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**Centre for Turkey Studies**

Building bridges between Turkey and the UK



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**Ibrahim Dogus**  
 Founder & Director  
 Centre for Turkey Studies

“ CEFTUS has no political bias – our role is to work with whichever party is in office in Turkey and in the UK. Any government must uphold the rule of law, the principles of democracy, and the primacy of human rights. It must respect diversity, and protect the minority communities living within its borders. ”

We established Centre for Turkey Studies five 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 Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities, 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 have enjoyed, at the highest levels of business and politics, from across the communities represented here today.

Centre for Turkey Studies is the only neutral platform where Turkish and Kurdish political leaders and thinkers, from across the political spectrum, can come to attend events, speak, and engage in conversation.

As you know, politics in Turkey is polarised, and at times abrasive. Yet we manage to bring senior figures from all political parties in Turkey together for a mature debate.

In this, Centre for Turkey Studies is unique. No other organisation does what we do. The packed meetings and seminars, and the high-level speakers we heard, are testament to the success of the Centre for Turkey Studies.

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.

There have been Turkish and Kurdish people living in England since the 1500s. Today, as many as 400,000 people can claim Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot origin 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. It is a desperate situation, and shows no signs of abating,

Turkey has taken in nearly two million refugees from the Syrian conflict, far more than European governments which have failed to act fast enough. Against the backdrop of this humanitarian crisis, and escalating violence including suicide bombings in Gaziantep, Ankara, Suruc and Diyarbakir the Turkish and Kurdish people are adamant to build a peaceful and democratic country.

CEFTUS has no political bias – our role is to work with whichever party is in office in Turkey and in the UK. Any government must uphold the rule of law, the principles of democracy, and the primacy of human rights. It must respect diversity, and protect the minority communities living within its borders.

Of course, 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 any other institution.

We pay for our office, staff, flights and hotels for guest speakers, our website and marketing, all for around £50,000 a year.

We make every pound go a long way!

Of course to be sustainable, we need regular donations and financial support, so I hope you and your organisation will consider becoming a partner.

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 interest in Turkey. It reflects the strategic importance of Turkey, as a democratic and secular state in a region which is turbulent and unstable, as a home to both Turkish and Kurdish peoples. It reflects the real desire of British people to understand more about Turkish and Kurdish society, its diverse communities and its vibrant 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.

Thank you for your continuous support.



**Theresa May**  
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

Prime Minister Theresa May, sends her apologies for not being able to attend CEFTUS Gala. Her support message will be published online.

“ I am looking forward to joining you at the 5th annual CEFTUS reception and campaigning with you to support the important work you do in strengthening Anglo-Turkish relations. ”

“I am pleased that so many people support CEFTUS, it is a great and important international campaign. Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot people make an enormous contribution to our economy and our society and both Turkey and its people have done so much over recent years to support refugees

fleeing from Syria and other war torn areas.

I am looking forward to joining you at the 5th annual CEFTUS reception and campaigning with you to support the important work you do in strengthening Anglo-Turkish relations.”



**Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP**  
Leader of the Labour Party



**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London

“ I therefore welcome initiatives that enable discussions and create a better understanding of relations between Londoners, including those of Turkish and Kurdish heritage, and that unique part of the world. ”

“Since 2011, the Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) has played a key role in building important bridges between the UK and Turkey. I’m pleased that London is home to sizeable Turkish and Kurdish communities, and CEFTUS’ panel discussions, speaking events and round table conversations, create an important space for dialogue and analysis of issues affecting Turkey and that region.

with London’s diverse communities to build greater cohesion and social integration. I therefore welcome initiatives that enable discussions and create a better understanding of relations between Londoners, including those of Turkish and Kurdish heritage, and that unique part of the world.

I’d like to wish CEFTUS continuing success with its endeavours, and trust that its forthcoming gala will be enjoyed by all who attend.”

As Mayor, I’m determined to work



**Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP**  
First Minister of Scotland

“ I welcome the work of the Centre for Turkey Studies and their achievements and hope that they continue to provide such an important forum for discussion.”

Scotland and Turkey have strong links. Our two countries continue to build our relationship in a number of key areas. In addition to our business links, we also have academic partnerships which exist between Higher Education establishments in Scotland and Turkey. We value the contribution the Turkish and Kurdish community makes to Scotland’s culture and economy.

The Centre for Turkey Studies provides a forum for discussion with a range of stakeholders to bring both countries together, which promotes bilateral relationships between the United Kingdom and Turkey. I welcome the work of the Centre for Turkey Studies and their achievements and hope that they continue to provide such an important forum for discussion.



**Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP**  
Her Majesty’s Attorney General for England and Wales (2010-2014)

“Sustaining and promoting good Anglo-Turkish relations is an essential component in promoting a free, democratic and pluralist world.

In this context, I very much want to congratulate the Centre of Turkey Studies, CEFTUS, on its fourth anniversary and congratulate it on the work it has done to develop relationships between the people of Turkey and the United Kingdom. By engaging a range of stakeholders and institutions, CEFTUS helps promote an understanding that is so important in the world at present.”



**Emily Thornberry,**  
Labour MP for Islington South and Finsbury and Sahdow Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

“I would like to commend CEFTUS for its invaluable efforts in cultivating strong relations between Turkey and the UK. The organisation’s debates, roundtables and community events provide a vital opportunity for people from a variety of backgrounds to share ideas and make connections, allowing cultural and economic bonds to flourish. I know from my own constituency what an essential social, cultural and economic contribution the Turkish, Kurdish, and Turkish Cypriot communities make to British life, and wish CEFTUS every success for the year ahead.”

“ Centre for Turkey Studies continue to build bridges between the UK and Turkey ”

“Turkish and Kurdish communities across the UK have made significant social, cultural and economic contributions to our societies over many decades. In a challenging time for international relations, it is critical that organisations like the Centre for Turkey Studies continue to build bridges between the UK and Turkey, promoting better understanding and communications between our two great countries.”



**Tim Farron**  
Liberal Democrat MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale and Leader of the Liberal Democrats



**Caroline Lucas**  
Green Party MP for Brighton Pavilion

“ We need expert sources like CEFTUS to shed light on what’s really happening. Good luck for the coming months and years.”

“I congratulate the Centre for Turkey Studies on five years of crucial work. With global politics in such a state of flux – and Turkey in particular going through extremely challenging times – we need expert sources like CEFTUS to shed light on what’s really happening. Good luck for the coming months and years.”



**Sajid Javid**  
Conservative MP for Bromsgrove and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

“I would like to send my warmest congratulations to the Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) on their 5th anniversary and to the organisation for its vital role in strengthening Anglo-Turkish relations. The British-Turkish community contribute greatly to the social and economic life of the UK and it’s great to see the work of the CEFTUS in helping to achieve this. The UK and Turkey cooperate on a number of important priorities including international policy, trade and investment, energy and counter-terrorism. I welcome the work of the CEFTUS to help develop and improve the relationship between the UK and Turkey, for more security and prosperity.”

“The British-Turkish relationship is very important. Turkey is a strong ally on the edge of Europe, and increased cooperation helps secure an increasingly insecure region.

We should be proud of our shared heritage. The work of CEFTUS over the years has helped make parliamentarians more aware of what is happening in the region, and their work is invaluable. I would like to thank Ibrahim and the entire team at CEFTUS for what they have done, and wish them good luck on another successful five years.”



**Virendra Sharma**  
Labour MP Ealing, Southall



**Gerry Adams TD**  
President of Sinn Féin

“ Only by respecting the mandates of all the people in Turkey can a credible conflict resolution process be established. Central to all of this is inclusive dialogue. We believe the contribution of CEFTUS is a positive factor.”

“Sinn Féin supports the efforts being made by CEFTUS to uphold human rights and equality for all Turkish and Kurdish citizens. Only by respecting the mandates of all the people

in Turkey can a credible conflict resolution process be established. Central to all of this is inclusive dialogue. We believe the contribution of CEFTUS is a positive factor.”



**Baroness Harris of Richmond,**  
Deputy Speaker (Lords)

“May I congratulate CEFUS on its 5th Anniversary and for the work it does to promote dialogue between the UK and Turkey. CEFUS plays a crucial role in bringing together the interests of the different communities – Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriots – who have brought such a wonderful cultural, economic and social benefit to life in the UK.

We need those voices even more in such a turbulent world.”



**Sir David Amess MP**  
Conservative MP for Southend West

“I congratulate CEFTUS on the work which they do. Undoubtedly Turkey is an extremely important country and one which the UK needs to have a better understanding of. That is where the Centre for Turkey Studies is of enormous importance.”

“ I praise the work of CEFTUS and Ibrahim Dogus in creating a better understanding...”

“Turkey is a great nation and vitally important in the development of relations between Europe and the Middle East. It can also be a key participant to improve relations and understanding between Christian and Moslem nations. I praise the work of CEFTUS and Ibrahim Dogus in creating a better understanding of Turkey and Turkish Cyprus throughout the United Kingdom.”



**Lord Kilclooney**  
Independent Cross Bencher and Member of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK/ Turkey.



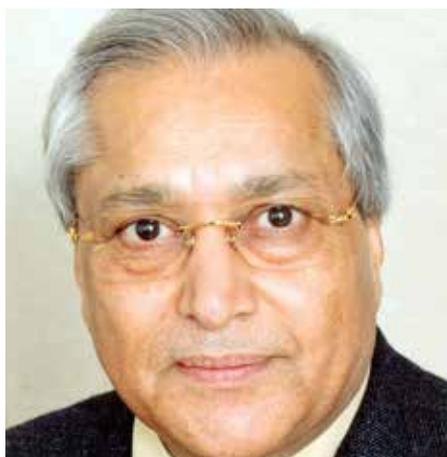
**Angus Robertson MP**  
Scottish National Party MP for Moray and Shadow SNP Westminster Group Leader

“As a forum for debate and discussion, I welcome the work of The Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) in deepening understanding of Turkey and its relationship with the UK. “Fast moving political events in Turkey and the surrounding region serve to increase focus on these relationships and highlight the importance of understanding the political, social, economic and defence context. CEFTUS’ work to promote this understanding and stimulate debate is therefore welcome. I wish CEFTUS all the best as they build on their successes through the various interesting events they have planned for the year ahead.”

“Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, who has had a long association with Turkey, is delighted to express her support for the Centre for Turkey Studies on the occasion of its 5th Anniversary. CEFTUS has been responsible for a formidable number of events in these five years. Parliamentarians, academics, journalists, business people and diverse representatives of many communities throughout the United Kingdom unite in congratulating this admirable organisation on effectively building bridges between Turkey and the United Kingdom. We look forward to the next five years of sustained achievement.”



**Baroness Nicholson**  
of Winterbourne, Liberal Democrat Peer



**Dr Rami Ranger CBE**  
Chairman of Sun Mark Ltd

“ The award dinners are not only inspirational but also showcase the achievements of Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot businesses in Britain. ”

“I am delighted to send a message of support to the Centre of Turkey Studies for the sterling work it is doing in forging closer relations between the people of United Kingdom and Turkey. Its Chairman Mr Ibrahim Dogus works tirelessly to connect with people of every walk of life and in turn has made the Centre a force in the UK.

Its cultural and business activities are generating better understanding of Turkey and its rich culture in the UK. The Centre is also helping to connect the vibrant Turkish diaspora to its country of origin. The award dinners are not only inspirational but also showcase the achievements of Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot businesses in Britain.”

“ The Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) has been instrumental in strengthening ties between the UK and Turkey. ”

“The Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) has been instrumental in strengthening ties between the UK and Turkey. The UK’s Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot diaspora is one of the country’s most prominent, hugely contributing to the UK both economically and culturally, and CEFTUS’ efforts to improve dialogue between the two countries should be applauded.

“The UK and Turkey have a long and illustrious history and, with our shared membership of important

international bodies - such as the G20 and NATO - as well as Turkey’s position as the link between Europe and Asia, it is vital that Anglo-Turkish relations continue to flourish.

“Political dialogue is sorely needed to solve some of the most pressing international issues facing the world today, from the conflict in Syria, to the resettlement of refugees from the Middle East, and I welcome the work that CEFTUS undertakes on the important issues facing both Turkey and the UK.”



**Lord Karan Bilimoria of Chelsea**  
CBE, DL Crossbench Peer and Chairman and Founder of Cobra Beer

“ It is relied upon as a trusted source of information by many MPs including myself. ”



**John F Spellar MP**  
Labour MP for Warley and former Minister of State for Northern Ireland

“The Centre for Turkey Studies has since its inauguration in 2011 become an invaluable source of information for those interested in Turkey and the region. Its events – often in partnership with leading Westminster think-tanks, giving

voice to a plurality of expert opinions – go well beyond the headlines in explaining complex and nuanced issues. It is relied upon as a trusted source of information by many MPs including myself.”



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

“ I welcome their continued work on significant issues important to both Turkey and the UK. ”

“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.”



**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.”

“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.”



**Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP**  
Former Secretary of State for  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

“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. “



**Boris Johnson**  
Former Mayor of London

“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.”



**Yvette Cooper MP**  
Labour MP



**Kate Osamor MP**  
Labour Party for Edmonton

“ CEFTUS does an important job in bringing people from a range of backgrounds together to build stronger links between the UK & Turkey. ”

“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.”



**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 Nick Clegg MP**  
Former Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Democrats Party

“There is a highly entrepreneurial Turkish community here in London with many thriving businesses that continue to grow and reinvest.

CEFTUS does an important job of promoting this contribution and tonight sees us celebrate this, displaying just how CEFTUS are able to bring together people from a variety of backgrounds who share an interest in Turkey’s development and its relationship with the UK.”

“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.”



**Lord Mohamed Sheikh**  
House of Lords

“ Through the work of our Westminster and Brussels’ based team, in partnership with Labour Friends of Turkey, we will continue to push for progress on this front and advance the case for Turkey’s EU membership, as well as advancing a deeper understanding of Turkey and its relationship with the UK.”

“Our team will continue to work, as Labour did in government, to support Turkey’s accession to the EU.

Through the work of our Westminster and Brussels’ based team, in partnership with Labour Friends of Turkey, we will continue to push for progress on this front and advance the case for Turkey’s EU membership, as well as advancing a deeper understanding of Turkey and its relationship with the UK.

The Centre for Turkey Studies will provide a very welcome contribution to this ongoing debate.”



**Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP**  
Former Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs



**Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP**  
Former Leader of the Labour Party

“I am fully committed to continuing to strengthen the bonds between our two nations and I acknowledge the work the Centre for Turkey Studies does in helping to support this.”



**Rt Hon William Hague MP**  
Former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

“ economic issues, and social developments in Turkey and the region...”

“In providing a forum for debating foreign affairs, economic issues, and social developments in Turkey and the region, the Centre for Turkey Studies is helping to strengthen the myriad ties between Britain and Turkey at a governmental, commercial, cultural, and educational level.”



**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.”

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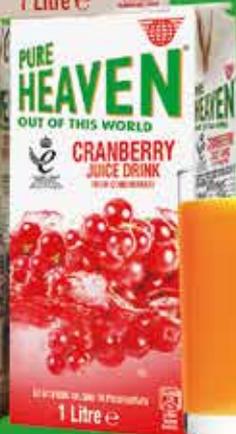
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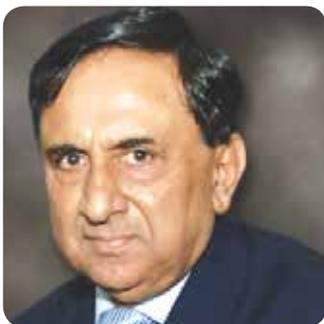
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# Our 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

“ We are an independent organisation with no organic links with any political party or organisation. We are dedicated to remain a cross-party and cross-community organisation”



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  
**020 7183 4272**

Twitter/CeftusOrg

Facebook/CentreforTurkeyStudies

We are thrilled to have completed five years of hard work. We have made remarkable progress over the past five years and have grown to become a notable organisation in the field of Turkish and British social and political relations as well as European affairs and regional developments.

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.

Over the past five years, 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, the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States discussed issues ranging from the short-lived Kurdish Peace Process, social and political implications of the General Elections over the last five years as well as 15th of July Coup Attempt, ISIS threat in Turkey and in the region, Turkey's foreign policy over Syria, structural changes of state apparatuses, women's and minority rights, freedom of speech and press, Turkey-EU relations, immigration and integration of communities originating from Turkey in the UK and the Cyprus issue, to name a few.

You may see our annual report in the following pages where we summarise our events and projects. As our 5th year is an important milestone, we have brought our work of five years into one document.

We held joint forums and exclusive roundtables with Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Chatham House, English PEN, Istanbul Policy Centre of Sabanci University, London School of Economics Middle East Centre, Refugee Workers Cultural Association, SOAS Turkish Society, SOAS Kurdish Society and the Centre for Kurdish Progress.

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, Scottish National Party 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 4th 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.

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) 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 2016 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.

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# 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot Community Achievement Awards 2015

CEFTUS celebrated fourth year of our ever increasingly important work on 28th October 2015 with 600 distinguished guests in London Marriott Grosvenor Hotel.

Several MPs and Lords/Baronesses including Keith Vaz Labour MP, Sir David Amess MP, Tom Brake Liberal Democrat MP, Seema Malhotra Labour MP, Caroline Flint Labour MP, Angus MacNeil SNP MP, Rehman Chisti Conservative MP, Stephen Kinnock Labour MP, Joan Ryan Labour MP, Kate Osamor Labour MP, Siobhain McDonagh Labour MP, George Howarth Labour MP, John Woodcock Labour MP, Virendra Sharma Labour MP, Conservative Peers Lord Sheikh, Lord Northbrook, and Baroness Knight of Collingtree, Independent Crossbench Life Peer Lord Karan Bilimoria and Labour Peer Lord McConnell among many others attended our gala event. Similarly, Mayors and Councillors of many London boroughs, High Commissioner for the Republic

of Cyprus to the UK Euripides L. Evriviades and the Kurdistan Regional Government High Representative to the UK Karwan Jamal Tahir were present at the event. Representatives of Kurdish, Turkish and Turkish Cypriot Communities as well as

“ 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. ”

journalists, academics and business people across many industries kindly joined us to celebrate our anniversary.

Guests from Turkey included comedian and author Gulse Birsel, journalists Ahmet Sik and Hayko

Bagdat and former AK Party MP Mehmet Emin Ekmen.

Presented by Hilat Ozcan, the evening began with speeches from Director of CEFTUS, Ibrahim Dogus, Lord Bilimoria, Keith Vaz MP, Tom Brake MP, Caroline Flint MP and Angus MacNeil MP. The significant political relationship between Turkey and Britain and CEFTUS' role in building bridges between the two countries were emphasised.

Prime Minister David Cameron's support message to CEFTUS was relayed and Opposition Leader Jeremy Corbyn's recorded support message was played on the screens.

CEFTUS also announced the winners of the Annual Community Achievement Awards 2015. 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.





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



**Gulse Birsel**  
CEFTUS Appreciation Award



**Dr Rami Ranger**  
CEFTUS Appreciation Award



**Shany Gupta**  
CEFTUS Appreciation Award



**Jale Erentok**  
Most Successful Business Person



**Dervis Aslan**  
Most Successful Business Person



**Ibrahim Ahmet**  
Most Successful Business Person



**Kemal Kaya**  
Most Successful Business Person



**Aysegul Yesidaglar**  
Community Achievement Role Model



**Ali Poyraz**  
Community Achievement Role Model



**Dr Seval Tasdemir**  
Community Achievement Role Model



**Dr Ayla Gol**  
Arts Culture and Education



**Mehmet Karakus**  
Arts Culture and Education



**Dondu & Mustafa Durmaz**  
Arts Culture and Education

# Community Achievement Awards Winners



**Martin Howe**  
CEFTUS Appreciation Award



**Kirkisrak Community House**  
Charity/NGO/Civil Society



**Ibrahim Uzun**  
Food - Restaurant Wholesalers



**Dr Ziya Radmand**  
Community Achievement Role Model



**Dr Ismail Bulut**  
Health



**Dr Ali Dogan**  
Health



**Ilker Kilic**  
Lifelong Achievement



**Raziye Akkoc**  
Media and Politics



**Peray Ahmet**  
Media and Politics



**Ali Huseyin Osoy**  
Young Entrepreneurs



**Nihat Ozdal**  
Young Entrepreneurs (Runner Up)



**Saniye Unal**  
Most Successful Business Person



**Zilan Akdogan, Ceren Turna, Hanim Karakoc, Dilan Guven, Rukan Has, Deniz Arman, Ergin Erbil, Zeynep Topkaya, Esin Gunes**  
Most Successful Students

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Page  
**21-31**

**Westminster  
Debates**

**2015  
2016**

Page  
**32-47**

**Westminster  
Debates**

**2014  
2015**

Page  
**48-60**

**Westminster  
Debates**

**2013  
2014**

Page  
**61-67**

**Westminster  
Debates**

**2012  
2013**

Page  
**68-69**

**Westminster  
Debates**

**2011  
2012**

**Westminster Debates 2011-2016**

# Turkey: The Insane and the Melancholy

With keynote speaker Ece Temelkuran,  
Journalist and Novelist

Hosted by John Woodcock MP  
Chaired by Bill Park, Senior Lecturer in the  
Department of Defence Studies, King's  
College

12 September 2016,  
House of Commons

Sharing a personal account of her family history, Ms Temelkuran discussed current affairs - including the tumultuous aftermath of the 2016 coup attempt - in the context of the historical pattern of coups d'état in Turkey. She described Turkey as being founded on the principle of 'a marriage of moderate Islam and democracy', but recent Turkish history has demonstrated the model does not work as well as hoped. She described how 'a polarisation' has formed in Turkish society that has led to 'disgust towards each other'. She diagnosed the two camps as 'those with the government and those with the others', and identified herself, politically, in that latter category.

She went on to explain this background as the cause for her writing the book, an exploration of the history of Turkey divided into



three parts. Taking the perspective of a woman in Turkey, rather than a political figure, she described how she used the book as an opportunity to explore the history of Turkey through different cultural groups and characters. She then gave a brief description of Turkey in the last ten years - a country where 'the mainstream media has been dominated by the discourse of the AKP [Justice and Development Party] and its surrounding intellectuals' -

“ Taking the perspective of a woman in Turkey, rather than a political figure, she described how she used the book as an opportunity to explore the history of Turkey through different cultural groups and characters.”

and then touched on the final portion of her book, where she makes her 'humble predictions' of the future of Turkey in general and the Kurds in particular.

Ms Temelkuran also touched on the difficulties of describing the Turkish situation to foreigners, both professionally (she is 'not allowed to write in [Turkish] newspapers') and personally ('it seems like you are making a complaint about your country to other people').



# Turkey's Coup of 15th July: Unity in the Midst of Crisis?

With keynote speaker Dr Sinan Ciddi, Executive Director of Institute of Turkish Studies and Visiting Assistant Professor, Georgetown University

Chaired by Bill Park, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Defence Studies, King's College

31 August 2016,  
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)

Dr Ciddi began by presenting the coup within its Turkish context, and framed it outrightly as a 'national trauma'. As it was still an unfolding event, its full repercussions could not be ascertained; but the significance of it in the minds of all Turks and in contemporary Turkish political history should not be underestimated.

Dr Ciddi explained that while it was clear that factions of the armed forces had indeed engaged in the coup, there was no clear consensus as to who or what organised it. None had yet owned up to it, unlike the Turkish coup of 1980 – but Ciddi did entertain the notion of some degree of involvement on the part of the Fethullah Gulen movement.

He went on to suggest that the coup had failed because Erdogan broke the attempted media blockade and addressed the public through FaceTime, mobilising them to get out into the streets and 'resist' the occupiers. Yet there were other issues with the failed coup that raised doubts; the fact that only around 5000 soldiers took to the streets in a country of over 70 million should be enough to arouse suspicion.

The consequences of the coup were laid out in detail, as Dr Ciddi went on to talk about the prospect of constitutional reform, including the legalisation of the death penalty, and then went on to address the elephant in the room, that being



the shocking number of individuals incarcerated, deposed, purged, or otherwise 'disappeared' on suspicions of involvement with the Gulenist movement. The crackdown had been wide and indiscriminate, and as well as media outlets and universities, many hospitals and schools also found themselves the target of state sanctions.

in northern Syria as Turkish tanks rush into Jarablus, the longer consequences of which could still not be known.

Finally, Dr Ciddi addressed the issue of foreign policy and the possibility of a new paradigm of relations between Turkey and the United States in the post-coup milieu. The United States, he pointed out, had taken around 48 hours to condemn the coup, showing a degree of reluctance to take a stance against it outright. This had given Turkey significant cause to question the steadfastness of its foremost Western ally. Ciddi finished by mentioning the emergence of a new conventional military conflict

“ The fact that only around 5000 soldiers took to the streets in a country of over 70 million should be enough to arouse suspicion. ”



# Quo Vadis Turkiye?

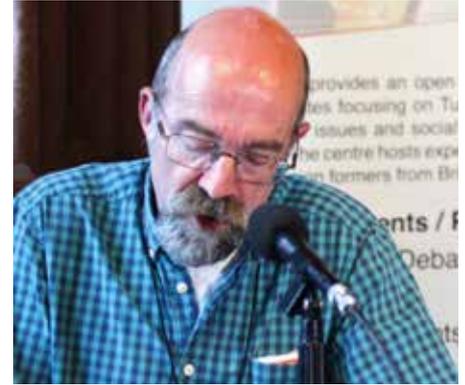
With keynote speaker Can Dundar, Author and Journalist

Hosted by Seema Malhotra MP  
Chaired by Lord Jeremy Purvis of Tweed

29 June 2016,  
House of Commons

Mr Dundar began by offering his sincere condolences to the victims of the terrorist attack in Istanbul this week. He then went on to talk about press freedoms in Turkey, noting that it is the biggest prison in the world for journalists, surpassing even China in that regard. He spoke of the difficult conditions for journalism in the country, talking from his own experiences of having to undergo not only arbitrary imprisonment and solitary confinement but also an assassination attempt.

Dundar spoke at length about how the power dynamic between the EU and Turkey and about the dirty backroom deals that often characterise this relationship. He noted that Turkey was in a sense holding the EU hostage by threatening to bus migrants across the Bosphorus in exchange for billions of dollars of aid and visa-free travel to the Eurozone, but also holding the migrants themselves hostage by retaining them in Turkey against their will. A point of contention for Dundar was the way in which the EU compromised on its own principles in order to maintain this relationship, failing to keep its own standards of openness and human rights with regards to Turkey. Dundar spoke at length about the backroom deals and agreements between the two sides and condemned an EU concession to delay the release of a report criticising Turkey's lack of respect for press freedoms until after the Turkish elections in November 2015 in the strongest terms, calling it a "shameful, filthy agreement". Dundar then went on to frame the current conflict in its historical context, describing how Turkey had



“ Being put at risk by an Ottomanist government that sought to revive the ‘old’ Turkey at all costs. ”



the unique position of having fought against European powers in the war of liberation of the early 1920s in order to create a republic based on Western values and secularism. Ataturk, Dundar said, knew that he would win the military battle – but that the real war was cultural, and the hardest fight was inculcating the new Turkish youth with those progressive values to create a new Turkey. That, he said, was now

being put at risk by an Ottomanist government that sought to revive the ‘old’ Turkey at all costs. Turkey, Dundar said, was a bridge between civilisations – geographically as well as culturally – and losing the Turkey of Ataturk in favour of the Turkey of Erdogan would be a great blow to the West and to the world. He mentioned the difficulty of bringing Turkey back from its current position on the brink, as it is a country that now runs towards the east, and not the west. In conclusion he emphasised that although things looked bleak, there was a Turkey outside of Erdogan's Turkey – a Turkey that supported press freedoms, democracy, and the respect for human rights. This, he hammered down, was the Turkey that the West must be more active in supporting. Echoing Roosevelt, he articulated that fear was the greatest enemy in this struggle, increasing fear parallel with increasing nationalism was responsible not only for many of Turkey's woes but also for the Brexit phenomenon. He finished by imploring the West to not let Turkey fall to fascism, as the whole world would lose one of its most wonderful countries.



# Regime Change in Turkey: Kurdish Politics and Foreign Policy

With keynote speakers Dr Nuray Mert of Istanbul University and Dr Lenore G. Martin of Emmanuel College in Boston

Chaired by Dr Zeynep Kaya of the London School of Economics

10 June 2016,  
Unite House

Dr Lenore G. Martin opened her speech by analysing why under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Turkey has found itself having strained relations with Russia and its NATO allies. She began by discussing architect of AKP foreign policy and former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's strategic depth foreign policy that led to improved relations between Turkey and its Middle Eastern neighbours, and allowed Turkey to mediate between Syria and Israel and to become increasingly engaged in the affairs of the region. She explained that Turkey was able to foster stronger ties with both Israel and the Assad regime in Syria. She added that Turkey expanded its trade wherever possible in the Middle East and that these policies were very effective. She argued however that the AKP's ideological leanings had stunted these developments as demonstrated by Turkey's poorer relations with neighbours and nearby countries for instance when Israel invaded Gaza in 2008 and with the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, which also damaged relations with Turkey's Western partners who came to view Turkey as an Islamist militant supporter and therefore an unreliable ally. Dr Martin also added that Turkey's over reliance on its geographical location had served as a double-edged sword, making it both strategically critical but also exposing the country to threats to its national security.

Dr Martin built upon her argument regarding the AKP's philosophical



leanings isolating Turkey internationally by noting the close ideological outlook that the party shares with Muslim Brotherhood groups in the wider Middle East. She referred to Turkey's Kurdish problem as the country's Achilles heel, that has left many dead within Turkey, and also made it vulnerable to manipulation by neighbours Russia, Greece, Iran and Syria.

Dr Nuray Mert reiterated the notion that foreign policy matters are strongly linked to domestic policy, and that generally if one is unsuccessful, the other is likely to be equally so. She stated that in the Cold War period, Turkey's foreign policy had been simple, Turkey was a NATO member and American ally. She added that following the end of the Cold War however, that Turkey struggled to adjust to the new circumstances, of conducting a more multi-dimensional foreign policy. She added that during the Turgut Ozal

“ That has left many dead within Turkey, and also made it vulnerable to manipulation by neighbours Russia, Greece, Iran and Syria. ”



presidency, that Turkey grew more ambitious and sought to play a more active role in world affairs during the 1990s. She continued, stating that there was a view that Turkey could play a leading role among post-Soviet Turkic republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus, alongside other ambitions of Turkish leadership in the post-Ottoman space.

Dr Mert added that the politics of Turkey in the last 15 years under the religiously conservative, often called Islamist AKP has a historical basis in the Republican modernisation period and the harsh secularism and authoritarian governance that accompanied it. She added however that the AKP's political tradition is also one an authoritarian one. She concluded therefore that both of Turkey's main traditions are somewhat based in authoritarianism.

# Turkey: Analysis on Political Changes and Potential Scenarios for Future

With keynote speaker Ahmet Hakan, Columnist and TV presenter

Hosted by Neil Coyle MP  
Chaired by Aysegul Yesildaglar

9 June 2016,  
House of Commons

Mr Hakan spoke largely about the current government administration in Turkey. When the Justice and Development Party (AKP) were elected in 2002, he said, they had promised to ensure a conservative, pious Muslim community could participate in society and gain their rights and freedoms. Whilst they came into power with this promise, Mr Hakan explained, you can no longer talk of a party with a cause. The AKP has become a one-man party, and no longer even tries to conceal this fact itself. Their initial promise to ensure an Islamist movement did not happen, but rather what resulted was an authoritarian man consolidated in power. Mr Hakan compared this situation in Turkey with the Hungarian situation, and what many fear may happen in the US with Donald Trump. In Turkey, he claimed, the regime is inconsistent in what it is and what it wants. At times, he said, it has a neo-Ottoman agenda, at times it claims to represent the oppressed, at some times it appears 'macho'. Many Islamist intellectuals, Mr Hakan said, have been incorporated into the ruling party's regime. The media has been silenced, directly or indirectly under government control.

Mr Hakan gave a number of interesting insights during the question and answer session. The legal system is not strong in Turkey, he explained. There is no tradition of independence, all it knows is either military intervention or political coups. This has resulted in a great void and therefore no clear idea of



“ The legal system is not strong in Turkey, he explained. There is no tradition of independence, all it knows is either military intervention or political coups. ”



what possible legal sanction could be introduced to challenge Erdogan's power. The AKP has become a one man party, flexible and opportunistic in ideology, but there are still various factors that hold it together such as people being given roles and jobs that they assume give them power and influence. When asked if, hypothetically, AKP would win an election in Turkey tomorrow,

Mr Hakan said that they would. According to Mr Hakan this is down to a disorganised opposition, momentum, and the fact that the mentality of Erdogan is close to many, many people in Turkey. Breaking AKP momentum, Mr Hakan expressed, would require mass support, weakness of opponents, success with nationalists, and utilising religious views.



# Turkish Democracy Today: **Yet Another Test of “Democracy without Democrats” Hypothesis**

With keynote speaker Dr Yilmaz Esmer, Professor of Political Science at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul

Hosted by Stephen Kinnock MP  
Co-chaired by Stephen Kinnock MP and Gareth Winrow

24 May 2016,  
House of Commons

Stephen Kinnock opened by illustrating the need to look at how Turkey has been for the last number of years and where it is going in the way of values, beliefs, and the political landscape. Dr Yilmaz Esmer said that Turkish democracy is no longer a joking matter. In fact, when one speaks of Turkish democracy, the word should be in quotation marks. It was become a process of selection, not election, in which one candidate has been elected unanimously. Dr Yilmaz then discussed Turkey's position in democratic ratings, which give an idea about Turkey and the international community in terms of civic liberties, freedoms, and political rights. In the Rule of Law Index, Turkey is ranked eighty. In the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index (2015) Turkey has dropped significantly in recent years. It shows that the political culture and functioning of government are closely correlated. What is responsible for this?, Dr Yilmaz asked. Dr Yilmaz said that people's mentality is a more important factor than institutions, leaders, laws, and constitutions.



“ Turkey also gave extremely low levels of tolerance and gender equality. In regards to interpersonal trust there was only a level of 12%. ”

The mentality, mindset and political habits of society are related to the well-functioning of the government. Culture matters, and it matters a lot, Dr Yildiz claimed. Quoting Welzel & Ingleheart (2009), he said ‘democracy is fragile when it is a democracy without democrats’. There are severe problems with how Turkish democracy has been practices, Dr Yildiz explained, and not just legal problems, leadership problems, or



problems of mindsets. When asked if it was good to have a strong leader who does not have parliament or elections, 60% of people answered in the positive (good or very good). 60% of people would never sign a petition, compared to only 10% who have signed a petition in the past. Turkey also gave extremely low levels of tolerance and gender equality. In regards to interpersonal trust there was only a level of 12%. Interpersonal trust is extremely important, Dr Yildiz explained, to democratic system of government and trust in elections. Dr Yildiz expressed that his findings suggested that religion was a possible factor in this outcome.



# Academic Freedom in Turkey

With keynote speakers Gulseren Onanc, Assembly Member of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Sinem Arslan of the University of Essex, Dr Janroj Keles of Middlesex University, and Dr Elizabeth Lawrence, President of the University and College Union

Hosted by Keith Vaz MP  
Chaired by Sara Whyatt, freelance consultant for Freedom of Expression

13 February 2016,  
House of Commons

Ms Gulseren Onanc, a politician and a women's rights activist, stated that in Turkey almost total executive power lies in one party and its president, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and President Erdogan. The current government seek to increase secularism and security, and to exclude the Kurdish people. They are ignorant to critical voices, Ms Onanc stressed, and refuse to listen to calls for a re-establishment of the peace process. The main challenges to overcome, according to Ms Onanc, are the need to abolish the existing polarisation between parties and to establish trust with politicians. The solutions proposed by Ms Onanc is to be found in civic initiatives, by active citizens discussing and establishing solution, by the courage of the people. Freedom of expression has been violated, she stated.

Ms Sinem Arslan, a signatory of the petition, highlighted the human rights abuses in Turkey that cannot be seen in the mass media. Like Ms Onanc, she related to the gross misconduct of government authorities, and asked for a return to the peace process as a solution. She told of how she had



“ The main challenges to overcome, according to Ms Onanc, are the need to abolish the existing polarisation between parties and to establish trust with politicians.”



seen her peers and fellow signatories subjected to smear campaigns, referred to as 'terrorists' and 'pseudo-intellectuals', accused of inciting people to violence. The solution, according to Ms Arslan, is through increased international support and legal processes, an increase in the international discussion about what can be done in solidarity with Academics for Peace.

Dr Janroj Keles argued that the peace process in Turkey was a guise used by the government to gain hegemonic domination of the Kurds through state institutions. Freedom is central to the core of academic

knowledge, yet in Turkey this freedom is countered by government brutality, racism and discrimination. The actions taken against the academics in question hold no legitimacy or legality, Dr Keles argued. Unless action is taken, he stressed, there would be increased negative impacts on scholarly and critical research. Dr Elizabeth Lawrence was the final speaker. The principle of academic freedom, she stressed, is vital for democratic societies; the ability to question and debate political and social alternatives strengthens society. It is our international duty, she argued, to protest when such rights are infringed, to take action against oppressive measures, to ask 'why?'. The academics in Turkey should be reinstated, their rights respected, and there should be a return to legality. This, she argued, would see a step towards a sustainable peace in Turkey, and an end to oppression.



# Turkey: Collapse of Peace Talks, ISIS Attacks and a New Constitution

With keynote speakers, Republican People's Party (CHP) MPs for Istanbul, Mr Gursel Tekin and Dr Sezgin Tanrikulu

Chaired and Hosted by Lord Northbrook

15 January 2016,  
House of Commons

Dr Tanrikulu began by discussing the Kurdish issue, stating that the conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is presently at its worst. He stated that there had been great hope that the Turkish government and PKK would reach a peaceful settlement in June last year, but that tensions between the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) grew and led to renewed clashes in which many people died. He argued that since March 2013, the AKP had only approached the peace process with the PKK for its own political advancement.

He stated that since July 2015 the government has no plan to end the conflict, arguing that the Prime Minister's ten point plan is without substance. He added that the CHP had looked at this issue from two angles, employing parliamentary measures and urgently establishing a committee, as the Kurdish youth is no longer looking to Ankara for a solution. Dr Tanrikulu stated that in



Turkey's polarised political climate, a consensus on a new constitution was not possible. He added that 76% of the Turkish population would not want to be neighbours with people who are members of a different party to them. On the issue of Daesh, he stated that the AKP government did not pay enough attention to the large numbers of people going into Syria from Turkey to fight. He stated that between 2012 and 2015, the government had ignored Daesh and was only recently investigating the organisation. He added that following the bombing of Suruc in July 2015, he and other MPs had given names and details about Daesh members, but that these had not been acted upon.

“ In Turkey's polarised political climate, a consensus on a new constitution was not possible. ”

Mr Gursel Tekin opened discussing Middle East-wide political issues, emphasising their roots in the Iran-Iraq War and the efforts of different powers, including the US and Russia to establish hegemony in the region. He added that sectarian conflict, and intervention in Libya and Iraq have exacerbated the problems present since 2003. He continued, stating that the CHP had communicated its concerns to current the Turkish Prime Minister, who was then Foreign Minister. Mr Tekin continued discussing the Arab Spring, stating that his party had invited members of like-minded parties to Turkey. He expressed that foreign powers had focussed on energy related concerns rather than human ones. He added that self-interested big countries are implicated in many problems in the Middle East, which could mean that conflict will become the status quo of the region.



# Cost of Syrian Refugee Crisis: **Social, Economic and Political Benefits and Burden**

With Dr Ibrahim Sirkeci, Professor of Transnational Studies and Director of Regent's Centre for Transnational Studies, Regent's University London, and Dr Petra Bendel, Professor of Political Science and Academic Director at the Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen Nuremberg, Germany

Hosted by Yvette Cooper MP  
Chaired by Ms Doris Carrion of the Chatham House Middle East and North Africa Programme

12 December 2015,  
House of Commons

Dr Bendel began by referring to the European refugee crisis as one of the greatest problems of our times. She argued that the values EU member states ascribe to themselves such as shared responsibility and human rights could serve as a compass to guide a uniform policy. Dr Bendel discussed co-operation with refugees' origin and transit countries, combatting irregular migration and illegal trafficking, and EU member state solidarity. She noted that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' funds met around only half of what was initially earmarked which has meant that refugees in camps in neighbouring countries such as Jordan, have led to a lack of healthcare provision, causing large numbers of chronic illness sufferers to go without treatment. This lack of funds had also prevented young refugees from receiving education as they often have to discontinue their studies and work or beg to support their families. On the solidarity of EU members, she noted that the European Commission has devised a resettlement and relocation plan to allocate shares to various countries, however this policy had been met with bitter opposition from several member states. She continued, stating that this opposition has led to allocation of refugees to various countries has become an allocation



“ As a result of this, these refugees can benefit European countries and Turkey, as they can and have set up businesses in cities such as Istanbul for instance, and will ultimately pay taxes. ”



lottery, and that a cohesive common refugee policy would be a suitable alternative to the current lack of solidarity.



Prof Dr Sirkeci discussed the demographic and financial implications of the refugee crisis. He stated that around 4.5 million Syrians are currently displaced, and 2.5 million of these are in Turkey amounting to around 3% of the Turkish population, alongside this, he added that around 800,000 have arrived in Europe over the last four years. Dr Sirkeci noted that many refugees from Syria often have higher social capital and are often prone to risk-taking making them more entrepreneurial. He continued noting that most Syrian refugees are young, and that only 3% of the Syrian population was over 60 years old. The remaining 97% he added will be eligible to work in the next decade or have already been workforce members. He stated that as a result of this, these refugees can benefit European countries and Turkey, as they can and have set up businesses in cities such as Istanbul for instance, and will ultimately pay taxes. He added that these newcomers could also fill gaps in the workforces of European countries with ageing populations. He concluded stating that these refugees can be contributors to the societies in which they settle.

# Cyprus, the EU and the Eastern Mediterranean

With keynote speaker His Excellency, Euripides L. Evriviades, High Commissioner for the Republic of Cyprus to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Hosted and chaired by John F. Spellar MP

9 December 2015,  
House of Commons

This Westminster Debate focused on the role of Cyprus as a member of the European Union in the region and the prospects for a re-united Cyprus. His Excellency, started his speech by highlighting the importance of the geography of the region and emphasised the fact that the European Union, Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean, despite their unique qualities, are interconnected with each other.

According to Mr Evriviades, the EU, the single most important humane political experience in the history of the world, protected the peace and stability in Europe and expanded itself to the Eastern Mediterranean through the accession of the Republic of Cyprus in 2004. Mr Evriviades argued that the membership of this divided society provided the EU an access to the Middle East and that Cyprus has been an active and reliable member with regards to EU's engagements for solutions for peace in Syria and the fight against DAESH. He added that the result of 2004 referendum was unfortunate with regards to prospects of a united Cyprus. Mr Evriviades indicated the importance of the discovery of hydrocarbons in the Mediterranean and added that the context has, since then, changed both domestically and regionally. By underlying the fact that such discovery created a new dimension for the negotiations between both Greek and Turkish Cypriot Governments, he stated that hydrocarbons can be the new coal and steel of the EU and become one of the main income sources of the Union.



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In the last part of his speech, Mr Evriviades referred to the problems between Turkish and Greek Cypriot sides as issues of security, territorial adjustment and refugees. He emphasised a common national identity and argued that both

societies are Cypriots that happen to be of Turkish or Greek origin, which he said, would enhance the contribution of Cyprus to the EU. He added the negotiations for a unified federal state are progressing towards a solution in the near future.



# The Kurdish Issue: Is Peace Still on the Table?

With keynote speaker Cengiz Candar, veteran journalist and author

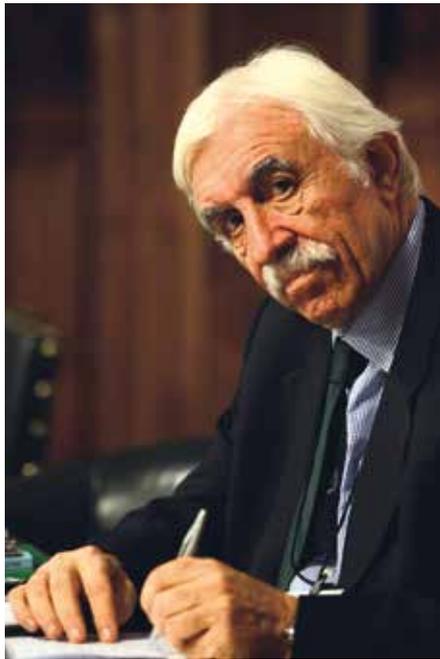
Chaired and hosted by Tom Brake MP

October 31st 2015,  
House of Commons

Tom Brake MP opened the event discussing the relationship between Britain and Turkey, which has grown increasingly important in light of the Syrian Crisis, adding that this conflict has led to a potential re-opening of EU accession talks with Turkey.

Mr Candar discussed his previous visits to the UK and past speeches at CEFTUS, namely on the resolution of the conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). He stated that the peace process has evaporated and remains frozen at present. He argued that at the social level, violence between Turks and Kurds has reached its worst extent. Mr Candar stated that Turkey's Kurdish issue has gained greater international significance in the context of the Syrian conflict, as the situations of Kurds in both Syria and Turkey are increasingly linked, strengthening the causes of one another. This link according to Mr Candar has grown especially important given the establishment by Kurds of the Rojava canton in Syria. In previous years, the peace process has involved participation on the part of the President and leaders of the PKK, but was neither transparent nor mediated by a third party. Mr Candar then stated that with the 2013 Gezi Park protests, the single party Justice and Development Party (AKP) government was weakened. This, according to Mr Candar, saw the AKP government attempt to assert its strength by neglecting to include a third party, which damaged the process' structural viability.

Following the indecisive June 2015 elections, Mr Candar told of how speaking about the Kurdish issue has become an electioneering tactic on



“ Candar argued that at the social level, violence between Turks and Kurds has reached its worst extent. ”

the part of the AKP and therefore any current peace process efforts would be lacking in substance and drive. Mr Candar added that presently the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), having gained enough votes in June to cross the threshold for parliamentary representation and breaking the AKP's majority in parliament, now stands as a key obstacle to President Erdogan's aims of achieving an executive presidency. Erdogan, according to Mr Candar,



has since adopted a more militant, uncompromising and Turkish nationalist stance vis-a-vis the PKK, to try and draw upon the nationalist vote. He also commented on Kurdish political movements in Syria having received Russian and American support, giving Kurds in the Middle East greater confidence. This in turn affected the PKK in the face of renewed state violence against them and has encouraged them to become more militarily active.

He concluded that a resumption of the peace process could occur if the HDP were to triumph again in the coming November elections, as it could lead to pro-Kurdish legislators participating in government, therefore ameliorating the drive for armed struggle among Kurds.



# 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



“ 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. ”

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



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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



“ 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. ”

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.



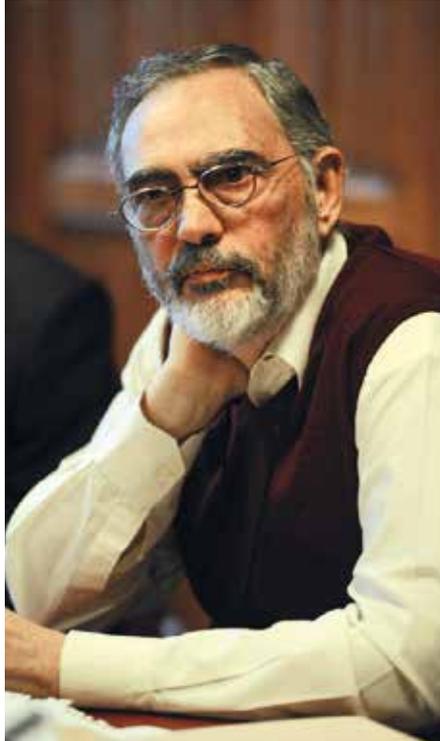
# Understanding the Transformation; AK Party Era in Turkey

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.



“ 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. ”

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



“ 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. ”

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

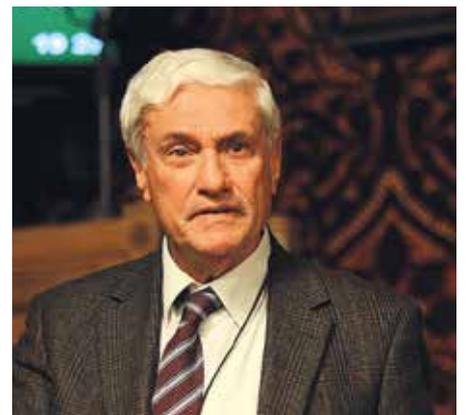
TDP Chairman Cemal Ozyigit opened the discussion by recapping the ongoing, start and stop negotiations that have characterised the peace process in Cyprus since the division of the island. Mr. Ozyigit touched on the February 2014 declaration announcing the renewal of unification negotiations, suspended 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.



“ 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 Aysegul 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 he 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



“ A return to CHP leadership will be needed in order to reenergise Turkish intellectual society, which will be necessary to counter what he described as the rising threat of Islamic radicalism in the country. ”

'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 Sik 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 Sik 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 Sik then relayed his own experience of being arrested for his unfinished book *Imam'ın Ordusu* (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 Sik 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.

“ 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



“ The pluralistic achievements of the AKP are the cornerstone of the party’s success and longevity. ”

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

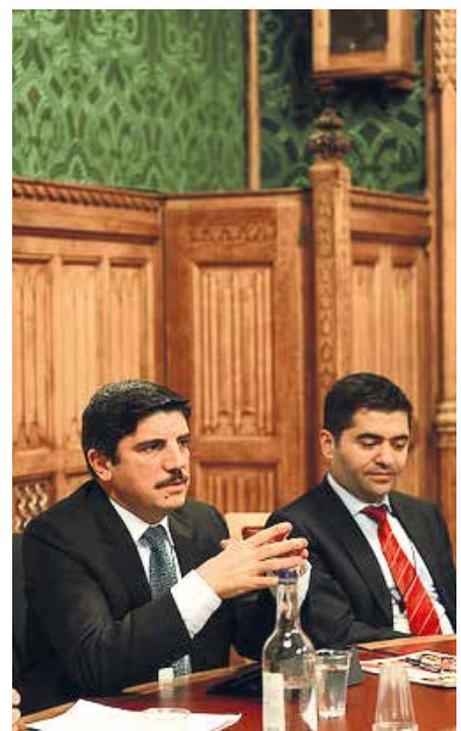
Hosted and chaired by Lord Richard Balfe

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.



# 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.



“ 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. ”

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.



“ Despite the problems with the trials, more than 500 people were sentenced to time in prison, and appeals were ongoing. ”

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



“ 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. ”

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

Mr. 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.



# Destruction of the Near East and the Kurdistan Issue

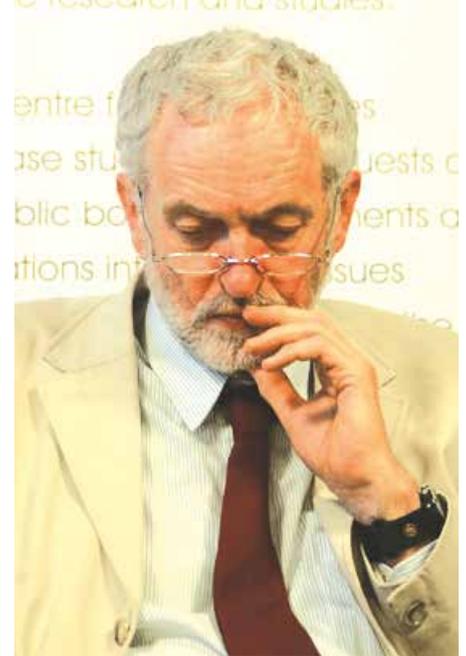
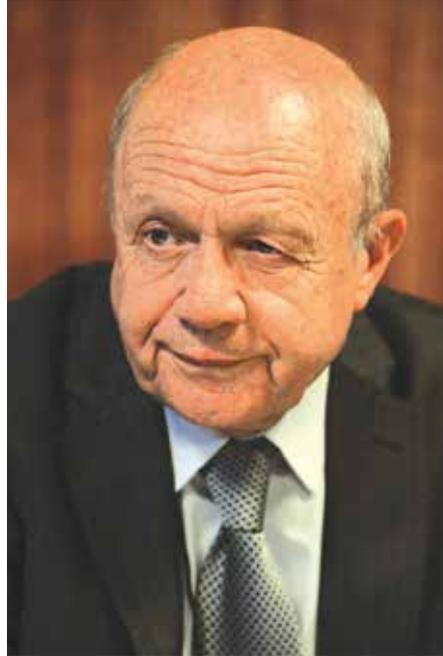
April 2014,  
the House of Commons

Turkish sociologist and Kurdologist Dr  
Ismail Besikci

Chaired and hosted by  
Jeremy Corbyn Labour MP for Islington  
North

Dr Besikci reviewed the history of the Near East with regards to Kurdish identity and identity of Kurdistan. He argued that the ancient peoples of Anatolia of the Near East went through a process of destruction, which was due to the Community of Union and Progress' project of turning the Ottoman Empire into a vast area where only Turks lived. Besikci stated that beginning with the Balkan War in 1912, a systematic state terror against the Greeks, the Armenians, the Kurds and the Alevis occurred and today's Turkey was built on the destruction of these peoples.

Dr Besikci asserted the Kurdish issue is a question of territory. The Kurds' right to self-determination, he argued, was denied in the 1920s by the four then imperial powers, Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire and Iran. Dr Besikci referring to the European Union, the Council



“ He indicated that the right of nations to self-determination which is an essential principle of international law have not applied to the Kurdish people.”

of Europe and the United Nations argued that these unions dismiss the existence and rights of an estimated number of over 40 million Kurds in the Middle East although they have member countries of which populations less than a few million.

He indicated that the right of nations to self-determination which is an essential principle of international law have not applied to the Kurdish people. Hence, he added, the international order established in the 1920s is an anti-Kurdish order.



# 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, London University and Dr Kerem Oktem of the University of Oxford

February 2014,  
the House of Commons

Chaired by Siddik Bakir, Energy Analyst  
Middle East and South Asia

Hosted by Stuart Andrew Conservative  
MP for Pudsey

Keynote speakers analysed the political events of 2013 as well as the corruption probe at the end of the year of 201 in this debate on democracy and politics in Turkey. Mrs Zeynep Banu Dalaman argued that 2013 was not a year of building a 'New Turkey' with rights for all, as the Justice and Development Party (AKP) had promised when it first came into power in 2002. Instead, since 2011 general elections, the AKP has begun building a Sunni Muslim Turkey. She suggested that the Gezi movement was an Alevi movement which was opposing to PM Erdogan's model of Sunni Muslim Turkey. Mrs Dalaman presented a 2013 political chronology of four political parties in the Turkish parliament.



“ The only potential political challenger to Erdogan was President Abdullah Gul. Park stated that there was certainly a crisis in relations between the AKP and the Gulen movement, and both sides were severely damaged.”

Dr Kerem Oktem argued that Turkey has been in a democracy crisis since 17 December, when major public figures were arrested in anti-corruption raids. The question to keep in mind, he argued, was whether Turkey's democracy will survive this crisis. Dr Oktem said the a trigger for the crisis was the

power struggle between two Islamist ideologies: the 'Milli Gorus' (National View) movement which is closer to Muslim Brotherhood and the Gulen Movement, which is pro-Western and focuses on commercial and educational activities. He stated that 17 December marked the start of war between these two powers which was tarnishing Turkey's image. Mr Bill Park discussed the variable power dynamics in Turkey. He argued that the only potential political challenger to Erdogan was President Abdullah Gul. Park stated that there was certainly a crisis in relations between the AKP and the Gulen movement, and both sides were severely damaged. He also pointed out that the military remained an actor, as the country's pro-military constitution remained in place. Bill Park said that he used to be optimistic about democracy in Turkey and AKP when it first came to power in 2002. However, he felt pessimistic about Turkey's prospects.



# Turkey at a Tipping Point

With Dr Jenny White, a writer and social anthropologist; Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies and Professor at Boston University.

February 2014,  
the House of Commons

Chaired by Dr Pelin Kadercan of the University of Reading

Hosted by Diane Abbott MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington

Dr Jenny White analysed the roots of the Gezi protests and its implications for current politics. Dr White argued that polarisation that Turkey experienced did not begin with the Gezi protests, but was present in politics before then. She clarified that laicism in Turkey, unlike secularism, was not the separation of state and religion, but “a secular lifestyle within a system of state-sponsored Sunni Islam”. Dr White stated that Turkish identity was a “religio-racial identity” with having Turkish blood and being Muslim being the two constituent parts; non-Muslims remain outside the Turkish identity. The rhetoric of inside and outside enemies of Kemalist discourse, she added, stemmed from this and despite PM Erdogan’s non-Kemalist stance, he applied the same rhetoric, especially during the Gezi protests. Dr White indicated that the

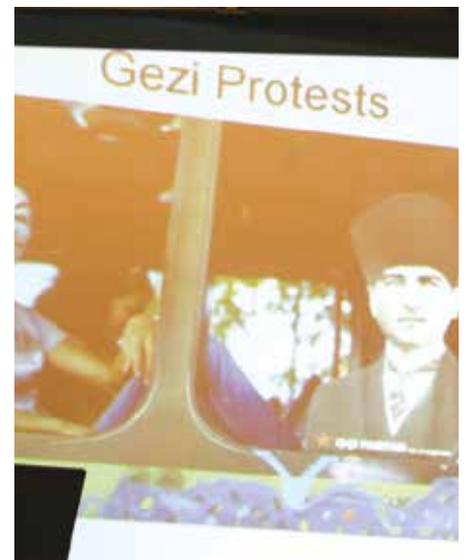


“ Milli Gorus concept of ‘Muslimhood’ was not Islamism and a pious leader governing a secular democracy was not contradictory in Muslimhood ideology.”

Milli Gorus concept of ‘Muslimhood’ was not Islamism and a pious leader governing a secular democracy was not contradictory in Muslimhood ideology. Muslim nationalism rooted itself to Ottoman imperial period and was based on culture rather than ethnicity. This nationalism broke the taboos of the Republican past. She pointed out that belonging

to a community which could be a political party or even a football club was crucial and essential for social survival and social identity in Turkey.

The Gezi protests was a step against this and towards a civic nationalism where protection of rights were based on citizenship rather than being a member of a certain group.



# Ergenekon and the Other Side of the Story

With Prof Dr Mehmet Altan, academic, economist, journalist and author

December 2013, Portcullis House

Chaired by Mr Jonathan Friedman, chief Turkey analyst at Control Risks

Hosted by Alison Seabeck Labour MP for Plymouth Moor View

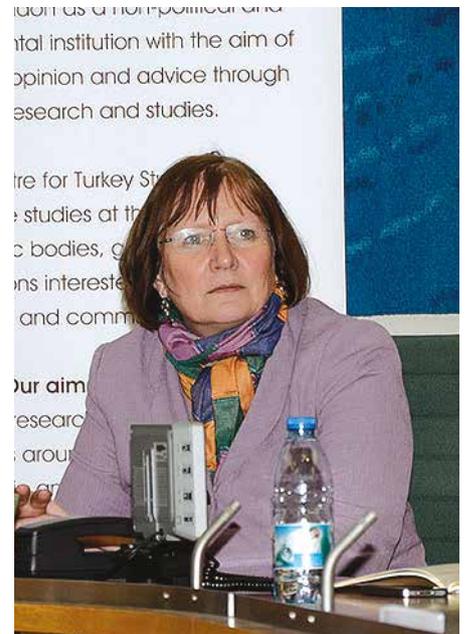
Prof Dr Mehmet Altan kindly shared his analysis of the Turkish political and economic developments at this CEFTUS Westminster Debate. Altan stated that the Ergenekon trials were steps to end Turkey's history of tutelary oversight and democratise the country. Increasingly however, it appeared that although the trials shifted power from the military to civilians, civilian leaders kept authoritarian elements of the system intact for their own benefit. According to Altan, the events in Turkey were a continuation of the battle between politics of the barracks and the mosque. He argued further that Turkey's judiciary lacked independence, citing the lack of investigation into the 2011 massacre of Kurdish civilians in Uludere as an example. Altan also said that this incident showed that despite the Ergenekon trials, the 'deep



“ Ergenekon trials, the 'deep state' remained a major problem for Turkey. According to Altan, the AKP government failed to deliver structural reforms for democratisation and financial betterment. ”

state' remained a major problem for Turkey. According to Altan, the AKP government failed to deliver structural reforms for democratisation and financial betterment. He criticised the political parties law and the electoral law, which provides

for a 10% voting threshold to enter parliament, for contributing to one-man governance. Altan also noted that politics in Turkey remained to be based on religious, ethnic and sectarian identities, and this was hampering further development.



# Turkey's Democratisation and Reform Package and Peaceful Solution to the Kurdish Question

With Mr Altan Tan Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) MP for Diyarbakir and Mr Eyüp Burç, Journalist

October 2013, the House of Lords

Chaired by Bill Park, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Defence Studies, King's College, London University

Hosted by Lord Muhammad Sheikh

Lord Sheikh underlined Turkey's leadership role in the region, the Turkish and Kurdish populations' contributions to the UK, and the enthusiasm of the democratising momentum in Turkey. He believed that the 30 September 2013 Democratisation Package– although with weaknesses – was an important step in the right direction towards further democratising Turkey.

Our first speaker, Eyup Burç, explained how current problems can be traced to issues present during Turkey's modern founding. Burç stated that while the Kurds' existence was recognised by the AKP, this recognition only manifested itself in the socio-cultural sphere. While giving examples from the recently obtained rights of the Kurds, Burç emphasised that these rights were limited in their scope. Burç stated that the current government failed to grant Kurds their political rights and this was a significant shortcoming of the democratisation package announced by the AKP in September. Burç made a significant observation that the refusal to grant the right to educate Kurdish in public schools was rooted in the government's refusal to grant Kurds a political identity. Burç also observed that although the peace process had been halted, the ceasefire between the Turkish army and the PKK was still in place. Thus, he expressed his hope for the continuation of the ceasefire,



“ PM Erdogan to go through with the necessary reforms, the PKK must realign with the West, and move away from its former alliances with Iran, Syria and Hezbollah. ”

and a return to a more proactive reconciliation process with the Kurds.

Altan Tan MP compared Turkey to the Ottoman Empire and stated that the multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature of the Empire gave way to an exclusivist ideology in the Republic. Tan analysed the 30 September Democratisation Package. He argued



that the package did not extend to all religious sects in Turkey, and followed a narrow road map, no different to the Kemalist governments of the past. The inability to follow a broader road map and the continuation of Kemalism, Tan stated, led to the postponement of a draft of the new constitution. Tan also spoke about meetings between Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), and the National Intelligence Organisation (MIT). Tan stated that in order for PM Erdogan to go through with the necessary reforms, the PKK must realign with the West, and move away from its former alliances with Iran, Syria and Hezbollah. The PKK must also disarm and end armed struggle. He argued that understanding that the outcome of the peace process would affect the whole region and not just Turkey, but that Ocalan would proceed at a slow pace.

# The Impacts of Democratisation and Reform Package in Turkey

With Mehmet Emin Ekmen, AKP Deputy Chairman of Party Organisation and former MP for Batman

October 2013,  
the House of Commons

Chaired and hosted by Andy Love Labour and Co-operative Party MP for Edmonton

Our keynote speaker Mehmet Emin Ekmen spoke on the historical, political and social necessities behind the current government's 30 September 2013 Democratisation and Reform Package and detailed the contents of the package. Ekmen argued that there was a variety of obstacles preventing Turkey's democratisation process, including the state ideology of the early Republican years and the other political parties of Turkey. Ekmen, referring to the earlier reform packages by the AKP government, stated such reforms initiated structural changes in Turkey. Ekmen indicated that the incumbent government took a number of constructive steps regarding the Kurdish issue and these not only promoted the political rights and



“ The majority of society supported the government's reconciliation efforts. ”

liberties of the Kurdish population but also sought to improve their living standards. Ekmen stated that the 'Wise People' Commission's findings, assigned by the AKP government

to introduce the peace process in different regions of Turkey, showed that the majority of society supported the government's reconciliation efforts.



# The Peace Process in Turkey: What Future for a Plural Society in Turkey

With Abdurrahman Kurt,  
Former AKP MP for Diyarbakir and  
Hayko Bagdat Journalist and Human  
Rights Activist

September 2013,  
Portcullis House

Chaired by Siddik Bakir, Energy Analyst  
Middle East and South Asia

Hosted by Anas Sarwar Labour MP for  
Glasgow

This Westminster debate took place following the news that the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) halted its withdrawal from Turkey on 9 September 2013. Mr Abdurrahman Kurt reviewed the history of the Republic of Turkey with regards to Turkish nationalism and military tutelage. Kurt stated that the military legacy of deep state had been the root cause of many problems in Turkey and the AKP government did a great deal to advance democratisation, demilitarise the state and solve the Kurdish issue. Kurt argued that amendments to the Citizenship Law, the Law on Associations and Political Parties, the Law on Demonstrations and



“ The AKP government did a great deal to advance democratisation, demilitarise the state and solve the Kurdish issue. ”

Meetings, the Law on the Duties and the Authorities of the Police, Anti-terrorism Laws, National Education Law, Universities Law, Radio and

Television Law, and laws to empower local authorities and to implement Kurdish language education in state-run schools met political demands of the Kurds. Kurt emphasised that the AKP was the only political party to resolve the Kurdish issue.

Mr Hayko Bagdat stated that the different ethnic and religious groups that existed in Turkey in the early 1900s almost vanished after the state implanted its ideology of ‘Turkishness’. He added that the number of the old residents of Anatolia who were non-Muslim and non-Turkish decreased drastically since the foundation of Republic of Turkey. According to Bagdat, the Kurds of Turkey, fighting over the last 30 years, feared the same destiny of near-extinction in Turkey. Mr Bagdat pointed out that peace in the interest of both parties and neither side wanted to return to war.



# Turkey: Everything You Don't Want to Know!

With author and journalist  
Ms Ece Temelkuran

June 2013,  
the House of Commons

Chaired by Dr Tunc Aybak, Director of  
International Politics Programme at  
School of Law, Middlesex University

Hosted by Seema Malthotra Labour MP  
for Feltham and Heston

Ms Ece Temelkuran shared her experiences attending anti-government protests in Istanbul and Ankara. She said that the protests made Turkey's 'post-coup d'état apolitical generation' realise their power to encounter fear and love each other. Temelkuran, speaking about the reasons why the protests lasted for days, stated that the protests began with environmental concerns, but expanded due to excessive use of force by the police.

Seema Malthotra MP who kindly hosted the event congratulated the work of CEFTUS. She stated that the protests in Turkey proved that there was a strong need for dialogue in Turkey and among the communities in the UK. Hence, she added, organisations like CEFTUS would



“ Hence, she added, organisations like CEFTUS would bring the communities together and keep them close to the leaders of their countries. ”

bring the communities together and keep them close to the leaders of their countries.

The Chair of the Human Rights All-Party Parliamentary Group Ann Clwyd MP also joined in the debate and made a short speech. Commenting on the Taksim protests, she said that peaceful protests should be allowed in a democratic country.



# 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

June 2013,  
the House of Commons

Chaired by Dr Omer Tekdemir of Durham University

Hosted by former Shadow Europe Minister Emma Reynolds Labour MP for Wolverhampton North East

Our keynote speakers shared their analyses regarding freedom of expression in Turkey. Dr Kerem Altiparmak compared the current situation in Turkey to the late 1980s and 1990s. He asserted that although there was good deal of improvement with regard to human rights, there were lingering concerns about the transparency of the AKP's reforms. He claimed that Turkey had come a long way from a period of systemic torture of Kurds, socialists and others. According to Altiparmak, AKP reforms until 2005 / 2006 moved to improve human rights. Up until 2009, the government was also moved towards expanding freedom of expression. Altiparmak claimed however that by 2009, the government began using existing laws against blasphemy, demonstrations, and terrorism to impose silence critics.



“ Among them were cases which aimed to remove blocks on the music sharing site Last.fm and video sharing site YouTube. ”

Prof Dr Yaman Akdeniz, a long time legal cyber activist, gave some pertinent examples of cases pertaining to freedom of expression that he, and Altiparmak, brought to Turkey's courts. Among them were cases which aimed to remove blocks on the music sharing site Last.

fm and video sharing site YouTube. Akdeniz also noted that the public's lack of interest in the EU means that there was less pressure on the government to follow freedom of speech requirements related to EU accession.



# Turkey: Everything You Don't Want to Know!

With Dr Ipek Demir of University of Leicester and Dr Dogus Simsek of Regents University London

June 2013,  
the House of Commons

Chaired and hosted by Andy Love, the Labour and Co-operative Party Member of Parliament for Edmonton

Our keynote speakers Dr Ipek Demir and Dr Dogus Simsek analysed how Kurdish and Turkish communities related to Turkey and Britain. Dr Dogus Simsek, who carried out an ethnographic research on second generation Turkish and Kurdish migrants in London since 2009, presented some of the findings from her research. Simsek stated that she analysed how these migrants connect with the homeland and the host country, and their relations to North London, London in general and Turkey. She indicated that second generation Turkish and Kurdish migrants felt more connected to homeland culture. However, she said, their connection to Turkey was through their parents who had settled in North London. As a result, second generation migrants considered North London as their home. Simsek argued that the second generation migrants did not have a direct link with Turkey aside for summer holidays and trips to their parents' hometowns. She added that they did not feel included in Turkey, not only due to difficulties in speaking local languages, but also because some of them felt that they were perceived as the problematic outsiders whose parents had sought asylum abroad.

Dr Ipek Demir shared some of the findings of her academic work called 'Battling with Memleket in London: The Kurdish Diaspora's Engagement with Turkey'. She stated that in London, the majority of those from Turkey were Alevi Kurds, mostly



“ In London, the majority of those from Turkey were Alevi Kurds, mostly originating from Malatya, Maras, Elbistan and the surrounding region. ”

originating from Malatya, Maras, Elbistan and the surrounding region. However, she pointed out that the number of Kurdish people (from Turkey) living in London is only an estimation (somewhere between 100.000 and 180.000) because the Home Office asks refugees about their country of origin, not their ethnic background. Demir stated that various issues in Turkey—especially ethnic conflict, sectarian discrimination (being Alevi) and

economic deprivation, which some Kurds faced—reinforced one other, and paved the way for Alevi Kurds, even those who were not immediately involved in the Kurdish conflict, to migrate to the UK. Demir argued that many migrants from Turkey began identifying themselves more as Kurdish (instead of, for example, as British) over time. She suggested that this increasing tendency to identify as Kurdish was due to political developments in Turkey.



# Foreign Policy of Turkey during the EU Accession

With Former British Ambassador to Turkey (1997-2001) Sir David Logan, Researcher and Writer Ziya Meral, Conservative Peer and Centre for Turkey Studies Advisor Lord Sheikh, and Mike Gapes Labour MP for Ilford South

May 2013,  
the House of Commons

Chaired by Lord Tim Clement Jones,  
Liberal Democrat Peer

Hosted by former Shadow Europe  
Minister Emma Reynolds Labour MP for  
Wolverhampton North East

Our keynote speakers examined Turkey's foreign policy regarding the conflict in Syria, Turkey's relations with its regional neighbours, Turkey's stance regarding the EU accession process and Turkey's economy.



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# Government, Media, Conflict and Peace: Limits to Freedom of Expression in Turkey

With journalist Banu Guven

April 2013,  
the House of Commons

Chaired by journalist Murat Ozcelik

Hosted by Anas Sarwar Labour MP for  
Glasgow

Our guest speaker, Banu Guven, shared how she resigned to protest the censorship of her TV programme. She also gave a broader analysis of the situation on freedom of expression and limits on journalism in Turkey. Guven noted how although Turkey was often given as an example of 'Muslim democracy' in the region, it suffers many flaws, including a 10% electoral threshold for political parties to enter the National Assembly and broad anti-terror laws that limit freedom of speech in the media. Guven expressed that the censorship she experienced across her work was a result of the government's attitude towards media in Turkey. She recalled how PM Erdogan held a press meeting with editors-in-chiefs of TV channels and newspapers where he provided his advice on how to report news. She and others had been forced to resign when their reports contradicted the PM's advice and the government's agenda. Guven asserted that media



“ Turkey was often given as an example of 'Muslim democracy' in the region, it suffers many flaws, including a 10% electoral threshold for political parties to enter the National Assembly and broad anti-terror laws that limit freedom of speech in the media. ”

also suffered from self-censorship as many journalists feared losing their jobs. Guven acknowledged that

censorship in Turkey is not new and existed before the AKP came into power in 2002.



# Religion, Society and Politics in a Changing Turkey and the Hate Crime Legislation Campaign in Turkey

With Dr Binnaz Toprak CHP MP for Istanbul and Dr Aykan Erdemir CHP MP for Bursa

March 2013,  
the House of Commons

Chaired by Alison McGovern Labour MP for Wirral South

Hosted by John Woodcock Labour MP for Barrow and Furness

Our keynote speakers focused on two interconnected key issues in Turkey. Dr Binnaz Toprak MP evaluated the findings of her report 'Religion, Society and Politics in a Changing Turkey' which she co-authored with Ali Carkoglu. It was published by the Turkish think tank TESEV in 2006. According to the findings of this report Turkey suffers from polarisation between islamists and secularists. Secularists equated modernisation with westernisation and were more republican in Turkey's context. Toprak suggested however the AKP's understanding of modernisation was different. She stated that the governing party associated the concept of modernity purely with economic development. The cities of Turkey were developed with new roads and bridges, however, Toprak argued that the people and the political system became more



conservative. People who did not share the same views on modernism as the government, and those who did not belong to pro-government religious groups were less likely to find employment, particularly in Anatolia. Toprak acknowledged the achievements of the current Prime Minister Erdogan and his government in the last decade. Nevertheless, she argued that PM Erdogan began interfering in civil society and restricting freedom of speech. Also, Toprak pointed out how the Ergenekon trials showed the lack of Turkey's judicial independence.

Dr. Aykan Erdemir MP analysed the Hate Crime Legislation Campaign in Turkey. He stated that the 'hate crime' topic was new to the Turkish public. However, he said that the Social Change Organisation (Sosyal Degisim Dernegi) brought together 70 NGOs for the Hate Crime Legislation Campaign. Erdemir expressed that only the CHP, BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) and some MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) MPs supported the campaign in the parliament. Erdemir argued that the Hate Crime Initiative included two challenging issues. One concerned sexual orientation and LGBT people. The other one was the distinction between hate crimes and hate speech. According to Erdemir, the incumbent government had no interest in the former issue and only supported hate crime legislation against Islamophobia. Erdemir suggested the Prime Minister had argued for a more authoritarian law against Islamophobia which was almost a law banning blasphemy against Islam. Such legislation would have been dangerous for the non-Muslim and non-religious groups.



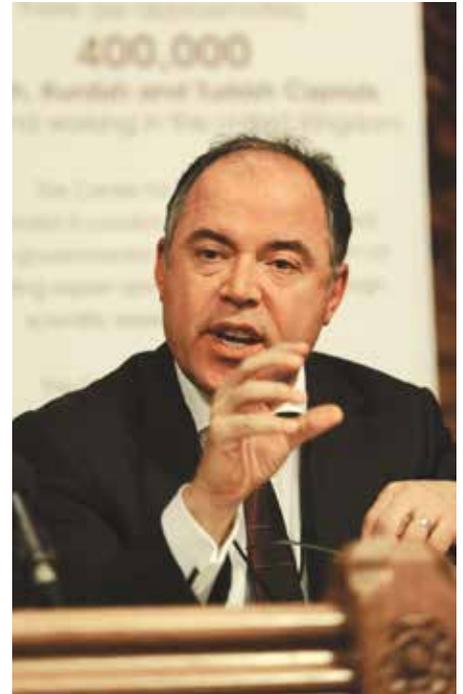
# Turkey's Path to A New Constitution: Possibilities and Obstacles

With Professor Fuat Keyman of Sabanci University and Professor Levent Koker of Atilim University

December 2012, the House of Commons

Chaired by Oksana Antonenko, Senior Political Counsellor at EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development)

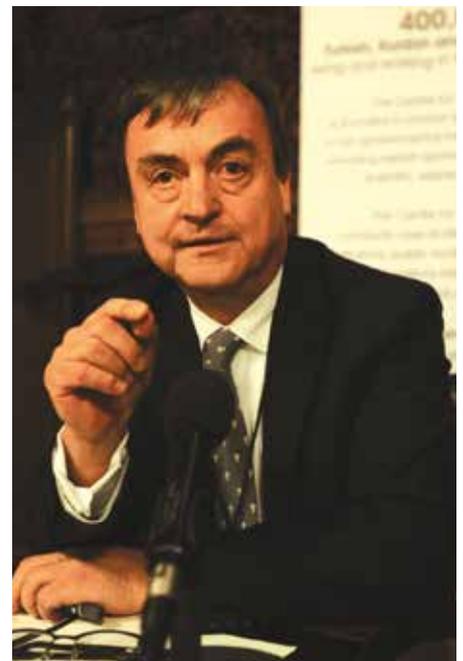
The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted a panel with expert speakers who analysed the necessity for a new constitution, the process of the parliamentary negotiations to draft a new constitution and the potential outcomes a new constitution can have in advancing Turkey's democratic reforms. Professor Keyman emphasized the significance and the urgency of Turkey's first potential civil constitution. He argued that a new constitution should ensure equality first and foremost and individual rights as well as freedoms for its diverse peoples and pluralistic society. Professor Koker analysed some articles regarding Turkishness in the current constitution and argued that the constitution reflects a nationalist approach rather than a democratic and inclusive



“ He argued that a new constitution should ensure equality first and foremost and individual rights as well as freedoms for its diverse peoples and pluralistic society. ”

constitution. Koker also indicated that the current constitution enables only centralised governance;

however democratisation requires decentralisation in order for local democratic movements to succeed.



# 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

November 2012, the House of Commons

Chaired by Siobhain Mc Donagh Labour MP for Mitcham and Morden

The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted a panel with eminent speakers who examined the conflict in Syria and Turkey's foreign policy regarding Syria. Mike Gapes MP analysed the Syrian uprising and the UN, Britain and France's response to the brutal conflict in Syria. Kadri Gursel outlined Turkey's policy on Syria and argued that Turkey expected the Syrian regime to be toppled within months, hence provided support publicly for the opposition. Gursel further argued that Turkey approached Syria with interventionist aims rather than democratic values.



Dr Bill Park analysed the role of the Kurdish minorities in the region and suggested that Turkey signals a move

towards backing opposition against the Syrian Kurds in addition to the Assad regime.



“ Turkey's policy on Syria and argued that Turkey expected the Syrian regime to be toppled within months, hence provided support publicly for the opposition.”



# 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

October 2012, the House of Commons

Chaired by Solicitor Sadiye Arslan LLB

The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted a panel with CHP politicians and academics who examined the role of religion in the formations of society and politics in Turkey. Muslum Sari indicated the financial and social restrictions that the Alawite community experiences due to the state-led policies and that the AKP government reflects a more sectarian approach against non- Sunnis in Turkey. Dr Istar Gozaydin suggested that the Department of Religious Affairs was built to establish and ensure the state's presence and role in the social organisation of religion and Sunni understanding of Islam is preminent in the state's policies. Dr Bill Park analysed the increasing conservatism of the government



“ The Department of Religious Affairs was built to establish and ensure the state's presence and role in the social organisation of religion and Sunni understanding of Islam is preminent in the state's policies. ”

and argued that the governing party came to power as a reaction against

years of oppression on religion and religious people in Turkey.



# Power and Authority

With Journalist and Political Scientist Nuray Mert

September 2012, the House of Commons

Chaired by Journalist Murat Ozcelik

The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted a forum with the acclaimed journalist and scientist Nuray Mert. Mert examined the issue of freedom of expression and restrictions on rights and liberties in Turkey. She suggested that the governing party, AKP, was promising in regards to ensuring religious liberties, especially removing the ban on wearing headscarf in public places. However, she continued, the government has represented a contradictory attitude when politically criticized and challenged. She argued that there are many people including journalists and students who have been imprisoned purely for political reasons by the government. Hence, she added, the power that the government achieved by democratic elections has not produced freedom of expression for all, but dictatorship for the centre. Mert further argued that the 'Kurdish problem' would only be resolved with peaceful negotiations with BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) and PKK, and without treating the Kurdish issue as a terrorism



“ There are many people including journalists and students who have been imprisoned purely for political reasons by the government. ”

issue. Lastly, Nuray Mert analysed Turkey's approach towards the Syrian conflict in relation to Kurdish minorities in the region.

resolved with peaceful negotiations with BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) and PKK, and without treating the Kurdish issue as a terrorism



# The Balcony of Authority: A Brief History of the New Regime in Turkey

With Author and Journalist  
Ece Temelkuran

May 2012,  
School of Oriental and African  
Studies (SOAS) University of London

Chaired by  
Professor Dr Ibrahim Sirkeci,  
Director of Regent's Centre for  
Transnational Studies

“The Centre for Turkey Studies held a debate with Ms Ece Temelkuran who gave a fruitful explanation on the current political situation in Turkey. She also gave insightful analysis on PM Erdogan’s so-called ‘balcony speeches’, conservatism in today’s Turkish society, and evaluated both the current legal cases on “KCK” (Unions of Communities in Kurdistan) and the “Ergenekon.”



# The Condition of Alawis under 10 years of AKP Government

With Dr Aykan Erdemir  
CHP MP for Bursa

May 2012,  
the House of Commons

Chaired by  
Eric Joyce MP for Falkirk

The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted a roundtable discussion with Turkish and British MPs. Dr Aykan Erdemir MP outlined the human rights violations that the Alawi community has experienced in Turkey and their struggles that they have undergone in order to achieve fundamental rights and freedoms. Erdemir suggested that the current governing party, AKP, has taken some steps towards improving the plight of the Alawis by organising various meetings and workshops. However, he argued, the



government's attempts demonstrated a lack of understanding Alawis and their causes as the government also

invited the prime suspect of the 1978 Maras Alawi massacre, Okkes Sendiller, to the workshops.



# 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

May 2012, the House of Commons  
Chaired by

Journalist Firdevs Robinson, Senior  
Research Associate of the Foreign Policy  
Centre

The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted a forum with two well-known journalists from Turkey. Mrs Zaman analysed Turkey's foreign policy regarding the Syrian conflict and the Kurdish minorities in the region. Mrs Kaplan examined the political transformation of Turkey in relation to the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Ataturk.



# Democratisation in Turkey

In collaboration with the Foreign Policy Centre

October 2011, the House of Commons

Chaired by Nick de Bois MP,

The Centre for Turkey Studies and the Foreign Policy Centre co-hosted a public meeting in the House of Commons with an acclaimed panel of speakers including: Lord Alderdice, Nick de Bois MP, Firdevs Robinson (Journalist), Jonathan Fryer and Adam Hug (Academics). The discussion focused on democratisation and minority rights in Turkey.



# Westminster Forum with Cengiz Candar

With Cengiz Candar

October 2011, the House of Commons

Chaired by Dr Ayla Göl

Prominent Turkish journalist and columnist, Cengiz Candar, was a guest speaker from Turkey at the Centre for Turkey Studies Westminster forum alongside Dr Ayla Göl from the University of Aberystwyth, Andy Slaughter MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Emma Reynolds MP, Eric Joyce MP and Dr Muhammed Kayani MP from Iraqi Parliament. Over 150 guests attended Mr Candar's speech in which he presented his findings of his report published recently by Turkey-based think-tank TESEV: "Leaving the mountains: How may the PKK lay down arms? Freeing the Kurdish question from violence". The panel also highlighted the importance of positive steps made by Turkey's incumbent government under the leadership of the AKP party regarding political reforms and democratisation. The discussants further emphasised the need for peaceful negotiations to find a permanent solution to the Kurdish issue in Turkey.





## Westminster Forum with Hasan Cemal and Bejan Matur

Veteran journalist Hasan Cemal from the 'Milliyet' newspaper and Bejan Matur from the 'Zaman' daily, both prominent columnists in Turkey were keynote speakers at the CTS Westminster Forum in the House of Commons discussing

"Democratisation and Reforms in Turkey: Achievements and Challenges". Other distinguished speakers included Meg Hillier MP, Keith Vaz MP, Eric Joyce MP and Lord Hylton.

## Westminster Forum with Ali Bayramoglu

In December 2011,

Dr Ali Bayramoglu, acclaimed columnist, TV broadcaster and academic from Turkey was keynote speaker at the Centre for Turkey Studies Westminster Forum in the House of Commons titled "Democratisation and Reforms in Turkey - What future for Cyprus?"

Dr. Ali Bayramoglu, acclaimed columnist, TV broadcaster and academic from Turkey was the Centre for Turkey Studies keynote speaker at the Centre for Turkey Studies Westminster Forum in the House of Commons entitled "Democratisation and Reforms in Turkey - What future for Cyprus?". Other guests included: Nick De Bois MP, Richard Ottoway MP, Chair of Foreign Affairs Select Committee, Simon Hughes MP, Deputy leader of Liberal Democrats, Academic Dr. Bill Kissane and Mr. Ilker Kilic of the Republican Turkish Party from Cyprus. The meeting was chaired by Cllr Ertan Hurer, London Borough of Enfield. Dr. Bayramoglu focused on the need for Turkey to advance its democratisation process and political reform initiated under the AKP government led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Our guest speaker and panel particularly highlighted the need to balance the civil-military leadership and their role in politics in Turkey.



## Westminster Forum Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat

The CTS hosted Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat, former deputy leader of AK Party to speak at the Westminster Forum focusing on 'Turkey's Path to A New Constitution'. Mr Firat shared his insights with a public audience in the House of Commons and

spoke in detail about the future of Turkey's constitution and the path to democratization and political reform. Other panelists joining our guest from Turkey included Mr Virendra Sharma MP, Eric Joyce MP, and Michael Fallon MP.





Page  
**72-81**

**Joint Forum**  
**2015 - 2016**

Page  
**82-89**

**Joint Forum**  
**2014 - 2015**

Page  
**90-92**

**Joint Forum**  
**2013 - 2014**

Page  
**93-94**

**Joint Forum**  
**2012 - 2013**

**Joint Forums 2011-2016**

# CEFTUS and English PEN Roundtable with Can Dundar

Keynote speaker Can Dundar, Author and Journalist

Chaired by Maureen Freely, President of English PEN  
In partnership with English PEN

29 June 2016,  
Free Word Centre

Dundar and journalists discussed press freedom and the challenges to freedom of expression in Turkey.

Can Dündar is editor-in-chief of the newspaper Cumhuriyet. He is currently appealing a sentence of five years and ten months for revealing state secrets, handed down earlier this month, which has been widely criticised by human rights groups. His colleague Erdem Gül received a sentence of five years.



The two journalists were charged last November following the publication of reports claiming that intelligence services were sending arms to jihadis in Syria.



# Changing Kurdish Dynamics in the Middle East

With keynote speakers Cengiz Candar, veteran journalist and author, Dr Zeynep Kaya, research fellow at the LSE Middle East Centre, and Robert Lowe, Manager of the LSE Middle East Centre.

Hosted and chaired by Sharon Hodgson MP  
In partnership with the LSE Middle East Centre

22 March 2016,  
House of Commons

Mr Cengiz Candar stressed that, on the 100 year anniversary of Sykes-Picot, it remains clear that all sides are against the superficial boundaries drawn then. Daesh have established their 'caliphate' and removed the frontiers of Sykes-Picot. The Kurds are also against Sykes-Picot, Mr Candar said, which divided a potential nation, a community, and identity between two imperial territories. By the divisions that happened under Sykes-Picot Kurds were, manipulated by foreign forces to dismember Turkey and Syria, Mr Candar argued. Developments since the end of the Cold War saw a new paradigm in Kurdish affairs emerge, new dynamics of the Kurdish Question. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) emerged as a quasi-proto independent state in Iraq. Kurds have come to perform new roles in history, Mr Candar said, which has become a more widespread phenomenon since the developments in Rojava. Without the Kurds, Mr Candar claimed, there can be no Middle East to be redefined or shaped.



Mr Robert Lowe spoke of the past and future of Rojava. Six years ago, he said, no one was talking about Rojava. World War I saw imperial western powers imposing provisions on multiple ethnicities in the Middle East. The situation remained relatively stagnant until 2011, when the grass-roots rose to fight the artificial, unhelpful structure of the nation-state. Mr Lowe offered up some possible solutions to the conflict in the Middle East: a bottom-up government by the people and for the people, in which all of Syria is de-centralised. Not fragmented, he stressed, that does not suit the people. Rojava, he argued, can help the rest of Syria, through their history and ideology of tolerance, inclusion, and representation. However, international support remains shallow.

Dr Zeynep Kaya spoke on the peace talks in Turkey. The peace talks were not a real peace process, she said, they lacked guarantees, international brokers, and incentives on both sides. It was a ceasefire process that looked like a talk, and ultimately was a missed opportunity. The Turkish government will only negotiate when the PKK surrenders and gives up arms. The Kurds, on the other hand, believe the government has deceived them. While there were roots of reconciliation there, Dr Kaya argued, the distrust ran deeper on both sides. She called for a belief in politics, in discussing the Kurdish Question on a democratic level to regain this misplaced hope. The impact of relations within Syria make the possibility for a new peace process less likely, Dr Kaya said. It has altered political and Kurdish dynamics



# CEFTUS and IPC Istanbul Roundtable Meeting on 'Post-Election Turkey' – Part 1

With keynote speakers Lord William Wallace, Lord Peter Hain and Dr Ersin Kalaycioglu, Senior Scholar at IPC and Professor at Sabanci University

Chaired by Dr Bill Park, Senior Lecturer in the Defense Studies Department, King's College London

5 January 2016,  
Istanbul Policy Centre, Sabanci University,  
Istanbul

Lord William Wallace presented his impressions of how people in the UK perceive Turkey, conveying their multiple images of the country. Overall, the Gezi protests were perceived positively in the UK, albeit confused as part of the Arab Spring. Turkey's attitude towards Daesh and the Kurds in contrast is perceived rather negatively. Explaining the UK's concerns over the Kurdish question, Lord Wallace indicated that the way the UK had handled its experience with Irish, Scottish, or Welsh nationalism may serve as an example of rapprochement with the Kurds.

According to Lord Peter Hain, people in the UK criticise Turkey or undermining human rights, attacks on the media, its current embrace of Sunni sectarianism, and the abandonment of the ceasefire between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Comparing the Kurdish question with the Irish case in the UK, Lord Hain mentioned that negotiations between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the British government took place in a non-military, political fashion. Geopolitically speaking, Turkey may have a crucial role to play in the Middle East in the coming years and could possibly function as a non-sectarian force between Sunni and Shiite groups in the region. Thus, Turkey could and will play an important role in bringing stability and peace, however, only if the government moves towards adopting



a non-sectarian policy both internally toward its domestic opponents and externally in the region. Dr Ersin Kalaycioglu indicated that current debates in Turkey are affected by three incidents that occurred in 2013: (1) the Gezi Park protests; (2) the revelations by the police and financial authorities that uncovered corruptions and entanglements amongst several ministers and their families on December 17, 2013; and (3) failures in foreign policy. Moreover, Prof. Kalaycioglu added that the local elections campaign was characterised by the AKP's utilisation of the media, to which he

referenced the OECD report declaring the elections not fair. Turkey's military forces seem to have moved into a major confrontation with the PKK beginning in March 2015, climaxing in July and carrying on still today. The conflict within the country caused the AKP's priorities, as well as the Turkish voters', to shift from economics to security, resulting in the outcome of the November 1, 2015 election. Dr. Kalaycioglu predicts that an amendment to the constitution, which will be voted on in a referendum, may be used by the AKP to promote the idea of presidentialism.



# CEFTUS and IPC Istanbul Roundtable Meeting on 'Post-Election Turkey' – Part 2

With keynote speakers Dilek Kurban, Marie Curie Fellow at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, Co-Chair of the Dahrendorf working group 'Europe and Turkey', Dr Fuat Keyman, IPC Director, Dr Bill Park

Chaired by Dr Senem Aydin-Duzgit, Senior Scholar at IPC

5 January 2016,  
Istanbul Policy Centre, Sabanci University,  
Istanbul

Dr Bill Park stated that the Kurdish political movement has become segmented and lacks unification due to the disparate policies of the PKK and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). Dr. Park compared the Scottish case in the UK and the situation in Turkey, adding that whereas Scottish culture has been incorporated into British culture under a British umbrella identity, Turkish nationalism was not fabricated to include ethnic and cultural diversity. For him, there has never been a real peace process in Turkey because the process lacks the concepts of self-determination, decentralisation, autonomy, or federalism.

Dr Keyman emphasised that in the beginning of the peace process, the shift from conflict to politics was undertaken; however, since the elections in June 2015, it has evolved to the contrary. The HDP would have provided a favourable opportunity to politically negotiate the Kurdish question between the PKK and the Turkish government. Furthermore, the current developments in the Middle East regarding ISIS must be taken seriously because of the conditions of the failed states in Syria and Iraq. With regards to the refugee situation, it should be mentioned that states like Russia, Iran, the United States, or Saudi Arabia that have geopolitical interests in the region



have not experienced flows of refugee migration. These circumstances have given rise to the PKK's determination to focus on conflict rather than a political resolution.

Dilek Kurban elaborated on the attempts to provide a solution in the Kurdish question as well as on the historical roots of the Kurds' desire for cultural and political recognition. Kurban criticised the deficiency of the legal framework in the peace process, which resembles the governmental approach in other areas such as the Alevi Opening.

The reform process in Turkey as part of the EU accession process provided a shift in the Kurdish question from a legal process to a political approach as Kurdish rights became an issue of the Turkish parliament. Kurban explained that the southeastern region of Turkey has been in a state of exception, citing the implementation of martial law in the area. The discourse of the AKP and the media coverage have had a significant impact on how Turkish society perceives the current political climate and the Kurdish question in general.



# RWCA, CEFTUS and Kurdish Progress Joint Forum with HDP Co-Chair Figen Yuksekdag

With keynote speaker Mrs Figen Yuksekdag  
(Translation by Andrew Penny)

Hosted by Seema Malhotra MP  
Chaired by Lord William Wallace and Joan Ryan MP

In partnership with Refugee Workers Cultural Association (RWCA) and the Centre for Kurdish Progress

30 November 2015,  
House of Commons

Mrs Figen Yuksekdag opened stating that she had come from an increasingly unstable Turkey with a heated atmosphere. She stated that President Erdogan had promised stability if his party were elected, but despite the AKP (Justice and Development Party) parliamentary majority, he has been unable to end the country's difficulties as promised. She continued, saying that Erdogan had stoked up tension in Turkey and that he created an atmosphere of fear. She added that many felt obliged to vote AKP to provide the stability necessary to end the violence, but the instability has increased. Mrs Yuksekdag stated that a government has been established and a cabinet has been sworn in, but that the rights that people have struggled for in Turkey have been taken away one by one. She added that opponents to Erdogan still wish for democracy and change. She said that 6.5 million people had voted for the HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) and that the many others who had voted for parties other than the AKP had demonstrated their opposition.

She went on to state that the HDP's election results in November were a great success given the difficulties faced by the party at this time. However worst of all, the AKP's policies of violence and repression were maintained in spite of the electoral victory. In so doing, the AKP has not acted like a victorious party,



and has opted for these policies to enforce stability, instead of reaching out and attempting to create unity in the country. She also stated that these actions show that the AKP has no interest in dialogue with moderate figures. She concluded that with its policies the government wants polarisation and not unity.

She added that despite the government's scaring some HDP supporters away from the polls, these supporters still believe in the party's struggle for democratisation. She

called for the government to resume its peace talks with PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and added that the HDP is advocating an alliance between the Turkish government and this movement. She stated that this was crucial for the Middle East, as Turkey is situated right in the midst of this crisis, and did not have the luxury of being able to look on from afar like Western countries. She concluded stating her belief that a peaceful and democratic Middle East and Mesopotamia in which all peoples are recognised was possible.



# CEFTUS and IPC Roundtable 'Post-Election Turkey and Economy'

With keynote speakers Professor Fuat Keyman, Director of Istanbul Policy Centre, Prof Izak Atiyas, Senior Scholar at Istanbul Policy Center and Professor at Sabanci University, and Lord Peter Hain

Hosted by Keith Vaz MP  
Chaired by Baroness Jan Royall  
In partnership with Istanbul Policy Centre of Sabanci University

18 November 2015,  
House of Commons

Baroness Jan Royall in her opening speech emphasised the important role that Turkey plays with regards to critical developments in the region. Lord Peter Hain in his speech concentrated on the outcome of the November 2015 elections and the implications of Turkey's foreign policy in the region. He referred to Turkey's pivotal role with regards to Syrian refugees. He also shared his views on the emergence of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) and how vital it is for the peace process that both the state and the Kurdish armed and political groups remain tolerant to each other. He indicated that only an inclusive government can achieve the ambitions of the peace process. Prof Fuat Keyman analysed Turkey's domestic and foreign policy. He argued that despite the government's somewhat totalitarian outlook, one party government may provide



stability for Turkey and the region providing that democratic reforms are introduced. He analysed the issues surrounding Turkish foreign and domestic policies with regards to fight against ISIS, Turkey's neighbours being 'failed-states' and the refugee problem. These issues, he argued, are all in relation to each other and affect not only Turkey but also Europe.

Prof Izak Atiyas outlined Turkey's economic growth over the last decade. He stated that despite high productivity in economy with

new growth centres and structural changes for improvement in income distribution, industry has not become more productive and there has been a drop in employment in agriculture. Prof Atiyas also referred to questions over independence of the Turkish Central Bank and polarisation in business community due to the conflict between the AKP and the Gulen movement. He stated that a reform package which will invigorate the economy is expected after the November elections, but how this will manifest is not yet clear.



# CEFTUS and IPC Joint Forum 'Post-Election Turkey'

With keynote speakers Professor Fuat Keyman, Director of Istanbul Policy Centre, Lord Peter Hain, Lord David Owen and Lord William Wallace

Hosted by Catherine West MP  
Chaired by Professor Ayla Gol of Aberstwyth University  
In partnership with Istanbul Policy Centre of Sabanci University

17 November 2015,  
House of Commons

Professor Fuat Keyman stated that by returning a Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, Turkey's voters chose stability and a strong government. This, he argued, has meant that any discussion of Turkish politics has the AKP as its main reference point. He stated that this "New Turkey" may not be healthy for Turkey's politics. The main problem facing Turkey is the refugee crisis, intertwined with those presented by the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) and "failed" or "non-state" problems in Iraq and Syria. He added that Turkish society is becoming increasingly polarised which has created mistrust between the government and Turkish society. He concluded stating that AKP's electoral victory presented the party with a second chance, to govern rather than rule, and to lead rather than having hegemony, which would help it to tackle Turkey's problems in a more meaningful and effective way.

Lord Peter Hain began by discussing Turkey's pivotal political role in its



location between Europe and Asia. He stated that in 2002 when the AKP first came to government, there was a great deal of hope in Turkey that democratisation would follow; this according to Lord Hain was not to be. He also expressed disappointment at Turkey's policy towards the Syrian conflict in its viewing the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime as the primary objective, rather than defeating IS. He did however express positivity regarding the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) that he argued could serve as a progressive actor in that it would benefit a successful peace process between the Kurdish militants the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Turkish government in a style similar to that conducted by Britain during the Northern Ireland peace process.

Lord Owen began by discussing the situation of the Turkish economy and its relationship with the European Union and European Economic



Area. He stated that Turkey should be allowed to join the European Economic Area next year, to show that Turkey, as a Muslim-majority country, is welcome in Europe. According to Lord Owen, this economic partnership would help overcome political issues between Turkey and the EU, which would help a new Turkish accession process. He concluded that this would benefit Turkey and the EU in these changing times.

Lord William Wallace discussed the nature of the AKP as a grassroots and more socially representative party when it first came to government, in comparison with the other more traditional top-down parties. Lord Wallace concluded stating that for Turkey's benefit, the Turkish government ought to preserve and encourage its democracy by allowing for greater dissent and more opposition voices to be heard.

# The Syrian War's Impact on Kurdish Politics

With keynote speakers Dr Cengiz Gunes Associate Lecturer at the Open University, Robert Lowe, Manager of the Middle East Centre of LSE, and David Hartwell, Director of the Middle East Insider

Hosted by Kate Osamor MP  
Chaired by Tim Eaton, Chatham House Middle East and North Africa programme  
In partnership with the Centre for Kurdish Progress

16 November 2015,  
House of Commons



Robert Lowe opened by discussing the dominant trends in Kurdish nationalism that have emerged during the Syrian conflict following the establishment of the Rojava canton. These included the dominance of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), the development of an autonomous Rojava in and of itself, and the internationalisation of Kurdish politics. This is due to the PYD being highly disciplined with a clear agenda for its regions, whereas others have been fractious and ill-disciplined. Mr Lowe also noted that Kurds in Syria had not necessarily sought to have such levels of autonomy as had others elsewhere. This, according to Mr Lowe has changed, and there is little likelihood of a return to the previous status quo. Mr Lowe added that as a result of this leadership that the PYD is undertaking a democratic ground-up re-construction of government in Rojava. He also listed several problems that complicate the position of the PYD. He stated for instance that despite its aspiring

to democracy, the PYD has often conducted authoritarian and heavy handed governance, human rights abuses such as arbitrary arrests, and the movement's misuse of the People's Protection Units (YPG) forces.

Mr Cengiz Gunes, stated that with the Syrian conflict, the development of a pan-Kurdish politics has occurred, with Turkish Kurds going to join YPG fighters in Syria. He noted that violence has also spilled over the Turkish border, as shown by the attacks of IS on various Kurdish movements within Turkey in Suruc, Diyarbakir and Ankara. He also noted that the Turkish government has declared that it will not tolerate Kurdish gains in Syria, seeing PYD relations with the PKK as a threat to its own security, given that the Turkish state and this insurgent movement are currently at war. He further expressed doubt about a peace-process between the PKK and Turkey being successful, given that

the current state of the Middle East would mean it is unlikely that the PKK would disarm, one of Turkey's main conditions for peace.

Mr David Hartwell began by stating that Turkish foreign policy relating to the Syrian conflict has been incoherent and inconsistent. He stated for instance, that Turkey's focus on defeating Bashar al-Assad and preventing Kurdish autonomy and prioritising these goals rather than defeating IS have caused its aims to diverge from those of Western countries. Mr Hartwell continued stating his belief that it is unlikely that Assad will fall given the role of Russian intervention, which has further stunted Turkey's aims. This according to Mr Hartwell has ultimately left the Turkish government reliant on the actions of other agents within the region, rather than being a decisive player, which is now incapable of imposing its diplomatic aims for a post-conflict Syria, having failed to develop a preferred vision.



# CEFTUS and RUSI Roundtable Mr Cengiz Candar

30 October 2015,  
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

'Snap Elections in Turkey: Now and Then'

The Centre for Turkey Studies in partnership with Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) hosted a roundtable with veteran journalist and author Mr Cengiz Candar.

Days before the General Elections in Turkey, Mr Candar shared his analysis on the tumultuous developments of recent months, from violent clashes between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Turkey's policy over Syria to prospects of a change to a presidential system and making of a first civilian constitution.

This event was held under the Chatham House rule.



# COMING SOON



For enquiries, please contact on 020 7183 4272

# CEFTUS and Centre for Kurdish Progress Turkey's War in the South: Kurds, ISIS and Assad

With keynote speakers Dr Neil Quilliam, Acting Head of Chatham House's Middle East and North Africa Programme, and Jonathan Friedman, Turkey and Middle East Expert at Stroz Friedberg and Associate at the Centre for Turkey Studies

Hosted by Diane Abbott MP Chaired by Raziye Akkoc, Telegraph Journalist

19 October 2015,  
House of Commons

Mr Friedman opened stating that Turkey is fighting three wars in the south: against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a proxy war against the Assad regime in Syria and a "phony" war against Daesh. He stated that the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) has been seen by the Development and Justice Party (AKP) as a powerful threat to its aims to maintain a one party government, and for this reason, the Turkish government has resumed its hot war with the PKK to discredit the HDP in the public eye. He added that Iran and Russia have out manoeuvred Turkey in the proxy war occurring during the Syrian conflict, having committed far more resources and military personnel, including ground troops in Iran's case. He argued that despite Turkey's viewing IS as an enemy, it is unlikely that Turkey would undertake any effective action



against this movement, because of its role in keeping Kurdish militant forces pre-occupied, fighting IS rather than against the Turkish state. He argued that this policy has disadvantaged Turkey in that it opens the country to more attacks, making the country unstable, that it has pushed the US to support the PYD and other Kurdish movements and made President Erdogan personally unpopular.

Dr Quilliam spoke at length about the war in Syria against the Assad regime. He stated that Russia's intervention in Syria has been a game changer, having strengthened

the Assad regime and making it increasingly likely that he will be a part of the ultimate solution to the crisis. He stated that a "no-fly" zone with a UN resolution would not be possible because Russia would vote against it as part of the UN Security Council. Dr Quilliam continued, stating that US and Russian interests in Syria have meant that the US-backed Kurds are strong, that the Russian and Iranian-backed Assad regime is also looking stronger, but also that IS remains strong, and within this framework, Turkey's ambitions to shape Syria both now and in the future are increasingly strained as a result.



# 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

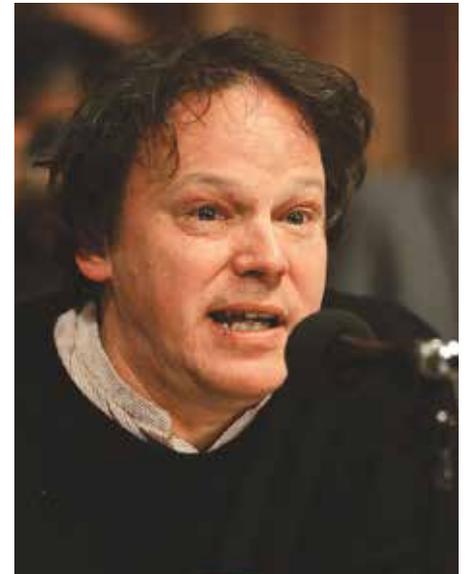
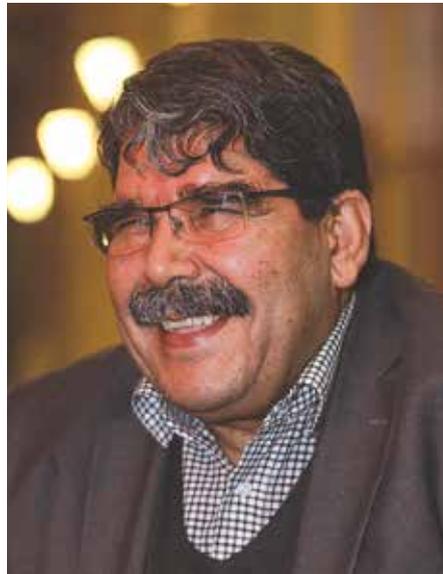
With keynote speaker Mr Salih Muslim, co-chair of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), other speakers included Mr Michael Stephens of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Dr David L. Phillips of Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Dr David Graeber of the London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



# 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.



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 of violence in family situations.

Ms Arwa Ibrahim on the other hand, argued that women in Turkey were



# 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

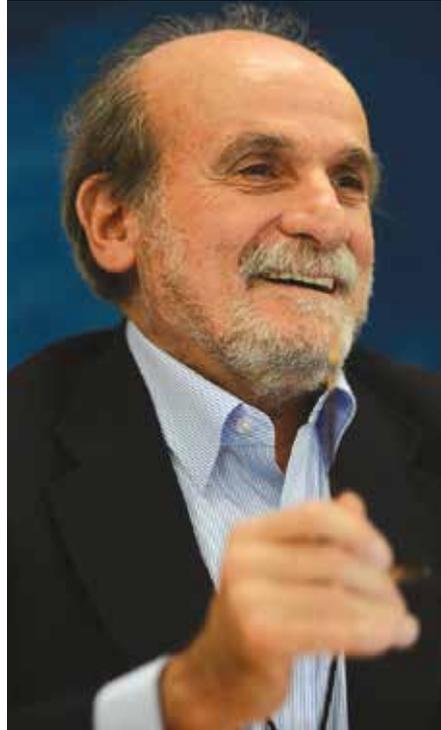
Chaired by Wayne David Labour MP for Caerphilly

Hosted by Fabian Hamilton Labour MP for Leeds North East

18 November 2014, Portcullis House

Mr 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

Dr 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.





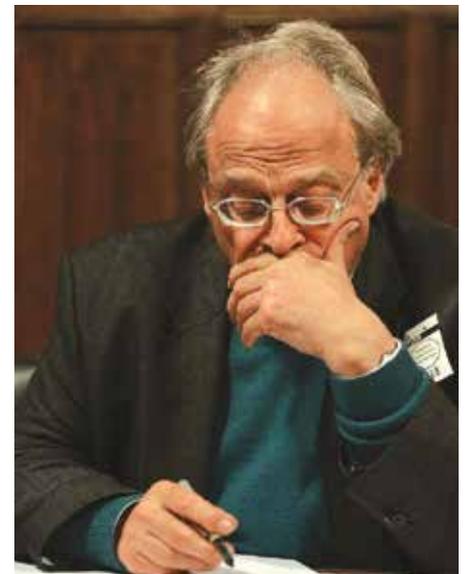
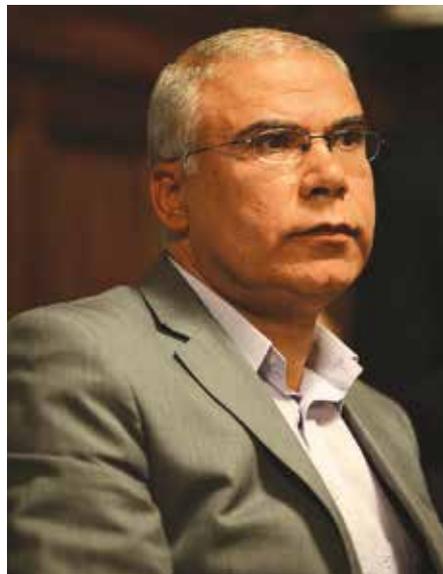
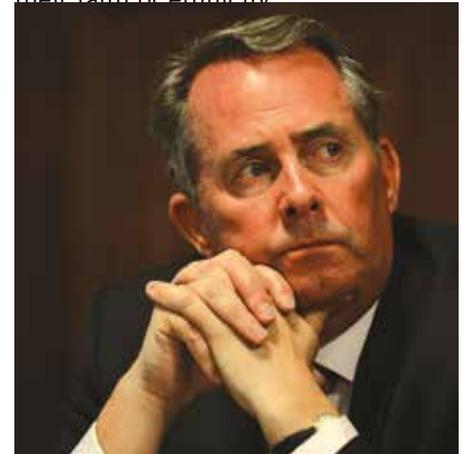
Mr Bill Park asserted that the West should rethink its relationships with the PKK, the PYD and even Syria's Assad and that a better understanding of the region and of IS was necessary in order to find an enduring solution.

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



# The Centre for Turkey Studies, the London Kurdish Institute and SOAS Kurdish Society Joint Forum

## Turkey's Kurdish Question: Past, Present and Future

April 2014, the House of Commons and School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London

This joint forum was chaired by Ms Rosa Burc, chair of SOAS Kurdish Society. Professor Christine Allison of University of Exeter made an opening speech. She praised Dr Besikci's work and his contribution to Kurdish studies.

Turkish sociologist and Kurdologist Dr Ismail Besikci made a comprehensive analysis of the Kurdish issue in relation to freedom of expression and the official ideology of the Republic of Turkey. Besikci asserted that academic freedom is not sufficient when freedom of expression is restricted in a country. He stated that freedom of expression is still restricted in Turkey although Turkey established over a hundred universities since the 1980s. He discussed that the official ideology is the most significant component of the state of Turkey as it dictates not



only state bureaucracy and military but also universities, press and judiciary. He pointed out that Kurdish language and Kurdish identity and ideology existed before and at the time of founding the Republic of Turkey, however, the official ideology dismissed Kurdishness entirely. Dr Besikci argued that science

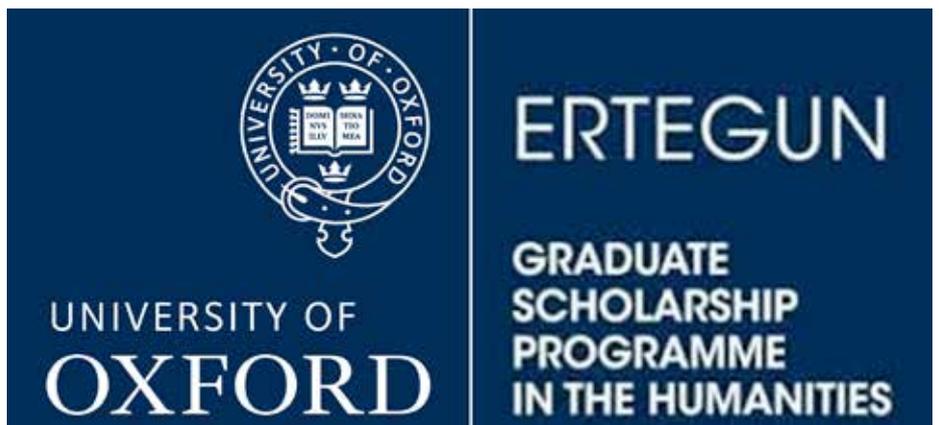
can improve only when the official ideology is consistently criticised. Dr Besikci stated that there are 200 mass graves where about 3000 Kurds are estimated to be buried. He argued that the Kurdish issue is not an issue of human rights and a question of minority rights, but it is a question of territory.

# Centre for Turkey Studies and Ertegun House (University of Oxford) Joint Forum

## Freedom of Expression in Turkey during the EU Accession Progress

June 2013, Ertegun House University of Oxford

Keynote speakers Prof Yaman Akdeniz, Istanbul Bilgi University and Dr Kerem Altıparmak, Ankara University addressed the current state of the freedom of expression in Turkey, ten years since the first government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and seven years after the start of accession negotiations with the European Union.



# The Centre for Turkey Studies and SOAS Kurdish Society Joint Forum

## The Gezi Spirit and Its Impacts: Recent Developments in Turkey

December 2013, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London

Chaired by consultant Sara Whyatt who specialises in freedom of expression in Turkey and Dr Omer Tekdemir of Durham University, thinker and author Mr Ihsan Eliacik shared his analysis on the Gezi movement in this forum. Eliacik discussed the meaning of the Gezi Spirit which remained strong in the Turkish political context. Eliacik attributed the Gezi Spirit as creating a new postmodern era which was post-Kemalism and Kemalist elitism. In turn, he described five concrete concepts which not only demonstrated what the Gezi Spirit was, but also represented Turkey's future which as a dream to be realised. These five concepts were love for nature, freedom, respect, pluralism and anti-capitalism. He stated the youth were there to protect the existing freedoms they felt were being threatened. Eliacik discussed



what was unique with Gezi and how they dealt with freedoms of one group clashing with those of another. Flags of Atatürk flew alongside those of PKK leader Ocalan and the Kurdish flag, but both Atatürkist and Kurdish groups showed each other respect. The ability to hold Friday prayers and to have women wearing headscarves protesting alongside secular individuals, Eliacik suggested, also showed a high level of mutual respect. Eliacik stated that

the first thing that lost importance was money, which reflected the anti-capitalist nature of the movement. Referring to the corruption scandal in Turkey, Eliacik noted that any dissenting voice and any action against the incumbent government in Turkey would suffer from the same accusations that the Gezi protestors had to encounter. They would be labelled as 'terrorists' and 'enemies of the nation'.



# The Centre for Turkey Studies and Refugee Workers Cultural Association (RWCA) Joint Forum

## Kurdish Issue in Turkey and Problems of Democratic Participation

April 2013, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London

Keynote speaker of this forum was eminent academic Professor Busra Ersanli. The forum was chaired by Ibrahim Avcil of RWCA. Prof. Ersanli's analysed the political representation and participation of the Kurdish minority in Turkey. Ersanli examined the issue at three levels of political activity which were parliamentary, local and intermediary levels. Prof. Ersanli called the 10% electoral threshold for political parties to enter the National Assembly the most significant obstacle impeding Kurdish political representation. Ersanli discussed the history of the Kurdish issue historically and said that restrictions on Kurdish political activity remained. She said that murders of Kurdish leaders, the closures of five Kurdish political parties, continuous trials of Kurdish political activists and intellectuals and about 900 imprisoned party members all demonstrated grave political inequality in Turkey. Ersanli examined the Kurdish political representation and participation at local level, stating



that the Kurdish population had demanded de-centralisation and self-government for more than a century. Ersanli pointed out that modern Turkey's first constitution in 1921 allowed regional government, but this was ruled out in the 1924 constitution. She added that this information along with many other

historical facts were not taught in Turkish school books. Prof. Ersanli concluded by examining the intermediary level of Kurdish political activity. She stated that politicians and the courts abused several human rights associations with lawyers who assisted people in remote parts of the southeast.



## Centre for Turkey Studies and Politics Exposed (LMU)

### What the eye doesn't see: a national discourse on urban intervention, and Istanbul's changing landscape

February 2013,  
London Metropolitan University

The Centre for Turkey Studies in partnership with Politics Exposed (LMU) organised a public forum about the political reflections of urban planning models in Turkey, particularly Istanbul's. The keynote speakers were Atakan Guven of Space Syntax Ltd and Omer Cavusoglu of London School of Economics and Political Science. Guven analysed planning practice in Ankara and Istanbul since the late-Ottoman era and suggested a strong correlation between 'western inspired' nation-building and urban planning of these two major cities. Guven added that the 'turkification' policies and some political turning points affected Istanbul's urban planning. Cavusoglu examined the recent developments



regarding Istanbul's regeneration project. He suggested that the change of some legislations and new laws enabled the construction companies to make profit whilst dismissing the environmental

concerns of the city. He pointed out the extensive powers the politicians have in deciding the future of the city, and how the demands of the local communities have been ignored by officials in this process.

## Centre for Turkey Studies and International Forum for Democracy and Peace (IFDP)

### Can an emerging middle class offer a new order and the role of Turkish youth

January 2013,  
the House of Commons

The Centre for Turkey Studies held a joint forum with IFDP. The founder and chairman of IFDP, Tuna Beklevic who was an advisor for the current Turkish minister for EU Affairs Egemen Bagis, was the keynote speaker. The event was hosted by the Labour MP Chris Williamson at the House of Commons and was chaired by Siddik Bakir of the Centre for Turkey Studies. Many guests from different communities attended the event.



# Centre for Turkey Studies and Chatham House

## Turkey and the Arab World: Ambition and Evolution

June 2012, Chatham House

The Centre for Turkey Studies held a joint event with world renowned think-tank Chatham House. The event was chaired by Sir David Logan

KCMG, former British Ambassador to Turkey (1997-2001). The speakers were Mr Taha Ozhan - Director General of the SETA foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, Columnist Lale Kemal of

daily Today's Zaman, Taraf and Jane's Defence Weekly, Dr Fuat Keyman- Director of the Istanbul Policy Centre and Mr Fadi Hakura - Associate Fellow at Chatham House



# Centre for Turkey Studies and Institute for Strategic Dialogue

## Talking Turkey: Can Europe get on the same page?

April 2012,  
Institute for Strategic Dialogue

The Centre for Turkey Studies organised a round table discussion in collaboration with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) at the ISD offices in London, Mayfair. The participants were Jonathan Powell, former Downing Street Chief of Staff; Sasha Havlicek, Chief Executive Officer and Director of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD); Ivan Krastev, ISD Senior Adviser; Ann Wyman, Senior Adviser at Gatehouse and Cengiz Candar, veteran journalist and author from Turkey. The invitation only round table explored how the UK and the Europe might engage more coherently and strategically with Turkey beyond the parameters of the stalled EU accession process. The other participants of the round table included Dr. Tunc Aybak of Middlesex University; Katrin

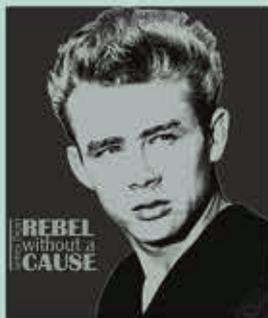


Bennhold of International Herald Tribune; Feryal Smith of Hackney City Council; Tina Fordham, Citigroup Director of Political Risk; Jordana Friedman, Deputy Director, Institute for Strategic Dialogue; Baroness

Meral Ece, House of Lords; Jonathan Fryer, Lecturer at SOAS University; Stanley Johnson, retired politician; Philip Stephen, Assistant Editor at the Financial Times and Mustafa Topkaya, London-based entrepreneur.



Few minutes walk to the Houses of Parliament, the London Eye, Southbank Centre and the Royal National Theatre



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## Women's Rights and Achievements Reception

Page **96-97**



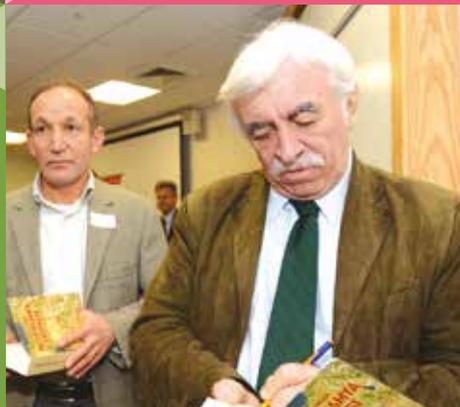
## CEFTUS Networking Reception

Page **98**

## Cengiz Candar Book Launch

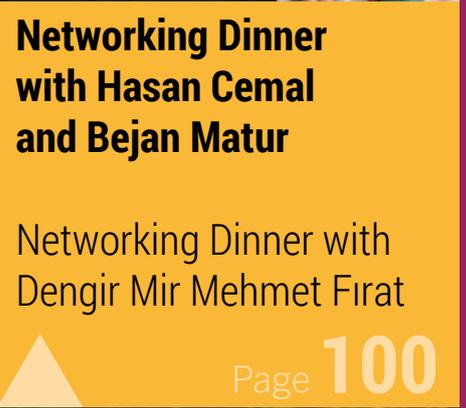
Centre for Turkey Studies and IFDP Reception at the House of Commons

Page **99**



## Launch of ceftus.org at the House of Commons

Page **99**



## Networking Dinner with Hasan Cemal and Bejan Matur

Networking Dinner with Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat

Page **100**

## CEFTUS Olympics Recruitment Event with the Cemevi

Page **100**



## Center for Turkey Studies Launch Dinner

Networking Dinner with Douglas Alexander, Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Page **101**



# Women's Rights and Achievements Reception

On March 2nd 2016, in the lead up to International Women's Day, The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted the Women's Rights and Achievements Reception in the House of Commons. The reception was kindly hosted by Caroline Flint, Labour MP for Don Valley, with additional speaking from Baroness Jan Royall of Blaisdon and Tom Blake, Liberal Democratic MP for Carshalton and Wallington. Women of contemporary Turkey have achieved many political and social rights, up to globally accepted women's rights standards. Nevertheless, they have had to cope with traditional patriarchal values in Turkey's male-dominated society. In Turkey, more and more women are participating in public life and occupy senior positions, including some female representation in the Turkish parliament. Although violence against women is on the increase in Turkey, and sexist discourses dominate Turkey's political and social spectrum, women throughout Turkey, with many grassroots movements, protest against inequalities that they encounter in their everyday lives. This CEFTUS event celebrated the achievements of women of all ethnicities and religions from Turkey and their invaluable contributions to Turkey's progress in many fields. The reception welcomed all, particularly those women originating from Turkey, with the aim to bring women and men together to raise awareness of women's rights.

Labour MP Caroline Flint opened the reception by providing a background into the current political landscape in Turkey, some achievements of Turkish women as well as some of the struggles they face. She referenced the fact that in the 2015 Turkish elections a record number of women – 81 – were elected to parliament. This surge in women's political representation is in line with the theme for this year's International Women's Day of gender parity; the hopes for 50/50 representation by



2030. Ms Flint drew attention to parallels between the situation of women in the UK and Turkey. In the UK two women every week die as a result of domestic violence. In Turkey, there are huge concerns that violence against women is increasing. In 2010 fourteen times more women were murdered than in 2003. In regards to employment, Ms Flint noted that in the last ten years, women's employment in Turkey has dropped from 35% to 25%. However, more people, especially women, are speaking up. Ms Flint highlighted solidarity in Turkey, in which women are helping other women to become businesswomen. In the most senior ranks of Turkish business, women hold a quarter of board seats in the biggest companies.



Baroness Jan Royall spoke to the reception of her recent visit to Diyarbakir, in Southeastern Turkey. She extended her support to the women of the Turkish and Kurdish communities, especially those living in the curfew areas in Southeastern Turkey. In such areas, Baroness Royall said, democracy, the rule of law, and the fundamental freedoms to which every human being is entitled, are not being fully respected. There are fundamental violations of freedom in Kurdish areas. Baroness Royall spoke of her meeting with a female co-mayor in Diyarbakir, who was under investigation for publicly speaking out on the need for a decentralised system of government. At the time of her visit there were twenty four elected representatives





**This CEFTUS event celebrated the achievements of women of all ethnicities and religions from Turkey and their invaluable contributions to Turkey’s progress in many fields.**

in prison, with an additional thirty under investigation. Baroness Royall spoke of the bravery of the women she met from curfew areas, areas in which residents cannot leave, as the state believe that they are PKK supporters or members. Baroness Royall called for the need of the state

to respect fundamental human rights and UN obligations. Whilst the UK is a friend of Turkey and wants Turkey to thrive, Baroness Royall stressed that as a friend of Turkey, we have a responsibility to be a critical friend. Tom Brake, Liberal Democrat MP for Carshalton and Wallington stressed

that when it comes to gender equality, where there is a will, things can be done. He gave the example of Scotland, in which they have agreed that five top seats will be reserved for women. Issues faced by women in the UK are not that different from those faced by women in Turkey. In Southwest London, Mr Brake said, the number one violent offence is domestic violence, a prominent problem in Turkey as well. Whilst we have seen a greater recognition of this problem, Mr Brake stressed that recognition does not mean resolve, and there is still a great amount to be done. Our role in the UK is to ensure that Turkey is held accountable for human rights abuses. Mr Brake praised Turkey for its role in dealing with the refugee crisis and also praised the Kurds for their role in fighting against Daesh in the Middle East, one of the greatest contemporary threats to women’s rights.





## CEFTUS Networking Reception

The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted an exclusive reception where communities and businesses had an opportunity to meet and network in British Parliament on 8 February 2016.

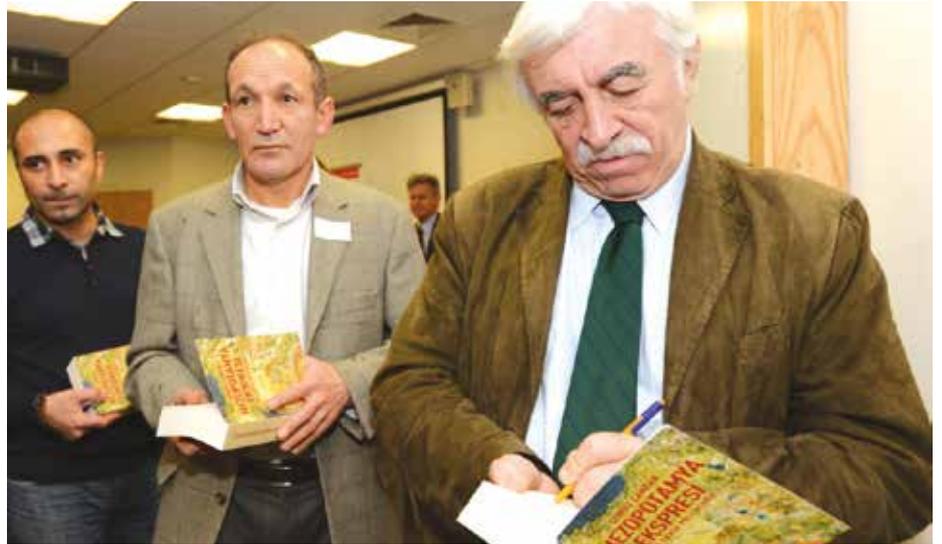
Our special guests were Republican People's Party (CHP) MPs Mr Gursel Tekin and Dr Sezgin Tanrikulu. This event was kindly hosted by Seema Malhotra MP for Feltham and Heston.

Attendees included Natalie McGarry MP, Philip Boswell SNP MP and Angus Brendan MacNeil SNP MP and business people including Mustafa Topkaya and Hasan Dikme.



## Cengiz Candar Book Launch

In February 2013, the eminent columnist and journalist Cengiz Candar launched his new book 'Mezopotamya Ekspresi: Bir Tarih Yolculugu' at an event at the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) organised by the Centre for Turkey Studies. Former director of BBC Turkce, Mr Gamon Maclellan of SOAS chaired the event where Candar signed his new book for the guests and made a speech. Candar stated that the launch of the book has coincided with the MIT (the National Intelligence Organization) and Abdullah Ocalan meetings. He, remarked that these meetings are very fragile and similar to dancing on the ice. The event attracted many guests from our communities.



## Centre for Turkey Studies and IFDP Reception at the House of Commons

In January 2013, London based Centre for Turkey Studies and the International Forum for Democracy and Peace (IFDP) organised a reception hosted by Conservative MP Nick De Bois in the British parliament.



## Launch of ceftus.org at the House of Commons

In September 2012, the Centre for Turkey Studies, after having completed a successful year, launched its new website in the British Parliament.

The reception was hosted by Anas Sarwar MP for Glasgow in the Jubilee Room, House of Commons. The reception attracted a large audience from different communities. Emre Egesel, responsible for press and media relations at the Centre for Turkey Studies spoke about the new website. Egesel stated that the new website will allow the centre to reach out to larger audiences in Britain and Turkey. He also gave a short tour of the ceftus.org website.



## Networking Dinner with Hasan Cemal and Bejan Matur

In January 2012, the Centre for Turkey Studies organised a networking dinner with journalists, community and business leaders from London welcoming Hasan

Cemal and Bejan Matur, highly respected journalists from Turkey who have been covering Turkey's domestic politics and foreign policy for many years. The invited

only participants of the dinner enjoyed Mr. Cemal's insights and anecdotes regarding Turkey's politics.



## CEFTUS Olympics Recruitment Event with the Cemevi

In February 2012, as part of its community engagement with British communities originating from Turkey, the Centre for Turkey Studies co-organised an Olympics Recruitment Event in partnership with the London

Borough of Hackney and two faith-based organisations, the Alevi Cultural Centre and Cemevi. This was an opportunity for hundreds of people to be able to apply for jobs during the London Olympics in the summer of 2012.

## Networking Dinner with Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat

In March 2012, CEFTUS organised a business networking dinner with Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat, Former Deputy Leader of the governing AK Party in Turkey. This exclusive dinner hosted around 40 key business leaders from diverse communities in London that had a chance to network and discuss issues of common interest with our distinguished guest from Turkey.



# Networking Dinner with Douglas Alexander, Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

In September 2011, the Centre for Turkey Studies hosted a networking dinner with Douglas Alexander, Shadow Foreign Secretary, who discussed UK-Turkey relations, the EU accession

process and democratic developments in Turkey. Douglas Alexander confirmed the importance of strong links with Turkey and stated that critical topics such as the Cypriot issue or the Kurdish Question

should be openly discussed to find a long lasting and peaceful solution. Other notable guests included Eric Joyce MP and General Secretary of the Labour Party, Iain McNicol.



# Center for Turkey Studies Launch Dinner

The Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg launched the Centre for Turkey Studies (CEFTUS) in London in April 2011. Over 400 guests attended the dinner including Lynne Featherstone MP, Simon Hughes MP, Tom Brake MP, Lord Clement-Jones, Lord Wallace, Baroness Ece, Lord Sharkey, and many distinguished guests from Britain's diverse business communities. In his keynote speech, Nick Clegg congratulated the CEFTUS for their vision and their aims to bring issues relating to Turkey closer to Britain. Baroness Ece and Lord Sharkey also spoke at the inaugural dinner and offered their full support for the CEFTUS. The CEFTUS is proud to have created London's first policy forum/think tank that focuses on Britain's relationship with Turkey and highlights the contributions of communities originating from Turkey to Britain's political, commercial and community life. The CEFTUS seeks to provide through its various roundtables, public forums and networking events



a better and more comprehensive understanding of Turkey's domestic



political development, its foreign policy, and economic growth.



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