

**BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD**

**TURKEY**

**Weekly Report on Turkey's Political, Geo-Strategic, Economic and Social Issues,**

**Period:29<sup>TH</sup> January-5<sup>TH</sup> February 2010.**

**Submitted By: Aasia Khatoon khattak**

**Presentation: January 13, 2009**

**Report no.105**

---

**News Outline**

**POLITICAL NEWS**

**KURDISH ISSUE**-----4-5

Turkey, US discuss PKK threat in Iraq

**OTHER POLITICAL NEWS**-----5-11

Turkey to establish human rights watchdog

Turkey lifts controversial security protocol

Controversial Turkish protocol annulled amid coup allegations

Annulled Turkish security protocol takes center stage

Several former DTP members detained in raids

Turkish Police Seize 78 Kg of Hashish in Aegean City

**Geo-strategic NEWS**

**VISITS**-----11-15

Turkish President to visit India, Bangladesh next week

Davutoglu sees "Turkish era" in PACE's new term

Turkey says to expand "zero problem policy" to Eurasia

Rasmussen, Gates in Turkey for NATO meeting

Erdogan says regional countries trust in Turkey

**TURKEY'S POLITICAL DIALOUGE IN EURASIA**-----15-16

FM calls for more political dialogue in Eurasia

**TURKEY AND AFGHANISTAN**-----16-17

Turkish Minister Says Deal with Taliban Not to Tackle Terror's "Root Source"

U.S. Envoy Praises Turkey's Role in Afghanistan

**TURKEY'S AID TO HAITI**-----17-18

Turkey grants \$1 mln aid to Haiti

Western Thrace Turks tell Erdogan of problems in Greece-----18

**TURKEY AND IRAN**-----18-21

Turkey, Iran sign JEC protocol Turkish President Receives Iranian FM

Turkey Hails Iran's Presidential Elections Again

<u>Iranian Fm Says Any Threat against Turkey Considered Threat against Iran</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY AND ARMENIA</u></b> -----	<b>21-23</b>
<u>U.S. Calls On Turkey And Armenia to Ratify Protocols</u>	
<u>Turkish Foreign Ministry Says No Problem in Armenian Move</u>	
<u>Turkey-Armenia pact hits snags</u>	
<u>Questions linger over Swiss assurance for normalization talks</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY AND ISRAEL</u></b> -----	<b>23-27</b>
<u>Turkey's Criticism of Israel Does Not Mean End of Relations, Turkish Fm Davutoglu</u>	
<u>Spanish FM promotes Turkey's mediation between Israel-Syria</u>	
<u>OIC SG: Solution of "Islamophobia" &amp; Palestinian Issue Important for World Peace</u>	
<u>Israel, Syria locked in bitter war of words</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY AND RUSSIA</u></b> -----	<b>27-28</b>
<u>Premier Says Relations with Russia Have Special Importance for Turkey</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY AND BULGARIA</u></b> -----	<b>28</b>
<u>Turkish Premier Welcomes Bulgarian Counterpart</u>	
<u>Bulgaria Awaiting Special Commission's Report for Compensation Demand from Turkey</u>	
<b><u>CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL IMPORTANCE OF TURKEY</u></b> -----	<b>28-29</b>
<u>Turkish Prime Minister Attends Conference on Turkey's Growing Global Importance</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY AND KOSOVO</u></b> -----	<b>29-30</b>
<u>Kosovar President Meets with Turkish Parliament Speaker</u>	
<u>Turkish President Pledges to Continue Support for Kosovo</u>	
<u>Kosovar President Says Hopes for Continued Support from Turkey</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY AND EUROPEAN UNION NEGOCIATION PROCESS</u></b> -----	<b>30-35</b>
<u>Turkish Pm: "We Work Hard for Turkey's EU Process"</u>	
<u>Turkey Has No Patience to Wait More for EU Membership," Ak Party Official</u>	
<u>European Human Rights Court Rules Against Use Of Letters "Q", "W", "X" In Turkey Legal Names</u>	
<u>European Court Rules against Religious Designation on Identity Cards in Turkey</u>	
<u>PACE chief Çavuşoğlu criticizes lack of domestic support</u>	
<u>Verheugen to EU: Backtracking on Turkey is 'pure populism'</u>	
<u>Turkey not turning back on West, says NATO's Rasmussen</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY AND CYPRUS ISSUE</u></b> -----	<b>35-37</b>
<u>Turkish Cypriot Association Condemns EU Commissioner</u>	
<u>Greek church in Bodrum to be restored</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY'S ANTI-PIRACY MISSION</u></b> -----	<b>37</b>
<u>Turkish Frigate Sets Sail for Anti-Piracy Mission</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY CONDEMNS TERROR IN IRAQ</u></b> -----	<b>38</b>
<u>Turkey Condemns Act of Terror in Iraq</u>	
<b><u>ECONOMIC NEWS</u></b>	
<b><u>TURKEY'S GROWING ECONOMY</u></b> -----	<b>38-39</b>
<u>Turkish Businessman Says Turkey on Road to Become Global Power</u>	
<u>Turkish Minister: Turkey's 2010 Export Target Is 111 Bln Usd</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY'S ENERGY TALKS</u></b> -----	<b>39-41</b>
<u>Turkish Minister says Eurasia very important over energy</u>	
<u>Turkey, Azerbaijan agree on natural gas price</u>	
<u>US interested in Turkey nuclear tender</u>	

<u>Minister sees Turkey resumed positive growth</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY'S WORKERS ON STRIKE</u></b> -----	<b>41-44</b>
<u>Workers in Turkey start one-day general strike</u>	
<u>Turkish Minister warns Tekel workers against provocations</u>	
<u>Thursday's strike ineffective, gov't stands firm on Tekel issue</u>	
<b><u>TURKEY'S GROWING ECONOMY</u></b> -----	<b>45-47</b>
<u>\$729 million from hazelnut exports</u>	
<u>Turkish, Syrian state TVs to shoot documentaries</u>	
<u>Turkey's property market revived</u>	
<u>Higher taxes, energy prices cause rise in Turkish inflation in January</u>	
<b><u>SOCIAL NEWS</u></b> -----	<b>47-48</b>
<u>Turkey's PM renews gov't's determination to fight smoking</u>	
<u>'Museum of Innocence' withdraws from 2010 culture capital</u>	
<u>Snow halts ferry lines, flights and traffic in Turkey</u>	
<b><u>COMMENTARY</u></b> -----	<b>48-62</b>
<u>Ankara seems favoring Tehran in the nuke issue</u>	
<u>Deepening US-Turkish business ties through online social networks</u>	
<u>To shoot oneself</u>	
<u>Spinning the bridge between East and West</u>	
<u>The EU paints itself into a corner in Cyprus</u>	
<u>From the Bosphorus: Straight - When dogma imperils diplomacy</u>	
<u>Turkey to the European Union's rescue</u>	
<u>Discrimination</u>	
<u>Başbuğ's difficult task -- or historic duty</u>	
<u>Ankara seems favoring Tehran in the nuke issue</u>	

**POLITICAL NEWS**

**KURDISH ISSUE**

Turkey, US discuss PKK threat in Iraq

Thursday, 04 February 2010 12:02

World bulletin

-----  
The Turkish interior minister and a U.S. general discussed on Wednesday PKK threat from Iraqi territories to Turkey.

The Turkish interior minister and a U.S. general discussed on Wednesday PKK threat from Iraqi territories to Turkey.

Turkey's Interior Minister Besir Atalay had a meeting with Ray Odierno, the commanding general of multinational force responsible for Iraq invasion, on Wednesday morning and exchanged views on PKK threat from Iraqi territories to Turkey.

"We discussed concrete steps taken and to be taken against the terrorist organization PKK as a prior issue," Atalay said in a statement regarding his meeting with Odierno.

Atalay said Turkey was determined to end terror threat stemming from the north of Iraq and affecting Turkey's democratic initiative negatively.

"I have once more expressed our determination to our American friend," Atalay said.

Atalay said he once more told Gen. Odierno that the positive approach of the regional administration in north of Iraq towards cooperation in fight against terrorism contributed to ending PKK terror threat.

In the meeting, Atalay also reiterated Turkey's expectations that the regional administration in north of Iraq should continue its contributions.

"As we have stated in high-level meetings we held within the framework of trilateral mechanism, our aim is to render the terrorist organization ineffective, and end its activities just outside our borders," Atalay said.

Atalay said Odierno and he reaffirmed the current understanding between Turkey and the United States in their meeting, and set the methods to be implemented from now on.

The interior minister defined this common approach as the continuation of the compromise Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and U.S. President Barack Obama reached in Washington D.C. in December 2009.

"Turkey attaches importance and actively contributing to preserving territorial integrity of its neighbor Iraq, and ensuring the country's peace, stability and welfare," Atalay said.

Atalay said the upcoming Iraqi elections in March would be an important step for Iraq's democracy and stability, and expressed belief that Odierno's talks in Turkey, particularly with the General Staff and Foreign Ministry, would give a new momentum to Turkey's fight against PKK. Turkey's Interior Minister Atalay also said Turkish-U.S. cooperation would give the "best results" for Turkey, Iraq and the United States in coming days.

---

## **OTHER POLITICAL NEWS**

### **Turkey to establish human rights watchdog**

05 February 2010, Friday

TODAYS ZAMAN

---

The government has taken one more step forward within the framework of the democratic initiative by establishing a state institution to deal with human rights violations and make proposals to prevent them. The bill regarding the establishment of the Human Rights Institution was sent to Parliament last week. The institution will monitor developments related to human rights and will receive complaints about violations and discrimination along with proposals to prevent human right abuses. The institution's decisions will be made by the Human Rights Council, which will consist of a president, a deputy president and members who will be selected by the Cabinet. The members of the council will be from different NGOs, universities and occupational organizations in order to reflect the diverse opinions on the issues. All members will have a four-year term and may only be selected for one additional term.

However, the first president and deputy president of the institution will remain in post for six years and four of the members will also work for six years for their first term at the council. The selection of the council members will be determined two months after the law is put into effect. The new institution will prepare and publish reports on problems in the field of human rights and on the performance and progress of state organs concerning the protection of human rights. The institution will carry out projects and campaigns with the cooperation of the relevant civil society institutions to encourage the public not to ignore human rights violations and be more aware of discrimination.

The institution's decisions will not be announced to the public if the institution does not deem it necessary. Decisions will be conveyed to the relevant state institutions within five days of having been made. However, the institution will issue information through its Web site on its budget and expenditure.

The Human Rights Institution will be composed of different departments which are responsible for fighting against torture and mistreatment, legal regulations, external relations and documentation. Individuals who have faced human rights violations and discrimination can apply to the institution.

The institution will have regular meetings with related state institutions, NGOs, universities, experts on the media and researchers every three months with the aim of considering recent developments in terms of human rights and exchanging views.

---

Turkey lifts controversial security protocol

Thursday, 04 February 2010 13:04

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Interior Ministry said on Thursday Turkey lifted a controversial security protocol after a coup plot report.

Turkey's interior minister said that security and public order protocol, publicly known as EMASYA, was abolished on Thursday.

The move comes after Turkey's top general said on Thursday that the security protocol could be abolished.

"In my earlier meeting with Chief of General Staff Gen. Ilker Basbug, we had agreed on abolishment of the protocol," Besir Atalay told the AA.

Turkish Chief of General Staff Gen. Ilker Basbug had a chat with reporters at the General Staff headquarters in Ankara, and said the security and public order protocol, publicly known as EMASYA, could be abolished since there was no need for that protocol.

The protocol allowed the head of a military unit in a province to dispatch soldiers in an emergency without prior approval of the governor. It gave authority to military units to intervene in social incidents on their own decision.

The protocol was signed by the General Staff and the Interior Ministry in 1997, Besir Atalay recalled. He said senior officials of the two bodies jointly signed annulment of the protocol on Thursday.

"We had earlier emphasized that regulations and laws are already detailed enough. We agreed that there is no need for a new protocol or a new regulation," Atalay said.

Current laws empower governors in emergency incidents, he added.

Turkish Daily Taraf recently published a coup plot allegedly drafted by the 1st Army, aiming to drive the country into chaos with false flag operations.

The General Staff announced that the said plot was "the forged and altered version of a routine emergency scenario."

The issue created wide controversy in the media, causing the EMASYA protocol to be questioned publicly, which is considered by some, as the basis of such scenarios.

---

## Controversial Turkish protocol annulled amid coup allegations

Thursday, February 4, 2010

ANKARA – Hürriyet Daily News

---

A protocol allowing the military to take power if it felt domestic security was at risk has been annulled in the wake of recent coup allegations. The Interior Ministry and the armed forces agree the protocol is outdated and unnecessary. ‘The protocol has been given too much importance and its confidentiality created only more trouble,’ says a top general

A disputed Turkish protocol that allows the country's armed forces to use power to maintain domestic security has been annulled, the Turkish interior minister announced in a statement Thursday.

"Officials from [the military and the Interior Ministry] came together and have jointly annulled the protocol," Interior Minister Beşir Atalay announced Thursday, according to the Anatolia news agency. Atalay said that the document annulling the protocol was signed by Gen. Mehmet Eröz from the office of the General Staff and Osman Güneş, undersecretary of the Interior Ministry.

"This signed document was sent to our chief of General Staff and to all our governors," Atalay said, adding that following talks with top military officials it was understood that there was no need for a new protocol regulating cooperation between the military and the police or the gendarmerie.

According to Turkish law, in case of an emergency governors can ask the military for help. The announcement came on the same day Chief of General Staff Gen. İlker Başbuğ said in an interview with daily Hürriyet that the Police-Security Cooperation Protocol, or EMASYA, could be lifted because “there is no need for this protocol as it is already stipulated in the law.”

“As you know, EMASYA originated from public order, civilian and military cooperation. As a matter of fact, article 11 of law no. 5442 of the Special Provincial Administration clarifies the issue. Actually, if it was consummately read, that much discussion would not take place,” Başbuğ said.

“Yet, what is important here to us is the rule of law. It is out of the question even for the EMASYA protocol to go over the law, and it should not be inconsistent with the law, as well. Law no. 5442 is very clear: “The governor is superior to all general and local law enforcement officers.” This is irrevocable under any circumstances. Everything is under the command of the governor,” he said.

The protocol was signed between the government and the General Staff on July 7, 1997, and allowed the Turkish Armed Forces, or TSK, to exert power in the interest of upholding domestic security and in natural disasters, even if the relevant governor’s offices made no such request. The content of the protocol has not been fully revealed thus far. Without the EMASYA protocol, it is up to provincial governors to call upon the military to intervene.

Başbuğ said the frame of the protocol was determined between the General Staff and the Interior Ministry. “This has been discussed for the last 10 years. It is seen from a different perspective because of its confidentiality, and it is exaggerated by attributing unnecessary importance to it.”

Asked if the protocol could be annulled, Başbuğ said: “It may be annulled, this protocol is not needed, the capacity already is in the law. All in all, the law is the basis for us about EMASYA. It is impossible for the EMASYA protocol to pass over other laws. This protocol has been given excessive importance and has been misunderstood. And its confidentiality has created more trouble in the process.”

The top general said article 9 of the protocol was problematic, stressing it was important to draw a distinction between the fight against terrorism and social incidents. He said the article was actually aimed at social incidents. "However, the differences between social incidents and the fight against terror need to be understood."

Asked what should be understood from social incidents, Başbuğ said: "Mass meetings such as demonstrations and marches. We are intensely opposed to engage the Armed Forces within the scope of social incidents. Do we ever want the Armed Forces to come up against the public? Of course we do not. Which military wants that?" he asked.

"If the law requires, we will perform our task, of course. Nevertheless, apart from this, we want it to be known that we are sensitive about not coming up against the public ... Some say, 'The TSK may use the EMASYA protocol as an excuse.' No way. It is the exact opposite. We are sensitive about not coming up against the public."

The top general said the military was working with the Interior Ministry on the protocol. "We are not dissenting against the Internal Affairs Ministry. We already met with the esteemed internal affairs minister Monday, as well," he said.

It was Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who first signaled that the protocol would be abolished. President Abdullah Gül also made statements signaling the need to annul the protocol. "EMASYA was signed between the Interior Ministry and the Turkish Armed Forces and is a protocol that has its own logic and law. I believe under our current legal understanding and the legal standards we have reached today, this is not necessary," Gül said in Ankara on Tuesday. The EMASYA protocol came into question following the alleged "Beykoz" (Sledgehammer) coup plot. The plan, which focused on domestic threats, was drawn up as a war game scenario, according to the military. This brought up military involvement in domestic security and intelligence gathering.

In an interview with private broadcaster NTV, Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç said the government's relations with the military were much healthier today than in the past. "But I cannot say it's 100 percent, it is not at an ideal level yet," he said.

Arınç highlighted the need to remove mutual concerns between the TSK and the government, referring to military premises barring women who wear a headscarf.

---

#### Annulled Turkish security protocol takes center stage

Thursday, February 4, 2010 Özgür Öğret

ISTANBUL - Hürriyet Daily News

---

The Police-Security Cooperation Protocol, or EMASYA, is no more, but its existence has been a focus of debate since its signing in 1997. Declared unlawful for contradicting with many laws in effect, and unnecessary because of the Provincial Administrative Law, EMASYA was also defended as being necessary to hastening interventions in disasters or social unrest

Recent coup allegations based on the "Sledgehammer" operation have brought the Police-Security Cooperation Protocol, or EMASYA, onto Turkey's agenda and led to its annulment Thursday due to links to the alleged plot.

The 1st Army of the Turkish Ground Forces is being blamed for the Sledgehammer plot and was said to use EMASYA as the stepping-stone for actualizing the coup.

No longer in effect as of Thursday, EMASYA essentially determined the conditions under which local governments could ask for military help in times of disasters, social uprisings and terrorism

threats when their own staff and resources proved to be inadequate. But in practice, it was more complicated than that.

EMASYA was signed in 1997 between the General Staff and the Ministry of Interior Affairs to determine rules for employing military forces internally during times when neither marshal law nor war have been declared. Events such as forest fires, natural disasters or broad social unrest fell under the scope of the protocol. The governor of a province could call on the military if the police and the gendarmerie forces could not handle the matters. In such cases, the governor continued to be the highest official in the province, but all other forces would be under military command. However, in extraordinary situations, such as social unrest spreading to more than one province, the military was allowed to intervene without waiting to be called on by either governors or the ministry.

According to retired military judge and author Ümit Kardaş, the main problem with the protocol was granting the military the authority to intervene on its own behalf, which he said was clearly unlawful and unthinkable. “Internal security is a thing completely outside of the scope of the military,” said Kardaş. “When you grant the military such a leading role, it would employ it as a power domain and it has been doing so.”

Most debates over EMASYA centered first on whether or not it was antidemocratic to place military authority over local governments, and second on the protocol’s allowing the military to constantly carry out intelligence efforts and keep records on people. Criticisms made focusing on these two subjects also argued that the protocol was in contradiction with certain laws, and that Article 11/D of the current Provincial Administrative Law had already covered the matter before 1997 in any event.

There are two official internal threats recognized by the government: separatist terrorism and fundamentalism. EMASYA allowed military intelligence to be active in both these fields beforehand. Nejat Eşlen, a retired general and author, said he believed the protocol was necessary, noting that EMASYA was prepared primarily to be used in southeastern Anatolia, where clashes with the outlawed Kurdistan Worker’s Party, or PKK, are most common. “Such a protocol was needed to fasten the civil-military relations,” said Eşlen. “It is not necessary to have those protocols, but they make it easier to employ military forces when needed. You have to be prepared and have plans beforehand.”

Otherwise, Eşlen said, the military would not be ready to intervene. He gave the example of the Sivas Massacre of 1993, in which a hotel full of intellectuals was torched during civil unrest, saying that if the military had been prepared, such a tragedy might not have occurred. Eşlen added that the EMASYA plans were not kept secret from civilian authorities.

Önder Aytaç, a columnist for daily Taraf, disagreed with Eşlen, saying: “The protocol [was] limiting the discretionary power and freedom to act of the civilian authorities by founding an operational system that might lessen the speed and effectiveness at solving problems that appeared suddenly and required emergency decisions.”

According to Aytaç, the political authority was at its weakest in 1997 and EMASYA granted the military the right to intervene in the democracy. He added that EMASYA was thoroughly analyzed and declared to be unlawful during a meeting of the Civil Administration Council on April 25, 2002, which was attended by then-Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit.

Addressing the criticisms about the protocol being used to gather intelligence, Eşlen said even banks gather information about people who ask for credit and asked why it is wrong for soldiers, who are responsible for the country’s security, to gather intelligence within legal perimeters.

Kardaş said this had led to the military having a resident place in internal security affairs, since the protocol had given it the right to intervene, a situation he said does not mesh with democracy.

---

Several former DTP members detained in raids

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

GAZIANTEP — Anatolia News Agency

TODAYS ZAMAN

---

Sixteen former members of the now-banned Democratic Society Party or DTP, were taken into custody in Gaziantep in an operation, Anatolia news agency reported Wednesday.

According to Anatolia, 25 locations were searched and 16 former DTP members were detained for suspicion of being part of an urban branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

Documents were seized in the operation, and the suspects were being questioned.

In a previous raid on Jan. 5, the Gaziantep police department anti-terror unit arrested 21 out of the 22 people it detained in a similar raid.

Turkey in uncharted territory in referendum appeal

As the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) readies

to bring a constitutional reform package to Parliament with the

expectation that the changes will have to be taken to a public vote, a discussion is likely to erupt soon over whether opposition parties can take the package to the Constitutional Court for annulment if the changes receive the support of more than 330 deputies, the number of votes needed to go to referendum.

The government, which has been working on a mini "democratization package" to smooth Turkey's path to European Union accession, plans to bring the package to Parliament soon, but the changes are likely to be taken to a public vote as the package cannot pass without the support of opposition parties. The AK Party's reform package is expected to comprise 22 articles and include topics that exist in the party programs of all the parties.

The AK Party cannot currently amend the Constitution by itself as it has 338 seats in Parliament. According to the Constitution, constitutional changes that are voted for by more than 330 but less than 367 deputies should be taken to a public vote.

However, some legal ambiguities in the Constitution signal that a debate is likely to erupt if the package is approved between 330 and 367 deputies. Changes that receive the support of 330 to 367 deputies can be sent back to Parliament by the president for further deliberation or he can directly take them to a public vote.

Currently, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), which has 20 seats in Parliament, and some deputies from the Democratic Left Party (DSP) are likely to support the package. But since the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) are dragging their feet over the government's plans, support for the package is most likely to fall between 330 and 337. The AK Party plans to hold a referendum in May or June of this year or, at the latest, together with parliamentary elections in 2011.

However, the opposition who aims to prevent the government from holding a referendum plan to take the changes to the Constitutional Court for annulment as soon as the package fails to receive the approval of 367 deputies -- in other words, before a public vote. AK Party jurists do not think it is possible to appeal to the top court on constitutional amendments approved by more than 330 and less than 367 deputies as there is no relevant article in the Constitution. Jurists from the CHP, on the other hand, say even changes approved in a referendum can be taken to the

Constitutional Court. According to DSP Eskişehir deputy Tayfun İçli, parties have the right to appeal to the top court for changes supported by less than 367 deputies but cannot do so for changes approved by the public in a referendum.

The signatures of at least 110 deputies are required to appeal to the top court for the annulment of constitutional changes. The CHP, which has 98 deputies, cannot make such an application without the support of the DSP and the MHP.

### **Past rulings a matter of concern**

It is uncertain how the top court will rule if the opposition parties find the 110 deputies needed to appeal to the court because the Constitutional Court has issued many controversial rulings in the past.

In 2005, the Constitutional Court annulled a broadly supported constitutional reform package that would have lifted the long-standing ban on headscarves at Turkish universities. In the 20-page decision, the court stressed that the headscarf legislation, which was supported by 411 deputies in Parliament, had political and religious motivations .

Speaking to Today's Zaman, AK Party Deputy Chairman Salih Kapusuz said it is very difficult to predict how the court would rule on the constitutional changes currently being discussed.

Noting that Turkey has witnessed a number of situations in which the Constitutional Court has hijacked the authority of Parliament in the past five years, Kapusuz said there is still a possibility that the court can annul constitutional amendments even if the public approves them in a referendum.

---

### Turkish Police Seize 78 Kg of Hashish in Aegean City

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Saturday, 30 January 2010

Turkish security forces seized 78 kg of hashish during an operation waged in the Aegean province of Izmir on Saturday.

Acting on a tip-off, anti-narcotics teams stopped a passenger bus travelling from the southeastern province of Diyarbakir to Izmir.

Searching the bus with sniffer dogs, police found the illicit drug wrapped in plastic bags and hidden under the floor covering.

Two people, who were reported to be the owners of the bus, were detained in the operation.

---

### GEO-strategic NEWS

#### VISITS

Turkish President to visit India, Bangladesh next week

Thursday, 04 February 2010 17:09

WORLD BULLETIN

Gul will participate in a NATO event to take place Friday on the sidelines of informal two-day Istanbul meeting of NATO defense ministers.

Turkish President Abdullah Gul will participate in a NATO event to take place Friday on the sidelines of informal two-day Istanbul meeting of NATO defense ministers.

Gul will attend a session in which ministers from 28 NATO member countries would exchange views on the operation in Afghanistan with their non-NATO partners of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Gul's office said in a statement on Thursday.

Gul will deliver a speech on "Turkey's contributions to establishment of peace and stability" in Afghanistan.

Gul is also scheduled to have a meeting with NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. On Monday, Gul will receive Thorbjorn Jagland, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, and then he will leave for New Delhi on a formal visit to India and then Bangladesh, the statement said.

---

Davutoglu sees "Turkish era" in PACE's new term

Thursday, 04 February 2010 16:49

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Davutoglu met Thursday Mevlut Cavusoglu, newly-elected Turkish president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu met Thursday Mevlut Cavusoglu, newly-elected Turkish president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Davutoglu said during the meeting that the next period in the Council of Europe would be a "Turkish era."

In November 2010, Cavusoglu will also assume the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe's decision-making body, Davutoglu recalled.

"We attach special importance to this period in which Turkey's effect could be seen once again," Davutoglu said.

On his part, Cavusoglu said that Turkey has become a notable and an effective country in international organizations thanks to its strong, dynamic and proactive foreign policy.

He also said that there were several challenging reforms to be made in the Council of Europe and asked for support from Turkish Foreign Minister and the ministry staff.

---

Turkey says to expand "zero problem policy" to Eurasia

Thursday, 04 February 2010 15:39

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Davutoglu said Turkey is determined to expand its "zero problem-maximum cooperation policy" towards to Eurasia.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said Turkey is determined to expand its "zero problem-maximum cooperation policy" towards to Eurasia.

Davutoglu said on Thursday that they consider fate of Eurasia as fate of the humanity, adding, "if we succeed in using Eurasia's potential in trade, communication and energy correctly, this region will become one of the leading parts of the world."

Turkish FM spoke at the seventh diplomatic mission representatives' meeting of Turkish-Eurasian Business Councils hosted by Turkey's Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) in Ankara.

Davutoglu said, "There is a requisite political will in order to turn Eurasia into a cultural basin by pulling it out from its inner tensions. No country can live in isolation, let's provide more cooperation among us".

Mentioning their desire to settle a dialogue in Eurasia at the highest level as well as building constant and permanent mechanisms, Davutoglu said, "We are decisive to further our zero

problem-maximum cooperation policy, which we have been able to succeed with our neighbors, towards Eurasia. All Eurasian countries are our brothers. What we want is more political dialogue, more economic and cultural interaction. If we can translate this into the life, then Eurasia will become a new center of attraction. Turkey will show the necessary effort to realize this end. I am, as the foreign minister of Turkey, making this pledge”.

Davutoglu said, "Eurasia is a transit area of great importance among the People's Republic of China, India, southern Asia and Europe, and this region is a geography which shapes the world policy and economy. No one can understand history of the humanity by ignoring this geography."

Referring to his meeting with his Chinese counterpart Yang Ciechi, Davutoglu said, "our talks focused on what could be done to improve China's relations with Europe. We also discussed likely joint projects by Turkey and China in Eurasia. One of those projects is a railway route beginning from Urumchi and passing through whole region."

"We aim at intensifying our activities under the roof of some Eurasian and Asian organizations in the coming months. We want to give the message 'more political dialogue, more political cooperation'. Any country cannot ensure security and prosperity by isolating itself from the rest of the world. Since we consider all Eurasian states as countries with a great potential of strategic cooperation, we target to further develop our dialogue with all of them," he said.

Davutoglu added that they wanted to remove visa proceedings among the regional countries.

---

#### Rasmussen, Gates in Turkey for NATO meeting

Thursday, 04 February 2010 13:27

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Rasmussen and Gates arrived in Istanbul on Thursday to attend the informal meeting of NATO defense ministers.

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates arrived in Istanbul on Thursday to attend the informal meeting of NATO defense ministers.

Turkish Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul will host the meeting that will gather defense ministers of 28 NATO-member countries.

The meeting will focus on Afghanistan. Afghan interior and defense ministers will also take part at the meeting to discuss the recent situation in the country and steps to be taken in 2010.

NATO's new targets as well as financing of NATO attacks will also be high on the agenda of the meeting.

More than 250 journalists from around the world came to Istanbul to cover the two-day meeting.

---

#### Erdogan says regional countries trust in Turkey

Thursday, 04 February 2010 11:54

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Erdogan that all the countries in its region had confidence in Turkey and Turkey tried to use such trust for the foundation of regional peace.

Turkish prime minister said on Wednesday that all the countries in its region had confidence in Turkey and Turkey tried to use such trust for the foundation of regional peace.

Speaking at a conference at the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) on the changing balances in the world and Turkey's growing global importance, Prime Minister Recep

Tayyip Erdogan said that all countries should be treated the same regarding the nuclear weapons issue.

Erdogan said the notion of justice would be harmed if some countries were warned and others were tolerated on the nuclear issue.

"If you have a nuclear weapon, you cannot tell another country not to develop it. In order to demand such a thing, such country should first destroy the weapons in its hand," he said.

### **"Hopefull for Spanish EU presidency"**

Upon a question on the relations between Turkey and EU, Erdogan said that he expected the Spanish rotating presidency of EU to act differently while negotiating the chapters with Turkey. Erdogan said Turkey was currently in a much better position than nearly half of the EU-member states and those who assessed the issue objectively agreed on such matter.

Regarding Turkey's EU bid, Erdogan said the country would continue to fulfill its responsibilities, however, the Union had certain liabilities in Turkey's full membership process as well.

"We expect EU to stay committed to its responsibilities," he said.

### **"Patience"**

In his reply to a question on Cyprus issue, Erdogan said UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's recent visit to the office of Turkish Cypriot President Mehmet Ali Talat seriously disturbed the Greek Cypriot party.

Noting that the UN SG had given the best reply to the stance of the Greek Cypriot party with his visit, Erdogan said, "We will get what we deserve sooner or later. However, this journey needs patience. We have nothing to lose, we will win in the end".

Erdogan also said that several countries' efforts to present the Cyprus issue as a political obstacle before Turkey's EU membership, were totally wrong.

"Obstacles that are not envisaged by the *acquis* are put in front of us. This is wrong in terms of the ethics of negotiation," he said.

Erdogan said that the appropriate platform for the solution of the Cyprus issue was the UN, not the EU.

### **Regional issues**

Commenting on the Paletsinian conflict as well, Erdogan said such issue laid in the center of all the regional problems, adding no permanent peace or stability could be provided in the Middle East unless this matter was solved.

Expressing the importance attached by Turkey to the security and stability of the Gulf region, Erdogan said Turkey also had quite good relations with the Black Sea countries such as Romania and Ukraine.

Pointing to Turkey's efforts to initiate the Caucasus cooperation process, Erdogan said, "We are trying hard to solve the problems between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which we consider a key country in the region.

Erdogan also called on the Minsk Group to fulfill its duties for the solution of the matter.

### **"More embassies in Africa"**

Upon a question on whether there would be any changes in the organizational structure of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Erdogan said MFA would start recruiting ambassadors that were not actual employees of the ministry.

"If those who are offered such positions accept, we desire to appoint them as ambassadors in different parts of the world," he said.

Erdogan also said that Turkey would open 5 more embassies in Africa in 2010, increasing the total number of embassies in the continent to 27.

---

---

## **TURKEY'S POLITICAL DIALOGUE IN EURASIA**

FM calls for more political dialogue in Eurasia

Thursday, February 4, 2010

ANKARA - Hürriyet Daily News

---

An increase in political dialogue, economic interdependence and cultural interaction constitute the three basic pillars of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's vision for peace in Eurasia, the Turkish official said Thursday.

His remarks came during a meeting of the Foreign Economic Relations Board, or DEİK, in Ankara.

"Eurasia is passing a very critical threshold," Davutoğlu said in his address, adding that a new vision is necessary in evaluating the region.

"The first [step] is that uncertainties should be removed and political dialogue should be heightened," he said.

"Secondly, Eurasia is the region where international economic politics takes shape; if it is neglected, the EU, Chinese or Indian economic bases cannot interact with one another," the minister warned, also calling for more cultural interaction.

While explaining the Turkish vision of the region, Davutoğlu said Ankara favors activating dialogue channels on the highest level and establishing permanent mechanisms as exemplified by recent Turkish-Russian plans to establish a high-level strategic council.

"We would like to see more political dialogue and more political cooperation. No country can live isolated. There is a need for more integration and more dialogue when there is a problem," he said, adding that the government wants to spread its policy of zero problems and maximum cooperation with neighbors to Eurasia.

Referring to the Turkish vision of economic interaction, Davutoğlu called for the lifting of visa requirements. "People should move freely. We need to remove the barriers between us," he said, noting that Turkey and Russia were working on lifting visa requirements for each other's citizens.

"We want such an approach in Eurasia based on self-confidence, political dialogue and economic interaction," the foreign minister said, promising a Turkish contribution to this end because "we see the fate of this region as our fate and as the fate of humanity."

Davutoğlu calls for 'Eurasian union'

Given the European Union's peaceful environment, which is based on a joint economic basin, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu has called for the establishment of a similar union encompassing the Eurasia region.

There is a need to embark on a new vision in order to have the Eurasia region regain its historical importance," Davutoğlu said on Thursday at a meeting organized by the Turkish-Eurasia Business Council of the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) in Ankara. In addition to Davutoğlu, Foreign Trade Minister Zafer Çağlayan and Energy Minister Taner Yıldız also participated in the meeting, which brought together ambassadors and commercial officers accredited at the embassies of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

“If peace and welfare do not reign in Eurasia, it is not possible to make peace and welfare reign in the world, either. This region can export peace and welfare to the rest of the world,”

Davutoğlu said in a speech delivered at the meeting, which aimed at dealing with new strategies for multilateral and regional cooperation.

In the absence of stability in Eurasia, this region can become the source of war and chaos in the entire world, Davutoğlu warned, urging for the highest level of dialogue among Eurasian countries for the sake of global peace. The minister suggested revitalizing historical, economic and political relations which were maintained at the time thanks to the Silk Road via today’s railroads, highways and air links.

“The western and eastern ends of Eurasia should be reconnected,” Davutoğlu said, while underlining that the region should also serve as a link between energy-supplying countries and energy-receiving countries. “We can become the power engine of the world’s economy.”

Later on Thursday, Davutoğlu and Dussanbay Kasseinov, the secretary-general of the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY), signed a host country agreement. TÜRKSÖY was founded in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in 1993 upon Turkey’s initiative. TÜRKSÖY, which has diplomatic status as an international organization, began its activities within the same year. TÜRKSÖY member countries are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (KKTC), the Gagauzia Autonomous Region of Moldova and some autonomous republics of the Russian Federation -- the Altai Republic, the Republic of Bashkortostan, the Republic of Khakassia, the Saha (Yakutistan) Federal Republic, the Republic of Tatarstan and the Tuva Republic -- participate in TÜRKSÖY’s activities as observers.

The official language of TÜRKSÖY is Turkish, and its headquarters is in Ankara. The signing of the host country agreement on Thursday aims at outlining legal privileges and immunities of TÜRKSÖY staff during their activities in Turkey. The agreement is expected to facilitate TÜRKSÖY’s activities here and lead to concrete contributions to the organization.

---

---

## **TURKEY AND AFGHANISTAN**

Turkish Minister Says Deal with Taliban Not to Tackle Terror's "Root Source"

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Saturday, 30 January 2010

---

The Turkish foreign minister said on Friday that a peace deal between Afghanistan's government and parts of the Taliban will not end the worldwide threat from al-Qaida.

The British Daily Telegraph's foreign affairs correspondent Damien McElroy interviewed Davutoglu, and the interview was published on Friday's edition of the newspaper.

In the interview, Davutoglu said that Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai announced this week that he hoped to launch a national reconciliation process that would include the Taliban within weeks.

Davutoglu also said, "we should not think that there is a full identification between the Taliban and al-Qaida because many of the Taliban's members are people of Afghanistan and national reconciliation is a must for them."

"We should think about the root source of why do we have this problem," he said.

In his article, McElroy wrote that the views of Turkey were important as it was NATO's only Muslim state and had played a prominent role in Afghan affairs in recent years.

Davutoglu said a much more comprehensive strategy was needed that must include a settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict as well as other disputes that inflame Muslims.

"If the situation in Palestine continues or if there is another [dispute] ... which provokes the feeling of Muslim communities left unresolved, then it will be difficult to contain this [terror] issue," he said.

"We think there should be a global vision of peace as well as regional perspectives and regional peace. If there is a just and sustainable peace many of these groups will not have a suitable atmosphere to get traction," Davutoglu also said in the interview.

Turkey held talks with Pakistani and Afghan officials this week that included a sensitive intelligence exchange.

---

### U.S. Envoy Praises Turkey's Role in Afghanistan

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Thursday, 4 February 2010

---

A senior US envoy has said Turkey played an important role within the international security mission in Afghanistan or ISAF, adding that Turkey was one of the countries which had legitimate security and strategic interests in the region.

"Turkey is a very important factor in the region. I can think of no country in the ISAF alliance that has a role that is more important than Turkey's, in terms of operations inside Afghanistan," Richard Holbrooke, US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, told a press meeting at the Foreign Press Center in Washington.

Holbrooke said Turkey and the US had parallel interests, adding that he had extensive discussions with the Turkish president and premier as well as other members of the Turkish cabinet.

The US representative said one of the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan was led by Turkey which he said had done "some extremely valuable work in fields like agriculture, where they built the first cold-storage facility since the end of the war."

"We have the highest respect and attach the greatest importance to deepening our cooperation with Turkey. And it gives me a chance to thank the Turkish government and the Turkish people for their support and involvement," Holbrooke said.

Responding to a question whether the US received any Turkish help in reaching out to Taliban, Holbrooke said contacts with Taliban had not been "a major subject between us and the Turkish government."

---

### TURKEY'S AID TO HAITI

Turkey grants \$1 mln aid to Haiti

Thursday, 04 February 2010 11:29

World bulletin

---

Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Osman Ulukan, coordinator for relations with Latin American countries, left for quake-devastated Haiti.

Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Osman Ulukan, coordinator for relations with Latin American countries, left for quake-devastated Haiti.

The Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday, "Ulukan will hand over Turkey's financial aid of 1 million USD to President Rene Preval of Haiti. He offered Turkish people's condolences to

those who lost their beloved ones in the quake disaster."

"Ambassador Ulukan also visited Turkish police officers assigned in the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Turkish health personnel working at a field hospital and quake survivors in a camp," the statement added.

Thousands of people were killed and thousands of others were left homeless and destitute when a magnitude-7 quake devastated Haiti on January 14. It was the most powerful quake recorded in the last two centuries.

AA

---

### Western Thrace Turks tell Erdogan of problems in Greece

Thursday, 04 February 2010 09:10

World bulletin

---

The Turkish prime minister listened on Wednesday problems of Turks living in Western Thrace. The Turkish prime minister listened on Wednesday problems of Turks living in Western Thrace. Turkey's Premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan had a meeting with members of Western Thrace Turks Minority in Ankara.

During the meeting, the delegation said they were not allowed to use expression Turkish in their unions names in Greece despite the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights.

The delegation also demanded that diplomas of people graduating from Greek schools should be considered equivalent to those in Turkey.

Erdogan then said he had asked the Turkish National Education Ministry to deal with this problem.

Also, the delegation demanded that 64,000 members of Western Thrace Turkish minority, deprived of their Greek citizenship, should be given back their citizenship.

The delegation also hoped the new Greek government would assume a constructive attitude.

Turkish minority delegation earlier had a meeting with Turkish Parliament Speaker Mehmet Ali Sahin.

Ahmet Mete, chairman of consultative committee for Turkish Minority in Western Thrace, said, "Greece does not accept us as Turks. We are 150,000 Muslim Turks who have been trying to live in Western Thrace. We have existed so far with our self-confidence and we will keep living."

Mehmet Hacıhalil, president of Iskece (Xanthi) Turkish Union, said that after several associations of Turks have been closed down, they applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). "ECHR ruled in favor of us. However Greece did not do anything," he said.

Sahin said, "Turkey has been wanted to take new steps on rule of law, human rights and democracy. But those who want us to take these steps, cannot solve problems of their own citizens. There is a contradiction here."

Parliament Speaker Sahin said Turkish parliament would always support Turks living in Western Thrace and Turkey would do what was required for solution of problems of Turks.

---

### TURKEY AND IRAN

Turkey, Iran sign JEC protocol

Thursday, 04 February 2010 08:47

World bulletin

---

Turkish Justice Minister Sadullah Ergin and Motaki also signed the "Judicial Cooperation Agreement" prior to the signing of the protocol.

Turkish State Minister Cevdet Yilmaz said that signing of the 21st Turkey-Iran Joint Economic Commission Protocol would add a new momentum to the existing cooperation relations between the two countries.

Yilmaz said at the signing ceremony, "during the meetings between Turkish and Iranian delegations, we have taken a series of decisions which will make valuable contributions to our bilateral relations with Iran."

"Measures to be taken to remove all obstacles in front of the bilateral trade were high on agenda of our talks," he said.

Yilmaz said that the protocol included a number of issues from agriculture to health, from industrial cooperation to labour and social security, from scientific and technological cooperation to environment, from culture and tourism to judicial cooperation.

He added that the next meeting of the joint economic commission would take place in Iranian capital Tehran in 2011.

Meanwhile, Turkish Justice Minister Sadullah Ergin and Foreign Minister Manouchehr Motaki of Iran signed the "Judicial Cooperation Agreement" prior to the signing of the protocol.

---

#### Turkish President Receives Iranian FM

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Wednesday, 3 February 2010

---

Turkish President Abdullah Gul received Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Motaki in Ankara on Wednesday.

The meeting, which was closed to press, took place at Cankaya Presidential Palace.

Turkish State Minister Cevdet Yilmaz also attended the meeting.

Earlier today, Motaki met with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, and attended Turkey-Iran Joint Economic Committee meeting.

---

#### Turkey Hails Iran's Presidential Elections Again

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Wednesday, 3 February 2010

---

Turkey was one of the first countries to congratulate Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad after disputed presidential election in June 2009. The country has again praised the elections despite ongoing unrest. A conservative cleric in Tehran, meanwhile, has urged the execution of more opposition protesters

Turkey has again praised last year's disputed Iranian presidential election that returned President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to power amid ongoing unrest.

"We consider the elections democratic and, in terms of the people's turnout, a positive development," Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu told a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart, Manouchehr Mottaki, who was in Ankara Wednesday to co-chair the Turkish-Iranian Joint Economic Committee meeting.

"The strong participation [in elections] is important but the latest developments upset us," said Davutoğlu.

Street protests that followed the presidential poll in June plunged Iran into its biggest internal

crisis since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 that toppled the Shah. Iran hanged Thursday two men convicted of being moharebs, or those that war against God, over the unrest.

Another conservative cleric, meanwhile, has demanded more opposition protesters be executed. Davutoğlu stressed that Turkey placed a priority on the peace and stability of Iranians, saying, “We believe Iran will overcome such problems as soon as possible and continue to have peace, stability and welfare.”

Turkey was one of the first countries to congratulate Ahmadinejad after elections although many European leaders declined to do so. Iran’s moderate opposition says the June election was rigged in favor of Ahmadinejad. The Iranian government, however, denies any fraud.

“Some 85 percent of Iranians participated in the elections while this figure stands around 25 percent in European countries. They were free elections that left no room for fraud,” said Mottaki.

“Only one person wins the elections,” said the Iranian minister, accusing the opposition of overstepping the boundaries of objection. “They attempted to spark unrest, burn cars, buses and mosques and harm the things that are holy for us.”

Mottaki recalled a recent interview he had with a Western broadcasting station where he said the current unrest in Iran was a “plot by Westerners.”

“I told them they failed. The situation has returned to normal in Iran. Those who are accused in Iran answer before the court. They have the right to appeal. We say ‘yes’ to appeals but ‘no’ to chaos.”

FM: Room for diplomacy on nuclear issue

Another issue occupying the agenda of the two ministers was Iran’s disputed nuclear program. Davutoğlu repeated Ankara’s well-known position that the dispute should be resolved through dialogue by using diplomatic means instead of through tension and threats.

“There is still room for diplomacy. We’ll be involved in every effort regarding Iran that expands the sphere of diplomacy,” said Davutoğlu.

Mottaki said Iran considered an exchange of low-enriched uranium with uranium enriched by 20 percent as a “formula that could build confidence.”

“This formula is on the table at present,” he said, adding that Tehran’s research reactor would need fuel within a year.

The United States and other nations suspect that Iran's nuclear program is geared toward acquiring atomic weapons. Iran denies the charge, saying the program is to generate energy.

Mottaki, meanwhile, said in December that Turkey could also be a venue for Tehran to exchange nuclear material with the West.

“Iran and Turkey have a common perspective toward security problems. A threat posed to Turkey is a threat posed to Iran and [vice versa],” he said.

The two ministers attended a dinner together late Wednesday.

---

### Iranian Fm Says Any Threat against Turkey Considered Threat against Iran

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Wednesday, 3 February 2010

---

Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Motaki said on Wednesday that a threat against Turkey would amount to a threat against Iran and vice versa.

Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and Motaki held a press conference after holding a meeting in Ankara.

Replying to a question, Motaki said Tehran's research reactor would need fuel within a year. Foreign Minister Motaki said swapping low-enriched uranium with uranium enriched by 20 percent was a formula which could build confidence. Motaki said there was a great cooperation in several areas between Turkey and Iran, noting that the two countries had a common point of view regarding security issues in the region. He added that any threat to the security of Iran amounts to a threat to the security of Turkey.

---

## **TURKEY AND ARMENIA**

### **U.S. Calls On Turkey And Armenia to Ratify Protocols**

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

---

A senior U.S. official called on Turkey and Armenia to ratify protocols signed last year to normalize relations.

Philip Gordon, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, told a press conference that Turkey and Armenia need to move forward in ratifying and implementing protocols signed last October on establishing diplomatic relations.

"We believe this is an opportunity to overcome really historic differences between the two countries in a way that would benefit both," Gordon said.

"To establish normalized relations between the two countries and open the border would contribute to peace and stability in the region, and we think that is true regardless of other issues -- that it needs to move forward independently of other issues, simply because it is in the interest of the two countries," he said.

Gordon said that U.S. government was in touch with both government and that Obama administration encouraged them to move forward.

"Turkey-Armenia normalization is a good thing in and of itself and it should move forward because of that," he added.

---

### **Turkish Foreign Ministry Says No Problem in Armenian Move**

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Wednesday, 3 February 2010

---

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Wednesday that there was no problem in Turkey's Armenian initiative.

Burak Ozugergin, the spokesperson of the ministry, told reporters that Armenia's Turkey initiative was in trouble after a verdict of the Armenian Constitutional Court.

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia has declared its decision of constitutional conformity on the Protocols between Turkey and Armenia signed on 10 October 2009 with a short statement on January 12, 2010.

Turkey thinks the fifth article of Armenian Constitutional Court's verdict regarding the protocols signed between two countries is against the target and basis of the protocols.

"Turkey has not changed its views, and it is still in the same position," Ozugergin said.

Undersecretary Feridun Sinirlioglu of the ministry will visit Switzerland and the United States in coming days.

"Sinirlioglu will express Turkey's concerns over this matter during his meetings," Ozugergin said.

On Upper Karabakh dispute, Ozugergin said there had been a progress in this issue in recent days.

"It seems that there is a light of hope for concrete steps aiming to solve the issue in coming days," Ozugergin said.

Ozugergin also said a concrete step depended on political will and courage of concerned parties, and Turkey was monitoring the process.

---

Turkey-Armenia pact hits snags

The Wall Street Journal

30 January 2010, Saturday

---

A deal between Turkey and Armenia to open their border and establish diplomatic relations after generations of dispute over genocide allegations and territory is under growing threat of collapse.

Armenia is pushing for rapid ratification of the deal, signed in October, while Turkey has a longer time frame. On Wednesday, Azerbaijan President İlham Aliyev added to concerns for the deal when he said he was confident Turkey wouldn't ratify the agreement until Armenia has returned Azeri territory that it occupies, including the mainly ethnic-Armenian region of Nagorno Karabakh. "There is a common understanding in the region that there should be a first step by Armenia to start the liberation of the occupied territories," Aliyev said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal in Davos, Switzerland.

---

Questions linger over Swiss assurance for normalization talks

Thursday, February 4, 2010 Barçın YİNANÇ

ISTANBUL - Hürriyet Daily News

---

A top Turkish diplomat will travel to Switzerland to seek support against an Armenian court ruling that Ankara says threatens the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia. Questions linger over his efforts, however, because Bern considers it a crime to deny the Armenian "genocide."

Feridun Sinirlioğlu, the Foreign Ministry undersecretary, will seek assurances from Swiss authorities that Armenia's constitutional court will not legally prevent discussion of the validity of Armenian "genocide" claims by a historians' commission that will be established as part of the Turkish-Armenian deal.

Sinirlioğlu's visit will also take place just a few days before a final verdict is issued for three Turks who were found guilty of denying genocide claims, the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review has learned.

After months of Swiss-mediation and U.S. encouragement, Turkey and Armenia signed two protocols in October to establish diplomatic ties and reopen their shared border. It was a historic step toward ending decades of hostility due to World War I-era killings of Armenians.

But the process hit the rocks after the Armenian court upheld the legality of the protocols, but underlined that they could not contradict Yerevan's official position that the Armenian mass killings during the late days of the Ottoman Empire constituted "genocide."

Sinirlioğlu will visit Switzerland and the United States "to express our concern" over last month's ruling, Foreign Ministry's spokesman Burak Özügergin told reporters Wednesday. Dialogue process

The Armenian court said the interpretation and application of the protocols should be in compliance with the Armenian Declaration of Independence, which states: "The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia."

The protocols noted the parties' agreement to launch a dialogue process, including the formation of a committee of historians, to handle historical issues. If the Armenians continue to consider the events of 1915 as an undisputable "genocide," in the Turkish view, the court's verdict in effect renders the historians' work obsolete.

Following the decision, Turkey asked Switzerland and the United States for clarification, the Daily News learned from official sources. Both said the decision would not hamper the commission's discussions but refused to give an assurance in writing, according to diplomatic sources.

Sinirlioğlu will try to convince Swiss authorities at talks in Bern on Friday to give a binding assurance that the historians' commission will work without any prejudice about the final outcome. This could prove difficult, however, because denial of the Armenian "genocide" is a crime according to Swiss law.

The decision to outlaw denying the Armenian "genocide" carries the signature of Switzerland's Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey, who held a different ministerial post in 1998 when the denial amendment was passed. Calmy-Rey, however, has played a key role in Turkish-Armenian normalization talks, including the decision to create a commission to discuss "historical issues." Meanwhile, a final verdict is expected Feb. 9 on an appeal from three Turks found guilty of denying Armenian genocide claims. Turkish politician Doğu Perinçek was the first Turkish citizen to be found guilty by the Swiss court. He is also among the suspects in the trial of an alleged gang called Ergenekon that is suspected of seeking to topple the government by staging a coup.

---

## **TURKEY AND ISRAEL**

Turkey's Criticism of Israel Does Not Mean End of Relations, Turkish Fm Davutoglu

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Saturday, 30 January 2010

---

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said Friday that Turkey's criticism of Israel did not mean end of relations with this country.

Davutoglu who delivered a speech titled "New Global Geopolitics" at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London, said Turkey had different views and disagreements with Israel over certain issues noting however this was not the fundamental dynamic of the Turkish-Israeli relations.

He said Turkey's criticism of Israel targeted the offensive on Gaza and had nothing to do with anti-semitism, adding that not a single example of anti-semitism could be found in Turkish history.

"Turkey has been a safe haven for Jews for centuries and will continue to be so. Criticising a policy of the Israeli government does not mean the end of Turkish-Israeli relations. Our relations will continue, so will our criticism," said Davutoglu.

Davutoglu emphasized that security of a child in Gaza was as important for Turkey as the security of a child in Tel Aviv, noting that Turkey wanted its surrounding to be secure.

He said Turkey's new motto in its foreign policy was "zero problems with neighbours", pointing out that with such perspective Turkey mediated indirect talks between Israel and Syria in 2008.

"If there had been peace between Israel and Syria back then, the atmosphere in the region would have been completely different. But that did not happen. Who is responsible for that? Is it possible to start it all over? Yes, Why not?" said Davutoglu.

Davutoglu said should both parties agree, Turkey was ready for the call, noting that Syria wanted to resume talks but Israel disagreed.

"Some of the coalition members (Israeli) are against it while others support it. If we see a strong political will in both Israel and Syria we will continue to extend support. We will support every step, every initiative towards peace," said Davutoglu.

Davutoglu said, Turkey would do everything within its reach, in order to meet the new challenges in the geopolitical arena and contribute to the global peace.

Commenting on the ongoing normalisation process in Turkey's relations with Armenia, Davutoglu said the Armenian Constitutional Court's reasoned verdict on the protocols with Turkey was unacceptable.

He said Turkey wanted to establish perfect relations with Armenia, just like the relations with Greece, noting that Turks and Armenians should get along just fine, wherever in the world.

"Are we going to dwell in the past, or live the future ahead of us?" asked Davutoglu.

He said Turkey wished for high level political dialogue and normalisation in the entire Caucasus. Davutoglu later proceeded from London to Strasbourg to meet the newly elected president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Mevlut Cavusoglu.

---

### Spanish FM promotes Turkey's mediation between Israel-Syria

05 February 2010, Friday

TODAY'S ZAMAN ANKARA

---

Spain, while pledging to do its best to push the Middle East peace process forward in its capacity as the rotating president of the

European Union, has also stated that it encourages Turkish mediation between Israel and Syria. Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, who recently returned from a visit to Israel, was in Damascus on Wednesday to hold talks with both Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his counterpart, Walid al-Moallem.

"I visited Israel on Tuesday and found they are willing to push forward the peace process. I think Turkish mediation is the best option for both sides to find a solution," Moratinos said at a joint press conference following his talks with Moallem.

"I met with Israel's prime minister, foreign minister and defense minister, and I did not hear suggestions of war but of peace. We have to continue to push forward the peace process," Moratinos said, in an apparent response to earlier remarks by Assad.

"All the facts indicate that Israel is driving the region toward war, not peace," the official Syrian news agency SANA quoted Assad as saying during his meeting with Moratinos. "Israel is not serious about wanting peace," Assad added.

Indirect peace talks between Syria and Israel, mediated by Turkey, broke down during the Israeli invasion of Gaza in December 2008.

Syria has sought to resume the talks as the confrontation between its ally Iran and the West and Israel over Tehran's nuclear activities has escalated. Damascus wants an Israeli commitment to withdraw from the whole of the Golan Heights, the Syrian plateau that Israel occupied in the 1967 Six Day War. Israel has said it was willing to resume the talks with Syria without preconditions.

---

OIC SG: Solution of "Islamophobia" & Palestinian Issue Important for World Peace

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Wednesday, 3 February 2010

---

Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu said on Wednesday that solution of "Islamophobia" and Palestinian issue was very important for world peace.

Speaking at a panel discussion at OIC HQ, Ihsanoglu said that OIC was closely interested in "Islamophobia" and Palestinian problem.

Noting that the targets of Alliance of Civilizations and OIC were the same, Ihsanoglu said that Islamic religion wanted dialogue among people.

Former president of Portugal and UN high representative for Alliance of Civilizations Jorge Sampaio, Turkey's Ambassador in Riyadh Ahmet Muhtar Gun and Turkey's Consul General in Jeddah Salih Mutlu Sen also attended the panel discussion.

OIC is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations which has membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world and ensuring to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

The Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations.

---

Israel, Syria locked in bitter war of words

Thursday, February 4, 2010

JERUSALEM - From wire dispatches

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Israel and Syria were locked on Thursday in a bitter war of words, warning each other of the dire consequences of any new war, but analysts played down the outbursts as little more than posturing.

Israel's firebrand Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman warned Syrian President Bashar al-Assad that he would lose the war and his grip on power if his country picks a fight with Israel. "When there is another war, you will not just lose it, but you and your family will lose power,"

Lieberman said Thursday at a conference near Tel Aviv. "I hope the message will be well understood in Damascus."

His comments came a day after al-Assad and his Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem said Israel was pushing the region toward war. The two countries, which have fought three full-scale wars since Israel was founded in 1948, were trading threats just as the United States prepares to restore diplomatic ties with Syria and kickstart peace talks that broke down more than a year ago.

Israel's December 2008 assault on the Gaza Strip led to the collapse of indirect peace talks with Syria that had been mediated by Turkey. The previous round of talks had foundered in 2000 over the terms for Israel to return the Golan Heights, which it captured in 1967.

### **'Just posturing'**

Lieberman's tone contrasted with more conciliatory comments by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said Israel was prepared to consider resuming indirect peace feelers with Syria that came to a halt in late 2008. But he also blamed Syria for "creating difficulties and preventing the establishment of negotiations."

Analysts, meanwhile, warned against reading too much into the blunt language from the two sides. "All this is just posturing and things will calm down in two or three days since neither Israel nor Syria want to cause a war," said Eyal Zisser, a specialist on relations with Syria at Tel Aviv University.

The latest spat emerged after Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak warned on Monday that if there is no peace agreement with Syria, "we might find ourselves in a forceful conflict that could lead to an all-out war."

Syria reacted angrily to the comments, with al-Assad saying all signs are that Israel is "working towards a war" and al-Muallem telling Israel: "do not test the power of Syria since you know the war will move into your cities."

Netanyahu on Thursday suggested re-launching the contacts for peace talks. "The prime minister has declared on numerous occasions he is willing to go anywhere to negotiate with Syria, without precondition," his office said, lamenting what it said were obstacles put in the way by Syria.

### **Lieberman urged to quit**

But Lieberman's warning to al-Assad overshadowed Netanyahu's statement.

"It should be clear that if he provokes us, it will end badly for him on the battlefield but also for his power," the ultra-nationalist minister said at a business conference at Bar Ilan University near Tel Aviv. "This must be our message because all that interests him is not human life, human values. The only value for him is power and that's what must be targeted," Lieberman said.

"There must be a correlation, because unfortunately until now a military defeat did not mean a loss of power." Lieberman noted that Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and Syrian President Hafez al-Assad - Bashar's father - both stayed in power after they were defeated in wars against Israel.

Moshe Maoz, a political analyst at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, called the minister's outburst "a disaster."

"Israel is trying to present itself as a country that wants peace and he destroys it all," Maoz told public radio, warning that Lieberman's remarks will further strengthen Syria's mistrust of Israel.

Eitan Cabel, a member of parliament for Barak's center-left Labour Party, urged Netanyahu to get rid of Lieberman, calling the foreign minister a "warmonger who has no honor or wisdom."

"This escalation of words comes in the context of Israel's saber-rattling vis-à-vis Iran and the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon," said Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, author of a forthcoming book, "The Iran Connection: The Alliance with Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas," in a phone interview with Bloomberg.

Israel has been pushing for tougher international action against Syria's ally Iran over its nuclear program. Earlier this week, Netanyahu accused the Syrian-backed Hezbollah of illegally stockpiling weapons.

While the mutual threats don't mean military conflict is imminent, they do signal that "any forthcoming war would likely become a wider regional showdown," Saad-Ghorayeb said.

---

### **TURKEY AND RUSSIA**

Premier Says Relations with Russia Have Special Importance for Turkey

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Saturday, 30 January 2010

---

Turkish prime minister has said Turkey placed special significance on strengthening relations with Russia, adding that cooperation between the two countries would benefit them both. "We attach special importance on our relations with Russia and we are pleased to see that the same sensitivity is present with our Russian friends. I believe that the close dialogue between our two countries will continue," Erdogan told Friday a televised address to the nation. Erdogan paid an official visit to Russia earlier in January with a busy portfolio that included regional issues, projects to boost economic cooperation and trade, and most significantly cooperation in energy. Erdogan has also proposed to mutually lift visa requirements for Turkish and Russian citizens. He has said that Moscow had agreed to work on the proposal and an agreement might be signed during Russian president's visit to Ankara later this year. The Turkish premier said his country aimed at developing dialogue with not only neighboring countries but also with others all around the world. "We believe that the world needs dialogue and the countries need to get to know and understand each other. It is my sincere belief that Turkey will soon become a leading country in this sense," Erdogan said. Erdogan also said Turkey had become "a global player and a leader country with an increasing say and credibility" in global issues.

---

### **TURKEY AND BULGARIA**

Turkish Premier Welcomes Bulgarian Counterpart

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Friday, 29 January 2010

---

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan welcomed his Bulgarian counterpart Boyko Borissov in the Turkish capital, Ankara with an official ceremony on Friday. The two premiers are set to hold a tete-a-tete meeting and appear in a joint press conference later on. Borissov was received by Turkish President Abdullah Gul earlier in the day.

---

TBulgaria Awaiting Special Commission's Report for Compensation Demand from Turkey

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Saturday, 30 January 2010

---

Bulgarian Premier Boyko Borisov said Friday that they were waiting for reports of commissions on both sides on assets of ethnic Bulgarians which were left behind in Turkish territory when they migrated from Ottoman Empire in 1913, regarding the legal compensation demand from Turkey.

Borisov told a joint press conference with Erdogan in Ankara that descendants of deceased 1913 immigrants urged the government to follow up on the issue and they wanted to find a solution to the problems of the aggrieved families.

Earlier in January, Bulgarian Minister Bojidar Dimitrov said Bulgaria planned to ask from Turkey a 10 billion USD compensation for the properties that Bulgarian nationals left behind in 1913 in Turkey, based on the Ankara agreement signed between the two countries in 1925. Dimitrov who said that his country would block Turkey's accession to the European Union unless Turkey agreed to pay the compensation, later had to apologise when he was warned sternly by Premier Borisov who said the government nor the parliament had given such a decision.

Borisov told the press conference that with permission of the Turkish government they wanted to look once again in to the allegations of the descendants of deceased 1913 immigrants.

Borisov said nationalist politicians in Bulgaria exploited the issue and created tension.

He said the two countries should rather focus on strategic projects and common interests rather than these tensions.

Borisov said Turkey and Bulgaria shared many values like democracy pluralism, and respect for freedoms, adding that Bulgaria supported the reforms in Turkey and its integration to the EU.

He also said he would push for an end to the delay in the Nabucco pipeline project during the upcoming EU summit in Brussels.

After the press conference, Erdogan hosted a dinner in honour of Borisov.

---

## **CONFERENCE ON TURKEY'S GROWING GLOBAL IMPORTANCE**

Turkish Prime Minister Attends Conference on Turkey's Growing Global Importance

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Wednesday, 3 February 2010

---

Turkey's prime minister said on Wednesday that the government's goal was to display a strong will for the solution of the problems in Turkey and to improve unity and brotherhood in the country.

Attending a conference at the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) in Ankara on the changing balances in the world and Turkey's growing global importance, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that ignoring the problems of minorities or various religious groups in Turkey made contributions neither to the country nor to democracy.

Expressing the importance of mental shift, Erdogan said, "Our government knows that the most important thing is to change the mentalities and eliminate the reasons that are causing the problems. No success could be achieved in implementation unless a mental shift is provided".

Noting that Turkey had a great potential in every sense, Erdogan said, "We are a European country, but at the same time, we are a country that understands the politics, sociology and psychology of the Middle East, the Caucasus region, the Balkans, Africa and the Near East in the best way".

Erdogan said Turkey's historical background, cultural richness, human potential and geographical position offered it irreplaceable opportunities.

"Turkey's qualifications make it an highly effective and important actor," Erdogan said, adding that Turkey took part in the solution of problems in many regions of the world, as well as in tensions between nations and cultures.

Erdogan also said that Turkey could lead the transformation process in the world and assume

constructive and active roles in the new order thanks to its historical and cultural background. "In order to achieve that, we should ease our internal problems, stand on our own feet and complete our own transformation and development processes," he said. Erdogan said a country that could not build stability and confidence would not be able to maintain its reforms and have a word in regional matters. Pointing to the expectations of the global capital as well, Erdogan said global investors looked for stability and confidence in a country.

---

## **TURKEY AND KOSOVO**

### **Kosovar President Meets with Turkish Parliament Speaker**

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

---

Turkish Parliament Speaker Mehmet Ali Sahin said that they would continue extending support to Kosovo.

President Fatmir Sejdiu of Kosovo met with Sahin as part of his visit to Turkey.

Sahin said at the meeting, "nearly two years have passed since Kosovo acquired its independence. Turkey is one of the first countries recognizing Kosovo's independence. Our bilateral relations have improved considerably in the last two years. Six Turkish ministers visited Kosovo while five ministers came to Turkey from Kosovo in this period. And we signed a series of agreements. Parliaments of the two countries have succeeded in setting up an exemplary cooperation."

"We will continue extending all kinds of support for a prosperous Kosovo," he added.

President Sejdiu, on his part, thanked Turkey for supporting Kosovo's struggle for independence. He said that his visit to Turkey aimed at further developing existing cooperation ties between the two countries.

Kosovar president said that his country had made a significant progress since the day it required independence. "We have ensured economic and political stability. We hope that Turkey will explain those achievements of Kosovo in international platforms and help us to win recognition from international community," he said.

"We have constructive relations with other regional countries. But Serbia wants Kosovo without Kosovar people. They wanted to kill us all. We did not want to kill them. They want to own the assets of Kosovo," he said and added that war criminals should be brought to justice.

---

### **Turkish President Pledges to Continue Support for Kosovo**

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

---

Turkish president has vowed to extend any support to Kosovo's efforts to win recognition from international community.

"Turkey will continue to support Kosovo in its resolute path. Turkey has led the way by becoming one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo and I hope that certain Islam countries are waiting for the right time to follow suit," Abdullah Gul told a joint press meeting on Tuesday with his Kosovar counterpart Fatmir Sejdiu in the Turkish capital, Ankara.

Gul said independence of each country in the Balkans should receive due respect while efforts should be paid to develop neighborly relations with an eye to strengthen friendship and peace.

"The history of the Balkans is our common history and we share great many values which gives us strong ties between our two countries. Turkey attaches great importance to stability and security in the Balkans, which is being reconstructed to align with a new Europe and a new world," Gul said.

The Turkish president said Kosovars considered Turkey as a brother nation, adding that Turks living in Kosovo constituted a strong bridge between the two countries.

Gul said Kosovo was restructuring its state bodies as a democratic rule of law in a bid to become a part of the European-Atlantic institutions and the number of countries to recognize Kosovo was increasing.

Gul said economic relations between the two countries were developing strongly and rapidly, adding that the Turkish government encouraged Turkish businesspeople to make investments in Kosovo

"We believe that when the day comes, Kosovo will take its seat in the European-Atlantic institutions, in the NATO as well as in the European Union. I wish Kosovo a bright future," Gul said.

---

### Kosovar President Says Hopes for Continued Support from Turkey

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

Kosova's president has expressed hope that Turkey would continue to extend support to his country, saying that Turks living in Kosovo and Kosovars living in Turkey was "a golden bridge of cooperation and friendship" between the two countries.

"Turkey's support for Kosovo's independence and for our efforts to offer a better future for our citizens is a part of our history. And we hope that Turkey will continue to extend support for Kosovo's recognition by other international actors and our membership to the European Union and NATO," Fatmir Sejdiu told a joint press conference with his Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul in Turkey's capital, Ankara.

Sejdiu said Kosovo was also grateful for Turkey's contributions to NATO's KFOR mission, adding that Kosovo attached great importance to Turkey as a country with a rapidly developing economy and increasing role in maintaining peace.

---

### **TURKEY AND EUROPEAN UNION NEGOCIATION PROCESS**

Turkish Pm: "We Work Hard for Turkey's EU Process"

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Saturday, 30 January 2010

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday there were some efforts to block Turkey's EU accession process, but Turkish government had patience and was working hard. Erdogan and Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov held a joint press conference in Ankara after their meeting.

Replying to a question on Turkey's EU accession process, Erdogan said Turkish government has been working really hard for the process with a full determination.

"Turkey has been waiting for result of its application to the EU for 50 years. But we have patience. Bulgaria always supported us in regard to Turkey's EU accession process. We believe that it will keep supporting Turkey," he said.

Fruitful cooperation between Turkey and Bulgaria on national and international platforms increased our power in the region, Erdogan said.

"In the meeting we discussed energy projects. We also discussed the areas in which the two countries can work together," he said.

Erdogan said 1.4 million Bulgarian people have visited Turkey in 2009 and more number of Turkish people should also visit Bulgaria for holiday.

Trade volume between Turkey and Bulgaria became nearly 3 million euro, but this figure should be boosted, he said.

"Transportation of water from River Rezve to Istanbul is an important issue. We discussed the matter in the meeting," he added.

---

"Turkey Has No Patience to Wait More for EU Membership," Ak Party Official

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Saturday, 30 January 2010

---

The deputy chairman of external affairs for Turkey's ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party said on Saturday that Turkey did not have the patience to wait for another 10-15 years in order to become a full member to the European Union (EU).

Speaking at a meeting in the Swedish capital of Stockholm, Suat Kiniklioglu, AK Party's deputy chairman of external affairs and the party's MP from central Anatolian province of Cankiri, said, "officials were talking about a 10 or 15-year process 10 years ago. I find it very disappointing that they are still talking about the same thing in 2010".

Expressing Turkey's objection to such waiting period, Kiniklioglu said, "in the geo-political sense, Turkey does not have the patience to wait for another 10-15 years".

Commenting on the negotiations aiming at finding a solution to Cyprus problem, Kiniklioglu said it would not be morally or politically right to put the blame on Turkey while the Greek Cypriot administration kept on displaying an uncompromising attitude.

Kiniklioglu said the negotiation process in Cyprus was an issue that affected not only Turkish and Greek Cypriot parties, but also Turkey-EU relations, NATO-EU relations, as well as future of the Balkans, Black Sea, Caucasus, Middle East and East Mediterranean regions.

Pointing to Turkish-Israeli relations as well, Kiniklioglu said bilateral relations between the two countries would be affected positively if Israel displayed efforts to improve the humanitarian conditions in Gaza.

---

European Human Rights Court Rules Against Use Of Letters "Q", "W", "X" In Turkey Legal Names

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

---

Top European human rights court rejected on Tuesday a request to use names containing letters "q", "w" or "x", which are not part of the Turkish alphabet.

Eight Turkish citizens of Kurdish descent appealed in 2004 and 2005 to the European Court of Human Rights after Turkish courts had refused to allow them to use letters "q", "w" or "x" in their legal names given on their national identity cards.

The court said, in the case, Turkey did not violate Article 8 and Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights on private and family life and discrimination.

---

European Court Rules against Religious Designation on Identity Cards in Turkey

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

---

Europe's chief human rights court ruled Tuesday against the listing of religious affiliation on national identity cards in Turkey, saying that it violated a top European human rights charter. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) said the recording of religious affiliation on identification cards Turkish citizens carry violated European Convention of Human Rights Article 9 on freedom of conscience and religion.

The court said no one can be forced to disclose religious belief and that it was not the duty for the state to review one's religious affiliation, which otherwise would hamper the neutrality of the state on religious matters.

Carrying an identity card is compulsory for Turkish citizens.

The Turkish government introduced a new regulation in 2006, allowing persons to leave the religion section on their identity cards blank.

Sinan Isik, a Turkish national, appealed in 2005 to the ECHR after Turkish courts refused to record "Alevi" in the religion section of his identity card.

---

PACE chief Çavuşoğlu criticizes lack of domestic support

Thursday, February 4, 2010

ANKARA - Hürriyet Daily N

---

Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, the first Turkish president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, or PACE, has expressed his annoyance and disappointment with the lack of support given him by Turkish opposition parties.

“What upset me is that they would have blocked my way because of worries related to internal politics,” he said.

Çavuşoğlu thanked all of his supporters, including President Abdullah Gül, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Parliament Speaker Mehmet Ali Şahin in a press conference at the Turkish Parliament on Thursday.

“I was shocked to see that [main opposition Republican People’s Party, or] CHP deputy Birgen Keleş counter-voted,” he said.

Azerbaijani parliamentarian Ganire Paşayeva returned from Frankfurt Airport in order to cast her ballot and Ertuğrul Kumcuoğlu, a deputy of the Nationalist Movement Party, or MHP, voted in favor, although colleague Tuğrul Türkeş left the hall at the time of voting, Çavuşoğlu said.

“They denied what happened and accused the prime minister of being incapable of understanding the process.” he said. “Sorry, I’m incapable of understanding why Turkish colleagues counter-voted and Mr. Türkeş was absent.”

Political differences at home resulted in non-collaboration on the European stage, Çavuşoğlu said.

“They were also wrong to back a proposal that would block my way because of their worries related to domestic politics. That’s what upset me. I’d like to be outside such kind of debates,” he said, noting that none of the opposition parties had sent a congratulatory message.

NATO seeks answers to key questions at İstanbul meeting

As 2010 is widely considered to be of critical importance for NATO in Afghanistan, defense ministers of the transatlantic alliance gathered in İstanbul on Thursday for a two-day informal meeting focused exclusively on Afghanistan and on developing the alliance's new strategic concept.

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and US Defense Secretary Robert Gates are among participants at the meeting hosted by Turkish Defense Minister Vecdi Gönül.

Just a day before the meeting in İstanbul, the US administration strongly praised Turkey's efforts in Afghanistan, with US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard Holbrooke calling Turkey "a very important figure in the region."

Recalling that he had had extensive discussions on Afghanistan with Turkish President Abdullah Gül, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, Holbrooke highlighted that Ankara and Washington have been engaged in constant dialogue on the issue.

"We have parallel interests. Turkey is, of course, a NATO member and a key member of ISAF [International Security Assistance Force, a NATO-led international force in Afghanistan] and one of the PRTs [provincial reconstruction teams] is a Turkish PRT. The Turks have done some extremely valuable work in fields like agriculture, where they built the first cold storage facility since the end of the war. A very important issue, I might add, because agriculture is so important and without cold storage everything rots. And we have the highest respect and attach the greatest importance to deepening our cooperation with Turkey and it gives me a chance to thank the Turkish government and the Turkish people for their support and involvement," Holbrooke said. "I can think of no country in the ISAF alliance that has a role that is more important than Turkey's in terms of operations inside Afghanistan," he added.

---

#### Verheugen to EU: Backtracking on Turkey is 'pure populism'

05 February 2010, Friday

TODAY'S ZAMAN ANKARA

---

A senior European Union official has warned the 27-nation bloc that offering Turkey anything less than full membership is "pure populism," which will also pose a danger to the whole bloc. Guenter Verheugen has long been a strong supporter of Turkish membership and worked hard for its candidacy as enlargement commissioner from 1999 to 2004. His mandate as the vice president of the EU Commission and the European commissioner for enterprise and energy since 2004 ended earlier this week.

"This attitude is pure populism, and it is dangerous because just the opposite is demanded of statesmen and women," Verheugen said in an interview with the German Press Agency dpa on Wednesday, in an apparent reference to the idea of privileged membership, which has been proposed by German and French leadership, instead of full-fledged EU membership on the grounds that Turkey will not be a part of the Western world and will fail to adopt Western values.

That proposal is "fake packaging" because Turkey already has a privileged relationship with the EU, Verheugen said.

"Mrs. [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel and Mr. [French President Nicolas] Sarkozy regularly duck the question of what more they want to give Turkey short of membership. Turkey already has a customs union with the EU; it's already associated with it -- there is no more privileged partner state than Turkey," Verheugen said.

“How should a Turkish government convince society that they should carry out a fundamental change in their entire way of life when it hears from all kinds of European capitals: Do what you like, you’re not Christian and you belong to a different cultural sphere?” Verheugen also asked, when reminded of certain European politicians’ approach of putting the blame on Turkey for slowing down the EU reform process.

---

Turkey not turning back on West, says NATO’s Rasmussen

05 February 2010, Friday

TODAYS ZAMAN

---

There has been criticism from some that Turkey is moving away from the West, given its recent foreign policy moves, but NATO Secretary-General Anders F. Rasmussen does not share that concern

Rasmussen, who shared his opinions on various issues in an interview with Today's Zaman, said he was not concerned about Turkish foreign policy changing direction, adding that he believed Turkey can and should play an important role as a bridge between Central Asia and the Middle East and Europe and North America. “I think Turkey for geographical and political reasons can and will play an instrumental role; having said that, I also hope to see progress in the Turkish relationship with the EU. I would urge EU member states to make progress in the Turkish relationship with the European Common Security and Defense Policy and in particular concerning the European Defence Agency. It is a strong wish from the Turkish side,” Rasmussen said, expressing his opinion that Turkey is a valuable contributor to a number of operations and missions.

Rasmussen also expressed the view that he thinks Turkey can play an instrumental role and contribute to a peace process in Afghanistan, owing to its good relationship with neighboring Pakistan. “Having said that I also think it is essential that the reconciliation and reintegration process should be led by the Afghan government. It has to be an Afghan-led process. We can, of course, assist that but the Afghan government must be in the driver’s seat. Those individuals and groups involved in the reconciliation and reintegration process should respect the Afghan Constitution, Afghan democracy, the rule of law and human rights.”

He also commented on his dialogue with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who canceled a joint press conference with Rasmussen -- then prime minister of Denmark -- in 2005 because Danish authorities insisted that a journalist from a television station linked with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) be allowed to attend the conference. “I have the very best impression. We are always very frank and very open with each other during our conversations ... So I can tell you that our relationship is the very best,” Rasmussen said.

He also briefly commented on the ongoing investigation into alleged coup d’état plots by some army generals in Turkey. “Obviously, it is a matter of great interest. But I am not going to interfere in internal and domestic Turkish discussions and politics. I think the relationship between the military and the political system in Turkey has developed and improved during recent years. We have seen positive developments recently. Within the context of NATO we have the very best relations with Turkey at the political and military level,” he said.

Rasmussen also responded to Today’s Zaman’s questions on the cartoon crisis in Denmark five years ago. In response to a question on whether he would have changed any of his actions if the clock could be turned back, he said the cartoon crisis was a matter of the past and noted that he greatly valued relationships with Muslim countries and was working to develop these. “I give a

high priority to the further development of NATO's partnerships with a number of Muslim countries. We have two partnerships, one with the Gulf states and the Mediterranean Dialogue, which also includes Israel. I made it clear that I would give priority to developing these partnerships further and right after my press conference, I invited ambassadors from all countries in these partnerships to discuss with them how we could possibly take further steps bilaterally. I have met all the ambassadors; I had the opportunity to meet with some of the political leaders. So these partnerships are developing and will further develop in the coming years. I will meet with the secretary-general of the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] in Istanbul. I have taken a number of steps myself, and this outreach has been received positively," Rasmussen said. In response to a question on whether he still believes depicting the Prophet Muhammad as a terrorist falls within the principle of freedom of expression, the Danish politician replied: "I have made my position on that issue quite clear. There are two core principles that are of utmost importance. The first is freedom of expression. I think it is essential in every democracy. Without freedom of expression, you do not have democracy. Another core principle is freedom of religion, freedom to exercise your religion, and in that context, I would also say and stress I have the deepest respect for people's personal religious feelings and their belief."

---

### **TURKEY AND CYPRUS ISSUE**

Turkish Cypriot Association Condemns EU Commissioner

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

---

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Kemalist Thought Association condemned EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn who said that an investigation would be launched whether flags of TRNC and Turkey on the peak of the Besparmak Mountains caused a pollution. Namik Cafer, chairman of the association, said in a written statement, "Olli Rehn said upon a written request by Greek Cypriot parliamentarians, that the EU would launch an investigation whether Turkish and Turkish Cypriot flags polluted environment. Those flags are the indispensable symbols of our independence and freedom. Such an intervention in the flags with such unreasonable allegations of the Greek Cypriots through the EU is unacceptable."

"Throughout their history, Turkish Cypriot people have lost numerous sons to protect their flag, the noble symbol of their national identity.

Neither the EU nor any other power cannot remove our flags from the peak of Besparmak Mountains. As the TRNC Kemalist Thought Association, we condemn Rehn for making such an unfortunate statement," the statement read.

Earlier in the day, the Greek Cypriot Phileleftheros newspaper quoted Rehn as saying in response to Antigoni Papadopoulou, a Greek Cypriot member of the European Parliament, that he understood the sensitivity of the Greek Cypriot party and that an investigation would be launched to determine whether the flags caused a pollution.

---

### **Greek church in Bodrum to be restored**

Thursday, February 4, 2010 YAŞAR ANTER

BODRUM - Doğan News Agency

HURRIYAT

---

A project has been prepared to restore a 1,800-year-old Greek church located in the popular resort town of Bodrum's Bitez district.

The Gara Church is within the boundaries of a tourism facility built by a private firm, NF Construction and Tourism. The company has had a report prepared seeking ways to preserve and restore the church, which contains ancient mosaics, with the aim of opening the building to visitors.

In her report, Dr. Emine Tok of Ege University's art history department said the Greek church dates back to the late Roman-early Byzantine era from A.D. 2 to 4, noting that the remains are unique and very important in terms of archeology and art history.

"The mosaics, especially on the church floor, are the most important and rare kind," read the report. "It is possible to restore the church and turn it into an asset for tourism. The building will not last long considering its current situation; it should immediately be repaired."

The 8-meter-tall church, which has a water well, a cistern and water canals, has one prayer room and two living quarters. There is a mosaic on the church floor, believed to have been brought from Egypt. The mosaic contains images of four dolphins and a swordfish, symbols of the religious beliefs of the time.

Architect Ahmet İğdırlıgil has prepared a plan, titled the "Gara Church Culture and Art Museum," under which the building will be restored, the mosaics covered with glass and brightened and the church opened for worship if the necessary permission is received.

With the construction of a cafeteria, handcrafts and souvenir stands and a parking lot, the Gara Church could become the second House of the Virgin Mary. Located in İzmir's Selçuk district, near the ancient city of Ephesus, that site is a very important place for Christians.

Ayşe Doğançay, the president of the Bitez Association of Preserving Cultural and Natural Assets, told the Doğan news agency that the church in its current situation can barely remain standing. "The necessary permission for the restoration work has not been received despite all our requests and warnings," said Doğançay. "The building is officially under protection, but not a single thing has been done to protect it. The church has been left to destruction."

Doğançay noted that Bodrum bears the responsibility of having such an important piece a world-renowned resort town, saying that the necessary maintenance works should start immediately. "As the association, we are ready to do whatever we can to support the work," she said.

**A turning point in cultural tourism**

Remzi Güngör, a tour operator from Bodrum, said the 1,800-year-old church should serve the public once again. "To have such a religious location in Bodrum, on land that has hosted hundreds of civilizations, will contribute not only to Bodrum and Bitez, but also be a turning point for cultural tourism efforts in Turkey," he said. "Such a project will highlight the ties between different cultures and religions, bringing them together, and will attract tourists from many countries, including neighboring Greece."

Firat Özbaşar, an executive from NF Construction and Tourism, which operates the boutique hotel next to the Gara Church, said the firm has spent around \$100,000 for scientific research and the restoration project. "An additional \$300,000 is needed to turn the church into a museum and a cultural center," he added. "Maybe a different project can be completed at a much lesser cost, but we aim for the 1,800-year-old church to become an important religious location, not only for Bodrum but for Turkey and Europe."

Özbaşar noted that the company has been in talks with the Muğla Governor's Office, the Culture and Tourism Ministry and private firms about sponsorship options. "The support of nongovernmental organizations and locals on the project urges us to act faster," said Özbaşar. "At the end, the church can be a pride of the country and help us

attract tourists to Bitez.”

I will do my best to find a resolution to Cyprus, Talat says

Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat has stated that he cannot be held responsible if reunification talks between him and Greek Cypriot leader Dimitris Christofias fail to generate a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem, implying that he has exerted great effort for the success of the intensified talks.

“I will not be the architect of separation. As I am working on resolving this problem with all my goodwill with the Greek Cypriot side, which as some say does not demand a solution at all its costs, I will not be responsible for separation on the island,” stated Talat on a TV program yesterday.

The Turkish Cypriot leader also accused the Greek Cypriot side of failing to work comprehensively for the unification of the island because it had not backed the Annan plan, the UN scheme that was overwhelmingly approved by Turkish Cypriots but rejected by Greek Cypriots in simultaneous referenda in 2004.

He also referred to the independent situation of the Turkish Cypriot leadership, saying if a proposal is seen as unsuitable despite being beneficial for the talks, he would do his best to convince the people to accept the proposal for the negotiations.

When asked about his comments over the recognition of Turkish Cyprus, Talat emphasized that the currently negotiated proposal for a solution is the best option for Turkish Cyprus. “Thus we should focus on this [negotiation’s success]. This should be our target.”

Talat pointed to comments suggesting that Christofias wants another president to be elected in the Turkish Cypriot presidential election, which will be held on April 18, noting that he will run in the elections as an independent candidate.

Meanwhile, Talat dismissed the allegations that he holds a Greek Cypriot passport, saying: “I previously said there is nothing wrong with having a Greek Cypriot passport. I am personally not against it; however, I rejected offers to have one.” Talat explained why he refused the offers, stating that the Greek Cypriot administration does not have the authority to issue people a Republic of Cyprus passport. He also criticized some media organs that published the names of Turkish Cypriot citizens who have Greek Cypriot passports.

---

## **TURKEY’S ANTI-PIRACY MISSION**

Turkish Frigate Sets Sail for Anti-Piracy Mission

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Monday, 1 February 2010

---

A frigate with the Turkish Naval Forces set sail on Monday from its base in southwest Turkey to take part in an international effort to fight off piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

The Perry class frigate, TCG Gemlik, will relieve TCG Gokova currently serving under the international anti-piracy mission, CTF-151.

TCG Gemlik is the fifth task force Turkey has deployed to the region since February last year.

The others were TCG Giresun, TCG Gaziantep, TCG Gediz and TCG Gokova.

A farewell ceremony was held for TCG Gemlik at the Aksaz Naval Base Command in Marmaris and she is expected to arrive in Djibouti within seven days and take over the task from TCG Gokova.

---

## **TURKEY CONDEMND ACT OF TERROR IN IRAQ**

### **Turkey Condemns Act of Terror in Iraq**

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

USAK PUBLICATIONS

---

Turkish. Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned the bomb attack targeting Shi'ite pilgrims in Iraqi capital Baghdad

The Ministry said in a statement, "we condemn this heinous attack aiming at creating a turmoil and sectarian clash in Iraq prior to next month's election. We believe that Iraqi people will act with common-sense."

In the statement, the Ministry also offered Turkey's condolences to those who lost their beloved ones in the attack.

At least 40 people were killed and more than 100 others were injured when a suicide bomber blew herself up among Shi'ite pilgrims on the outskirts of Baghdad.

---

## **ECONOMIC NEWS**

### **TURKEY'S GROWING ECONOMY**

#### **Turkish Businessman Says Turkey on Road to Become Global Power**

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Saturday, 30 January 2010

---

The head of a Turkish businessmen's association said on Friday that Turkey was on road to become a global power.

Omer Cihad Vardan, the chairman of the Independent Industrialists & Businessmen's Association of Turkey (MUSIAD), said in New Jersey, the United States that Turkey was progressing in a determined way to become a global power.

"Turkey has become a power in its region thanks to its efforts in recent years," Vardan said in a conference organized by American Turkish Chamber of Commerce (ATCOM) in Mount Laurel, south of New Jersey.

Vardan said Turkey felt impact of economic crisis less then other countries thanks to its trade volume with its neighbors.

The chairman said Turkey was now selling its products to countries with which it had no trade in the past.

Vardan is expected to return to Turkey on Saturday.

Anon-profit business organization, which was officially established on March 11, 2008 and headquartered in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, ATCOM is an alliance of small and medium sized Turkish and American firms operating mainly in the Mid-Atlantic region of the US and its vicinities.

The main purpose of ATCOM is to promote networking, training, and collaborative efforts among its members and affiliates. It also seeks to create an environment where businesses and their surrounding communities can grow together. ATCOM also aims to promote trade between firms in Turkey, Europe, and the USA. For this purpose, it has established close ties with leading business organizations in Turkey, such as TOBB, DEIK, TAIK, ITO, MUSIAD, and TUSKON. ATCOM will serve as a bridge between Turkish entrepreneurs and U.S. businesses to aid them in developing new relationships.

---

Turkish Minister: Turkey's 2010 Export Target Is 111 Bln Usd

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Monday, 1 February 2010

---

Turkish State Minister for foreign trade Zafer Caglayan said on Monday that Turkey's export target for 2010 was set as 111 billion USD.

Releasing a statement, Caglayan said that the rising trend in Turkey's export would continue in 2010.

He noted that the government would support exporters and increase market diversification, expressing belief that they would even exceed 111 billion USD target in 2010.

Caglayan said that January 2010 export increased 12.6 percent and reached 624 million USD in electric-electronic sector when compared to January 2009, while textile export rose 20.6 percent to 482 million USD.

Caglayan reminded that the government exceeded 2009 export target 3.7 billion USD, and reached 102.2 billion USD.

---

**TURKEY'S ENERGY TALKS**

Turkish Minister says Eurasia very important over energy

Thursday, 04 February 2010 16:37

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Yildiz said that Eurasia was a very important region in regard to energy.

Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said on Thursday that Eurasia was a very important region in regard to energy.

Speaking at the seventh diplomatic mission representatives' meeting of Turkish-Eurasian Business Councils hosted by Turkey's Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) in Ankara, Yildiz said that it took 125 years to use the first trillion barrels of oil and the next trillion barrels of oil in 25 years. "Eurasia should make good use of the next 25 years," he said.

Eurasia possessing significant energy resources was a very important region for world economy and had a critical 25 years, he said.

"Turkey is also an important country in the area of energy. Turkey knows how to use advantages of its geography and it developed a strategy on the matter," he said.

Yildiz said Turkey has become a bridge from the north to the south and from the east to the west thanks to projects which have been fulfilled in the last four years.

Turkey preserved its determination in regard to establishment of nuclear power plant in the country, he added.

---

Turkey, Azerbaijan agree on natural gas price

Thursday, 04 February 2010 08:41

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Turkey's energy minister said Wednesday that Turkey and Azerbaijan agreed on price of natural gas imported from Azerbaijan.

Turkey's energy minister said Wednesday that Turkey and Azerbaijan agreed on price of natural gas imported from Azerbaijan.

"We have offered a reasonable price (for natural gas from Shah Deniz 1) to Azerbaijan and our

offer has been accepted," Taner Yildiz told reporters after his meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki.

Azerbaijan had earlier said that it had been selling natural gas to Turkey at one third of the global prices. However, Turkey said it had purchased natural gas at former rates for only ten months, and later proposed a raise in 2008.

Yildiz said Turkey still insists that its price offer for transit fee and natural gas from Shah Deniz 2 project was reasonable. However, he said this offer has not been accepted yet.

"I believe that Azerbaijan would accept this proposal too," Yildiz said.

Yildiz also said that Turkey asked Iran for a delay on repaying its debt for the gas it ordered earlier.

Yildiz said Iranian and Turkish officials would hold talks on technical issues for a week. And then an agreement is expected, he said.

---

#### US interested in Turkey nuclear tender

Thursday, 04 February 2010 11:40

WORLD BULLETIN

---

U.S. companies would definitely be interested in building Turkey's first nuclear power plant if Turkey decides to renew a tender canceled last November, said top U.S. diplomat in Turkey.

U.S. companies would definitely be interested in building Turkey's first nuclear power plant if Turkey decides to renew a tender canceled last November, said top U.S. diplomat in Turkey.

U.S. Ambassador to Turkey James Jeffrey had a meeting with Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz in Ankara on Wednesday.

Jeffrey told reporters after the meeting that U.S. government would encourage U.S. companies in that way. He said U.S. energy companies would definitely be interested in Turkey's nuclear projects if Turkey decides to hold more tenders.

A Turkish-Russian consortium led by Russia's Atomstroyexport had been the only bidder in a 2008 tender to build country's first nuclear power plant. But Turkey's state-run electricity wholesaler TETAS canceled the tender in November 2009.

Turkish Energy Minister Yildiz said that Turkey would reconsider the matter if such companies show interest in nuclear power plant project.

Yildiz also said that several energy-related issues were discussed during his meeting with Jeffrey.

---

#### Minister sees Turkey resumed positive growth

Thursday, 04 February 2010 15:51

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Babacan said "I think Turkey has resumed its positive growth as of the last quarter of 2009."

Turkish State Minister for Economy & Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan said on Thursday, "I think Turkey has resumed its positive growth as of the last quarter of 2009."

Babacan said at a meeting hosted by Association of Turkish Tourism Investors, "when we look at the exports and production figures as well as, capacity utilization figures for the last quarter of 2009, we see that Turkish economy has begun recovering from the global crisis."

"We predict that Turkey has resumed its positive growth as of the last quarter of last year.

Figures will be officially announced on March 31, but according to the premise indicators, our

economic growth has begun rising again. Recent statistical data also reveals the signals of recovery in the real sector," he said.

---

### **TURKEY'S WORKERS ON STRIKE**

Workers in Turkey start one-day general strike

Thursday, 04 February 2010 11:21

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Workers in Turkey began a nation-wide one-day strike on Thursday to support workers of the Tobacco and Liquor Administration.

Workers in Turkey began a nation-wide one-day strike on Thursday to support workers of the Tobacco and Liquor Administration (TEKEL).

Workers and civil servants throughout Turkey were called to participate to the one-day strike, supported by Turkey's vocational organizations, namely Turk-Is, Hak-Is, DISK, Memur-Sen, Turkiye Kamu-Sen and KESK.

The workers will be on strike between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday.

"We have started use our right not to vote, granted by the Constitution," Mustafa Kumlu, the chairman of the Turkish Confederation of Labor (Turk-Is), told AA correspondent.

Kumlu said this strike was a serious warning, and hoped the government would take it into consideration.

Workers from the privatized Tekel factories have been struggling for 52 days at a sit-down strike in Ankara to secure a transfer to other public institutions along with their employee rights and called for a general strike at a recent mass rally in Ankara.

Last week, following a meeting with Turk-Is Chairman Mustafa Kumlu, Premier Erdogan ordered two of his ministers to work on the issue and come up with a solution to the situation.

Tekel workers who have been on a hunger strike, gave a break and decided to wait for the government's offer.

The government offered to reemploy Tekel workers under 4-C contract, which means a partial loss of rights for the workers, the initial cause of the protests. However, the government promised to ameliorate the conditions of the contract with the new offer.

The negotiations between, Turk-Is, Turkey's largest federation of labor unions --representing the Tekel workers-- and the government have failed, when Premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan's offer failed to satisfy Turk-Is.

After the break up of negotiations, Turkey's major confederation of labor and civil servant unions, Turk-Is Hak-Is, DISK, Memur-Sen, Turkiye, Kamu-Sen and KESK, got together on Tuesday and decided to go on a one-day nation wide strike to warn the government.

---

### **Turkish Minister warns Tekel workers against provocations**

Thursday, 04 February 2010 08:58

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Tekel workers who have been on a hunger strike, gave a break and decided to wait for the government's offer.

Turkish Labor & Social Security Minister Omer Dincer said that workers would use their democratic rights and go on one one-day strike on Thursday.

Speaking to A.A on Wednesday about one-day nation wide strike to be held by workers, Dincer

expressed belief that the workers would hold their strike within scope of the legal system and by not violating others' rights.

Turkey's major confederation of labor and civil servant unions are going on a one-day nation wide strike on February 4 to extend support to Tekel (tobacco and alcoholic beverages monopoly) workers in protest of the government.

The negotiations between, Turk-Is, Turkey's largest federation of labor unions --representing the Tekel workers-- and the government have failed, when Premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan's offer failed to satisfy Turk-Is.

After the break up of negotiations, Turkey's major confederation of labor and civil servant unions, Turk-Is Hak-Is, DISK, Memur-Sen, Turkiye, Kamu-Sen and KESK, got together on Tuesday and decided to go on a one-day nation wide strike to warn the government.

Dincer said that Turkey was a democratic law state, and each part of the society had the right to express their demands, and thus, the workers wanted to use this right.

Dincer noted that the workers should act with common sense and they should not be agitated by provocations during the strike.

Workers from the privatized Tekel factories have been struggling for 50 days at a sit-down strike in Ankara to secure a transfer to other public institutions along with their employee rights and called for a general strike at a recent mass rally in Ankara.

Last week, following a meeting with Turk-Is Chairman Mustafa Kumlu, Premier Erdogan ordered two of his ministers to work on the issue and come up with a solution to the situation. Tekel workers who have been on a hunger strike, gave a break and decided to wait for the government's offer.

Kumlu said Turk-Is wanted the government to reemploy Turk-Is workers at other public institutions, noting that negotiations broke down due to a disagreement over how the workers would be reemployed.

The government offered to reemploy Tekel workers under 4-C contract, which means a partial loss of rights for the workers, the initial cause of the protests. However, the government promised to ameliorate the conditions of the contract with the new offer.

---

#### Thursday's strike ineffective, gov't stands firm on Tekel issue

05 February 2010, Friday

TODAY'S ZAMAN ANKARA

---

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on Thursday that the government will maintain its stance regarding the Tekel dispute and will not take a step back following a one-day strike which, observers argue, failed to be as successful as some of the unions anticipated.

Tekel workers have been protesting in Ankara since Dec. 15, demanding that the government find them positions in other public institutions in the wake of the privatization of the monopoly. Following a decision by labor unions on Tuesday to hold a strike on Feb. 4 in support of the workers dismissed from Tekel, Turkey's alcohol and tobacco monopoly, workers from different labor unions participated in demonstrations in the provinces of İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Edirne, Mersin, Batman, Denizli and Antalya.

In addition to the demonstrations, workers from some labor unions across Turkey either staged a work slowdown or did not showed up for work. The strike, which was to cripple public services, has dealt only a slight blow to daily life.

Speaking to reporters in Ankara on Thursday, Prime Minister Erdoğan said the government was determined not to step down in the Tekel dispute and asked Tekel workers “not be deceived by some provocations.” He reiterated that the Tekel protest was illegal and the government will have to use the police force to end the protest by the end of this month. Erdoğan pointed out that the protest was occupying one of Ankara’s busiest avenues. He noted that the government has paid approximately 4,500 Tekel workers their severance pay since the beginning of the year. Meanwhile, the Turkish Public Workers’ Labor Union (Kamu-Sen) and the Civil Servants Trade Union (Memur-Sen) announced early on Thursday that they would not participate in the strike but reiterated their support for the Tekel workers.

The unions, led by the Confederation of Turkish Labor Unions (Türk-İş), are expected to meet today to decide on future steps concerning the issue.

### **İzmir’s public transportation crippled**

The strike perhaps proved most effective in İzmir as most public transportation services were cancelled for the entire day. Transportation workers did not show up at work and residents of the city had difficulty getting to work from the early hours of the morning. People criticized the Greater İzmir Municipality for failing to take necessary measures to deal with the strike in advance. Service Sector Workers’ Union (Hizmet-İş) İzmir President Ramazan Turhan said people had difficulty to get to their workplaces and that the municipality was responsible for this. “They knew this was going to happen. They could at least have provided half of the public transportation services,” he argued. There was not a problem, however, with the city’s ferry and metro services. State railway workers in İzmir also supported the strike and some 1,000 workers did not show up for work on Thursday. With the exception of emergency service workers, the city’s health care employees also did not work on Thursday.

The governor’s offices in each province will start administrative inquiries on the public servants who participated in the strike and failed to show up to work on Thursday.

Few of Ankara’s metro services were cancelled. Residents of Ankara’s Batıkent district went to work on public buses.

In İstanbul, flights were not affected by the strike as workers from the Civil Aviation Workers’ Union (Hava-İş) went to work and there were no problems with services at İstanbul Atatürk Airport. On Wednesday, the union invited its members to support the strike. However, this was followed by a warning to the workers from the Turkish Airlines (THY) administration. THY said they would cancel the labor contracts of workers those who took part in the strike.

Meanwhile, workers at İstanbul’s Haydarpaşa and Sirkeci train stations did not participate in the strike. People were able to make use of train services as usual. Hasan Bektaş from United Transportation Employees’ Union (BTS) told reporters that “they were left to decide on their own” as to whether to participate in the strike. Accusing the labor union presidents of showing off, he said the unions had failed to address the problems of the Tekel workers, who have been continuing their protest for the past 53 days.

Demonstrations in İstanbul and Ankara ended with little trouble following some minor tension between the police and demonstrators.

Workers from the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers’ Unions (DİSK) and the Confederation of Public Sector Trade Unions (KESK) gathered in Kadıköy and later took the ferry to meet other workers on the European side of the city. Gathering at the Eminönü pier, the workers proceeded to Saraçhane Park to deliver a statement to the press. On their way to Saraçhane some 1,500 workers blocked traffic at the entry of Unkapanı Bridge and the police intervened to break up the crowd. Following a short clash between the police and the

demonstrators, the police retreated and workers continued on their way to their final destination. A group of workers and members of different unions and civil society organizations participated in a demonstration in Ankara's Kolej district. The police closed the area to traffic. Workers from Republican People's Party (CHP) headquarters also supported the Tekel strike and participated in the demonstrations.

Workers from the Union of Petroleum, Chemicals and Rubber Workers (Petrol-İş) in Batman gathered in front of their workplace and delivered a statement to the press. They later proceeded to the directorate's headquarters carrying billboards which read "We are all Tekel workers."

The strike also affected public services in Edirne, where workers at the special provincial administration, the Postal and Telecommunications General Directorate (PTT) and the State Waterworks Authority (DSİ) did not show up for work. Meanwhile, workers from Kamu-Sen left a demonstration in Mersin due to a last minute decision, saying the protest had "gone beyond its purpose." The decision came after a call by some of the demonstrators to march to Justice and Development Party (AK Party) Mersin headquarters.

### **Labor, employer unions mixed on Tekel strike**

In individual comments on the Tekel dispute on Thursday, representatives of labor and employer unions expressed mixed opinions about the one-day strike.

Speaking in front of the Türk-İş headquarters in Ankara, Türk-İş President Mustafa Kumlu called on the Prime Minister Erdoğan and ministers to visit Tekel workers in their tents. Tekel workers have been continuing their protest since Dec. 15, living in tents in front of Türk-İş headquarters on Sakarya Avenue, which is one of Ankara's busiest streets.

"Tekel workers, I congratulate you for your determination and faith during this honorable struggle. You have broken new ground with this 53-day protest and today all workers and public servants in Turkey, the whole nation, supports your dispute, underlining that the Tekel workers are right in their struggle. However, the government failed to understand this fact," Kumlu said. "We have started use our right not to vote, as granted by the Constitution," Kumlu told an Anatolia news agency correspondent. Kumlu said this strike was a serious warning and hoped the government would take it into consideration. In a message to government officials, the Türk-İş head said: "Please come here and witness these people's determination. I promise we will welcome you with applause." Kumlu thanked the workers and unions that supported the Tekel strike and reiterated once again that the government has to address this problem as soon as possible.

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Association (KOBİDER) President Nurettin Özgenç told reporters in İstanbul on Thursday that the unions' decision to stage a one-day strike was politically motivated and was far from protecting the workers' rights. He called on the Tekel workers not to let themselves be manipulated by some provocateurs who seek personal gain from the protests. "Some groups who remained deaf to workers' problems in the past are saying they support the Tekel workers today. This is nothing but hypocrisy and gaining benefit from the situation." Özgenç said the Tekel strike will only increase tensions at a time when the markets are suffering from a contraction in business.

Kamu-Sen President Bircan Akyıldız visited Tekel workers and said the union is committed to all efforts to stand by the workers. "The Tekel issue has turned into a symbol of the workers' struggle for their rights in Turkey."

DİSK President Süleyman Çelebi called on the citizens to show patience during the strike. "I ask our fellow citizens not to shop, travel or go to hospitals except for in emergency situations. We need to unite as a nation in solidarity."

---

## **TURKEY'S GROWING ECONOMY**

\$729 million from hazelnut exports

05 February 2010, Friday

TODAY'S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

---

One of the leading hazelnut producers in the world, Turkey exported 118,332 tons of hazelnuts in the first five months of the hazelnut export season, which starts on Sept. 1 of every year, yielding revenue of more than \$728.87 million

According to data from the Black Sea Hazelnut Products Exporters' Union, Turkey shipped hazelnuts to some 90 countries around the world. One quintal (100 kilograms) of shelled hazelnuts has been traded at approximately \$641 since the beginning of the season.

Between the months of September and January, 90,542 tons of hazelnuts were exported to European Union countries, while 12,394 tons of hazelnuts were shipped to European countries that are not members of the EU. Overseas countries bought 9,420 tons of hazelnuts from Turkey, and the remaining 5,976 tons were sent to other countries.

Turkey's hazelnut exports totaled 144,700 tons in the same period of last season, yielding \$710.7 million in revenue.

---

## **Turkish, Syrian state TVs to shoot documentaries**

Thursday, 04 February 2010 12:07

WORLD BULLETIN

---

Directors of TRT and the Syrian TV will shoot documentaries in each other's countries.

Turkish Radio Television's (TRT) tourism and documentary channel, which started broadcasting in October 2009, cooperates with the state televisions of the countries within its service area on the exchange of documentaries and tourism programs.

The channel has recently signed a preliminary protocol with the Syrian state TV on the preparation of a series of documentaries and competition programs.

Accordingly, directors of TRT and the Syrian TV will shoot documentaries in each other's countries.

Speaking to AA on the cooperation, director of TRT's documentary channel Hudayi Yilmazkan said that the channel aimed at entertaining the Turkish audience, as well as promoting Turkey's cultural and natural beauties to the world thanks to its broadcasts in 4 languages.

Yilmazkan said TRT desired to strengthen Turkey's image in the international arena by improving its relations with the broadcasters and relevant institutions of the countries in Turkey's coverage area.

Commenting on the documentaries to be shot by TRT's directors, Yilmazkan said a total of 4 documentaries would be prepared in Syria within the scope of the protocol.

Yilmazkan said the Syrian TV would provide all the infrastructural facilities and TRT's documentary channel would only send the directors.

The documentaries would focus on common cultural elements of Turkish and Syrian cultures, he added.

Yilmazkan said that TRT and the Syrian TV would also prepare and broadcast competition programs, winners of which would be awarded with one-week holidays in Turkey and Syria.

TRT's recently opened tourism & documentary channel broadcasts in English, German, French

and Russian languages in Europe, some part of the Central Asia, the Arab peninsula and north Africa.

---

Turkey's property market revived

Thursday, February 4, 2010

ANTALYA - Anatolia News Agency

HURRIYAT

---

Growth in the Turkish tourism sector has helped boost the tourism property market, according to Hüseyin Baraner, chairman of the Europe-Turkey Tourism Business Council.

The Turkish tourism sector has grown at an extraordinary speed, said Baraner. Ten years ago, only eight million tourists were visiting the country a year, he said, adding that that figure has reached 27 million. "This increase in the number of tourists has also revived the tourism property market."

Turkey's tourism property market has gained a lot of momentum, according to Baraner. That is partially due to the fact that there are more people who want to purchase hotels than those who want to sell, he said.

There are investors who are keeping a close eye on hotels that are located in some key regions, he said. "That is because if your hotel is a good, you will earn. Turkey has become an important address in the hotel business. After the crisis, Turkey has become one of the countries that grabbed the most interest with their tourism industries. Turkey has become a very effective player in tourism; therefore, foreign investors find Turkish hotels very attractive."

Following the economic crisis, tourism investors, operators and agencies have split into two groups, said Baraner. One group continues to invest in small hotels and turn them into luxury ones. The other group has given up on the industry completely, he added.

"We do not profit much. Tourism requires knowledge and expertise. Some think the competition in the sector has increased too much and they pull out of it," said Baraner. "From now on only those who really know the business will be involved in it. Investors who do not know about the sector will quit."

The increasing interest in Turkey's tourism sector has also helped revive the tourism property market, he said. Turkey's revived tourism property market has grown significantly. Investors from around the world, namely, from Europe, Russia, Kazakhstan and now Arab nations, are seeking to purchase hotels, Baraner said.

Antalya opens to the world

Turkey has been receiving the most demand when it comes to property in more than 100 sale points around Europe. The most popular location in Turkey is the Mediterranean city of Antalya, said Baraner. "Antalya sales keep afloat all the tour operators in Europe. Antalya has become the igniting power of European tourism markets," he said.

"If sales continue at such levels, then this will be the year that Antalya opens up to the world for the first time. That could help make the city one of the most important tourism centers of the world, instead of just being the most important tourism center in the Mediterranean basin," Baraner added.

---

Higher taxes, energy prices cause rise in Turkish inflation in January

Thursday, February 4, 2010

ISTANBUL — From wire dispatches

## TODAYS ZAMAN

---

Turkey's central bank said inflation accelerated in January because of tax increases and higher energy prices, as it had forecast on Jan. 26.

The bank repeated predictions that the rate will also rise in February because of the comparison with a year earlier, according to an e-mailed statement released from Ankara on Thursday.

The cigarette tax will boost inflation .2 points in February, the statement said. Energy and food prices will also be higher.

Core inflation figures will remain at low levels, the bank said.

---

### SOCIAL NEWS

#### Turkey's PM renews govt's determination to fight smoking

Thursday, 04 February 2010 15:45

WORLD BULLEWTIN

---

Erdogan expressed determination to continue his government's war against smoking.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed determination to continue his government's war against smoking, saying country's expanded smoking ban had been supported by a great majority of Turkish people.

At a meeting of Yesilay, a Turkish organization devoted to reduce alcohol and cigarette consumption, Erdogan said that 99 percent of Turkish people had respected the smoking ban in Turkey.

In July 2009, a law made it illegal to light up in all enclosed areas including bars, cafes and restaurants in Turkey.

Erdogan said that nearly 17 million Turkish people, around 25 percent of the population, were smokers. However, he said the law was supported by 95 percent of the people.

Erdogan also said that consumption of tobacco products declined after the ban took effect.

"Cigarette sales have been coming down since July 2009. During the period between July and November, Turkey has seen its lowest cigarette consumption over the past five years," he said.

"Sales have dropped by 10 percent during this period when compared to the same period of 2007. Turkish people have spent 1.1 billion TL less for cigarettes."

Restaurant owners have been complaining about the ban and they had demands from the government to soften it.

But Erdogan was resolute to continue the ban. He said some people complained to him that their shops were on the brink of crash.

"I can not accept such things. If so many shops had been closed, more than those have started," he said.

---

#### 'Museum of Innocence' withdraws from 2010 culture capital

Thursday, February 4, 2010

ISTANBUL - Hürriyet Daily News

---

Due to claims of "plundering" the agency responsible for financing projects, Turkey's Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk has withdrawn his "Museum of Innocence" project from 2010 Istanbul Capital of Culture.

The 2010 agency's president, Şekib Avdagiç, criticized the claims, which said Pamuk's \$2.5 million exhibit in the Çukurcuma district was going to be paid for by the 2010 culture capital agency.

Avdagiç said the agency committed only 750,000 Turkish liras to the project. "The rest would be met by the Museum of Innocence Foundation, which Pamuk founded in February 2009," he said, adding that they were very sad Pamuk withdrew his project.

"It was a very significant project for us. We attached great importance to it. Seventy percent of the project would already be met by the foundation. We planned to give just 750,000 liras, but it has been called 'plunder.' I called Pamuk and talked to him for 25 minutes. I barely persuaded him to stay on, but when articles against him appeared in the newspapers again, he completely abandoned the project. We are helpless," said Avdagiç.

The process that caused Pamuk to withdraw his "Museum of Innocence" project from culture capital activities started when there were negative articles about financing for culture capital projects. Those, who receive finance for their project were claimed to "plunder" the agency. As a result, Pamuk decided to withdraw the museum project from the agency.

The first installment of money was paid for the project, but Pamuk said it would be paid back with interest.

---

### Snow halts ferry lines, flights and traffic in Turkey

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

ISTANBUL – Daily news with wires

HURRIYAT

---

Ferries working between Istanbul and nearby cities on the shores of the Marmara Sea canceled services Wednesday because of snow and adverse weather conditions, Doğan news agency reported. Also, some flights to and from Turkey were canceled.

Sea traffic on the Bosphorus was limited to one direction and ferry services to Yalova, Armutlu, Bursa and Bandırma were canceled. Snow locked up traffic across Istanbul on Tuesday evening as well. Many people reported that their commute home took three to four hours, according to the Doğan news agency. There were also several car accidents with material damage. Highway directorate units and municipalities worked through the night to keep roads open.

Snow is expected to continue Thursday along with Black Sea coast and central Anatolia, although at a lighter rate. The storm in the Black Sea region is estimated to go on, reported private news site NTVMSNBC. The eastern and northeastern provinces of Gümüşhane, Bayburt, Erzurum, Kars, Artvin and Rize are expected to receive the heaviest snow. Many villages are likely to be cut off from provincial centers and the threat of avalanche will likely increase. Temperatures are expected to rise in western Anatolia over the weekend, but the cold will continue to grip the eastern end of the country.

Planes grounded by weather

Some domestic and international flights from Turkish airports and from abroad to Turkey were canceled due to the bad weather conditions.

Istanbul's Atatürk Airport survived with only some delays due to de-icing efforts, but some airports in Anatolia and abroad decided the weather conditions were too dangerous for flights.

---

### COMMENTARY

Ankara seems favoring Tehran in the nuke issue

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

MEHMET ALİ BİRAND

HURRIYAT

-----  
I want to have your attention to some other issues today because we have had enough with the usual. Let me share you a matter that I've been searching for long and that I've finally reached a conclusion. It is Turkey's approach to Iran. What do we see from the outside?

We see that President Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan are trying to have good relations with Iran in general, and have the two countries closer. Yes, this is right. Turkey is favoring Iran and exerting special efforts for rapprochement. However, there is this nuclear side of the story.

Iran enhances its nuclear energy program. The western world believes this is not simply limited with nuclear energy policy. The West using Iran's general approach, statements of its leaders and their track records asserts that Iran is actually trying to have nuclear arms. And concerns are spreading.

Israel and therefore the United States take the lead in such concerns. What is Turkey's approach? Again as we see from the outside Turkish leaders have sympathy for Iran in the nuclear issue. Conversations, photographs or TV images depict Turkish leaders arm-in-arm with their Iranian counterparts and hugging each other.

Mr. Prime Minister draws attention to Israel's possession of nuclear arms instead of warning Iran, and brings nuclear disarmament of the region to the fore. He's acting as if he is misleading. This is the perception of international community.

Therefore, the outside world is criticizing the Turkish government. The number of skeptics against Ankara's approach to this particular subject is especially increasing in Israel and the U.S. "If Erdoğan were to call Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinajad 'my friend' rather than 'my brother,' no one will be suspected. But that causes others to worry," says a top-level officials at the U.S. State Dept. This is a typical example how the world sees Turkey-Iran relations.

All right, does Turkey really not care about Iran's possession of nuclear arms? Is Turkey not buying the claims that Iran is having nuclear arms because it simply has faith in the Iranian leaders?

But Turkey seriously warns Iran

I agree with people who are disturbed by Turkey's attitude toward Iran, which seems as if it supports the Iranian nuclear program. I don't say that Iran has such intentions. I also accept remarks of the Iranian leaders. Still I have my reservations. History is full of similar examples that countries like Iran gave promises to do something but acted differently.

Now let's forget about if Iran indeed has such intentions but look into "how and whom Iran could affect and if it becomes a nuclear power." Official policy in Ankara is that Iran in no way should possess any nuclear power. And the main reason is that Iran in no way will be able to hit Israel because if Iran uses a possible nuclear bomb then Jerusalem will disappear. None of the Iranian leaders can push the button to wipe out one of the most sacred places of the Islamic world.

On the other hand, Iran may use this incredibly "deterrent" power in hand against other Sunni countries in the region. It will not hit Muslim countries but may try imposition as a country having nuclear power.

Sunni states in the region, primarily Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Gulf countries, are frightened by Shiite expansionism of Iran. And Turkey is clearly disturbed by this too.

Perhaps Ankara doesn't reflect anything outside but in official conversations openly warns Iran as a friend. This is what I've heard. I talked to sources who personally attended or are officially involved in such talks.

I was told that "Mr. Prime Minister and President Gül said told Iranian leaders, 'If you want to have Ankara as your enemy, produce nuclear arms ... We take your word. However, countries in the region are disturbed by developments, you should know this.'"

And Ankara has taken some actions, too. Top officials are cooperating with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Gulf states against Shiite expansionism of Iran. Most of the talks in meetings revolve around this very subject.

I was relieved with this information I obtained. Still, I remember disappointments in the international arena, so I say let's be prudent.

---

### Deepening US-Turkish business ties through online social networks

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

LIAM HARDY

HURRIYAT

---

Business professionals know the importance of building a large professional network. Opportunities and referrals are most often found through contacts. In recent years, the phenomenon of online social networking has made establishing business relations easier and more practical than ever before.

The most successful Turkish and American businessmen and women thrive at developing their networks, but cooperation with each other has traditionally occurred only at top levels.

Successful examples of U.S.-Turkish joint ventures include partnerships between Koç Holding and Ford Motors, Borusan Holding and Caterpillar, Sabancı Holding and Citigroup and others. But when it comes to networking among U.S. and Turkish mid-level and small businesses, there is much room for improvement.

Turks and Americans have both embraced online social networking. In fact, citizens of Turkey are the second largest group of users of the social networking site Facebook.com after citizens of the United States.

Although Facebook is primarily used for social networking among friends, a simple search for "Türkiye iş" (Turkey business) brings up 1,300 results for groups. A similar search for "Turkey business" in English brings up 650 group results, such as "Business in Turkey" (275 members) and "Turkey Business Network" (35 members). Group members use the site to post news and advertisements and participate in discussions.

Facebook is useful for tapping into new networks, but it can be insufficient for creating those personal connections that sometimes lead to sustained cooperation. Normally such relationships develop only after meeting another professional face-to-face. A platform that allows such face-to-face interaction and has developed in the U.S. but has yet to make major inroads in Turkey is the social networking site Meetup.com.

While Facebook's emphasis is on social networking among friends, the focus of Meetup is on getting members to meet in person to discuss specific interests. These interests might pertain to anything from flying a kite to learning a language, and in the United States the site has become a popular tool for business strategy and networking.

One must be in the same vicinity of a group to participate in meetings but one can be a member from anywhere, and most groups will encourage visitors from out of town to attend “meetups.” Meetup groups can offer an excellent way to meet other business professionals who are simply visiting a place as well as professionals who have worked in a certain area for their entire careers. Jobseekers might also benefit from developing such new contacts at meetings. While Istanbul has a few Meetup groups, other cities in Turkey simply require new organizers with the initiative to start them. Be warned, however, that starting a group requires a small monthly fee. Often, group members pay small fees to attend meetings while groups obtain sponsorships from local restaurants or cafes to cover the cost. In addition to Facebook and Meetup, the site LinkedIn.com also allows people to keep up with other professionals. In fact, this site has a focus on fostering professional relationships and allowing individuals to control their professional identities online. Much like Facebook, one can create profiles and join groups through LinkedIn, but unlike Meetup, these groups do not frequently meet face-to-face. While the U.S. and Turkey each have deep trade networks with Europe, the two countries unfortunately do not have strong business ties with each other. The trade volume between the U.S. and Turkey grew to over \$16 billion in 2008, but this remains paltry in terms of the total trading volume of each country. However, Turkey draws a lot of tourists every year from the U.S. and sends a lot of students every year to the U.S. In order to deepen professional networks, tourists and students ought to take advantage of the online social networking opportunities that are available. The two countries’ markets have great potential to become more interconnected, and online networking sites can do much to help.

---

To shoot oneself

Thursday, February 4, 2010

MİTHAT MELEN

HURRIYAT

---

Both the world economy and the economy in Turkey are in a deep quagmire. On the one hand, we are defending the market economy, but on the other hand, the share of the public sector in GDP is constantly increasing.

Even in the U.S., which is the leading country of the market economy, this share has almost reached 50 percent. Financial institutions that were bailed out by President Obama last year received a serious blow when the administration decided to increase taxes.

Obama had bailed out leading financial institutions last year following the mortgage crisis by transferring billions of dollars of public funds to bankrupt banks. I am sure the American taxpayer was deeply offended when he heard that the money he paid in taxes was being transferred to the vaults of irresponsible bankers.

It is completely contradictory to the market economy when you distribute fish instead of teaching how to fish. But the U.S. Congress, in consensus, decided to hurry and save the markets. Europe followed suit. Today in both the U.S. and Europe, the economic structure seems to be under the control of the public sector.

All politicians are terrified of social unrest created by unemployment and political and economic instability. To stop the threat of unemployment means to spend public resources in abundance.

This is an open secret. All political parties that one day come to power in Turkey inflate public

cadres with their own supporters, disregarding their capacities. By doing this, they calculate that they will increase their votes.

Two essential elements for economic growth are investment and consumption. As an example, if a government increases imports, consumers are encouraged to spend more and the economy receives a rejuvenating shot. Governments can increase investments by increasing tax revenues. Dealing with taxes is like holding a gun in your hand. If you pull the trigger several times, you may skip your target; if you loosen the trigger, you may not be able to hit your target. If you really want to hit the target, you have to be very careful.

You may not like the phrase “to hold a gun.” Actually, it is dangerous to carry a gun with you. If you don’t know how to use it, you may even shoot yourself with it. This is why the first thing you have to do is not tackle taxes as if they were guns.

The most important task of a government is to open the way for markets and create a balance between expenditures and revenues. If there is a deficit in your current accounts, this means there is an imbalance between your expenditures and revenues. If you cannot economize, then you are not able to invest. If you cannot control the increase in expenditures and consumption, this will mean you will have to get more foreign loans.

Looking at the matter from this perspective, you will see that in the East, there is more investment and less consumption, whereas in the West it is vice versa. As an example, 70 percent of the U.S. economy is based on consumption, whereas in China it is exactly half of that – 35 percent. Americans consume in abundance, but China is very frugal with its consumption. This fact shows that China is investing for future plans. To invest in future generations is a perfectly acceptable project. But China wanting to create her own world hegemony in the future is another matter and can be considered a threat.

Almost two-thirds of the EU budget is spent on financial assistances to member countries. On the one hand, the European structure defends the free movement of products, capital and workforce according to the Rome Agreement, but on the other hand, local politicians are opening the purse strings for local political consumption for increasing votes.

We are in a period where the notions of productivity and effectiveness have been forgotten, the Lisbon Convention has been shelved and the amount of financial assistance is constantly increasing due to the global economic crisis.

You may ask me, what will happen in the world? Will the free-market economy and globalization become history and will another new order be introduced to the world? Or, much more important, are we going to say: “We are making everybody happy by increasing the public share in the GDP. This is real democracy, and what are states for anyway?”

It is essential that academics take up the issue and debate more because politicians don't know what to do and have become helpless in their awareness that things are not going in the right way.

---

### Spinning the bridge between East and West

Thursday, February 4, 2010

BURAK BEKDIL

HURRIYAT

---

After years of forced exposure to the ultra-boring rhetoric that “Turkey is a bridge between the West and East,” I was feeling a little bit relaxed over the sudden disappearance of the bridge talk.

I thought world leaders had realized the risks of mass fainting in conference rooms if they opted for this wording.

I was wrong.

Some things are better left unsaid. But the bridge talk apparently did not fall into that category. If it wasn't for the supreme diplomatic machine called the British Foreign Service, I might have been tempted to think that British diplomats were too busy to draft a better speech for Foreign Secretary David Miliband's appearance at an Istanbul conference that brought together Afghanistan's neighbors – with the exception of one, India – and that is understandable, given the minor size and importance of the country.

Mr. Miliband joined the queue of extremely boring statesmen when he said that Turkey could assume a bridging role in regional diplomacy. A visiting official's politeness is always nice. And yes, Turkey is progressing rapidly toward Western democratic standards, especially when we recall that to think is not yet illegal in Turkey.

I am sure Mr. Miliband has a small army of advisers who may remind him that the famous bridge leans too visibly on its Eastern leg, rather than Western. But ironically, it was the story of an Englishman that surfaced more or less on the same day as the foreign secretary praised Turkey with not-so-veiled references to its democratic credentials.

Michael Dickinson, an English artist who has been living and working in Turkey for 20 years, has been convicted of mocking Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan by portraying him as a dog in an artwork. Mr. Dickinson now faces jail after refusing to pay a fine imposed by an Istanbul court “because he thinks it would be unfair to pay for an act that was not a crime.” Mr. Miliband may or may not convince Mr. Dickinson to pay the fine and enjoy living in a critical bridge country that will one day bring civilization to both ends of the East-West super highway. But I am not sure if Mr. Miliband's bridge rhetoric can convince the European judiciary to twist and corrupt facts and figures. In 2009, for instance, Turkey maintained its title as the country with the highest number of convictions from the European Court of Human Rights, with 341 rulings, leaving behind a larger and “autocratic” country like Russia. In terms of convictions between 1959 and 2009, Turkey also remains the unchallenged champion, with still 13,000 more cases pending.

Recently the European court found Turkey to be in serious violation of press freedoms. In two separate cases, the court ruled that Turkey violated freedom of speech laws when it suspended five newspapers and sentenced a magazine editor to prison over an article criticizing prison brutality. Mind you, this is happening in Mr. Erdoğan's democratic Turkey, not in another Turkey run by generals. A prison sentence for criticizing prison brutality! I imagine Mr. Miliband might have an explanation for that: Well, the judges must have wished to convince the editor by sending him to jail and thus allowing him to witness himself that there is no prison brutality.

But none of these examples of “democratic Turkish practices” can compare with the case of journalist Nedim Sener. Unfortunately, assuming that he is living in a country in the shape of a bridge with one leg sitting on Western democratic values, Mr. Sener was too unfortunate to write a book revealing his story, being entirely based on official documents, systematic abuse of authority and (deliberate) negligence during the events that led to the murder of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. The book accuses both the police and the gendarmerie of mishandling intelligence that, if it had been acted upon properly, may have prevented the murder.

Presently Mr. Sener is standing before two trials and faces a combined prison term of more than 32 years. Theoretically, Mr. Sener could get a heavier sentence than Mr. Dink's murderer and his accomplices. Funny? Well, accidents can happen on well-built bridges, too. But death is inevitable and sad, is it not?

As Brooke Shields, one of the greatest thinkers of our time, once put it, "If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life."

---

The EU paints itself into a corner in Cyprus

Thursday, February 4, 2010

Semih Idiz

HURRIYAT

---

Granted, it is not the most exciting or interesting of international disputes – except for those who are directly concerned or involved, of course. But U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's visit to Cyprus last weekend has turned world attention to the problem once again, even if only momentarily.

Judging by the press coverage of the visit, however, it seems that few people, if any, are holding their breath for an early breakthrough to the Cyprus problem that has defied all attempts at settlement to date.

Ban himself made it clear on arriving on the island that he was "under no illusion that the Cyprus problem is easy to solve or about the difficulties that you face," even if he did go on to say he was still confident "a solution was possible and within reach."

There is some news from the south of the island, to the effect that the Greek Cypriot government has accepted some Turkish demands for the power-sharing formula that presidents Talat and Christofias are currently trying to hammer out in a series of intensified talks.

Past experience, nevertheless, tells us that caution is the best approach in the face of such news concerning Cyprus. Nowhere is it more apparent that "the opera does not end until the fat lady sings," as the saying goes, than in Cyprus. In short, "the fat lady has not sung" on Cyprus yet, and, to be honest, it is not even clear if there is a fat lady in this case.

All that is known is that there is a deadline of sorts, namely April 18, when the Turkish northern part of the island goes for presidential elections, and is expected to elect hardliner Derviş Eroğlu, if one is to go by the polls being conducted.

The fear is that Eroğlu, who is known as someone who favors a division of the island and much closer ties with Turkey, will scuttle whatever headway presidents Talat and Christofias have managed to make to date. Whether Eroğlu will be that free to act as he wants, however, is a wide open question.

In fact, it is very unlikely that he will have enough political clout to overcome any resistance from Ankara to his resistance in the Cyprus talks. In other words, his actions will ultimately be guided by what Ankara says, given that northern Cyprus is dependent on Turkey for just about everything.

What will therefore determine the future of the Cyprus talks after the Turkish Cypriot presidential elections will be Ankara's position, more than what Eroğlu may say or do. What will work to Eroğlu's advantage, however, is that there is little reason at the present time for Turkey to put the Cyprus question on a fast track for a settlement.

Ankara, of course, argues that any settlement must be worked out very carefully to ensure it does not lead the island to another crisis, or series of crises, such as the ones that culminated in the

events of 1974. It says that what is more important is a good agreement, rather than a bad agreement that is hurried through for political reasons.

Ankara has also made it clear in various ways that any “threat” or “enticement” coming from Europe for it to act on Cyprus, in order to thus enhance its EU prospects, simply does not provide any incentive to make it hurry. Professor Ludger Kühnhardt from the political science department at the University of Bonn puts the reasons for this in bland and succinct terms in a recent piece he wrote on the topic.

Kühnhardt, who also heads the Center for European Integration Studies, or ZEI, wrote the following in the December edition of the center’s EU-Turkey Monitor:

“As long as many in the EU are hoping that EU membership negotiations with Turkey will not lead to membership, the EU can not expect Turkey to hope that moving on Cyprus will lead to a better reputation or even to faster EU membership. As long as the Republic of Cyprus can insist on unanimity in EU foreign-policy making, the EU as a whole can hardly become an honest broker in the process of resolving the Cyprus issue.”

When looked at from another angle, these remarks also make something else very clear.

Something, that is, which cannot be much to the liking of the Greek Cypriot side. The Greek Cypriot government’s hold over the EU, in blocking Ankara’s EU path, in fact makes it less likely there will be a settlement any time soon, not more likely.

Put another way, both the EU’s carrots and the Greek Cypriots’ sticks are simply not big enough to make Ankara budge on Cyprus at the present time – beyond, that is, what is necessary as a minimum diplomatic requirement.

The fact that the EU has not been able to come up with a fair and honest formula for Turkish Cypriots, who endorsed the EU-supported Annan Plan rejected by the Greek Cypriots at the time, simply aggravates the problem, of course.

This only confirms to the Turkish side that the EU is not, and cannot be an honest player in Cyprus. That role remains with the U.N. Security Council and its key members; namely the United States, Russia and Great Britain – which is also a “Guarantor Power” for Cyprus.

The problem, however, is that there is very little incentive for these powers to force a Cyprus settlement at the present time, because the current status quo is not the cause of any tangible instability in the eastern Mediterranean. These powers say they want a solution as soon as possible, of course, but their actions belie their words.

The ultimate irony here is that the EU is the one side that really needs a settlement today because of the problems it imported into the union by admitting only the Greek Cypriot side (i.e. the side that spoiled the chances for a settlement in 2003) as a full member. Yet it has become part of the problem itself, delaying, and perhaps even preventing, the very settlement it needs.

Professor Kühnhardt also points to this when he indicates that “Cyprus is the one dilemma the EU has intentionally aggravated by accepting the EU membership of the Republic of Cyprus.”

He concludes by saying that “the EU as a whole is not in the position to impose its normative philosophy on Turkey as long as its strategic interests can be vetoed by the Republic of Cyprus.”

Given this overall picture, it appears that the EU is the side that has really painted itself into a corner here. It is now faced with a very difficult situation that will need all the diplomatic prowess of her new “foreign minister” to get out of – extremely difficult, if not impossible, as this may seem.

---

From the Bosphorus: Straight - When dogma imperils diplomacy

Thursday, February 4, 2010

## HURRIYAT

---

When the roles of judicial, diplomatic and political authorities blur, the result is problematic. This will be amply demonstrated in coming days in the news involving Turkey, Armenia and Switzerland.

As readers know, we support the position of the Turkish government and many others that the nature of the events before and leading up to 1915, a time of nationalist slaughter throughout the collapsing Ottoman Empire, should be discussed as part of the normalization process between our two countries. Whether the word “genocide” is a legitimate part of the discussion is something with which we have no quarrel. But given the highly charged nature of the issue, as well as other matters including complex legal questions related to the fact the relevant law on the matter was promulgated in 1948, we support the argument that this should come at the end of the normalization process. Not on opening day. We have also noted, to the discern of many readers holding diverse perspectives, our view that historians are generally converging toward a common view of the facts of this important history. Increasingly, the greater disputes are over the question of what the facts mean. Do they add up to “genocide”? We think not. But we are neither historians nor legal scholars. That’s why we strongly support the creation of a historical commission by the two countries that can examine these questions authoritatively.

Which takes us to the matter of dogma. The encyclopedia definition: “Dogma is the established belief or doctrine by a religion, ideology or any kind of organization: it is authoritative and not to be disputed, doubted or diverged from.”

Like most journalists, we are not fond of dogma. We have long shared the concern that when national legislatures, or other institutions, venture into the making of historical conclusion, the result is dogma. And dogma is inflexible.

The reason the Turkish-Armenian protocols are now in trouble is that the Armenian Constitutional Court has trumped the proposed work of the envisioned commission. It has stated that “genocide” is not up for discussion, that the ratification process cannot proceed if such is in the cards. Hoping to retrieve the negotiations, the Turkish government is seeking the support of the Swiss diplomats who facilitated the protocol agreement last year. A Turkish ambassador was on his way to Bern yesterday on this mission.

This is good diplomacy. But it is about to encounter dogma. For the Swiss Parliament has made questioning the term “genocide” a crime. It has made it dogma. Next week, three Turks will be on trial for this crime. Will the envoy’s request for Swiss mediation be a crime? If the Swiss Foreign Ministry helps, will it be in violation of its own national law?

We don’t know. But we do know that this is why we don’t like dogma.

---

### Turkey to the European Union’s rescue

05 February 2010, Friday

JEAN-PIERRE LEHMANN\* LAUSANNE

TODAYS ZAMAN

---

The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference was an unmitigated disaster for the European Union. Instead of the EU claiming center stage, as its leaders assumed it would, the key actors were the United States, Brazil, South Africa, India and China. Indeed, when the accord was reached, the EU was not

even in the room. Copenhagen exposed the demise of Europe not only as a global power, but even as a global arbiter.

So what is the EU left with? As its “hard power” ebbs, its “soft power,” as illustrated by the Copenhagen summit, seems to be very weak. This in part arises from a failure to provide the EU with political power.

The Lisbon Treaty was a compromise constitutional arrangement that would nevertheless give the EU greater weight and authority precisely for occasions such as the Copenhagen summit, when global issues are addressed. Though multiple European actors on the world stage were more than justified in the old days, this is no longer the case. With China, India, the US, Indonesia, Brazil and other major global players speaking with one voice, Europe could no longer afford a cacophony of voices.

But in Copenhagen, the structure established by the Lisbon Treaty failed. Can anyone even recall what the EU’s new president said there? Indeed, can anyone even remember his name? (It is Herman von Rompuy, in case you were wondering.)

Beyond the failure in Copenhagen, the EU has several other problems. It tends to be perceived globally as supercilious, petulant and prim. Its know-it-all attitude grates almost everywhere. With only 7 percent of the world’s population (and rapidly dwindling) and composed mainly of post-industrial low-growth economies, the EU is increasingly seen as marginal. Europeans do not realize how little interest in “European affairs” there is in Seoul, Sydney, São Paulo or San Francisco. There is a growing general global consensus that Europe is a pompous old has-been. There are many causes for the decline of the EU’s global position and prestige, one of which has been the way in which the union has evolved as an aloof and bureaucratic citadel. This is unfortunate, because, despite its problems, the EU does have much to offer. But there seems little prospect for a European revival. The EU will continue to decline and become increasingly marginalized as it fails to find the spirit or the structure to adjust to the profound transformations and challenges of the 21st century.

There is one thing, however, that could revive the EU, give it much enhanced global respectability and make it an “interesting” place as well as ensure a return to the international limelight: Turkey’s admission as a full member.

The debate about whether Turkey is European is absurd. It is impossible to airbrush Turkey out of European history. Apart from being an integral part of Europe, membership for Turkey, with its young and dynamic population, would provide a great fillip for Europe’s aging demographic profile.

In a highly complex and diverse world, the EU stands out for its homogeneity. While the EU flatters itself on diversity, it is in fact one of the least diverse regions of the world. There is more ethnic diversity in, say, Malaysia than in the entire EU. ASEAN as a whole, with a population of 580 million, is not significantly bigger than the EU (with 500 million), yet it encompasses an infinitely greater degree of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity.

With Turkey as a member, the EU would gain legitimacy as a more “normal” world region. By admitting Turkey, with the world’s fifth-largest Muslim population (after Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India), the EU would be in a position to establish close ties with the world’s 1.8 billion Muslims and could become a credible voice on reform within the Islamic world. Turkish membership in the union would also greatly ease the assimilation of the EU’s own Muslim minorities.

EU lethargy and growing irrelevance in global public affairs owes much to Eurocentric political atavism. One potential benefit of the Copenhagen debacle could be that it forces the union to wake up to the new world of the 21st century.

An EU with Turkey as a member would be far better situated to meet today's challenges than an EU without Turkey. But, unfortunately, Turkey, like much of the rest of the world, is rather turned off by the EU. Indeed, now it is the union that will need to seduce the Turkish people, rather than the other way around.

That seduction should begin this year, with an agenda that sets the process and timeframe for accession, to be followed by an EU-Turkey Treaty that confirms the country's accession by 2020.

*\* Jean-Pierre Lehmann is a professor of international political economy and the founding director of the Evian Group at the IMD Business School. © Project Syndicate 2010*

---

### Discrimination

BÜLENT KENEŞ

[b.kenes@todayszaman.m](mailto:b.kenes@todayszaman.m)

05 February 2010, Friday

TODAYS ZAMAN

---

A few months ago, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew said in comments on US-based CBS television that as Orthodox Greeks they felt from time to time as if they were being crucified in Turkey; his comments sparked a massive debate.

Looking at new debates that were on the agenda in Turkey this week, we can easily say now that not just the esteemed patriarch and his congregation but even the prime minister sometimes feels crucified in this country.

As you know, while answering journalists' questions during a television program last Sunday, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan explained how his wife, Emine Erdoğan, was prevented by military doctors from visiting a sick patient -- visits that occupy a nearly sacred place in Turkish custom and tradition -- at the Gülhane Military Academy of Medicine (GATA) solely because she wears a headscarf. According to what was said, three years ago Erdoğan had wanted to pay a sick bed visit to theater actor Nejat Uygur at GATA, but Uygur's wife, pressured by military authorities, helplessly requested that Erdoğan not come to the hospital but that they instead meet outside.

If the prime minister's wife, or viewed differently, the peak of this country's political will, is able to fall victim to inhumane and dishonorable discrimination, then imagine the extent to which discrimination can reach in Turkey, a country that we're struggling to make a better democracy. But know this -- what Emine Erdoğan experienced was not the first, nor the last. Perhaps it would be of benefit here to recall the low-blow discrimination that Abdullah Gül faced after being elected president due to his wife's headscarf. We all remember the strange and pitiful situations created by generals and other high-level military officers during sendoff ceremonies both in Turkey and abroad with their embarrassing, absurd attempts to run off or hide in order to avoid greeting first lady Hayrünisa Gül or shaking her hand. Even today, the fact that on all national holidays and other celebrations, receptions and other events hosted by the presidency are held twice just to please the generals is a sign of how high the military-based discrimination has

climbed. If there is a need for events and receptions hosted by the president to be held once with no spouses invited to prevent those headscarf-wearing wives of the prime minister, other ministers, deputies and civil society representatives from attending and another time to ensure democratic and diverse civilian participation -- this is a great shame that belongs to none other than the generals who always view themselves as above the rest of society. And this is how they will shamefully enter the history books.

At the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) meeting the other day, Erdoğan once again felt the need to touch upon the same topic, saying that because he didn't want to create any tension, he waited three years to bring up the topic of his wife's denied entrance to GATA. "I've experienced many things. I've shared them with the necessary entities. But the country can't yet handle it if I were to talk about everything we've been through. Could we not have pursued the issue? We could have, but instead I just had to endure my wife's tears," the prime minister said, emphasizing that after he left politics he would be able to write about their experiences. Just think, if even the prime minister and president of a country have fallen and continue to fall victim to extreme discrimination, to what extent do everyday citizens of that country face discrimination?

So what is the source of this horrible discrimination that brings together the patriarch, president, prime minister and millions of citizens living in this country from different religious and ethnic backgrounds over "being a victim"? Why is it that this inhumane and primitive thing cannot be overcome? Why is it that those who sign off on discrimination at the highest levels are always profiting and going unpunished? How much longer are we supposed to tolerate this fascist mentality that belittles and views as despicable the pious, the Alevis, the Kurds, the Romas, the minorities of every religion and ethnicity? For how much longer must the people be patient in the face of this graceless extortion of the shared public spaces by this crooked, twisted mentality in the institutions that owe their existence to the taxes we pay and the manpower we ensure?

Why does this country lack legislation that calls for heavy sanctions against all forms of discrimination and hate crimes, as in all modern democracies? Why are young women who wear headscarves continuing to fall victim to humiliation at university gates, headscarved patients at the doors to some hospitals and headscarf-wearing mothers, sisters and wives of soldiers at the entrance to barracks? Why aren't Kurds as Kurds, Alevis as Alevis, Armenians with their Armenian identities, minorities with their own beliefs and lifestyles and religious people without having to hide their beliefs accepted as equal and respected individual citizens of this country? The reason is quite clear. While some can unabashedly accuse a prime minister -- who can't even protect his own wife from discrimination, who despite having the will and a parliamentary majority can't implement libertarian reforms that this country needs as much as air and water, who can't make the slightest change to the despotic Constitution, which is a remnant of the Sept. 12, 1980 military coup -- of staging a "civilian coup" or establishing a civilian "dictatorship," it is more than clear and obvious where the real "coup d'etat" is, when one looks at the higher judiciary, military, the Constitution and at how this dictatorship, at whose center are military officers, higher bureaucrats and senior judges, was made permanent.

Come, let's set aside the two-faced, fake democrats and their artificial civilian coup nonsense, and let's support all together the reforms that will dig up the roots of the actual dictatorial regime.

---

Başbuğ's difficult task -- or historic duty  
YAVUZ BAYDAR

While everything else changes, the Turkish Armed Forces [TSK], too, will have to change. If it doesn't, it is left out of the loop of developments. You cannot resist this. And you don't have to fear these things."

It is Hilmi Özkök, who served as chief of General Staff during what may be Turkey's most critical stage of transition between 2002 and 2005, speaking. He is in the spotlight because of what he had to go through with a series of coup plans while on duty. He has not denied the existence of the constant desire among his staff to stage a coup or an illegal act to unseat the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government. He has already given his testimony to the civilian prosecutors, and he is keen that justice be brought to those generals and other high-ranking officers who kept Turkey on a knife's edge for many years.

Meanwhile, his successor, İlker Başbuğ, clarifies some of the doubts as to what is really going on behind the thick, closed doors in Ankara. In an interview with the Hürriyet daily, the top commander said he supports the government's plans to abolish the much-debated Protocol on Cooperation for Security and Public Order (EMASYA), which is an agreement on holding public order between the Interior Ministry and the army, which has kept the country under constant threat of emergency rule. A couple of days ago, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan implied on a TV program that he was having communication in good faith with Başbuğ and, most probably, his top brass.

And EMASYA was abolished yesterday.

To respond to the ever-vital question "What is really going on?" one must take into consideration the reality inside the triangle designed by these three remarks. The clock is ticking, as it seems in an irreversible manner, for severely restricting the military tutelage, if not ending it altogether. Despite the attempts by ill-intentioned, manipulative segments of the media, the current stage of the thorny transition to democracy tells us of a negotiation at the top level. The generals in responsible positions understand that their superiority over civilian politics and the rule of law has come to the end of the road. The pressures in the name of an open society, which come from below, have become unbearable. We may conclude, too, that the political arm wrestling under the threat of guns is nearly over: The military has been forced to realize that it has been unable to "bend" the will of the ruling party, contrary to its predecessors. A new type of politician emerged in Turkey, decided on talking the language of the people on the street, albeit slightly disoriented on long-term strategies, keen on not playing the game, whose rules have been "owned" by the four-star generals.

From now on, how this transition stage will be managed is the key issue. Başbuğ serves until August. The general, intellectually, very seriously and rather open-mindedly engaged in major matters of Turkey, has had a very stormy period for the institution he leads. Inside, he realizes that Turkey has been caught firmly by global developments, that delaying problems by asserting the mechanisms of military tutelage no longer has any effect; on the contrary, the resistance to change will shuffle Turkey into the well of huge problems. His expressed anger reflects the angst within the institution and is probably aimed at calming the tension there.

There is no doubt about the historic character of this stage of Turkey. The freedom dominating the press has allowed all of us promoting democracy and the rule of law to challenge all the taboos and to manage. But, after all, good journalists only follow, not "lead" or be part of, policy

making. So, in order for the transition to further go smoothly, Başbuğ must have understood, too, that most of the criticism directed at the military is done with good intentions.

The top brass of the army will slowly realize that there are only a few people, debating in the public domain, who are hostile to their key institution. Their over-defensive attitude, or fierce counterattacks, did not pay off well because, apparently, large parts of society feel relieved by the calls for a lawful, accountable, open, no longer privileged/patronizing military, which will have to focus on its real duty and modernize its outdated educational system. It is, therefore, vital that Başbuğ further develop his constructive cooperation with the head of the government, even encourage him to take bold steps. Until now eyes of the main part of the opposition were on how the top command would respond to civilian attempts to launch investigation after investigation into the dark, deeply corrupt segments of the army. Despite the outbursts, Başbuğ proved he is a legalist and let his officers be subjected to legal scrutiny. This may be very helpful in “reorienting” the Republican People’s Party (CHP) towards a more civilized, democratic pattern of behavior on the necessity of reforms.

Nevertheless, his predecessor, Özkök, left a remarkable mark on history, and whether Başbuğ will follow Özkök’s critical lead for democratic continuity, we shall know by the end of August.

---

Ankara seems favoring Tehran in the nuke issue

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

MEHMET ALİ BİRAND

HURRIYAT

---

I want to have your attention to some other issues today because we have had enough with the usual. Let me share you a matter that I’ve been searching for long and that I’ve finally reached a conclusion. It is Turkey’s approach to Iran. What do we see from the outside?

We see that President Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan are trying to have good relations with Iran in general, and have the two countries closer. Yes, this is right. Turkey is favoring Iran and exerting special efforts for rapprochement. However, there is this nuclear side of the story.

Iran enhances its nuclear energy program. The western world believes this is not simply limited with nuclear energy policy. The West using Iran’s general approach, statements of its leaders and their track records asserts that Iran is actually trying to have nuclear arms. And concerns are spreading.

Israel and therefore the United States take the lead in such concerns. What is Turkey’s approach? Again as we see from the outside Turkish leaders have sympathy for Iran in the nuclear issue. Conversations, photographs or TV images depict Turkish leaders arm-in-arm with their Iranian counterparts and hugging each other.

Mr. Prime Minister draws attention to Israel’s possession of nuclear arms instead of warning Iran, and brings nuclear disarmament of the region to the fore. He’s acting as if he is misleading. This is the perception of international community.

Therefore, the outside world is criticizing the Turkish government. The number of skeptics against Ankara’s approach to this particular subject is especially increasing in Israel and the U.S. “If Erdoğan were to call Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinajad ‘my friend’ rather than ‘my brother,’ no one will be suspected. But that causes others to worry,” says a top-level officials at the U.S. State Dept. This is a typical example how the world sees Turkey-Iran relations.

All right, does Turkey really not care about Iran's possession of nuclear arms? Is Turkey not buying the claims that Iran is having nuclear arms because it simply has faith in the Iranian leaders?

But Turkey seriously warns Iran

I agree with people who are disturbed by Turkey's attitude toward Iran, which seems as if it supports the Iranian nuclear program. I don't say that Iran has such intentions. I also accept remarks of the Iranian leaders. Still I have my reservations. History is full of similar examples that countries like Iran gave promises to do something but acted differently.

Now let's forget about if Iran indeed has such intentions but look into "how and whom Iran could affect and if it becomes a nuclear power." Official policy in Ankara is that Iran in no way should possess any nuclear power. And the main reason is that Iran in no way will be able to hit Israel because if Iran uses a possible nuclear bomb then Jerusalem will disappear. None of the Iranian leaders can push the button to wipe out one of the most sacred places of the Islamic world.

On the other hand, Iran may use this incredibly "deterrent" power in hand against other Sunni countries in the region. It will not hit Muslim countries but may try imposition as a country having nuclear power.

Sunni states in the region, primarily Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Gulf countries, are frightened by Shiite expansionism of Iran. And Turkey is clearly disturbed by this too.

Perhaps Ankara doesn't reflect anything outside but in official conversations openly warns Iran as a friend. This is what I've heard. I talked to sources who personally attended or are officially involved in such talks.

I was told that "Mr. Prime Minister and President Gül said told Iranian leaders, 'If you want to have Ankara as your enemy, produce nuclear arms ... We take your word. However, countries in the region are disturbed by developments, you should know this.'"

And Ankara has taken some actions, too. Top officials are cooperating with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Gulf states against Shiite expansionism of Iran. Most of the talks in meetings revolve around this very subject.

I was relieved with this information I obtained. Still, I remember disappointments in the international arena, so I say let's be prudent.