

# Forced Humanitarianism: Turkey's Syrian Policy and the Refugee Issue\*

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The Middle East faces complex and overlapping turbulences. The Civil War in Syria and the emergence of Islamic State have radically changed the geo-strategic environment. In recent years, Turkish foreign policy has faced two major tests in relation to this new situation: a large wave of Syrian refugees and the threat of Islamic State in southeast border areas. Since the start of the Syrian Civil War, Turkey has to deal with an increasing volume of refugees, while the emergence of the Islamic State increased the number of Syrian and Iraqi citizens seeking protection in Turkish territories, in addition to the deterioration of the regional security environment. Ankara has tried to navigate the troubled waters of the Syrian crisis via a two-pronged approach, combining national security concerns with democratic internationalism. One of the highlights of Turkish Internationalism has been growing humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees, which brings Turkey to a prominent position in terms of humanitarian aid delivery. In this paper, I will discuss the concept of “forced humanitarianism” to explain the intersection with the Syrian Crisis in Turkish foreign policy.



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Along with the Arab Revolutions, the Syrian Civil War has been the most significant destabilizing factor of the regional order of the Middle East since the 2003 United States invasion of Iraq.<sup>1</sup> The Arab Revolutions, or Arab Spring, significantly changed the domestic priorities of the Arab countries facing popular demands for change. Four years on, the fallout of the Arab Spring has entailed a series of traumatic experiences such as ousting of Morsi government in Egypt, the civil war in Libya followed by the NATO's military intervention, and finally the civil war in Syria. The only light in the region is the Tunisian experience. The regional order of the Middle East substantially changed after the Arab Spring, but has changed even more in the wake of the Syrian civil war.

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The Syrian civil war is not only a domestic but a regional conflict. In the last decades, the main regional geostrategic competition has been between Iran and Saudi Arabia: the core of the Middle Eastern 'Great Game'.<sup>2</sup> However, the Syrian case transformed the soft power rivalry into hard power rivalry. Saudi Arabia saw itself as Iran's ideological and strategic rival in the region-wide confrontation, seeking to pull in the other Arab states to counter Iranian influence, and lobbying against Western concessions to Tehran on regional security and nuclear matters<sup>3</sup>.

On the other hand, Iran is trying to avoid Saudi Arabia's strategic encirclement by strengthening its regional allies – especially Assad regime in Syria – and bargaining with the West without relinquishing its nuclear plan. The Syrian civil war has transformed this regional competition into a regional proxy war.

The consequences of Syria's civil war have been catastrophic. Between March 2011 and the end of 2014, more than 200.000 individuals – combatants and civilians – have been killed;<sup>4</sup> there are more than 3 million refugees in border countries; 7.6 million

1 Öniş, Z. (2014) 'Turkey and the Arab Revolutions: Boundaries of Middle Power Influence in a Turbulent Middle East', *Mediterranean Politics*, 19 (2), p. 4.

2 Mabon, S. (2014) 'The Middle Eastern 'Great Game'', *FPC Briefing*. Available at: <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/1555.pdf> (Accessed: 5 January 2015).

3 Hokayem, E. (2014) 'Iran, the Gulf States and the Syrian Civil War', *Adelphi Series*, 54 (447-448), p. 51-52.

4 New York Times (2015) *Syria Deaths Hit New High in 2014, Observer Group Says*. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/02/world/middleeast/syrian-civil-war-2014-deadliest-so-far.html> (Accessed: 5 January 2015).

displaced within Syria; and 3.2 million Syrian refugees abroad.<sup>5</sup> The country is deeply divided, with different areas being under control of various armed groups. The increasing radicalization of the Syrian opposition with the emergence of Al-Nusra Front, the Islamic States and other minor religious armed groups pose further threats. Neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq face increasing national security threats as a consequence.

Humanitarian aid has been a common, natural response to the humanitarian disaster of the Syrian's civil war. Turkey has been affected significantly in terms of national security, but has risen as one of the main donors of humanitarian help with regard to Syrian refugees. In this paper, I will evaluate Ankara's Syrian policy, arguing that Turkey has addressed the Syrian crisis with a two-pronged approach that combines national security concerns and democratic internationalism. The interplay between self-interest and liberalism explain why Turkey has moved from "humanitarian diplomacy" towards "forced humanitarianism".

#### *Turkey's foreign policy in the Syrian civil war*

The Arab Revolutions were the turning point in the Turkish Regional Policy in the Middle East in general and Syria in particular. The cooperative "virtuous regional cycle" - in which greater border security and growing economic interdependence between Turkey and its neighbors were mutually reinforcing each other – have been replaced by a more competitive approach wherein the promotion and spread of normative democratic principles along with national security interests are the main foreign policy aims in the context of an unstable and highly changeable regional environment.<sup>6</sup>

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The 2002-2011 period was a golden age for the relationship between Turkey and Syria, characterized by regular high-level visits and increasing trade and investments, which contributed positively to regional stability. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government developed a multidimensional perspective toward Middle East, increasing the links and developing ef-

5 UNPFA (2014) Regional Situation Report for Syria Crisis, p. 1. Available at: <http://syria.unocha.org/sites/default/files/UNPFA%20Regional%20SitRep%201%20-%2030%20November%202014%20%20%23%2027.pdf> (Accessed: 5 January 2015).

6 Öniş, Z. (2014) 'Turkey and the Arab Revolutions: Boundaries of Middle Power Influence in a Turbulent Middle East', *Mediterranean Politics*, 19 (2), p. 4.

forts in order to build friendly and cooperative relations with the Middle Eastern countries and to play a more active role in the region's politics.<sup>7</sup> This approach was presented as the “zero problems with neighbors” strategy, a soft power based foreign policy that was aimed to establish a peaceful and cooperative regional order.

The main achievement of this period was the Free Trade Agreement signed in December 2004 during the first official visit of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a Prime Minister.<sup>8</sup> Other key events included the visit by Turkish President Necdet Sezer to Lebanon in 2005 after the death of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri<sup>9</sup>, the mediation of Ankara in the peace negotiations between Israel and Syria, the establishment of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) during President Assad's visit to Turkey in September 2009, the Visa Exemption Agreement and, finally the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement that brought commercial, logistical, tourism, and investment benefits for both sides.

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When the crisis broke out in Syria, Turkey was initially cautious. However, the radicalization of the popular demands and the brutal repressions by Assad's Security Forces caused Ankara to change its approach, seeking instead to convince Assad to take political decisions on behalf of popular demands. These recommendations were however, ignored.

There is little official data available on the initial phases of the Syrian civil war, but since early months of 2011, the situation has gradually deteriorated. At the end of 2011, an official political opposition group – the Syrian National Council – and an armed wing – the Free Syrian Army – took a stand against the Assad regime. In May 2011, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, warned that Assad's army was violating basic standards of humanitarian law, and committing atrocities.<sup>10</sup>

7 Kanat, K. (2010) ‘AK Party's Foreign Policy: Is Turkey Turning Away from the West?’, *Insight Turkey*, 12(1), p. 210

8 Moubayed, S. (2008) ‘Turkish-Syrian Relations: The Erdoğan Legacy’, *SETA Policy Brief*, 25, p. 3.

9 Hinnebusch, R. and Tur, O. (eds.) (2013) *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, p. 2.

10 The Jerusalem Post (2011) ‘Erdoğan: Syrian troops barbaric, ‘don't behave like humans’’, Avail-

The start of the Arab Spring at the end of 2010 was an unexpected development for Turkey. Ahmed Davutoğlu identified this process as a political “earthquake” in the Middle East.<sup>11</sup> Ankara had to rethink its “zero problems with neighbors” strategy, which entailed a combined approach to cooperative security relations and economic interdependence.<sup>12</sup> However, the changes in the Turkish regional foreign policy were not due to sectarianism in foreign policy<sup>13</sup>, Davutoğlu’s “pan-Islamist” views,<sup>14</sup> or the exportation of Turkey as a model of democracy and Islam.<sup>15</sup> The main cause of the shift in Ankara’s policy was the change brought by the Arab Revolutions. The Arab Revolutions forced the Turkish foreign policy to take on a new role in the “new” Middle East. The implications for Turkish foreign policy were serious. Turkey did not have the enough capabilities to be an active actor beyond its role as a model of democracy in a Muslim society.

Since the Syrian conflict broke out, Ankara has developed a two-pronged policy by combining national security concerns with norm-based principles aimed at promoting democratic norms.<sup>16</sup> In sum, Turkey seeks to present itself as a model of democracy and a regional power while at the same time taking into account addressing national security concerns posed by the ongoing Syrian crisis. The normative approach takes a long-term view, emphasizing the gradual development of democracy and popular legitimacy. Crisis management efforts are central to re-ordering the regional and global environment. As Davutoğlu has stated, “our long-term vision will inspire our crisis management

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able at <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Erdogan-Syrian-troops-barbaric-dont-behave-like-humans> (Accessed: 5 January 2015).

11 Davutoğlu, A. (2013) ‘Turkey’s humanitarian diplomacy: objectives, challenges and prospects’, *Nationalities Papers*, 41 (6), p. 866.

12 Davutoğlu, A. (2013) ‘Turkey’s Zero-Problems Foreign Policy’, *Foreign Policy*, Available at: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys\\_zero\\_problems\\_foreign\\_policy](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy) (Accessed: 5 January 2015).

13 Edelman, E., Cornell, S., Lobel, A. and Makovsky, M. (2013) ‘The Roots of Turkish Conduct: Understanding the Evolution of Turkish Policy in the Middle East’, National Security Program - Foreign Policy Project, Bipartisan Policy Center. Available at: <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/publications/1312BPC.pdf> (Accessed: 3 January 2015).

14 Ozkan, B. (2014) ‘Turkey, Davutoğlu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism’, *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 56 (4), pp. 119-140.

15 Samaan, J (2013) ‘The Rise and Fall of the “Turkish Model” in Middle East’, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 12 (3), pp. 61-69.

16 Onis, Ziya (2012) Turkey and the Arab spring: between ethics and self-interest. *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 14 (1), p. 6.

efforts and help shape the course of developments in our regional and global neighborhoods. At the regional level, our vision is a regional order that is built on representative political systems reflecting the legitimate demands of the people where regional states are fully integrated to each other around the core values of democracy and true economic interdependence”.<sup>17</sup>

However, the “self-interested”, realist approach has been shaped by the security concerns of the Syrian civil war, managing the unintended consequences, and the empowerment of the Syrian opposition. The security situation has rapidly deteriorated in the southern provinces since the start of the civil war in Syria. The emergence of ISIS and the reemergence of the Kurdish issue, the traditional threat to the Turkish Republic since the 1980s, have only exacerbated the situation.

The rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has created a high risk situation in terms of national security. Originally from Iraq, ISIS entered the Syrian civil war and began displacing and absorbing segments of Islamist groups such as Al-Nusra. They crossed the Iraqi-Syrian border and occupied vast areas in western Iraq and eastern Syria, taking control of checkpoints along the Syrian border with Turkey. This move has enabled them to control and exploit economically strategic enclaves like refineries and oil fields, which endow ISIS with important logistical capacities along with renewed funding to buy military equipment.<sup>18</sup> The Islamic State is a revisionist power in the region that is challenging the geographical principles of the modern Middle East based on the Sykes-Picot Agreement, trying to present itself as the Caliphate.

From the perspective of national security and self-preservation, the Syrian crisis poses a threat to Ankara. In February 2013, a bomb exploded at the Turkish-Syrian border crossing in Cilvegözü. Three months later, in the town of Reyhanlı, Hatay, a car bomb exploded, causing more than 50 deaths and injuries.<sup>19</sup> Re-

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17 Davutoğlu, A. (2012) ‘Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political structuring’, *Turkey Policy Brief Series*, TEPAV/ IPLI, 3, p. 5.

18 Cfr. Basallote, A. and Gonzalez, A. (2015) ‘Limitando la amenaza: Turquía y Jordania frente al Estado Islámico’, *Reportes CEMOAN*, Centro de Estudios de Medio Oriente y África del Norte (Costa Rica), 16.

19 Doğruel, F. and Karakoç, J. (2013) ‘The Regional Repercussions of Turkey-Syria Relations’ ATINER Conference Paper Series, 539, p. 10.

cently, the battle of Kobanē in northern Syria, next to the Turkish-Syrian border, has epitomized the struggle between Kurdish fighters and ISIS.<sup>20</sup> The presence of ISIS has also affected Turkey's relations with the West, due to the lack of support from the United States and Europe for Turkey's position toward the Assad regime, and the increasing pressure on Turkey to participate in the International Coalition against ISIS. In sum, ISIS has not only been a threat to Turkish security but it has also influenced perceptions of Turkey as a reliable in the West.<sup>21</sup>

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*Forced humanitarianism: Between urgency and good will*

Until August 2014, Turkey spent more than USD 4.5 billion on Syrian refugees, while Turkish NGOs allocated USD 635 million in financial support. Foreign support during this period remained at USD 233 million.<sup>22</sup> According to the UNHCR and the Turkish government, Turkey was host to the world's largest community of Syrian refugees by the end of 2014. Turkey is not only a place where refugees are settling, but also a transit point to Europe.<sup>23</sup> It is worth to mention that Turkey has some experience in dealing with waves of immigration: Bulgarian immigration to Turkey in 1989; asylum seekers and refugees from Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq in the 70's, 80's and 90's; illegal migrants transited via human trafficking.<sup>24</sup>

The number of refugees has significantly increased since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria. In April 2011, the country began to receive the first wave of refugees (8,000 in total), and built the first refugee camp in Altınözü, in the province of Hatay. A year later, this number increased to 170,000 registered refugees, and

20 Hurriyet Daily News (2014) 'Turkish police clash with Kobane protesters near Syria border'. Available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/video-turkish-police-clash-with-kobane-protesters-near-syria-border.aspx?pageID=238&nID=75120&NewsCatID=341> (Accessed: 5 January 2015).

21 The Guardian (2014) 'Can Turkey under Erdoğan any longer be deemed a reliable western ally?'. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/15/turkey-erdogan-western-ally> (Accessed: 5 January 2015).

22 Erdoğan, M. (2014) 'Syrian in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration Research', Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center, p. 15

23 Cf: Düvell, F., (2013) 'Turkey, the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Changing Dynamics of Transit Migration', *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2013*, pp. 278-281.

24 Mourenza, A. and Ortega, I. (2014) 'Syrians go home: the challenge of the refugee influx from the Syrian civil war in Turkey', "Guest and Aliens": Re-Configuring new Mobilities in the Eastern Mediterranean post 2011 - with a special focus on Syrian refugees, Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes, p. 3

by the end of 2013, there were a total of 560,000 displaced Syrians.<sup>25</sup> That year Turkey became one of the largest providers of humanitarian assistance worldwide, contributing USD 1.6 billion of international aid.<sup>26</sup> This sudden increase in numbers is a direct consequence of the Syrian crisis and of the assistance to Syrian refugees inside Turkey.<sup>27</sup>

The humanitarian response to the refugee crisis has been the responsibility of the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) under the Turkish government. AFAD has estimated the country's Syrian population at 1.7 million.<sup>28</sup> In November 2014, Interior Minister Efkân Ala told the Turkish Parliament's Budget Commission that there were 1,617,110 refugees in the country.<sup>29</sup> According to Ahmet İçduygu, an expert on the refugee crisis, official and unofficial figures reveal that there are between 1.3 and 1.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey. Of these, one quarter are living in 22 refugee camps, while the rest are "urban refugees".<sup>30</sup> As of November 2014, the largest number of urban refugees were located in İstanbul (330,000), Gaziantep (220,000), Hatay (190,000), Şanlıurfa (170,000), Mardin (70,000), Adana (50,000), Kilis (49,000) and Mersin (45,000), respectively.<sup>31</sup> In sum, Turkey hosts a Syrian refugee population that actually represents around 2% of its population.

In dealing with this unexpected influx of migrants, Ankara has formulated a new strategy. "Temporary Protection Status" was initially conferred on refugees from Syria in October 2011, guaranteeing all Syrian residents (including Palestinian residents in

25 Interview with Prof. Dr. Ahmet İçduygu, Director of Migration Research Program (MiReKoç), Koç University, 13/11/2014.

26 In the 2003-2013 period, the largest recipients of Turkish aid have been Syria (US\$980 million), Somalia (US\$48 million) and the West Bank and Gaza Strip (US\$9 million).

27 Global Humanitarian Assistance (2014) 'GHA Report 2014', p. 28. Available at: <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/GHA-Report-2014-interactive.pdf> (Accessed: 5 January 2015).

28 Hogg, J. and Afanasieva, D. (2015) 'In winter freeze, Turkey clears capital of Syrian shanty towns', Reuters. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/09/us-turkey-refugees-idUSKBN0KI1RR20150109> (Accessed: 10 January 2015).

29 Cetingulec, T. (2014) 'Turkey registers Syrian refugees', Al-Monitor. Available at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/turkey-syria-refugees-profiled.html> (Accessed: 10 January 2015).

30 Interview with Prof. Dr. Ahmet İçduygu, Director of Migration Research Program (MiReKoç), Koç University, 13/11/2014.

31 Orhan, O. and Gündoğar, S. (2015) 'Effects of the Syrian Refugees on Turkey', ORSAM/TESEV, 195, p.15. Available at: <http://www.tesev.org.tr/assets/publications/file/09012015103629.pdf> (Accessed: 11 January 2015).



Syria) access to Turkish territory and its basic services.<sup>32</sup> The principles of the Temporary Protection Status include an open border policy, no forcible returns, registration with the Turkish authorities, and support inside the borders of the camp displacing the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international institutions that are part of this process in other cases.<sup>33</sup> The Temporary Protection Status itself synthesizes national security concerns with the humanitarian approach; in this particular case, what can be understood as a forced humanitarianism.

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Officially, Turkey has presented its humanitarian policy as an example of the new type of Turkish soft power embodied in the form of “humanitarian diplomacy”. This new strategy can be explained as “the use of international law and the humanitarian imperative as complementary levers to facilitate the delivery of assistance or to promote the protection of civilians in a complex political emergency”.<sup>34</sup> This kind of diplomacy has its roots in a liberal understanding of international politics in which the protection of the individual human rights has prevalence over the state sovereignty principles. Turkey presents its humanitarian approach as a liberal, norm-based, internationalist foreign policy. At the same time, Ankara’s humanitarianism combines liberal and Islamic values. That is even clearer in the selection of humanitarian priorities such as Syria, Palestine, Somalia and Afghanistan, among others. Beyond these priorities, Turkey has been active in more than 100 countries in 2013, ranging from Asia to Africa, the Middle East to Europe and Latin America to the Far East.<sup>35</sup>

Davutoğlu identifies four dimensions of Turkish humanitarian diplomacy: an open visa policy, a human-oriented political vision, multifaceted and multi-channeled approach, and finally, a global

32 Mourenza, A. and Ortega, I. (2014) ‘Syrians go home: the challenge of the refugee influx from the Syrian civil war in Turkey’, *International Conference “Guest and Aliens”: Re-Configuring new Mobilities in the Eastern Mediterranean post 2011 - with a special focus on Syrian refugees*, Institut Français d’Etudes Anatoliennes, p. 11.

33 Özden, S. (2013) ‘Syrian Refugees in Turkey’, *Migration Policy Centre (MPC) Research Report*, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at European University Institute, 5, p. 5.

34 Regnier, P. (2011) ‘The emerging concept of humanitarian diplomacy: identification of a community of practice and prospects for international recognition’, *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93 (884), p. 1216.

35 Haşimi, C. (2014) ‘Turkey’s Humanitarian Diplomacy and Development Cooperation’, *Insight Turkey*, 16(1), p. 129

projection, especially within the UN system. These dimensions are based on a general humanitarian approach that tries to find solutions to crises in the close neighborhood, within the frame of universal goals embracing the humanity as a whole.<sup>36</sup> Ethical foreign policy is important to the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and the humanitarian activism of Turkey partly reflects a concern for justice.<sup>37</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Presidency for Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), and the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) are the main public institutional actors, while NGOs such as the Humanitarian Aid Foundation (İHH), Lighthouse Foundation, Cansuyu Organization and etc. These NGOs work closely with the government, and their role has increased in the last few years in parallel with the “humanitarian diplomacy”.

*However, when the humanitarian situation affects its sovereign, territorial integrity or appears as a threat to public security, the concept of humanitarian diplomacy becomes increasingly complex, albeit well intentioned.*

The concept of “humanitarian diplomacy” is easily applied as an ideal in areas where Turkey does not have vital national security interests at stake, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan or even Palestine. However, when the humanitarian situation affects its sovereign, territorial integrity or appears as a threat to public security, the concept of humanitarian diplomacy becomes increasingly complex, albeit well intentioned. In these cases, a humanitarian approach is not sought but rather required by the regional environment. This is the case with the humanitarian tragedy in Syria. Turkey was forced to act in response to the impact of the Syrian civil war and therefore, it is more accurate to define Turkey’s approach towards Syria as a case of “forced humanitarianism” rather than “humanitarian diplomacy”.

“Forced humanitarianism” is a direct consequence of a humanitarian disaster in a neighboring country. Facing this kind of tragedy so nearby entails two challenges. On the one hand, there is a need to provide help to the victims, but at the same time, it is also necessary to develop measures to avoid the spillover of the conflict. Consequently, national security interests and humanitarian concerns coexist in tension. Turkey is in the middle of this difficult situation. The civil war in Syria forced Turkey to improve its

36 Davutoğlu, A. (2013) ‘Turkey’s humanitarian diplomacy: objectives, challenges and prospects’, *Nationalities Papers*, 41 (6), p. 866-468

37 Bayer, R. Keyman F. (2012) ‘Turkey: An Emerging Hub of Globalization and Internationalist Humanitarian Actor?’, *Globalizations*, 9(1), p. 85.

humanitarian profile and, at the same time, to take action to avoid the spread of the Syrian conflict into its southern territories.

The concept of “forced humanitarianism” enables us to understand the interplay between the ethical-normative Turkish foreign policy and the threats entailed by the regional security environment, which puts Turkey’s vital national interests at risk. However, Turkey is not alone in this situation. There are similar cases, such as Jordan’s policy towards the Palestinian refugees after 1948, or the Dominican Republic’s position after the crisis in Haiti. The concept of forced humanitarianism does not detract from the real efforts behind Turkish humanitarian diplomacy; rather it helps us to understand the objective determinants beyond the ethical considerations.

### *Conclusion*

Turkey has sought to position itself as a major regional player, taking Syria as a test case. Ankara has not only placed itself as a model of inspiration but it has also tried to play an active role.<sup>38</sup> The Middle East is facing a traditional realist security dilemma, even if Turkey has tried to export democratic norms and economic interdependence by supporting a peaceful regional order. The consequences of the Syrian civil war for the region and Turkey’s high-profile opposition to the Assad regime have undermined Turkey’s position not only among its neighboring countries, but have also destabilized its own interests along with its international image.<sup>39</sup> Syria is a hard case for Turkish foreign policy. While it is a successful example of foreign policy activism and assertiveness of soft power, it has also been the main focus of criticism in terms of Ankara’s Middle East policy in the aftermath of the Arab Revolutions. The Syrian civil war has generated a humanitarian disaster. Turkey has responded by developing a policy based on humanitarian diplomacy that also takes into account the national security rooted in the increasing risks of the regional situation. Ankara’s two-pronged Syrian policy is clearly seen in the refugee problem. This has transformed the concept of “humanitarian diplomacy”, based on normative and ethical standards, into a “forced humanitarianism”, a mixed account of humanitarian urgency driven by the need to defend public security.

38 *Cfr.* Ertuğrul, D. (2012) ‘A Test for Turkey’s Foreign Policy: The Syria Crisis’, *TESEV Foreign Policy Program*, Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation.

39 Öniş, Z. (2014) ‘Turkey and the Arab Revolutions: Boundaries of Middle Power Influence in a Turbulent Middle East’, *Mediterranean Politics*, 19 (2), p.10.