



36TH

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON U.S.-TURKEY RELATIONS

MAY 21-23, 2017 • TRUMP INT'L HOTEL, WASHINGTON DC

TOGETHER TOWARDS TOMORROW:
EMPOWERING BUSINESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

POST CONFERENCE REPORT

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The **36th Annual Conference on U.S.-Turkey Relations** focused on current and relevant topics in a variety of sectors, including defense, manufacturing, agribusiness, and construction. The theme of the conference, “Together Towards Tomorrow: Empowering Business Through Partnerships,” emphasized the importance of dialogue in fostering, maintaining, and improving commercial diplomacy and relations between the United States and Turkey. The conference provided a platform for thought leaders, business people, and government officials to gather and discuss issues that influence the trade relationship.

Keynote speakers included the *Honorable Ambassador Thomas Shannon*, the *Honorable Newt Gingrich*, *His Excellency Serdar Kılıç*, *Andrew Liveris*, *Osman Kibar*, *General James L. Jones*, *Ömer Cihad Vardan*, and *Ekim Alptekin*.

Throughout the conference, panelists and keynote speakers discussed the importance of the bilateral relationship within the geopolitical and economic context. Despite many challenges, the Turkish economy remains strong, providing large incentives for foreign companies to invest. The Turkish government has been working to improve innovation through research and development. Furthermore, Turkey acknowledges areas of improvement, such as the low number of women in the workforce.



General James L. Jones:

“As we gather together leaders from business, the government, and the military, we resolve to honor our shared past, but also to deepen our strategic commitment to one another and to focus firmly on the future.”



Ömer Cihad Vardan:

“The business community on both sides have gathered together to build the road map for the new era in line with the vision set by our leaders.”



Ekim Alptekin:

“Economic relations can only reach their full potential in the context of a robust Turkish-American relationship that includes close political and security cooperation as well. Strong Turkish American relations are crucial for global peace and stability.”



Howard G. Beasey:

“...the 36th Annual Conference on U.S.-Turkey Relations, where we truly strive to move together towards tomorrow and empower our business companies through partnership.”

Within the regional context, Turkey continues to face numerous challenges primarily due to the refugee crisis and the ongoing civil war in Syria. ISIS and the PKK continue to threaten peace and stability in the region, highlighting the importance of the critical alliance between the U.S. and Turkey. Many at the conference agreed that this partnership is not one for the short-term, but a long-term vision that must be maintained by both sides.

Overall, the conference consisted of 12 expert panels, two plenary sessions, an exhibition hall, and numerous networking events. The conference kicked off on Sunday with an opening reception at the Turkish Ambassador's Residence, where Andrew Liveris, CEO of Dow Chemical, delivered a powerful speech that emphasized the importance of building a better business climate, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and developing skills training for the workforce. Monday's full day of conference panels ended in a networking reception that provided a fun environment for conference attendees to eat, socialize, and talk about everything U.S.-Turkey related. The conference came to a close with Tuesday's Gala Dinner, which featured a special preview of the Turkish movie, Ayla. The movie emphasized the historical military friendship and partnership that existed between the U.S. and Turkey during the Korean War and continues until today. The 36th Annual Conference on U.S.-Turkey Relations was productive, informative, energetic, and successful.



Ambassador Thomas Shannon:

"The United States and Turkey need each other. Ours is not a partnership of convenience or of temporary interests. It is one of conviction. A time tested alliance built on the enduring foundation of common interests, mutual respect, and shared values."



Ambassador Serdar Kılıç:

"For over 6 decades, Turkey and the United States have been staunch allies and strong partners, bound by common values and mutual interests."



Andrew Liveris:

"... the U.S.-Turkey relationship has long made both countries safer, more innovative, and more prosperous."



The Honorable Newt Gingrich:

"Those of us who want to live in freedom, those of us who want to live in prosperity and those of us who want to live in safety, have to find ways to work together, particularly in times of political turmoil."

@USChamber President & CEO Tom Donohue calls for upgrading the U.S.-#Turkey business relationship at #USTurkeyConf



ECONOMIC PLENARY BUSINESS CLIMATE IN TURKEY

MODERATOR: Patrick Anderson, *Principal & CEO, Anderson Economic Group LLC*

PANELISTS: Jean-Patrick Marquet, *Managing Director, Turkey, EBRD*; Enrique Jimenez, *Managing Director, Turkey, Philip Morris*; Ahmet Burak Dağlıoğlu, *Head of Department, ISPAT*

The economic plenary examined Turkey's business climate with a focus on what makes Turkey an attractive country for commercial opportunities and what Turkey must accomplish to strengthen its economy. These issues were explored both from a Turkish companies perspective and that of foreign firms looking to invest and work in Turkey.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Why Turkey?
 - » **Good geographic location** links Europe with Asia and the Middle East, providing companies with a base to reach a wide variety of markets.
 - » **Strong banking network** is equipped to finance projects for companies. Additionally, the government is working on a variety of banking reforms to promote further business.
 - » **Changes to international labor laws** now make it easier for foreigners to increase FDI.
- Areas to Improve
 - » **Low rate of female participation** in the workforce at just 30%. This is well below the world average and puts Turkey tied for 21st lowest of all countries. The government is working on creating programs to bring more women into the workforce.
 - » Turkey **does not have enough innovation**, although the government is working on creating more incentives in the research and development system to improve innovation.
- There is so much background noise about Turkey's geopolitics that it is easy to lose sight of the phenomenal strength of the economy. 2016 was a difficult year for Turkey in many regards, but it still achieved 2.9% economic growth. This is indicative of the solid foundation that is in place in Turkey, and what makes it an attractive business climate.

KEY QUOTES

- **Enrique Jimenez**—"The combination of a very strong educational system, a very strong, striving culture, together with a lot of innate ambition has made Turkish talent very competitive in the world marketplace."
- **Ahmet Burak Dağlıoğlu**—"Turkey is a dynamic G-20 country that uniquely links the East and West."



AGRIBUSINESS THE “GROWING” ORGANIC AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

MODERATOR: Fergül Kuzucuoğlu, *Founder, AFK Strategies Inc.*

PANELISTS: Ahmet Hepdoğan, *VP Global Procurement & Supplier Quality, Ferrara Candy Company*; Onur Bülbül, *Founder and President InnoNative Advisors*; Joe Lukitsch, *President, Lukitsch & Company*; Jake Lewin, *President, CCOF Certification Services, LLC*

Consumers are increasingly demanding more sustainable, organic choices and the business community has taken note. Both the U.S. and Turkey have made significant advancements in catering to this new trend. Turkey is one of the most suitable places for organic farming due to the presence of rich biodiversity, suitable climate conditions, experienced farming practices, and less polluted areas of the Anatolia. In the U.S., the USDA has a platform focused on organic agriculture and international trade partners. However, the production and outsourcing of organic foods also comes with a series of challenges both to the seller and buyer. Overall, Turkey is a suitable partner for organic trade with the U.S. and there is a lot of potential to further this trade relationship.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Organic agriculture is a **holistic production management system** that does not harm human health or the environment.
- The biggest challenge in the organic food industry is **keeping the integrity of the food** across the whole supply chain.
- Focus on the Consumer: Consumers, particularly millennials, are most interested in the **social aspect of food consumption**, particularly corporate social responsibility and where the food comes from. Consumers are turning to small batch production. Additionally, consumers do not want to pay a lot—they want a premium product without the premium price. The most important attributes to the organic consumer are: authenticity, transparency, proactivity, and engagement.
- **U.S organic market has tripled in size** to over 22,000 certified organic operations with over \$43 billion in U.S. retail sales.
- U.S. Natural and Organic Food and Beverage sales grew in 2016 at 8.5% to \$75 Billion, while total food growth lagged behind.
- In Turkey, over the last decade, Turkish organic production tripled as farmers and consumers are showing more interest in organic products. The market for organic foods is still small, but it is growing, with much of the production intended for export.
- Turkey is an important trade partner to the U.S., with around \$100 million dollar in trade. Turkey's main organic exports are nuts, dried fruits, and grains. These products have to be certified to the market you are trading or selling to.

KEY QUOTES

- **Ahmet Hepdoğan**—“Consumers want to know the intimate story behind the food. It provides a feeling of safety.”
- **Jake Lewin**—“This is not just about Turkey, but about good international trade.”



CONSTRUCTION & INFRASTRUCTURE GLOBAL

INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES & AMERICA'S TRILLION DOLLAR PROMISE

MODERATOR: Nizamettin Derbil, *Chair, Energy & Infrastructure Committee, American-Turkish Council*

PANELISTS: Burak Talu, *CEO, Dogus Construction and Trade Inc.*; Robert Yüksel Yıldırım, *President & CEO, Yıldırım Holding*; Ziad Haider, *Senior Associate, Simon Chair in Political Economy, CSIS*; Norman Anderson, *President & CEO, CG/LA Infrastructure*

The U.S. recently allocated a trillion dollars towards infrastructure development. The new opportunities presented from U.S. infrastructure revitalization promises to be a strong market for international collaboration. Furthermore, the global deficit in transportation networks, power generation, and more beg for more competition from international players. This panel discussed the opportunities for investment in U.S. infrastructure, as well as the opportunities for American and Turkish companies to take advantage of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A **shift from public investments to private investments** in infrastructure is what will drive the trillion dollar promise.
- The U.S. has one of the most closed infrastructure economies in the world. However, moving forward, there will be greater private public partnerships (PPPs), which both American and Turkish companies can benefit from. **Four sectors ideal for private investment are:** high voltage electricity transmission, airports, VA hospitals, and seaports.
- Qualities that make the **U.S. an attractive investment environment** for Turkish companies: cheap energy costs, existing infrastructure, qualified workers, and access to capital.
- **How Turkish companies can enter the U.S. marketplace:** set up a company in the U.S., purchase an existing company, or subcontract with a major American corporation.
- **China's Belt and Road Initiative**, which will connect the traditional silk road routes between China and Central Asia, is estimated to be a trillion dollar investment and involve over 65 countries. It has already received the endorsement of Turkish President Erdogan as a means of enhancing political stability. Turkey and China signed a land transportation agreement, allowing for Turkey to position itself in the middle corridor. The initiative also provides opportunities that may be beneficial for American companies. Turkish and American companies can work together by comparing notes and bidding on projects together.

KEY QUOTES

- **Norman Anderson**-“This is a tremendous time for people to think about investing in U.S. infrastructure.”
- **Ziad Haider**-“China is trying to position itself as a champion of open markets and globalization at a time when the U.S. is stepping back.”



CYBERSECURITY OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION ON CRITICAL NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE CYBERSECURITY

MODERATOR: RADM (ret.) Bill Liegher, *Director, Government Cyber Solutions, Raytheon*

PANELISTS: Ebru Bjarnason, *Account Manager, CSRA*; Yakup Börekçioğlu, *General Manager Mediterranean, Trend Micro*; Navroop Mitter, *CEO, ArmorText*; Egemen Taş, *Senior VP, Engineering, Comodo*.

Developments in technology have transformed the cybersecurity field as cyber crime now transcends national borders and industries. While hackers have been quick to create new tactics that target vital systems, many in the cyber defense industry have been slow to adapt. This panel examined how governments and business can work together in the pursuit of a safer digital climate.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Cyberspace **transcends physical state borders** and therefore means that not one party alone can guarantee cybersecurity. Companies and governments must collaborate and work together to develop the proper mechanisms for defense.
- A majority of the components of cyberspace are **owned by the private sector**. Companies provide citizens with security and, in exchange, they receive access to a tremendous amount of information. Access to data is seen as a competitive advantage, in both the private and public sectors, and this serves to create a barrier to collaboration that needs to be changed in order for cybersecurity to improve.
- Government entities today know relevant information, but often times hold on to it even if it can potentially help other companies and businesses.
- The **general public should be knowledgeable** on how to protect their data. There is an outdated mindset that security systems should be connected to physical products, like computers. In reality, most of the cyberattacks target the flow of information. Therefore, consumers need to focus on more products that protect their information once it leaves their computers, cellphones, tablets, etc.
- **Turkey is a viable country for research and development** because the government provides good incentives, such as reduced income tax and reimbursement of 60% of all salaries. In order for collaboration to occur between the U.S. and Turkey, there needs to be a capable workforce that is supported by academia and training exchange programs.

KEY QUOTES

- **Egemen Taş**—“Every single geopolitical event has its reflections in cyberspace.”
- **Navroop Mitter**—“Everyone is on the front line of the cybersecurity fight.”



R&D/INNOVATION ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING: ITS IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF MAKING THINGS

MODERATOR: Banu Onaral, *H.H. Sun Professor, Drexel University*

PANELISTS: Canan Özsoy, *President & CEO, GE Turkey*; Volkan Emre, *Co-Founder & CEO, Pergatech*; İhsan Elgin, *Founder, Core Strateji*

Additive manufacturing, or 3-D printing, has and will continue to change traditional business models in a variety of sectors. However, rather than clashing with traditional manufacturing, additive manufacturing (AM) enhances traditional production by producing different components with high complexity in small quantities. It provides the opportunity to create jobs that unlock human potential and develop skills that are transferable from sector to sector. AM application is limitless and is used to create end-use products for a variety of industries including: aerospace, construction, healthcare, automotive, and even fashion and art.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Benefits of additive manufacturing:** Additive manufacturing makes it possible to produce goods with geometries that were not possible in previous forms of manufacturing. Instead of having to mesh many different design and parts together, a single design can be printed that combines them. Additive manufacturing makes cheaper, efficient, and lighter products.
- **How to promote growth:** In additive manufacturing, technology moves rapidly so companies and countries need to be constantly innovating or they will fall behind. Governments should create programs, such as innovation labs and grants, to provide people with opportunities to design products. This is the most effective way to learn and gain experience, which can be transferred from one area of additive manufacturing to another.
- **Changing the future of jobs:** Many people worry that advances in technology will drive people out of work. However, the reality is that additive manufacturing will **unlock more human potential**. Blue collar jobs may decrease, but there will be an increase in “new collar” jobs in which people perform thought-heavy work that cannot be automated.
- Turkey has a strong base of workforce and factories for additive manufacturing, but they need to continue to innovate and advance or else they will be passed by other countries. Turkish education needs more application, rather than being theoretical.

KEY QUOTES

- **Canan Özsoy**—“Additive manufacturing and other similar technologies are reigniting productivity and growth.”
- **Banu Onaral**—“With the help of technology supporting us, enabling us, augmenting us, we will be able to engage in what humans should do and not the work that can be automated...the age of the mind is upon us.”



RETAIL & MANUFACTURING THE RISE OF E-COMMERCE: HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN CAPITALIZE

MODERATOR: Barış Ornarlı, Representative, TUSIAD

PANELISTS: Ceyhun “Jay” Doğan, COO & Co-Owner, Tayse Int’l Trading Inc; Paul Demery, Business/Technology Editor-Writer, B2BecNews; Justin King, Founder, eCommerceandB2B.com; Ashley Aslı Ölçer, Manager, Business Intelligence & Strategy, Global Sales and Int’l Seller Services, Amazon; Hüsnü Dilemre, Deputy Undersecretary, Ministry of Economy

The retail & manufacturing panel discussed the increase in global retail e-commerce sales and the steps companies are taking to expand omni-channel sales and marketing efforts to accommodate for this growth. E-commerce offers access to a global pool of customers and consumers who are increasingly shopping online. This shift in e-commerce provides challenges for many companies, but there are ways to capitalize on this trend.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There are two types of e-commerce: B2B and Retail. B2B means selling products through distribution or wholesale channels. One business sells to another. Retail commerce is selling directly to the consumer.
- **Adapt to changes in the marketplace:** While traditional storefronts may be shutting down, the brick-and-mortar store is not going extinct because companies are building stores that seamlessly incorporate the online experience with the in-store experience. Consumers can shop online and make in-store pick-ups or returns. Companies are building omnichannel stores and using new platforms like social media to advertise. Companies are following the consumers’ attention.
- **Focus on the customer:** Customers today have high expectations for companies. They want products and services almost instantaneously. Companies must work to gain customers’ trust, which is a difficult task to do online. However, using social media and providing information in the form of photographs or videos is a good way to legitimize a product.
- **Innovate:** Large amounts of data, combined with improving artificial intelligence, create new opportunities for customer-centric products and services. The future of e-commerce is in machines that use artificial intelligence to order products for you. For example, a refrigerator that orders eggs when you run out of them.
- Turkey has potential for a lot of e-commerce, but it needs improved digital literacy and must address the issues of returns.

KEY QUOTES

- **Ashley Aslı Ölçer**—“When you focus on the customer and innovate, that is when the success follows.”
- **Hüsnü Dilemre**—“Turkish consumers have trust issues with e-commerce, but they look at convenience and low prices online as an advantage.”
- **Justin King**—“It’s not about e-commerce, it’s about the customer.”
- **Ceyhun “Jay” Doğan**—“It does not matter which industry you are in, ecommerce is a fact, affecting all industries.”



TRADE TRADE POLICIES AND THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION: ASSESSING THE IMPACT ON THE U.S.-TURKEY TRADE RELATIONSHIP

MODERATOR: Doreen Edelman, Co-Leader of the Global Business Team, Baker Donelson

PANELISTS: Mustafa Mente, Secretary General, DEİK; Frank Schweitzer, Counsel for the International Trade Group, White & Case LLP; Dean Pinkert, Partner, Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP

The trade panel focused on current and potential U.S. policy changes, particularly as it applies to the Trump Administration. Panelists discussed how these changes will affect the U.S.-Turkey trade relationship and why Turkish investors find the U.S. market to be so appealing.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- President Trump has expressed **more interest in bilateral trade**, instead of multilateral trade deals like NAFTA and TPP. This most likely due to the complications associated with negotiating multilateral trade deals.
- Modern trade agreements: create guidelines for market access; establish rules for the treatment of foreign goods, service providers, investment and intellectual property; and contain transparency provisions.
- **Rise in protectionism** is due to: the rise of anti-establishment populism following the 2008 financial crisis, the lack of jobs produced by an anemic world economy, and threats to global security and stability.
- In a recent study, the U.S. was found to be the most attractive market for Turkish investors, in part due to America's high purchasing power and abundance of cheap energy.
- The USTR is at the center of U.S. trade policy.

KEY QUOTES

- **Dean Pinkert**—"Trump's trade policy may not be as different from the past agenda as you have been led to believe."
- **Mustafa Mente**—"The United States is the most attractive market for Turkish investors among the high income economies."
- **Frank Schweitzer**—"The mission of the USTR is to open foreign market for trade and service suppliers around the world and, when necessary, to protect US trade obligations."



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HOST ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN-TURKISH COUNCIL (ATC) TURKEY-U.S. BUSINESS COUNCIL (TAİK)



The American-Turkish Council (ATC), a leading independent business organization, exists to help member companies achieve their bilateral business and investment objectives and to facilitate stronger U.S.-Turkey relations. Our diverse membership includes Fortune 500s, multinationals, and U.S. and Turkey-based small and medium-sized enterprises from multiple sectors. Equipped with decades of experience, expertise, and an influential network, the ATC provides its member community with opportunities, services, and programs designed to resolve business challenges and strengthen linkages between the two countries.

ATC Leadership

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Tamer Saka
Vice Chairman

Howard G. Beasey
President and CEO

ATC Staff

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Rüya Eichelberger
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The Turkey-U.S. Business Council (TAİK), operating under the umbrella of the *Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK)* was formed in 1985 as the first business council in Turkey with the aim to enhance trade and investment relations between the U.S. and Turkey. TAİK's vision is primarily to increase the trade and investment volume between the U.S. and Turkey; to be recognized as a reliable source of information and networking channel on bilateral trade issues for both countries and to make the U.S. companies view Turkish companies as a key partner and Turkey as a destination for direct investments in the region.

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WHY ATTEND?

- Build relationships and develop your network among 500+ attendees
- Exchange ideas with executives from 20+ industries
- Learn from expert panels
- 88% of attendees would recommend to a colleague
- 80% of attendees reported making valuable connections
- One of a kind Annual Conference on U.S.-Turkey Relations



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