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TURKEY

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SUMMARY-POLITICAL NEWS

POLITICAL NEWS

Opposition parties criticized Turkey's "no" vote on Iran sanctions at the U.N. Security Council. In the opinion of these Opposition Political parties the nuclear weapons should be eliminated from the entire world in order to maintain peace.

Turkish Parliament passed new protection law for coal miners. This bill was passed after the deaths of 28 workers in a Zonguldak coal mine last month. Under the law new safety measures and good working environment for coal miners are identified.

The Turkish military launched air strikes against bases of the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq. The Constitutional Court announced that it has accepted an indictment filed by the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) against the government's referendum package passed in May.

SUMMARY-GEO-STRATEGIC NEWS

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, whose country holds a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, pledged yesterday to support Turkey in raising the issue of the May 31 Israeli attack on a Gaza-bound humanitarian aid convoy which led to the deaths of nine activists. Turkey no vote on new sanctions against Iran indicating a big change in her future relationship of with USA as both are also NATO allies. Arab nations at Istanbul during the Third Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum (TAC) expressed their full support to Turkey against Israel's deadly attack over Turkey's aid ship flotilla. Erdogan said while speaking at the forum that Arabic countries should take more initiatives for solution of the problem through peaceful means. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said that unity and integrity should immediately be secured in Palestine would be the best response to Israel's attacks.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said U.S. President Barack Obama wrote a letter to Turkey and Brazil that both the states should start work on the uranium swap agreement with Iran. Now Turkey intends to proceed her effective role accordingly to the signed swap nuclear agreement. Turkey is worry about the newly imposed sanctions on Iran because these sanctions would have to cost to Turkey. Turkey current trade volume with Iran is around \$ 10 billion and it can rise to \$30 billion if sanctions are lifted.

A group of Israelis will travel by ship to Cyprus to protest against Turkey's occupation and call for the reunification of Cyprus under Greek Cypriot rule, an Israeli news report has said. The group, which includes former deputy Alex Goldfarb and 63-year-old Israeli activist Pinhas Har-Zahav. The trip is considered to be in retaliation to the recent flow of aid ships to Gaza to break a long-standing joint Israeli-Egyptian blockade.

The Turkish energy minister said that he did not think there would be any problems with a nuclear energy agreement with South Korea. Turkey's Energy & Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said that negotiations with South Korea on construction of a nuclear power plant in the northern Turkish province of Sinop were positive. Turkish doctors are set to provide regular health services in 36 African countries as a result of cooperation between several Turkey-based nongovernmental organizations and the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA).

Egypt after the incident of Israel's attack on flotilla, decided that she would open the Rafa border adjacent to Gaza in order to ease the tension in the Middle East. The Rafah crossing serves passengers, but is mainly used by Palestinians and humanitarian aid

shipments coordinated by the Egyptian Red Crescent. According to an agreement with the European Union, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the Rafah crossing was monitored by EU officials, but after Hamas took over the control of Gaza in 2007 and an embargo was put into effect, the EU officials were withdrawn. Since then, the Rafah crossing has been operating on and off. Although Egypt has announced that this is a permanent opening, experts have voiced doubts.

Turkey and Thailand are set to sign two bilateral agreements to enhance cooperation between the two countries in fields of military, education, science and culture., Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya has announced during his visit to İstanbul for the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

Nagorno Kharabgh

Nagorno-Karabakh is an enclave in Azerbaijan that has been occupied by Armenian forces since the end of a six-year conflict that left about 30,000 people dead and displaced 1 million prior to a 1994 truce. The territory's unilateral independence is not recognized by the international community.

International mediation efforts brokered by the so-called Minsk group – made up of France, Russia and the United States – have failed to produce a settlement to the conflict.

The mediators have been pushing since 2007 for the two sides to agree to the so-called Madrid principles – a deal that would see Armenian forces withdraw from areas surrounding Karabakh, would deploy international peacekeepers to the region, would grant refugees the right to return and would lead to an eventual vote on the region's status.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has warned that Baku could withdraw from foreign-backed peace talks with Armenia over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, the state-run Azertaj news agency reported. In addition he said Armenia during recent months has acted in a way which showed that she wanted to break out the negotiation process. Azerbaijan must seriously consider the prospects of its participation in negotiations... We are considering different options.

SUMMARY-ECONOMIC NEWS

Israeli Welfare and Social Services Minister Isaac Herzog said Israel is ready to divert up to 400,000 tourists to Bulgaria from Turkey this year because of the war of words over a deadly raid on an aid convoy.

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri while addressing the opening of Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum said that Turkey and Arab countries might establish an integrated economic structure which will foster power of Arabs and Turkey in economic and political platforms and international arena against challenges in the region.

Turkey's statistics authority, TurkStat announced Turkey's quarterly industrial employment index for Q1. The high prices of red meat are expected to fall after the slaughter of 17,000 imported cattles. The government recently decided to resume livestock and red meat imports through the state-owned Meat and Fish Institution (EBK). Previously above mentioned institutions were being banned for an eight-year in result the mad cow disease scare.

Turkey's efforts to reach the "millennium development goals" set by the United Nations 10 years ago were discussed at a meeting yesterday, suggesting that the country has indeed made great progress so far and has a promising future.

Turkey will support establishment of an organized industrial zone in Iraq. The Union of Chambers & Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) will support and assist Iraq in establishing a new organized industrial zone.

Only one day after the signing of three critical natural gas supply deals with Azerbaijan, Turkey has taken yet another step to intensify efforts to emerge as an energy hub in the region. Turkey and Russia signed a nuclear cooperation deal in Istanbul during the third summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

POLITICAL NEWS

AKP clashes with opposition over Turkey's 'no' vote

Thursday, June 10, 2010

ANKARA - Hürriyet Daily News

Opposition parties criticized Turkey's "no" vote on Iran sanctions at the U.N. Security Council, arguing Thursday that the country is pushing itself toward isolation.

Turkey is located in a very important geographical position in the world. We don't want Israel or Iran or any of our neighbors to have nuclear weapons," said Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, leader of the Republican People's Party, or CHP.

"To ensure peace in the Middle East, we want to eliminate nuclear weapons from the entire world, not just the Middle East, because peace is our main philosophy," the CHP chief said Thursday in response to a question on a possible "shift in axis" in Turkey following the decision made by the United Nations Security Council regarding Iran.

Mehmet Şandır of the Nationalist Movement Party, or MHP, said the UN's decision was an injustice, but the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP's, wrong-headed policies have pushed Turkey toward isolation.

"Turkey's move poses a threat to its future. Now, Turkey says it backs its [no vote] decision. Does it mean that the AKP will not abide by the UN's decision? It would be a very dangerous move, which will make Turkey be perceived as an unreliable country," Şandır told the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review.

"Decisions by the Turkish prime minister and the Foreign Ministry put Turkey in an excluded and isolated position," Şandır said.

The AKP's Mehmet Dülger rejected the opposition criticism, saying a "shift in axis" was out of question for Turkey.

"Turkey had to say 'no.' It had to stand behind the deal it brokered in Tehran," Dülger said, referring to the fuel-swap agreement signed by Turkey, Brazil and Iran. "Also, Turkey and Iran have shared the same region for 370 years, and it is not right for historical ties to change in line with the purposes of countries overseas."

Turkey challenges the world

The CHP's Gülsün Bilgehan, however, said it was too challenging an attitude for Turkey to say "no" by fully sponsoring Iran.

"Time will tell what the results of Turkey's move will be, but for me the consequences of Turkey's 'no' vote will be negative. The United States' reactions already hint that a new era is likely to start," Bilgehan told the Daily News.

The AKP's Vahit Erdem, who is also the head of the Turkish Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, said the main axis of Turkey's foreign policy was strategic cooperation with the United States and full membership in the EU.

"Turkey can't be isolated and shouldn't isolate itself from the West, where technology and economy exist. We have been among that community for 50 years," Erdem said, adding that the remarks of U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates that Turkey is being pushed toward the East should be taken into consideration.

Turkish Parliament approves new protection for miners

Thursday, June 10, 2010

ANKARA - Hürriyet Daily News

The deaths of 28 workers in a Zonguldak coal mine last month have led to the passing of stricter safety measures and stronger oversight for mines

New safety measures to improve the working conditions of coal miners were passed by Parliament on Thursday, following calls to tighten regulatory control after a deadly mine explosion.

The new law, drafted by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, requires mining operations to be halted if a dangerous situation is detected. Any company that employs more than 15 miners will also have to have a mining engineer on staff to monitor the stability of the work environment and ensure that all safety standards are being met. The law also makes technical adjustments to regulations governing mineral exploration and certification for mining-related activities.

Calls for enhanced mine safety increased after a May 17 explosion at a coal mine in the northern province of Zonguldak killed at least 28 miners. Inspection practices at state and private mines were also scrutinized as a result of the deadly accident.

Mining in government forests possible

Under the new law, mining engineers will also be charged with reporting violations of the environmental protection plan to the government and implementing any necessary safeguards. The mining license holder will remain legally responsible at all times under the law, which applies to all underground mining facilities and all above-ground mines employing 15 or more miners.

In addition, the law allows mining in government forests with the approval of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and the payment of a fee. As part of the approval process, the ministry will examine the water, communication and transportation infrastructure required to mine in forests.

Mining in forests that include seed stands ,gene protection areas, protected forests, rest areas and areas containing rare ecosystems will come under the authorization of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

Turkey leads in occupational accidents

According to a report by the Chamber of Mining Engineers, which rates occupational health and safety standards around the world, Turkey has the most workplace injuries in Europe and the fourth-most internationally.

The report cites a recent increase in workplace injuries, attributing the jump to private companies seeing employee health and worker safety as an unwanted expenditure.

Using the example of most developed countries, the report says accidents at work can be prevented, and that strengthening the inspection process will make the Turkish mining industry safer.

Turkish jets reportedly hit terrorist bases in Iraq

The Turkish military launched air strikes against bases of the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq yesterday, Turkish media have said in reports not immediately verifiable with the army.

According to the reports, the army launched an aerial attack on Tuesday using six warplanes on the Hakurk terrorist camp in Sidekan. If the reports are true, it would be the second such operation by the Turkish military in less than three weeks. A local government official in Sidekan, Ahmed Sur, disputed the claims, saying Turkish planes

were seen in Iraqi airspace but that no shelling occurred. Representatives of the outlawed PKK also said there was no shelling.

Clashes in Turkey's Southeast typically become more frequent in spring and summer due to more favorable weather conditions for the terrorists, who cross the border into Turkey from their camps in the mountains of northern Iraq. The PKK took up arms against the Turkish state in 1984 in a conflict that has claimed more than 40,000 lives. The United States and European Union both label the PKK a terrorist organization.

09 June 2010, Wednesday

TODAY'S ZAMAN WITH WIRES İSTANBUL

Constitutional Court accepts CHP appeal against package

The Constitutional Court announced on Tuesday morning that it has accepted an indictment filed by the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) against the government's referendum package passed in May.

The court said it will review the appeal request on procedural grounds.

The court's decision on the package that includes articles that reform the judiciary is crucial for Turkey. Liberal jurists in the country say a ruling from the high court that cancels the public vote on the referendum scheduled for Sept. 12 would severely damage Turkey's democratization process.

The government's constitutional amendment package, which introduces new regulations in many areas, also makes structural changes to the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK). These two articles have been the most contentious changes in the package. The CHP in its appeal to the Constitutional Court claimed that the government's intended changes violate the constitutional principle of separation of powers by giving too much say to the government in the formation of the makeup of these two judicial bodies. The government says the high courts' juristocracy-like powers need to be reined in for Turkey to democratize, while the opposition accuses the government of trying to dominate the judiciary.

08 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAY'S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

GEO-STRATEGIC NEWS

Putin joins Erdoğan, voices condemnation of Israeli ship raid

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, whose country holds a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, pledged yesterday to support Turkey in raising the issue of the May 31 Israeli attack on a Gaza-bound humanitarian aid convoy which led to the deaths of nine activists at the United Nations, while condemning Israel's lethal raid.

Putin, speaking at a joint press conference following talks with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, on Tuesday, underlined that the circumstances of the Israeli attack must be thoroughly investigated. The Russian leader arrived in İstanbul earlier in the day to participate in a summit of a 20-member Asian security forum, the Conference

on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). He and Erdoğan held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the summit.

Nine Turks were killed last Monday during the Israeli commando raid of the Mavi Marmara, part of a six-vessel convoy that set out to challenge the blockade of the Gaza Strip. Israel said its troops used lethal force in self-defense after they were attacked by pro-Palestinian activists wielding clubs and knives, while both Turkish leaders and the global public were infuriated by the killings.

“Such actions against a civilian ship are unacceptable,” Putin said. “These actions in neutral waters raise special concerns and, undoubtedly, demand a thorough investigation,” he added. His remarks in Russian were translated to Turkish through an interpreter.

Russia was among the 32 members of the 47-member UN Human Rights Council that voted last Wednesday to set up an independent fact-finding mission to look into what it termed violations of international law in Israel's raid on the Gaza aid flotilla. Israel appeared to ignore the vote and instead eagerly accepted a US suggestion to launch an Israeli inquiry with the participation of outside observers.

Putin also stated that his country advocated the immediate lifting of the Israeli blockade on the impoverished Gaza Strip, while calling for concrete steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Expressing pleasure over Russia's support of Turkey's efforts to bring the Gaza raid issue to various international platforms, Erdoğan pledged that his country would continue these efforts.

“The voice raised will be the voice of consciences which want a more just and freer world,” Erdoğan said. “The day that justice is established, our pains will ease, even if just partly,” he added.

The Russian and Turkish leaders' press conference was held only a few hours after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad warned Russia against siding with Iran's foes ahead of a UN Security Council vote to impose a fourth round of sanctions on Tehran.

Ahmadinejad, who was also in Istanbul for the CICA summit, held a separate press conference before joining the other heads of state and government at the summit.

“There is no big problem, but they must be careful not to side with the enemies of the Iranian people,” Ahmadinejad said, as he strongly criticized Russia for backing the draft sanctions.

After weeks of closed-door negotiations, the United States, Britain and France won crucial support from Russia and China for new sanctions, but they have faced a tough campaign to get backing from the rest of the 15-member Security Council.

For his part, at the press conference with Erdoğan, Putin said the sanctions should not be “excessive” and should not create barriers for the development of Iran's nuclear energy sector. “I hold the opinion that this resolution should not be excessive and should not put Iran's leadership or the Iranian people in a tricky situation that creates barriers to developing Iran's peaceful nuclear energy,” he said. Putin also said that he might have a bilateral meeting with Ahmadinejad later in the day in order “to discuss these problems, if my Iranian colleague has such a need.”

He noted that the long-delayed Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran should come on line in August, regardless of the sanctions. The construction of Iran's first nuclear power plant began in 1975 by German companies. However, the firms stopped work after a US

embargo was imposed on high-technology supplies to Iran following the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the subsequent US Embassy siege in Tehran. Russia signed a contract with Iran in February 1998 to complete the plant.

Refusal to press parties in Nagorno-Karabakh dispute

Putin also made clear yesterday that his country has no intention of pressing any parties in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, a territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan, suggesting that any interference or pressure on one side of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would be a risky move.

Russia, along with France and the United States, is one the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which has striven to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict for more than 17 years.

“Not only one side bears responsibility when resolving such conflicts. The officials of both countries must discuss this issue and continue a dialogue,” Putin said in response to a question by an Azerbaijani journalist. A solution to the conflict that would be accepted by both parties must be achieved, he said, adding: “Other countries in this issue can act only as mediators. Patience is required, because the issue is very difficult.”

Azerbaijan and Armenia must resolve the conflict themselves, and Russia and other countries are ready to provide them with all necessary assistance, Putin said. “We cannot compel the parties to make a decision. We cannot put pressure on them.”

08 June 2010, Tuesday
EMINE KART

İSTANBUL

Turkey spins on new set of axes with 'no' vote on Iran sanctions

Thursday, June 10, 2010

FULYA ÖZERKAN

ANKARA - Hürriyet Daily News

Turkey’s “no” vote on new sanctions against Iran has disappointed Washington and threatened to create a sea change in the future relationship between the two NATO allies. “I won’t conceal the fact that we’re disappointed with the vote that took place today,” Undersecretary of Political Affairs Bill Burns said at a press briefing Wednesday, referring to the United Nations Security Council’s passing of a fresh sanctions resolution despite “no” votes from Turkey and Brazil and abstention from Lebanon.

The vote by Turkey, a non-permanent member of the Security Council, could cause the “model partnership” previously articulated by the Obama administration to be shelved, said Mehmet Yegin of the Turkish think tank USAK. He said Washington could decide as a result to step up its critical rhetoric against Turkey or revive resolutions to recognize Armenian genocide claims.

“Turkey’s ‘no’ vote does not target the United States. Turkey had to stand behind the deal it brokered as a requirement of pursuing a consistent policy,” Yegin said. “But that certainly will have a price.”

Last month, Turkey and Brazil brokered a deal with Iran to swap low-enriched uranium for more highly enriched nuclear material in an attempt to ease the international standoff. In initial reactions, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she appreciated the two

nations' efforts and said Turkey and Brazil would both continue to play an important role in ongoing diplomatic outreach to Iran.

"Turkey made a sovereign choice in deciding how to vote today," Undersecretary Burns said in his statement after the Security Council vote. "But we believe that Turkey shares – and the Turkish representative in New York made clear that Turkey shares – international concerns that Iran has not lived up to its obligations."

Turkey to abide by sanctions

Despite its opposition to the new resolution, Turkey has said it will abide by the sanctions against Iran since U.N. resolutions are binding for all members. It will monitor other leading international powers' moves in implementing sanctions and take them as a precedent, Turkish diplomatic sources told the *Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review*.

"Work on how sanctions would hit Turkey's interests was already completed at the Foreign Ministry long before the vote took place. But instead of talking about them now, we think we should focus on diplomatic efforts," ministry spokesman Burak Özügergin told the private channel NTV on Thursday.

Diplomatic sources said the Turkey-Brazil-Iran agreement is "still on the table" and that Ankara will work to try and implement it. "We will also try to persuade Iran to be calm," a source said. Turkey will also reply to letters sent by Russia, France and the United States – collectively known as the Vienna Group – explaining why the swap deal did not satisfy their concerns.

A threatened alliance

In an address in New York, Turkey's permanent representative to the U.N., Ertuğrul Apakan, called on Iranian authorities to dispel the international community's concerns over the peaceful nature of their nuclear problem and repeated that the dispute should be resolved through peaceful means and negotiations. Western sources told the *Daily News* that Turkey's statement was "balanced" as it included a strong message to Iran.

Still, the atmosphere in Washington remains one of uneasiness over future relations with Turkey.

"I am sure the situation in Washington goes beyond disappointment," Sabri Sayarı, a professor at Sabancı University in Istanbul, told the *Daily News* on Thursday. "The approach toward Turkey has dramatically changed over recent years due to a number of reasons, including Ankara's rejection of the troop deployment motion before the Iraq war, problems with Israel and the Iran policy."

Turkey and the U.S. cooperate on a wide range of issues, from Afghanistan to Iraq, and including the fight against terrorism. But relations incurred a severe blow when the Turkish Parliament rejected a motion to let U.S. troops open a front from the Turkish territory against Iraq in the 2003 war. Turkey's escalating rhetoric against Israel, coupled with the recent tension in bilateral ties caused by the Israeli raid on a Gaza aid flotilla, is also a source of concern in Washington.

In a keynote statement this week, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates acknowledged Turkey's turn toward the East but blamed the European Union for the country's recent moves away from the West.

"We know that Turkey shares our objective of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, even if we differ in our respective approaches. But we strongly reject the idea

that Turkey has a 'choice' to make between the East and West," a Western diplomat told the Daily News, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Whatever happens, the diplomat said, Turkey is and will remain an important strategic partner for countries in the West. "The relationship will survive recent events," he said. "It would be irresponsible for opponents of Turkey's EU accession to take advantage of an already difficult situation."

Arab nations unite in applause for Turkey's tough Israel stance

Thursday, June 10, 2010

ISTANBUL - The Associated Press

Turkey gets Arab nations' full support on its stance against Israel's deadly attack on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla and blockade on the Palestinian territory at a forum in Istanbul. Prime Minister Erdoğan says his country cannot turn blind eye on Israel 'banditry,' while rejecting claims that Turkey is shifting away from the West

Arab nations burst into applause Thursday as Turkey's prime minister walked to the podium at a summit, reflecting Turkey's meteoric rise on the world stage amid disputes over Israel's blockade of Gaza and U.N. sanctions against Iran.

The Turkish-Arab Economic Forum opened with calls for an international investigation into the May 31 Israeli commando raid on aid ships bound for Gaza, a topic emphasized by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Meanwhile, the participant nations condemned Israel in the final declaration of the forum.

"Are we going to remain silent over the murder of nine people? We can't turn a blind eye to this banditry in international waters," Erdoğan told the Turkish-Arab Economic Forum. "From now on, this can't continue as it is."

Arab league chief Amr Moussa also accused Israel continued "atrocities and assault" in violation of human rights and international law and praised Turkey for challenging Israel on the raid that left eight Turkish activists and a Turkish-American teenager dead.

Israel insists its commandoes acted in self-defense after being attacked by pro-Palestinian activists on the aid ships.

Moussa said the nine dead "are our martyrs as well."

Turkey's popularity in the Muslim world has surged as it led the world in condemning Israel for the raid on ships trying to break Israel's blockade of Gaza. Turkey - a non-Arab, predominantly Muslim country - also won favor among Arab allies for objecting to new sanctions against Iran, which the U.N. Security Council passed Wednesday after rejecting an Iranian nuclear fuel swap-deal brokered by Ankara.

"Arms, embargoes and exclusion are not working," Erdoğan said, adding that the world was paying a heavy price as a result of such policies in Iraq and Afghanistan. "There are hundreds of thousands of widows, who will account for this? There are orphans, who will account for this? Those who turn this geography into this (mess) have to be held accountable."

Shift claims nixed

Erdoğan strongly rejected allegations in the West that Turkey was shifting toward the East, describing such claims as "evil intentioned" and attempts to prevent Turkey from establishing relations with the Arab world.

Erdogan stressed Turkey's commitment to its membership bid in the European Union, but at the same time accused the EU countries of not being sincere and raising obstacles.

Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri and other foreign ministers from about 15 other Arab nations also attended the summit.

Hariri said the Middle East was suffering under Israel's "criminal and barbaric" attitude. "We support Turkey's demands not only about the international investigation, but for Israel to apologize," Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said. "We support Turkey's demand to try those behind these acts."

Turkey also says Israel's partial easing of its Gaza blockade was not enough. At another summit in Istanbul earlier this week, Turkey and 21 Asian countries urged Israel to join the nuclear nonproliferation treaty and place its nuclear capabilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Agency.

Turkey said Israel should not be left out from any scrutiny of its alleged nuclear arsenal, which Israel has never confirmed, and also said Iran should be able to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Turkey followed Obama's letter on Iran deal, FM says

Thursday, June 10, 2010

ANKARA - Anatolia News Agency

The letters U.S. President Barack Obama wrote to Turkey and Brazil laid the groundwork for the uranium swap agreement with Tehran, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said Wednesday.

Adding that a meeting with the U.S. leader in April also helped shape the deal, Davutoğlu said in a televised interview that "Turkey progressed step-by-step for the Tehran agreement."

Davutoğlu said the letter sent to Turkey was the same as the one sent to Brazil, and the basic demands in the letters were met by the agreement he signed May 17 with Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim. After key members expressed reservations about the Turkey- and Brazil-brokered deal, the 15-nation U.N. Security Council passed a new sanctions resolution against Iran on Wednesday. The resolution was approved with 12 votes in support of the sanctions, two against from Brazil and Turkey and one abstention from Lebanon.

Cost to Turkey

Davutoğlu said the peaceful use of nuclear energy is every country's right and that Iran should behave transparently regarding its nuclear program and cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog.

Pointing out that his country is "the only U.N. Security Council member neighbor to Iran," Davutoğlu said, "Turkey is against nuclear weapons and wants a region free of nuclear weapons."

He said sanctions against Iran would also have a cost to Turkey, which wants to see the restrictions lifted.

"Turkey and Iran's trade volume is around \$10 billion, and it can rise to \$30 billion if sanctions are lifted," Davutoğlu said.

The swap deal

Under the deal inked by Turkey, Brazil and Iran, Tehran committed to send 1,200 kilograms of 3.5 percent enriched uranium to Turkey in return for receiving 20 percent enriched uranium from Western countries to be used as fuel for the nuclear research reactor in the Iranian capital.

Tehran would receive the enriched uranium in Turkey from the Vienna Group – the United States, France and Russia – and the IAEA.

Turkey calls for Palestinian unity in "new era" after Israel attack
Davutoglu said that unity and integrity should immediately be secured in Palestine would be the best response to Israel's attacks.

Thursday, 10 June 2010 17:03

WORLD BULLETIN

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Thursday that unity and integrity should immediately be secured in Palestine would be the best response to Israel's attacks. Speaking at the foreign ministers meeting of the Turkish-Arabic Cooperation Forum, Davutoglu said division in Palestine should never be allowed to become chronic. Davutoglu thanked to the participants of the meeting as they responded affirmatively to the invitation of Turkey at a time when very critical developments were occurring in the region.

Davutoglu said, "we also envisage to organize Turkish-Arabic Media Forum in Turkey for the first time".

"Arab support for independent probe"

Turkish foreign minister thanked to Arab League Ministers Council that held an emergency session on June 2 and decided to condemn Israel following Israel's attack on ships carrying aid to Gaza.

Davutoglu said this decision made an important contribution to the efforts of Turkey carried out in international platform and noted that Turkey relied on full support to Arab League in other initiatives that would take place in the future.

Turkish foreign minister said Israel raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla on May 31 constituted a "new landmark" in the region noting that, "despite the grave dimensions threatening regional peace and security, this incident at the same time constituted an opportunity in giving a shape to regional order".

"It will not be possible for us to remain silent against the acts violating the most essential principles of the international law and trampling on human honor," Davutoglu said.

Davutoglu said, "no state can be superior to law. Israel has to account for its unlawful and reckless stances. Reactions coming all over the world reveal that international public share this expectation. We should all step up efforts for a more fair and equitable regional and global order."

Davutoglu said Turkey asked for formation of an independent commission as the first step of the efforts in question and underlined that Turkey expected all members of Arab League to support and pursue this process.

Over the situation in Iraq, Davutoglu said a stable and prosperous Iraq, whose territorial integrity and political unity is preserved and have peaceful relations with its neighbours has a key importance in its geography.

Referring to the joint statement announced together with Iran and Brazil, Davutoglu said this deal formed an important opportunity and a new ground for the solution of the problem permanently. "Joint statement is the victory of diplomacy and dialogue," he underlined.

Davutoglu said next meeting of Turkish-Arabic Cooperation Forum would take place in Morocco next year.

Agencies

Hamas: 'We want Erdoğan's model, not Taliban's'

Thursday, June 10, 2010

CANSU ÇAMLIBEL

GAZA CITY - Hürriyet

The Justice and Development Party, or AKP's, success in Turkey has become a model for Hamas, the group's deputy foreign minister Ahmad Yusuf told daily Hürriyet.

"If you speak with the people in Gaza, you will see that everybody speaks like [Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip] Erdoğan. I mean, they all want what he wants for his own country," Yusuf said, adding that this is contrary to foreign public opinion, which assumes Hamas to be equivalent to the Taliban or al-Qaeda.

According to Yusuf, who said he is writing a book called "Erdoğan and a New Strategic Vision," the Taliban is "opposed to everything," including education and women's rights. "Erdoğan's model, on the other hand, is liberal. It is a model that dares to take responsibility and change things and establishes good relations between the religious and secular elements of society," he said. "It is a model that works for democracy and human rights, and supports an open society. That is what we want."

Yusuf added that the "martyrs" on the Mavi Marmara ship broke through the Gaza blockade and ignited public opinion all around the world. "Now EU countries are talking about it, aiming to come up with solutions," he said. "Those who died on that ship sacrificed their lives for this sake."

78 percent of Jewish Israelis view Turkey as enemy, poll shows

Thursday, June 10, 2010

JERUSALEM — Agence France-Presse

Some 78 percent of Jewish Israelis now view Turkey, once Israel's only Muslim ally in the Middle East, as an enemy nation, according to a poll published on Thursday.

The sharp switch in public attitude toward Turkey comes in the wake of a May 31 raid by Israeli commandos on an aid flotilla bound for Gaza, which left eight Turkish activists and one Turkish American dead.

The poll, published in the pro-government Yisrael Hayom daily, asked participants: "Do you believe that in light of recent events Turkey has become an enemy state?"

It said 78 percent of those surveyed answered yes, while 22 percent said no.

In the 1990s, the two nations developed close military and economic links and have held frequent joint military drills and signed a free trade agreement. Turkey had also become a favorite holiday destination for Israelis.

But the ties have declined rapidly amid vehement Turkish criticism of the devastating offensive which Israel launched against the Gaza Strip in December 2008 and Ankara's improving ties with Tehran.

And relations virtually broke down following the flotilla raid.

Turkey recalled its ambassador and scrapped joint military drills, saying economic and defense ties with Israel would be reduced to a "minimum level."

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said this week that normalization of ties with Israel was out of the question if it rejects an international inquiry into the deadly raid on the aid flotilla.

The poll said that only 13 percent of Jewish Israelis favor an international commission, while 71 percent prefer an internal Israeli inquiry.

The poll by the New Wave Research group surveyed 561 people and had a margin of error of 4 percent. It did not take into account the views of Israel's Arab minority, which makes up about 1.3 million of Israel's 7.4 million citizens.

The poll also indicated that 91 percent of Jewish Israelis believed Israel should stop future flotillas trying to breach its Gaza blockade. Five percent were opposed and 4 percent had no answer, the poll said.

Israel, together with Egypt, first imposed the closures on the Gaza Strip after the capture of an Israeli soldier by Hamas and other militants in a deadly cross-border raid in June 2006 and tightened the sanctions when the Islamist group seized power in Gaza a year later.

Obama calls for new approach on Gaza blockade

Thursday, June 10, 2010

WASHINGTON — The Associated Press

President Barack Obama is advocating sharply limiting Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the Israeli naval raid that is straining U.S. and Israeli relations with allies around the world.

"The situation in Gaza is unsustainable," Obama said Wednesday as he met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the Oval Office. He said the attention of the world is on the problem because of the "tragedy" of the Israeli raid that killed nine people trying to bring in supplies.

Obama said Israel's broad blockade on goods entering Gaza should be narrowed so that arms are kept out, but not items needed for the Palestinians' daily life and economic development.

In connection with Abbas' visit, the White House announced a \$400 million aid package for Gaza and the West Bank.

A State Department spokesman, P.J. Crowley, said the money represented specific allocations that already had been budgeted for the Palestinians, some of it fulfilling a \$900 million commitment Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton made last year. Projects announced Wednesday included \$240 million for mortgage assistance in the West Bank and \$10 million to build five new schools in Gaza.

Construction goods are among items forbidden for delivery to the Gaza Strip by the Israelis. They contend the Palestinian enclave's militant Hamas leaders would use the supplies for facilities that could strengthen Hamas' military capabilities.

"The key here is making sure that Israel's security needs are met, but that the needs of people in Gaza are also met," said Obama.

"So if we can get a new conceptual framework ... it seems to me that we should be able to take what has been a tragedy and turn it into an opportunity to create a situation where lives in Gaza are actually, directly improved."

The approach marked a shift although it stopped well short of meeting international calls for an end to the three-year blockade, which Israel says is needed to keep arms away

from the Hamas movement that controls Gaza. Critics say the blockade is ineffective and causes undue suffering. Obama said the United States would discuss the new approach with European leaders, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Abbas welcomed the \$400 million aid package, which will go for things like creating jobs and improving access to drinking water, but called for going farther on the blockade. "We also see the need to lift the Israeli siege of the Palestinian people, the need to open all the crossings and the need to let building material and humanitarian material and all the necessities go into the Palestinian people," said Abbas, whose actual influence over Gaza is slight, since his forces were routed when Hamas took over the area in 2007. He and his more moderate Fatah movement lead the West Bank, the other Palestinian territory in Israel.

Israel's ambassador to the U.S., Michael Oren, said Israel was open to suggestions that would address the needs of the Palestinian people along with Israel's security requirements, but he defended the blockade as "essential for not only Israel's security, Egypt's security, but it's essential for the peace process."

Oren bridled at the notion of letting through goods such as building materials.

"We know that Hamas is going to take these materials and not use them to build schools, they're going to use them to build military bunkers. So we are reluctant to let those things through," Oren said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Wednesday's meeting between Obama and Abbas came as Israel announced it would allow potato chips, cookies, spices and other previously banned food items into the Gaza Strip, a step Oren said was meant in a spirit of cooperation. Critics denounced the move as insignificant, and a Hamas spokesman, Sami Abu Zuhri, said the gesture was not worth commenting on.

"Yes, we have allowed some chocolate and other snacks through today, but Hamas has rejected them," Oren said. "They rejected our chocolate."

It's been a little more than a week since Israel's deadly May 31 raid on a flotilla hoping to break the blockade on Gaza. Nine men in the flotilla were killed, including eight Turks and a Turkish American. Israel says its soldiers opened fire only after being attacked while the flotilla activists accuse Israel of using unnecessary violence.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had been scheduled to visit the White House June 1 but canceled the visit to deal with the crisis. His visit is being rescheduled, and White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said Wednesday it could happen by the end of this month.

The Abbas visit, scheduled before the flotilla raid, had been expected to focus on peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians, now proceeding with U.S. envoy George Mitchell shuttling between the two parties. The eventual goal is to move to direct talks. Despite the uproar over the flotilla raid, Obama said he anticipated significant progress could be made, if both sides try to ensure a conducive environment. For the Israelis, Obama said, that means curbing settlement activity and recognizing progress on security on the part of the Palestinians.

"On the Palestinian side, I was very frank with President Abbas that we have to continue to make more progress on both security as well as incitement issues," Obama said.

Abbas responded to that when he spoke.

"I say in front of you, Mr. President, that we have nothing to do with incitement against Israel, and we're not doing that," Abbas said. "What we care about is to live in

coexistence with Israel in order to bring about the independent Palestinian state that will live side by side with Israel in peace and stability."

Azerbaijan threatens to pull out of Armenia peace talks

Thursday, June 10, 2010

BAKU - Agence France-Presse

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has warned that Baku could withdraw from foreign-backed peace talks with Armenia over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, the state-run Azertaj news agency reported.

"Armenia in recent months has acted in a way aimed at breaking down the negotiating process. Azerbaijan must seriously consider the prospects of its participation in negotiations... We are considering different options," Aliyev was quoted as saying Wednesday in an interview with Azerbaijani journalists during a trip this week to Istanbul.

If Armenia continues pursuing its aggressive policy and if it continues the (peace) process only for the sake of appearances, then Azerbaijan will make serious changes in its attitude," Aliyev said.

Nagorno-Karabakh is an enclave in Azerbaijan that has been occupied by Armenian forces since the end of a six-year conflict that left about 30,000 people dead and displaced 1 million prior to a 1994 truce. The territory's unilateral independence is not recognized by the international community.

International mediation efforts brokered by the so-called Minsk group – made up of France, Russia and the United States – have failed to produce a settlement to the conflict. The mediators have been pushing since 2007 for the two sides to agree to the so-called Madrid principles – a deal that would see Armenian forces withdraw from areas surrounding Karabakh, would deploy international peacekeepers to the region, would grant refugees the right to return and would lead to an eventual vote on the region's status.

Turkey sees no problem in nuke deal with S.Korea

In March, Turkey signed a cooperation protocol with South Korea to establish a nuclear energy power plant in Sinop.

Thursday, 10

WORLD BULLETIN

The Turkish energy minister said on Thursday that he did not think there would be any problems with a nuclear energy agreement with South Korea.

Turkey's Energy & Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said that negotiations with South Korea on construction of a nuclear power plant in the northern Turkish province of Sinop were positive.

"There will not be any problems in signing an agreement," Yildiz said during his meeting with South Korean Minister of Knowledge Economy Kyung-hwan Choi in Ankara.

Yildiz said Turkey's President Abdullah Gul would visit South Korea in the following week, and hoped to make progress in nuclear energy agreement before that visit.

Also speaking in the meeting, Choi said South Korea would work to construct the most secure and lucrative nuclear power plant in Sinop.

In March, Turkey signed a cooperation protocol with South Korea to establish a nuclear energy power plant in Sinop.

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**Turkey's PM expects Arab govts to step up steps for besieged Gaza
"Arabic countries should take more initiatives for solution of the problem through peaceful means," Erdogan said.**

Thursday, 10 June 2010 14:16
WORLD BULLETIN

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday that peace and stability could not be restored in the region when Gaza was under blockade.

"Arabic countries should take more initiatives for solution of the problem through peaceful means," Erdogan said while speaking at the opening of the Third Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum (TAC).

Erdogan said billions of dollars, which had to be spent for employment, production and poor people, were spent to armament because of unreal problems. "We face severe criticisms as we voice the problems and we say peace, stability and welfare. We face criticisms as we raise our voice for injustice and oppose to every kind of terrorism and state terrorism," he said.

Erdogan said, "Shall we remain silent against attacks on ships, which set out from Turkey, carrying activists of 32 different countries, and which were only loaded with relief materials. Shall I close my eyes against massacre of my 9 citizens in the international waters with terrorism and injury and maltreatment of 24 people from different countries. I visited all those injured one by one and saw their situation. Some of those injured are still under treatment in intensive care unit. Shall we remain silent against inhumane practices in Palestine? Won't this be approving state terrorism? Won't this be tolerance to unlawful acts?"

Erdogan said international community and international organizations condoned such kind of inhumane practices and encouraged them secretly, "this process can not continue so and should not. Peace and stability can not be restored when Gaza is under blockade. My government will never make concession from the principles we believe whatever they say to us," he said.

Erdogan said he expected Arabic countries to take more initiatives for the solution of the problem through peaceful means and noted that no country could restore peace and stability as a whole when Palestinian-Israeli problem stayed there.

"We should boost alliances and exert more efforts in the name of peace. Neither me nor the government is after getting a role in the region. We believe that the sufferings, tragedies, unlawful acts and piracy give serious damages to all the countries in the region and the region itself," Erdogan said.

AA

**Turkey, Arab League discuss joint regional initiative
The Turkish foreign minister said that Turkish-Arab world had the most strategic zone in the world.**

Thursday, 10 June 2010 16:41
WORLD BULLETIN

The Turkish foreign minister said that Turkish-Arab world had the most strategic zone in the world from Kars (Turkey) to Morocco and Mauritania, from Sinop (Turkey) to Sudan, from Istanbul Strait to Gulf of Aden.

Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu delivered a speech at the joint inauguration of Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum (TAC) and the Third Meeting of TAC Foreign Ministers in Istanbul on Thursday.

Davutoglu said, "we want this zone to turn into a security, economic integration and prosperity zone. We are resolute on this matter."

"Economic walls and political walls among us are collapsing. But the most important thing is that walls in minds are collapsing. There is a new mentality now. This new mentality will build a new history and it will create a brand new atmosphere in this important strategic zone," Davutoglu said.

Davutoglu said they supported joint regional initiative that was proposed by Arab League's Secretary General Amr Moussa at the last Arab Summit and they discussed some details on Wednesday and would continue to discuss it today as well.

"When we are working to turn the region into a secure region, we consider that the biggest obstacle is the policy of pressure which has been imposed on our Palestinian friends for more than a half century. It is difficult for this zone to reach security and get normalized before Palestine is freed," he said.

"The latest attacks and developments showed that the region has a fragile structure. We have to focus on works that will make the region a zone of security," he said.

"Israel violated international law and attacked on a civil flotilla, killing nine people and wounding several others. I would like to thank Arab League for its solidarity in regard to the incident," he said.

Davutoglu said, "Turkey will keep dealing with every kind of problem in the region. We will not remain indifferent to any problem."

AA

Turkish doctors to work in 36 African countries

Turkish doctors are set to provide regular health services in 36 African countries as a result of cooperation between several Turkey-based nongovernmental organizations and the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA).

Supported by the Ministry of Health and civil society organizations, TİKA has so far helped organize hundreds of aid projects abroad, including everything from general health screenings to complicated operations and even the building of hospitals and training of local medical staff in the countries visited.

TİKA President Musa Kulaklıkaya noted that despite numerous projects undertaken in foreign countries to provide medical services so far, they wanted to health services to be provided on a regular basis, not periodically. "Thousands of people throughout the world need help. We do not discriminate against people based on gender, ethnicity, religion, race, language, creed and so on. We aim to provide our services for the sake of humanity. We plan to increase our humanitarian aid with each passing day," Kulaklıkaya said. He also noted that Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda are among the countries in which they plan to provide regular medical services, adding that every nongovernmental organization that has

accepted to provide medical services systematically will be assigned to one African country.

Last year TİKA undertook 658 projects. Its vision is to be a reputable leader in its field and to remain at the top of the list of cooperation and development agencies abiding by world standards by revising its targets according to changing world conditions. Turkish doctors who went to various countries in August 2009 as part of TİKA have completed some 40,000 health screenings and 4,000 operations thus far.

“Previously, when Africa or African countries were mentioned, poverty, drought and infectious diseases came to the minds of people around the world. However, Africa will no longer be a continent remembered by people like this. Our doctors are working to help African countries provide good living standards to their people. They have been helping people in need and will continue to do so,” Kulaklıkaya said.

10 June 2010, Thursday

TODAYS ZAMAN

Israel condemned over Gaza raid at CICA summit

Leaders from the Middle East and Asia condemned Israel’s raid on a Turkish aid ship bound for Gaza at a summit on Tuesday, calling on the Jewish state to end its “inhuman” blockade of the Palestinian territory.

In a diplomatic coup for Turkey, all members of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), except Israel, denounced last week’s raid, in which nine pro-Palestinian Turkish activists were killed. “It’s not possible for us to forgive this,” said Turkey’s president, Abdullah Gül, at a news conference at the end of the summit, which brought together Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, among others.

Gül said Israel could go a long way toward repairing the damage resulting from the raid by offering an “acceptable restitution,” but added that “this cannot be forgotten by Turkey.”

The final declaration of the 22-member forum issued at the end of the two-day summit omitted any reference to Israel, which, as a fellow member, objected to such mention.

Gül, who as Turkey’s president is also acting as the chairman of CICA, read a separate presidential declaration in which all members, except Israel, criticized Israel’s actions.

“All member states, except one, expressed their great concern for and condemnation of the actions undertaken by the Israeli defense forces against an international civilian flotilla transporting humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip,” Gül said. “In this context they stressed the urgency of lifting the inhuman blockade of the Gaza Strip.”

Israel, to avoid exposing any senior official to Turkey’s wrath, had sent its ambassador to the talks.

All CICA members, except Israel, also called for an Israeli withdrawal from all Arab lands occupied in 1967, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital, and a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem based on past UN resolutions said Gül.

The CICA declaration also included countering drug trafficking and underlined the necessity of an active cooperation against organized crimes, noting that respect for national independence and territorial integrity in interstate relations is vital. It also said

separatism posed a very great threat to the principles of stability, security, independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders.

The declaration said the next meeting of CICA foreign ministers would be held in 2012 and the fourth summit of CICA heads of state and government was scheduled for 2014. CICA had been a low-key forum until now, but the timing of the Istanbul conference and the list of attendees transformed it into an opportunity for countries to launch verbal attacks against Israel and issue pledges of Muslim brotherhood.

Syria's al-Assad, whose country is not a CICA member but was attending as a guest, said, "Turkish blood is not different from Arab blood," while Ahmadinejad accused Israel of going beyond "all boundaries in its disrespect for humanity."

Turkey, NATO's only Muslim member and a candidate to join the European Union, has sought to raise its international profile in recent years, mediating on issues ranging from ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan to Iran's nuclear program.

CICA's members include: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan. The summit, during which Iraq and Vietnam joined as member countries raising the number of members to 22, marked the third summit of the forum.

10 June 2010, Thursday

TODAY'S ZAMAN WITH REUTERS İSTANBUL

Opening Rafah border helps ease tension in Middle East

Egypt's decision to open the border with Gaza at the Rafah border crossing serves to ease tension in the Middle East after a crisis in which Israel attacked a flotilla, killing nine Turkish citizens. The Rafah crossing serves passengers, but is mainly used by Palestinians and humanitarian aid shipments coordinated by the Egyptian Red Crescent. According to an agreement with the European Union, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the Rafah crossing was monitored by EU officials, but after Hamas took over the control of Gaza in 2007 and an embargo was put into effect, the EU officials were withdrawn. Since then, the Rafah crossing has been operating on and off. Although Egypt has announced that this is a permanent opening, experts have voiced doubts.

"Egypt's move looks like a temporary political stunt. If Egypt was considering another move, a high-ranking visit would take place between Turkey and Egypt. But we have not seen it, not yet at least," Samir Salha, an expert on the Arab world, told Today's Zaman. Egypt has suspicions that in the long run Israel aims to make Egypt responsible for the control of Gaza in order to restrict the area of Palestine to the West Bank alone. The main opposition in Egypt is the Muslim Brotherhood, which has strong connections to Hamas. US Vice President Joe Biden on Tuesday met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Sharm el-Sheik and issued a statement in which he praised Egypt's role as leader in the Middle East and African affairs.

"The United States recognizes and appreciates Egypt's leadership in support for these efforts [comprehensive peace]. The status quo is unsustainable for all sides. It is vital to make progress in the proximity talks between Israelis and Palestinians to enable the parties to move to direct negotiations as soon as possible that will result in an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and to a two-state solution to the conflict with Israel and a

Palestinian state living in peace and security. In addition, we are consulting closely with Egypt, as well as our other partners, on new ways to address the humanitarian, economic, security and political aspects of the situation in Gaza,” Biden said.

He added that they also discussed the Iranian nuclear program. According to many analysts in Turkey, Turkey’s position on the issue will be directly linked to the future attitude of the US administration regarding Turkey’s international efforts to punish Israel over its lethal attack. It is well known that Egypt supports the US position against Iran. According to Hasan Köni from Galatasaray University, Turkey’s efforts to get the support of the international community against Israel will be shaped by the decision of the UN Security Council when it votes on sanctions against Iran.

“The UN Security Council’s vote on sanctions targeting Iran will play a crucial role. If Turkey is the only country to oppose the sanctions against Iran, then it can expect a goal in its net,” he told Today’s Zaman.

Biden in his statement underlined that the UN Security Council is prepared to hold Iran accountable and argued that Iran is not fulfilling the expectations of the international community.

“We discussed our serious concerns about Iran’s nuclear program. The international community continues to witness Iran’s non-compliance with its obligations to the United Nations Security Council and the International Agency for Atomic Energy, as well as Iran’s unwillingness to engage seriously with the P5+1 on its nuclear program. The United States remains committed to a diplomatic resolution to these serious issues, but we will continue to hold Iran accountable for its continued violations of its international responsibilities, in accordance with our dual-track policy. We expect to see developments in the United Nations Security Council to hold Iran accountable very soon. In addition to concerns about Iran’s nuclear program, we remain concerned about its destabilizing activities throughout the region, including with regard to its support for Hezbollah and Hamas,” Biden said.

Turkey together with Brazil signed an agreement with Iran which envisages an exchange of low-enriched uranium for enriched uranium in Turkey. Ankara claims there is no need for sanctions after this agreement, but the US is of the opinion that the agreement is inadequate to assuage the worries of the international community.

Well-informed sources close to the Turkish government underlined that Egypt, which has some difficulties in internal politics as well as in the Arab League, had decided to act together with Turkey over the Gaza issue. The same sources think opening the Rafah border crossing has allowed Cairo to gain ground and served to ease tension.

09 June 2010, Wednesday

AYŞE KARABAT ANKARA

Turkey, Thailand to sign two cooperation agreements

Turkey and Thailand are set to sign two bilateral agreements to enhance cooperation between the two countries, Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya has announced.

Speaking to a group of journalists in İstanbul yesterday, Piromya, who is visiting İstanbul for the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), said that a military cooperation agreement and an action plan to enhance cooperation in other areas, including education, science and culture, would be signed in the next few months. He also said that he would be visiting his Turkish counterpart, Ahmet Davutoğlu,

in the next few months, saying Thailand would appreciate political consultation with Turkey.

Piromya said Turkey is increasingly becoming a key country in the Middle East and in Southeast Europe, noting that Thailand and Turkey deal with similar issues.

He also said Thailand condemns the killing of innocent people during Israel's attack on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla last week, which sparked a crisis between Turkey and Israel. Nine people aboard a passenger ship that was part of the flotilla were killed. Eight of them were Turkish citizens. He said an independent investigation committee should be set up under the auspices of the United Nations to investigate the attack.

Piromya said he had also told Davutoğlu in a meeting on Tuesday night that Thailand appreciates Turkey and Brazil's efforts to convince Iran to organize a uranium exchange agreement. He said he regretted not having had more meetings in the past one-and-a-half years with the Turkish foreign minister. "I think we should more of that," the Thai foreign minister said.

He also said that he would like to see more Thai students coming to Turkey and more Turkish students studying in Thailand.

Piromya said an independent investigation committee will start probing the political violence of the past few months in Thailand, where the government continues its crackdown on the red-shirt protest movement.

The most recent protests started peacefully in mid-March but ended in May with an army crackdown that resulted in nearly 90 deaths and arson that damaged or destroyed more than 30 buildings. The state of emergency affects some civil liberties and gives the military broad powers to keep order. Piromya also criticized the Western media for distorting the violence and wrongfully portraying former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra as a champion of poor people's rights. He said the Western media was interested in "commercial activities, selling news and not telling the facts." He said the situation in Thailand could not be simplified as a poor rural vs. urban conflict.

He said a committee of academics will be working on a draft amendment proposal to change the Constitution and workshops where academics, media professionals and civil society organizations will come together to discuss Thailand's social inequality issues will be organized. The government is planning a referendum on constitutional amendments that will make it difficult to dissolve political parties and will introduce some changes to the structure of the Thai parliament after the new year. He said the judicial process for those who used arms will continue.

He said the government would try to follow this roadmap through the end of this year. Meanwhile, Thailand has extended the state of emergency which has been in place since the outbreak of political violence for another month. Piromya said the state of emergency would not be lifted until red-shirt protesters denounce violence as a means of achieving their aims.

The Thai government will spend \$60 billion to tackle the country's problems with poverty, education, universal healthcare and agriculture, Piromya said. He noted that the government will also fight corruption "We will make sure that every cent of [the \$60 billion] will go down to the villages and not be lost in corruption. We'll be an honest government."

10 June 2010, Thursday

E. BARIŞ ALTINTAŞ İSTANBUL

Israelis to protest Turkey in Cyprus

A group of Israelis will travel by ship to Cyprus to protest what they call the Turkish occupation of the island and call for the reunification of Cyprus under Greek Cypriot rule, an Israeli news report has said.

The group, which includes former deputy Alex Goldfarb and 63-year-old Israeli activist Pinhas Har-Zahav, made the announcement on Thursday. They are expected to travel to Cyprus this week, The Jerusalem Post reported.

The trip is considered to be in retaliation to the recent flow of aid ships to Gaza to break a long-standing joint Israeli-Egyptian blockade. An Israeli takeover of the Turkish aid ship the Mavi Marmara on May 31 resulted in the killing of nine activists, eight Turks and one Turkish-American. An unnamed wealthy Israeli donor is subsidizing the initiative. Israeli right-wing politicians are criticizing the government for releasing the Turkish activists under pressure from Turkey, claiming that there is evidence showing they had attacked the Israeli commandos boarding the ship. "It is our counter-visit to Turks in response to their so-called humanitarian mission. They are responsible for the Armenian Genocide and still hold Kurds in occupation," Har-Zahav was quoted as saying on Armenian news sites. "It is time to bring into light Turkey's hypocrisy," he added.

07 June 2010, Monday

ECONOMIC NEWS

Israel may divert tourists to Bulgaria

Thursday, June 10, 2010

SOFIA - Agence France-Presse

HURRIYAT

Israel is ready to divert up to 400,000 tourists to Bulgaria from Turkey this year because of the war of words over a deadly raid on an aid convoy, Israeli Welfare and Social Services Minister Isaac Herzog said Thursday.

"With the certain souring of our relationship with Turkey, where we have 400,000 Israelis who visit every year, it's only natural that Bulgaria would be the preferred alternative," Herzog, who is a former tourism minister, told journalists in Sofia.

Turkey has downgraded ties with Israel since the May 31 raid by Israeli commandos on ships carrying aid to Gaza in which nine Turkish nationals were killed.

Herzog encouraged Bulgaria to launch a marketing campaign to attract Israelis and added that he would discuss the issue with the tourism industry in Israel.

"We are talking of a very large population of people who are traveling," Herzog said.

"Over a million Israelis travel every year abroad ... they are tourists that like to spend a lot of money where they go."

Herzog saw "great potential" for Bulgaria to attract Israeli pensioners who, he added, were always looking for new places to visit.

"For example, they visit a lot the hot baths in Romania, in the Carpatian mountains, or they visit Greece. And what's more natural than just between Romania and Greece - to hop over to Bulgaria," he explained.

Bulgaria's Black Sea resort of Varna has "acquired an impressive name in Israel," according to Herzog.

"So I think we have a very major market two hours from here and we can have a very large population coming to visit your wonderful country," the minister said. Bulgaria's hopes to attract more Israeli tourists was also discussed during a visit by Bulgaria's Agriculture Minister Miroslav Naydenov to Israel last Friday.

**Hariri calls for integrated economic structure between Turkey, Arabs
Urging activation of Arab-Turk interaction, Hariri said, "there are riches and manpower in Arab world. We may establish a real partnership.**

Thursday, 10 June 2010 13:42

WORLD BULLETIN

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri said on Thursday that Turkey and Arab countries might establish an integrated economic structure.

"This partnership will foster power of Arabs and Turkey in economic and political platforms and international arena against challenges in the region," Hariri said while addressing the opening of Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum.

Hariri condemned Israel's attack on ships carrying aid to Gaza and noted the region was going through a very sensitive period.

Hariri said the region experienced difficulty in political and security area and suffered a lot from Israel's violence, and noted that Islamic and Arabic countries were endeavoring to restore a comprehensive and fair peace in the region. Hariri said Lebanon comprehended very well the importance of the agreement, supported stance of Arabs, tried to display a strong force and supported formation of a Palestinian state which had Jerusalem as the capital city.

Urging activation of Arab-Turk interaction, Hariri said, "there are riches and manpower in Arab world. We may establish a real partnership. We may establish an integrated economic structure with Turkey."

Referring to bilateral relations of Turkey and Lebanon, Hariri recalled that various agreements were signed during his visit to Turkey last December and noted that visa requirements were removed between the two countries.

Hariri said they expected Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to visit Lebanon in July and sign various new agreements.

Lebanese prime minister said private sector of the two countries assumed an important role for continuation of relations and underlined that partnerships should be established between the private sectors.

He said there was confidence environment in Lebanon adding the government was endeavoring to develop national economy.

AA

**Turkey's industrial employment rate up by 0.7% yr-on-yr in Q1
Turkey's statistics authority, TurkStat announced Thursday Turkey's quarterly industrial employment index for Q1.**

Thursday, 10 June 2010 13:24

WORLD BULLETIN

Turkey's industrial employment rate rose 0.7% year-on-year in Q1.

Turkey's statistics authority, TurkStat announced Thursday Turkey's quarterly industrial employment index for Q1.

TurkStat figures revealed industrial employment index in Q1 rose 0.7 % year-on-year and 0.4% quarter on quarter. Quarterly Industrial Employment Index was 96.6.

Work hours in the industry sector in Q1 rose 2.6% year-on-year but recorded a 0.7% quarter on quarter fall. Q1 Work Hours Index in industry sector was 95.1.

Gross wages-salaries in the industry sector rose 11.9% year-on-year and 0.5% quarter-on-quarter in Q1. Q1 Gross Wages-Salaries Index in industry sector was 149.5.

According to the Main Industrial Groupings (MIGs) classification in the first quarter of 2010; employment rose 4% year-on-year in intermediate goods sector, 3.2% in durable consumer goods, while it fell 0.7% in non-durable consumer goods, and 1% in energy sector and 4.1% in capital goods sector.

AA

**TOBB says Turkey, Arabic world must establish barter bank
Hisarciklioglu, said Thursday Turkey and the Arabic world must establish a barter bank.**

Thursday, 10 June 2010 13:34
WORLD BULLETIN

President of the Executive Board of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), Rifat Hisarciklioglu, said Thursday Turkey and the Arabic world must establish a barter bank.

The Third Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum (TAC) began together with TAC Economic Forum at the Four Seasons Hotel in Istanbul. Speaking at the inauguration of the meeting, Hisarciklioglu thanked Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan for his support extended to the TAC for the past five years.

The Arabic world, extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf, with a population of around 350 million people has a special place in the heart of the Turkish business world, Hisarciklioglu said.

At a time when the balance of power is being re-shaped, it is the common wish of the Turkish business community to see an Arabic world which has solved its regional problems, and reached welfare and stability, Hisarciklioglu stressed.

We want to establish cooperation with the Arabic world in all fields by maximum cooperation and integration, Hisarciklioglu said.

As the business world, we favor the establishment of permanent peace and stability in the region, Hisarciklioglu said.

The history of our region shows us that no problem could be solved by the use of force.

We are against embargoes, isolations and military interventions, Hisarciklioglu said.

Commercial relations between Turkey and Arab countries developed significantly in the past several years, Hisarciklioglu noted.

There are things we must do in order to continue this nice trend. We must first of all modernize the transportation net among our countries. Secondly, we must establish a strong banking system among our countries. We need to create a joint barter bank. Accordingly, we can reduce the dependency of Turkish and Arabic businesspeople on foreign banks. We can preserve the financial resources of the region in the region, Hisarciklioglu said.

Touching on the importance of lifting obstacles in the face of commerce, Hisarciklioglu said that the negotiations on free trade agreement between Turkey and Lebanon and Turkey and Gulf Cooperation Council must be completed soon.

Once these two agreements get signed, a vast area of free trade between the Eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf would be created, Hisarciklioglu said.

We invite Arab companies and investment funds to make more investments in Turkey. Let us work together to turn our region into one of peace, stability and welfare, Hisarciklioglu also said.

AA

Meat prices fall as slaughter of imported livestock begins

Skyrocketing red meat prices are expected to fall following the slaughter of 17,000 head of cattle imported into Turkey as the result of a successfully concluded tender for the purchase of livestock.

The government recently decided to resume livestock and red meat imports through the state-owned Meat and Fish Institution (EBK) following an eight-year ban as a result of the mad cow disease scare. The decision was aimed at curbing problems related to an unprecedented rise in prices in the Turkish red meat market over the past few weeks. A third tender for the purchase of 8,000 tons, or 17,000 head of cattle, was recently finalized following the failure of two previous bids. The slaughter of animals that have recently arrived in Turkey from 13 countries began at the EBK's Sakarya slaughterhouse early on Wednesday. EBK General Manager Bekir Ulubaş observed the process in Sakarya, accompanied by the local manager, Muharrem Uçar. The EBK has set the price per kilo of imported red meat at TL 12, well below current levels in the market. Meanwhile Turkey will receive 1,600 head of Angus dairy cows from Australia, with around 200 of the animals arriving in Ankara late on Wednesday. The animals, brought by Austock Exports Turkey (AET), were previously purchased by customers from various provinces.

10 June 2010, Thursday

SALIH MUMCU SAKARYA

Global, Turkish markets inch higher ahead of opening

World stock markets and the İstanbul Stock Exchange (İMKB) crept higher Monday as investors enter the new week tentatively.

İMKB climbed only 163.06 points at the opening of second trading session on Monday; shares were up 0.3 percent. The index opened the second session at 53,794.37 points.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 323 points Friday to close below 10,000 and at its lowest level since February.

The absence of any big moves comes after major indexes plummeted more than 3 percent Friday. Investors sold stocks following the Labor Department's monthly employment report that showed a slowdown in hiring by private employers in May. The weak report calls into question the strength and pace of a domestic economic recovery.

There are few domestic economic reports due out early this week that could ease the concern brought on by the jobs report, so investors could turn their attention elsewhere for the next few days. That means the health of Europe's economy could again become the focus of traders and the Gulf of Mexico oil spill will also likely garner attention.

Hungary's government backed off statements it made last week that it was facing a similar debt crisis to Greece, but that wasn't enough to calm ongoing concerns. European markets fell modestly Monday.

The euro fell to a new four-year low early in the day, but rebounded and is now trading higher. As it recovered from early morning losses, European markets have pared some of their losses.

The euro dropped as low as \$1.1878 before bouncing back to \$1.1974.

Ahead of the opening bell, Dow Jones industrial average futures rose 23, or 0.2 percent, to 9,969. Standard & Poor's 500 index futures rose 3.50, or 0.3 percent, to 1,069.60, while Nasdaq 100 index futures rose 8.75, or 0.5 percent, to 1,843.00.

Bond prices dipped following big gains on Friday. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note, which moves opposite its price, rose to 3.24 percent from 3.21 percent late Friday.

Treasury prices surged Friday sending interest rates sharply lower because investors sought safety of government bonds following the jobs report.

The Labor Department said Friday that private employers hired just 41,000 workers in May, down sharply from 218,000 in April and the lowest number since January. It was a reminder to investors that while the economy is incrementally improving, the pace of recovery is not necessarily swift.

Investors trying to get beyond the sting of that report will have to wait until Wednesday afternoon for another broad reading on the health of the economy. The Federal Reserve releases its beige book on Wednesday, which will provide the Fed's view of the economy on a regional basis.

The weekly unemployment report due out Thursday is likely to get increased attention because the monthly jobs data was so disappointing. Economists expect initial jobless claims inched lower last week.

Retail sales and consumer sentiment reports are due out Friday. Those two reports could be vital to investors regaining confidence because there is concern that without new jobs being created consumers will cut back on spending and their confidence will wane.

Retailers' stocks were among the hardest hit after the employment report Friday.

Meanwhile, oil and gold prices both fell Monday.

08 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAY'S ZAMAN WITH WIRES İSTANBUL

Turkey on its way to reaching millennium development goals

Turkey's efforts to reach the "millennium development goals" set by the United Nations 10 years ago were discussed at a meeting yesterday, suggesting that the country has indeed made great progress so far and has a promising future.

Titled the "Millennium Development Goals Regional Conference," the meeting, which took place in İstanbul on Wednesday, was jointly organized by the State Planning Organization (DPT), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

Speaking at the meeting, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan praised Turkey's efforts to reach the millennium goals set by the UN. Turkey is implementing multi-dimensional reforms in every area, Erdoğan said, which is both in line with the

millennium development goals, EU accession negotiations and the country's own targets. All of these efforts are yielding positive results, the prime minister said, explaining that the share of people in the overall population living in poverty declined from 26.9 percent in 2002, before his party came to power, to 17 percent. In 2002, 0.2 percent of the population was earning less than \$1 each day, but this figure is now zero as of 2006, he stated. The share of people in the overall population living in food poverty also declined from 1.35 percent in 2002 to 0.5 percent in 2008.

The government has introduced the Health Transformation Program in a bid to extend the scope of health insurance, Erdoğan said, adding that Turkey has made great progress in reducing the infant mortality and maternal mortality rates as well as increasing the schooling rate.

State Minister Cevdet Yılmaz also noted that as the 17th largest economy in the world, Turkey has been a successful role model during the first 10 years of the current millennium. Despite the recent global financial crisis, Turkey continued its efforts to raise the living standards of its people in line with the millennium development goals, he stated. "We are steadily making progress in all development goals. Most of the 2015 goals have been reached now," he said.

Kori Udovicki, director of the UNDP's Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, also congratulated Turkey for its successes in the recent term. Udovicki said the country has taken its place among new donor countries. Turkey, together with Russia and new EU-member states in its region, has continued to contribute to international cooperation more and more, he noted, adding that these countries had significant development experiences, unlike the traditional donors, and that they would share those experiences with relevant countries.

UNECE Executive Secretary Jan Kubis also said Turkey not only plays an important role in its region but is also a remarkable actor in the global arena.

10 June 2010, Thursday

TODAY'S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

Turkey to support establishment of industrial zone in Iraq

Turkey will support establishment of an organized industrial zone in Iraq.

The Union of Chambers & Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) will support and assist Iraq in establishing a new organized industrial zone.

TOBB Chairman Rıfat Hisarcıklioğlu had a meeting with Iraq's Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi and discussed ways to boost Turkish-Iraqi commercial relations in İstanbul. During the meeting, Hisarcıklioğlu requested al-Hashimi to help solve problems of Turkish trucks carrying goods to Iraq.

Al-Hashimi said his country was open to cooperation in establishing a new organized industrial zone, and asked TOBB's support to set up a qualified industrial zone in Kirkuk. The Iraqi vice president said his country wanted Turkish businessmen to make more trade and investments in Iraq, and invited Hisarcıklioğlu to Iraq to discuss business opportunities in his country.

Hisarcıklioğlu also met Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Mualem and Syrian Finance Minister Muhammad al-Husayn.

10 June 2010, Thursday

THE ANATOLIA NEWS AGENCY İSTANBUL

Turkey cements regional cooperation with Russian energy deal

Only one day after the signing of three critical natural gas supply deals with Azerbaijan, Turkey has taken yet another step to intensify efforts to emerge as an energy hub in the region.

Turkey and Russia signed a nuclear cooperation deal in İstanbul on Tuesday during the third summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). The Turkish Atomic Energy Agency (TAEK) and Russia's Federal Service for Ecological, Technological and Nuclear Supervision (ROSTECHNADZOR) signed the deal. Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yıldız and Russian Deputy Premier Igor Sechin signed the agreement at a ceremony held at İstanbul's Çırağan Palace.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, also attended the ceremony. The agreement foresees information and know-how exchange on the licensing of nuclear facilities and activities. Under the agreement, TAEK and ROSTECHNADZOR will cooperate in the areas of regulations for licensing and supervision, protection from radiation, management of the quality of nuclear facilities, radioactive fuels and fuel waste management, safety regulations for nuclear/radioactive materials and radioactive wastes, emergency reaction and readiness and training for supervisory personnel.

Erdoğan stated at a joint press conference with Putin in İstanbul that the government would make multidimensional relations with Russia a priority in foreign policy and that "we aim to raise our trade volume to \$100 billion in the next five years." Erdoğan said Turkey receives a great deal of its natural gas from Russia and that Turkey would take new steps towards the using more natural gas in industry. Putin stated that natural gas from the Shah Deniz field "is not enough to meet the planned Nabucco pipeline's needs." Monday's deal with Azerbaijan will allow Baku to export gas to Europe via Turkey. Underlining that Russia respects the Turkish side's right to diversify energy routes, Putin said they concentrated particularly on some previously outlined projects that will increase Russian natural gas exports to third countries via Turkey. Turkey and Russia are currently discussing building an oil pipeline from Samsun on the Black Sea coast to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan and a gas pipeline that will run underneath the Black Sea, called Blue Stream 2. Cyprus, Israel and other countries in the Middle East are expecting natural gas from this project as well.

Turkey's relations with Israel are in tatters after Israel killed nine Turkish peace activists on board an aid vessel en route to the blockaded Gaza Strip. Putin said the projected pipeline would not be extended to Israel "due to extra financial burdens."

Meanwhile the two countries yesterday also signed a joint declaration on tourism in İstanbul.

Meanwhile, Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yıldız said on Tuesday in İstanbul that Parliament would vote within a few weeks on a deal with Russia to build Turkey's first nuclear power plant. "The agreement we signed on the construction of the nuclear plant will be submitted to Parliament for approval within the next two to three weeks," he told reporters.

09 June 2010, Wednesday
TODAY'S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

COMMERTARY

Is Turkey tilting to East?

Thursday, June 10, 2010

YUSUF KANLI

HURRIYAT

Not so long ago, when secularist die-hard Ahmet Necdet Sezer was the tenant of the presidential seat of the Turkish republic, executives of the Turkish foreign ministry were suffering immense pain of the hard labor to find a pretext to tell Iranians that while they very much appreciated and indeed pleased with the repeated wish of the Iranian president to make a state visit to Turkey. The “agenda” of the Turkish president was so heavy, or he was suffering from such acute back pain that “for now” that they believed it would be more appropriate to consider such a visit at a later date.

That “later date” never came as long as Sezer remained in the seat of the president. Over the past few years since the 2007 the change of the tenant of the Turkish presidential palace, however, the Iranian president has made several visits to Turkey and indeed was even given the opportunity to address a clandestine rally in the heart of Istanbul carrying his anti-Israeli and anti-American rhetoric to the largest Turkish city.

Has there been a change in Turkey’s foreign policy priorities?

A few years ago, in the aftermath of the so-called Feb. 28, 1997 process or the post-modern coup, Tuncer Kılıç, an outgoing four-star secretary-general of the then very powerful National Security Council, found himself in a sea of criticisms when fed-up with the frequent European scolding of Turkey, he declared at a military symposium in Istanbul that Turkey was no country obliged to walk in the footsteps of the West, was not a country with no alternatives, but should as well pay attention to developing economic, political and strategic relations with Russia, Iran and India. He was accused at the time of being an “Eurasianist” willing to replace Turkey’s almost two centuries old European and thus Western vocation with a “Eurasian alternative.”

Since then, Turkey has become 65 percent dependent on Russia regarding natural gas and 35 percent regarding oil imports. Once the first nuclear power plant in Turkey, a Russian project, is completed and start the energy production, Turkey’s dependence on Russia will further be consolidated. If Iran is added, we may comfortably say that in the energy field Turkey is squarely dependent on Russia and Iran.

Not so long ago, when Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu was only an advisor to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Khaled Meshaal, the military head of the Hamas was invited to Turkey by the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP. At the time Turkey had gone under some strong criticism, there was a domestic outburst, and Erdoğan had to escape to a factory to avoid coming together at the Ankara airport with the Hamas chieftain but Abdullah Gül, not in his then capacity as foreign minister but as an “AKP executive” had met with Meshaal at the AKP headquarters.

Few days ago the prime minister of Turkey not only declared Gaza as the “historical cause” of Turkey, but underlined as well that Turkey considered Hamas as a “political party” and a “resistance group.”

Has there been a change in Hamas? Did it denounce terrorism? Did it lay down arms and start engaging in civilian politics? What is the difference between a “resistance group”

and a “terrorist gang”? If a group is indiscriminately attacking and killing civilians; if a group orders individuals to get onboard school buses and blow themselves apart and kill “enemy” civilians; if a group is firing rockets on the “enemy territory” without discriminating civilian settlements, hospitals and schools, is it a “resistance” group or a “terrorist” gang?

Of course, the Israeli state applying similar terrorist actions and indiscriminately murdering civilians in Gaza and elsewhere, including on the humanitarian aid flotilla, has to be condemned as acts of state terrorism which indeed worst than actions of a terrorist group as states are expected to conform to norms of international law. Yet, has Hamas changed and become a civilian political element?

An effort to take the Turkish “no” vote at the Iran sanctions resolution as a demonstration of the tilt in Turkey towards the East or towards radicalism could only be a farcical approach to a fundamental problem: Gradual consolidation of an autocratic and radical mentality in Turkey...

All for the sake of 'strategic depth'

Thursday, June 10, 2010

Semih İDİZ

HURRIYAT

We complimented Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu for the crisis management skills he displayed after the deadly raid on the “Mavi Marmara” in the Eastern Mediterranean by Israeli commandoes. We know now that he is capable of showing leadership under pressure.

It was also this leadership that made him deny that there was a link between the Israel operation against the Mavi Marmara, and the PKK attack on the same day against the armed forces in Iskenderun which left six sailors dead.

This was a dangerous link that was established by Hüseyin Çelik, a deputy head of the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP.

Observers maintained that Çelik was trying to deflect anger away from the government during the funerals of the killed soldiers. The idea was that if you could somehow blame Israel for the İskenderun attack, then angry reactions would be directed way from the AKP. This is clearly important for the government because anger at the AKP during such funerals is on the increase.

This anger even resulted in Energy Minister Taner Yıldız receiving a punch in the face during the funeral of another soldier killed by the PKK in May. Mr. Davutoğlu nevertheless had the sense and propriety to say there was no evidence to suggest that there was such link between the two incidents. In doing so he acted responsibly and in a way that was above mere party considerations.

But, regardless of complimenting him on his crisis management skills, one cannot help wondering where Mr. Davutoğlu’s grand vision of “strategic depth” for Turkey is leading the country. This question looms much larger now following the serious defeat his diplomacy received at the Security Council on Tuesday during the vote on sanctions against Iran.

Turkey, along with Brazil, voted against sanctions on Iran, but 12 of the remaining Security Council members, including all five permanent ones, voted for it. Granted there is Brazil, so Ankara can say it was not totally isolated.

But this is poor consolation given that Brazil is a country that is thousands of kilometers away from the Middle East while Turkey is viewed as a key player in the region. One cannot therefore see the Turkish rejection of the sanctions in the same light as Brazil's, since the ramifications are much greater for Turkey. The greatest blow to Ankara came from Russia and China since both countries voted in favor of the sanctions. This was a double blow for Prime Minister Erdoğan, because his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin was uttering remarks on the topic in Istanbul, a day before the vote in New York, that were pleasing to the AKP government.

But the truth is that, just as Putin was appeasing Turkey, his envoy in Vienna was telling the IAEA that the uranium-swap deal worked out by Turkey and Brazil for Iran was not sufficient to meet the demands of the international community.

Much worse for Turkish diplomacy, though, was the fact that the AKP government could not even convince Security Council members Lebanon and Bosnia and Herzegovina, countries to which Ankara is very close, to vote against the sanctions. While Lebanon abstained, Bosnia Herzegovina acted with the majority and voted for the sanctions. Turkey was also unsuccessful in convincing the African members of the Security Council, Uganda, Nigeria and Gabon although much of Africa had supported Ankara's bid for membership in the Security Council - despite Turkey's great opening to the African continent.

While the AKP government is now trying to convince the public that the outcome at the Security Council represents an "honorable stance" for Turkey, as opposed to the "wily and self-serving stance of the others," there can be no doubt that Turkey's foreign policy ship has run seriously aground this time.

This, we believe, is the result of the AKP government disregarding a foreign policy orientation that has a century of experience behind it and its going out of its way instead to take controversial steps that make many in and outside Turkey wonder where the country is headed.

If this is being done in the name of "strategic depth," then the isolation that this has brought Turkey in such a crucial international platform as the Security Council is there for all to observe. If, on the other hand, this is being done to vent anger at the West in general, and Europe in particular, then the result is again there for all to observe because Ankara could not even convince non-Western countries in the Security Council to vote against sanctions on Iran.

There is another option of course. All of this may be being done for the sake of Prime Minister Erdoğan's personal religious and ideological mission - whatever that may be. If that is the case, one has to say he is being successful. But he also has to take note of the fact that more and more people in Turkey are beginning to question why damage is being done to Turkey's well-established and almost institutionalized international relations.

It is always easy to bring down edifices one may not like personally, even if these edifices are functional and serve a purpose. The question is what one replaces them with. It is clear that after the vote at the Security Council, the AKP government will be put even more under the projector light at home and abroad in order to try and understand where it is taking Turkey.

If you were to ask us, we would have to conclude that the AKP government has allowed itself to be taken over by delusions of grandeur and has, as a result of this, painted itself into a corner on a number of foreign policy issues.

Prime Minister Erdoğan is expressing particular animosity towards retired diplomats now, who he calls “Mon Chers,” a French term Turks use to belittle their own diplomats, implying that they are “gutless effete and good for nothing.” He is doing this because these people are urging caution as well as policies that are more in line with Turkey’s traditional international preferences and commitments. But if he listens more to the “Mon Chers” it is evident that the outcome will be much better for Turkey.

'No' vote will deal blow to Turkey-US ties

Thursday, June 10, 2010

SERKAN DEMİRTAŞ

HURRIYAT

Amid sound and fury, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates’ argument that Turkey was pushed away from the West was not adequately analyzed.

His basic assumption suggests that Turkey was pushed away from the West, but he followed on to say that it was because of the European Union. There were numerous pieces and articles published in the international media highlighting this suggestion, but as far as we do remember it was a first that a senior U.S. government official underlined it. Also note that the statement came hours before Turkey had to make a choice between abstaining and voting against U.N. Security Council sanctions to be imposed on Iran. So to say, this assertive statement by Gates would give us hints on potential consequences of the Thursday vote on the bilateral relations. It was William Burns, a senior State Department official, who said the administration was disappointed by Turkey’s vote against the sanctions. If one thinks that the alliance between the two countries dates back to late ‘40s, the depth of disappointment at the other side of the Atlantic would be understood in its clearest format.

No doubt this vote would be interpreted as a step for further alienation of Turkey from the Western world, especially at a moment when it has cut diplomatic and military ties with Israel following the latter’s brutal attack against a Turkish humanitarian aid ship the other week. Nonetheless, almost suspended full membership negotiations with the EU further complicates this picture. Giving the impression of echoing Hamas or Iran’s arguments on regional problems is another factor fueling concerns of Ankara’s distancing from the West.

Apart from these points, perhaps we should better focus on how this move would have an impact on bilateral relations with the U.S. To put it straight, we should underline that Washington sees the Iranian nuclear program as its top security concern. That’s why it was expecting all of its NATO allies to back itself in this course, as required by the spirit of alliance.

Just to make a comparison: It’s not very much different how Turkey is willing to see full support from its allies in its fight against the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK. We do not know whether Washington will seek a payback from Turkey but it would not be surprising if Turkey would face some consequences in the aftermath of the vote. At least we can foresee that Turkey would have difficulty in getting U.S. support on some crucial international issues like the Cyprus problem, the reconciliation process with Armenia, or the EU process.

Having said that, and given the fact that the interests of the U.S. and Turkey throughout the Balkans, Caucasus and Afghanistan overlap, that would be premature expectation of severing the relations. So, this is time for two allies to begin a damage control process through proper diplomatic channels.

It's no doubt the spirit of alliance has been hurt for a second time, only seven years after the famous March 1 incident. Turkey and the U.S. should be wise enough to immediately start mending relations before it is too late. Let's all not forget that Turkey-U.S. ties cannot afford another March 1 crisis and its aftermath consequences.

Turkey's clash of civilizations

Thursday, June 10, 2010

Soner Çağaptay

HURRIYAT

Since the Justice and Development Party, or AKP, assumed power in 2002, Turkish foreign policy has made a 180-degree turn. The country's once-strong ties with the United States and Israel have been weakened, and entry talks with the European Union have stalled while Ankara has come to the defense of the Iranian nuclear program and Hamas. The reason for this shift is simple: Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his government believe Samuel Huntington was right, that there is a clash of civilizations. Only they are on the side of the Islamists, not the West.

For the AKP, "Turkey's traditionally strong ties with the West represent a process of alienation." This is a quote from "Strategic Depth," the opus written by Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkey's foreign minister. Unfortunately, "Strategic Depth" has not been translated into English, though Westerners would do well to read it to get a better understanding of Ankara's thinking. The work's executive summary answers all questions about the AKP's foreign policy: "Since the end of the Ottoman Empire, Muslims have gotten the short end of the stick, and the AKP is here to correct all that."

The AKP won't correct all wrongs against Muslims, though. This is because Islamism, a political ideology that sees Muslims in perpetual conflict with the West and with "non-believers," and not Islam, guides the AKP's foreign policy. Ankara will therefore favor other Islamists over Muslims that don't share their Manichean worldview. Thus, the party will forgive and even defend the ills of Islamist regimes against fellow-Muslims, such as the Sudanese genocide of Darfuris or Tehran's suppression of its own population. Likewise, it will support Islamist Hamas and its violent goals, but not the secular Palestinian Authority or the peaceful Palestinian cause.

This selective solidarity also applies to ills committed against Muslims by non-Muslims, as long as those non-Muslims are anti-American or anti-European. That's because political Islam has made the strategic decision that the enemy of its enemy is its friend.

Hence, Russia will get a pass regardless of how many Chechens it kills.

Ankara, though, will always singularly target Israel, because the AKP adheres to the Islamist view that the Jewish state as such, irrespective of its specific borders or policies, will always be a sore in the "Muslim world."

There is little the West can do to change the AKP's foreign policy outlook. In fact, some policymakers and pundits in Washington and European capitals have, perhaps unwittingly, helped empower this development in the first place. Believing that the supposedly reformed Islamist AKP could be a bridge-builder between Western and

Muslim countries, they promoted the new Turkish government as a special mediator in the region while shielding it from those critics who worried early on about the AKP's worldview.

Allowing such an Islamist catalyst into the Middle East's conflicts produced devastating results. Because the AKP sees a clash of civilizations everywhere it looks it cannot be an impartial mediator. Hence, when the AKP was allowed to interject itself between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, or the United States and Iran, it quickly became a tribune for the Islamist side, rising in their defense. After eight years of increasingly authoritarian and dominant AKP rule at home, many Turks now also see the world through the Islamists' eyes of a clash of civilizations.

Even though the AKP is the main political force in the country, the party's popularity has been sliding after the opposition Republican Peoples' Party, or CHP, elected a charismatic new leader. One survey even showed the opposition party pulling ahead of the AKP for the first time since 2002. Recent polls, however, show that the Gaza debacle, which resulted in the tragic death of Turkish citizens, has boosted the AKP's popularity. The government will no doubt continue to use populist, anti-Western foreign policy to boost its popularity in the run up to next year's elections.

The West needs to face the reality that, despite the country's NATO membership, Turkey can no longer be considered a Western ally under the AKP. In order to contain the AKP's Islamist's influence not just in Turkey, but also in the region, the West must deny the Erdoğan government the influence and prestige that comes with being promoted as a regional mediator. It's time for Western leaders to distance themselves somewhat from Ankara.

This column originally appeared in The Wall Street Journal Europe.

Muhammad Cetin

Role of civil society in Turkey's judicial reform

Records from the court-ordered wiretap of former Justice Minister Seyfi Oktay have revealed cronyism in the higher judiciary, with many judges and prosecutors asking the minister directly for higher positions in the judiciary. It seems the former minister and his cronies had exerted inappropriate influence on cases, the courts and the appointment of judges and prosecutors for almost 15 years.

In 1946, for the needs of post-war Europe, Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, a British politician and attorney general, said: "The law is a living thing. It is not rigid and unalterable. Its purpose is to serve mankind, and it must change and grow to meet the changing needs of society." Today's Turkey also needs reform in law, and the rule of law must be strengthened and evolve to serve all its citizens.

Civil society needs to involve itself with this living law creatively, rather than seeing it as fixed, unalterable and as a means to be used in power struggles between mighty groups. Also, in a modern democracy, civil society should engage with the law and "humanize" the state and its institutions, bringing it into line with "public conscience." That is, citizens urge governments to comply with and implement the law and to develop it for the benefit of all rather than for the narrow interests of particular groups.

In addition, the law in any particular society is formed with respect to its ethical foundations, arising from its common conscience. Therefore, in contemporary societies citizens are encouraged to be continually involved in refining their consciences in the

light of current affairs, and also to monitor the rulings and actions of the judiciary. Thus, the law is not static but evolving, and cannot be abandoned to the dictates of partisan politicians and legal professionals of a certain period. Civil society must therefore play a big part in reflecting the public conscience and international law.

However, this view encounters official and public cynicism in Turkey today. People are perplexed as to whether the law has real force and applies equally in all circumstances. Although some articles of the Constitution are well articulated, when they are applied to cases affecting certain interest groups, the protests start. Some of the judiciary condemn ordinary citizens for meddling in the law, saying that individuals are “unqualified” to uphold the law or to “take the law into their own hands.” It seems only the select few can be involved, those chosen from among certain associations of prosecutors and judges; it is apparently not up to the government or Parliament to deal with legislation and the execution of the law or the Constitution.

But these are all false arguments that hold our society back. They have prevented the courts from acting as a necessary balance to the power of the executive and ensured that they do not do their job of judging whether, for instance, gangs and putsch-minded people within the judiciary and the armed forces are acting within the law. This lack of judicial oversight has allowed our state to cover up illegal acts.

Nonetheless, one simple route for civil society to bring governments to comply with and develop international law is campaigning for the implementation of EU regulations and requiring our institutions to comply with existing international law. Through education and lobbying, civil society organizations encourage debate and urge governments to uphold international law by suggesting various policy changes.

Individuals and groups have also requested a judicial review of government decisions and the indictment of government and military leaders who have been complicit in plots, extrajudicial killings, coups and crimes against peace and humanity as well as those involved in the preparation of such crimes.

This is all part of the process of bringing our society into line with international human rights law. Civil society is often well ahead of institutional changes, so legal challenges may not work out at a particular time. Nevertheless, they often succeed at a later date, when attitudes have changed and institutions have caught up. Thus courts must continually be presented with the opportunity and challenge of implementing international law on human rights and of acting independently of the executive.

The strength and wisdom of a society lies in its people. We need the government and legal system that we deserve as contemporary citizens of a civilized international community. We believe we are not completely powerless but are responsible individuals. Thus we cannot stay silent when we see gross crimes being committed in our name. We have seen the active deployment of weapons and plots that could destroy the fundamental principles of law, the Constitution and international law. Taking the law seriously, we call our institutions to account. We become part of the force behind the evolution of our society, taking a part in shaping the law and ensuring its implementation.

10 June 2010, Thursday

IBRAHIM OZTURK

Economic implications of Turkish-Israeli conflict (I)

Turkey has been judged to have been in line with the policies of a US-Israeli alliance in its region since the Cold War era. Such an alliance actually means very little for the Turkish public. It is also not possible to mention any favorable contributions from this collaboration to the development of the Turkish economy.

Turkey was for a long time nothing more than a “memory” in the minds of Arab countries, and it is hard to explain where the country actually stood in this period. With nowhere to go, the country has suffered from a severe identity crisis for the past 50 years. The US-Israel alliance gradually made Turkey enemies with its neighbors, with whom it had shared the same borders for centuries. Turkey all at the same time missed the opportunity to engage in political cooperation with Arab countries, enter regional markets, attract investments and capital from the Gulf region in particular, promote its halal food potential in these markets and attract tourists.

While such unions as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the EU and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) became the centers of attraction in their regions, Turkey had to remain outside the pitch; the EU did not hesitate to isolate the country, and this fact cost Turkey years.

In addition, Turkey’s allies have failed to provide it with the necessary support when it was in need. For instance, the US deliberately chose to “abuse” the Armenian issue when it could have helped in its solution between the two neighbors. Turkish-Armenian relations are in tatters due to the Armenian side’s claims of a so-called genocide with respect to the 1915 killings of Armenians under the Ottoman Empire. Turkey has had to funnel billions of dollars into the American Jewish lobby for a possible solution of the Armenian issue for the past 50 years but with no result. They are lobbying to avoid a possible endorsement of Armenian claims in the US.

The US was also expected to use its influence in the solution of the Cyprus issue; however, this was used against Turkey, too. It was its “strategic ally,” the US and NATO, which imposed an embargo on Turkey following the Cyprus intervention. Decades-long armed attacks on the defenseless Turkish Cypriots culminated in 1974 when an Athens-backed Greek Cypriot military coup on the island led to Turkey’s intervention based on its rights stemming from the Treaty of Guarantee.

There is widespread suspicion in Turkish society that the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) has been created, supported and used by the American-Israeli alliance for the past 30 years as part of a plan to keep Turkey under their influence. Following the war in Iraq in 1990, the invader state provided the necessary infrastructure for the establishment and growth of the PKK in the years to come.

The alliance had been able to keep Turkey under control thanks to military coups in the past. The better the alliance was able to weaken the democratic structure in the country, the less they had to worry about the illegal things that have happened in Turkey.

However, the more Turkey worked to improve the democratic environment, break the chains of the Cold War and follow multifaceted policies, the more the long alliance with the US-Israeli pact has started to shake; it is becoming harder for Turkey to maintain the same close relationship with these countries than in the past. We should analyze the current impasse with Israel in this regard. It seems that Israel is the party that must shoulder responsibility to cool down the tension, not Turkey. Turkey was among the first countries to have recognized the Israeli state. The country has also made clear it has no problems with the Israeli public but is uneasy with the irresponsible acts of the current

government. Turkish lands (the Ottoman Empire) have offered sanctuary to Jewish refugees escaping mass killings in Europe in the past. We can assume that many Jews are aware of such a fact. A recent picture that showed Jews waving Turkish flags during a protest against the Israeli government in different parts of the world was a clear sign of it. In short, the problem is with the Zionist romantics. Today's Israeli government is engaging in the same -- even worse -- brutality that Hitler's Germany perpetrated, but on the innocent Palestinian people.

That is why many are prompted to ask, "Could these people be the children of Hitler?"

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