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# American Propaganda in Türkiye during the Cold War: The Case of Dostluk Newspaper

## Soğuk Savaşta Türkiye'de Amerikan Propagandası: Dostluk Gazetesi Örneği

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**Abstract** The Cold War era was defined by intense ideological and strategic rivalry between two superpowers (USA and USSR). During this period, propaganda was utilized as a critical instrument by both superpowers to influence public opinion, strengthen alliances, and solidify their global strategies. This study examines Dostluk (Friendship), a newspaper published in Türkiye by the United States Information Agency (USIA) between 1956 and 1959. As the first American propaganda newspaper printed in Türkiye, Dostluk aimed to bolster the image of the United States in the country, maintain Türkiye's commitment to the Western bloc, and underscore the threat of communism. The newspaper presented content related to the NATO alliance and economic cooperation, alongside features on the American way of life and culture, thereby promoting the American model for Türkiye's modernization process. Targeted specifically at Turkish intellectuals and decision-makers, the newspaper was distributed free of charge and sought to familiarize the audience with American values. This study analyzes the establishment, content, and impact of the Dostluk newspaper, thereby examining the reflections of American soft power strategies in Türkiye.

**Öz** Soğuk Savaş dönemi, iki süper güç (ABD ve SSCB) arasındaki yoğun ideolojik ve stratejik mücadelenin yaşandığı bir dönemdir. Bu süreçte propaganda, her iki süper güç için de kamuoyunu etkilemek, ittifakları güçlendirmek ve küresel stratejilerini pekiştirmek adına kritik bir araç olarak kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışma, ABD Enformasyon Ajansı (USIA) tarafından 1956-1959 yılları arasında Türkiye'de yayımlanan Dostluk gazetesini incelemektedir. Türkiye'de basılan ilk Amerikan propaganda gazetesi olan Dostluk ABD'nin Türkiye'deki imajını güçlendirmeyi, Batı bloğuna bağlılığını korumayı ve komünizm tehdidini vurgulamayı amaçlamıştır. Gazete, NATO ittifakı, ekonomik iş birlikleri yanında Amerikan yaşam tarzı ve kültürüne dair içerikler de sunarak, Türkiye'nin modernleşme sürecine Amerikan modelini önermiştir. Hedef kitlesi Türk entelektüelleri ve karar vericiler olan gazete, ücretsiz olarak dağıtılmış ve Amerikan değerlerini tanıtmayı hedeflemiştir. Bu çalışma, Dostluk Gazetesi'nin kuruluş, içerik ve etkisini inceleyerek, Amerikan yumuşak güç stratejilerinin Türkiye'deki yansımalarını analiz etmektedir.

**Keywords** Cold War · Propaganda · Dostluk Newspaper · US-Türkiye Relations · Soft Power

**Anahtar Kelimeler** Soğuk Savaş · Propaganda · Dostluk Gazetesi · ABD-Türkiye İlişkileri · Yumuşak Güç

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## Introduction

The bipolar system established after the Second World War constituted a new international order, one that had not been previously experienced. This era, characterized by the absence of direct armed conflict between the two superpowers, became known as the Cold War. Beyond the tangible arenas of conflict such as technology, economy, nuclear power, and military strength, the rivalry between the superpowers extended into a broader domain, encompassing social life. Among the most pivotal components of this new global order was the use of propaganda. Despite the implementation of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, the enduring influence of Communist ideology in Europe prompted the United States to increasingly prioritize propaganda efforts. Psychological and cultural warfare thus emerged as central elements of U.S. national security policy.[1] In this context, the steps initiated during the Truman administration culminated in the establishment of the United States Information Agency (USIA) on August 1, 1953.[2] Thus, propaganda and diplomacy were separated, and a new civilian institution was established, independent from but supportive of the department of state.[3]

The year 1953 was marked by significant shifts in the geopolitical landscape of the Cold War. In the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower assumed the presidency in January, and Joseph Stalin's death in March 1953 further altered the dynamics between the two superpowers. During this period, as the Cold War became further institutionalized and relations between the U.S. and the USSR reached a historic low, changes in leadership on both sides had a notable impact on the foreign policies of both nations.[4] Nikita Khrushchev, who succeeded Stalin in the Soviet leadership, abandoned the aggressive policies of the Stalin era and advocated for the policy of 'peaceful coexistence,' proposing the possibility of mutual coexistence between the communist and capitalist blocs. While this peace rhetoric from the Soviet Union helped draw neutral countries closer to the USSR, it simultaneously posed a challenge to American public opinion, potentially undermining U.S. relations with its allies. President Eisenhower described Khrushchev's doctrine as a new form of Cold War, consisting of economic, political, and cultural offensives.[5] In this context, the USIA assumed a crucial role in assisting U.S. policymakers in advancing American foreign policy objectives.

In collaboration with the U.S. Department of State, USIA engaged in psychological warfare to influence public opinion and thus advance U.S. foreign policy objectives. During the Cold War, USIA served as a pivotal instrument of American soft power, disseminating American values and ideologies across various global regions. The agency sought to project the image of the United States as a peaceful, humane, benevolent, and powerful nation. In contrast, it also underscored the threat posed by the USSR and the dangers of communist ideology to the United States and its allies. Furthermore, one of USIA's core objectives was to promote American culture, values, sports, and the arts. By emphasizing the superiority and attractiveness of the American way of life, USIA aimed to generate positive sentiment toward the United States and its policies.[6]

[1] Report to the President by the National Security Council, December 14, 1950, *FRUS 1950,* Vol. I**,** p. 473.

[2] For a detailed account of the foundation of USIA see Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War And The Unıted States Informatıon Agency,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 2008, pp. 22-96.

[3] Erkan Aydınlı, "Amerika'nın Soğuk Savaş Döneminde Kamu Diplomasisi Yoluyla Komünizmle Mücadelesinde USIA Örneği" *Stratejik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi,* V. 6, N. 2 July, 2022, p. 319.

[4] Ian Cooke "Culture and Politics: Art, the Cold War, and the US Information Program in New Zealand." *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2, December 2016, p. 5.

[5] Johnston, Gordon, "Revisiting the Cultural Cold War." *Social History*, Vol. 35, No. 3, August 2010, p. 299.

[6] Circular Airgram From the United States Information Agency to all USIS Missions, April 11, 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, Vol. IX**,** p. 572.

To achieve these goals, USIA employed a diverse range of information dissemination channels and developed numerous cultural and informational programs. These included radio broadcasts, films, booklets, libraries, exhibitions, conferences, binational associations, newspapers, and exchange programs. These propaganda tools functioned as instruments in the broader cultural Cold War, which was waged on multiple fronts.[7] In this context, USIA established several offices, known as the United States Information Service (USIS), across various regions of the world. Türkiye, as a strategic location and a natural bulwark against Soviet expansion, became one of USIA's primary operational theaters, with multiple USIS offices established throughout the country.[8]

The Dostluk newspaper, published between 1956 and 1959, was one of USIA's key propaganda tools in Türkiye. As an important vehicle of American public diplomacy, *Dostluk* warrants scholarly attention, as it represents the first American propaganda periodical in Türkiye to be directly published by the USIA. For this reason, the U.S. National Archives, under Record Group 306 (USIA records), preserve not only all issues of the newspaper but also numerous documents concerning the decision to initiate its publication, its distribution, and its content. By contrast, the Archives of the Republic of Turkey contain no material on this newspaper.

A detailed examination of the *Dostluk* newspaper reveals not only its role as a USIA propaganda medium but also uncovers the broader objectives behind American propaganda efforts in Türkiye during this period.

The newspaper holds particular significance for scholarly analysis, as it represents the first American propaganda periodical in Türkiye to be directly published by the USIA.

## 1. The Establishment of Dostluk Newspaper

The period from 1946 to 1954 is often regarded as the golden age of Turkish-American relations. During this time, the alliance with the United States not only enhanced Türkiye's security in foreign policy but also brought rapid changes domestically, revitalizing its social and economic life. This success was attributed both to the Democratic Party government and to the economic aid and loans provided by the United States. Nevertheless, following 1954, Türkiye began to experience a noticeable decline in its economic indicators. Economic liberalization contributed to a widening foreign trade deficit, while the conclusion of the Korean War led to a decline in agricultural product prices and demand. Persistently rising inflation eroded public welfare, triggering widespread criticism of the Democratic Party's economic policies. By 1956, however, the golden age of Türkiye–United States relations had effectively come to an end. Although the government refrained from explicitly attributing Türkiye's economic challenges to American policies and the resulting increase in defense expenditures, speculation to this effect began circulating during the summer of 1956.[9]

American policies and America began to be criticized more openly and intensely. The large American population in Türkiye, their higher standard of living, the supposed special treatment they receive, and the inevitable frequency of incidents (car crashes, black marketing, flag tearing, drunken and disorderly behavior, etc.) all incited Turkish resentment. They supply fuel to the opposition journalists and editorialists who are otherwise constrained by the Press Law and other restrictive measures which the government may use when directly attacked."[10] Türkiye's tone has also changed. Türkiye is no longer a completely pro-

[7] Greg Barnhisel "Cold Warriors of the Book: American Book Programs in the 1950s." *Book History*, Vol. 13, 2010, p.185.

[8] USIS missions were stationed in cities including Ankara. İzmir, Bursa, Zonguldak, Edirne, İstanbul, İskenderun and Adana. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group (RG) 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, A Proposal for the Establishment of USIS Operations in Adana, November 1, 1961, Box 1, Official Use Only.

[9] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, From USIS Ankara to USIA Washington, Subject: 1957-1958 USIS Budget, September 28, 1956, Box 1, Confidential.

[10] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Subject: Annual USIS Assessment Report, April 13, 1960, Box 1, Confidential.

American ally in the bag. The honeymoon is clearly over. Keith E. Adamson, who served as the Director of Public Affairs at the USIS office in Ankara between 1956 and 1958, stated in an interview that his primary objectives in Türkiye were to highlight the significance of f friendly relations, to inform Türkiye about U.S. policies, and to enhance Turkish understanding of American society and values.[11]

Accordingly, the primary objective of the *Dostluk* newspaper was to foster the perception that the United States was genuinely committed to supporting Türkiye's development as a strong and independent nation. This effort targeted both the intelligentsia and the broader public, aiming to convince them that American support was essential for Türkiye's growth. By cultivating this image, the United States sought to ensure that it would not be held accountable for any shortcomings of current or future political regimes. This strategy was particularly significant in light of the economic challenges faced by the Menderes government in 1955–1956, as well as the failure to secure the desired loans from the United States.

The idea for the newspaper and its subsequent publication in Türkiye originated in 1956. Early in that year, with the arrival of new American officials in Türkiye, considerable efforts were made to utilize the Turkish press as a nationwide communication channel for disseminating USIS media materials. However, due to the Turkish press's preoccupation with domestic political affairs, it proved unsuitable for American propaganda purposes. Visits by U.S. military officers, interviews with Turkish leaders and journalists, as well as assessments conducted by USIS personnel in Türkiye, revealed that existing informational materials about the United States and its policies were not effectively reaching either the general public or key leadership groups within Türkiye.[12]

The Turkish press is primarily concentrated in the major cities of Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Among these, the Istanbul-based press holds the most prominence, with widespread distribution and the largest circulation nationwide. In contrast, newspapers in Ankara function more as the media outlets of political parties, often dedicating significant portions of their content to intra-party discussions and debates. Meanwhile, the provincial press is characterized by small, irregularly published newspapers, typically spanning three to four pages, with their content largely dominated by official advertisements. Consequently, there emerged a clear need for a new media platform capable of delivering information about the United States and its policies to a wider leadership group.[13]

In this context, USIS Türkiye determined the necessity of establishing an independent communication channel to inform the Turkish leaders about American policies and the broader scope of US relations, particularly with Türkiye.[14] Consequently, the decision was made to publish a Turkish-language periodical in tabloid format, comprising twelve pages. To ensure the newspaper's effectiveness in fulfilling its objectives, comprehensive lists of opinion leaders and senior officials in Türkiye were compiled. Following an extensive process lasting more than four months, a search for an appropriate name for the publication commenced. Both American and Turkish individuals were consulted for their input on potential names, and ultimately, the title "Dostluk" (Friendship) was chosen.[15] This succinct, clear, and culturally resonant Turkish term encapsulated the newspaper's purpose of fostering friendship and mutual understanding between the Turkish and American peoples, meeting all the criteria set for the publication's identity.

[11] Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, Interview with Keith Earl Adamson, January 01, 1988, ADST, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C., (Online) Digital ID: https://www.loc.gov/item/mfdipbib000008/ , January 02, 2025.

[12] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Publication of Turkish Language Periodical Dostluk, December 27, 1956, Box 1, Official Use Only.

[13] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Subject: 1957-1958 USIS Budget, September 28, 1956, Box 1, Confidential.

[14] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Subject: 1957-1958 USIS Budget, September 28, 1956, Box 1, Confidential.

[15] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Publication of Turkish Language Periodical Dostluk, December 27, 1956, Box 1, Official Use Only.

In accordance with Turkish press law (Law No. 5680, enacted on July 15, 1950) the newspaper's owner and editor-in-chief were required to be Turkish citizens born in Türkiye. As a result, Doğan Poyraz, head of the USIS press department, was officially listed as the owner and editor-in-chief of *Dostluk*. However, all editorial content was meticulously selected, reviewed, and edited under the oversight of the USIA's press officer and country information officer.

## 2. The Format and Distribution of Dostluk Newspaper

The primary objective of the USIA's newspaper *Dostluk*, published during an era of escalating Cold War tensions, was to enhance the American image through public diplomacy. Consequently, the newspaper's target audience was primarily composed of influential figures within the country's administration. Government officials, members of parliament, high-level bureaucrats, academics, journalists, general managers of public institutions, and military commanders were among those on the newspaper's mailing list.

The newspaper's launch was preceded by months of preparation, focusing on creating detailed lists of institutions and individuals to receive the publication. *Dostluk* aimed to provide its readers with informative content about US policies and relations with Türkiye as well as other countries worldwide. Rather than targeting the general Turkish public, *Dostluk* focused on an elite group capable of influencing Türkiye's political landscape and foreign policy. Given that foreign policy is shaped by this group, the newspaper's strategic targeting appears rational. Unlike other newspapers, *Dostluk* was distributed free of charge by mail, and its audience was specifically identified by the USIA and consulates.

Intensive research was conducted on the format of the newspaper, consulting Turkish journalists, bureaucrats, and intellectuals. Ultimately, it was decided that the newspaper would be printed in a tabloid size (43 cm x 28 cm), featuring large images to balance official texts, which included political commentary, press releases, and editorial pieces. In planning the format, it was decided to devote columns in each issue to American press comment, Voice of America (VOA) radio schedules, Turkish-American Association activities and brief review of new books in USIS libraries. It was also decided to devote one page to a photo feature on some aspect of US-Turkish cooperation in the economic, technical assistance, military or cultural field.[16]

The newspaper was divided into two main sections: the news section and the magazine section, with a total of 12 pages. Of these 12 pages, 4 pages were dedicated to news content, while 8 pages were allocated to the magazine section. Although the number of pages occasionally varied depending on the intensity of the agenda or special news stories, this basic format remained consistent throughout the majority of issues.

The first section of the newspaper consisted of the cover page, which focused on political and economic news related to Turkish-American cooperation, regional alliances, and international developments. The second page featured additional details on the stories presented on the cover, as well as a column titled "*Suallerinize Cevaplar*" (Answers to Your Questions). In this section, readers' inquiries about the United States were answered. Questions on a wide range of topics—from the population of the United States to the wages of workers, from the breakfast foods of Americans to the clothing worn by school children and indigenous peoples—were addressed by the American News Center and published in subsequent issues. Throughout the first year of the newspaper's publication, this question-and-answer section appeared regularly, but after December 18, 1957, with the commencement of the second year of publication, the focus shifted towards an increased volume of news, interviews, and articles, and the question-and-answer section was discontinued.

[16] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Publication of Turkish Language Periodical Dostluk, December 27, 1956, Box 1, Official Use Only.

Following the news content, one page was devoted to photographs under the title "Haftanın Resimleri" (Pictures of the Week). This section featured a selection of prominent technical, cultural, or military images relevant to Turkish-American cooperation, as well as photographs of developments in the American defense industry, space exploration, and nuclear weapons technology. Occasionally, photographs of American cultural and artistic events were also included. The last page before the magazine section featured columns from the American press, content from the VOA radio program, activities of the Turkish-American Association, and short introductions to new books available at USIS libraries.

After the news section, the magazine section of the newspaper was presented on a separate cover page. The magazine section occupied more space than the news section and covered a wide range of topics likely to appeal to a broad audience, with narratives enriched by illustrations. Unlike contemporary magazines, this section predominantly featured illustrated articles on science, culture, art, and technology. Some of these stories focused on Turkish individuals participating in such activities in the United States, while others were directly related to American life and culture. News and commentary on prominent figures in entertainment and the arts were included, but they were relatively few and smaller in scale. On the final page of the magazine section, a column titled "*Bunları biliyor musunuz?*" (Did You Know?) offered short, unrelated facts—such as information about the tallest people in the world, the number of types of kangaroos, and the inventor of the air brake system accompanied by simple illustrations.

Following the magazine section, the sports page provided full-page coverage of various global sporting events. Priority was given to coverage of sports activities in which both Turkish and American participants were involved. However, due to the limited number of such events, the sports section included a compilation of sports news from around the world. In the lower right corner of the sports page, information was provided about famous athletes in specific sports in the United States.

Thus, *Dostluk* newspaper was designed to be distinct from daily political newspapers, incorporating not only cultural, artistic, and sporting content, but also focusing on Turkish-American cooperation. The source of news for *Dostluk Gazetesi* comprises reports obtained from the International Press Service as well as regional developments and events.[17] The first issue of *Dostluk* was published on December 12, 1956, with an initial print run of 12,500 copies, 11,500 of which were distributed free of charge by mail to a predetermined list of recipients. An additional 1,000 copies were distributed to individuals from various professional groups who were learning English at the Turkish-American Association. The print run was increased to 13,000 copies by the third issue, 14,000 copies by the seventh issue, and 15,000 copies by the 26th issue at the end of the first year.[18]

## 3. The Analysis of the Content and Objectives of Dostluk

The first issue of the newspaper states its purpose as “to strengthen and increase the bonds of mutual friendship and understanding between Turks and Americans.”[19] The news, interviews, articles, and images featured in *Dostluk* reveal that the newspaper undertook a multifaceted role, addressing topics ranging from political developments to cultural events. Significant attention was given to mutual visits, military aid, exchange programs, and economic collaborations between the United States and Türkiye. The headlines on the front page primarily focused on political and diplomatic developments. The inner pages provided

[17] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Publication of Turkish Language Periodical Dostluk, December 27, 1956, Box 1, Official Use Only.

[18] NARA, RG 306, *Master File Copies of Field Publications 1951-1979*, Ankara Dostluk Turkish 1957, Box 91.

[19] “Dostluktan Mesaj”, *Dostluk*, 12 December 1956, p. 2.

detailed coverage of these topics, while the newspaper's magazine section included supplementary images and articles that supported the political and diplomatic narratives.

An examination of the political and diplomatic coverage in the newspaper underscores the significance of military and strategic cooperation between the United States and Türkiye. Discussions on the history of bilateral relations, including joint military exercises conducted by Turkish and American armed forces, air demonstrations, and the exchange of messages between the naval forces of both nations, serve to highlight the historical aspects of Turkish-American friendship and the deepening of ties between the two states.[20] In the context of the Cold War era, frequent emphasis was placed on the United States' strategic positioning of Türkiye as a key ally and the critical role of the NATO alliance in ensuring defense and security.[21] Articles within this category particularly underscored the role of Turkish-American collaboration as a barrier against Soviet expansionism. Furthermore, it was emphasized that the United States pursued military and economic cooperation to enhance the security of free nations and promote global peace.[22]

Beyond the bilateral relations between the two countries, another prominent theme in the political news was the Soviet threat. As a catalyst of the Cold War, the newspaper sought to maintain a persistent focus on the Soviet threat.[23] It frequently emphasized that the United States adopted a strong stance against this threat, not only in support of its allies but also in defense of all free nations.[24] In addition to highlighting the danger posed by the Soviet Union to global peace, *Dostluk* portrayed the communist system as corrupt, dismissive of human rights, economically fragile, and reliant on false propaganda to mislead the public.[25] Accordingly, the newspaper attributed significant importance to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. According to the newspaper, the Hungarian people rose up against the oppression of the Soviet Union in their struggle for freedom. President Dwight D. Eisenhower condemned the repressive measures imposed on the Hungarian people as contrary to human rights and declared that the United States would provide assistance to refugees.[26] Throughout the Cold War, anti-communism was employed as a mechanism of control and a tool for instilling fear.[27]

During this period, the Baghdad Pact emerged as a critical element of the U.S. strategy to contain Soviet expansion, and it received extensive coverage in *Dostluk.* The newspaper underscored the Pact's significance for regional security, the positive assessments of the Pact by the United States, and the economic assistance that the U.S. pledged to its member states.[28] When these themes are analyzed collectively, it becomes

[20] "Türk-Amerikan Tabii Bağları", *Dostluk*, 19 March 1958, p. 1; "Türk-Amerikan Hava Gösterileri", *Dostluk*, 20 August 1958, pp. 6-7; "Türk-Amerikan Donanmaları Arasında Mesajlar", *Dostluk*, 1 October 1958, p. 1; "150 Senelik Türk Amerikan Dostluğu", *Dostluk*, 27 May 1959, pp. 6-7; "Barış İçinde İşbirliği", *Dostluk*, 15 May 1957, pp. 6-7.

[21] "NATO'nun En Mühim Toplantısı Başladı", *Dostluk*, 12 December 1956 p. 1; "Türk-Amerikan-İngiliz NATO Manevraları Sona Erdi", *Dostluk*, 17 April 1957 p. 1; "NATO Memleketlerinin Takip Ettiği Usuller", *Dostluk*, 3 April 1957 p. 1; "NATO Üyeler Arasında Samimi Fikir Mübadelesi Temin Etti", *Dostluk*, 27 December 1957, p. 2.

[22] "Türk-Amerikan İşbirliğinin Onuncu Yılı", *Dostluk*, 20 March 1957, p. 1.

[23] "Son Rus Tehditleri ve Batılı Gazeteler", *Dostluk*, 17 April 1957, p. 2; "Sovyetlerin Norveç'i Tehditleri Hakkındaki Yorumlar", *Dostluk*, 3 April 1957, p. 2; "Sovyetler Suriye'yi Kontrol Altına Almak İstiyor", *Dostluk*, 28 August 1957, p. 1; "Demir Perde Gerisinde", *Dostluk*, 15 October 1958, p. 2; "Mütecaviz Sovyet Uçakları", *Dostluk*, 7 January 1959, p. 4; "Sovyet Tehditleri ve İran", *Dostluk*, 30 April 1957, p. 2.

[24] "Orta Doğu Memleketlerine Tecavüze Mani Olunacak", *Dostluk*, 9 January 1957, p. 1; "Sovyet Güdümlü Mermileri Hür Dünyayı Korkutmuyo", *Dostluk*, 11 September 1957, p. 2.

[25] "Kızıl Çin Komünistlerinde Hayatın Korkunç Olduğu Bildiriliyor", *Dostluk*, 18 February 1959, p. 2; "Sovyetlerde Şahsa Tapma", *Dostluk*, 18 March 1959, p. 2; "Sovyetlerin Uydurma Haberleri", *Dostluk*, 1 October 1958, p. 2; "Sovyet Cemiyetinde Sınıf Farkı", *Dostluk*, 11 September 1957, p. 2.

[26] "Macar İhtilali Hakkında Yorum", *Dostluk*, 27 December 1957, p. 2.

[27] Mehmet Özçağlayan, Dilhan Apak, "Soğuk Savaş Yıllarında Algı Yönetimi, Haber ve Propaganda İlişkisi" *Marmara İletişim Dergisi*, Vol. 28, December 2017, p. 114.

[28] "Amerika Bağdat Anlaşmasını Destekliyor", *Dostluk*, 12 December 1956 p. 1; "Bağdat Paktı Memleketlerine 12.500.000 Dolarlık Yardım", *Dostluk*, 17 April 1957, p. 1; "Amerika Bağdat Paktı Askeri Komitesine İştirak Ediyor", *Dostluk*, 3 April 1957, p. 1; "Bağdat Paktı Müslüman Delegeleri Ankara'da Toplandı", *Dostluk*, 23 January 1957, p. 1; "Bağdat Paktı Nedir?", *Dostluk*, 22 January 1958, p. 4; "Bağdat Paktı Toplantıları?", *Dostluk*, 25 June 1958, p. 1.

evident that the United States placed considerable strategic importance on the Baghdad Pact. Throughout the Cold War, the U.S. sought to effectively implement its containment strategy against the Soviet Union by providing consistent political and economic support to the Pact.

Another significant topic in the political context is the statements made by Turkish and American leaders regarding bilateral relations, as well as high-level visits between the two countries. These statements frequently emphasize the close and friendly ties between the nations, aiming to foster a positive public perception of bilateral relations.[29] These reports underscore the threat to global peace and the persistent challenges facing the Middle East. Within this context, the importance of two nations working together as allies to protect shared interests and ideals of liberty is underscored.[30]

As well as the assistance provided to Baghdad Pact countries, direct aid extended by the United States to Türkiye, has been a prominent topic in the newspapers. Military, economic, and technical aid to Türkiye are among the key subjects extensively covered by the press. The 10th anniversary of the Truman Aid and the Marshall Plan in 1957-1958 provided an opportunity for the newspaper to delve into these topics in detail.[31] During an interview with General Lawrence R. Dewey, Chairman of the Military Assistance Commission, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Truman Aid, it was noted that Türkiye requested assistance from the United States in 1947 and that the U.S. provided the necessary support to ensure Türkiye's security and continued existence as a free nation.[32] This objective was frequently highlighted in reports on U.S. aid.

It was emphasized that the United States holds great respect for the independence and sovereignty of nations, and these principles formed the basis for the aid provided.[33] The newspaper regularly featured reports on military, economic, humanitarian, and technical assistance directed toward Türkiye. While this aid was undoubtedly a component of the containment strategy against the Soviet Union, the articles highlighted that it was also aimed at securing Türkiye's safety and enhancing the welfare of its population.[34]

In addition to economic and military aid, numerous articles also addressed technical assistance. These reports highlighted the United States' efforts to develop Türkiye's road infrastructure, provide credit for railway construction, and facilitate agricultural agreements and loans.[35] Particularly, the construction of highways in Türkiye was portrayed as a vivid example of Turkish-American cooperation. It was noted that the assistance was not limited to equipment and materials; American experts were actively working on the ground in Türkiye.[36] These contributions, which supported the integration of Türkiye's economy into Western economies, were simultaneously part of a broader strategy to maintain the balance of power during the Cold War.

[29] "Büyükelçi Richard Türkiye Yolunda", *Dostluk*, 20 March 1957, p. 1; "Başvekil Menderes Forrestal'da", *Dostluk*, 3 April 1957, p. 5; "Green Türkiye'yi Methediyor", *Dostluk*, 4 December 1957, p. 1; "Amerikan Büyükelçisi Teşekkürü", *Dostluk*, 1 October 1958, p. 4; "Amerikan Ordu Vekili Türkiye'yi Ziyaret Etti", *Dostluk*, 29 April 1959, p. 1.

[30] "Eisenhower ile Ürgüplü Türk Amerikan Münasebetlerindeki Dostluk ve Samimiyeti Belirttiler", *Dostluk*, 11 September 1957, p. 1; "Büyükelçi Warren'in Dostluk Gazetesine Verdiği Beyanat", *Dostluk*, 15 May 1957, p. 6; "Amiral Briscoe'nun İstanbul'daki Konuşması", *Dostluk*, 6 March 1957, p. 1.

[31] "Truman Doktrini'nin Yıldönümü", *Dostluk*, 20 March 1957, p. 1; "Marshall Planının Onuncu Yıldönümü", *Dostluk*, 12 June 1957, p. 1.

[32] "Türkiye'ye Amerikan Askeri Yardımı Hakkında Bir Röportaj" *Dostluk*, 20 March 1957, p. 6.

[33] "Rountree ve Amerikan Yardımı", *Dostluk*, 12 June 1957, p. 1; "Amerika'nın 1957 Yılındaki Yardımı $4.750.000.000", *Dostluk*, 25 September 1957, p. 1; "Amerikan Yardımının Yeni Şekli Hakkında", *Dostluk*, 17 April 1957, p. 2; "Amerikan Kızılhaçı 13.000.000 Dolar Gönderiyor", *Dostluk*, 15 May 1957, p. 1; "Amerikan Yardımı $5.000.000", *Dostluk*, 25 June 1958, p. 1; "Amerikan Yardımı $243.000.000", *Dostluk*, 6 August 1958, p. 1; "Birleşik Amerika Türkiye'ye $75.000.000 Yardım Yaptı", *Dostluk*, 17 September 1958, p. 4.

[34] "Eisenhower Dış Yardımın Ehemmiyetini Bildiriyor", *Dostluk*, 29 May 1957, p. 1; "Truman Karşılıklı Yardım Manevi Kıymetleri Destekler Diyor", *Dostluk*, 13 May 1959, p. 4; "Ankara'daki Amerikalılar Bir Yardım Sandığı Kurdular", *Dostluk*, 6 February 1957, p. 4; "Bugüne Kadar Türkiye'ye Yapılan Yardımlar", *Dostluk*, 3 April 1957, p. 5-6.

[35] "Türk Demiryolları İçin 40 Milyon Dolar Kredi Açıldı", *Dostluk*, 23 January 1957, p. 1; "Amerikadan 500.000 Ton Buğday", *Dostluk*, 23 January 1957, p. 6; "Türkiye ile Amerika Arasında Bir Zirai Anlaşma İmzalandı", *Dostluk*, 6 February 1957, p. 4.

[36] "Türk Karayolları Her Gün Daha Gelişiyor", *Dostluk*, 30 April 1957, p. 7; "Bağdat Paktı Karayolları Komitesi Toplandı", *Dostluk*, 9 October 1957, p. 1.

One aspect of the strategy to maintain alliances during the Cold War was to highlight the advancements in science and technology to its allies. As a result, the newspaper columns extensively covered the political, economic, social, scientific, cultural, and military developments of the United States, emphasizing the admiration for America's achievements and the dissemination of American culture. Under the heading of science and technology, particular attention was given to advancements in space exploration and atomic technology. Thus, the progress made in these two key areas of competition during the Cold War—space and nuclear power—was communicated to Türkiye, showcasing the developments recorded in the United States.

As part of its strategy to retain its allies during the Cold War, the United States sought to emphasize the progress it had achieved in science and technology to its partners. Accordingly, *Dostluk* devoted significant space in its columns to scientific and technological advancements, aiming to highlight and garner appreciation for America's political, economic, social, scientific, cultural, and military achievements, while also promoting American culture. The newspaper featured articles highlighting a wide range of American technological advancements, including space exploration, new technologies utilizing atomic energy for peaceful purposes, innovations in agriculture, maritime advancements, radar systems, and the automobile industry.[37] These reports underscored the strength and technological superiority of the capitalist system led by the United States, presenting it as a model for Türkiye in its modernization process.

Under the theme of science and technology, special emphasis was placed on space exploration. In this context, advancements in the United States related to the Space Race, one of the most critical arenas of competition during the Cold War, were communicated to Türkiye. The Soviet Union's launch of the first satellite, Sputnik, in October 1957 marked a turning point in the Cold War, initiating a "Space Race" between the U.S. and the USSR. The successful launch of Sputnik brought significant prestige to the Soviet Union. In response, the United States sought to reverse this trend by accelerating its space program and intensifying its science and technology themes in propaganda.[38] Reports on the Space Race highlighted several points, including America's progress in space programs compared to the Soviet Union, the unprecedented size of rockets sent into space, significant advancements in U.S. rocket and missile technology, and the extensive involvement of American scientists in this field.[39]

Alongside news related to developments in science and technology, the promotion of American lifestyle and values also emerged as a key component of the propaganda efforts. Articles on topics such as art, sports, cinema, and cultural events like Christmas, Independence Day, former U.S. presidents, and prominent figures in American literature were featured in the newspaper. These contents not only supported Türkiye's Westernization efforts but also contributed to shaping America's image as a peace-loving nation. Another USIS activity that contributed to this image was exchange programs. Particularly, the sending of students to the United States through exchange programs like Fulbright, as well as the dispatch of military personnel and healthcare workers for professional specialization, became an effective method for spreading American ideals. The newspaper placed significant emphasis on these exchange programs and regularly highlighted

[37] "İki Yeni Atom Denizaltısı", *Dostluk*, 20 August 1958, p. 1; "Birleşik Amerika'nın Yeni Atom Yakıtı Tesisleri", *Dostluk*, 17 July 1957, p. 4; "Denizlerde Araştırmalar", *Dostluk*, 23 January 1957, p. 5; "Otomobil Sanayinde Kaydedilen İnkişaf: İki Kişiye Bir Otomobil", *Dostluk*, 6 February 1957, pp. 6-7; "Tütün Ekiminde Bir Yenilik", *Dostluk*, 23 January 1957, p. 7; "Radarda Kaydedilen Yeni İlerlemeler", *Dostluk*, 17 July 1957, p. 7.

[38] Trevor Rockwell "New Frontiers of Knowledge: Science and Technology in the Late 1950s American Cold War Propaganda". *Past Imperfect*, Vol. 15, September 2009, DOI:10.21971/P76W2W, p. 370.

[39] "Sputnikin Birleşmiş Milletler Üzerinde Tesiri Olmadı", *Dostluk*, 18 December 1957, p. 2; "Sun'i Peyk Kaşif'in İlmi Mahiyeti", *Dostluk*, 19 February 1958, p. 2; "Birleşik Amerika İlk Sun'i Peyki Attı", *Dostluk*, 5 February 1958, p. 1; "Amerikanın Füze ve Feza Gelişmesi", *Dostluk*, 7 January 1959, p. 4; "Vanguard Peyki Fezada", *Dostluk*, 19 March 1958, p. 1; "Birleşik Amerikada Füze Çalışmaları", *Dostluk*, 5 March 1958, p. 1; "Kaşif Fezada Dönüyor", *Dostluk*, 19 February 1958, pp. 6-7.

them in its columns.[40]

## 4. The Effectiveness of Dostluk Newspaper

The effectiveness of *Dostluk* newspaper as a propaganda tool published by USIS can be assessed, albeit not definitively, by examining the extent to which its content aligns with the objectives outlined by the USIS Türkiye mission. In the 1956 USIS Türkiye plan, the primary objectives of the United States were outlined and communicated to all USIS offices. These objectives can be summarized as emphasizing the alliance and friendship between the two countries, promoting the aid provided by the United States to Türkiye, maintaining the awareness of the Soviet threat, and showcasing America's technological and scientific superiority.[41] Considering the content and objectives of the newspaper detailed in the previous section, it is evident that the publication served to support these goals. In this regard, the newspaper can be regarded as a successful soft power tool for the United States.

Another source for observing the newspaper's impact is the reports submitted by USIS Türkiye to USIA. Although the preparation of these reports by the institution that published the newspaper may raise concerns about objectivity, the information contained in the reports documents the interest shown by the Turkish elite in the newspaper. The initial response to the newspaper was highly positive. The USIS office in Ankara received numerous phone calls and letters containing requests and suggestions. Following this strong interest in the first issue, the American Ambassador sought feedback from the American missions in Türkiye regarding mailing lists, content, and new ideas. Both USIS Istanbul and USIS Izmir made significant contributions through local news coverage and by assisting with the list of recipients. Additionally, sufficient quantities of newspaper paper were ordered to meet the newspaper's future needs in the coming months.[42]

As *Dostluk* completed its first year of publication, the evaluation conducted by USIS highlighted that the newspaper was successfully progressing in alignment with its intended objectives.[43] Over time, interest in the publication grew among key individuals and institutions within Turkish society. For instance, the Turkish General Staff requested 2,000 copies of *Dostluk* to distribute to all military bases and training centers. Similarly, Turkish Airlines and the Turkish Grain Board requested copies of the newspaper, stating its plan to distribute them to its central and regional offices across Türkiye.[44]

Although *Dostluk* newspaper was effective in influencing the Turkish elite, it is difficult to claim that it had a similar impact on the broader public. The limited number of copies printed and the fact that they were sent only to pre-determined individuals and institutions served as a restricting factor in its reach. Even though the newspaper was available in public-access spaces such as USIS libraries and trade fairs, the number of readers it reached remained limited. However, some newspapers in the Turkish press quoting from *Dostluk* helped to ensure that its content was somewhat accessible to the public. These developments demonstrate that, within just one year, *Dostluk* had established itself as a significant publication among periodicals in Türkiye.

[40] "Amerika ile Türkiye Arasında Genç Çiftçi Mübadelesi", *Dostluk*, 6 November 1957, pp. 6-7; "Türk Hemşireler Amerika'ya Gidecek", *Dostluk*, 12 June 1957, pp. 6-7; "Türk Amerikan Eğitim Mübadele Komisyonu Faaliyete Geçti", *Dostluk*, 29 May 1957, pp. 6-7; "Amerika'da Tetkiklerde Bulunan ilk Türk Emniyet Memuru", *Dostluk*, 8 January 1958, pp. 6-7.

[41] For detailed information pls see NARA, RG 306, *Country Files For Turkey 1953-1972*, From USIS Ankara to USIA Washington, Subject: Briefing Session for Representatives Thomas S. Gordon and Edmund P. Radwan, September 5, 1956, Box 1, Secret.

[42] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Publication of Turkish Language Periodical Dostluk, December 27, 1956, Box 1, Official Use Only.

[43] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Evidence of Effectiveness, November 20, 1957, Box 1, Unclassified.

[44] NARA, RG 306, *Country Files for Turkey 1953-1972*, Subject: Soviet-Hungarian Protests Regarding USIS Ankara Exhibit, December 19, 1957, Box 1, Unclassified.

## Conclusion

*Dostluk* Published by the United States Information Agency (USIA) between 1956 and 1959, was not only the first American propaganda newspaper in Türkiye but also a key instrument in shaping Turkish-American relations. Its establishment was driven by strategic necessities, as Turkish-American relations experienced challenges following the "golden age" of cooperation between 1946 and 1954. Economic difficulties, public discontent, and growing criticism of American policies required a channel to address Turkish intellectuals and policymakers directly. *Dostluk* was designed to fulfill this role by emphasizing the mutual benefits of the bilateral relationship and promoting American values.

*Dostluk*'s significance lies in its ability to blend political, cultural, and ideological narratives to align with USIA's primary goals. Politically, the newspaper reinforced Türkiye's strategic importance within the NATO framework and the broader Western alliance. It consistently emphasized joint military exercises, economic aid programs, and diplomatic engagements as solid symbols of mutual commitment. This emphasis on cooperation sought to reassure Turkish elites of the United States' reliability as an ally while countering the Soviet Union's ideological and geopolitical influence.

Culturally, *Dostluk* served as a window into the American way of life, presenting achievements in science, technology, and culture. The newspaper's articles on advancements in space exploration, atomic energy, and modern infrastructure underscored the superiority of the capitalist system and its potential as a model for Türkiye's modernization. By promoting American cultural practices, holidays, sports, and arts, Dostluk aimed to foster admiration and sympathy for American values. The inclusion of exchange programs, such as the Fulbright scholarships, further solidified cultural ties between the two nations and reinforced the narrative of the United States as a benevolent power invested in Türkiye's development.

An analysis of *Dostluk*'s effectiveness reveals its success in achieving USIA's objectives. Reports from USIS offices indicated strong interest among Turkish elites, with increasing requests for copies from institutions like the Turkish General Staff and Turkish Airlines. These responses demonstrate that *Dostluk* effectively addressed its target audience's needs and played a significant role in shaping perceptions of the United States within influential circles. Furthermore, the newspaper's content supported the broader goals of American soft power, reinforcing Türkiye's alignment with the West during a period of geopolitical uncertainty.

The newspaper also offers valuable lessons about the challenges and limits of propaganda. While *Dostluk* successfully reached an elite audience, its impact on the broader public was less clear. This highlights how propaganda can be effective within specific groups but may struggle to create widespread influence or change. The limited accessibility of the newspaper to the general public and its focus on a specific audience suggest that its impact was primarily confined to the elite circles it targeted.

In conclusion, *Dostluk* offers valuable lessons for understanding the role of media in diplomacy and international relations. It demonstrates how targeted communication strategies can reinforce alliances, counter adversarial narratives, and promote mutual understanding. The newspaper's ability to navigate the complex dynamics of Turkish-American relations during the Cold War highlights the power of media as a tool for shaping perceptions and advancing strategic objectives. As a case study, *Dostluk* provides a nuanced understanding of the interplay between media, diplomacy, and geopolitics, offering insights that remain relevant for contemporary discussions on soft power and public diplomacy.

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[45] Further information about the archival documents used in this study is provided in the footnotes

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