

## In Turkish-American Relations, Hereinafter Institutions, Not Individuals, Are Addressed

### News:

The G20 Leaders' summit was held in Rome and hosted by Italy. Global Warming and Climate Agreement was on the agenda of the world leaders. Turkey's eyes were on the meeting to be held between President Erdogan and Biden. It was expected that positive news would come from the meeting, with which the Turkish economy would breathe and the People's Alliance would dribble past the Nation Alliance, but it didn't happen. The meeting, which was supposed to last 20 minutes, lasted for 1 hour and 10 minutes, but Erdoğan could only summarize this meeting with these words: **"It was positive meeting."**

### Comment:

There are details about the G20 Summit and especially, about the meeting with Biden in President Erdogan's press conference following the meeting and in his statements he made to the journalists on the plane returning to Turkey. When we look at these details, we see the following: The top priority in the Biden-Erdogan meeting was the fate of the F35s and the purchase of the F16s. Erdogan said the following regarding this issue: **"Above all, of course, we have F35 issue. As you know, we have a payment of \$1.4 billion. On this issue, we negotiated the procurement of F-16s. I have not seen any negative attitude from him in this regard. On the contrary, as our Defense Ministers will meet with each other, our Foreign Ministers will also meet regarding this issue and we hope to bring to end this sensitive issue concerning the relations between the two countries."**

This statement shows that Turkey has completely closed F35 subject that it paid and wanted to buy from the USA. Turkey is now considering whether they can buy something else from the USA with F35 money. There is something important that draws attention here; the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs of the two countries will continue negotiations on the purchase of F16s. This is the Biden administration's new approach in the American foreign policy... To distract countries and leaders by removing the problems from the personal relations of the leaders and spreading them to the processes on the basis of institutions. The following detail in Erdogan's statement to journalists, who asked Biden to take the initiative in this matter, shows this more clearly. **"Biden said "We may not get results very soon," You know, it goes through two different stages, the House of Representatives and the Senate. As you know, [the situation] is fifty-fifty but I will do my best. And I said to him, "I believe that you will succeed, and I see that you have your weight on this issue."** Firstly, the USA took the money paid for the F35, then

removed Turkey from the F35 program and now it is discussing whether F16s will be given with this money or not. If you take note, Biden is neither addressing himself nor addressing Erdogan, he is saying that institutions and ministries should continue to meet and the senate, etc. will look and decide.

President Erdoğan also made the following statements to journalists: “...*We agreed to establish a joint mechanism with the United States regarding all issues between us, especially regional issues, security, defense, trade and the fight against terrorism. Hopefully, our related colleagues will carry out these issues.*” These words are an indication that Turkish-American relations will not be based on individuals (leaders) but on institutions (ministries and experts) in the upcoming period. Of course, this process will be difficult and painful for President Erdoğan, who loves to emphasize his personal leadership qualities and to say “I did it”, “I succeeded”. For Erdogan, time is elapsing fast, 2023 is approaching, and unfinished business that is beyond his control is making his baggage load heavier on the way to the election.

In short, President Erdoğan is unable to deliver high-profile political messages in relations with leaders that is not one-on-one but through institutions, and has to wait for the process. Considering that the 2023 elections are approaching and the votes of the People's Alliance are decreasing day by day due to the ongoing economic crisis in Turkey, there is a need for steps that will yield concrete results for the President, but he cannot take these steps for now. For example, the Iraq and Syria bill accepted in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey is a power in Erdogan's hands, but he cannot use it effectively against the PKK-PYD-YPG, because he cannot predict the US's attitude, and the US does not give the green light on this issue. In fact, Erdogan, who said that he discussed the issue of the support given by the USA to these terrorist organizations with Biden, uses these expressions: **“We conveyed our regrets regarding the support given by the US to the terrorist organizations PKK/YPG/PYD in Syria.”** Although the security and national issue comforts Erdogan the most in Turkey's domestic politics, if he cannot talk clearly and loudly even on this issue, we can say that 2023 is not certain and guaranteed for Erdogan.

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