

*Annual Conference of International Studies Association – West,
San Fransisco (California/USA), 25-26 September 2009*

**TURKEY'S NEW STANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:
OBSERVATIONS ON THE PERCEPTIONS IN
SYRIA AND LEBANON ***

Prof. Dr. Tayyar Ari

Res. Assist. Ferhat Pirinççi

Uludag University

Department of International Relations

BURSA / TURKEY

Turkey has made an indelible impression on the Middle Eastern countries as well as on the third parties with her active foreign policy initiatives and regional engagement in recent years. Despite the dominant Cold War mentality which was haunting in the minds of the 1990's, Turkish foreign policy virtually lived a take-off and transformed to an active foreign policy in the 2000's. This transformation can be observed particularly in the relations with the Middle Eastern countries. Turkey's new foreign policy which can be summarized as multidimensional positive engagement includes having zero problems with neighboring countries and developing friendly relations with everyone. The paper examines the Syrian and Lebanese decision makers and intellectuals' perceptions towards Turkish diplomatic demarches in recent years depending on the interviews and observations made in the field. Then the factors which effect these perceptions are analyzed by regarding some particular Middle East conflicts.

* We thank to Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Council (TUBITAK), for their valuable support.