies presented a panel in which AK Party Members analysed political developments including Turkey's controversial Homeland Security Bill and potential post-election structural change including a new constitution.

Dr Uslu expressed the AK Party's two chief aims. Firstly, to improve Turkey's economic status to that of a high income country and make it more competitive internationally. Secondly, to further Turkey's



democratisation process. She also argued that the Homeland Security Bill corresponded to the tenets of EU countries.

Professor Can pointed to flaws in Turkey's previous constitutions since 1924, which he attributed partly to social prejudices and Kemalist aims



to restrain opposition. He argued that these problems had been partly addressed by the AK Party since 2002. Professor Can also expressed the party's aim to democratise Turkey to EU standards, adding that reform of the presidential role would help curtail authoritarianism with greater checks and balances.



# The Cyprus Dispute: Economic Crisis and Hydrocarbons

*With Mr Hüseyin Angolemli, MP for the Turkish Cypriot Social Democratic Party, Mr Cemal Ozyigit, Chairman of the TDP, and Ms Deniz Birinci, the Foreign Relations Secretary and the Deputy Secretary General of the Turkish Cypriot Social Democratic Party (TDP)*

*Hosted by Nick De Bois, Conservative MP for Enfield North Chaired by Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece*

*3 February 2015,  
House of Commons*

**T**DP Chairman Cemal Ozyigit opened the discussion by recapping the ongoing, start and stop negotiations that have characterised the peace process in Cyprus since the division of the island. Mr. Ozyigit touched on the February 2014 declaration announcing the renewal of unification negotiations, suspended since 2012, and the most significant dialogue about unification since a failed referendum in 2004. The exploration of natural gas fields in Cypriot waters adds another dimension to the negotiations, and Mr Ozyigit and Mr Angolemli



acknowledged the tensions between the two sides, including the dispatching of warships to the area by the Turkish navy, and controversy over Turkish hydrocarbon exploration. Ms Birinci commented on efforts to build dialogue between Greek and Turkish Cypriots through

community outreach initiatives such as bilingual television specials and football matches.

Their comments were followed by a question and answer session which focused on the concerns of members of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities in London.



# The Republican People's Party's (CHP) Political Outlook in the 'New Turkey'

*With Mr Faik Tunay, a Republican People's Party (CHP) MP from Istanbul and Dr Muhammet Çakmak, Sociologist of Religious Studies and Head of the CHP Parliamentary Group*

*Hosted by Eric Ollerenshaw, Conservative MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood  
Chaired by Aysegül Yesildaglar*

*2 December 2014,  
House of Commons*

Both Mr Tunay and Dr Çakmak disputed the AKP's claims of creating a 'new Turkey', one of AKP's central policy initiatives during the 2014 municipal and presidential elections. For Dr Çakmak, the phrase 'new Turkey' belongs to the CHP and the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, whose work in creating a modern society allowed for a stable democracy in the Middle East and is the cornerstone of Turkey's success. Dr Çakmak



concluded his comments by arguing that a return to CHP leadership will be needed in order to reenergise Turkish intellectual society, which will be necessary to counter what we described as the rising threat of Islamic radicalism in the country. Mr Faik Tunay saw the origins of 'new Turkey' in more recent history,



and credited the economically robust 'new Turkey' to former Prime Minister and President Turgut Ozal and his Motherland Party, whose neoliberal restructurings of the Turkish economy are the source of the country's economic vitality. Mr. Tunay credited the AKP with being more inclusive than the CHP had been historically, and suggested that historic military interventions had been detrimental to CHP popularity. He also expressed satisfaction at the way that the AKP had sustained and extended the economic reforms of the Ozal period. Tunay detailed what he believed is a dangerous increase in political polarisation in Turkey between supporters and opponents of the AKP, and finished by comparing the rule of the AKP to that of the system of military tutelage that had previously existed in Turkey, saying "The actors have changed, but the roles are the same".



# Battling the Censors: Freedom of Journalism in the 'New Turkey'

*With Mr Ahmet Sık and Mr Ismail Saymaz, both experienced journalists from Turkey*

*Hosted by John Woodcock, Labour MP for Barrow and Furness*

*Chaired by*

*Baroness Sarah Ludford, MEP*

*Translated by Zeynep Kosereisoglu*

*11 November 2014, Portcullis House*

This CEFTUS Westminster debate explored the challenges to freedom of press in Turkey from the point of view of journalists themselves. Both Mr Saymaz and Mr Sık have witnessed the constraints placed on journalists by press censorship and detailed the problems experienced by individuals and journalists in Turkey who find themselves restricted in their ability to speak freely.

Mr Saymaz focused on the struggles of Kurdish rights activists, relating a series of anecdotes of individuals detained in Turkey on terrorism charges for speaking Kurdish, participating in Newroz celebrations, being members of certain football clubs or presiding over funerals for members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Mr Saymaz argued that these activities were labeled as terrorism by the state in an effort to curb dissent against both the state and the ruling party.

Mr Sık then relayed his own experience of being arrested for his unfinished book *Imam'ın Ordu* (The Imam's Army), which explored allegations leveled against members



of the Hizmet movement (also known as the Gülen movement) of establishing a secret network inside the judiciary and police forces. This claim, dismissed at the time of his arrest, has since been embraced by the government, particularly President Recep Tayyip Erdogan,

following a public rift between the Hizmet movement and the AKP. Mr Sık concluded his comments with his view that despite the major blows the Gülen movement has suffered, it is still a very potent actor in Turkish politics and should not be written off as defeated.



# 'New Turkey': Democratisation Process and Challenges

*With Prof. Dr. Yasin Aktay, AK Party  
Vice Chairman in charge of Foreign  
Affairs*

*Hosted by Keith Vaz, Labour MP for  
Leicester and former EU Minister  
Chaired by Stephen Kinnock MP*

*6 November 2014,  
House of Commons*

Prof. Aktay analysed Turkey's transformation over the last decade and the AKP's endeavours to further democratise the country and the challenges that it has encountered. He began by emphasising the unprecedented electoral successes of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), calling this phenomenon a "silent revolution" and a political reformation inside Turkey. Prof. Aktay accounted for this success by explaining that the AKP government marked a break from previous governments who had imposed certain values on the people. Prof. Aktay pointed to AKP's improvement of state-Kurdish relations and the increased pluralism of the AKP



period in general. Referencing Turkey's history of military coups and the alleged 2002 "Sledgehammer" coup plot, Prof. Aktay characterised past military interventions in government as having done serious harm to the country's democracy, and framed the AKP's successful removal of the military from political affairs as a huge step forward for democracy in Turkey. He asserted that the



pluralistic achievements of the AKP are the cornerstone of the party's success and longevity and suggested that the AKP enjoyed far more legitimacy than any previous government. Prof. Aktay concluded by summarising the achievements of the AKP in higher education and in advancing the conditions for a real democracy in Turkey but acknowledged that Turkey still had many changes to make.



# 'New Turkey' in light of recent upheavals in the Middle East

*CEFTUS Roundtable with Dr Yasin Aktay*

*Hosted and chaired by Lord Richard Balfe*

*6 November 2014, House of Lords*

The Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) held an exclusive and off-the-record roundtable with Dr. Yasin Aktay, the AK Party Vice Chairman in charge of Foreign Affairs. The meeting was kindly hosted and chaired by Lord Richard Balfe.

The event was attended by academics, politicians and businessmen ranging from a wide range of backgrounds.

Dr. Aktay delivered a presentation on the development of Turkey under AK Party rule and the various different ways in which it has been involved in and cooperated with various different countries in the Middle East, especially in light of the current crisis in Iraq and Syria.



# Turkey, the Kurds and the Crisis in the Middle East

*With Bill Park of Kings College, Gareth Winrow Independent Analyst and Michael Stephens, Deputy Director of RUSI Qatar*

*Hosted by Jonathan Reynolds Labour (Co-op) MP for Stalybridge and Hyde Co-chaired by Baroness Hussein-Ece and Dr Ayla Gol of Aberystwyth University*

*27 October 2014, House of Commons*

In this meeting, Bill Park made an analysis of the role of Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in the crisis in the region. Mr Park reminded that both the United States and Iran had backed Al-Maliki government in Iraq despite the Turkish government's and Barzani's warnings of Al-Maliki's sectarian politics. Mr Park added that the US, Iran and other regional actors including Turkey had not foreseen the rise of jihadists in the region until the fall of Mosul and Sinjar beheadings of Americans in the summer. He argued that



the biggest mistake that Turkey made was to become so fixated on the overthrow of Assad and they remain to do so. Mr Park concluded his speech by indicating that ISIS is only the top of the iceberg in the region as the root of the issue is radical fundamentalism of Sunni and Shia militancy and the international coalition must defeat this ideology in order to stop emergence of more ISIS-like jihadists groups.



This was followed by Mr Gareth Winrow, who began by arguing that one cannot separate internal and external policies when it comes to Turkey and the Middle East. To demonstrate this, he outlined a number of questions pertinent to the current debate. He asked if Erdogan is somehow trying to gather Kurdish support within Turkey, and what the role of Abdullah Ocalan currently is, if his popularity is increasing or if there is the possibility that he might be bypassed. Other questions that, according to Mr Winrow, we should keep in mind are whether we will begin to see inter-Kurdish rivalry, whether Erdogan's commitment to seeing the overthrow of Assad is somehow linked to his approach to the Alevi community within Turkey and, more importantly, what the role of ISIS inside Turkey is.

Last speaker Michael Stephens began his speech by looking into the importance of Kobane, a city which was of little or no strategic or administrative importance, but which nonetheless has become the



centre of the struggle against ISIS. He argued that Turkey had fallen behind in this conflict because it did not realise the qualitative shift in the fight: both the YPG and ISIS realised that they were faced with an existential PR struggle as much as a strategic one. More importantly, Turkey failed to realise that with the appearance of the international coalition bent on defeating the Islamic State, there had also come a change in playing field. Turkey's decision to post tanks above the hills of Kobane strained its relations with its NATO allies and allowed Kobane to take on the image of Stalingrad. The emotional sentiment that was thus attached to the Kurdish city gave it strategic importance - it has become the line which the international coalition has drawn, and beyond which it will not allow the Islamic State to cross. Mr. Stephens went



on to argue that there is another aspect of the qualitative shift which Turkey failed to detect, this time concerning the PYD. He argued that the PYD had gone from being an organisation linked with the PKK and difficult to get a hold of, to hosting Western strategists and

military operators in the region; a shift which reflects the fact that the USA has now committed itself to the protection of Syria and Kurdistan for a real democracy in Turkey but acknowledged that Turkey still had many changes to make.

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# Turkey under Erdogan and Davutoglu

**CEFTUS Roundtable with  
Dr Soner Cagaptay**

**Hosted and chaired by Lord Tim  
Clement-Jones**

**13 October 2015,  
House of Lords**

The Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) held an exclusive and off-the-record roundtable discussion with Dr Cagaptay of the Washington Institute. The meeting was kindly hosted and chaired by Lord Tim Clement-Jones.

Academics, politicians and business people including Lord Richard Balfe, Vice-President of RUSI David Abrahams, independent analyst



Gareth Winrow, Dr Natalie Martin and Dr Katerina Dalacoura attended the event.

Dr Cagaptay gave a presentation on

Turkey's transformation under AKP rule and how the future of Turkey economically and socially will be shaped implications for the Kurdish peace process.

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# Dynamics of 'New Turkey': Domestic and Foreign Challenges

*With Dr Soner Cagaptay of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and journalist and author Mr Rusen Çakır*

*Hosted by Stephen Twigg, Labour Co-operative MP for Liverpool West Derby  
Chaired by Mr. Gareth Winrow, research analyst and consultant*

*14 October 2014,  
House of Commons*

This debate's keynote speakers were This was the first of CEFTUS' 'new Turkey' debate series, which examined issues in the 'new Turkey' proclaimed by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) after its victory in the 2014 presidential elections.

Dr Soner Cagaptay began his speech by reviewing Turkey's economic transformation under Erdogan's AKP, asserting that AKP-spurred growth can claim credit for creating a large and healthy middle class in Turkey. Switching to foreign policy, Dr Cagaptay tied Turkey's



recent economic expansion to its more active role in regional politics, but warned that regional upheaval is a major security concern, and that Turkey was only a soft power' country, leaving it incapable of intervening in matters essential to its security.

Mr Rusen Çakır focused his talk on Turkey's domestic politics. He explained that three powers run Turkey: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the governing AKP; the imam Fethullah Gülen and his community of followers; and Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan and the associated Kurdish political movement. Çakır explained how Erdogan and Gülen allied to eliminate the political power of the military before becoming enemies around 2012-2013. In contrast, Gülen and Ocalan have always been enemies, although the once influential Gülen has seen a massive reduction in his power, while Ocalan, through the peace



process, is now enjoying a certain extent of political legitimacy. He went on to detail the dynamics of the Gülen-AKP conflict, discussing that while the security forces have likely been effectively purged of Gülenists, many remain in the judiciary. Ultimately, however, it is unlikely that the Gülen movement will be able to regain the power and influence they once enjoyed.

# The Politics of Polarisation: Prospects for Democracy and the Rule of Law in Turkey

*With Mr Gareth Jenkins, author and analyst of Turkish affairs and Mr Güney Yıldız, BBC World Service Broadcast Journalist*

*Hosted by Andy Love, Labour MP for Edmonton*

*Chaired by Buket Bora, Centre for Turkey Studies*

*19 June 2014, Portcullis House*

Speakers discussed the politicisation of justice and the relationships between political actors in the months before Turkey's first democratic presidential elections in August 2014.

Mr Jenkins summarised the Ergenekon' and Balyoz' court cases, which targeted the members of an alleged conspiracy to topple the government, but were seen by government critics and international observers as relying on unreliable or fabricated evidence and as a pretext to silence opponents of the government. Despite the problems with the trials, more than 500



people were sentenced to time in prison, and appeals were ongoing. Mr Jenkins explained the suspected role of Gülen-affiliated police and prosecutors in the trials and the nature of their relationship with the AKP government, and the dynamics of the AKP-Gülen conflict after December 2013.

Mr Güney Yıldız spoke on the topic of political polarisation in Turkey and the role of Prime Minister



Erdogan in exploiting tensions for the benefit of his party. Mr Yıldız explained that polarisation, frequently embodied by the dichotomy between Kemalism and political Islam, has existed since the foundation of the country. Mr Yıldız offered his opinion that Erdogan was trying to increase polarisation in the country so that he had a base of militant supporters willing to fight for him should he be removed from office, democratically or otherwise. To illustrate this point, Mr. Yıldız pointed to Erdogan's calls for his supporters to take to the streets during the Gezi Park protests of 2013. Mr. Yıldız also offered his views on the peace negotiations between the government and the PKK.

Both speakers further commented on issues such as the inability of the Gezi Park movement to effect serious political change, the presidential elections of 2014, and the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and the implications for the Kurdish peace process.



# Democracy, Identity and Foreign Policy and Turkey's Inaugural Presidential Election

*With Professor Fuat Keyman of Sabanci University and Dr Natalie Martin of De Montfort University*

*Hosted by Anas Sarwar, Labour MP for Glasgow Central*

*Chaired by Dr. Alev Adil, University of Greenwich*

*4 June 2014, House of Commons*

Professor Fuat Keyman of Sabanci University and Dr Natalie Martin of De Montfort University spoke on politics in Turkey in the context of the upcoming presidential election in August and Turkey-EU relations.

Viewing the democratisation of Turkey as still in process, Professor Keyman outlined his views on current challenges to a healthy liberal democracy in Turkey. He pointed to a lack of an effective system of checks and balances and a weak, fragmented opposition and an increasingly polarised political climate as major hurdles that will need to be cleared in the future. Professor Keyman expressed his view that Turkish society is deeply divided and that party loyalty is



quite strong, saying that Turks rarely change their voting habits. Dr Natalie Martin focused her comments on Turkey-EU relations. In her view, the identity of the EU as a normative power has been positive in its influence on Turkish government conduct, although the quality of this relation has depended on the will of the Turkish government to implement reforms in compliance with EU standards. Furthermore, the high point of Turkish-EU relations from 2002-2004 had ended by 2006-2007, with a range of factors responsible,

including a slowdown of reform implementations in Ankara, as well as the Cyprus issue and the public rejections of Turkish EU membership by European leaders such as Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy. Dr. Martin argued that Turkey is, however, a valuable geostrategic asset for the EU in areas of migration, drug trafficking and relations with the Middle East. Ultimately, Dr Martin argued, full EU membership for Turkey seems unlikely and that a broader, exceptional status trade agreement is a more likely outcome.



# Global Democracy and Turkey - EU Relations

*With Mustafa Sarigul,  
Former Mayor of Sisli, Istanbul*

*Hosted by Keith Vaz, Labour MP  
for Leicester East Chaired by Ms.  
Aysegül Yesildaglar of Docklands  
Academy Translated by Andrew  
Penny*

*4 June 2014, House of Commons*

**M**r. Mustafa Sarigul was the mayor of Istanbul's Sisli district from 1999 to 2014, and ran as the Republican People's Party's (CHP) candidate for Istanbul's mayoralty in the March 2014 municipal elections. Mr. Sarigul focused his comments on what he called "Global Democracy", stressing the need for international economic competition as a way to increase employment and increase respect for labourers. He went on to describe his proposals for the strengthening of democratic checks and balances in Turkey, which include placing EU ascension as a national priority, increased respect for the rights and wishes of Kurdish and Alevi citizens, and redrafting the laws on elections and political parties.



# 2013 - 2014 Westminster Debates



'Destruction of the Near East and the Kurdistan Issue' with Turkish sociologist and Kurdologist Dr Ismail Besicki, chaired and hosted by Jeremy Corbyn MP, April 2014.



'Ergenekon and the Other Side of the Story' with Prof Dr Mehmet Altan, chaired by Analyst, Mr Jonathan Friedman and hosted by Alison Seaback MP, December 2013, Portcullis House.



'2013 Analysis of Democracy and Politics in Turkey' with Mrs Zeynep Banu Dalaman, Director of the Centre for Studies on Turkey (CST) of Istanbul Aydin University, Mr Bill Park of King's College, University of London and Dr Kerem Oktem of the University of Oxford, February 2014.



'Turkey's Democratisation and Reform Package and Peaceful Solution to the Kurdish Question' with Mr Altan Tan MP for Diyarbakir and Journalist, Mr Eyup Burc, chaired by Mr Bill Park of King's College, University of London and hosted by Lord Sheikh, October 2013, House of Lords.



'Turkey at a Tipping Point' with Dr Jenny White, chaired by Dr Pelin Kadercan of the University of Reading and hosted by Diane Abbott MP, February 2014.



'The Impacts of Democratisation and Reform Package in Turkey' with Mehmet Emin Ekmen, AKP Deputy Chairman of Party Organisation and former MP for Batman, chaired and hosted by Andy Love MP, October 2013.

# 2013 - 2014 Westminster Debates



The Peace Process in Turkey: What Future for a Plural Society in Turkey' with Abdurrahman Kurt former MP for Diyarbakir, Journalist and Human Rights Activist, chaired by Analyst, Siddik Bakir and hosted by Anas Sarwar MP, September 2013, Portcullis House.



Foreign Policy of Turkey during the EU Accession' with Former British Ambassador to Turkey Sir David Logan, Researcher and Writer Ziya Meral, Lord Sheikh and Mike Gapes MP, chaired by Lord Tim Clement Jones and hosted by Emma Reynolds MP, May 2013.



'Freedom of Expression in Turkey during the EU Accession Progress' with Prof Dr Yaman Akdeniz of Istanbul Bilgi University and Dr Kerem Altiparmak of Ankara University, chaired by Dr Omer Tekdemir of Durham University, hosted by Emma Reynolds MP, June 2013.



Turkey: Everything You Don't Want to Know' with Author and Journalist, Ms Ece Temelkuran, chaired by Dr Tunc Aybak of Middlesex University, hosted by Seema Malhotra MP, June 2013.



London's Kurdish and Turkish Communities: How do they Relate to Britain and to Turkey' with Dr Ipek Demir of University of Leicester and Dr Dogus Simsek of Regent's University London, chaired and hosted by Andy Love MP, June 2013.



Limits to Freedom of Expression in Turkey' with Journalist, Banu Guven, chaired by Journalist, Murat Ozcelik and hosted by Anas Sarwar MP, April 2013.



Religion, Society and Politics in a changing Turkey and the Hate Crime Legislation Campaign in Turkey' with Dr Binnaz Toprak MP for Istanbul and Dr Aykan Erdemir MP for Bursa, chaired by Alison McGovern MP and hosted by John Woodcock MP, March 2013.

# 2012 - 2013 Westminster Debates



'Turkey's Path to A New Constitution: Possibilities and Obstacles' with Professor Fuat Keyman of Sabanci University and Professor Levent Koker of Atilim University in December 2012



'Syria and Turkey's Foreign Policy' with Mike Gapes Labour MP for Ilford South, Columnist Kadri Gursel of Turkish daily Milliyet and Dr Bill Park of King's College in November 2012



'Religion, Society and Politics in a Changing Turkey' with Muslum Sari CHP MP for Istanbul, Guven Karatas Istanbul CHP Provincial Vice-President, Professor Dr Istar Gozaydin of Dogus University and Dr Bill Park of King's College in October 2012



Turkey's Foreign Policy: Syria and its Kurds and Turkish Modernization, the Consolidation of Democracy and the Cult of Ataturk' with Journalist Amberin Zaman of the Economist and HaberTurk and Journalist Hilal Kaplan of Turkish daily Yeni Safak in May 2012



'The Balcony of Authority: A Brief History of the New Regime in Turkey' with Author and Journalist Ece Temelkuran in May 2012



The Condition of Alawis under 10 years of AKP Government' with Dr Aykan Erdemir CHP MP for Bursa in May 2012



Power and Authority' with Journalist and Political Scientist Nuray Mert in September 2012

# 2011 - 2012 Westminster Debates



'Turkey's political reform process and its path towards a new constitution' with Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat, Former Deputy Leader of AKP in March 2012



'Democratization and Political Reforms in Turkey' with Veteran Journalist and Columnist Hasan Cemal of Turkish daily Milliyet and Columnist Bejan Batur of Turkish daily Zaman in January 2012



'Democratisation and Reforms in Turkey – What future for Cyprus?' with Dr Ali Bayramoglu, Columnist, TV Broadcaster and Academic in December 2011



'Leaving the mountains: How may the PKK lay down arms? Freeing the Kurdish question from violence' with Journalist and Columnist Cengiz Candar in October 2011

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# 2014 - 2015 Joint Forums



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CEFTUS and RUSI Roundtable

**Joint Forum:**

**“June 2015 General Elections and Turbulence in Politics of Turkey”**

CEFTUS and Centre for Kurdish Progress

**Joint Forum:**

**“Kurds in Syria: from Denial toward Self-Ruled Governance Model”**



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CEFTUS and SOAS Turkish Society

**Joint Forum:**

**“Experience of Women in Contemporary Turkey”**

CEFTUS and Centre for Kurdish Progress

**Joint Forum:**

**“Kobane Resistance and the future of Peace Process in Turkey”**



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CEFTUS and Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

**Joint Roundtable:**

**“Foreign Political Challenges that Turkey is Facing Today”**

CEFTUS and Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

**Joint Forum:**

**“Turkey and its Turbulent Neighbours”**



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CEFTUS and Centre for Kurdish Progress

**Joint Forum:**

**“The Crisis in Iraq: Unexpected Alliances, Western Intervention and the Question of Kurdistan”**

# CEFTUS and RUSI Roundtable

## June 2015 General Elections and Turbulence in Politics of Turkey

*With Professor Istar Gozaydin,  
Professor of Law and Politics at Gediz  
University*

*Chaired by Michael Stephens of Royal  
United Services Institute*

*1 September 2015, RUSI*

Professor Istar Gozaydin gave her analysis on Turkey's June 2015 elections. Professor Gozaydin stated that the June 2015 elections in Turkey were neither free nor fair, and accused the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government of having used tactics such as intimidation, and of having been especially harsh on figures from within the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), alongside unfairly using state resources for the AKP campaign.

She argued that AKP had lost part of its voter base and therefore its



overall majority in parliament, and could not win the two-thirds majority which would be required for constitutional changes.

Professor Gozaydin continued noting that this election was the first time since 2002, that the AKP though finishing first with the most votes, could not sustain its parliamentary majority. She blamed AKP policies for the country's economic difficulties, and stated that Turkish President and leading figure within the AKP Erdogan's attempts at self-aggrandisement meant that the Kurdish and Armenian issues struggled to be resolved.

She also stated that around 66% of voters asked see Erdogan as increasingly authoritarian and oppressive and that 70% would have been satisfied with a coalition government. She closed predicting that AKP will not get a great deal more votes in the next election this coming November.



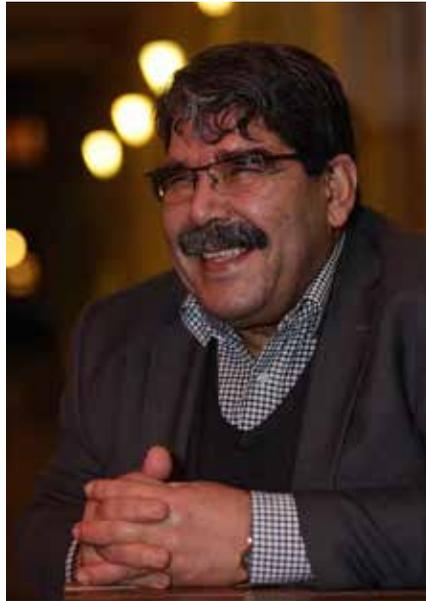
# CEFTUS and Centre for Kurdish Progress Kurds in Syria: from Denial toward Self-Ruled Governance Model

*With keynote speaker Mr Salih Muslim, co-chair of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), other speakers included Mr Michael Stephens of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Dr David L. Phillips of Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Dr David Graeber of the London School of Economics (LSE) and Dr Johanna Riha.*

*Chaired by Dr Tunc Aybak of Middlesex University Hosted by John Woodcock Labour MP for Knowsley*

*25 March 2015, House of Commons*

The Centre for Turkey Studies in partnership with the Centre for Kurdish Progress held a public forum with over 200 guests, at which Mr Salih Muslim, PYD co-chair among others discussed



Kurdish governmental organisation in Syria since the start of the conflict. The other speakers were Mr Michael Stephens of the Royal

United Services Institute (RUSI), Dr David L. Phillips of Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Dr David Graeber of the London School of Economics (LSE) and Dr Johanna Riha.

Mr Muslim stated that the uprising in 2011 presented the PYD and Kurds in Rojava, Syria with an opportunity and necessity to organise themselves politically, both to survive and reach the democratic ideals they sought. Mr Muslim continued, explaining that the PYD had reached out to other ethnic and religious groups in the area following the successful defence of Kobane, and aimed to establish an autonomous canton, where gender equality was a key attribute. He also expressed the view that ISIS is a threat not only to the Kurds in the



immediate vicinity, but also to the West.

Mr Stephens argued that the Western idea of the nation-state as an intellectual norm meant that many observers in the West struggled to comprehend the Rojava canton. He stated that this was why Western observers have been slow to react to the self-government model, and why despite successfully defeating ISIS the PYD had not received support from the West. Dr David Graeber hailed the PYD as more committed to democratic values than the West and any others he has seen. Dr Johanna Riha shared the findings of her field study in Syria and noted the urgent need for humanitarian aid alongside the difficulties of transporting supplies to those in need through Northern Kurdistan and Turkey. Dr Riha argued that given its



emergence as a democratic system at a grassroots level, the Rojava canton could potentially serve as a model for the wider region. Dr David L. Philips, who has closely followed the Kurdish issue for 25 years,



argued that Turkish lobbyists and politicians had negatively distorted the image of the PYD, and for that reason, US policy makers had not held talks with the movement.



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# CEFTUS and SOAS Turkish Society

## Experience of Women in Contemporary Turkey

*With keynote speaker Professor Binnaz Toprak, CHP MP for Istanbul, other speakers included Ms Arwa Ibrahim of Middle East Eye and Dr Funda Ustek of Goldsmiths, University of London.*

*Chaired by Dr Ayca Cubukcu of the London School of Economics (LSE)  
Hosted by George Howarth MP*

*23 March 2015, Portcullis House*

The Centre for Turkey Studies held a joint forum discussing the experience of women in contemporary Turkey. CHP Istanbul MP, Professor Binnaz Toprak stated that women in Turkey are often victims of deep-seated problems urgently in need of attention. She claimed that various governments including the AKP administration have much to answer for on women's present situations. She argued that at the core of this issue is the perception of women in Turkey as members of families rather than of society, and an expectation of



them to accept family rules and punishments rather than to receive state protection as law abiding citizens. She argued that as a result of this, police and judicial officials often disregard women's concerns and complaints. She added that the Turkish cabinet only had a single female member who was Minister of Family and Social Policy, confirming her above point about women and families in Turkey. She did state however, that a grassroots movement was working to protect women in the Kurdish regions.



of violence in family situations. Ms Arwa Ibrahim on the other hand, argued that women in Turkey were often in the public eye, and that many women were active on gender equality among other issues affecting them. She stated however that 40% of women in Turkey across the entire society of various backgrounds had experienced harassment. She also noted that women's bodies have previously played a canvas for political "culture wars", for example on the headscarf debate.



Dr Funda Ustek, agreeing with Professor Toprak with regards to women's confinement to the family sphere, presented the findings of her study on women's informal employment in Turkey. She stated that over 70% of Turkey's women are working despite far lower figures in the labour market because of the often informal status of their employment. She added that single, widowed and unmarried women are at the highest risk of poverty, isolation and harassment, but noted that many women were also at risk



# CEFTUS and Centre for Kurdish Progress Kobane Resistance and the Future of Peace Process in Turkey

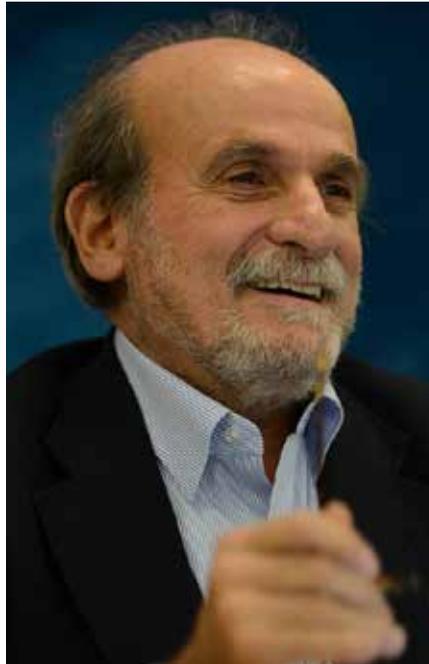
*With Mr Ertugrul Kurkçu, Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) MP*

*Chaired by Wayne David Labour MP for  
Caerphilly*

*Hosted by Fabian Hamilton Labour MP  
for Leeds North East*

*18 November 2014, Portcullis House*

**M**r Ertugrul Kurkçu's talk focused on recent developments and challenges in the Kurdish peace process. Mr Kurkçu began by identifying the three distinct elements that represent the Kurdish side of the negotiations: Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned founder of the militant Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK); the Group of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK), a collection of political and armed groups supporting increased Kurdish autonomy; and Mr Kurkçu's own Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), currently the main Kurdish interest party active in Turkish politics.



Mr Kurkçu reported that negotiations between the Kurdish elements and the Turkish government had resumed on Monday 17th November 2014 after a month long hiatus. The Kurdish groups had suspended the talks on 6th October 2014 and

called for demonstrations against the Turkish government in protest against the government's inaction during the Siege of Kobane in Syria, in which Kurdish militants battled fighters from the Islamic State (IS). The demonstrations, which occurred across the whole of Turkey but primarily in Turkey's Kurdish south-east centred in the largely Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, were the deadliest street protests in Turkey for many years.

In reference to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's remarks on the relationship between the Kurdish peace process and the crisis in Kobane, Mr Kurkçu argued that Kurds in Turkey could not negotiate for peace whilst their fellows were fight the brutality of IS across the border. Mr Kurkçu stressed the need for Kurds to defend themselves against threats posed to their interests by IS.

Mr Kurkçu emphasised Kobane's role as an independent, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, secular model for other Kurds. He also detailed the plan proposed by Ocalan, which calls for a confederation of autonomous Kurdish regions (such as the extant Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq) in Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran. He expressed confidence that the HDP would break the 10% limit of the vote which a political party must surpass to gain any seats in the assembly and he predicted that support for Ocalan's plan is also likely to increase in the near future.



# CEFTUS and Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Joint Roundtable Foreign Political Challenges that Turkey is Facing Today

*With Prof Dr Yasin Aktay AKP MP  
and former Vice Chairman of AKP in  
charge of Foreign Affairs*

*Chaired by Jonathan Eyal, International  
Director and International Studies  
Director of RUSI*

*7 November 2014, RUSI*

Prof Aktay opened the discussion with a presentation on Turkey's foreign policy and Turkey's relations with its neighbours. Prof Aktay stated that the AK Party's foreign policy has aimed to achieve zero problems with neighbours since it came to power in 2002 and that this policy was successful up until the Syrian conflict. He evidenced the policy's success by sighting the opening of new embassies in the Middle East and across Africa and the momentum gained in accession talks with the European Union.



In regards to the ongoing Syrian conflict, Prof Aktay remarked that relations between Turkey and Syria were on good terms but that, similarly to the Egyptian case, the Syrian regime had not respected the choices of its people. Prof Aktay also asserted that Turkey is and will continue to be actively engaged with creating a solution to remove the Islamic State (IS) from the region.



# CEFTUS and Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Turkey and its Turbulent Neighbours

*With Dr Soner Cagaptay the Beyer Family Fellow and Director of the Turkish Research Programme at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*

*Chaired by Jonathan Eyal, International Director and International Studies Director of RUSI*

**15 October 2014, RUSI**

**D**r Soner Cagaptay argued that Turkey's foreign policy principle of zero problems with neighbours has proved unsuccessful. For Dr Cagaptay, Turkey's failure is apparent in its role in the Syrian conflict, where it has failed in its ambition to generate itself as a regional power and exert its influence on the Syrian leadership. He explained that Turkey lacks hard power in the form of intelligence and hardware and that this is the cause of its unsuccessful foreign policy in the region.

Dr Soner Cagaptay identified two urgent issues facing Turkey: Syria and the Kurds. Dr Cagaptay asserted that Turkey's ultimate strategy in Syria and in the region is to oust Syrian President Al Assad and that Turkey seeks to ensure that the international coalition considers this aim in their fight against the Islamic State (IS).

In relation to the Kurdish issue, Dr Cagaptay argued that Turkey does not want to deal with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and affiliated Democratic Union Party (PYD) for three reasons. Firstly, Turkey still regards the PKK as a terrorist organisation despite ongoing peace



talks, secondly the PKK did not support Turkey's policy of ousting Al Assad and never directly targeted the Syrian regime, and finally Turkey wants to weaken the PKK's hand on the negotiations table. Dr Cagaptay indicated that Turkey would like to turn the PKK into a security client like it did with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) whilst also noting that Kurds in Iraq wanted to maintain good relations with Turkey.



Dr Cagaptay demonstrated the interrelated nature of the Syrian and Kurdish issues by explaining how the Syrian regime had allowed the Kurdish network to remain in Syria even after the capture of PKK leader Ocalan in 1999. He argued that the impetus behind the peace process in Turkey came from a desire to prevent a new surge in the Kurdish network of Syria attacking Turkey after 2011. He added that Turkey does not trust the PYD and fears a PKK-PYD canton in Syria.

In conclusion, Dr Cagaptay indicated two priorities for Turkey. One is to address the growing number of Syrian refugees in Turkey who will most likely not return to Syria. It is for this reason that the Turkish government is demanding buffer zones to be established in Syria to stop the flow of refugees into Turkey. The other priority is the peace talks with the Kurds and the establishment of effective relations with the Kurdish actors in the region. Likely to increase in the near future.

# CEFTUS and Centre for Kurdish Progress

## The Crisis in Iraq: Unexpected Alliances, Western Intervention and the Question of Kurdistan

*With Ms Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman  
Kurdistan Regional Government High  
Representative to the UK,  
Dr Liam Fox Former Secretary of State  
for Defence and Conservative MP for  
North Somerset,  
Dr Alan Semo UK Representative of the  
Democratic Union Party (PYD),  
Lord Tim Clement-Jones, Lord Maurice  
Glasman,  
Mr Bill Park of Kings' College,  
Mr Patrick Cockburn author and  
journalist,  
Mr Harvey Morris author and  
journalist,  
Ms Sundus Saqi Iraqi Turkmen Front  
Representative UK,  
Mr Jason McCartney Conservative MP  
for Colne Valley*

*Chaired by Mr Gary Kent, Administrator  
of the All Party Parliamentary Group  
for the Kurdistan Region, Iraq  
Hosted by Meg Hillier MP for Hackney  
South and Shoreditch*

*9 September 2014,  
House of Commons*



Meg Hillier MP opened the debate by urging the West to act against the crisis in Iraq and deliver tangible support to the Kurds, placing their struggle for independence and recognition higher on the political agenda.

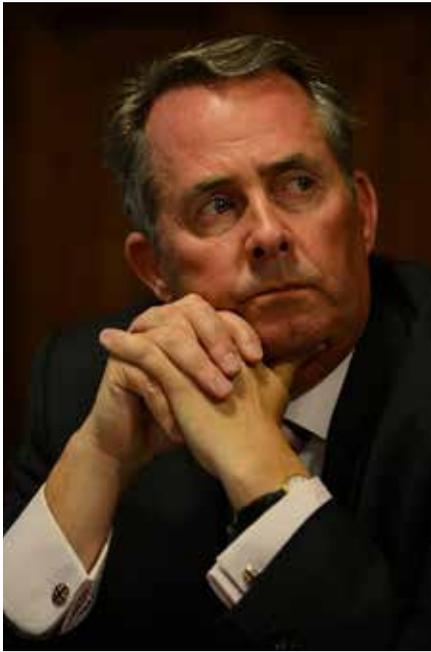
Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman asserted that there is a genocide taking place in Iraq against the Yazidi people. She urged for assistance to solve the humanitarian crisis in the Kurdistan region which is experiencing an ever increasing influx of refugees as quickly as possible. In response to a question from the audience she argued that the only solution to this crisis is to transform Iraq into a federation of three states, otherwise Iraq has no future. She also recommended that the Turkish government seal its borders to prevent more terrorist from joining the Islamic State (IS) and provide more humanitarian aid to the Kurdistan region.

Dr Liam Fox MP proposed military intervention to deal with the threat of IS and stressed the need to cut off IS's funding from oil sales on the black market and donations from groups and individuals in the region. He called for the UK to act decisively, quickly and, if necessary, ruthlessly'.

Dr Alan Semo added that he would like to support the airstrike and agreed with earlier speakers that if we did not act immediately the threat would spread still further. He asserted that the joint Kurdish forces are capable and efficient and could defeat IS if given the right support from the West.

Liberal Democrat Peer Lord Tim Clement Jones said that the focus on dealing exclusively with the





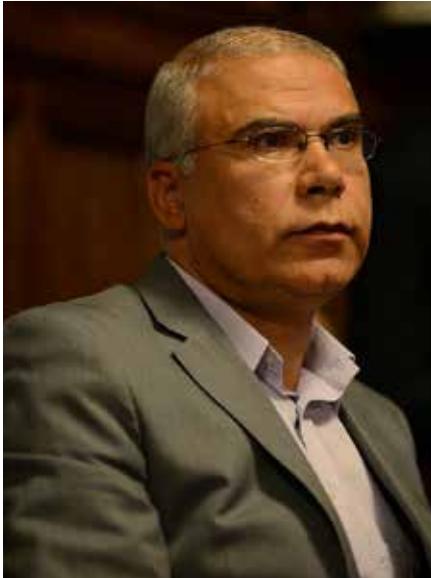
Baghdad government up to this point was a grave mistake. He called for the UK along with the rest of the world to treat the Kurdish people and the Kurdish Regional Government as essential allies in implementing a strategy to defeat or at least minimise the threat of IS.

Labour Life Peer Lord Maurice Glasman stressed the importance of looking towards the Shia and Iran with new eyes. He emphasised the necessity to build reciprocal relationships rather than imperial ones and to create respectful



military cooperation with the Kurdish forces. Mr Bill Park asserted that the West should rethink its relationships with the PKK, the PYD and even Syria's Assad and that a better understanding of the region and of IS was necessary in order to find an enduring solution.

Mr Patrick Cockburn attributed the rise of IS and the destabilisation of Iraq to the events that took place in Syria after 2011. He called for practical decisions and actions to be taken, and emphasised the need for pressure to be put on Turkey to close



off its border to IS.

Mr Harvey Morris was pessimistic about the future of Iraq and strongly opposed cooperation with Assad and the Syrian regime. He argued that the new government in Baghdad will fail to respect the rights of Kurds and urged that the UK deal with the Kurdish Regional Government directly. Ms Sundus Saqi added that it is not only the Kurds but also Turkmen who suffer from IS's brutality which is a problem for all minority groups in Iraq, regardless of their faith or ethnicity.



## 2013 - 2014 Joint Forums



The Centre for Turkey Studies, the London Kurdish Institute and SOAS Kurdish Society Joint Forum 'Turkey's Kurdish Question Past Present and Future' with Professor Christine Allison of University of Exeter and Dr Ismail Besikci, chaired by Ms Rosa Burc chair of SOAS Kurdish Society, April 2014, the House of Commons and School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.



The Centre for Turkey Studies and Refugee Workers Cultural Association (RWCA) Joint Forum 'Kurdish Issue in Turkey and Problems of Democratic Participation' with Professor Busra Ersanli, chaired by Ibrahim Avcil of the RWCA, April 2013, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.



The Centre for Turkey Studies and SOAS Kurdish Society Joint Forum 'The Gezi Spirit and its Impacts: Recent Developments in Turkey' with Dr Omer Tekdemir of Durham University and author Mr Ihsan Eliacik, chaired by consultant Sara Whyatt, December 2013, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.



The Centre for Turkey Studies and Ertegun House (University of Oxford) Joint Forum 'Freedom of Expression in Turkey during the EU Accession Progress' with Professor Yaman Akdeniz of Istanbul Bilgi University and Dr Kerem Altiparmak of Ankara University, June 2013, Ertegun House University of Oxford.

## 2012 - 2013 Joint Forums



Centre for Turkey Studies and Politics Exposed (LMU) Joint Public Forum 'What the eye doesn't see: a national discourse on urban intervention, and Istanbul's changing landscape' with Mr Atakan Guven of Space Syntax Ltd and Mr Omer Cavusoglu of London School of Economics and Political Science, February 2013, London Metropolitan University.



Centre for Turkey Studies and International Forum for Democracy and Peace (IFDP) Joint Westminster Forum 'Can an emerging middle class offer a new order and the role of Turkish youth' with founder and chairman of IFDP, Mr Tuna Beklevic, January 2013, hosted by Chris Williamson MP, the House of Commons.



Centre for Turkey Studies and Chatham House Joint Forum 'Turkey and the Arab World: Ambition and Evolution' with Director General of the SETA foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research Mr Taha Ozhan, Columnist Ms Lale Kemal of daily Today's Zaman, Taraf and Jane's Defence Weekly, Director of the Istanbul Policy Centre Dr Fuat Keyman and Associate Fellow at Chatham House Mr Fadi Hakura, June 2012, Chatham House.



Centre for Turkey Studies and Institute for Strategic Dialogue 'Talking Turkey: Can Europe get on the same page?' with former Downing Street Chief of Staff Mr Jonathan Powell, Chief Executive Officer and Director of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) Mr Sasha Havlicek, ISD Senior Adviser Mr Ivan Krastev, Senior Adviser at Gatehouse Ms Ann Wyman, and author and journalist Mr Cengiz Candar, April 2012, Institute for Strategic Dialogue



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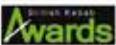
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The Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) is an independent and non partisan organisation inaugurated in April 2011.



CEFTUS is a civil society organisation and we would like to do more of what we have done so far; organise debates and community gatherings with keynote speakers from Turkey and the UK, nevertheless, we would like to organise them better and we do need your support to carry on our work.

Our audience has been a mixture of communities with different backgrounds. We brought keynote speakers of politicians, academics, journalists and business people from Turkey, Britain and beyond together with their counterparts.

CEFTUS received cross-party support as several MPs and Lords and Baronesses have kindly hosted and participated in our debates in British Parliament.

**ceftus.org**

Thanks to our non-partisan and objective approach, people from diverse political views have come together to meet and discuss issues.

CEFTUS welcomed MPs and members of all major parties in Turkey including the Justice and Development Party (AKP), Republican People's Party (CHP) and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), over the last years.

CEFTUS believes that only establishing dialogue between individuals, ethnic and religious groups, political ideologies and countries would bring ideas together to seek solutions for domestic and international problems.

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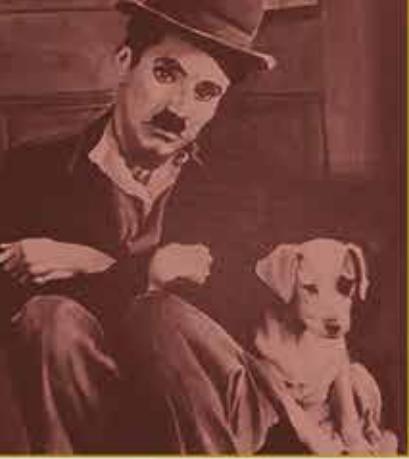


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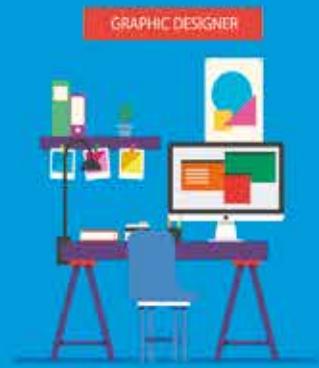
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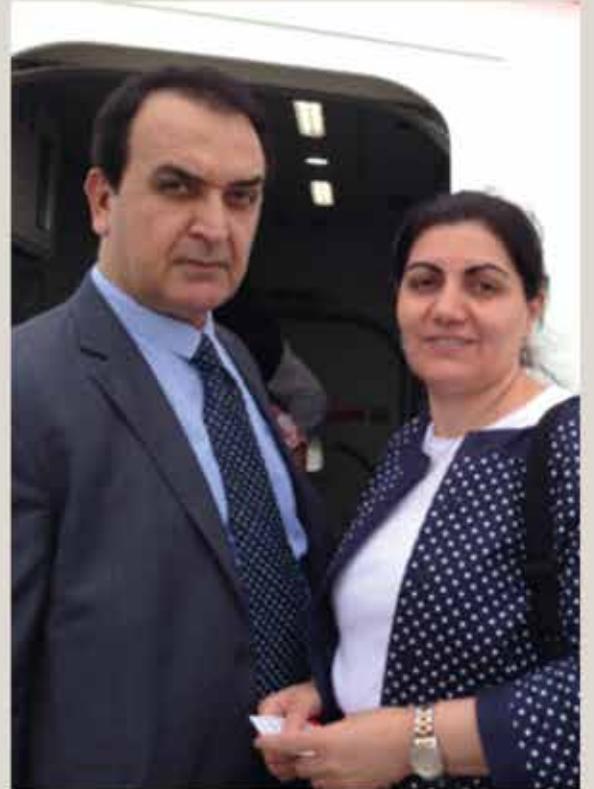
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**IKA EPoS Yeni Raf Fiyatlama El Terminali ile  
Ürünlerin Üzerine Fiyat Vurmaktan Kurtulun.**



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