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TURKEY

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Submitted By: Aasia Khatoun khattak

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## **SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **SUMMARY-POLITICAL NEWS**

#### **Democratic Kurdish Initiative and Pkk terrorists conflict**

Regarding Democratic Kurdish Initiative, the current Turkish Government expressed her determination that she, unlike previous governments would not try to stop criticism or allegations most prominently that the Democratic initiative increased terror rather to stop it. The Government has a strong determination to preserve a balance of freedom and security in the Southeastern region of Turkey.<sup>11</sup> Turkish soldiers were killed in an attack by PKK terrorist in Hakkari. The escalating bloody conflict between Turkish armed forces and PKK terrorists gave air to the discussion of possibility of martial-law in the Southeastern region of Turkey. This discussion is continuing to draw sharp reactions from intellectuals, politicians and terrorism experts.

While in a rebuke of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), civic groups and nongovernmental organizations in the predominantly Kurdish Southeast have called on the terrorist organization to put an end to its violence and have urged the government to continue on the path of reform.

#### **BAN ON SMOKING Under consideration to be up lifted**

The Constitutional Court, in response to a request from the council of state said it will examine the constitutionality of the smoking ban and consider whether an article regarding ban on indoor smoking can be made invalid or not. The Constitutional Court has not yet said when it will take up the matter. The Council of State ruled June 20 that the ban on smoking in teahouses is unconstitutional, saying that it limits personal freedoms as well as the freedom of labor. It recommended establishing separate smoking and non-smoking areas in place of the blanket ban on smoking indoors.

#### **Report: Turkey, Greece should stop treating minorities as lesser citizens**

The report, titled "A Tale of Reciprocity: Minority foundations in Greece and Turkey," presented at a Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) conference, said It is time for Turkey and Greece to leave behind their policy of "reciprocity" when it comes to their minority groups. Both states have for decades held their own citizens hostage, pitting them against each other in the name of defeating the other in foreign policy. Minority foundations in both countries are subjugated to political goals and hidden agendas by stakeholders, even the most advanced legal solutions would fail to heal the problems of minorities. The report also makes a number of new policy recommendations for both governments to deal with the issue more effectively.

#### **Study links headscarf ban to downturn in women's employment**

Dilek Cindođlu, a professor of political science at Bilkent University, in her study "Headscarved Women in Professional Jobs: Revisiting Discrimination in 2010 Turkey" conducted for the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) has suggested that society should be aware of a possible link between the declining employment of women and the headscarf ban in Turkey.

A new study has suggested links between the downward trend in women's employment and the headscarf ban in the public sector, which might have a spillover effect on the private sector.

### **SUMMARY-GEO-STRATEGIC NEWS**

#### **TURKEY AND ISREAL**

#### **Turkey raised Flotilla Incident at G-20 Submmit**

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the G-20 summit in the Canadian city of Toronto held several bilateral talks with world leaders, including US President Barack Obama and discussed recent incident of aid flotilla. In the incident nine Turkish supporters were killed. Erdoğan said that he gave copies of Council of Forensic Medicine documents on those nine victims to British Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero.

#### **Turkey closed her air-space to Israeli military flights**

Turkey has closed its airspace to some Israeli military flights after Israeli commandos killed eight Turks on an aid ship in international waters during a deadly May 31 raid.

#### **Israel signaled it may compensate and apologize to families of victims of its aid-flotilla raid**

Israel has signaled it may compensate and apologize to families of some of the victims of its aid-flotilla raid in comments during a covert meeting between Turkish and Israeli officials, the first high-level contact since the deadly attack.

#### **Secret Meeting between Israel and Turkey to improve strained relations**

An Israeli cabinet minister secretly met Turkey's foreign minister in Europe on Wednesday in an attempt to improve strained relations in the wake of a recent raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla, Israeli government officials said.

#### **Syria and G-8 support Brazil and Turkey on Nuclear swap deal with Iran**

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad voiced support for the efforts of Brazil and Turkey to broker a diplomatic solution to the international tensions over Iran's nuclear program. The annual Group of Eight (G8) summit ended welcomed all diplomatic efforts made recently by Brazil and Turkey on the specific issue of the Tehran Research Reactor."

#### **Visit of Indonesian President to Turkey**

Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's paid visit to Turkey. It was the first visit by an Indonesian president to Turkey in 25 years, since the last Indonesian presidential-level visit to the country. Turkey and Indonesia had also agreed on a visa waiver program and more flights between the two countries. Indonesia will open a consulate in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, Indonesia's Culture and Tourism Minister said on Wednesday. During the visit, the Indonesian Batik Foundation (YBI) is organizing a fair to promote Indonesia's rich culture in Istanbul. The fair is expected to feature a trade exhibition, Indonesian batik fashion show, performances of Indonesian traditional music and dance .

#### **Syria's Operation against the terrorist organization PKK**

Syria has detained 400 militants in operations against the terrorist organization PKK. Syria organized simultaneous operations against the PKK in Aleppo, Kamishli, Afrin, Al Hasaka and Al Raqqa cities, and detained 400 people on charges of being a member of the terrorist organization.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, while underlining Turkey's role and strategic position within NATO, has said Western countries, the United States included, should act together with Turkey in its fight against terrorist activities by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

#### **Turkey and European Union**

Turkey has not given up its ambition to join the European Union and has no intention of cutting its ties with the West, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said.

The European Union opened accession negotiations with Turkey on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy chapter on Wednesday.

A senior Turkish official has claimed that Turkey's new biometric passports, with their enhanced security, will now step up the process for the EU to abolish visa requirements for Turkish citizens, noting that the new passports will be amongst the most secure forms of identity worldwide.

Biometric passports were always on the agenda during Turkey's talks with the EU. Turkey has already fulfilled its responsibility regarding biometric passports," Foreign Ministry Deputy Undersecretary Naci Koru said in an interview with Today's Zaman.

#### **Turkey ready to mediate talks between Syria and Israel**

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said Turkey was ready to resume mediating indirect talks between Syria and Israel, if the two sides voiced such a demand and "Israel conformed with the standards of the international law."

#### **Cyprus Issue**

Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu has challenged his Greek Cypriot rival to reach a peace deal this year that would reunite the divided Mediterranean island, saying "there must be a time limit."

Eroğlu, who met with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in New York on Monday, said it was time to reach a deal and that the United Nations and the European Union "have a responsibility in order to see these negotiations are successfully concluded."

#### **Turkey and Iran signed memorandum on health**

Turkish Health Minister Recep Akdağ said on Friday that a memorandum of understanding signed between Turkey and Iran on health would be advantageous for the two countries and the region. Turkey and Iran could cooperate in many areas in health. Turkey and Iran are very similar to each other with respect to their population, money spent on health and indicators of health.

#### **Turkey welcomed approval of Kyrgyzstan's new constitution**

Turkey welcomed approval of Kyrgyzstan's new constitution in a referendum on June 27. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Tuesday, "the referendum, which was held in a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere, undoubtedly constituted a significant step for development of a democracy and rule of law in Kyrgyzstan."

#### **Summary-ECONOMIC NEWS**

In partnership with the Universal Hospitals Group network of Turkey, The Gaziantep-based Acarsan Group is set to complete the construction of five new hospitals in Iraq and submit them to the direction of the Iraqi Health Ministry by the beginning of 2012.

These hospitals will be built in the Iraqi cities of Karbala, Basra, Babil-Hilla, Missan and Nasiriyah.

Turkish Central Bank Governor Durmuş Yılmaz said Thursday that he expected 2010 annual inflation rate to turn out higher than the annual target of 6.5 percent.

In a presentation at the Parliamentary Commission on Planning and Budget on Thursday, Yılmaz made projections about Turkish economy. Yılmaz said the Bank expected annual inflation rates for 2011 and 2012 to float around 5.5% and 5% respectively.

Turkey's exports to neighboring countries rose by 9.6 percent in the first four months of 2010, from the same period a year earlier, to reach 4.7 billion USD.

Yevgeny Primakov, a former prime minister of Russia, has said Turkey has started to undertake a leadership role in the region thanks to the active foreign policy it has been pursuing over the past couple of years.

Unemployment was highest in Turkey's southeastern provinces of Adana, Diyarbakır and Hakkari last year, while the highest rates of employment were found in the northeastern provinces of Rize, Artvin and Gümüşhane, a recent report has revealed.

Turkey's southern province of Antalya has drawn 1.27 million tourists since the beginning of June.

The representatives of the Turkish ready-to-wear industry have convened in Bursa to set a series of ambitious targets for the mid and long term, such as creating jobs for 1.5 million new workers in the next decade and earning a combined annual revenue of \$60 billion from exports by 2023.

Syria has demanded an extra 250 megawatts of electricity from Turkey. Syria, at present, is purchasing 250 megawatts of electricity from Turkey, wants to raise this capacity to 500 megawatts. Therefore, it has sent a demand to the Turkish Electricity Trade Corporation (TETAS).

The Turkish energy minister said on Wednesday that Turkey was willing to raise electricity trade with Georgia to 1,100 megawatts. Turkey's Energy & Natural Resources Minister Taner Yıldız said that the current electricity trade capacity between Turkey and Georgia was 100 megawatts.

The World Bank decided to grant 700 million USD of Environmental Sustainability and Energy Sector Development Policy Loan (ESES-DPL 2) to Turkey, the Turkish Treasury Undersecretariat said on Thursday.

## **POLITICAL NEWS**

### **Gov't determined about democratic initiative, fight against terror**

The government is being careful not to commit the same mistakes as former governments in the fight against terrorism. Blocking its ears to criticism alleging that the democratic initiative increases terror and rejecting calls to bring back the Emergency Rule Region (OHAL) in Turkey's Southeast, the government seems determined to preserve the balance of freedom and security.

In 26 years of the fight against terrorism perpetrated by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), 42,000 citizens have been killed, and Turkey is questioning its methods of fighting the problem. Although the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), which has been carrying out the fight against the PKK, accepts that the method is wrong, many political parties demand responding to terrorism with violence.

While explaining that the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) is careful about not committing the same mistakes as former governments, former Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu, who is current deputy chairman of the AK Party, told Sunday's Zaman: "We do not care about the parties which impose their deadlock as solutions. We did not fall into the same traps as the previous governments, and we will not."

Aksu said former governments had merely let the military handle the fight against terrorism and did not fulfill their duties in economic, social, political and diplomatic terms in the fight against terrorism.

### **Aksu: We will not be mistaken again**

Aksu served as interior minister during the terms of former governments when terrorism was intense. Aksu spoke about former Prime Minister Tansu Çiller's proposal to make investments in the region to stop terrorism; she was in office in the early 1990s. "We did not think of the terrorism problem as a struggle with the security forces then. We met the needs of our security forces in the fight against terrorism, on the one hand, and we made economic, social and cultural investments in the region on the other.

"Important steps have been taken in the past eight years in the issues of democratic rights and freedoms. The ban of broadcasting in the mother tongue was abolished and Kurdish institutes were opened. People had the freedom to learn their mother tongue and name their children in their own language. The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation [TRT] launched a Kurdish broadcasting station. All the villages in the region were provided with roads and water resources with Köydes [Village Infrastructure Support] and Beldes [Municipalities Infrastructure Support] projects. We allocated \$12 billion to GAP [Southeastern Anatolia Project], which will develop the region, and we aim to complete the project. The governments before us only looked at the issue in terms of security. We have changed that point of view," he said.

### **'You cannot totally wipe out terror'**

While noting that the inappropriateness of the method was accepted by chiefs of General Staff and force commanders, Aksu said they will take a step back with democratic gains. "If opposition parties that support a traditional fight against terrorism with armaments were a little more conciliatory, both the democratic initiative and the constitutional reforms would be successful in Turkey. See who did not want the democratic initiative? Mostly the PKK and its extensions. Now those parties offer their deadlock to us as

solutions. Turkey knows very well that those methods will not bring about a solution,” he said.

The parties that act with the discourse of “we will totally wipe out terrorism” do not see the realities, according to Aksu. “No countries with problems of terrorism have totally wiped out terrorism. What they do is to minimize terrorism and render them unable to act. This is what we want.”

### **Military accepts mistakes**

About 30 soldiers were killed in the aftermath of April 27, 2007 e-memorandum when terrorist incidents began to increase, with attacks targeting the Dağlıca and Aktütün military outposts in Turkey. In light of recent incidents, military officers also seem to be changing their point of view in the fight against terrorism. Former Chief of General Staff Gen. Yaşar Büyükanıt and retired Gen. Edip Başer confessed that the military had committed grave errors in the fight against terrorism.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said at Tuesday’s AK Party group meeting in Parliament that Turkey will not repeat the same old mistakes. On the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) proposal to reinstitute OHAL, Erdoğan said, “Calling for a state of emergency is tantamount to bowing down to the language of terrorism.”

Recalling that a state of emergency was declared on July 19, 1987 and it was abolished on Nov. 30, 2002, Erdoğan said during his speech in Parliament: “What problem did OHAL solve? From the statistics, you will see that terror was at its peak during the state of emergency. A state of emergency deepens terrorism, victimizes the people of the region and strengthens the abuse of terror.”

### **Experts find old methods mistaken, too**

Experts on terrorism and strategy also accept that the methods of fighting against terrorism applied by former governments were wrong. In a recent speech, main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu accepted that the old methods were detrimental. “It is wrong to respond to blood with blood,” he said. Chairman of the International Strategic Research Center (USAK) and renowned security analyst Sedat Laçiner told Sunday’s Zaman that in addition to committing mistakes in the fight against terrorism, Turkey also commits mistakes in its fight against terrorists. “There are many mistakes in the fight against terrorism. First of all, you cannot battle against terrorism with a large, slow-moving army because they are not designed for fighting against terrorism.”

Highlighting that it is wrong to deploy 250,000 soldiers in the region where terrorism is concentrated, Laçiner asserted that the battle must be waged by professional experts in terrorism instead of a regular army.

Assistant Professor Bekir Çınar of Niğde University noted that England’s struggle against the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was successful when projects to win hearts and convince people were implemented along with intelligence gathering. In addition to responding to terrorism with violence, there is disagreement between intelligence units in Turkey, according to Çınar. Explaining that England carried out its fight against terrorism by withdrawing the army and maintaining the fight with professional security forces, Çınar said: “A new page can be turned in the fight against terrorism with the democratic initiative. However, internal balances, political parties and differing points of view in the bureaucracy prevent this page from being turned.”

### **Government determined on democratic initiative**



Suat Kılıç, the deputy chairman of the AK Party parliamentary group, reacted to the criticism that the government is inefficient in its fight against terrorism and that the democratic initiative weakens this struggle.

“The governments before us only dealt with the issue of terrorism in terms of the military and security. We, on the other hand, are trying to carry out the fight and have been keeping human rights, freedoms, democracy and security alive for eight years,” Kılıç said, highlighting that the government will not give up on the democratic initiative.

27 June 2010, Sunday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **‘Society will answer those pleased at the supposed end of the initiative’**

Following the killing of 11 Turkish soldiers by terrorists in Hakkari last Saturday, discussions have emerged over the possibility of declaring Turkey’s conflict-ridden Southeast an Emergency Rule Region (OHAL) -- and the prospect of instating martial law there is continuing to draw sharp reactions from intellectuals, politicians and terrorism experts.

Observers are urging that Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) administration not abandon the initiative that it launched last summer to address Turkey’s long-standing Kurdish problem, a deeply rooted and complex issue that has dimensions involving ethnic separatism, terrorism and economic inequality. They underscore that Turkey’s newfound regional influence and power as a result of a revamped foreign policy would be undermined should it now institute undemocratic measures to address the Kurdish issue at home. Noting that -- as the government had stressed when first unveiling its initiative -- the Kurdish problem cannot be solved with weapons alone, intellectuals emphasize that the nation’s 30-year struggle with the outlawed, separatist Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) proves this point.

Kurdish writer and intellectual Ümit Firat emphasized in remarks to Sunday’s Zaman that violence would not solve the Kurdish problem and that declaring martial law would be disastrous. “What would you accomplish by declaring the region an OHAL? This would only increase the victimhood of people in the region. ... I find the democratic initiative period to be a good and sincere one. ... The government shouldn’t be undecided about [the democratic initiative]. They must strengthen the democracy that eradicates violence instead of violence itself, which they should oppose. Those who lay ambush to soldiers, attack military outposts and detonate mines and bombs have a desire: They want to prevent society from developing expectations over the good pace of [the initiative]. This is an absolutely flawed understanding,” he said.

Cevat Öneş, former deputy undersecretary at the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), said: “I don’t find it correct for OHAL to be discussed. It’s not a situation that suits today’s Turkey. They’re saying that the initiative is over; in my opinion it hasn’t ended, it’s just slowed. Within these global conditions and domestic dynamics, nobody can put an end to the initiative. New steps need to be taken toward democratization. This process should be carried out with speed. A party that can’t log progress on this issue can’t be elected and can’t come to power.”

Similarly, writer-researcher Aytekin Yılmaz of the Association of Confronting the Past and Researching Social Events says that the idea of declaring martial law in the Southeast would only add fuel to the fire. “Speaking of OHAL in today’s Turkey is nothing more

than lunacy. What would be the goal of doing so? Are they dreaming of a Turkey with more blood, more chaos and more pressure? The AK Party wants to make major moves, but it's a reality that they're caught between pincers. Despite this, the initiative must be continued -- the fact that a solution to this problem cannot be found in weaponry is a truth that has been known in Turkey for a century."

The experts also decry speculation that a new wave of PKK terrorist attacks in Turkey in recent days marks the end of the government's initiative. Intellectuals and Kurdish and Turkish citizens who believe in democracy say that the government will continue with the democratic initiative until it produces the desired results. Urging that this process proceed with definite steps, the experts say that this is what society demands of its leaders.

Yılmaz weighed in: "The loss of human life is painful beyond description. We've been being killed for years, and the unfortunate result is clear. Steps are [now] being taken that the courage could not be summoned for throughout this nation's republican history. Along with this, those who want to throw the initiative off course have also not rested. This process begun by the AK Party must be perpetuated with concrete steps, and it would have the public's support in such a venture."

Pro-Kurdish Rights and Freedoms Party (HAK-PAR) Chairman Bayram Bozyel says that the recent spate of terrorist attacks are, in fact, aimed at the democratic initiative itself. "Those exerting efforts toward that end will see in time that they are wrong. ... Armed conflict is a method that's been exhausted by the state at this point; and the same goes for the PKK. ... Nobody should say happily that the initiative is over -- it's not over and it's not going to end. Kurds, Turks and everyone who believes in democracy must take steps down this path, and the government must draw strength from this and embellish the process with concrete steps," he said.

Former MIT official Öneş agrees that the PKK is trying to sabotage the democratic initiative, saying: "The latest incidents are tactical attacks by the PKK. The PKK is both insisting that the government talk to it and at the same time it wants to be the sole power in control of legal Kurdish politics being conducted in Turkey. This attitude isn't consistent with a path to peace. When we look at the debates in the last few days, we see that the atmosphere in Turkey is returning to that of the 1990s -- except that in society, there is a desire for a solution to the Kurdish problem and for peace. I think that the actors in the political arena need to take note of this."

Meanwhile, observers are also leveling criticism at the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), noting that the military has available to it every resource in the war on terrorism and thus has no excuse for its gross negligence. Terrorism and strategic expert Dr. Birol Akgün says that it is unacceptable for the military of a nation that has been fighting terrorism for 30 years to display such incompetence. Akgün decries Turkey's dependence on foreign sources for weapons technology, saying: "If you're dependent on foreign countries for weapons, then you'll experience these weaknesses, because you can't trust [the technology]. That is what lurks beneath these incidents. How reliable is the information coming from the Herons that we spent millions of dollars to purchase? If the intelligence coming in is sound and just wasn't appropriately evaluated, then you have a technical intelligence error at hand. This is negligence, betrayal. After such incidents, there's also an element of psychological exhaustion that develops. Everyone is affected by this. For 30 years, there's been negligence."

The solution, some say, lies in completing the transition to a professional army that would be more suited to combating the PKK, which is mobile and utilizes guerilla tactics against fixed military targets. "Everyone has a share of responsibility in the events that have been taking place," Sinan Oğan, president of the International Relations and Strategic Analysis Center (TÜRKSAM). "I oppose Turkey carrying out the struggle against terrorism by itself. I think that in the struggle against terror, the Special Operations Unit must be restructured. The war on terror should be run by the Interior Ministry."

Oğan echoed common criticisms of the Turkish military's strategy in fighting the PKK, pointing out that sending young men performing their mandatory military service to fight seasoned terrorist operatives would naturally result in many deaths on the Turkish side. "You're sending someone who's received three months of training to face a terrorist who's been in the [PKK bases in the] mountains for 20 years. You have to be at the same level as the terrorist you're fighting. As well as s/he knows that geography, you have to know it just as well. This isn't a job for 18-year-old children to do, for we're facing an international terrorist organization," he emphasized. "This issue must have a national counterterrorism strategy determined for it by the government, military and opposition, and this must be implemented without turning it into a tool for domestic politics. We've been fighting for 30 years -- if we're going to have to fight for another 30, then we need to be structured accordingly."

"We need a professional army; this is something to be done in the long term. In the short term, special units should be established subordinate to the Interior Ministry. And we need to not think of the struggle only in armed terms. If we don't also take into consideration social, economic and political factors, then our efforts will be incomplete," Oğan said.

His sentiments were echoed by Participatory Democracy Party (KADEP) Secretary-General Nizamettin Maskan, who said: "There's a social problem [in the Southeast] that cannot be solved by OHAL but [by remembering that] Kurds and Turks have always had blood ties; we've always lived in the same lands and shared the same fate. Some circles are engaging in nationalism, but what's important is to prepare for the future of living together and sharing together. We all need to participate in projects that will give hope to future generations. Otherwise, people will begin searching for other things and veer toward alternatives. We can't open the door to this happening. We need to secure the political, democratic and economic conditions for togetherness. And in order to do this, we need to establish a ground based on trust."

27 June 2010, Sunday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Turkish Constitutional Court to take up smoking ban**

Thursday, July 1, 2010

ISTANBUL - Daily News with wires

The Constitutional Court has said it will examine the constitutionality of the smoking ban and consider repealing an article applying to traditional teahouses, a change that could return indoor smoking to other venues as well.

The court announced its decision Thursday in response to a request from the Council of State, the country's top administrative court.

The Constitutional Court has not yet said when it will take up the matter. The Council of State ruled June 20 that the ban on smoking in teahouses is unconstitutional, saying that it limits personal freedoms as well as the freedom of labor. It recommended establishing separate smoking and non-smoking areas in place of the blanket ban on smoking indoors.

The Council of State case started with a filing by the Chamber of İzmir Teahouse Owners against the first article of the memorandum on Prime Ministry Law No. 4207, which defines the smoking ban. If the Constitutional Court decides to repeal this article, indoor smoking may return not only to traditional teahouses, but also to all cafes, bars and restaurants because the law covers “restaurants owned by private individuals alongside establishments where entertainment services are offered, such as teahouses, cafeterias and pubs.”

In its decision, the Council of State mentioned the public health and environmental problems caused by the consumption of tobacco products and said both the Constitution and the World Health Organization’s Tobacco Control Treaty require taking precautions to limit such harms. It added, however, that such “bans and limitations ... should not make it excessively difficult for commercial establishments to continue their existence, and the operators’ use of free labor should not be subjected to difficult circumstances.” The administrative court also said in its decision that it is a legal necessity to consider that tobacco consumption is, in the end, the “personal choice of the consumer.” The Council of State said it is possible for the government to separate smoking and non-smoking areas inside establishments, apply the ban according to the size of the business or create a different kind of limit on smoking that does not contradict the principles of personal or labor freedoms.

The legislation took full effect July 19, 2009, and outlawed smoking in all enclosed public places, including bars, cafes, restaurants, taxis, trains and outdoor stadiums. The ban includes premises that serve nargile, or hookah, and excludes private residences. Businesses are additionally required to make arrangements to protect non-smokers if smoking is permitted in open-air sections of the premises.

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## **Turkey's Saadet Party dismisses rumors on alliance with AKP**

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Thursday, July 1, 2010

ANKARA — Hürriyet Daily News

The Saadet (Felicity) Party leader Numan Kurtulmuş said the party has not engaged in coalition calculations or electoral alliances for a possible election.

Kurtulmuş said the party’s objective is to construct a capable political center for the future.

Media reports in the last few days have alleged a possible coalition between Saadet and the Justice and Development Party, or AKP.

Kurtulmuş addressed these reports at a press conference on Thursday, saying rumors of coalitions between Saadet and many other parties, primarily the Democratic People’s Party, or CHP, have also surfaced.

Pointing out that these reports reveal Saadet to be the "key party," Kurtulmuş said, "No talk of party coalitions or electoral alliances has been discussed within our party. No meeting has taken place, and we are unaware of such discussions."

Kurtulmuş invites leaders to Şırnak

Kurtulmuş went on to say Saadet is prepared to support a meeting between party leaders to discuss the fight against terror.

"If they can't find a place to meet up, my proposal to the ruling and opposition party leaders is this: come to Şırnak and let's meet at a martyr's house," he said.

Kurtulmuş said the only thing he remembers from the "democratic initiative" meetings in Parliament are the "blows and insults" and that a "meeting discussion" is now on the agenda.

Inviting the party leaders to Şırnak, Kurtulmuş said the city is significant because it has been oppressed for years by gangs and terrorism, with 335 casualties between 1984 and 2008.

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### **Kurdish civil society calls on outlawed PKK to stop violence**

In a rebuke of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), civic groups and nongovernmental organizations in the predominantly Kurdish Southeast have called on the terrorist organization to put an end to its violence and have urged the government to continue on the path of reform.

NGOs, numbering around 100, came together in Diyarbakır yesterday to issue a declaration, calling on the PKK to "de-escalate the situation," a term used to advise the organization to stop attacks on Turkish targets including military ones. The statement also urged the government to keep working on the democratization initiative it launched last year to expand the rights of Kurdish citizens.

Galip Ensarioğlu, the chairman of the Diyarbakır Trade and Industry Chamber (DTSO), read the declaration on behalf of the civil society organizations of the city and urged the public to act with common sense.

Before reading the declaration, Ensarioğlu denied reports claiming that the PKK threatened the NGOs and told them not to issue a statement urging the terror group to halt its violence. "The allegations of threats are not true," he said, adding that "even if that happens, we will not hesitate to state our goals."

The short declaration points out the reasons for the current violence, which has claimed many lives both in direct armed conflict between the PKK and the army and other violence that resulted in a terrorist bombing in İstanbul's Halkalı neighborhood last week in which six citizens including a 17-year-old girl lost their lives.

According to the declaration, it was noted with regret that a variety of amendments that would have increased society's confidence were not able to be enacted in Parliament in time.

"In order to discuss all aspects of the Kurdish question in a free environment, there is a need for new regulations in the field of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

There is a need for amending the Elections Law. The recent constitutional reform package did not include any regulations to ease the solution of the Kurdish question.

Human rights defenders and children are arrested. All these developments led to an invitation for the emergence of a violent atmosphere and speaking with guns," the declaration pointed out.

It also stated the reasons the civil society organizations had urged the government to stop all kinds of operations and asked to PKK to "de-escalate the situation."

The declaration did not explain what it meant by “all kinds of operations,” but many Kurdish intellectuals underlined that the recent security operations against the Kurdish Communities Union (KCK), allegedly an urban extension of the PKK, harmed the government's democratization process that was launched to address the decades-old Kurdish question in Turkey.

During these operations, which are called the KCK operations, more than 1,400 members of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy (BDP), including 12 elected mayors, have been arrested, and recently an indictment against those arrested was accepted by a court.

The civil society organizations also urged the PKK to return to a position of de-escalation, which does not necessarily mean a cease-fire or laying down arms. Rather it means that the PKK should refrain from acts that might lead to a direct armed conflict or not to attack, but if there are any security operations against the PKK, it can respond.

Another step towards a de-escalation of violence is a cease-fire in which it withdraws its armed men. But the PKK has never laid down arms in its history.

Civil society organizations also urged the government to get involved with “all the dynamics that can play an active role in the solution.” The declaration did not say what these dynamics are, but for many experts it means the PKK and its leader, who is serving a life prison term on Imralı Island in the Marmara Sea.

Conservative Kurdish intellectual Altan Tan, who is not a signatory to the declaration since he is not a representative of a civil society organization, said the government during its democratization initiative was not able to understand that there are many groups involved with the Kurdish question, such as liberal intellectuals, Kurdish intellectuals who are putting distance between themselves and pro-Kurdish politics, and Kurds who are thinking with Islamic references.

“We asked the government to involve these groups as well. We told them not to implement the democratization initiative only with academics. They also need to separate the Kurdish question and the PKK problem,” he said, while explaining to Today's Zaman what “all the dynamics” might mean.

He added that once the PKK and the Kurdish question are successfully separated, the interlocutor for laying down arms should be the PKK.

Altan added that the declaration in general is positive and balanced because it increases its demands for both the PKK and the government.

The declaration of the civil society organizations also urged the government, opposition parties and all state institutions to show the “necessary political will” in order to prepare a constitutional basis for the solution.

The declaration also invited all these institutions “to abandon the attitude that neglects all the relevant sides and all dynamics.”

According to Sedat Laçiner from the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK), the statement did not meet the general public's expectations.

“They are using words that are reminiscent of the PKK discourse. They are using the same language as the terrorist organization,” he told Today's Zaman.

Laçiner added that the government took great risks with the democratization initiative and engaged in a fight with gangs within the state but that Kurds in general were not able to criticize the PKK.

“They are forgetting that there is nothing on the ground that can be used to legitimize the violence. If they only want democratic autonomy as they claim, there is no reason to keep

thousands of armed men in the mountains. Also, all these reasons they mentioned in the declaration for the escalation of the situation are not good enough to explain the reasons for the conflict,” he said.

But Hatem Ete from the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) pointed out that only this declaration stated that the democratization initiative was successful in one of its goals, which is to create a free atmosphere of discussion.

“The democratization initiative ensured the involvement of civil society. Before it, the problem was only discussed within the limited framework of the dimension of security. I strongly believe that the free atmosphere of discussion that we now have will positively contribute to the solution,” Ete told Today's Zaman.

28 June 2010, Monday

## **TODAYS ZAMAN**

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### **Southeastern civil society up in arms against PKK violence**

Amidst an increase in terrorist attacks around the country by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), dozens of civil society organizations from the Kurdish-dominated southeastern provinces have banded together to stand against the PKK terrorism and call on the organization to lay down its arms.

NGOs, numbering around 100, came together in Diyarbakır yesterday to issue a declaration, calling on the PKK to “de-escalate the situation,” a term used to advise the organization to stop attacks on Turkish targets including military ones. The statement also urged the government to keep working on the democratization initiative it launched last year to expand the rights of Kurdish citizens.

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According to the declaration, it was noted with regret that a variety of amendments that would have increased society's confidence were not able to be enacted in Parliament in time.

“In order to discuss all aspects of the Kurdish question in a free environment, there is a need for new regulations in the field of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. There is a need for amending the Elections Law. The recent constitutional reform package did not include any regulations to ease the solution of the Kurdish question. Human rights defenders and children are arrested. All these developments led to an invitation for the emergence of a violent atmosphere and speaking with guns,” the declaration pointed out.

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During these operations, which are called the KCK operations, more than 1,400 members of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy (BDP), including 12 elected mayors, have been arrested, and recently an indictment against those arrested was accepted by a court.

The civil society organizations also urged the PKK to return to a position of de-escalation, which does not necessarily mean a cease-fire or laying down arms. Rather it means that the PKK should refrain from acts that might lead to a direct armed conflict or not to attack, but if there are any security operations against the PKK, it can respond. Another step towards a de-escalation of violence is a cease-fire in which it withdraws its armed men. But the PKK has never laid down arms in its history.

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28 June 2010, Monday

## TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Report: Turkey, Greece should stop treating minorities as lesser citizens**

It is time for Turkey and Greece to leave behind their policy of “reciprocity” when it comes to their minority groups, states a report presented at a Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) conference, which also makes a number of new policy recommendations for both governments to deal with the issue more effectively. “Both states have for decades held their own citizens hostage, pitting them against each other in the name of defeating the other in foreign policy,” states the report, co-authored by Dilek Kurban of TESEV and Konstantinos Tsitselikis, assistant professor at the Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies at the University of Macedonia in Greece.

The report, introduced during a June 24-25 TESEV conference, indicated that both Turkey and Greece took steps forward, regarding their policy of reciprocity, through new laws that govern minority foundations.

“Unlike its predecessor, Greek Law No. 3647 of 2008 does not make any reference to the principle of reciprocity. In fact, for the first time, Law No. 3554 of 2007 overtly denounced the principle of reciprocity,” the report notes, as Greece underlined that “reciprocity is not aligned with the European values that Greece constantly applies.”

On the other hand, the 2002 amendments to the Law of Foundations in Turkey made the exercise of newly introduced rights conditional on the principle of reciprocity, and Law No. 5737 of 2008 still contains an explicit reference to reciprocity, though it seems to apply to foreign foundations only.

The report further elaborates on the controversy between different groups in the Turkish state, as it mentions the dispute between the legislature and former President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, who vetoed an earlier version of the 2008 law on the grounds that, among other things, the law did not include a reference to reciprocity in accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne.

However, the treaty grants community/minority foundations of pious, social, educational, or religious purpose the right to acquire, make use of, and dispose of real estate. Articles 40 through 44 of the treaty impose corresponding duties on the Turkish state and Article 45 confers on Greece “parallel obligations” to grant its Muslim minority, or the Turkish

minority of Western Thrace as the community self-identifies, the same rights that Turkey is required to grant its non-Muslim minorities.

Soon after August 2007, the end of Sezer's term, Parliament readopted the law, which was immediately approved by the new president, Abdullah Gül. There was further disagreement between the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party), which introduced limited improvements to Law No. 5737 and thereby provoked a nationalist reaction. Finally, on June 17 of this year, the report notes that the Constitutional Court unanimously rejected the CHP's petition, putting an end to more than two years of uncertainty regarding the law.

In conclusion, the report states that both Turkey and Greece have taken positive steps in addressing the treatment of minorities in each country, but some structural issues remain to be solved. "Structural problems remain due to an unspoken endorsement of 'millet' like communitarianism and the prevalence of nationalistic perceptions toward minorities in both societies," it reads.

#### **'Greece, Turkey should address problems regarding minorities'**

The report, titled "A Tale of Reciprocity: Minority foundations in Greece and Turkey," also has a few policy recommendations for the governments of Greece and Turkey. But it notes that as long as minority foundations in both countries are subjugated to political goals and hidden agendas by stakeholders, even the most advanced legal solutions would fail to heal the problems of minorities.

#### **To Greece:**

A sincere and profound dialogue should be undertaken with the Muslim communities of Western Thrace and Rodos/Kos in order to develop a liberal and democratic framework, and to establish management and administrative structures that would allow Muslim communities to run their foundations without constraints.

Law No. 3647 should be amended to bring it in line with both the Treaty of Lausanne and the civil law on foundations, in order to safeguard minority rights and bring community foundations under the rule of law.

There should be a clearer division between the private and public sphere, in which minorities exert decisive and managerial authority and the state exerts supervision as a guarantor of the principles of clarity, fair administration and accountability, in order to protect the rights of the minority.

In case they are missing, title deeds of the main foundations and their real estate should be issued in the names of minority foundations.

#### **To Turkey:**

There is an urgent need for further amendments to Law No. 5737. Provisional Article 7 should be amended to allow the immediate return of all confiscated properties to their rightful owners and to pay compensation for those properties that were passed on to third parties.

The government should give due attention to the joint proposal developed by lawyers from the Armenian and Jewish communities for amendments to Law No. 5737.

An administrative or judicial mechanism should be established to review the Directorate General for Foundations' (VGM) assessment of applications under Provisional Article 7 and to revoke arbitrary rejections and demands that require applicants to submit further documentation.

The VGM circular on Provisional Article 7 should immediately be revoked.

The government should closely monitor key bureaucratic institutions such as the VGM and land registry offices to ensure that they abide by the instructions of the prime minister's circular.

The prime minister should issue a follow-up circular specifically calling on the VGM and land registry offices not to require foundations to produce documents they do not have or cannot obtain.

27 June 2010, Sunday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Study links headscarf ban to downturn in women's employment**

A new study has suggested links between the downward trend in women's employment and the headscarf ban in the public sector, which might have a spillover effect on the private sector.

Dilek Cindoğlu, a professor of political science at Bilkent University, has suggested that society should be aware of a possible link between the declining employment of women and the headscarf ban in Turkey in her study "Headscarved Women in Professional Jobs: Revisiting Discrimination in 2010 Turkey" conducted for the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV). She said that a 2008 study by certain research organizations, such as Konda Research and Consultancy and Metropol, found that about 72 percent of women wear headscarves in Turkey.

She added that headscarved women constitute about 11 percent of university graduates; although the headscarf ban is enforced in universities, it largely depends on the university administration on how strictly the ban is implemented. In addition, the headscarf is banned in the public sector.

Moreover, women's employment has been decreasing in cities, she said, recalling that women's employment has been increasing in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries; however, in Turkey the figure has gone down to 22 percent in recent years, from 34 percent in 1988. "We should be concerned about this," she said at her presentation yesterday at a TESEV panel titled "Politics, Institutions and Citizenship in a Changing Turkey: Is It Possible to Live Together?"

"A World Bank report calls this the 'Turkey puzzle,' and the simple answer is that it is because of the rise of the Islamic values in Turkey," she said.

However, she pointed out that in such Islamic societies as Malaysia and Indonesia women's employment is not on the decline. Cindoğlu links this phenomenon to a "spillover" effect. She explained that professional jobs have different structures and working conditions compared to blue and pink collar jobs.

"As opposed to working with a specific space and a set number of individuals or institutions, professional workers are expected to engage with a variety of persons and institutions to perform their jobs. Consequently, the headscarf ban in the public sector influences private sector institutions," she said.

Giving an example, she said that if a headscarved journalist chooses to cover political news, her ability to pursue stories in political institutions will be restricted.

"Equally, a self-employed headscarved pharmacist who works with public sector enterprises or institutions will have problems meeting her correspondents for business, or a headscarved sociologist who works in a think tank may be asked to remain in the office instead of being invited to join her colleagues in external meetings," she said.

The study, which was conducted between December 2009 and June 2010 in the city centers of Ankara, İstanbul and Konya, was carried out through face-to-face and focus group interviews. The subjects were married, single, employed and unemployed headscarved women and the spouses of headscarved professional women, and influential male and female leaders. A total of 78 women and 25 men were interviewed as part of the study. The study further revealed that private sector enterprises also hindered the “visibility” of headscarved professional women by discriminating against them in recruitment, wage policies, employment opportunities, promotions and dismissals. “Different pressures and expectations stemming from job markets, traditional household roles and patriarchal family structures collectively operate toward the discouragement of professional headscarved women from participation in job markets,” she said. She added that this situation also affects women without headscarves because when the number of women in the job market decreases, fewer measures are adopted to facilitate the employment of more women by adopting favorable working conditions.

25 June 2010, Friday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Constantly Changing Exam Requirements Test Patience of Turkish Youth USAK PUBLICATION**

Though Turkish students undergo a slew of exams at all grade levels, their real test seems to be navigating the continual changes in testing requirements, which critics say leave educational policy stalled at the “rough draft” stage.

Education Minister Nimet Çubukçu’s announcement Monday that the three-stage exam implemented three years ago for high school entrance would be changed back to a single test is just the latest reversal to have students, families and educators abuzz.

“The [government] does not have a clear policy on how to govern national education with democratic methods and in a scientific way,” said Zübeyde Kılıç, president-general of the educators’ union Eğitim-Sen, who blamed the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, for abandoning the concept of national education and leaving it up to the private sector.

“The [educational] process is presented to the private sector on a platter, saying, ‘You are welcome to make a profit from it as best you can,’” Kılıç said.

Çubukçu defended the ministry’s recent decision by saying the current qualification test for high school entrance, known as the SBS, subjects children to exam stress at too young an age. “Education is a very lively process,” she said, adding that the ministry arrived at its decision by listening to academic experts and consulting scientific reports. “We are living in a rapidly changing world so we have to administer our [country’s] education by constantly questioning our understanding of governing.”

Derya Hepşen, the mother of eighth grader Mevra Hepşen, expressed approval of the new approach to the SBS in an interview published Tuesday in daily Vatan. “They have stolen children’s childhoods from them,” she said, adding that her daughter was interested in music but had to quit because of a lack of free time.

Other parents, however, disagreed with the change, calling it unfair.

Ziya Şengöz, the father of seventh grader Gizem Şengöz, said his daughter would have to take two more SBS exams while entering sixth graders will not. “This change shows us that our national education policy is facing doom,” he said.

Currently, students have to take the SBS in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Under the new plan Çubukçu announced Monday, the exam will be phased out gradually. Students who have already taken at least one of the tests will finish out the existing three-step process, while those who start sixth grade in the fall will take a single exam in the eighth grade. The minister announced Tuesday that the high school entrance exam would be eliminated altogether in four years.

“How easy directing education is; just change the tests and it is done,” Sadık Gültekin wrote in his Tuesday column for daily Vatan. “Did you notice? Hüseyin Çelik Çubukçu’s predecessor] came and his first action was changing the testing system. The person responsible for [the Higher Education Board, or] YÖK came and his first action was changing the tests. Nimet Çubukçu came and her first action was changing the tests.”

The changes occur frequently because decisions on policies used to be made by the top people in the ministry without consulting anyone else, said Yaşar Şahindoğan, the secretary for the educators’ union Türk Eğitim-Sen. “Since people who are in the practicing positions are not asked [their opinion], changes are being made as mistakes are observed,” Şahindoğan said, noting that the most recent change is an exception to the rule since Çubukçu consulted with Türk Eğitim-Sen as well as other unions.

Türk Eğitim-Sen backs the decision to institute a single-step SBS in the eighth grade, Şahindoğan added, saying that the previous system favored private courses called “dershane” because students started to attend these courses two years earlier under the old method.

Some 1.2 million students attend the 4,200 dershanes in Turkey.

Faruk Köprülü, the president of the Union of Private Dershanes, told daily Radikal on Tuesday that the group believed it would only lose a small number of sixth-grade students due to the change in the SBS. “Parents do not send their children to dershanes only for success on tests,” he said. “They also send them for [general] success in school.”

Changes in the last five years

The series of recent changes to the high school entrance exam began in 2005, when what was then called the LGS was turned into the OKS, which collected together all state high school exams, including those for entering vocational high schools. In 2006, the exams for entering private high schools were also incorporated into the OKS. In 2007, the OKS was cancelled and replaced with an entirely new system, the OGES, the predecessor of the SBS exams, as part of an attempt to spread the testing out during the last three years of primary education rather than leaving a student’s fate up to a single two-hour exam. The OKS was offered for the last time in 2008, when sixth and seventh graders also took their SBS exams.

In 2009, the Council of State cancelled an illegal application of the OGES, which resulted in the lowering of nearly 2 million students’ grades. In 2010, the exam for private foreign high schools was cancelled and students at those schools also had to take the SBS.

The merry-go-round of changes does not end with the high school entrance exam; the test to earn a place at a university, which was previously held each June, at the end of the academic year, has also changed this year. Students will now have to take two major exams instead of one.

Wednesday, 30 June 2010

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**Turkish Constitutional Court to Take Up Smoking Ban**

The Constitutional Court has said it will examine the constitutionality of the smoking ban and consider repealing an article applying to traditional teahouses, a change that could return indoor smoking to other venues as well.

The court announced its decision Thursday in response to a request from the Council of State, the country's top administrative court.

The Constitutional Court has not yet said when it will take up the matter.

The Council of State ruled June 20 that the ban on smoking in teahouses is unconstitutional, saying that it limits personal freedoms as well as the freedom of labor. It recommended establishing separate smoking and non-smoking areas in place of the blanket ban on smoking indoors.

The Council of State case started with a filing by the Chamber of İzmir Teahouse Owners against the first article of the memorandum on Prime Ministry Law No. 4207, which defines the smoking ban. If the Constitutional Court decides to repeal this article, indoor smoking may return not only to traditional teahouses, but also to all cafes, bars and restaurants because the law covers "restaurants owned by private individuals alongside establishments where entertainment services are offered, such as teahouses, cafeterias and pubs."

In its decision, the Council of State mentioned the public health and environmental problems caused by the consumption of tobacco products and said both the Constitution and the World Health Organization's Tobacco Control Treaty require taking precautions to limit such harms. It added, however, that such "bans and limitations ... should not make it excessively difficult for commercial establishments to continue their existence, and the operators' use of free labor should not be subjected to difficult circumstances."

The administrative court also said in its decision that it is a legal necessity to consider that tobacco consumption is, in the end, the "personal choice of the consumer." The Council of State said it is possible for the government to separate smoking and non-smoking areas inside establishments, apply the ban according to the size of the business or create a different kind of limit on smoking that does not contradict the principles of personal or labor freedoms.

The legislation took full effect July 19, 2009, and outlawed smoking in all enclosed public places, including bars, cafes, restaurants, taxis, trains and outdoor stadiums. The ban includes premises that serve nargile, or hookah, and excludes private residences. Businesses are additionally required to make arrangements to protect non-smokers if smoking is permitted in open-air sections of the premises.

Friday, 2 July 2010

Hurriyet Daily News and Economic Review

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## **GEO-STRATEGIC NEWS**

### **Erdoğan takes Israel dispute, PKK terror to G-20 platform**

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's main agenda at the G-20 summit in the Canadian city of Toronto over the weekend was occupied with questions on how to deal with the global economic recovery.

The rest of Erdoğan's agenda, which was not the main issue but just as critical, was occupied with several bilateral talks with world leaders, including US President Barack Obama, on the sidelines of the summit.

Erdoğan, who described Israel's treatment of civilian activists during a May 31 raid on an aid ship in international waters by its commandos that killed eight Turks and one American as "state terror," used most of his bilateral talks as opportunities to explain the Turkish government's position on the incident and its expectations of steps to be taken regarding the issue.

Erdoğan said that he gave copies of Council of Forensic Medicine documents on those nine victims to British Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero.

Pressing the international community to lend support to Turkey's fight against terrorist activities by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) also occupied Erdoğan's agenda.

Erdoğan said there was no problem with the intelligence sharing within a trilateral mechanism between Iraq, Turkey and the US in order to combat the PKK. Yet he said this mechanism should have certain "additional functions."

As long as the PKK continues to maintain a presence in northern Iraq, nobody can speak of "territorial integrity" there, Erdoğan said, in an apparent response to those suggesting that the Turkish Armed Forces' (TSK) cross-border operations into northern Iraq were a violation of the neighboring country's territorial integrity.

"As members of NATO, we have to maintain our cooperation in different parts of the world, like the cooperation we have in Afghanistan. Moreover, our solidarity in this region has a very different importance," Erdoğan said, in remarks particularly addressed to the US and other NATO allies in regards to their contribution to Turkey's fight against PKK.

The prime minister held a critical bilateral discussion with Obama on Saturday.

"While he conveyed his sincere convictions to me in a sincere atmosphere, I also similarly expressed my sincere convictions very openly," Erdoğan said of his one-hour, 15-minute long meeting with Obama. On Sunday, the two also had a 10-minute-long conversation.

"Dear friends, not every word is for disclosing, some remain with us," Erdoğan said, responding when reporters asked about the content of his casual conversation with Obama. Nonetheless, in remarks delivered in Washington only a few hours before Erdoğan and Obama's meeting on Saturday, US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Gordon had criticized Turkey for its vote against a US-backed United Nations Security Council resolution on new sanctions against Iran. Sources close to the Turkish government have maintained that such remarks by US officials are related to the administration's domestic concerns. Some leading organizations of the US-based Jewish community have accused Obama of not sufficiently supporting Israel, especially in the wake of its dispute with Turkey after the May 31 incident.

Erdoğan said the Obama administration still supports continuing the negotiation process regarding Iran's nuclear program. "We will continue this process in the same way. We will see in a short time what happens with this negotiation process," he added.

During a reception held on Saturday for participants at the meeting, Erdoğan spoke with Argentinean President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Saudi King Abdullah and with Berlusconi and Cameron again.



Kirschner expressed sadness over the developments which led Erdoğan to cancel the Argentina leg of his Latin American tour in protest of the cancellation of an event honoring the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, under pressure from the Armenian diaspora, while Erdoğan and Cameron mutually invited each other to visit each other's country.

29 June 2010, Tuesday

ALI H. ASLAN TORONTO  
TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Turkey closes its airspace to Israeli military flights**

Turkey has closed its airspace to some Israeli military flights after Israeli commandos killed eight Turks on an aid ship in international waters during a deadly May 31 raid. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, speaking to reporters in Toronto on Sunday, stated that Turkey had imposed a ban on Israeli flights after the May 31 raid. Erdoğan didn't elaborate, but Turkish authorities based in Ankara clarified that commercial flights were not affected, as the current ban is for Israeli military flights. "According to the internationally agreed military aviation procedures which are already in place, permission for another country's military to use Turkish airspace is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Currently, in the aftermath of the Mavi Marmara incident, the tendency is to not give permission to Israeli military flights as was done in the past," government authorities, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Today's Zaman, indicating that the ban was a "de facto" one.

The officials did not term the ban a blanket ban. In Israel, Transport Ministry officials said on Monday that the country's Civil Aviation Authority has not received any official notification from Turkey that its airspace is closed to Israeli flights.

The Israeli officials said Israeli passenger planes are continuing to fly through Turkey as usual, Ynetnews, an English-language Israeli news portal, reported.

On Sunday, Israel's Yediot Ahronot newspaper reported that Turkey had not allowed a plane carrying Israeli military officers en route to a tour of memorial sites in Auschwitz, Poland, to fly over Turkish airspace. The transport plane, with more than 100 officers on board, was forced to make a detour, the paper said.

The Israeli military "refrained from responding officially to the event so not to exacerbate the rift in relations," the newspaper added.

According to the international military aviation rules in place, Turkey is not in a position to take into consideration whether the Israeli military aircraft's final destination was linked to a commemoration ceremony. Turkish authorities stated that the recent implementation had nothing to do with the aircraft's destination.

29 June 2010, Tuesday

Today's zaman

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### **Israel signals compensation for Mavi Marmara victims**

Thursday, July 1, 2010

Sevil KÜÇÜKKOŞUM

ANKARA - Daily News with wires

Israel has signaled it may compensate and apologize to families of some of the victims of its aid-flotilla raid in comments during a covert meeting between Turkish and Israeli officials, the first high-level contact since the deadly attack.



“There will be a second meeting if the Israeli side takes a step toward [meeting] our demands,” a Turkish diplomatic source told the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review on Thursday. “We do not categorically dismiss meeting with Israeli officials at this level.”

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and Israeli Industry, Trade and Labor Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, who is known to have good relations with Turkey, met secretly in Brussels on Wednesday. The meeting was later disclosed by the Israeli media and the Israeli Foreign Ministry issued a strong statement criticizing Ben-Eliezer’s move. Diplomatic sources said the meeting could provide a way out of the current situation, as ties between the two countries have been badly damaged by the May 31 raid, in which Israeli commandos killed eight Turks and one American of Turkish descent in a deadly attack on a Gaza-bound flotilla.

“Davutoğlu reminded Ben-Eliezer of Turkey’s demands from Israel, including an apology, payment of compensation to families of those killed and wounded, an international inquiry and an end to the blockade of Gaza,” Burak Özügergin, a spokesman for the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told reporters Thursday. Diplomatic sources said no move to meet these demands would be made until after the Israeli commission tasked with investigating the incident issues its report to the Israeli government.

According to Özügergin, the two ministers discussed the current state of Turkish-Israeli relations and the future of the relationship, adding that Ben-Eliezer assured Davutoğlu that Turkey’s demands would be conveyed to the Israeli government.

“The point our ties have reached is not one we are happy with. The meeting provided an opportunity to convey in person the steps we expect [to see taken] so that relations can be repaired. The reason why they requested this meeting might be to determine our expectations,” the spokesman said.

Turkish officials have said Israel initiated the talks, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said Wednesday that Turkey had requested the meeting. The Israeli newspaper daily Haaretz reported that the White House prompted and coordinated the Brussels talks after U.S. President Barack Obama met with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and urged him to repair relations with Israel. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon had earlier said Washington was working to heal the Turkish-Israeli rift amid fears that Turkey, the sole primarily Muslim member of NATO, was moving away from the West.

In the aftermath of the May 31 attack, Turkey withdrew its ambassador to Israel and blocked some Israeli military flights in Turkish airspace.

Meeting sparks high-level row in Israel

The secret talks between Israel and Turkey provoked a major row between the Israeli Foreign Ministry and the office of the Israeli prime minister.

News of the meeting, reported Wednesday evening by Israel’s Channel 2 TV, infuriated Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, whose office issued a sharply worded statement saying the move caused “serious harm” to his relations with Netanyahu.

“The foreign minister views as extremely serious the fact that this was done without notifying the foreign ministry. This goes against all norms of government and does serious harm to the trust between the foreign minister and the prime minister,”

Lieberman’s office said in its statement.

Netanyahu's office released a statement confirming the meeting but explaining it was initiated by the Turks and was "unofficial." According to the statement, Ben-Eliezer had told Netanyahu that a senior Turkish official had asked him for an unofficial meeting. "The prime minister saw no reason not to have the meeting," the statement said. "In recent weeks there have been various initiatives for contacts with Turkey, which the foreign ministry knew about. The failure to update the ministry was due merely to a technical reason. The prime minister is fully cooperating with the foreign minister." Ben-Eliezer was the first Israeli minister to visit Ankara last year after Israel's war on Gaza triggered severe Turkish criticism. Since the flotilla raid, he has been calling for immediate steps to stop the deterioration in bilateral relations. Sources close to Ben-Eliezer told daily Yediot Aharonot that keeping the talks secret from Lieberman was the right thing to do as the foreign minister had played "a significant part in intensifying the crisis with Turkey." Diplomatic sources said the Israeli side preferred to keep the Brussels meeting covert because of internal sensitivities. The talks were reportedly also kept secret from Turkey's chief EU negotiator, Egemen Bağış, and Agriculture Minister Mehdi Eker, who were both in Brussels with Davutoğlu.

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### **Israel, Turkey hold secret meeting to mend ties**

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Thursday, July 1, 2010

JERUSALEM – The Associated Press

An Israeli cabinet minister secretly met Turkey's foreign minister in Europe on Wednesday in an attempt to improve strained relations in the wake of a recent raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla, Israeli government officials said.

Industry Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer met Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in an unspecified location in Europe, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the government did not officially confirm the details.

Ties between Israel and Turkey were dealt a blow at the end of May when eight Turks and a U.S. citizen of Turkish descent were killed on the Mavi Marmara ship, which was trying to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

The meeting was meant to be secret but became public when it was reported Wednesday evening by Israel's Channel 2 TV. The station's reporter gave the location of the meeting as Zurich.

The report drew an unusual and angry response from Israel's own foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, who said he was not informed and blamed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for what he called a "serious blow to the trust" between them.

Lieberman, a divisive figure at home and largely unpopular abroad, is widely seen to have been sidelined in foreign policy by Netanyahu.

Lieberman's comment, in turn, led Netanyahu's office to release a statement confirming the meeting but explaining that it was initiated by the Turks and was "unofficial."

The statement did not name the Turkish participant and said the failure to inform Israel's foreign minister was due to an unspecified "technical reason."

There was no immediate comment from the Turkish government.

In signs of the heightened tension between the two countries since the May 31 flotilla deaths, Turkey has withdrawn its ambassador to Israel and blocked some Israeli military

flights in Turkish airspace. Israel, in turn, has expressed anger at the Turkish government's alleged support for the flotilla organizers, charging that they are openly allied with Gaza's Hamas rulers.

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### **Syria's al-Assad backs Brazil-Turkey plan to solve Iran row**

Font Size: [Larger](#)|[Smaller](#)

Thursday, July 1, 2010

BRASILIA - Agence France-Presse

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad voiced support for the efforts of Brazil and Turkey to broker a diplomatic solution to the international tensions over Iran's nuclear program. Under a May accord, Iran agreed to send some of its low-enriched uranium to Turkey in return for higher grade nuclear fuel from Russia and France for a medical research reactor.

Al-Assad described Wednesday the Brazil-Turkey plan, which was rejected when the United Nations imposed new sanctions on Tehran earlier this month, as "fundamental" to any peaceful solution.

The U.S.-led drive to impose tougher U.N. sanctions on Iran was hampered by sustained efforts by Brazil and Turkey to head off the measures and promote their nuclear fuel swap deal.

Western nations fear Iran is bent on developing nuclear weapons, but Tehran insists its nuclear program is purely for civilian purposes.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said Wednesday that Brazil and Turkey would like to help mediate in any new negotiations between the Vienna Group – United States, France, Russia and the International Atomic Energy Agency – and Iran.

Amorim, however, said it was vital that all countries involved in the talks "show a clear interest in our participation."

#### **Trade agreements**

Al-Assad's comments came after meeting in Brasilia with his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva during his first-ever Latin American tour.

In a speech at the foreign ministry, al-Assad proposed a free trade agreement between Syria and the South American trading bloc Mercosur, which consists of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Lula said Brazil "supports ending the obstacles" preventing Syria's admission to the World Trade Organization, while al-Assad said he backed Brazil's hopes for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

"The world needs Brazil in the U.N. Security Council because it can help establish a new and more just international order," al-Assad said.

Lula backed Syria's demand that Israel return the Golan Heights it occupied after the Six Day War of 1967 and said Damascus should be included in any peace initiative in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinians.

During their meeting, the leaders signed a series of cooperation agreements on health, education and extradition proceedings.

Al-Assad has already met President Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and President Raul Castro in Cuba on his tour of the region, which wraps up Friday in Argentina.

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### **President Yudhoyono's visit to boost political, economic, cultural ties**

The president of Indonesia is paying a key visit to Turkey, the first visit by an Indonesian president to Turkey in 25 years, along with four ministers and 80 high-level officials to fortify the growing economic and political ties between the two G-20 member countries. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who arrived in Turkey later on Monday, is expected to meet with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and President Abdullah Gül during his visit. During Yudhoyono's visit, a series of cultural and economic events will take place in Turkey. He is also expected to conclude 12 deals in the political, economic and cultural spheres with Turkey.

The Turkish Presidency said through a statement issued yesterday with respect to Yudhoyono's visit that the meetings between President Gül and Yudhoyono will center on bilateral relations and additional opportunities for cooperation as well as current regional and international affairs. The press statement also underlined that the two countries will sign a number of agreements.

The statement said the participation of the Turkish and Indonesian presidents will assist the Turkish-Indonesian Business Forum to bring businessmen from both countries to boost trade and economic relations between the two countries. The forum was organized by the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON) and is set to take place this week. More than 800 businessmen will reportedly attend.

The statement pointed to a rapid development of relations between Turkey and Indonesia based on mutual trust, understanding and shared interests. The Presidency said the historic visit will comprise a new and significant stage in improving bilateral relations and boost dialogue and cooperation between the two countries on regional and international issues.

Yudhoyono is expected to address the Turkish Parliament during his visit.

Both countries share many similarities regarding political views and economic and demographic indicators. Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population, while Turkey is home to a substantial number of Muslims. Both are members of the G-20 and hold similar views on international affairs. They are among the world's most rapidly developing economies and are also members of the Developing Eight (D-8).

Turkey's major exports to Indonesia are wheat and flour, despite some impediments in trade. The bilateral trade volume between the two countries was \$1.78 billion in 2009; however, this was less than the \$2.1 billion in trade volume a year earlier. The large drop in trade could be explained by the impact of last year's devastating global financial recession, when countries opted to apply protectionist economic policies that limited free trade. The countries' officials vow to reach \$5 billion in mutual trade in the near future.

Turkey displayed its support for Indonesia by voting in favor of its bid to lead the Parliamentary Union of Islamic Countries (PUIC). Despite the ever-strengthening ties between the two developing nations, it has been 25 years since an Indonesian president last paid a visit to Turkey. The Turkish prime minister, however, has visited Indonesia twice, once in 2005 and again in 2006. Erdoğan's 2005 visit to Aceh was to lend his support to the victims of a major earthquake and subsequent tsunami that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Erdoğan's second visit came a year later to attend a D-8 summit in Bali.

Both the Indonesian public and the government have stridently protested Israel's raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla on May 31 that left nine Turks dead. Indonesia was a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2008. The country

abstained during a vote on imposing sanctions aimed at pushing Iran to relinquish its nuclear ambitions, a political stance Turkey staunchly supported for years. During the president's visit, İstanbul will host several cultural events to mark Indonesia's rich cultural heritage with an aim to promote its culture in Turkey, make Turkey a profitable market for its traditional clothes and fabric and attract Turkish tourists to Indonesia to revitalize its tourism industry. Indonesia's president and the accompanying delegation are also expected to attend the cultural events.

A fair set to start on Wednesday in İstanbul is intended to promote Indonesian culture and its traditional fabric, called "batik." The fair will last until July 3. Along with traditional Indonesian clothing and fabric, the fair will also feature traditional music, dances, a batik fashion show and batik sales. Batik, in Indonesian culture, is not merely a fabric but also reflects a distinct spiritual meaning. UNESCO designated Indonesian batik as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2009.

Indonesia witnessed a deadly terrorist attack in Kuta, Bali, in 2002, where 202 people were killed, 164 of whom were tourists from other countries.

Subsequent to the attacks many countries issued travel warnings for their citizens and this damaged Indonesia's tourism industry. Indonesia also experienced a major tsunami in Aceh in 2004, which also hit many tourist resorts. Observers believe Indonesian officials will work assiduously to attract Turkish tourists to their country to boost the tourism industry.

Before the arrival of the Indonesian president, Turkish Transportation Minister Binali Yıldırım met with his Indonesian counterpart, Freddy Numberi, in Ankara yesterday. The two ministers signed a protocol on civil aviation.

Speaking to reporters during the meeting, Yıldırım said his counterpart's visit to Turkey presents an opportunity to improve already friendly relations between the two countries. The Turkish transportation minister also said the current trade volume did not reflect the true potential of Turkey and Indonesia. "Our trade volume is far away from satisfactory when we consider our two countries' potential in population, economy, natural resources and cultural wealth," Yıldırım said. He expressed hope that a prospective meeting between Turkish and Indonesian presidents would add fresh momentum to relations.

The Indonesian minister said that he was pleased to sign the protocol on civil aviation, adding that the agreement would boost cooperation in this area. Numberi said his country aims to develop strategic cooperation with Turkey in civil aviation training programs.

29 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAY'S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

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### **Syria Detains 400 PKK Militants**

Thursday, 1 July 2010

\*by Gamze Coskun, JTW

400 People Are Detained

Syria has detained 400 militants in operations against the terrorist organization PKK.

Syria organized simultaneous operations against the PKK in Aleppo, Kamishli, Afrin, Al Hasaka and Al Raqqa cities, and detained 400 people on charges of being a member of the terrorist organization.

Accusations against the Detainees

The detainees are also interrogated on charges of collecting unjust money, attempting to

divide Syria and establish a separate state, and dissolve Kurds living in Syria ethnically and religiously.

Sanctions against the Supporters of the PKK

Syria decided to implement harsh sanctions against Kurdish origin families who provide logistical support to the terrorist organization PKK. Syrian authorities have said that they would get back the rights of such people who were given the right to use Syrian territories while expanding the operations against the PKK.

Syrian President Bashar al-Asad, who visited Turkey some time ago, had said acts of the terrorist organization were unacceptable, Turkish and Syrian security forces were cooperating against terrorism.

**Futhermore, in various cities of Syria, 11 terrorists were killed last week.**

**Thursday, 1 July 2010**

**Gamze Coskun, JTW**

USAK PUBLICATION

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### **G8 leaders welcome Turkish, Brazilian efforts for solution to Iran's nuclear issue**

The annual Group of Eight (G8) summit ended Saturday in Canada after a declaration. Referring to uranium swap deal Turkey and Brazil signed with Iran, the declaration welcomed all diplomatic efforts to find a solution to Iran's nuclear issue, saying "we also welcome and commend all diplomatic efforts in this regard, including those made recently by Brazil and Turkey on the specific issue of the Tehran Research Reactor." G8 leaders said the adoption by the UN Security Council of new sanctions on Iran reflects the concerns of the international community on the Iranian nuclear issue, and they called on all states to implement it fully.

"While recognizing Iran's right to a civilian nuclear program, we note that this right comes with international obligations that all states, including Iran, must comply with. We are profoundly concerned by Iran's continued lack of transparency regarding its nuclear activities and its stated intention to continue and expand enriching uranium, including to nearly 20 percent, contrary to UN Security Council Resolutions and the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors," the declaration said.

"We call upon Iran to heed the requirements of the UN Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency, and implement relevant resolutions to restore international confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. Our goal is to persuade Iran's leaders to engage in a transparent dialogue about its nuclear activities and to meet Iran's international obligations. We strongly support the ongoing efforts in this regard by China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union High Representative, and we welcome their commitment to the resolution of all outstanding issues through negotiation," it added.

27 June 2010, Sunday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Indonesia to open consulate in Turkey's Istanbul**

Turkey and Indonesia had also agreed on a visa waiver program and more flights between the two countries.

Thursday, 01 July 2010 08:22

Indonesia will open a consulate in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, Indonesia's Culture and Tourism Minister said on Wednesday.

Jero Wacik, who inaugurated a cultural exhibition to promote Indonesia in Istanbul, said that Turkey and Indonesia has recently signed several agreements during Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's visit to Turkey.

"Following talks between Indonesia and Turkey, we decided to open a consulate in Istanbul," Wacik said.

"We believe that it will increase trips to Indonesia's tourist destination Bali from Turkey," Wacik said.

Turkey and Indonesia had also agreed on a visa waiver program and more flights between the two countries.

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### **Turkey, Indonesia agrees to work on lifting visa requirements**

Turkish President Abdullah Gül said that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia and he agreed to begin works for removal of visa requirements between Turkey and Indonesia.

President Gül said at a joint news conference with his Indonesian counterpart that President Yudhoyono's visit would add momentum to bilateral relations between the two countries."

"Earlier, our countries accepted to give visa to citizens of each other in border crossings. At today's meeting, we agreed to begin works to remove visa requirements between Turkey and Indonesia totally," he added.

29 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Turkey committed to EU goal, says Erdoğan**

Turkey has not given up its ambition to join the European Union and has no intention of cutting its ties with the West, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said.

Erdoğan, speaking in an interview published in Canada's Toronto Star newspaper on Sunday, also reiterated Turkey's conditions for normalizing relations with Israel, whose commandos killed eight Turks and one American aboard an aid ship trying to break an Israeli embargo on the Gaza Strip. Relations will remain strained until Israel apologizes for the raid on the ship, pays compensation to the families of the nine people killed, agrees to an international probe as called for by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon into the incident as opposed to an Israeli inquiry and lifts its embargo on the Gaza Strip, according to Erdoğan.

Harsh criticism of Israel following the deadly raid came as Turkey voted against US-backed sanctions on Iran at the UN Security Council. Both developments fueled claims in the West that Turkey is turning away from the West and building alliances with countries such as Iran and Syria. Asked to comment on claims that Turkey is turning away from the West, Erdoğan said: "That would be a very wrong conclusion. Turkey is developing contacts all over the world. But Turkey has not cut off relations with anyone. Such a thing is not on the agenda." He also said Turkey continues "with determination to walk



on the European path, despite the efforts on the part of the European Union to prevent the opening of some of the chapters that are part of the negotiations process.”

29 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAY'S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

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### **EU opens talks with Turkey on food safety**

The European Union opened accession negotiations with Turkey on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy chapter on Wednesday.

Thursday, 01 July 2010 08:44

World bulletin

EU opens talks with Turkey on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy chapter  
The European Union (EU) opened accession negotiations with Turkey on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy chapter on Wednesday.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, State Minister and EU chief negotiator Egemen Bagis, and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Minister Mehdi Eker attended the intergovernmental conference at the European Council during which entry talks on food safety chapter were launched.

Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos of Spain, holding the rotating presidency of the EU, and European Commissioner for enlargement Stefan Fule represented the EU in the intergovernmental conference.

Spain had said it wanted to open negotiations with Turkey on four chapters when it took over the rotating presidency of the union six months ago, on January 1, 2010.

However, it worked hard to launch talks on at least one chapter when it could not overcome political obstacles of some member states. Spain even broke a record by reducing the chapter opening process to ten days instead of months after Turkey fulfilled required criteria.

Thus, Turkey has opened negotiations with the EU on 13 chapters since October 2005. Austria launched entry talks with Turkey on one chapter during its rotating presidency in the first half of 2006, Germany opened negotiations on three chapters in the first half of 2007, Portugal launched entry talks with Turkey on two chapters in the second half of 2007.

Slovenia and France, each, opened full membership negotiations with Turkey on two chapters in 2008, and Sweden launched entry talks with Turkey only on one chapter in the second half of 2009.

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### **Turkish premier says his country is ready to mediate talks between Israel, Syria**

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said Turkey was ready to resume mediating indirect talks between Syria and Israel, if the two sides voiced such a demand and "Israel conformed with the standards of the international law."

If Turkey is given such a task we are ready to start working for peace again. But first Syria and Israel must come up with such a demand and Israel must fall in line with the international law," Erdoğan told Charlie Rose Show in a televised interview on PBS. Erdoğan said Syria was eager to see the Israeli position over the resumption of indirect peace talks, adding that Damascus was also ready to restart negotiations.

"The biggest problem against peace is the coalition government in Israel," Erdoğan said.



Touching on a deadly Israeli raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla that killed nine Turkish nationals, Erdoğan said Israel must make an apology to Turkey for the killings and lift its Gaza blockade, which he likened to "an open air prison."

"If those demands are met, then we can assume any role we are given in the region," Erdoğan said.

Erdoğan described the Israeli storming of the aid convoy as "state terrorism," adding that the Israeli commandos attacked on the Mavi Marmara ship in high seas and used deadly force.

Asked whether his remarks in which he had said that "Israel was good at killing" and that "Israel cannot wash the blood off its hands," were too harsh, Erdoğan said the remarks reflected his own views as a human being.

"My criticisms are not against the Israeli people but against the Israeli government. I pick my words very carefully before I voice them. And I can tell what I tell if children are ruthlessly killed in summary executions," Erdoğan said, rejecting claims that by severely criticizing Israel he eyed to boost his credibility in the Muslim world.

The Turkish premier also lashed out at Israeli use of disproportionate force against Palestinians in response to Qassam rockets fired from Gaza.

"No one can fool me. Tell me how many rockets have been fired from Gaza and how many Israelis have been killed. Israel killed 1,500 people in just 15 days and wounded 5,000 others," Erdoğan said.

29 June 2010, Tuesday

## **TODAYS ZAMAN**

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### **Syria detains hundreds in anti-PKK operation**

Syria has detained 400 people in operations against PKK militants.

Thursday, 01 July 2010 11:16

World bulletin

Syria has detained 400 people in operations against PKK militants.

Syrian security forces have staged operations against the PKK in Aleppo, Kamishli, Afrin, Al Hasaka and Al Raqqa cities, and detained 400 people on charges of being a member of the terrorist organization.

The detainees are also interrogated on charges of collecting unjust money, attempting to divide Syria and establish a separate state, and dissolve Kurds living in Syria ethnically and religiously.

Also, Syria decided to implement harsh sanctions against families of Kurdish descend who provide logistical support to the PKK. Syrian authorities have said that they would get back the rights of such people who were given the right to use Syrian territories.

Eleven PKK militants were killed in clashes between security forces and PKK militants in various Syrian cities last week.

Syrian President Bashar al-Asad, who visited Turkey some time ago, had said "acts of the terrorist organization were unacceptable, Turkish and Syrian security forces were cooperating against terrorism."

Agencies

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### **Erdoğan appeals to NATO for cooperation in anti-PKK fight**

Western countries, the United States included, should act together with Turkey in its fight against terrorist activities by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a considerable segment of which is based in northern Iraq, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, while underlining Turkey's role and strategic position within NATO, has said. One of NATO's most important goals is fighting against terrorism, Erdoğan said in an interview with PBS television's Charlie Rose, aired late on Monday. Turkey is a country that fights against terrorism, and NATO members should lend their support to this fight, he said. He elaborated that it is incumbent on Western countries to capture and extradite any terrorist leader residing in their territory. But no positive response has come thus far from any Western country, he added.

During a press conference held over the weekend in Toronto following his participation in a G20 summit, Erdoğan said NATO members should replicate their cooperation in Afghanistan in other regions, as he spoke of the PKK presence in northern Iraq. Most Turkish newspapers interpreted Erdoğan's call with headlines such as "We rushed to Kabul, you should rush to Kandil," in apparent reference to the Kandil Mountains in northern Iraq, where the PKK controls a large swathe of land.

Yet, Turkish officials made clear on Tuesday that Erdoğan's call should not be interpreted as a direct reference to NATO's fifth article, which states that all participants agree that a military attack on one of the them is considered an attack on all of its members.

Erdoğan, during the PBS interview, also said that the US should take a leading role in dealing with the aftermath of Israel's raid on a flotilla of aid ships last month during which nine people were killed.

"The US administration should take ownership of the situation because there was an American involved," he said, referring to Furkan Doğan, a 19-year-old ethnically Turkish American citizen who was killed on board one of the ships. The eight others killed on the same vessel were Turkish citizens.

30 June 2010, Wednesday

TODAY'S ZAMAN ANKARA

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### **Eroğlu insists on Cyprus settlement this year**

Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu has challenged his Greek Cypriot rival to reach a peace deal this year that would reunite the divided Mediterranean island, saying "there must be a time limit."

Eroğlu, who met with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in New York on Monday, said it was time to reach a deal and that the United Nations and the European Union "have a responsibility in order to see these negotiations are successfully concluded." "Negotiations can be concluded by the end of the year if there is the necessary political will," he said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We have the political will, and if [Greek Cypriot leader Dimitris] Christofias demonstrates the same political will, there is no reason we cannot find a settlement by the end of the year because all aspects of the Cyprus question have been discussed." But Eroğlu said that "at this moment the Greek Cypriot side does not accept either a timeframe, a timetable or arbitration, or even mediation," in the sense of the UN making proposals or recommendations.

Greek Cypriots fear deadlines would lead to some sort of UN arbitration favoring the Turkish Cypriots, in a reprise of the UN reunification plan that was rejected by Greek Cypriots and accepted by Turkish Cypriots in a 2004 referendum.

Commenting on his meeting with Ban, Eroğlu said he left “with the feeling that he [Ban] is of the opinion that there can be a settlement under my leadership, because we are sincere about it.” UN spokesman Martin Nesirky said Ban expressed hope “that the two leaders would make serious advances in the coming months.”

Eroğlu, in a separate interview with the Anatolia news agency, also said he had proposed a three-way summit in September in New York to Ban, which he, Ban and Christofias would participate in. The Turkish Cypriot leader also demanded the lifting of the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriots, saying equal economic conditions between the Turkish north and the Greek south were a precondition for the success of any settlement.

### **Election dispute**

Meanwhile, Eroğlu’s former party, the National Unity Party (UBP), may have lost one seat in the Turkish Cypriot parliament after election authorities announced that the results from a Sunday vote were erroneous.

Eroğlu’s daughter, Resmiye Canaltay, was previously announced the winner of an election in Gazimağusa for the parliamentary seat vacated by her father when he decided to run for the presidency. But authorities said another candidate, Hüseyin Angolemli from the smaller Communal Democracy Party (TDP), was the winner by a narrow margin of only two votes. The ruling UBP has objected to the election board’s announcement, seeking a formal explanation and a vote recount.

30 June 2010, Wednesday

TODAY’S ZAMAN WITH AP İSTANBUL

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### **Iran says nuclear talks to resume with Brazil, Turkey**

Iran said on Tuesday it would soon resume nuclear talks with Turkey and Brazil -- a tentative first step back to international negotiations after new wave of sanctions was imposed on Tehran over its disputed nuclear work.

Iran has belittled the UN, US and European sanctions and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Monday he would return to long-frozen talks with world powers but on certain conditions only, and not before the end of August. He also suggested that Turkey and Brazil should also be part of the talks, saying “independent countries” that believe in “justice and respect” should join any future talks.

His foreign minister said talks would start before then with the two countries with which it agreed a nuclear fuel swap deal in May -- echoing a UN-brokered pact that Tehran backed out of late last year -- and which voted against the UN sanctions.

“There were some contacts with the foreign ministers of the three countries [Iran, Turkey and Brazil],” Manouchehr Mottaki told a news conference. “A joint meeting is on the agenda and we will announce it in the coming one or two days.”

Iran has held no substantive talks with world powers since the deal in principle on the fuel swap struck with Russia, France and the United States in October.

The pact would have seen Iran sending 1.2 tons of low-enriched uranium (LEU) -- about 70 percent of its stockpile at the time -- abroad in exchange for specially processed fuel rods needed to keep the Tehran medical research reactor running.

In a turnabout, Iran agreed in talks in May with Brazil and Turkey to part with 1.2 tons of LEU. But by then Iran's LEU reserve had doubled in size, devaluing the swap's terms in Western eyes since it would no longer divest Iran of enough LEU to prevent its use for an atom bomb, if refined to high purity.

So the May agreement proved too little too late to prevent a new batch of punitive sanctions from the United Nations, European Union and United States.

Meanwhile, Iran has increased suspicions abroad by launching enrichment up to a level of 20 percent purity, asserting this will yield raw material for making the reactor fuel rods without foreign help -- but at the same time advancing much of the way down the road towards weapons-grade enrichment.

Russia, which backed the US-led push for further sanctions but has since complained about the United States and the European Union issuing stricter unilateral measures, said on Tuesday it wanted to get back to talks with Tehran.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said he wanted talks between Iran, the United States, Russia and the watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) focusing on providing Iran with reactor fuel rods so it would not need to escalate enrichment itself.

"In the wake of the Brazilian and Turkish initiative, Russia, along with the United States, approached the director of the IAEA and proposed we arrange a meeting of technical experts from our three countries, including Iran, to discuss the possibility of supplying fuel for the experimental reactor in Iran, so that there will be no need for Iran to enrich the uranium to a level of 20 percent," Lavrov said.

"I hope very much that Iran will respond positively and that this will help prevent the situation from deteriorating," he told reporters during a visit to Israel, which considers Iran's nuclear campaign an existential threat.

On Monday, Russia complained to the UN Security Council about what UN diplomats said was Germany's seizure of items bound for a nuclear power plant in Iran, saying such moves were "not in line" with UN rules.

On June 19, French President Nicolas Sarkozy told Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that France was ready to talk with Iran at the IAEA "without delay," using the Tehran declaration as a basis for discussions.

In Ankara, Foreign Ministry spokesman Burak Özügergin called for talks without delay, saying it will be harder to reach a solution if talks are postponed. "Time is working against a solution. Ahmadinejad has mentioned August; we wish it were sooner," he told reporters on Tuesday. "The talks should begin as soon as possible."

30 June 2010, Wednesday

REUTERS WITH TODAY'S ZAMAN TEHRAN/İSTANBUL

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### **Indonesians mark Yudhoyono's visit to promote their batik, culture**

To mark Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's historic visit to Turkey after a 25-year gap since the last Indonesian presidential-level visit to the country, the Indonesian Batik Foundation (YBI) is organizing a fair to promote Indonesia's rich culture in İstanbul.

The fair is expected to feature a trade exhibition, Indonesian batik fashion show, performances of Indonesian traditional music and dance .

The primary feature of the fair, which will last through July 3 in Grand Ballroom at Marmara Hotel in Taksim, will be Indonesian batik, a traditional Indonesian cloth and

fabric. Indonesian batik was placed on the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on Oct. 2, 2009. The Indonesian government set this date as National Batik Day. The primary motive behind organizing the cultural fair in İstanbul is to improve cooperation between Turkey and Indonesia in the spheres of culture and tourism.

The representative of YBI in Turkey and the chief organizer of the fair, Ika BS Wahyudi, talked to Today's Zaman about Indonesian cultural projects in Turkey and the meaning of batik.

Noting that batik is not a simple fabric, Ika said it is an integral part of life for Indonesians, from birth to death, with deep philosophical and spiritual meaning.

According to Ika, every batik has its own distinct and different meaning.

Noting that batik cloth marks many important dates and aspects in Indonesian life, Ika said batik is widely used to celebrate the first pregnancy of a woman given in her seventh month of pregnancy to make sure that the parents and baby have a safe life. She also pointed to the use of batik during birth. Ika said brides and grooms also wear batik to attract God's blessing upon a marriage during a wedding ceremony. She added that people also use batik to cover corpses to denote eternity.

Now we want to introduce our culture to the Turkish people. We want to present to Turkey what batik and its meanings are," Ika said. "We also want Turkish cultural organizations," she continued, "to come to Indonesia and promote their own culture." Ika said this is a traditional dress for Indonesian people and they will try to explain this to Turkey using the opportunity of Indonesian President Yudhoyono's key visit. She also noted Turkey's humanitarian aid and assistance to Indonesia after a deadly tsunami that hit Aceh in 2004, claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Indonesian President Yudhoyono was to meet with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and President Abdullah Gül on Tuesday. Four ministers and 80 senior officials are accompanying the president during his visit to Turkey. Turkey and Indonesia will reportedly sign 12 agreements in the political, cultural and economic spheres. More than 800 businessmen will also attend a Turkish-Indonesian Business Forum in İstanbul to seal business deals and improve nascent trade relations between the countries.

Speaking during the official opening ceremony of the fair, called, "Indonesia Festival," on Wednesday morning, Indonesia's Culture and Tourism Minister Jero Wacik said Indonesia has many cultures, each with distinct cultural elements. Noting that the efforts to safeguard traditional arts, especially batik, needs to be continuously exerted, he stressed that the fair and Yudhoyono's visit are "strategic attempts in developing the relationship and partnership of the two countries, and at the same time introducing Indonesia's cultural items, particularly batik, to the people of Turkey."

The organizer of event Rumah Indonesia, Liana Trisnawati said they extended invitations to thousands of people in Turkey and they will also hold a cultural performance in Taksim Square.

Indonesian Ambassador to Turkey Awang Bahrin said during the opening ceremony for the fair that Yudhoyono's visit to Turkey is a "historic visit after over two decades since the previous visit," adding that the timing of this batik exhibition is good as it coincides with the visit of the Indonesian president.

The Indonesian ambassador said in the first exhibition of batik in Turkey, Turkish society will find that many kinds of batiks are made in Indonesia, which may inspire them to use

batik, not only for informal events but also for formal occasions in the summer. The envoy also expressed hope that similar events can be held in other major cities in Turkey. Speaking to Today's Zaman, Director General of Department of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Indonesia Tjetjep Suparman noted that they plan to organize a similar event every year in Turkey and hope to develop a good tradition. He said the exhibition may also be a spark to boost Turkish tourism to Indonesia.

Indonesia witnessed a deadly terrorist attack in Bali in 2002, where 202 people were killed, 164 of whom were tourists from other countries. Subsequently many countries issued travel warnings for their citizens, which damaged Indonesia's tourism industry. Indonesia also experienced a major tsunami in 2004, which also hit many tourist resorts. Tjetjep said that the tourism industry is rapidly developing and that the country has more than 17,000 islands. Tjetjep said there is a kind of "Turkish town" in downtown Jakarta, where many ethnic Turks sell Turkish carpets, and that Indonesians love and adore them. "I hope Turkish people will also love Indonesian batik," Tjetjep stated.

Ersin Karaođlan, secretary-general of the Association for Social and Economic Cooperation with Pacific Countries (PASIAD), one of the sponsors of the fair, told Today's Zaman that they want Turkey to know about Indonesia's culture. "The country is far from Turkey geographically, but we have strong historical and cultural ties," Karaođlan said. The secretary-general added that Indonesia and Turkey are the 15th and 16th largest economies in the world, yet the trade volume between the two countries is far below potential. "In this scope, civil society organizations are responsible for an important mission, and PASIAD is working hard to fulfill this mission," he concluded.

30 June 2010, Wednesday

MAHIR ZEYNALOV İSTANBUL

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### **Turkey welcomes approval of Kyrgyzstan's new constitution**

Turkey welcomed approval of Kyrgyzstan's new constitution in a referendum on June 27. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Tuesday, "the referendum, which was held in a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere, undoubtedly constituted a significant step for development of a democracy and rule of law in Kyrgyzstan." "Turkey as the current president of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), will continue extending full support to Kyrgyzstan's democratization and reform process. We are also determined to make any contribution to Kyrgyzstan to complete the parliamentary elections on October 10 in a democratic atmosphere," it said.

The Ministry said that Turkish diplomat Fatih Ceylan held a series of talks with Kyrgyz authorities in Bishkek on June 15 and 18 as the special envoy of the Turkish government and informed them on an action plan that could be carried out by the chairmanship of CICA.

"During his visit to Kazakhstan on June 21 and 22, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu met with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev. During the talks, Turkey as president of CICA and Kazakhstan as president of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) agreed to support Kyrgyzstan," it said.

The Ministry added that Davutoglu would travel to Kyrgyzstan in the coming days.



People of Kyrgyzstan approved the new constitution in a referendum on June 27 after an interim government led by former foreign minister, Roza Otunbayeva, came to power in April 2010 in Kyrgyzstan following anti-government protests toppled the president, whom the opposition accused of usurping power.

29 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Biometric passports to speed up EU's visa exemption for Turkey**

A senior Turkish official has claimed that Turkey's new biometric passports, with their enhanced security, will now step up the process for the EU to abolish visa requirements for Turkish citizens, noting that the new passports will be amongst the most secure forms of identity worldwide.

Biometric passports were always on the agenda during Turkey's talks with the EU. Turkey has already fulfilled its responsibility regarding biometric passports," Foreign Ministry Deputy Undersecretary Naci Koru said in an interview with Today's Zaman. European authorities are sensitive to passport security when deciding on visa regulations, and as Turkish citizens now use biometric passports, Koru said, the EU visa exemption policy for Turkish citizens is now back on the agenda. "It's time for the countries that require visas from Turkish citizens to act. Turkish citizens now have the right to be exempt from visa requirements. When traveling to any country in the world, particularly the European Union, Turkey's hand is now stronger in terms of demanding visa exemptions for its citizens," the diplomat said.

The biggest problems have been overcome by renewing passports. Koru said nearly 70 percent of the problems related to biometric photos had already been resolved.

Applications for new passports are being accepted through the Internet, call centers and traditional face-to-face methods to alleviate demand. New passports will be delivered to applicants by mail.

A biometric passport, also known as an e-passport or ePassport, is a combined paper and electronic passport that uses biometrics to authenticate the identity of travelers. It uses contactless smart card technology, including a microprocessor chip and antenna (for both power to the chip and communication) embedded in the front or back cover or center page of the passport.

The deputy undersecretary said it was important in terms of security to produce the new passports in one center and noted that applicants would be able to follow the delivery status of their passport through the Internet.

Koru said the new biometric passports would ease the processing of Turkish citizens when they travel. "The time taken for security checks will be reduced as these passports can be easily read by a machine. We are of the same status as the most secure passports in the world in terms of counterfeiting and fraud. It was easy to produce fake passports with the previous versions. As the new passports are of an international standard regarding security, current visa policies for Turkish citizens should change," Koru concluded.

26 June 2010, Saturday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **US in major effort to sell Patriot missiles to Ankara**

A senior Turkish official has claimed that Turkey's new biometric passports, with their enhanced security, will now step up the process for the EU to abolish visa requirements for Turkish citizens, noting that the new passports will be amongst the most secure forms of identity worldwide.

Biometric passports were always on the agenda during Turkey's talks with the EU. Turkey has already fulfilled its responsibility regarding biometric passports," Foreign Ministry Deputy Undersecretary Naci Koru said in an interview with Today's Zaman. Patriot missile manufacturer Raytheon representative Joseph Garrett, Sikorsky executive Stephen Estill and ExxonMobil's Drew Goodbread are among the members of the delegation engaged in a series of lobbying meetings with the Defense Industry Undersecretariat (SSM), the Defense Ministry and Parliament, doing their best to win the \$7.8 billion tender.

The American weapons giants are led by American-Turkish Council (ATC) Chairman Ambassador Richard Armitage at the meetings. They have already visited General Staff headquarters and the Air Forces Command. In their visit to Parliament, the delegation met with ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) Çankırı deputy and Turkey-US Friendship Group President Suat Kımıklioğlu.

The meetings addressed a number of relevant issues, including the latest state of Turkish-American relations, ongoing tension between Turkey and Israel and the Iranian issue. The American delegation stressed the closeness and deep-rooted nature of relations between Turkey and the United States, expressing the sentiment that recent events would not harm bilateral cooperation.

Ambassador Armitage said the meetings with Turkish authorities also involved intelligence sharing and regional issues and said that the Americans would do their best to be part of defense industry cooperation with Turkey.

During the meetings, the delegation focused on the long-range regional air and missile defense system that Turkey is looking to purchase but also discussed a helicopter tender that the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) is considering.

It did not escape attention that the American weapons giants came to Ankara at a time when Turkish-Israeli relations are on the rocks; observers also noted with interest that the visit coincided with the souring of military agreements between Turkey and Israel.

Pundits say that the Americans are seizing the opportunity presented by this situation, moving quickly to redirect Turkey's defense industry spending toward alternative shores. Russia is also working to bring Russian missile defense systems to Turkey. The Russians are trying to sell Turkey S-300-400 missiles instead of the American PATRIOT systems. The S-300 missiles have a range of 150 kilometers, reaching their target in eight to 10 seconds. The S-300 and S-400 are manufactured by Russia's Rosoboronexport and have many clear advantages over the Patriot missiles. The S-300 system can fire at six targets at a time; the S-400 can fire at 12, traveling at 2,800 meters per second to hit moving targets. Rosoboronexport is warm to the idea of working on joint production of the missiles with Turkey.

But the fact that the same missiles are being sold to Greek Cyprus and Greece make it difficult for Turkey to elect to purchase the S-300s. Another important consideration is that much of the weaponry used by the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is of Russian origin, raising security concerns for Turkey.



In addition to Russia, Turkey has also been closely following defense systems developments in China.

In 2008, the US's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), which is subordinate to the Pentagon, requested permission from the US Congress to sell long-range air defense and antiballistic missile systems to Turkey. Permission has not yet been secured, but it should be only a matter of formality should Turkey decide to go with the Patriot systems.

Turkey plans to install the systems it purchases in Ankara and İstanbul. The new generation of Patriot missile systems developed by America's Lockheed Martin and Raytheon can load 16 missiles into a missile launcher at once and has high altitude striking power. The Patriot air defense radars can detect enemy missiles from 100 kilometers away and destroy their targets within 15 to 20 seconds of locking on. The Russian and Chinese defense systems, on the other hand, only have a range of 70 kilometers.

The American delegation is stressing, in its push for the sale, the fact that the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3 missile system can provide excellent defense against any arms that neighboring Iran might possess. Should Turkey choose to go with the American systems, it is expected that it will purchase 13 Patriot firing units, 72 PAC-3 missile batteries and other accessories as part of the defense system.

26 June 2010, Saturday  
TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Turkey-Iran MoU on health to be advantageous, health minister says**

Turkish Health Minister Recep Akdağ said on Friday that a memorandum of understanding signed between Turkey and Iran on health would be advantageous for the two countries and the region.

Commenting on the memorandum of understanding that was signed on Thursday, Akdağ said Turkey and Iran could cooperate in many areas in health.

"Turkey and Iran are very similar to each other with respect to their population, money spent on health and indicators of health," Akdağ said.

Akdağ said Turkey could make use of Iran's success in bringing health services and medical education and in decreasing expenses for medicine.

Iranian Health Minister Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi said the memorandum of understanding was a new start in health area, adding that cooperation of Turkey and Iran on health would also be in the benefit of the region.

Dastjerdi underlined that Turkey and Iran were the countries marking noteworthy success in medicine and health.

The memorandum of understanding includes exchange of information and experts.

25 June 2010, Friday

**TODAYS ZAMAN**

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### **ECONOMIC NEWS**

#### **Turkish company constructing 5 new hospitals in Iraq**

The Gaziantep-based Acarsan Group is set to complete the construction of five new hospitals in Iraq and submit them to the direction of the Iraqi Health Ministry by the beginning of 2012.

In partnership with the Universal Hospitals Group network of Turkey, Acarsan won a recent tender to build hospitals in the Iraqi cities of Karbala, Basra, Babil-Hilla, Missan and Nasiriyah. The Acarsan Group has been operating in Iraq for 27 years as an exporter of legumes, processed food, home appliances and construction materials. Speaking with the Anatolia news agency on Monday, Chairman Selim Acar said the planned hospitals in the war-torn country will have a total bed capacity of 2,000 and that their construction costs will reach a combined figure of \$750 million.

“We are expecting to win new tenders in Iraq. There are many infrastructure projects needed there, and we intend to be involved in similar Iraqi projects,” Acar said. He also said his company has investment projects in Turkey as well, including a pasta production facility in Gaziantep scheduled for completion in 2010. “We will also begin construction of a German hospital in Gaziantep in 2010,” Acar added. The Acarsan Group is one of the largest conglomerates in Turkey and has companies in flour mills, automotives, tourism, petroleum products, vehicle inspection and health, and its new investments in Turkey and abroad will bring the company’s total labor force to around 5,000 by the end of the year.

29 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAY’S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

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### **Annual inflation rate in Turkey to turn out higher than 6.5 percent, Yılmaz says**

Turkish Central Bank Governor Durmuş Yılmaz said Thursday that he expected 2010 annual inflation rate to turn out higher than the annual target of 6.5 percent.

In a presentation at the Parliamentary Commission on Planning and Budget on Thursday, Yılmaz made projections about Turkish economy.

Yılmaz said the Bank expected annual inflation rates for 2011 and 2012 to float around 5.5% and 5% respectively.

He said implementation of the midterm program and the structural reforms, completion of the legislations on the fiscal rule and implementation of other practices ensuring midterm and long term predictability in monetary policies, would bring down Turkey's risk premium and help interest rates hover at low levels for a long time.

CB governor said the real sector interest rates which declined thanks to the interest rate cuts of the Central Bank, did not enter a rising trend despite the recent recovery in economic activity. He said it showed that the interest rates would hover at lower rates in the aftermath of the crisis compared to the pre-crisis levels.

Yılmaz said Turkey had been among the fastest growing economies of the world together with East Asian countries in Q4 of 2009, and would continue to be so in 2010.

He said the low levels of economic growth projections for the European Union which was the largest export market for the Turkish economy, signalled that the recovery in foreign demand would be slow. Durmus said the slow pace of recovery in the European market was a risk factor for Turkish exports.

25 June 2010, Friday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Turkey's exports to neighboring countries rise 9.6 percent**

Turkey's exports to neighboring countries rose by 9.6 percent in the first four months of 2010, from the same period a year earlier, to reach 4.7 billion USD.

Imports from these countries also showed an outstanding increase in the same period. Imports climbed 77.7 percent and reached 3.8 billion USD.

According to statistics of Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade, share of exports to neighboring countries skyrocketed to 13 percent from 0.05 percent in 2000.

Turkish officials forecast continued upward trend in Turkey's trade with neighboring countries -Iran, Iraq, Syria, Azerbaijan, Greece, Bulgaria and Georgia.

Turkey's total foreign trade grew by 195 percent over the past decade, however, trade with neighbors rose by 445 percent over the past nine years since 2000.

Turkey ships mostly finished and semi-finished goods to its neighbors in the Middle East and the Caucasus. It imports mostly oil, natural gas, raw materials and by-products.

Exports to Greece are made up of motor vehicles, mineral fuel, oil and iron & steel.

Cotton and plastic are the most common import goods.

Turkey, which expects a recovery in trade with Bulgaria, sells vegetables and plastic goods to this country and buys copper, sunflower, oil seed and mineral fuel in return.

27 June 2010, Sunday  
TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Primakov: We are happy to see Turkey developing as a regional leader**

Yevgeny Primakov, a former prime minister of Russia, has said Turkey has started to undertake a leadership role in the region thanks to the active foreign policy it has been pursuing over the past couple of years.

Russia appreciates Turkey's efforts to establish peace in the region, Primakov noted. Emphasizing the importance of a nuclear swap deal reached by Turkey, Brazil and Iran, he expressed disapproval of UN sanctions against Iran on the grounds that this decision might lead Iran to act more radically.

Underlining that he condemns an Israeli raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla last month, Primakov said: "Turkey suffered much in this raid. But Israel easing its blockade of Gaza is Turkey's achievement."

Primakov was in Istanbul as the guest of the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON). As part of his visit on Thursday Primakov promoted his book, titled "A World Without Russia? A Product of Political Shortsightedness."

Sharing his thoughts about Turkish-Russian relations, Primakov said that, other than improving political relations, rapprochement between Turkey and Russia can also be seen in the field of economy. The trade volume between the two countries should rise from the current \$30 billion to \$100 billion within the next five years, he said.

25 June 2010, Friday  
TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Southeastern province Adana has highest jobless rate in 2009**

Unemployment was highest in Turkey's southeastern provinces of Adana, Diyarbakır and Hakkari last year, while the highest rates of employment were found in the northeastern provinces of Rize, Artvin and Gümüşhane, a recent report has revealed.

The Turkish Statistics Institute (TurkStat) released provincial-level employment figures for last year on Thursday. According to the report, unemployment was 14 percent in Turkey last year, while this indicator was highest in the southeastern province of Adana, at 26.5 percent. Adana was followed by Diyarbakır and Hakkari, which have jobless rates

of 20.6 percent and 19.7 percent, respectively. The lowest unemployment rates were found in Bayburt, Gümüşhane and Ardahan, at rates of 4.5 percent, 4.4 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively.

Unemployment rates in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir, the powerhouses of the Turkish economy, amounted to 16.8 percent, 13.6 percent and 16.2 percent, respectively. The study revealed that the employment level was highest in the Black Sea provinces of Rize (62.8 percent), Artvin (60.4 percent) and Gümüşhane (59.6 percent), while Turkey's overall employment rate amounted to 41.2 percent last year. Turkey's largest province, İstanbul, had an employment level lower than average at 38.8 percent. This indicator, however, was lowest again in southeastern provinces, with Şırnak coming in first with an employment rate of 25.5 percent, followed by Siirt and Diyarbakır with the number of employed in the overall labor force standing at 25.9 percent and 26 percent, respectively. The labor force participation rate for Turkey was 47.9 percent in 2009, according to data from TÜİK, Turkey's statistics body. This indicator was highest in Rize with 65.8 percent.

Artvin came second with a rate of 64 percent followed by Gümüşhane with 62.4 percent. With a labor participation rate of only 30.4 percent, the southeastern province of Siirt had the lowest rate last year. Şırnak and Mardin were the other two provinces with the lowest share of people joining the labor force with rates of 30.7 percent and 32.3 percent, respectively. This figure was 46.7 percent in İstanbul, 44.9 percent in Ankara and 46.6 percent in İzmir.

25 June 2010, Friday

## TODAY'S ZAMAN ANKARA

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### **Turkey's Southern Province Draws More Than 1 Million Tourists**

#### **USAK PUBLICATIONS**

Monday, 28 June 2010

Turkey's southern province of Antalya has drawn 1.27 million tourists since the beginning of June.

The provincial Directorate of Culture & Tourism said Monday that 170,719 tourists came to the province at the weekend, bringing the total number of tourists who have visited Antalya since the beginning of the month to 1,275,125.

According to the Directorate, 3,628,663 tourists have visited the province since the beginning of the year.

Number of tourists increased by 12 percent on monthly basis and by 17 percent on annual basis.

Antalya had hosted 3,089,284 tourists between January 1 and June 27, 2009.

Monday, 28 June 2010

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### **Ready-to-wear industry to employ 1.5 mln workers over next 10 years**

The representatives of the Turkish ready-to-wear industry have convened in Bursa to set a series of ambitious targets for the mid and long term, such as creating jobs for 1.5 million new workers in the next decade and earning a combined annual revenue of \$60 billion from exports by 2023.

Gathered under the supervision of the Uludağ Clothing and Ready-to-Wear Exporters Union (UHKİB) at "the Sector Board Meeting of the Clothing and Ready-to-Wear Exporters Unions" on Monday, UHKİB President Şenol Şankaya delivered a speech after

the meeting behind closed doors to announce the decisions made by the participating representatives of Turkey's clothing and ready-to-wear industry. "Our motto is 'full speed ahead'," Şankaya noted, adding that the sector will never put the brakes on exports. Recalling Turkey's target of reaching \$500 billion in exports by 2023, the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, he said the ready-to-wear industry is strongly committed to undertaking around one-ninth of this figure. Other issues discussed during the meeting included Russia's stringent inspections of Turkish goods at the border gate. Şankaya said the Russian policy is victimizing Turkish clothing exporters and is creating a deterring effect, and called on Turkish officials to pursue sounder policies to convince the Russian side to abide by the rules stipulated in the previously signed protocols between the two countries.

29 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAY'S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

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### **Syria demands extra electricity from Turkey**

**Syria has demanded an extra 250 megawatts of electricity from Turkey, executives said on Thursday.**

Thursday, 01 July 2010 11:35

World bulletin

Syria has demanded an extra 250 megawatts of electricity from Turkey, executives said on Thursday.

Syria, which is purchasing 250 megawatts of electricity from Turkey, wants to raise this capacity to 500 megawatts. Therefore, it has sent a demand to the Turkish Electricity Trade Corporation (TETAS).

TETAS informed the Energy Market Regulation Board (EPDK) about this demand of Syria.

Turkey and Syria have a 500-megawatt-capacity electricity line, and 250 megawatts of electricity is transmitted through it.

In January, Lebanon also demanded 250 megawatts of electricity from TETAS.

Since 2002, Turkey has been giving electricity to Adjara (Georgia), Iraq, Nakhichevan and Greece within the scope of exchange, and to Syria within the framework of exports. According to TETAS, Turkey gave 5.1 billion kwh of electricity to Nakhichevan and got 573.2 million kwh of electricity from this autonomous republic between 1991 and end of November 2009.

Turkey gave 319.3 million kwh of electricity to Adjara, and got 573.2 million kwh of electricity from the region.

Within the framework of an agreement signed in 2007, Turkey gave 88.7 million electricity to Greece.

Turkey started to send electricity to Syria in 2006. Since then, Turkey exported 1.5 billion kwh of electricity to Syria.

Also, "Karadeniz Toptan Elektrik Ticaret A.S.", a private wholesale electricity company, has been exporting electricity to Iraq as of September 16, 2003.

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### **Turkey willing to raise electricity trade with Georgia**

**The Turkish energy minister said that Turkey was willing to raise electricity trade with Georgia to 1,100 megawatts.**

Thursday, 01 July 2010 08:58

World bulletin

The Turkish energy minister said on Wednesday that Turkey was willing to raise electricity trade with Georgia to 1,100 megawatts.

Turkey's Energy & Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said that the current electricity trade capacity between Turkey and Georgia was 100 megawatts.

"We want to raise it to 1,100 megawatts and we have completed necessary infrastructural works," Yildiz said during his meeting with Georgian Minister of Energy Alexander Khetaguri in Ankara.

Yildiz said he hoped the groundbreaking ceremony would take place in coming months, and the Borcka-Akhaltzikhe line would be constructed.

The Turkish energy minister forecast that the project would be completed in mid-2012, and cost around 255 million Euro.

"Turkey will meet 15 million Euro of it, whereas Georgia will meet the rest 240 million of it," Yildiz also said.

Georgia's Minister of Energy Khetaguri said Turkish companies were interested in hydroelectrical power plant projects in Georgia.

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**Turkish-Iranian Council: taxes should be lifted to ease transportation**

The head of the Turkish-Iranian Business Council said on Thursday that Turkey and Iran should lift taxes mutually to ease transportation.

Thursday, 01 July 2010 11:40

World bulletin

The head of the Turkish-Iranian Business Council said on Thursday that Turkey and Iran should lift taxes mutually to ease transportation.

Ali Osman Ulusoy, the chairman of the Turkish-Iranian Business Council and the chairman of Commerce & Industry in the northern province of Trabzon, said Turkey should lift fuel tax, and Iran should lift highway tax in order to overcome transportation problems.

Ulusoy's remarks came after a businessmen's delegation, headed by himself, visited Iran.

"Also, talks are under way to launch bus voyages and flights between Trabzon and (Iranian city of) Tabriz," Ulusoy told AA correspondent.

Ulusoy said in case problems were solved, Turkish businessmen could hand over the imported goods from Europe to Iran within a week.

The chairman also said he had invited Iranian tourism executives and representatives of tourism agencies to the Trabzon in order to boost tourism between the two countries.

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**Turkey says World Bank to give \$700 mln-environmental loan**

**The loan agreement was signed on Thursday**

Thursday, 01 July 2010 13:22

World bulletin

The World Bank decided to grant 700 million USD of Environmental Sustainability and Energy Sector Development Policy Loan (ESES-DPL 2) to Turkey, the Turkish Treasury Undersecretariat said on Thursday.

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved on June 15 the Second Environmental Sustainability and Energy Sector Development Policy Loan (ESES-DPL 2) for Turkey in the amount of Euro 519.6 million (US\$ 700 million equivalent).

The loan agreement was signed on Thursday, the statement said.

Turkey's energy and environment program, supported by the ESES DPL 2, aims to enhance energy security by promoting private sector clean technology investments and operations; to integrate principles of environmental sustainability, including climate change considerations in key sectoral policies and programs; and to improve the effectiveness

and efficiency of environmental management in the context of harmonization with the Environmental Acquis of the European Union.

The Program has three components: Pillar I supports the energy program, covering energy pricing, electricity markets, renewable energy, energy efficiency, electricity distribution and generation privatization, and gas supply security and wholesale gas market development. Pillar II supports Turkey's National Climate Change Strategy following the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in February 2009. Pillar III supports sustainable environmental management and is focused on the transposition of the EU Environmental Acquis and sectors/sub-sectors where environmental degradation could hamper sustainable development.

The ESES DPL2 is the continuation of the Programmatic Electricity Development Policy Loan (PEDPL1) dating back to 2009 in the amount of Euro 548.4 million (US\$800 million equivalent) which supported the Government's program for energy security, energy efficiency, and clean energy. The ESES DPL2 is an IBRD Flexible Loan in Euro with an interest rate equal to 6 months LIBOR term plus a variable spread, with a final maturity of 21.5 years, including a 14 year grace period.

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### **Turkey, US sign deal to manufacture 30 locomotives**

Turkey's Transportation Minister Binali Yildirim met U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood in the Turkish capital of Ankara.

Thursday, 01 July 2010 12:00

World bulletin

Turkey's Transportation Minister Binali Yildirim met on Wednesday U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood in the Turkish capital of Ankara.

"For investor ministries like ours, the only remedy of the economic crisis is to continue investments," Yildirim told a joint press conference with Lahood.

Yildirim said however, the remedy of the crisis was to cut down expenditures according to ministries managing the economy.

"Ensuring a balance between these two is the most correct solution," Yildirim said.

Yildirim said Turkish and U.S. companies could cooperate not only in each other's countries but also in other countries.

"My ministry aims to boost our relations with the United States, particularly in aviation, railways and communication," Yildirim also said.



U.S. Secretary LaHood said the aim of his visit was to observe Turkey's experiences, particularly in high-speed train project.

Lahood said he received information about the tunnel project, and visited Turkish Airlines (THY) headquarters in Istanbul.

The U.S. secretary also said he was impressed with the success of THY, which was offering first-class airline service to Turkey and to the entire region.

After the press conference, Turkish Locomotive and Engine Industry Corporation (TULOMSAS) and General Electric company signed a contract for manufacturing 30 locomotives at TULOMSAS facilities.

With an annual production capacity of 60 locomotives, 10 railway maintenance cars, 500 bogie freight cars, 100 various type diesel engines, 100 alternators, 400 traction motors and 2500 tons steel and iron castings can TULOMSAS is the only locomotive supplier in Turkey operating as an affiliated company of the Turkish State Railways Administration (TCDD).

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### **Gül calls on Turkish firms to invest in Indonesia**

Thursday, July 1, 2010

ISTANBUL - *Hürriyet Daily News*

Turkish companies should not miss investment opportunities in Indonesia, whose economy expanded 5.7 percent in the first quarter, Turkish President Abdullah Gül said Wednesday.

“We are leading the way for you, so that you will proceed,” he said, addressing Turkish companies at the Turkey-Indonesia Trade and Investment Forum in Istanbul.

Indonesia’s President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, accompanied by more than 800 businesspeople and officials, also participated in the forum. Rızanur Meral, chairman of the Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey, or TUSKON, made the opening speech.

Meral said Indonesia is the world’s fourth most populous country. “The country has significant potential for purchasing Turkish goods with its \$4,000 per capita income and a market of 240 million.”

Gül invited Turkish businesspeople to Indonesia, noting that eight trade agreements had been recently signed between the countries.

“Indonesia presents a great opportunity for Turkish constructors, who rank second after China with investments of \$160 billion,” he said.

The forum ended with Turkish and Indonesian firms signing mutual agreements in various fields including geothermal energy, food and airport operations.

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### **Mideast opening fruitful for Turkey's Southeast economy, business head says**

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Wednesday, June 30, 2010

FULYA ÖZERKAN

DİYARBAKIR – *Hürriyet Daily News*

The Turkish government’s increasing ties with its neighbors in the Middle East has made serious contributions to the Southeast’s economy and is much more beneficial for the



region compared to the customs union accord with the European Union, said the head of the Diyarbakır Chamber of Commerce.

“At a time when the world is going through a financial slump, leading to 30 percent decline in the overall trade volume, Turkey’s exports to Middle Eastern countries have increased by 30 percent,” Galip Ensarioğlu told the Hürriyet Daily News.

“Trade with the Middle East is the best opportunity for us,” he said. Fifty-five percent of Diyarbakır exports are to Iraq alone, noted Ensarioğlu.

The government is trying to integrate with the regional economies in the Middle East as part of the “zero problem, maximum cooperation” policy with neighbors. The policy includes establishing high-level strategic councils with the countries in its neighborhood and removing the visa regime to create free trade zones.

“In the past, there were visa regulations with all neighbors. Turkey’s relationship with them was not good for political reasons. While the world’s bigger and or richer countries were making 60 percent of their total trade with their neighbors, Turkey’s trade volume with its neighbors stood at 10 percent,” said Ensarioğlu.

“But over the last four years, Turkey has increased this figure to over 30 percent. The volume is further increasing,” he added.

Diyarbakır’s exports last year amounted to \$127 million and further increased by 30 percent this year.

There are plans to increase the number of border gates with Iraq and Syria, build highways along the border gates, integrate Turkish and Syrian customs and to initiate cross-border commerce without duties, according to the NGO head.

Ensarioğlu highlighted that the Middle East is made up of consuming countries instead of manufacturing, which made them less affected by the global crisis, and added that once the Southeast Anatolia Project, or GAP, is complete, Turkey will have the potential to meet the Middle East’s food needs single-handedly.

Asked if terrorism affected the local economy, Ensarioğlu said

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## **Exports give distress signs in June**

Thursday, July 1, 2010

KOCAELİ - Doğan News Agency

hurriyat

Turkey’s exports in June stood at \$9.17 billion, representing a 13.2 percent increase compared with June last year, according to the Turkish Exporters’ Assembly, or TİM. TİM Chief Mehmet Büyükekşi announced export data for June at a press conference in the industrial city of Kocaeli on Thursday. “The 11.7 percent growth in gross domestic product was fueled by exports,” he said, addressing reporters.

Büyükekşi also said exports to Israel rose 20 percent in June on an annual basis, despite the recent political tension.

“As exports rose 22.3 percent in the first quarter of the year, we knew overall growth would elevate,” he said. “Exports provide the most important leading indicator for Turkey.”

Commenting on the sovereign debt turmoil in Europe, Büyükekşi suggested that, in the pre-crisis period, companies shifted to a model of trying to spend with U.S. dollars and earn with euros. “This created serious confusion,” he said. “Production costs have been turned into dollars in the past three years, while revenue was on a euro-basis. Thus, inputs

were changed to dollars while revenues were in euros. Nobody was expecting such a sharp fall [in the euro]. We are seriously concerned about this.”

A free-floating currency regime is actually “not in place,” Büyükekşi said. “The Central Bank has intervened, sometimes with action and sometimes with statements. Due to the interest rate policy, the exchange rate has been under pressure. To fight inflation, a cycle of high interest and low exchange rate was used.”

This policy has attracted so-called “hot money” to Turkey, while exporters and the domestic market have come under pressure, Büyükekşi said. “The rise in unemployment was not curtailed. This shows how the policies have hurt industrialists and exporters.”

Büyükekşi said the rise in exports to Germany and the U.K. has seen a slowdown in June, while exports to France and Italy have retreated compared to June 2009. Other countries that saw a decline in Turkish imports were Greece, Denmark, Slovenia, Malta, Hungary and Norway.

Exports in the first half of the year reached \$53.3 billion, representing a rise of 21.6 percent, while exports between June 2009 and June 2010 totaled \$106.5 billion. The automotive sector was again the export champion in June, accounting for \$1.37 billion of the past month’s total exports.

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## COMMENTARY

### **From the Bosphorus: Straight - Turning the education system into a jigsaw puzzle**

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Wednesday, June 30, 2010

hurriyat

Attributed to one of the late Ottoman-era education ministers, which in later years turned into a commonly used idiom, this following line tells a lot about the country’s deeply rooted problem of education: I could run the Education Ministry perfectly if there were no schools!

Still, perhaps more than 120 years since it was believed to have been said, few would disagree that the situation has changed when it comes to the better planning of the education system.

Just a week after the schools were closed and all exams at all grades ended, Education Minister Nimet Çubukçu announced that the three-stage exam implemented three years ago for high-school entrance would be changed back to a single test. She defended the move by saying that the current test was subjecting children to exam stress at too young an age.

It’s a virtue to return from a mistake, so we applaud the minister. But that does not save the government from criticisms. How come the government missed that point three years ago? Didn’t you consult pedagogues on the affects of such tests on children psychological development?

“I did not know that the ministry was using my child as a test subject,” Milliyet writer Mehmet Tezkan wrote in his column Tuesday, expressing the feelings of the parents of nearly 3 million children who passed the exams in the last three years.

Elementary and high-school students make up around 20 percent of the nearly 72 million population of Turkey. And this figure does not include nearly 2.5 million university students. Altogether they are larger than almost all Balkan and central European countries. This, on the one hand, shows how the task is difficult while, on the other,

shows that it presents a great opportunity for Turkey to realize its aim in becoming a regional leader.

Because if Turkey increases its influence in its near abroad and in global terms, it will require more than its traditional and conventional advantages. It will need a very well-educated human power.

The opposite is scary. Uneducated masses will bring nothing but more poverty and more social disorder. No need to go far: Let's have a look at the situation in Southeast Anatolia, a region where the level of schooling is below the country's average. Almost everyone agrees this is one of the multiple reasons for the unending problem of terror. That's why establishing an adequate education system in the country is seen as part of precautions against terror.

As a common view, we should repeat the need for a well-functioning education system prepared from beyond the prism of political parties. Daily adjustments only bring more chaos to the system and, more dangerously, has the potential of ruining the future of millions of youngsters. We should now clearly understand the fact that if we want to successfully run the Education Ministry, we should acknowledge that we should place the schools and students and their well-being before everything else.

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### **What came out of the Obama-Erdoğan meeting?**

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Wednesday, June 30, 2010

SEDAT ERGİN

hurriyat

President of the United States Barack Obama met Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan over the weekend in Canada. But in order to make an assessment on the consequences of this meeting I better underline the following fact:

The meeting took place Saturday evening. In fact, the day before U.S. Assistant State Secretary Philip Gordon made a statement to the Associated Press that was kind of a cold shower for Turkish public opinion.

What more Obama said, compared to Gordon

Gordon, reminding that questions have been asked about political shift in Turkey, said, "We think Turkey remains committed to NATO, Europe and the United States, but that needs to be demonstrated."

That was not an ordinary remark made in a hurry. It was a calculated move aiming to reflect the frame of the Obama-Erdoğan meeting and show at the same time that the American side is seriously disturbed by the latest developments.

Did Obama repeat to Erdoğan what Gordon said in his message?

According to the Americans, Obama adopted a similar but more general approach.

Although he was not as tough as Gordon, Obama was very clear on Turkey's "No" vote against sanctions on Iran in particular.

Considering statements issued by the Turkish side afterward, such as "Both parties have understood each other very well," one can say that both Obama and Erdoğan did not hesitate to say whatever they were thinking.

Can Obama convince Netanyahu?

Another subject that disturbed Obama was Turkey-Israel relations. The U.S. President said they do not want to see Turkish-Israeli ties deteriorated but rather expect normalization.

Erdoğan, in return, asked for an apology from Israel, compensation for the families of the nine people who died in the Israeli raid and for the blockage on Gaza to be lifted. Obama supports Turkey's demands. That doesn't mean, however, a positive result can be obtained.

Obama will probably convey expectations of the Turkish side to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is to pay a visit to Washington soon. It is difficult to say how Netanyahu will react. I can only say that relations between the Obama administration and Israel are not perfect.

One of the most critical items also on the agenda was obviously the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

We see that the U.S. administration will take action regarding the PKK issue. It is also important that Erdoğan said a few steps are expected beyond sharing intelligence. In the days to come, with the cooperation of the Kurdish groups under Massoud Barzani in the Regional Kurdish Administration, there will be developments that will narrow the PKK's ability to maneuver.

Controlled-relation structure

The meeting in the end showed that, despite serious disagreements, the parties couldn't take the risk of harming Turkey-U.S. relations due to mutual interests.

The Obama administration has to cooperate with Turkey in many problematic regions of the world, starting with Iraq and Afghanistan.

For this reason, Washington prefers to stress differences of opinion in an environment of dialogue although they are offended by Erdoğan's attitude toward Israel and Iran.

Apparently, Obama's naïve look on Erdoğan now is being replaced by a more realistic approach.

In the Ankara camp, we see that Erdoğan is not happy either with escalating tension lately. He doesn't like to give an impression of a leader weakening in dialogue with Obama. Erdoğan now is taking steps more carefully and more controlled in order not to harm Turkey-U.S. relations any further.

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### **What drives Arab interest in Turkey?**

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Monday, June 28, 2010

SEMİH İDİZ

hurriyat

Much is being made of the growing interest in Turkey among Arabs. A lot of this interest is being tied to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's strong stand on Israel. Arab streets frequently feature his portraits and Turkish flags these days. But is Israel the only factor behind this growing interest?

A Palestinian journalist friend thinks not. He made this amply clear recently when we were discussing the inevitable subject of Turkey's new role in the Middle East.

According to him we have to note three things well.

First, the interest in Turkey among Arabs is not contingent on either on Mr. Erdoğan or his Justice and Development Party, or AKP. In other words, should Mr. Erdoğan and the

AKP go, the interest would not diminish in any way. In fact, according to my Palestinian friend, “Erdoğan will be forgotten overnight.”

Second, Arab interest in Turkey would decline if Ankara were to lose its “Western orientation” in general, and sever its ties with the EU in particular.

In other words what is liked about Turkey is the Western image it projects, an image which is lacking in the Middle East.

Third, a Turkey that has severed ties with Israel and turned this country into a demonized adversary will diminish Ankara’s role in the Middle East, where there is the need for new players who have contacts with both Israel and the other countries in the region.

Before taking up some these points up we have to admit that Prime Minister Erdoğan’s position in the Arab world can still not be minimized. It is after all a fact that, just like in Turkey, the blood of almost everyone in the Middle East, regardless of who they are or what they believe in, boils over in the face of injustices meted out to the Palestinians. Therefore it is hard for Arabs across the board not to respect Erdoğan because of his stance on Gaza, especially at a time when their own leaders remain silent. But that is where it also ends.

People of different backgrounds may share sentiments on the Palestinians, but they also have radically different expectations from life. This is clearly visible from the way melodramatic Turkish soap operas based on Turkish literary classics are lapped up across the Arab world.

The important point to note here, however, is that these shows do not reflect Islamic lifestyles. Quite the contrary, they reflect Western lifestyles. They also touch on “taboo” issues such as love, commitment, sex, avarice and lust.

No wonder that Islamic clerics across the Islamic world frown on these shows, and in some cases – as in Saudi Arabia and Egypt – have issued fatwas against them.

We are also being told that tourism from the Arab world to Turkey is increasing visibly, and many analysts ascribe this to the Turkish soaps. It is a fact that the mansions where these soaps are filmed are on “must-see” lists for Arab tourists.

One can safely assume therefore, that these people are not streaming into Turkey out of “mujahideen” sentiments spurred by Prime Minister Erdoğan’s outbursts against Israel or his support for Hamas – which is not the favorite of many Arabs anyway.

Turkey’s “Western orientation” is important for the Arab world for another and much more practical reason too. Today the Middle East represents 20 percent of Turkey’s overall trade. This is not a negligible amount of trade, running into billions of dollars. In the meantime there is a continual stream of Arab capital coming into Turkey to sectors ranging from real estate to agribusiness, and from health to telecommunications. This is all happening not because of the government’s stand on Israel, but because Ankara has been stabilizing its economy, and making Turkey a country that can be invested in, just like any other Western country.

But the increasingly secure infrastructure Turkey is providing investors did not come about overnight. It was Turkey’s European Union perspective and International Monetary Fund prescriptions that were the driving forces here, and many a painful hurdle had to be jumped first.

One can safely assume, therefore, that a Turkey that has severed or weakened its ties with the West is not to the advantage of Middle Eastern investors either. It is Turkey’s ties with the West that is of interest to them.

To return to the “cultural interest” in Turkey that Arabs are displaying, it is obvious that much in this country is what they yearn for because they can not attain these things in their own countries due to bad administration. But more than just “bad administration” is involved here.

The average Arab who may have a romantic view of Turkey will also have to learn in time that the things they like in this country did not emerge out of a vacuum overnight either.

Much of this is the products of a relatively democratic environment, for which the struggle still goes on, but which in its present form is still a league ahead of what exists in the Middle East. The other important factor is, of course, Turkey’s secular system, even if this system requires some “fine tuning” today.

The hope is that when this is fully understood Turkey will become a true model for the Arab world where there is a serious deficit in everything from basic democracy to women’s rights today. Many Arab intellectuals, including our Palestinian journalist friend, say that these are what people in the Middle East are really yearning for.

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ANDREW FINKLE

### **Turkey, Iran and regime change**

Who lost Britain?” There’s a ruptured oil well polluting the southern coast of America and the company responsible has the word “British” in its title (as well as a listing on the New York Stock Exchange) -- and the furor has led some to declare the end of the special relationship.

However, Barack Obama gave David Cameron a lift in his helicopter from the G-8 to the G-20 summit and the president sweetly exchanged a Chicago Goose Island beer for a bottle from the prime minister’s native Oxfordshire, and the transatlantic alliance seemed special again.

“Who lost Turkey?” Ankara voted against a UN resolution imposing beefed-up sanctions against Iran, intended to punish Tehran’s uranium enrichment program, and Western commentators paint a worried picture of a Turkey steering a course away from its traditional allies. Barack Obama meets with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the background of the G-20 summit but there is no pedalo ride on Lake Ontario and the two leaders do not swap six-packs of Cola Turka for Pepsi. So is the model partnership a model again? Not according to Philip Gordon, the senior State Department official whose job it is to keep an eye on European affairs. Turkey is probably playing on the same side as NATO, he told the AP, but needs to demonstrate that commitment.

This bit of public finger wagging is evidence that the US is not prepared to acknowledge the Ankara Weltanschauung -- that Turkey’s attempt to keep the door open to Iran while it pursues a tough line with Israel -- is really in the West’s best interests. It is the second leg of that policy which attracts the most attention. The pro-Israeli lobby in America takes precedence over public sentiment against Iran, yet it is the weakening of the coalition against Tehran that Washington finds of immediate concern. And, of course, the Beltway Weltanschauung is that Ankara is putting its eggs in the wrong basket.

Turkey was, of course, among the first to congratulate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on his re-election just over a year ago, despite the protests against the legitimacy of the count and the violence used against demonstrators. Ankara clearly is not counting on regime change

to resolve the problem of Tehran's nuclear ambitions and appears to have accepted that appeasement is the only rational choice. Of course, this policy does not collapse if the theocracy in Iran goes pear-shaped and the regime is overthrown. Turkey, a big economy committed to the sovereignty of the ballot box, remains an attractive model for ordinary Iranians. Neda Agha-Soltan, the 26-year-old whose recorded death by a sniper bullet became the symbol of the abortive "Green Revolution" was, after all, learning Turkish. There is some additional ground for speculating that Ahmadinejad is not all that secure in his job. I submit for your consideration a piece of journalism produced by the London-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ) in conjunction with The Guardian. The piece centers around the testimony of four stalwarts of the regime who have chosen to flee.

One, Maj. Mohamad Reza Madhi, was the head of investigations to protect the revolution -- a job equivalent to chief examiner of the Inquisition. He was a veteran of the Iran-Iraq wars and said that he had seen too much bloodshed to accept a regime that now ruled through terror. The most chilling testimony came from a former intelligence officer, Muhammed Hussein Torkaman, whose job included positioning the snipers to control the demonstrators both at the time of the election and in the protests that erupted the following December to mark the holiday of Ashura. He describes the "fear and panic" among the top leadership with whom he regularly met and the Airbus 330 waiting on the tarmac to take the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, into exile. He said the government could not count on the loyalty of the Revolutionary Guard to control the demonstrators and deployed Palestinian and Lebanese mercenaries from the Quds Brigade. These were the ones who opened fire when the now minister of defense, Ahmad Vahidi, gave the order. His own decision to defect was pragmatic -- he did not want to be held accountable for the excesses of the regime and certainly not those he witnessed in the blood-spattered torture cells of Evin Prison.

Torkaman's testimony should come as no surprise to the Turkish government. He gave his interview from a modest hotel room in Cappadocia, in the centre of Turkey. My contact in the BIJ said they did not think the government was aware of the presence of so many Iranian defectors, "but if they weren't then, they are now," he added.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2010/jun/11/iran-revolutionary-guard-defectors>  
29 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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IHSAN YALMIZ

**Dealing with Turkey's biggest enemy**

It is not a foreign country, nor is it the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Turkey's biggest enemy is the lack of transparency and, linked to this, the lack of accountability of the state.

Unfortunately even our prime minister who came to power despite the unaccountable and nontransparent establishment seems to think that democracy is all about elections and that it is enough for people to speak at the ballot box. He gets upset with the critical opposition, critical media and even critical civil society institutions. People around him -- some of whom write for the daily papers -- from time to time even suggest that critical civil society representatives should establish a party themselves if they are so eager to

interfere in politics. It is obvious that this is both a self-conceited and perverted, as it were, approach to democracy. Anyway. Today, I will not write about the civilians who -- at the end of the day -- have to respond to the people at least at election time and could democratically be held accountable and even penalized. But our bureaucrats, especially the military bureaucrats, can never be questioned, and it seems this is one of the reasons behind their terrible, unprofessional and clumsy handling of the terrorist attacks. Never mind protecting our people against the terrorists, they are unable to protect their own soldiers.

In the last terrible incident, when 12 of our soldiers were shot dead by the terrorists, the regional commander responded to criticism that the military was unable to detect 200 terrorists approaching well before the attack by saying that they did not fail to detect them. But his answer was humiliating: He said that they thought that the people they detected, with thermal cameras, etc., were shepherds, so the commander ordered his men to shout at the suspected people first and then he ordered them to bomb the area. When there was no response, said the commander, they decided that they were shepherds. Two hours later, the "shepherds" attacked the military stations with heavy weaponry and killed 12 conscripts, including several youngsters who had joined the army just 15 days earlier for their compulsory military service, proving that Chief of General Staff Gen. İlker Basbuğ did not keep his promise that the military units stationed in the Southeast to combat terrorists would contain solely professional soldiers by the end of 2009.

In addition to his failure to keep his promise, Gen. Basbuğ made also a "remarkable" statement about the incident and declared that the number of the attacking terrorists were not 200, as claimed by the media, but only 57. Unbelievable, but this is what he said. Our military generals, who love to teach politicians their job, are not able to discern a shepherd from a terrorist and do not even question it, so instead of sheep wandering around in flocks in daytime, now we have shepherds wandering around in the mountains with their flocks at night. I wonder if these flocked-together shepherds had any sheep that shepherded them.

The exact figure, 57, is even a sign that Gen. Basbuğ has been economical with the truth, and his record is full of such incidents. He himself must have been aware of this, as he increased the figure from 57 to "about 100." It would normally be shocking to see our generals' miserable mistakes as they cost the lives of many, but it seems that in Turkey people are accustomed to the unprofessional mistakes of the army. If it were Turkish Airlines that, say, failed to fly their planes on time every day, people would raise a huge fuss and even the prime minister would have to resign, but when it comes to our young sons who are killed on a daily basis because of the mistakes of their military officers, people only say that they have more sons and they would be happy to send them to the military. I think the biggest reason is that many of those people, who are generally from modest backgrounds -- as the children of the rich, the oligarchs, the elites and the top bureaucrats never serve in dangerous regions -- are not aware of the mistakes, inefficiency, unprofessionalism and clumsiness of our generals. They must be thinking that their sons are being killed because the terrorists have the upper hand.

Unless we mandate and enforce the transparency and accountability of our army, we will continue to spend tens of billions of US dollars on weapons used against imaginary enemies, such as the aging and already dying Greece, for reasons unknown to the public and elected officials, and we will never know why these billions are not spent to



professionalize the army. We will also never know why 60,000 of our youths serve the generals at military clubs and bars free of charge for about two years under the guise of compulsory military service. The terrorist problem will never be solved in Turkey. Even if the PKK evaporates, it will easily be replaced.

27 June 2010, Sunday  
TODAYS ZAMAN

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HUSIYIN GULERCE

### **Does Öcalan want a solution to the Kurdish problem?**

When I say Abdullah Öcalan, what I'm referring to is those who do not openly oppose terrorism, be they members of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) or civil society organizations in Turkey's East and Southeast -- whether they are up in the mountains or in Europe.

Following the latest terrorist attacks, which struck at the heart of all Turks and all Kurds with a conscience, we must ask this question: All of you in Öcalan's ranks, do you truly, sincerely want a solution to the Kurdish problem?

Why is this a critical question? Because terrorism -- this bloody terrorism that stretches across Turkey, leaving in its aftermath the coffins of fallen soldiers draped in the national flag -- is the biggest obstacle to solving the Kurdish problem. Before the tears of grieving mothers stops, before an atmosphere of healthy thought, discussion, dialogue and trust is established, no one can solve the Kurdish problem.

For the Kurdish problem is no longer the problem of Kurds alone. It is Turkey's problem and all of our own -- and it's our biggest problem. There are now Turks in this country who in their hearts feel a sense of injustice for the atrocities and inhumane treatment perpetrated against Kurds for years. There are now conscientious, equitable Turks who share the pain of the Kurds, who feel at least as much pain as the Kurds do over the torture conducted at Diyarbakır Prison; there are Turks saying "enough already," and their numbers are more than the Kurds themselves. I've written it before -- the key to solving the Kurdish problem is this: Turkish consciences will solve the Kurdish problem. And this conscience is saying that we are all people first, and we want to live together again as we had for years.

But we need a healthy environment of trust and dialogue. Bloody acts of terrorism strew dynamite throughout this environment; they plug up communication channels with cement. Spokespeople for the BDP say, "Alright, but Turkish military operations against the Kurdistan Workers' Party [PKK] should be stopped." This approach and insisting upon this means nothing but defiance and stubbornness. While the cries of mothers of fallen soldiers are continuing, no government administration, no soldier can make the decision to stop the operations. For no state will or can surrender to a terrorist organization.

In order for Turks' consciences to get to work, an end to violence is the first and foremost condition. As long as innocent people on buses are being killed by Molotov cocktails, as long as mourners are lining up in rows at mosque courtyards during the funerals of fallen soldiers, these consciences will not take action. Without using a clear language to denounce all forms of violence and all methods that include violence, a solution to the Kurdish problem will never be possible.

Last Ramadan, I was in Diyarbakır on the occasion of a fast-breaking iftar dinner and I met with leading local administrators and political party members. There was a common theme in the comments that they made insistently. “There are no problems between Kurdish and Turkish members of the public,” they said. “The Ergenekon trial and the taking to account of deep structures within the state is also very important for us.” Now, they should think with a sense of conscience, what else is there that sows seeds of separation between these two publics that are even bigger than the groups of people that turn out for the funerals of fallen soldiers?

Weren't the Turks caused pain and grief by the loss of their writers and intellectuals and thousands of university students, including leftists and nationalists, in the pre-coup period? Weren't the Kurds caused pain and grief by the thousands of unsolved murders and tortures? Is it not the self-same bloody and dirty structure that is causing pain to both sides? In that case, what is it that the PKK wants from those wretched sons of Turks and Kurds who go to the borders to perform their mandatory military service that is demanded of them by their citizenship? Are you going to solve the Kurdish problem by causing us pain?

This road is a dead end. If the segment that I've mentioned is sincere about a solution, then its first step will be to put an end to PKK terrorism.

And the ongoing Ergenekon trial has also shown that the source of all the problems in this country is the tutelage system that prevents democratization. Terrorism just plays into the hands of the proponents of tutelage. And they are the ones calling for the declaration of emergency rule (OHAL) so that an interim administration can begin operation. Just like the periods proceeding coups d'état in the past, terrorism merely serves to prepare the grounds desired by junta members.

The sole path to a solution of the Kurdish problem is ending the tutelage system -- meaning Turkey's democratization.

25 June 2010, Friday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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