

# The Future of Saudi-Turkish Bilateral Relations

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## **Key Points**

- Saudi Arabia and Türkiye have a distinguished, historical relationships based on common characteristics and cooperation.
- Their bilateral relations have stagnated during the past five years due to successive regional crises.
- The perception of the coming post-American order in the Middle East calls for all countries to reconsider their strategies in the region.
- The Saudi-Turkish future geostrategic partnership will form a solid alliance to confront the challenges of Strategic Competition in the Middle East.

## **Introduction**

Saudi Arabia possesses deep-rooted historical and cultural ties with Türkiye. The history of diplomatic relations dates to 1929, following the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the two countries. Bilateral relations have been strengthened through mutual visits between the leaders of the two countries, the first of which was the visit of Prince Faisal bin Abdulaziz, representing the King, to Türkiye in 1932, and his second visit to it after he became King in 1966. Since its inception in 1929, relations between the two countries have witnessed development, growth and further cooperation, and mutual understanding on issues of interest to both nations. In 2015 and 2016, relations between Saudi Arabia and Türkiye developed remarkably as five Saudi-Turkish summits were held, bringing together Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz with President Erdogan.<sup>1</sup>

As a consequence, the Saudi-Turkish Coordination Council was established during the official visit of King Salman bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia to Türkiye in April 2016, and held its first meeting in February 2017 in Ankara under the co-chairmanship of the Foreign Ministers of both countries; the Council aims to enhance joint cooperation in the political and diplomatic fields, economy and trade, banking and finance, marine navigation, industry, energy, agriculture, culture, education, technology, military fields, military industries, security, and media, where the leaders of the two countries stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral relations in order to achieve common interests.<sup>2</sup> This document portrays the causes of the stagnation of relationships between 2017 and late 2021 and analyzes the rapprochement since.

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<sup>1</sup> Turkish MFA, "Bilateral Political Relations between Türkiye and Saudi Arabia", July 10, 2016,

<https://www.mfa.gov.tr/Türkiye-saudi-arabia-relations.en.mfa> (accessed Jul 10, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Alain News Agency "Saudi-Turkish relations: development, growth and joint cooperation", June 6, 2022, <https://al-ain.com/article/saudi-turkish-relations-joint-cooperation> (accessed Jun 6, 2022).

## **Background Information**

In late 2021, the Turkish government has pushed to repair its relationships with most regional states, an apparent end to Ankara's 'precious loneliness era' as some Turkish media outlets described. Before President Erdogan's visit to Riyadh in April 2022, Türkiye had largely managed to restore its relations with the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, and even Israel. Türkiye's rapprochement with Saudi Arabia is best understood as part of an ongoing process in the country's Middle East foreign policy. In that sense, mending relations with Saudi Arabia is part of a more extensive process to recover Türkiye's standing in the region; Riyadh is the best choice among the other potential allies.<sup>3</sup>

The development of the relations between Saudi Arabia and Türkiye has become noticeable this year. Especially after the stagnation period of Turkish international ties with the countries of the Middle East region in general, and with Saudi Arabia in particular, between 2017 and 2022 due to several crises and pivotal events experienced by the area, the Turkish government had time to assess the situation and rearrange its political cards to restore its role as a pivotal player in the Middle East.

### **1. Series of anti-government protests in the Middle East region (Arab Spring)**

The revolutions of the Arab Spring affected the balance of power and the map of alliances in the Middle East. Their repercussions appeared on the orientations of the regional countries' foreign policies affecting their regional interactions, including Turkish foreign policy, which witnessed pivotal changes towards the Arab countries and the regional powers. These revolutions also negatively affected the regional role of Türkiye. Türkiye had been a model before the Arab spring in the field of foreign policy for more than a decade. This situation is no longer the case, as Türkiye has become almost isolated regionally. The fall of the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the continuation of the Syrian revolution and its development have negatively affected Türkiye's regional relations. Moreover, its relations with Iran are also turbulent because of their contradictory positions and the lack of convergent interests on Iraq and Syria. In addition, its relations with the Syrian regime are also strained because of its support for the Syrian opposition on the one hand and the threat of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) on the other. Finally, its relations with Israel are at the beginning of their recovery after the Israeli apology to Türkiye for the attack on the Freedom Flotilla, and this effect continued until it led to the failed coup attempt against President Erdogan in July 2016.<sup>4</sup>

### **2. Qatar diplomatic crisis**

Türkiye supported Qatar in its diplomatic confrontation regarding the severed ties and embargo on Qatar, which were imposed by Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt in June 2017. Turkish President Erdogan criticized the list of demands released by the boycotting countries on 22 June, stating that they undermine Qatar's sovereignty. Because the boycotting nations highlight Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood as one of the primary reasons for their sanctions, siding with Qatar was the most logical choice for Türkiye's leadership.<sup>5</sup>

### **3. The murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi**

The repercussions of this incident came negatively on the level of bilateral diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Türkiye due to its occurrence within Turkish territory, which put both governments in an awkward position before the attention of the international media. The Turkish government has pursued a calculated media strategy

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<sup>3</sup> Ibrahim Karatas, "A New Era in Turkish-Saudi Relations", *Gulf International Forum Organization*, May 11, 2022, <https://gulffif.org/a-new-era-in-turkish-saudi-relations/> (accessed Jun 24, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Shafiq Dariah, "The impact of the Arab Spring revolutions on the trends of Turkish foreign policy in the ME", *Helwan University Scientific Journal*, December 1, 2014, <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/713837> (accessed Jun 26, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> Tom Wheeldon, "Why Türkiye is backing Qatar in Gulf diplomatic crisis" *France 24*, June 26, 2017, <https://www.france24.com/en/20170625-why-Türkiye-backing-qatar-diplomatic-crisis> (accessed Jun 26, 2017).

to release fragmented information from its investigation into the Khashoggi murder in October 2018, including flight records, surveillance videos of suspects, and the release of their personal data, which made Saudi Arabia announced that the accused persons would be prosecuted, and the justice will be served.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4. COVID-19 pandemic repercussions**

The world has faced an unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic since the beginning of 2020. This disease started to change economic, social, and individual conventional behaviors. Several economic activities had sharply declined, such as oil, and demand for commodities were decreasing. This situation has also suffered from disagreement among Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)+ members to deal with the amount of oil production to set. As an emerging economy, Türkiye depends heavily on imported oil and suffers from this pandemic. The outbreak has impacted the global economy, and GDP growth has plummeted. High-risk industries such as manufacturing, tourism, travel, transportation, and retail have struggled the most. The pandemic has already had a negative impact on key sectors in Türkiye, including automotive, retail, and transportation. Most of Türkiye's trade partners have been impacted by the coronavirus, and supply chains have been drastically disrupted.<sup>7</sup>

#### **5. War in Ukraine**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine poses a new and increasingly complex set of challenges for Türkiye. So far, Türkiye has been mainly convergent with its Western allies in supporting Ukraine while avoiding burning bridges with Russia. But as Türkiye tries to leverage its regional standing to facilitate peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, its exposure to Russia on multiple fronts and its burgeoning cooperation with Ukraine present Türkiye with difficult choices.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, the Russian invasion of Ukraine posed a severe challenge to Middle Eastern states whose interests in the conflict are multifaceted, requiring hedging between wheat and food insecurity.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia maintained a neutral position on the crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Riyadh government issued a statement calling for a radical political solution to end the conflict by any available peaceful means. Saudi Arabia has made it clear that it is firmly committed to a multi-pronged foreign policy to balance traditional partnerships with the West and relations with non-Western powers such as China, Russia, and India.

#### **Analysis**

The current situation in the Middle East has imposed on Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, as important regional players, a new scene whose challenges must be dealt with urgently and deliberately. There are several factors that contributed to a positive turn in the Saudi-Turkish relations, such as:

- the need to abandon the previous regional policies that drained their economic and military capabilities emphasizing the difference in their views on regional issues; and

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<sup>6</sup> Safak Timur, "Prosecutor Asks Türkiye to Turn Khashoggi Murder Case Over to Saudis" *The New York Times*, March 31, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/world/middleeast/Türkiye-khashoggi-trial-saudi-arabia.html> (accessed Mar 31, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Izzet Ari, "The impact of Covid-19 on Türkiye", SAGE Publishing group, June 29, 2020, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0144598720934007> (accessed Jun 21, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Carnegie Endowment Organization, "Caught in the Middle: Türkiye's Position Amidst Russia's War on Ukraine", April 11, 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/04/11/caught-in-middle-Türkiye-s-position-amidst-russia-s-war-on-ukraine-event-7853> (accessed Jun 15, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Simon Mabon, "Whither Rapprochement? Understanding Saudi-Turkish relations", *Al Sharq Strategic Research Organization*, March 28, 2022, <https://research.sharqforum.org/2022/03/28/saudi-turkish-relations/> (accessed June 9, 2022).

- the external transformations that occurred in the region during the past two years, foremost of which is the transformation that emerged in US policy in the region after President Biden took charge.

These main factors played an essential role in pushing Saudi Arabia and Türkiye to abandon the policy of competition to reshape the geopolitics of the area after the repercussions of the Arab Spring and the search for ways to cooperate.

### **Saudi cause for a rapprochement**

After the fall of the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, to the Houthis in September 2014, it became clear to the Riyadh government the costs of engaging in a simultaneous bilateral confrontation with Iran and its proxies in the region on the one hand and with Türkiye and the Islamist currently close to it that benefited from the conditions of the Arab Spring on the other. The arrival of new, young leadership at the decision-making table in Saudi Arabia in early 2015 led to the rearranging of foreign policy priorities and Saudi national security considerations. The main change was to prioritize confronting Iranian expansion in the region over everything else. Iran almost put Saudi Arabia at higher risk by approaching control of Yemen through its Houthi proxies after it had become the most influential in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. From another point of view, decision-makers in Saudi Arabia believe that, given their shaken confidence in US foreign policies, it seemed very difficult to confront Iran and contain its rising regional influence without the help of a regional pole the size of Türkiye. Also, there is a strong feeling in Saudi Arabia that Egypt has become unable to play its role in highlighting its Arab and regional weight in light of its complex internal crises.<sup>10</sup>

### **Turkish cause for a rapprochement.**

At present, Türkiye needs the support of a significant economic and moral power the size of Saudi Arabia to confront Russia's attempts to influence Türkiye's national security, especially considering that Türkiye depends on both Russia and Iran for more than 80% of its energy needs, which represents a security dilemma. Türkiye believes that Saudi Arabia can help alleviate it significantly and effectively.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Political significance of the rapprochement**

Analyzing Türkiye's foreign policy through domestic politics may present risks. It is thus essential to investigate the structural forces behind the Turkish-Saudi rapprochement. The common perception of the coming gap in post-American order in the Middle East calls for all countries to recalibrate their regional strategies. Türkiye perceives Saudi Arabia as a regional hegemon, hence a competitor in power politics. Even if Turkish President Erdogan's government changed abruptly, it is unlikely to see a Turkish withdrawal from the Middle Eastern power game.<sup>12</sup>

This approach will allow Saudi Arabia to explore the depth of the external transformation that Ankara is taking in its regional relations. This level of rapprochement with Türkiye can be reached in the coming period, especially at the level of regional cooperation, and it constitutes an urgent need for the Riyadh government, which is looking to diversify its external options as a way to hedge against the repercussions of the decline in US-Gulf relations, and

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<sup>10</sup> Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, "Saudi-Turkish Rapprochement: Background, Motives, Prospects", April 26, 2016, <https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/PoliticalStudies/Pages/Saudi-Turkish-Rapprochement-Background-Motives-Prospects.aspx> (accessed Jun 23, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Mustafa Gurbuz, "Turkish Reasons for a Rapprochement with Saudi Arabia", Arab Center Washington DC, June 2, 2022, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/turkish-reasons-for-a-rapprochement-with-saudi-arabia/> (accessed Jun 24, 2022).

Washington's tendency to reduce its security commitments to the Gulf region, in addition to the progress of the nuclear negotiations between Iran and Western powers.<sup>13</sup>

Türkiye has made some tangible steps; the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas had long been a bone of contention with Saudi Arabia, indeed with Egypt and with Israel as well. On his return to Türkiye, President Erdogan, asserting that "diplomatic circumstances have changed", shut down the Brotherhood's Mekameleen TV station and restricted the group's public relations activities. In addition, the Turkish government began expelling Hamas activists, including members of the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades, its military wing. These moves clearly were a direct message to Saudi Arabia and the world that a sea-change in Türkiye's foreign relations was in progress.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Military and Security significance of the rapprochement**

In the light of the theory of a post-American order in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye may find opportunities for cooperation in Syria and Iraq. Despite being competitors, Ankara and Riyadh find common ground in perceiving Iran's regional ambitions as detrimental to their national security interests. President Erdogan's recent statements included sympathy for Riyadh's security concerns about the government of Tehran.<sup>15</sup>

Türkiye could also help to train the Saudi army and equip it with Turkish-made weapons, particularly the highly effective "Bayraktar" drones, which Riyadh might need to deter increasing threats from Iranian drones and missiles, and to meet growing external demand. Consequently, Saudi-Turkish military relations will probably increase. President Erdogan has already hinted that his government expects Riyadh to invest in the Turkish defense industry. We should not be surprised to hear soon that Saudi Arabia will start to purchase Turkish weapons or participate in joint defense projects.<sup>16</sup>

In Iraq, Turkish-Saudi cooperation also depends on finding a delicate balance of competing demands. Baghdad is highly disturbed by Türkiye's expanding military influence in the Sinjar region, thus limiting its ability to help strengthen Sunni interests in the country, a critical Saudi desire. Neither is the expansion of Turkish military zones in Northern Iraq good news for Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Iran is also trying to increase its presence in Iraqi Kurdistan, while Israel is seeking to strengthen its foothold there. This situation generates tense relations between Ankara and Tehran. The overlapping interests of many parties in northern Iraq may guarantee an emerging Turkish-Saudi pact in the near future.<sup>17</sup>

As for the Iranian threat, it is now closer than ever to Türkiye's borders as thousands of Iranian Revolutionary Corps Guards and their extremist proxy militias advance throughout Syria. Tehran benefits the most if there are divisions between the two most potent Sunni-majority states in the region.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Mahmoud Alloush, "In the prospects of Turkish-Saudi rapprochement", *The New Arab Agency*, May 1, 2022, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/opinion/%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A2%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A> (accessed Jun 24, 2022).

<sup>14</sup> Neville Teller, "Saudi Arabia and Türkiye mend fences – opinion", *The Journalist Post*, July 4, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-711189> (accessed Jul 9, 2022).

<sup>15</sup> Mustafa Gurbuz, "Turkish Reasons for a Rapprochement with Saudi Arabia", *Arab Center Washington DC*, June 2, 2022, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/turkish-reasons-for-a-rapprochement-with-saudi-arabia/> (accessed Jun 24, 2022).

<sup>16</sup> Ibrahim Karatas, "A New Era in Turkish-Saudi Relations", *Gulf International Forum Organization*, May 11, 2022, <https://gulffif.org/a-new-era-in-turkish-saudi-relations/> (accessed Jun 24, 2022).

<sup>17</sup> Indr

<sup>18</sup> Oubai Shabandar, "Saudi Arabia and Türkiye must maintain strategic partnership", *Arab News*, June 22, 2022, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2108936> (accessed Jun 29, 2022).

On the other hand, Turkish-Saudi relations in Syria are more critical. The U.S. Treasury Department recently lifted some sanctions to exempt investors and private companies with ties in northeastern and western Syria from the Caesar Act. This is a critical development as far as Saudi Arabia is concerned and seeks to help the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in those areas but to continue sanctioning the Syrian regime's territories. Saudi Arabia seeks to engage with the Assad regime to lessen Iran's leverage in Damascus, but the Caesar Act will limit them. At the same time, if the Saudis get involved with the SDF, they will invite trouble with Türkiye, which is fighting the SDF and considers a Kurdish enclave in northern Syria a national security threat. Thus, the Saudi-Turkish rapprochement will necessarily entail a Saudi change regarding YPG and their ally, the Kurdistan Workers Party, and its operations in Iraq and Iran, even if YPG targets Iranian regime troops in Syria at worst.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Economic and Energy significance of the rapprochement.**

Türkiye's diplomatic drive coincides with the country's worst economic crisis in the last two decades. Having Gulf Arab states as allies can help draw investments. After mending ties with the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi announced a \$10 billion fund to support investments in Türkiye and made other moves to support the Turkish economy. Official inflation stands at a staggering 61%, while the lira tumbled 44% in value against the dollar last year. These figures do not bode well for President Erdogan's government which might affect the elections next year.<sup>20</sup>

Türkiye expects to reap substantial economic benefits from its repaired relationship with Saudi Arabi, and the Turkish exports increased by 25.3% in the first quarter of 2022.<sup>21</sup>

Saudi Arabia's economy is currently booming; Saudi Aramco says that as global economic growth recovered from a pandemic-induced downturn, its 2021 net profit soared by more than 120%. In short, Saudis are positioned to invest abroad, and Saudi Arabia is set to support and improve the ailing Turkish economy.<sup>22</sup>

Türkiye has not joined any sanctions on Russian energy, as it's a significant source of Türkiye's fuel imports. Energy relations between the two countries are strong. While European nations scurry to sign energy deals elsewhere, Türkiye looks comfortable where it is. Türkiye - second only to China in terms of growth in energy demand, according to the Turkish foreign ministry - is trying to boost its domestic energy production to meet its own needs and reduce its reliance on other countries. Investment in Turkish energy infrastructure could be an enticing prospect for Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia is currently funding the Turkish Petroleum Corporation Company (TPAO) to discover new fields offshore in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean that are lucrative prospects, and Türkiye is also conducting some searches with its own ships and facilities. Saudi Arabia buying cheap Turkish downstream energy operation assets - oil refinement and gas processing assets- could also significantly boost the Turkish economy.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Indr

<sup>20</sup> *The Indian Express*, "Explained: Why are foes Türkiye and Saudi Arabia fixing ties?", April 29, 2022, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/Türkiye-saudi-arabia-diplomatic-ties-explained-7893642/> (Accessed Jun 24, 2022).

<sup>21</sup> Ibrahim Karatas, "A New Era in Turkish-Saudi Relations", *Gulf International Forum Organization*, May 11, 2022, <https://gulfif.org/a-new-era-in-turkish-saudi-relations/> (accessed Jun 24, 2022).

<sup>22</sup> Neville Teller, "Saudi Arabia and Türkiye mend fences – opinion", *The Journalist Post*, July 4, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-711189> (accessed Jul 9, 2022).

<sup>23</sup> Shahla Omar, "Could Saudi-Turkish rapprochement save Türkiye's ailing economy?", *The New Arab*, May 6, 2022, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/could-fresh-saudi-turkish-ties-save-Türkiyes-ailing-economy> (accessed Jun 24, 2022).



## **The Cultural and Social significance of the rapprochement**

Saudi Arabia is very interested in becoming the next host for the World Expo in 2030, continuing the trend of Arab country hosts. Following the end of the 2020 Dubai World Expo this past March 2022, and as one of President Erdogan's first renewed non-economic support of Saudi Arabia, he affirmed that his country will back Saudi Arabia's bid to host the 2030 World Expo in Riyadh.<sup>24</sup>

Türkiye is one of the favored tourist destinations for most of the GCC countries, especially Saudi Arabia, as the Turkish people share many qualities with the Arabic people in an environment that respects privacy and suits the family atmosphere, in addition to the convergence of customs, social traditions and religious occasions.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, the Saudi government has issued 37,770 travel visas (a considerably large number) for Turkish travelers to perform Hajj rituals in Mecca for the current season, after a break of two years due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>26</sup>

## **Conclusion**

From my own perspective, both Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, as regional powers, are now considered essential pillars of the regional system in the Middle East. After years of stalemate tinged with caution due to the intertwining of interests and the intersection of different points of view, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye are moving towards ending differences. They are on the verge for opening a new page of their relations, neutralizing their areas of disagreement, building on points of agreement, and strengthening cooperation in various files to face the political, military and economic challenges that the two countries are going through in light of rapid regional and international transformations. By doing so, they are drawing a new map of relations in the region, in which each party wants to determine its position to equalize the balance of power in the region and form a united force capable of dealing with various current and future circumstances.

Each of the two countries has its strategic depth that complements each other. Through the strengthening of bilateral relations between them, the typical path desired by Saudi Arabia and Türkiye in their future geostrategic ties will be clearly determined in the face of the competition between strategic competitors in the Middle East.

In terms of timing, this convergence is drawing a map of regional alliances to enhance economic cooperation, especially with the continuation of the Russian-Ukrainian war that threatens global food security on the one hand, and to confront the Iranian threat and its influence in light of the growing dangers of armed militias funded by Iran, both in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen on the other hand.

It appears that Saudi Arabia and Türkiye are steadily heading towards rapprochement after years of stagnation. This might help President Erdogan solve some of his country's vexing political and economic problems. It is also likely to give the Saudis hope that they will not be alone in the presence of a powerful ally amid widespread speculation that the United States is planning an exit from the Middle East.

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<sup>24</sup> Jess Diez, "The future of the Turkish-Saudi relationship", Middle East Policy Council, May 3, 2022, <https://mepc.org/commentary/future-turkish-saudi-relationship> (accessed June 23, 2022).

<sup>25</sup> Türkiye, Wikipedia, July 11, 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Türkiye> (accessed Jul 13, 2022).

<sup>26</sup> Daily Sabah News Agency, "Hajj journey begins after hiatus for Turkish faithful", June 7, 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/Türkiye/hajj-journey-begins-after-hiatus-for-turkish-faithful/news> (accessed Jun 25, 2022).

**Recommendations for the US/USCENTCOM**

- Though Türkiye is outside USCENTCOM AOR, it is a major regional power in ME and CASA countries and mostly aligned with GCC. In the “Partnerships over Posture” framework, USCENTCOM should explore in close coordination with USEUCOM how to integrate Türkiye in Regional Constructs. Inviting and granting Türkiye an observer status in fora and Regional Constructs (CoE) should be a first step.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of Saudi-Turkish relations, especially in the military field, and contributing to the establishment of joint military exercises.
- USCENTCOM should collaborate with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye (ICW USEUCOM) to formulate a standard policy to confront the Iranian scenario based on Iran's continued threats to the region and to work jointly to build an effective defense system to face the Iranian threat.
- Supporting the strategic military stockpile between the two countries, especially in the field of air defense, to confront the Iranian threats and their proxies in the region.
- As part of the strategic competition with China and Russia, the U.S. needs strong allies in the Middle East. It will serve the interests of the United States for both Türkiye and Saudi Arabia to reach the capacity to provide their own security. For this, the normalization efforts of the Saudi-Turkish relationship should be supported, and the defense needs of both countries should be supported by US technology.