

FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Turkish Republic was established in 1923, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Since then, Turkey's foreign policy has been guided by the principle of "Peace at home, Peace in the world", laid down by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first President of the Republic.

Turkey is strategically located at the confluence of Europe and Asia. This unique geographical position bestows upon Turkey, European, Balkan, Middle Eastern, Caucasian, Mediterranean and Asian identities all at the same time and dictates the pursuit of a multi-dimensional foreign policy. Turkey is fully aware that an effective foreign policy has to conform to the realities of a country's geography. The varied and sometimes turbulent character of the regions surrounding Turkey has brought the objectives of stability, solidarity, peace, friendship and cooperation to the fore in Turkish political thinking.

In this context, the primary objectives of Turkish foreign policy are to establish and develop friendly relations with all states, in particular with neighbouring countries, to promote and to take part in regional and international cooperation initiatives, to resolve disputes through peaceful means and to contribute to regional peace, stability, security and prosperity. Closer integration with the international community, in particular with the Western institutions, has been a priority objective.

Accordingly, Turkish foreign policy can be characterized by principled action, consistency

and credibility. The major choices of the Republic reflect a stable and consistent foreign policy, despite the volatility of the regions surrounding it.

Initial Years of the Republic and the Cold War Era

In the post-Lausanne era, the focus of the new Republic was on internal structuring. Externally, efforts were directed at resolving the problems pending from the Lausanne negotiations, including the Ottoman debt and border issues. Relations with neighbouring countries were marked by a cooperative spirit and mutual understanding. In the mid-1930's, as the international environment was rapidly deteriorating, Turkey endeavoured to form a security belt on its western and eastern borders. It played a leading role in the establishment of the Balkan Entente (Turkey, Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia) in 1934, and the Saadabad Pact (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan) in 1937.

In the wake of World War II, Turkey became a founding member of the United Nations in 1945 and the Council of Europe in 1949. As a result of the growing threats to security in Europe, Turkey joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1952.

In 1963, Turkey became an Associate Member of the European Economic Community, the forerunner of the European Union.

During the Cold War years, Turkey shouldered significant responsibilities as a NATO member. Its basic foreign policy concern was security. Thus, initially Turkey was not in a position to allocate adequate resources to economic development and respond fully to the needs of a rapidly growing population, and an increasingly urban and industrial society.

However, as Turkey developed its economy and consolidated democracy, it was able to take a more active part on the international scene. Thus, convergence with the West acquired further importance.

On the other hand, Turkey's developing relations with the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries enabled it to play a positive role in the climate of "detente".

The Post-Cold War Era

The dramatic changes that occurred in Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union in the late 1980s and the early 1990s led to a sweeping re-definition of international relations.

The collapse of totalitarian regimes, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, the emergence of newly independent states, and other related developments which brought the bitter East-West rivalry and the bipolar international system to an end, have led to the widespread adoption of pluralistic democracy, respect for human rights, and free market economies throughout Europe.

The end of the Cold War also created a wave of optimism with regard to the prospects for international peace. However, new threats to security, such as ethnic nationalism, xenophobia, irredentism, fundamentalism and terrorism have led to regional conflicts and instability, casting a shadow over the initial optimism.

In the post-Cold War period, Turkey found itself at the centre of an enlarged geopolitical and geo-strategic landscape stretching from Europe and the Balkans to the Caucasus and Central Asia, from the Black Sea to the Middle East. With its democratic and secular regime based on the principles of free market economy, respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, Turkey stands as a source of stability and inspiration in this region. Indeed, the country's democratic, socio-economic and entrepreneurial resources permit Turkey to make an important contribution to the transformation taking place in Eurasia, an area of increasing geopolitical significance in the new millennium.

In this respect, it has spearheaded the formation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), which can be seen as the first and the boldest attempt to capitalize on the Post-Cold War spirit of international cooperation. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), of which Turkey is a founding member, can also be cited in this regard. Turkey has also pioneered the formation of a Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR) which was created among the coastal states to respond to emergencies and environmental disasters in the region.

Turkey has participated in many peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations, such as those in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Kosova, Georgia and Afghanistan. Turkey's commitment to peace keeping across the globe continues through its participation in and support for various UN, NATO and EU led missions.

Throughout the 20th century Turkish foreign policy has rationally reconciled the Turkish State tradition and Ottoman diplomatic heritage with the realities of the world. Currently, it is undergoing the process of meeting the requirements of

the 21st century. The principles of “realism” and “integration with the West” inherent in this heritage continue to maintain their importance in Turkey’s current foreign policy objectives.

Despite all possible adverse developments on a regional as well as global scale Turkey’s principle objective will not be altered. The main objective of Turkish foreign policy is to provide the Turkish nation with the highest political, economic and social standards of our age. With the strength that it derives from its historical experience, its human resources, its culture, its democratic and secular regime, Turkey regards this as an attainable objective.

The European Union

Membership in the European Union is a primary objective of Turkish foreign policy.



An Association Agreement between Turkey and the European Community, namely the Ankara Agreement, was signed in 1963, according to which the objective of full membership would be attained once the necessary conditions were met on the basis of the envisaged three phases of preparation. Consequently, Turkey applied for full membership in April 1987. The Customs Union between Turkey and the EU, foreseen by the Ankara Agreement, became effective on 1 January 1996. It was a significant milestone in advancing Turkish-EU relations.

The recognition of Turkey as a candidate country for accession at the Helsinki European

Council of December 1999 ushered in a new era in Turkish-EU relations.

As decided in the Helsinki European Council Presidency Conclusions, the EU Commission adopted an Accession Partnership document for Turkey on November 8, 2000, which was formally approved by the EU Council on February 26, 2001. The adoption of this document, which was revised in April 2003, was a crucial step in Turkey’s pre-accession strategy.

In line with the Accession Partnership document, the Turkish Government announced its own National Program for the Adoption of the EU Acquis (NPAA) on March 19, 2001, which was also subsequently revised in July 2003.

Turkey has undergone a historic period of reform and transformation since 1999. In a few years following the announcement of the National Program, groundbreaking reforms have been introduced, including two comprehensive Constitutional amendments, eight complimentary reform packages, a new Civil Code and a new Penal Code.

The sweeping reforms range from, inter alia, reinforcing the legal guarantees on freedom of expression to the abolition of the death penalty, from expanding the scope of the freedom of asso-



ciation to the lifting of legal obstacles to learn and broadcast in languages traditionally used by Turkish citizens in daily life and from ensuring

gender equality to the elimination of State Security Courts. The realization of these reforms, in such a short span of time, demonstrates Turkey's resolve to meet the Copenhagen political criteria and her commitment to acquire EU membership.

Furthermore, a Reform Monitoring Group was set up in September 2003 with a view to ensuring effective implementation of the reforms. This High Level Group composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Interior addresses specific issues that require further attention and takes decisions to ensure rapid and effective implementation. Implementation of the reforms is also a permanent item on the agenda of the Council of Ministers.

Similarly, on the economic front, numerous reform measures have been adopted in line with the NPAA. In terms of the economic criteria, Turkey has restructured its financial sector, ensured transparency in public finance, and enhanced competitiveness and efficiency in the economy. The structural reforms have already started to yield tangible results.

A process of legislative scrutiny has also been conducted to assess progress in Turkey's alignment with the Community Acquis by the eight sub-committees established in 2000.

All these efforts were acknowledged at the Copenhagen European Council of December 2002, which, after Helsinki, was yet another turning point in Turkey-EU relations.

The Copenhagen European Council decided that "if the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the EU will open negotiations without delay."

The Commission published its report and recommendation in October 2004. It declared that Turkey sufficiently met the Copenhagen criteria

and recommended the Council that the accession negotiations be opened.

Following the aforementioned report and recommendation of the Commission, the European Council, held in Brussels in December 2004, decided to open the accession negotiations on 3 October 2005.

The Council stated that the enactment of the six specific items of legislation identified by the Commission in its report of October 2004 would be expected before 3 October 2005.

The European Council also welcomed Turkey's decision to sign the Protocol regarding the adaptation of the Ankara Agreement, taking account of the accession of the ten new Member States prior to the actual start of accession negotiations.

Six items of legislation; namely the Law on Associations, the new Penal Code and the Law on Intermediate Courts of Appeal, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the legislation establishing the judicial police and the law on execution of punishments and measures; were brought into force on 1 June 2005.

Turkey has fulfilled all her commitments to start the accession negotiations with the EU. This has been acknowledged by the EU Commission as well.

On 29 July 2005, Turkey signed the Additional Protocol extending the Ankara Agreement to all new members, in the context that was agreed on 17 December 2004. Upon signing the Protocol, Turkey reiterated its position on the Cyprus issue by way of a declaration. In the declaration, she stated that pending a comprehensive settlement, the position of Turkey on Cyprus would remain unchanged, and expressed its readiness to establish relations with the new partnership State which would emerge following a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus.

Not only will the opening of accession negoti-

ations on 3 October 2005 mark a historic point in Turkey-EU relations, but it will also constitute a significant milestone in the European integration process.

When Turkey becomes a member to the EU, it will take its place as a young, dynamic, and rapidly developing large market.

Turkey's economic contribution to the EU will not only be limited to its own economic potential but also encompass the strategic geography it is located in. Turkey is located on a key point for the increasingly important energy, transportation, and communication networks that link the East to Europe.

Turkey will thus be able to contribute both to the EU's opening to Eurasian markets and to the procurement of raw materials and inputs that are of vital importance for the European economy.

Greece

Relations with Greece constitute an important dimension of Turkish foreign policy. Turkey believes that enhancing the existing friendship and cooperation between the two countries, which are also neighbours and NATO allies, sharing the same geography and common democratic values, serve the mutual interests of both countries.

The rapprochement process underway between Turkey and Greece since 1999 has created a constructive climate conducive to fruitful cooperation in various areas. Turkey looks toward improving its present cooperation with Greece in all fields and solving bilateral differences through a result-oriented comprehensive and constructive dialogue.

Five tracks have been established between Turkey and Greece during the ongoing process of dialogue, namely the reciprocal visits of the Foreign Ministers, meetings of the working

groups under the guidance of the joint Steering Committee, political consultations, talks on Confidence Building Measures and exploratory contacts on the Aegean.

This process of dialogue over the past six years has paved the way for the conclusion of 26 agreements in various fields such as trade, tourism, environment, energy, transportation, culture, regional cooperation and security.

Frequent high level contacts and reciprocal visits, which culminated with a Prime Ministerial visit from Turkey to Greece in May 2004 after an interval of 16 years, have been crucial in terms of keeping the momentum of the process of dialogue. On this occasion, Prime Minister Erdoğan also paid a visit to Western Thrace where a large Turkish minority resides. In April 2005, the Greek Foreign Minister Mr. Petros Molyviatis visited Turkey, which enabled the parties to seek further ways and means to enhance the existing friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

The mutual desire to bridge differences through dialogue and promoting closer cooperation, between the two countries has also reflected positively on other aspects of the bilateral relations, such as trade, transport, tourism and energy, which Turkey considers as the strategic dimension of the bilateral partnership. Trade between two countries is flourishing. While the bilateral trade volume stood at 710 million US Dollars in 1999, this figure reached 1.8 billion US Dollars in 2004. In 2004 Turkey was the destination for about half a million Greek tourists. Moreover, energy has proved to be a promising field of cooperation over the last few years.

Cyprus

Cyprus came to the forefront of the interna-

tional community's agenda in 2004 with the diplomatic initiative taken by Turkey in January for the resumption of negotiations between the parties on the Island with a view to reaching a comprehensive settlement.



The political resolve demonstrated by Turkey for a solution that would enable a united partnership state of Cyprus to join the EU on 1 May 2004 led to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's invitation issued to the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders together with the representatives of the guarantor states Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom to meet in New York in February to make arrangements for the resumption of the talks on the basis of the Secretary General's comprehensive settlement plan.

Following the drafting exercise among the relevant parties and the UN, the final revised version of the Annan Plan for a comprehensive settlement was presented to the parties on 31 March by the Secretary General. It was later submitted to simultaneous separate referenda in the North and South of Cyprus on 24 April 2004. The Turkish Cypriots overwhelmingly voted in favor of the Annan Plan by casting 65 percent of their votes for a settlement that would also provide for the accession of a united Island to the EU. However, ironically the Greek Cypriots, while

being the side to reject a solution with a 'No' vote of 76 percent, acceded to the EU on May 1st.

Turkey has consistently advocated a freely negotiated, comprehensive and viable settlement in Cyprus. It has placed its full support behind the UN Secretary General's good offices mission and cooperated closely with him in the entire process leading up to the referenda, thereby, demonstrating its political will to bring an end to the division of the Island. Turkey, together with the international community, profoundly regretted that the opportunity to solve the long pending issue of Cyprus was lost in the choice of the Greek Cypriots to reject the solution that would have permitted for the unification of the Island under the banner of a "United Cyprus Republic" with a federal government and two equal constituent states, namely that of the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots.

The fact of the matter is that there exist two distinct peoples on the Island, whose bitter past of ethnic conflict dictates that lasting peace can only be based on a viable equal partnership. The previous partnership state between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots was set up in 1960 according to the international agreements signed by the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders and the Turkish, Greek and British governments. This lasted only three years, as in 1963 the Turkish Cypriots were ousted by force from all organs of the new Republic by the Greek Cypriots, in contravention to the founding agreements and the constitution. A long and bitter period of ethnic confrontation, an early version of the strife that took place in the Balkans, ensued. This escalation peaked in a coup instigated by the then rulers of Greece in 1974 to overrun the Turkish Cypriots and annex the Island. Turkey reacted as a matter of exigency in accordance with the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. Turkey has since helped set up a

secure environment for the Turkish Cypriots to foster their democracy while continuing the search for reconciliation.

The outcome of the referenda of 24 April has created a new state of affairs. The international community has gone on record that the Turkish Cypriots who courageously affirmed their support for a solution should not be unduly penalized for the way the vote went on the other side of the Island, where the Greek Cypriots in fact “rejected the solution itself rather than the mere plan”, as noted by the UN Secretary General in his relevant report.

The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in the said report on his mission of good offices in Cyprus, issued on 28 May 2004, states that “in the aftermath of the vote, the situation of the Turkish Cypriots calls for the attention of the international community as a whole, including the Security Council” and that “the Turkish Cypriot vote has undone any rationale for pressuring and isolating them”. The Secretary General also calls on the members of the Security Council to give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development.



It is now up to the international community to heed the appeal of the Secretary General and bring an end to the political, economic, social and cultural isolation that the Turkish Cypriots have been subjected to as well as lift the unjust economic embargo imposed on them for decades. Modest first steps being taken to ameliorate the circumstances of the Turkish Cypriots need to be pursued with a greater commitment on the part of the international community.

Despite the repeated calls of the UN Secretary General, the Greek Cypriot side persistently refrains from reviewing its position vis-à-vis the Annan Plan. Following his visit to both sides of Cyprus, Greece and Turkey for consultations on the future of Secretary-General's good-offices mission, UN Undersecretary-General Kieran Prendergast, in his presentation at the Security Council on 22 June 2005, emphasized that, “despite my encouragement to produce a list of focused, finite, manageable, prioritised proposals, (Greek Cypriot leader) Mr. Papadopoulos declined to indicate any hierarchy in his demands or any priority within them.” Mr. Prendergast also underlined that “it would not help the search for a solution if Greek Cypriot concerns were met in a way that lost majority support for the UN plan on the Turkish Cypriot side – and the Turkish Cypriot electorate must have confidence that this, too, would be borne in mind in any renewed process.”

Turkey will continue to support the mission of good offices of the UN Secretary General and the efforts of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, to seek justice and reconciliation in Cyprus.

The United States

Relations between Turkey and the United States are based on strong ties of friendship and

alliance. During the Cold War years, the security aspect of the relationship became more pronounced, particularly following the Truman Doctrine and Turkey's membership to NATO. In the ensuing post-Cold War environment, the strategic relations between Turkey and the US, which have stood the test of time and have remained strong, continue to move forward in the pursuit of common interests based upon shared values.

The Turkish-American relationship has proven to be essential for the maintenance of peace, stability and prosperity as well as the preservation of freedom and democracy in the wider geographies of mutual concern. Hence, Turkey and the US continue to closely consult, coordinate and cooperate with each other, as appropriate, in conflict prevention and crisis management, containing regional conflicts, curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and combating international terrorism and extremism of all sorts, illegal drug trafficking and other manifestations of organized trans-national crime.

Turkey believes that there is a great potential yet to be tapped in its relations with the United States particularly in the economic, trade, investment, science and technology fields. The official visits of Prime Minister Erdoğan to Washington in January 2004 and of President George W. Bush to Turkey in June 2004 both served as a valuable opportunity to strengthen bilateral ties and give direction to the future course of cooperation between the two countries.

The need for deeper cooperation and coordination between Turkey and the US has also been surfaced by the intensity of high level visits paid by both sides to each other since the beginning of 2005. The visit of the Secretary of State as well as those of the other high level political and military personalities from the US and the visits of

Turkish Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs during the first half of 2005 gave a fresh impetus to the strategic relations between the two countries.

The Balkans

Turkey, due to geographical proximity, as well as her historical and cultural ties with the Balkan peoples, places importance on the maintenance of peace and stability in this region. The Balkans constitute a natural gateway for Turkey to Western Europe. On the other hand, Turkey is on the transit route for the regional and European states to the Middle East and Central Asia.

Turkey's approach to the conflicts in the Balkans has not been confined to merely stopping the bloodshed, but has had a broader perspective of creating a durable climate of understanding and peaceful cohabitation across the region.

Turkey was at the forefront of international efforts towards the settlement of the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts. In this regard, Turkey not only participated in the relevant NATO operations, but also took part in the UN peacemaking and peace-keeping operations, and subsequently contributed to the reconstruction efforts. Turkey continues to closely monitor peace and stability in this region. Its contributions to KFOR and the UN police mission (UNMIK) in Kosovo, to EUFOR-ALTHEA and the EU police mission (EUPM) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as the EU led police mission "Proxima" in Macedonia can be cited in this regard.

Turkey's leading role in launching major regional initiatives, such as the Southeastern European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the only genuine initiative emanating from within the region and the Multinational Peace Force Southeast Europe (MPFSEE)/South East Europe

Brigade (SEEBRIG), testifies to the importance that she attaches to forging closer ties among the Balkan countries and to the creation of a durable atmosphere of understanding and peaceful cohabitation. Turkey is also active within regional economic initiatives as well as the Stability Pact initiated by the European Union and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). In the field of security cooperation, Turkey makes her contribution to confidence and security building in the region through the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre in South Eastern Europe (RACVIAC).

South Caucasus

Turkey has close political, economic, social and cultural ties with the peoples of the Caucasus. Turkey's approach to the South Caucasus is shaped by its desire to establish an atmosphere of comprehensive cooperation in the region with the contribution of all three states; Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Turkey immediately recognized the independence of all the three states without discrimination in late 1991 and developed close

relations with both Azerbaijan and Georgia in the course of the years following their independence. However, Armenia's reluctance to build her relations with her neighbours on the basic principles of international law and good-neighbourliness made it impossible so far to establish diplomatic relations with this country.

Turkey considers that consolidation of South Caucasian states' independence, maintenance of their territorial integrity, strengthening of their democratic structures and market economy and optimal use of their economic potential are of crucial importance. With this understanding, Turkey has also actively supported these states' integration into the international organizations such as OSCE, NATO and the Council of Europe, and regional organizations like the BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation).

"Frozen conflicts" like Nagorno Karabakh and Abkhazia remain to be the principal obstacles to peace and stability in the South Caucasus. Peaceful settlement of all conflicts will contribute to the political stability of the countries and the economic welfare of the nations in this region and will open prospects for regional cooperation.



With this understanding, Turkey has been active to contribute to the peaceful solution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict from its inception. Turkey is a member of the OSCE Minsk Group and also supports direct and indirect bilateral talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Turkey is ready to support a peaceful solution to the Nagorno Karabakh problem that will be acceptable to both Azerbaijan and Armenia.

With the aim of playing a facilitating role in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and exchanging views on other regional issues, Turkey has initiated a forum for dialogue among the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia, the last meeting of which was held on the margins of the NATO Summit in Istanbul on 28 June 2005.

Likewise, Turkey has recently communicated to Abkhaz and Georgian sides her readiness to assume a facilitating role for the peaceful solution of the Abkhazian conflict.

Central Asia

Turkey's policy towards the Central Asian Republics is based on its desire to contribute to the consolidation of state re-structuring, to support political and economic reforms, to promote integration with the international community and to develop bilateral relations in all fields on the basis of equality, mutual interest and respect for sovereignty.

Turkey has cultivated strong relations with the Central Asian Republics. Close historical, linguistic and cultural ties have served as a valuable basis for a rapid development of relations. Today, Turkish businessmen are among the major investors in Central Asia where the inadequacy of necessary investment resources is one of the greatest obstacles to development and economic modernization. The Turkish Export Credit Bank has extended credits totalling 900 million Dollars

out of which 750 million Dollars have been allocated. The total trade volume of 565 million Dollars in 2001 increased to 840 million Dollars in 2002, 1,170 million Dollars in 2003 and 1,694 million Dollars in 2004. Moreover, Turkey has extended more than 10.000 scholarships to students from these countries since 1992 and has provided significant military assistance and training to help them counter possible threats to their security.

In addition to her bilateral endeavours, Turkey has also been active at the multilateral level by supporting the membership of the Central Asian Republics to the Economic Cooperation Organization and by pioneering the establishment of the Summits of the Turkish-Speaking Countries which serve as a platform for high level exchange with the participation of Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan.

Energy Resources

Turkey is in close proximity to 70 percent of the world's energy resources and is destined to play a key role in the transportation of the hydrocarbon reserves of the Caspian Sea basin and the Middle East to Western markets.

Thus, Turkey has concentrated its efforts on the realization of the East-West Energy Corridor for the transportation of Caspian and Middle Eastern oil and gas reserves to these markets. The pipeline projects linking the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East to Europe will be essential for the integration of the region to the West. Secure and commercially profitable pipelines will help bring stability and prosperity to the region. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Main Export Crude Oil Pipeline (BTC) project, which is the major component of the East-West Energy Corridor, is intended for both Central Asian and Azerbaijani oil. The legal framework of the BTC

oil pipeline project was completed at the end of 2000. The project entered its construction stage as of 10 September 2002. The first tanker to carry Caspian oil is expected to be loaded from Ceyhan in November 2005. The BTC pipeline will not only transport the Caspian oil safely to Western markets but will also contribute to the safety of navigation, protection of the environment and to the security of 15 million inhabitants of Istanbul by placing less of a burden on the Turkish Straits, currently over congested due to the heavy volume of oil tanker passage.

The other important project of the East-West Energy Corridor is the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) Natural Gas Pipeline, which will carry Azeri gas to Turkey through Georgia. It is also the first leg of the Trans-Caspian Natural Gas Pipeline Project which is to pump Turkmen natural gas to Europe. The project was sanctioned in February 2003 by its commercial partners, upon the completion of the legal framework. The delivery of Azeri natural gas is expected to begin in 2006.

An important pipeline in terms of diversification of Turkey's energy supply is the Iraqi-Turkish (Kirkuk-Yumurtalik) oil pipeline which was constructed to transport crude oil from Iraqi fields to the Ceyhan Terminal. The total capacity of the pipeline is 70.9 million ton/year.

The transportation of Caspian oil and gas resources through multiple pipelines will enable the European countries both to diversify and secure their energy supply. The interconnection of the gas pipeline networks of Turkey and Greece, within the south European gas ring project will also constitute an essential component of Europe's energy diversification efforts in the future. The incorporation of Turkey's energy network with that of the EU was realized with the conclusion of the "Intergovernmental Agreement on the Turkey-Greece Gas Interconnector" signed in February 2003 and the "Sale and

Purchase Agreement between BOTAŞ and DEPA" in December 2003. The ground breaking ceremony of the Turkey-Greece Gas Interconnector was held at the Turkish-Greek border on 3 July 2005 with the participation of the Prime Ministers of the two countries.

On the other hand, with a view to the diversification of its energy supply, Turkey started to receive natural gas from Iran in late 2001 and from the Russian Federation through the Blue Stream Pipeline as of February 2003, in addition to the existing Western line.

Turkish gas and electricity markets have been liberalized under the Electricity and Natural Gas Markets Laws enacted in 2001. The Energy Market Regulatory Body, which was consequently established, is entitled to license all sector-related activities.

Russian Federation

Russia, which is a key actor in the Eurasian region, has traditionally been an important neighbour of Turkey throughout history.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent emergence of the Russian Federation marked a new phase in Turkish-Russian relations. Today, both countries share the common aim of working towards the enhancement of peace, stability and economic prosperity in the region.



The changes that have taken place on the international scene and new threats and challenges that have emerged to peace and stability in the 21st century have proven that enhanced cooperation between Turkey and Russia is an important aspect of security, stability and prosperity both at the global and regional level.

Reciprocal visits between Turkey and the Russian Federation not only strengthen bilateral ties but also help to enhance understanding and diversify areas of cooperation between the two countries. The official visit of the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin to Turkey on 5-6 December 2004 introduced a new dimension to Turkish-Russian relations. This visit was the first at the highest level since that of the Chairman of the Soviet Presidium, Mr. Podgorny in 1972. During President Putin's visit, the Joint Declaration on the Intensification of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership was signed by the Presidents of both countries.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has recently paid several visits to the Russian Federation on various occasions. On 10-12 January 2005 Prime Minister Erdoğan participated in the inauguration ceremony of the Turkish Trade Centre in Moscow and on 8-9 May 2005 attended the ceremonies held in Moscow on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the World War II Victory Day. Prime Minister Erdoğan also paid a working visit to the Russian Federation on 17-18 July 2005 and held talks with President Putin in Sochi.

The trade volume between the two countries reached the level of approximately 5 billion dollars in 2002, 6.7 billion dollars in 2003, 6.7 billion Dollars in 2003 and 10.9 billion Dollars in 2004. Turkish contractors continue to consolidate their position in the Russian construction market by attaining over 13.1 billion Dollars of business to

date. Statistics indicate that the number of Russian tourists visiting Turkey in 2001, 2002 and 2003 was 753.000, 946.000 and 1.258.000 respectively. Enhanced cooperation, particularly in the energy sector is becoming a prominent feature of Turkish-Russian relations. The "Blue Stream Project" for the transportation of Russian natural gas to Turkey via an underwater pipeline in the Black Sea is an example of such cooperation.

The Greater Middle East Region

Turkey continues to be a strong advocate of reform and transformation for greater political and economic participation, democratisation, good governance, accountability and gender equality in the context of the greater Middle East region. It has been disposed to sharing its unique accumulated experience in democratisation with interested regional parties and to support their home-grown initiatives for reform.

In this context, Turkey participated as a "democratic partner" in the G-8 Summit held in Sea Island in June 2004 and has assumed the co-chairmanship, along with Italy and Yemen, of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD), one of the mechanisms created within the scope of the Broader Middle East and Northern Africa initiative.

The first meeting of DAD took place in Istanbul on 19-21 July 2005 on the empowerment of women in public life. More than 120 NGO representatives from Turkey and 18 regional countries attended the meeting and had a constructive exchange of views.

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The establishment of a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East as well as the evolution of this geography into a stable and

prosperous region is a priority of the Turkish foreign policy.

Believing that dialogue and cooperation must be the major tools to this end, Turkey has supported the Middle East Peace Process since its launching in 1991 with the Madrid Peace Conference. Turkey has not only tried to develop bilateral relations with all countries in the region but has also deployed efforts for the creation of an atmosphere conducive to regional co-operation.

Lasting peace, security and stability in the region can only be reached through a negotiated settlement based on the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 242 and 338, and on the principle of "land for peace."

In this regard, Turkey supports the vision of a region where two states, Israel and Palestine, will live side by side within secure and recognized borders. Adoption of the UNSC Resolution 1397 (2002) and the support given to the Quartet's Road Map by the UNSC Resolution 1515 are important steps towards this end.

Turkey welcomed the cease-fire declared at the Sharm el Sheikh Summit on 8 February 2005 and the ensuing steps taken by the parties. Turkey expects that the successful implementation of Prime Minister Sharon's Plan to disengage from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank would energize a peace dynamic to revitalize the long stalled Israeli-Palestinian track of the Peace Process.

Turkey has developed excellent relations with both Israel and the Palestinian National Authority and always pursued a balanced policy with regard to the conflict.

Turkey actively supported all efforts of the parties and the international community for the establishment of a peaceful atmosphere in the region.

Turkey firmly believes that any effort to revitalize the peace process requires the urgent alleviation of serious economic and social problems of the Palestinians. Following the 1994 and 1996 Donor Conferences, in Washington and Paris respectively, Turkey has provided donations and assistance to the Palestinian National Authority in health, education, public financing, institutionalisation, security, tourism and agricultural sectors. Turkey also provided indirect contributions through UNRWA and TIPH. Turkey actively supports the reform efforts of the Palestinian National Authority.

To further contribute to the process, since 2003 Turkey has increased and diversified its assistance to the Palestinian people within the context of an action plan. In this regard, Turkey provided significant amounts of humanitarian aid, increased the numbers of the scholarships allocated to the Palestinian students and police cadets, organized several vocational training programs, donated 25 thousand police uniforms and opened a branch of Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA) in Ramallah.

Iraq

Turkey has consistently followed the developments with regard to its neighbour Iraq with great caution and actively tried to persuade the former Saddam Hussein regime to fully comply with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and cooperate with the UN weapons inspectors. Turkey also initiated high-level exchanges with a number of neighbouring countries in January 2003 to explore the possibility of a joint effort to give peace a last chance. This initiative for consultations among countries neighbouring Iraq resulted in a number of meetings, first of which was held in Istanbul.

Turkey's policy with regard to Iraq did not change following the US-led operation in this country. In order for Iraq to achieve lasting peace, Turkey has consistently advocated the necessity to maintain the territorial integrity and the national unity of Iraq. Turkey has also stated that the transition of political authority to the Iraqis should be ensured through the establishment of a national government that is representative of and responsible to its entire people.

Turkey welcomes the restitution of sovereignty with the Iraqi people by way of first the Interim Iraqi Government established at the end of June 2004 and then the Transition Government which was formed after the January 30 elections in line with the UN Security Council Resolution no. 1546.

Turkey sincerely desires to see a swift and smooth transition of Iraq towards a democratic, pluralistic, stable, prosperous and peaceful country. This can be attained through ensuring the participation of all Iraqis in the political process and obtaining a broad national consensus among the Iraqis on the constitution.

The calculable losses of Turkey stemming from the 13-year sanctions regime in Iraq amount to over 100 billion US Dollars. Accordingly, Turkey extends fullest support to Iraq's speedy reconstruction through which it hopes to promote mutually beneficial economic and commercial relations. Currently Turkey serves as a main artery for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and other goods to Iraq, and stands committed to actively contribute to the international reconstruction efforts in this country.

Afghanistan

Turkey and Afghanistan have historically enjoyed close relations that derive their strength from the strong bonds of friendship and solidari-

ty between the two peoples. In the early years of its statehood Afghanistan was inspired by the reforms of the young Turkish Republic, which provided assistance in the establishment of important Afghan state organs, ministries, universities, hospitals, cultural institutions and its army.

Turkey attaches great importance to the independence, national unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and the well-being and prosperity of the Afghan people. Turkey believes that it is essential to have a democratic, broad-based, representative political structure in Afghanistan in order to establish lasting peace and stability throughout the whole country. Presidential elections successfully held in autumn 2004 and the parliamentary elections to follow in fall 2005 are important steps in this direction.

Turkey participated in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan since its inception and assumed the command of ISAF II between June 2002 and February 2003 and the command of ISAF VII between February 2005 and August 2005. Turkey also actively participates in the Bonn process for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It has undertaken a number of reconstruction projects in the fields of education, health and agriculture and has contributed financially to the reconstruction efforts in this country.

Turkey continues to contribute to ISAF with approximately 380 personnel, while also providing training for the Afghan National Army and Police Force.

Thus, Turkey is determined to continue to support Afghanistan in the challenges it faces on the path towards becoming a country liberated from terrorism, violence and radicalism, and in rebuilding a nation of peace, security and prosperity.

Terrorism

Terrorism, whether carried out individually or

collectively, poses one of the greatest threats to international peace and security. It is a crime against humanity which violates the most fundamental of human rights, namely the right to life, and cannot be justified under any circumstances. It is an evil that strikes at the very core of democracy, civil society as well as economic and social development.

Turkey has long felt the effects of terrorism. The foreign-sponsored campaign of violence and terrorism, which targeted Turkey for many years, has been curbed to a large degree, as a result of concerted efforts and the perseverance of all segments of the society.

The terrorist attacks perpetrated against the United States of America on 11 September 2001 have demonstrated the level of the threat that terrorism poses to mankind, and underlined the need for solidarity and concerted international action in the global fight against this scourge. Turkey was among the very first to join the global coalition mobilized to combat terrorism.

Terrorism cannot be associated with any religion, culture, geography or ethnic group. The fight against terrorism, thus, is the common fight of the civilized world.

The decision of the European Union in May 2002 to include the PKK, a separatist terrorist organization and the extreme-leftist DHKP/C in its "Terrorist Organizations List", followed by its decision in April 2004 to include KADEK and KONGRA-GEL, both aliases of the PKK in the said list, is a positive development in this regard.

New Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy

Changing circumstances in the post Cold-War era, coupled with the challenges faced by the international community have bestowed upon Turkey a special responsibility to make active

contributions to the preservation of regional and global peace and stability. Turkey is committed to live up to this historic task, with a clear vision for the future.

There are two major objectives that drive Turkish foreign policy vision for the future. The first goal is to make Turkey an integral part of the European integration process. Historically, geographically and economically, Turkey is a European country. It is therefore quite natural that Turkey should become a full member of the European Union, sooner rather than later.

The second, but equally important goal is to transform Turkey, situated at the centre of Eurasia, into a pivotal and prosperous country and create an environment of peace, stability, prosperity, friendship and cooperation in its neighbourhood and beyond. Turkey already has numerous assets which it will benefit from in pursuing this quest, including its pluralistic democracy and secular political system, tradition of modernity, free enterprising economy, diversified industrial base and highly capable security forces that are experienced in peacekeeping.

The political, economic and security initiatives Turkey has launched and its membership in various organizations, including the OIC and NATO, which encompass diverse regions, will also be instrumental in attaining this goal. Peace and prosperity in Turkey's neighbourhood is certainly in everyone's best interest.

Indeed, in hosting two important summits last year, namely the OIC Ministers of Foreign Affairs Conference between June 14-16, 2004, followed by the NATO Summit Meetings of Heads of State and Government between June 28-29, 2004, Turkey displayed its commitment to the multilateral cooperation in the context of its multidimensional relations. These consecutive summits gave visibility to the important role Turkey plays in

strategic cooperation at a vital junction between different cultures.

Turkey which is co-sponsoring "Alliance of Civilizations" Initiative with Spain, will continue to support the initiative, both politically and financially. Turkey intends to host the final meeting of the High Level Group next year.

At a time when Asia's prominence on the international scene is rapidly growing, Turkey also gives utmost importance to improving bilateral economic, cultural and political relations with the countries of the region.

Turkey attaches importance to furthering its relations and cooperation with African countries. According to an action plan, Turkey is vigorously

developing its relations with Africa as a whole. In this spirit, Turkey opened the first African branch of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA) in Addis Ababa to serve as a coordination center for Turkish humanitarian and developmental assistance to the continent. The Turkish government has also declared 2005 as the "Year of Africa" in Turkey.

Last but not least, Turkey has been implementing a special action plan to advance her relations with the Latin American and Caribbean States since late 1990s. As a result of the consistent implementation of this action plan, political, economic, trade and cultural relations with the countries in the region have been significantly enhanced.