

BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD  
TURKEY

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## **SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **POLITICAL NEWS-SUMMARY**

Turkey's Pro Kurdish Peace and Democratic Party or BDP had filed a motion in the Parliament against Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan claiming democratic initiative is discriminative in a sense it has been failed to fulfill the government's promises specifically to end terror problem in that area. So the democratic initiative should be excluded from the Parliament agenda.

Top officials with the country's largest business association TUSAID have criticized the failure of the government's democratic initiative to solve the terror problem and urged cooperation should be developed at political level otherwise domestic political tensions will provide a free hand and wide space to terrorism.

Three people including the daughter of an army officer were killed yesterday in a roadside bomb attack on a civilian bus transporting military personnel in İstanbul. Twelve people were injured, but two died in the hospital hours after the attack, bringing the death toll of the attack to five.

Turkey is planning to purchase high-altitude air defense systems in order to meet its military requirements. Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), which has no long-range missiles and air defense systems in its inventory, currently uses short-range "Rapier" and "Stinger" missile batteries and medium-range modernized "I-Hawk" missile systems, military officials told the Anatolia news agency. Turkey's need for long-range air and missile defense systems appeared especially during the U.S. military operations to Iraq in 1991 and in 2003.

The General Staff recently submitted a report to the Prime Ministry on the recent escalation in terrorist attacks. In the report certain reasons are given which working behind PKK's terror attacks are as follows:

Establishment of a tri-lateral mechanism to share intelligence between Iraq, Turkey and USA to stop terror based activities by PKK in the region and to drive the PKK out of northern Iraq.

A second reason is the difficulty the PKK faces in finding new recruits, as the government's democratization initiative has made this more difficult. One purpose of the escalation in terrorist attacks is to sabotage the government's initiative, announced last summer as part of a plan to minimize terrorism by giving more cultural rights to the country's Kurds.

Another reason is the organization's general frustration with fewer and fewer countries supporting it. Intelligence units say the ultimate target of the PKK is to move its terrorist acts to territories outside the eastern and southeastern parts of Turkey.

Although the General Staff has denied allegations that Israel might be behind the attack, terrorism experts do not find this convincing, saying it merits attention that there has been a rise in terrorist attacks exactly at the time when the relations between the two countries are deteriorating.

Head of the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK), Sedat Laçiner, says the PKK has escalated terrorist attacks in hopes of influencing domestic developments,

such as the democratic initiative process and the referendum process on a constitutional reform package, to be voted on in a public referendum on Sept. 12. According to Laçiner, the PKK is being used as an instrument by those circles that are uneasy with Turkey's emergence as an influential power in the Middle East region.

Turkish President Abdullah Gul said Turkey's fight against terrorism would continue with determination until terrorist organization PKK was eradicated. Turkish police confiscated 90 kg of hashish in the southern province of Hatay.

## **GEO-STRATEGIC NEWS SUMMARY**

Turkish Parliament passed a motion extending the mandate of Turkish forces in Lebanon for an additional year under the banner of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, or UNIFIL, for the fourth time.

Four Armenian troops and one Azerbaijani soldier were killed in an exchange of fire near Azerbaijan's breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said on Saturday.

Turkish Environment & Forestry Minister Veysel Eroğlu said on Monday that Turkey, Syria and Iraq would not allow any interference of any other country in water issue. Water issue from time to time causes problems among Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Eroğlu said Turkey wanted fair planning of use of Firat (Euphrates) River's water, raising the prosperity level of the three countries and will boost friendship and fraternity among Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Eroğlu, currently in Damascus to discuss technical details of the Friendship Dam to be constructed on River Asi with Turkish and Syrian cooperation, met with Syrian Irrigation Minister Nader al-Bunni and signed specifications and written report including the details.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday that Turkey should immediately be given visa liberalization by EU.

Turkish President Abdullah Gul said on Wednesday at the opening of the 8th Summit of Southeast European Cooperation Process Culture Corridors in Istanbul that Balkan countries should preserve cultural heritage to boost unity and friendly ties.

European Union's chief official for enlargement on Wednesday urged EU is hopeful that Turkey will speed up in its accession negotiations, saying that the country had made significant reforms until now.

Turkey will join forces with Azerbaijan to establish an arms production company in Baku as part of Turkey's years-long military cooperation with the South Caucasus country.

Turkey and Kazakhstan on Monday lent support to Kyrgyz leader Roza Otunbayeva's plan to hold a referendum while stating that they were ready to offer a joint action plan to be implemented following the referendum in a bid to help resolve the unrest in

Kyrgyzstan, where several contradictory death tolls have been announced thus far.

Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini has said the European Union's doors are open for Turkey, reiterating EU leaders' pledges to pursue full membership for Turkey.

President Abdullah Gül has said talks between Turkish and Greek Cypriots on the island's fate must be concluded this year, warning that failure to meet the deadline could spell the end of Turkish efforts to reunite the island.

In reply to Criticism against Turkey that it has been moving away from the Western world, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu has said, Turkey's foreign policy is based on

principles. He listed those principles as peace, stability, welfare, security, Turkey's policy of having "zero problems with neighbors" and its co-sponsorship of the UN-led Alliance of Civilizations initiative.

### **ECONOMIC NEWS-SUMMARY**

According to IMF estimates Gross domestic product figures at purchasing power parity of Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria are expected to total 1.13 trillion US dollars in 2010. As the four countries have pledge to intensify cooperation in trade and commerce. In spite of the fact that the global financial crisis has taken a huge toll on nearly all sectors around the world, the Turkish defense industry has continued its upward trend, achieving a 16 percent year-on-year growth in its exports.

Turkey has always complained of an inadequate amount of fossil fuels to meet its own energy needs but has recently been encouraged by what it actually has beneath its own soil. Turkish exploration activities in 143 wells that started drilling last year resulted in the discovery of oil in 53 wells and natural gas in 30; 33 of the wells were dry, and the work on the remaining 27 is still ongoing.

### **SOCIAL ISSUES- SUMMARY**

Discrimination against professional women who wear a headscarf keeps millions of qualified female employees out of the workforce and hampers women's economic progress, according to a recent report on the issue.

## **POLITICAL NEWS**

### **Motion on Kurdish initiative excluded from Turkish Parliament's agenda**

Thursday, June 24, 2010

ANKARA — Daily News Parliament Bureau

HURRIYAT

The parliamentary motion filed by Turkey's pro-Kurdish party claiming Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Kurdish initiative is discriminative was excluded from Parliament's agenda Thursday.

The Nationalist Movement Party, or MHP, protested the motion by refusing to speak about the motion.

The pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party, or BDP, had filed a motion against Erdoğan for failing to fulfill the government's promises featured in the government's plan and for discriminating via the Kurdish move to end the terror problem. The motion also claims Erdoğan is putting pressure on his opponents using illegal wiretaps.

Thursday's discussions witnessed a debate among the political parties.

Speaking in Parliament's General Assembly, BDP Şırnak deputy Hasip Kaplan accused Erdoğan of "turning into a 'military personality.'" Kaplan, without giving names, suggested talking directly or indirectly to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, and its imprisoned leader, Abdullah Öcalan.

Speaking on behalf of the Republican People's Party, or CHP, Şükrü Elekdağ asked the ruling government to take measures to prevent terror.

Ömer Çelik of the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, said the Kurdish move did not imply giving up the fight against terror.

Industry Minister Nihat Ergün said the terror problem can't be solved via weapons but can be solved with democracy and human rights.

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### **Turkish business group slams democratic initiative, divisive politics**

Thursday, June 24, 2010

ISTANBUL - Hürriyet Daily News

Top officials with the country's largest business association have criticized the failure of the government's democratic initiative to solve the terror problem and urged cooperation, saying domestic political tensions create "fertile ground" for terrorism.

"Bad management of the initiative, the ambiguity over its contents and the disappointment it created are all saddening and depressing," Ümit Boyner, the president of the board of directors of the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association, or TÜSİAD, said Thursday. "But these can in no way justify resorting to violence.

In all these years, we have failed to solve the terrorism problem by killing more and accepting the deaths of more of our children," Boyner added, calling on civil society to "stand tall against violence and the logic of terrorism."

Speaking at a high-level meeting of the association, Mustafa Koç, the chairman of TÜSİAD's High Advisory Council, called for the creation of a "multi-dimensional,

coordinated approach between all strategic institutions, the government and the opposition parties,” and said people should not forget that domestic political tensions are the most fertile growing ground for terrorism.

“Terrorism is the shared problem of everyone in Turkey and finding a solution is everyone’s joint responsibility,” Koç said.

According to Boyner, Turkish politics is hampered by the fact that dialogue channels are being kept closed during critical moments. She said the grounds for consensus must be built “without yielding to old habits or zero-sum logic.”

“We should avoid moves that would trigger some dangerous fault lines. We’re concerned that Turkey will be divided along ethnic lines, and this kind of [divisive] mentality will start to sneak into people’s minds,” she said.

Members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, which is listed as a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, killed 12 soldiers in attacks over the weekend in the southeastern province of Hakkari. Four more soldiers and one teenage civilian died Tuesday in a PKK-linked attack on a military bus in Istanbul.

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### **Five killed in fatal blast as terrorism hits İstanbul**

Three people including the daughter of an army officer were killed yesterday in a roadside bomb attack on a civilian bus transporting military personnel in İstanbul. Twelve people were injured, but two died in the hospital hours after the attack, bringing the death toll of the attack to five.

The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), an offshoot of the terrorist Kurdistan Workers’ Party, (PKK) claimed responsibility for the attack yesterday. The incident comes at a time when the terrorist PKK has escalated its attacks on Turkish military targets. More than 50 Turkish soldiers have been killed in the past few months. Last month, the PKK threatened to increase armed operations in all regions of Turkey. Eleven soldiers were killed over the weekend. The government and the top military brass came together at a security summit on Monday to lay out a new strategy on how to confront the PKK.

The explosion took place when the vehicle was passing through the Halkalı district on the outskirts of the city. A convoy of three buses had just left a military residential compound in Halkalı when the explosion hit the last bus, killing two soldiers and a 17-year-old girl. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, speaking at his party’s parliamentary group meeting, made comments on the attack as well as on the recent escalation in terrorist attacks. He harshly rebuffed a call from the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) to reinstate martial law, which was abolished in the early 2000s, in the region, saying that calling for a return of martial law was tantamount to surrendering to the language of terrorism.

Erdoğan said violence meant the loss of reason. “There is no reason where there is violence. If violence is in play, logic is out.” He said they would not succumb to the language of violence.

He also briefed deputies on his visit to the Gediktepe district of Hakkari, where 11 soldiers were killed in a PKK attack on an outpost. He said he saw the nobility and courage of Turkish War of Independence-era soldiers in the soldiers serving in the East and Southeast. He stated that the security forces were carrying out the fight against terrorism selflessly even in the most difficult of conditions.

The prime minister said the government was doing everything necessary to fight the war on terror, adding that fighting terrorism is a long-term endeavor. He also criticized some newspaper stories on recent terrorist incidents, saying, "The media here is supporting terrorism, knowingly or unknowingly."

He also accused his government's critics of lying when they say the government has not done anything. He stated that they had brought many changes including the abolishment of martial law in the region as well as extending more cultural rights to Kurdish students such as publications and education in Kurdish.

Erdoğan said any call for backtracking on the democratic initiative -- launched last year to extend more cultural rights to the country's Kurds and called the National Unity and Brotherhood Project by the government -- would be tantamount to succumbing to terrorism. He stated that the government had not launched the initiative for the terrorist organization, saying that giving up the initiative would mean betraying the country's children. "If we give up the initiative, that means terrorism has won," he declared. He said those behind the terrorist attacks of late wanted Turkey to appear as if it is a Third World country in the eyes of the world. The prime minister also dismissed calls for an early election. "Mothers do not want to hear of early elections or martial law; they want to hear a solution," he stated.

#### **Those killed in the attack**

Those who were killed in the attack were identified as gendarmerie Sr. Sgt. Bekir Çelik, Sr. Sgt. Çağlar Bölük, Sr. Sgt. Uğur Ekir, NCO Duran Bayram and Buse Sarıyağ, the daughter of an officer residing at the military compound.

İstanbul Governor Avni Mutlu said an investigation into the attack was under way but that no detentions had been made, speaking to journalists outside the Mehmet Akif Ersoy Hospital, where he visited those injured in the attack.

Chief of General Staff Gen. İlker Başbuğ also visited the injured yesterday.

İstanbul prosecutor Aykut Cengiz Engin rushed to the scene of the attack along with other prosecutors but declined to make a statement to the press. "We will make a statement when we have more information," he said. İstanbul Police Chief Hüseyin Çapkın also inspected the scene of the incident. "We will most certainly find the perpetrators. Terror won't get you anywhere." In response to a question about whether the perpetrators of a similar attack also in Halkalı a few months ago on a vehicle transporting police officers could be the same, he said, "I do not want to say anything on that." TAK had also claimed responsibility for that attack.

All three buses in the convoy were badly damaged by the blast. The windows of the last bus were shattered, and shards of glass were scattered across the highway. Crime scene investigation units looked for evidence yesterday. Neşat Yeni, the driver of the last bus, said the explosion was sudden. "There was a young girl sitting in the middle row. She was seriously injured. I later learned that she died. There were about 30 to 35 people on the bus. After the blast, the vehicle commander fired a few shots. He called for help." Meanwhile, the critically wounded vehicle commander said he saw a suspect clad in a blue shirt running away, but he couldn't tell if it was the perpetrator of the attack or a citizen.

#### **CoE condemns attack**

Meanwhile, the Council of Europe (CoE) issued a strongly worded statement against the attack in Halkalı yesterday. "We strongly condemn today's terrorist attack on a bus in

İstanbul, in which three people have been killed, including a child,” the chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Antonio Milošoski, and the president of its Parliamentary Assembly, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, said in a joint statement.

“Bloodshed like this will never bring victory, only sadness and anger. We stand together with the families of those killed this morning, and share in their distress. The recent upsurge of terrorist violence in Turkey is a matter of grave concern. Terrorism remains the greatest threat to the values the Council of Europe stands for,” the written statement further noted.

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### **Victims’ families mourn loss of loved ones**

Families of the five individuals killed yesterday when suspected terrorists detonated a remote-controlled bomb next to a bus carrying military personnel in İstanbul were devastated to learn of the deaths of their loved ones.

The roadside bomb went off on a usually quiet side road in Halkalı as the bus passed shortly after leaving a military housing complex. Five people were killed and 10 others were injured in the explosion. Four of those killed were military officers.

Relative of Spc. Sgt. Uğur Ekiz, 38, who was killed in the explosion, flocked to his parents’ house in the Erzin district of Hatay upon learning that Ekiz had been killed.

Ekiz’s mother Sevim Ekiz collapsed after hearing that her son had been killed.

“My son has never hurt anybody. Would I see his death?” said the tearful mother.

The news of Ekiz’s death was not told to his 76-year-old father, Fikri, who was waiting to have an angiogram at a hospital in Adana. Doctors placed him in a room without a TV and waited to perform the surgery for the time being.

Ekiz, who began serving in İstanbul one year ago, is survived by two children.

The family of gendarmerie Spc. Sgt. Emek Çağlar Bölük, 28, who reside in İzmir’s Tire district, were overwhelmed with pain in learning of his death. While his father, Salih Bölük, vowed not to cry and to stay firm, his mother Kezban Bölük shed tears while demanding the end of terrorism in the country. Bölük is survived by a two-year-old daughter.

The death of gendarmerie Spc. Sgt. Bekir Çelik, another victim of yesterday’s attack, also led to deep grief among his family members, who live in İskenderun. His mother Senem Çelik who lost her husband five years ago, said there was not much to say. Çelik was married and had no children.

Family members and friends of noncommissioned officer Duran Bayram, 32, who died at a hospital after being severely injured in the attack, were grieved to hear doctors announce his death yesterday afternoon. Another victim of the attack, Buse Sarıyağ, 17, who was going to a special university preparation course for children of military officers at the Provincial Gendarmerie Command in Maslak, was to take the Undergraduate Placement Examination (LYS) over the weekend. Sarıyağ was on the bus with her father, Spc. Sgt. Ünal Sarıyağ, who was slightly injured in the explosion.

22 June 2010, Tuesday  
TODAY’S

ZAMAN İSTANBUL

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**Turkey to purchase high-altitude air defense systems**

Turkey is planning to purchase high-altitude air defense systems in order to meet its military requirements.

Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), which has no long-range missiles and air defense systems in its inventory, currently uses short-range "Rapier" and "Stinger" missile batteries and medium-range modernized "I-Hawk" missile systems, military officials told the Anatolia news agency.

Turkey's need for long-range air and missile defense systems appeared especially during the U.S. military operations to Iraq in 1991 and in 2003.

High-altitude air defense systems, which are capable to stop hostile missiles within a 50-300 km distance, aim at eliminating long-range missile threats before entering the Turkish airspace.

According to military sources, USA, Russia and China are currently the top alternatives that can provide Turkey with high-altitude air defense systems.

Turkey can meet its requirements with the U.S. "Patriot" missiles, Russian "S-300 & S-400" systems or Chinese "HQ" missile systems, officials said.

Patriot is a surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, the primary of its kind used by the U.S. army and several allied nations.

The PAC-3 upgrade is the most significant upgrade Patriot has received thus far, and is one of the most comprehensive upgrade programs ever undertaken on an American weapon system. Due to this upgrade, PAC-3 software can now conduct a tailored tactical ballistic missiles (TBM) search. Patriot PAC-3 missile systems are manufactured by the U.S. Lockheed Martin and Raytheon companies.

S-300 & S-400 missile systems, which are alternatives to the U.S. Patriots, are long-range surface-to-air missile systems produced by the Russian military R&D enterprise Almaz. The S-300 is regarded as one of the most potent anti-aircraft missile systems currently fielded. The S-400 was introduced in 1999 and features a new, much larger missile with 2 per TEL. The S-400 is capable of detecting and simultaneously engaging six targets out to a range of 400 km (250 miles), including aircraft, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles. It is also designed to counter stealth aircraft.

HQ is a series of new generation medium-to long-range air defense missiles produced by China. The missile has a maximum range of 100 km and an altitude up to 20,000 meters, military sources say.

21 June 2010, Monday  
TODAYS ZAMAN

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**Turkey's top general: "we have begun using Heron systems in north of Iraq"**

Turkey's top general said Monday that they had begun using the Heron systems in north of Iraq for the last ten days.

Replying to questions of journalists after making opening remarks of the Silk Road-2010 General/Admiral Seminar in the northwestern province of Çanakkale, General Staff Chief Gen. İlker Başbuğ said, "we have begun using the Heron systems we purchased from Israel in north of Iraq for the last ten days. We have been using the system in coordination with US forces."

Referring to the Saturday's terrorist attack on a military outpost in Semdinli town of the southeastern province of Hakkari, Gen. Başbuğ said, "the border region between Turkey

and Iraq is one of the most difficult geographies in the world. I do not agree with those statements that there was a lack of intelligence before the attack in Hakkari."

Asked whether a state of emergency was required as some politicians had said earlier, Gen. Başbuğ said, "I do not think that a state of emergency is in question."

Eleven soldiers were killed when terrorists attacked on a military outpost near the town of Semdinli, a mountainous region where the borders of Turkey, Iraq and Iran meet early on Saturday.

21 June 2010, Monday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Reasons behind rise in PKK violence**

The General Staff recently submitted a report to the Prime Ministry on the recent escalation in terrorist attacks. According to the report, one reason behind the increase could be attributed to the recent developments in the Middle East region.

The PKK feels its end is near, due to Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani's recent visit to Ankara, which came after the establishment of a tri-lateral mechanism to share intelligence between Iraq, Turkey and the US. The PKK particularly views Barzani's rapprochement with Ankara as the first signs of cooperation between the regional government and Turkey to drive the PKK out of northern Iraq, the military's report says. A second reason is the difficulty the PKK faces in finding new recruits, as the government's democratization initiative has made this more difficult. One purpose of the escalation in terrorist attacks is to sabotage the government's initiative, announced last summer as part of a plan to minimize terrorism by giving more cultural rights to the country's Kurds. According to the General Staff, the terrorist organization is about to collapse and the recent attacks are a last attempt to stay on its feet. Another reason is the organization's general frustration with fewer and fewer countries supporting it. Intelligence units say the ultimate target of the PKK is to move its terrorist acts to territories outside the eastern and southeastern parts of Turkey.

Although the General Staff has denied allegations that Israel might be behind the attack, terrorism experts do not find this convincing, saying it merits attention that there has been a rise in terrorist attacks exactly at the time when the relations between the two countries are deteriorating.

Head of the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK), Sedat Laçiner, says the PKK has escalated terrorist attacks in hopes of influencing domestic developments, such as the democratic initiative process and the referendum process on a constitutional reform package, to be voted on in a public referendum on Sept. 12. According to Laçiner, the PKK is being used as an instrument by those circles that are uneasy with Turkey's emergence as an influential power in the Middle East region. However, intelligence units in the military make a point of avoiding such topics in their reports.

AK Party Deputy Chairman Dengir Mir Mehmet Fırat also believes that the recent attacks have been orchestrated by groups behind the PKK. He also claims that the attacks are tied to the Sept. 12 referendum. Another expert who agrees is Doğu Ergil, who told Today's Zaman, "If the Constitutional Court annuls the constitutional amendment package, there will be a serious regime crisis. The greatest rival for the Peace and Democracy Party [BDP], and thus indirectly the PKK, is the Justice and Development Party [AK Party]. This is the reason there is an attempt to portray the AK Party

government as if it is anti-Kurdish. The more Kurdish sons that die in operations, the higher the resentment against the government will be in the region. This is a common goal for some domestic and foreign forces.”

21 June 2010, Monday

TODAY'S ZAMAN ANKARA

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**Fight Against Terrorism Will Continue Until PKK Is Eradicated, President Gul**  
**Sunday, 20 June 2010**  
USAK PUBLICATIONS

Turkish President Abdullah Gul said Turkey's fight against terrorism would continue with determination until terrorist organization PKK was eradicated.

Gul condemned the terrorist attack which killed 8 soldiers and injured fourteen others and the death of two soldiers and injury of two others in the pursuing operations in a press release issued Saturday.

He said terrorist attacks would not weaken the Turkish state or the Turkish nation or disrupt the peace and security.

Gul said those who supported or harboured the terrorist organization would never attain their goals.

"I would like to announce to the whole world once again that Turkey is engaged in a full scale fight against the terrorist organization in the strongest and most efficient way," said Gul.

Gul said the greatest fear of terrorist organizations had always been a true democracy, adding that the enhancement of democratic standards in Turkey was a threat towards the existence of the terrorist organizations.

He said fight against terrorism was Turkey's utmost priority and it would be carried on until the terrorist organization PKK was eradicated.

Eight soldiers were killed and 14 others were wounded Saturday in an attack staged by PKK terrorist on a military outpost near the Iraqi border around 2:00 a.m. in Semdinli. 12 terrorists were killed by Turkish soldiers during the skirmish.

During operations launched in pursuit of a group of terrorists who staged the attack the military outpost, a mine planted by the terrorists exploded, killing two soldiers and injuring two others.

Extensive operations were launched in the region in pursuit of the escaping group of terrorists. Skirmishes between Turkish troops and terrorists are reported from the area.

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**Turkish Police Seize 90 Kg Of Hashish In Hatay**  
**Thursday, 24 June 2010**  
USAK PUBLICATIONS

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Turkish police confiscated 90 kg of hashish in the southern province of Hatay.

A statement from the governor's office said on Thursday that gendarme teams searched a woodland in Karlisu hamlet in Hatay, seizing 90 kg of hashish in the operation.

A full investigation is under way.

**Thursday, 24 June 2010**

**A.A**

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**GEO-STRATEGIC NEWS**

**Mandate of troops in Lebanon extended for the fourth time**

Thursday, June 24, 2010

ANKARA — Hürriyet Daily News

Parliament passed a motion extending the mandate of Turkish forces in Lebanon for an additional year under the banner of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, or UNIFIL, for the fourth time on Thursday.

Once the United Nations Security Council decides to extend the duty term of the UNIFIL, the Turkish forces, the number of which will be determined by the Turkish government, will be sent to Lebanon for a year starting April 5, 2010.

After the conflict broke out between Lebanon and Israel on July 12, 2006, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1701 on Aug. 11, 2006 and put it into action following the ceasefire between the parties Aug. 14, 2006.

The Turkish Cabinet decided on Aug. 29, 2006 to open airports and seaports to UNIFIL and to contribute some of the nation's forces within the framework of the deployment of an international force in Lebanon. The Turkish Parliament ratified the resolution to deploy forces to Lebanon on Sept. 5, 2006.

The Turkish troops' mandate in Lebanon has been extended every year since 2006 following decisions made by the Turkish Parliament.

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**Iran should prove Turkey's decision right, says Turkish former diplomat**

Thursday, June 24, 2010

ISTANBUL - Hürriyet Daily News

Iranian diplomats are asked whether the government in Tehran is ready to make certain sacrifices and prove Turkey is right to trust in Iran's nuclear policies. Turkey has taken a big risk by acting against the international community, says retired Ambassador Munat Bilhan

Countries that want to make brave decisions should pay the price for acting independently, as Iran has been doing since the 1979 revolution, said an Iranian diplomat Wednesday.

The comment was prompted by a question on whether Iran is ready to make sacrifices similar to that of Turkey, which acted against the majority in the United Nations Security Council by voting in favor of Tehran.

At a round table discussion organized by the think tank Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies, or TASAM, a former Turkish Ambassador emphasized the risks taken by the Turkish government when it voted against a new set of sanctions against Iran over its controversial nuclear program.

"Turkey trusted in Iran's honesty and defended Iran. Time will show whether Iran is really honest on that subject or not," said Murat Bilhan, the associate director of TASAM. Hers is a view echoed by Süleyman Şensoy, the director of Tasam, who said the risk taken by Turkey is bigger than that of Brazil, who also voted against the

sanctions, because Brazil is geographically far away from the region. “We expect Iran to continue to act in pursuit of peaceful purposes and confirm the good intentions Turkey carries,” said Şensoy.

According to Bilhan, Turkey acted emotionally and acted against the international community. “I am not just talking about acting against the U.S.–Israeli axis. Even some Arab countries are uneasy with Turkey,” said Bilhan, adding that Iran’s neighbors, including some Arab countries, are scared of Tehran’s intentions.

“It is only natural to see Iran increase its regional power and broaden its influence zone. Yet it needs to do that in a way that increases the confidence. Today Iran is extremely isolated, and it should develop policies to break this circle of isolation,” he said. Rhetoric is not enough, said Bilhan while explaining the lack of confidence toward Iran.

Bilhan also implied Turkey is not getting Iranian support on many issues, despite its support of Iran on its nuclear stalemate within the international community. “Will Iran make sacrifices in the face of sacrifices made by Turkey?” asked Bilhan, who said it is only natural to expect support from Iran in certain areas. “I am not seeing Iranian support in any problems faced by Turkey,” said Bilhan, naming the Cyprus problem as well as Turkey’s troubled ties with Armenia, with whom Iran enjoys food relations.

Iran and Turkey have been working together, said Mostofa Dolatyar from the Iranian foreign ministry while answering comments from Turkish participants. “As for the issue of sacrifices, Turkey has been successful in guaranteeing the world’s respect,” said the general director of the ministry’s Strategic Research Center.

“Turkey and Iran are rising to be respectable states trying to offer the best life to their citizens. We should not be so conservative in making bold decisions. If there is a price to pay for taking brave steps, it should be paid, as Iran has been paying for its independence since 1979,” he said. “We are ready to support Turkey. But what is the best way to do that? Obviously we should sit together and talk about it.”

Dolatyar said there is already a good level of cooperation between the two countries and Iran has been supporting Turkey in Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine.

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### **Azerbaijan, Armenia exchange of fire leaves five dead**

Four Armenian troops and one Azerbaijani soldier were killed in an exchange of fire near Azerbaijan’s breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said on Saturday.

Skirmishes, sometimes fatal, frequently erupt along the front line near Nagorno-Karabakh, a small mountainous region under the control of ethnic Armenians who have been fighting a six-year separatist war with support from neighboring Armenia.

The ethnic-Armenian controlled military said in a statement its soldiers repelled an Azerbaijani attack late on Friday, in which four ethnic Armenian soldiers were killed and four wounded.

In Baku, Azerbaijan’s Defense Ministry confirmed a clash had taken place and an Azerbaijani soldier was killed. An estimated 30,000 people were killed and 1 million displaced before a cease-fire in 1994 but a peace accord has never been agreed and the ethnic Armenian leadership’s claim for independence has not been recognized by any country.

A day before Friday’s clash, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met, together with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, and agreed to continue internationally mediated

efforts to resolve the conflict. Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, speaking to reporters on Saturday on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in Russia, said the clash was an Azerbaijani provocation, which was “all the more unacceptable” since it occurred hours after the meeting.

The dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia remains a threat to stability in the South Caucasus, an important route for oil and gas supplies from the Caspian region to Europe. More than a decade of mediation led by Russia, France and the United States has failed to produce a final peace deal and Azerbaijan has said it may use force to try to regain control of Nagorno-Karabakh. Tension has increased since Armenia and its traditional foe Turkey, which has close ties to Azerbaijan, reached an historic rapprochement last year.

The accord crumbled this year when Armenia suspended ratification after Turkish demands that it first reach terms over Nagorno-Karabakh, a condition set by Turkey to appease Azerbaijan, an oil and gas producer.

21 June 2010, Monday

TODAY'S ZAMAN WITH REUTERS İSTANBUL

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### **Turkey, Syria, Iraq not to allow interference in water issue, Turkish minister**

Turkish Environment & Forestry Minister Veysel Eroğlu said on Monday that Turkey, Syria and Iraq would not allow any interference of any other country in water issue.

Water issue from time to time causes problems among Turkey, Syria and Iraq.

Eroğlu said Turkey wanted fair planning of use of Fırat (Euphrates) River's water, raising the prosperity level of the three countries, "I wish the waters would boost friendship and fraternity among Turkey, Syria and Iraq," he said.

Eroğlu, currently in Damascus to discuss technical details of the Friendship Dam to be constructed on River Asi with Turkish and Syrian cooperation, met with Syrian Irrigation Minister Nader al-Bunni and signed specifications and written report including the details.

Eroğlu said the written report was a landmark between Turkey and Syria, noting that Friendship Dam would be a means for closer friendship between the two countries.

Eroğlu said they would take significant steps in prevention of pollution in Euphrates and Asi rivers.

Syrian Irrigation Minister al-Bunni said they agreed to have a trilateral ministerial meeting in Baghdad, and noted that they discussed preservation of water resources and quality as well as probable climate conditions in the region.

Eroğlu later met with Syrian Prime Minister Naji al-Itri who eulogized Turkish nation and government over their stance on Palestine cause and Gaza.

Al-Itri said they were pleased over the position of the Turkish nation in transportation of aid equipment to Gaza, and noted that the stance was an indication that Turks and Arabs came closer mainly on Palestinian problem.

The Turkish and Syria parties assessed cooperation opportunities on Friendship Dam, irrigation projects, agriculture and meteorology and al-Itri expressed Syria's eagerness to boost cooperation with Turkey in irrigation and agriculture.

Syrian Assistant Vice-President Hassan Turkmani who also received Eroğlu, made an emphasis on importance of Friendship Dam, and made a call for cooperation in areas of modern irrigation techniques and meteorology.

**Erdogan calls on EU immediately to give Turkey visa liberalization**

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday that Turkey should immediately be given visa liberalization.

Thursday, 24 June 2010 12:38  
WORLD BULLETIN

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday that Turkey should immediately be given visa liberalization.

"We have learned the good news that Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina will be included in visa liberalization regime after EU has granted visa liberalization to citizens of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. As Turkey is a negotiating country, visa liberalization should immediately be granted to Turkey," Erdogan told a luncheon he hosted in honor of participant leaders of the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP) in Istanbul.

Erdogan said there have been very pleasing and encouraging developments with respect to peace and stability in the Balkans in the recent years. "New independent countries like Montenegro and Kosovo were born in the West Balkans, Croatia and Albania became NATO members, Croatia started negotiations with the EU, and Albania and Macedonia gained candidate country status," Erdogan noted.

Referring to economic cooperation, Erdogan said despite the global crisis in the region, hopes still remained. "Trade volume among the Southeastern Europe countries amounted to 72 billion USD in 2008. This figure was around 53 billion USD in 2009 with the impact of the crisis," he said.

Erdogan said Turkey's total bilateral trade volume with the regional countries at the end of 2008 had exceeded 17 billion USD, and underlined that despite the economic crisis, bilateral trade volume was around 11 billion USD in 2009.

"Trade ministers gathered at a meeting in Istanbul in March and decided to triple foreign trade volume of the region in the next five years. I believe that we may catch this target by leaving global crisis behind. To this end, Turkey has been encouraging its contractors, businessmen and entrepreneurs to have joint investments both with regional countries and the third countries," Erdogan said.

Erdogan wished success to Montenegro which has taken over rotating presidency.

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**Turkish President urges Balkans to protect cultural heritage**

Turkish President Abdullah Gul said that Balkan countries should preserve cultural heritage to boost unity and friendly ties.

Thursday, 24 June 2010 12:45

Turkish President Abdullah Gul said on Wednesday that Balkan countries should preserve cultural heritage to boost unity and friendly ties.

President Gul delivered a speech at the opening of the 8th Summit of Southeast European Cooperation Process Culture Corridors in Istanbul.

The summit aiming to boost common cultural heritage among regional countries was of great importance in regard to development of regional development and intercultural dialogue, he said.

Gul said "we need to listen and speak about tones of friendship and solidarity". President Gul also hosted a dinner for leaders who attended SEECP summit in Istanbul. Speaking at the dinner at Istanbul's Dolmabahce Palace, Gul said that this region brought together peace, stability and welfare in the heart of Europe. As the leaders of the region, we must pass onto future generations such traits, Gul said. The rich history and common past formed by cultural and humanitarian accumulation and shared values promise a great potential for the region, Gul said. The common cultural heritage unites the past with the future and today we have strengthened the tie that would form the backbone of political and economic integration, Gul stressed. I believe that music is one of the most important ways to express cultural identity. We need to listen and speak about tones of friendship and solidarity. If we unite our forces, I can see the winds of optimism in the region, Gul said. We have no time to waste for new ideas and ways of thinking, Gul also said. President Gul said he hoped that funds for culture and education would not be cut due to global economic crisis. "There is need for investments in the areas of education and culture now than ever before to make communities potent," he said. 2010 was celebrated as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, he recalled. "Southeast Europe became an intersection point of civilizations and religions for centuries. It includes cultural corridors. Civilizations have common memories and peoples of the region have sound ties," Gul said.

Turkey was proud of being a part of several projects in regard to cultural corridors and contributed to such projects to boost cultural dialogue, he said. Turkey conducted several successful projects such as culture project on music with Bulgaria and cuisine project with Macedonia, he said.

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### **SEECP calls for intl probe over Israel aid attack**

The participating countries released joint "Istanbul Declaration" following the summit meeting.

Thursday, 24 June 2010 13:47

Turkey and other participating countries of the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP) on Wednesday expressed regret over Israel's attack on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla on May 31.

The participating countries released joint "Istanbul Declaration" following the summit meeting.

The declaration expressed regret over the attack of Israel on international waters on ships carrying aid to Gaza.

The declaration said "there should be an impartial, independent and internationally credible investigation on this matter."

Nine people, including eight Turkish and one U.S. citizen of Turkish descent, died when Israeli forces raided a Gaza-bound aid flotilla on May 31. Around 30 people were wounded in the attack.

In the declaration the participants also stressed the urgent need to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza and called on Israeli government to start to implement their previous statements, pertaining easing of blockade in Gaza, with tangible measures.

The declaration agreed on the importance of peace, security, stability in Southeastern Europe and that this should include all the parties.

Diplomatic sources said with this article in the declaration, there could be differences of views regarding status in Kosovo, however that it was reaffirmed that Kosovo was among the network of European Security and Cooperation.

The diplomatic sources underlined that this summit showed that the parties could "meet at the least common denominators in case they sit at the table".

The declaration also condemned every kind of terrorism, extremism and violence and referred to the importance of dealing with organized crime and corruption.

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### **Turkish Cyprus unveils details of KTHY-Atlasjet deal**

Turkish Cypriot government and Atlasjet are expected to sign the share transfer deal on Thursday.

Thursday, 24 June 2010 08:35

WORLD BULLETIN

Turkish Cypriot government said Wednesday that privately-owned Turkish carrier Atlasjet would hold 50.01 percent of shares in KTHY, Turkish Cypriot flag carrier which faced financial difficulties that ended up with government bailout.

Turkish Cypriot government held talks with two Turkish airlines companies, Atlasjet and Pegasus, and finally on Tuesday it agreed with Atlasjet on a 50-50 profit sharing for five years.

"KTHY will continue to hold 49.99 percent shares but 50.01 percent stake will be transferred to Atlasjet," Turkish Cypriot Transportation Minister Ersan Saner said on Wednesday.

"We no longer will be involved in the company. Atlasjet will manage the company and we will act as inspector," Saner said.

Turkish Cypriot government and Atlasjet are expected to sign the share transfer deal on Thursday. The deal between Atlasjet and Turkish Cypriot government aims to reduce KTHY's debts to 10 billion USD in the first six months of partnership.

Following long-running financial problems and growing debts, now around 40 million USD, Turkish Cypriot government decided to call for bids last month to find a partner to KTHY.

On Tuesday, country's civil aviation authority suspended KTHY's airlines operation certificate.

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### **EU's top enlargement official calls on Turkey speed up momentum in accession talks**

European Union's chief official for enlargement on Wednesday urged EU-hopeful Turkey to "speed up momentum" in its accession negotiations, saying that the country had made significant reforms until now.

Turkey has passed some impressive reforms but its needs a stronger momentum at a time when the accession talks take a turn for a more demanding period," Fuele told a summit meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP) in Istanbul.

Fuele said Europe and Turkey cooperated in many fields such as trade, investment, energy, foreign policy, culture and education which he said served in the interests of both Turkey and the EU.

"The Union is about to focus on the enlargement again in a very long time. We believe that Turkey would extend the necessary support to the negotiations process, which would also help take important steps to find a solution to the Cyprus issue under the supervision of the United Nations," Fuele said.

23 June 2010, Wednesday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Turkey, Azerbaijan to launch joint military facility**

Turkey will join forces with Azerbaijan to establish an arms production company in Baku as part of Turkey's years-long military cooperation with the South Caucasus country, which remains at war with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, the Azerbaijani press reported over the weekend.

Azerbaijani company Azersimtel is currently holding discussions over the structure and scope of the new company's operations. The Turkish Mechanical and Chemical Industry Corporation (MKE) will reportedly hold a large share of the military facility. In the first stage of production, the company is expected to produce attack weaponry for the Azerbaijani armed forces.

In the following stages of production, the company will produce materiel, munitions and ammunition, as well. Using the trade networks of both Azerbaijan and Turkey, the arms company will most likely export some of its products abroad.

**Military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey first emerged in 1992 with an agreement signed between the Azerbaijani and Turkish governments on military education.** Since then, the Azerbaijani and Turkish governments have closely cooperated on defense and security. As a sign of high-level military relations, Azerbaijani Defense Minister Col. Gen. Safar Abiyev traveled to Turkey on an official visit this April. The Turkish and Azerbaijani delegations discussed cooperation in military areas during that visit as well as issues related to the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

ASELSAN, a leading Turkish defense contractor, currently operates in Azerbaijan.

22 June 2010, Tuesday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Turkey, Kazakhstan offer joint plan to assist Kyrgyzstan**

Turkey and Kazakhstan on Monday lent support to Kyrgyz leader Roza Otunbayeva's plan to hold a referendum while stating that they were ready to offer a joint action plan to be implemented following the referendum in a bid to help resolve the unrest in

Kyrgyzstan, where several contradictory death tolls have been announced thus far.

Otunbayeva pledged on Monday to press ahead with a referendum in six days' time for the sake of the country's stability, despite calls to postpone it after a wave of ethnic violence. In Astana following talks with his Kazakh counterpart, Kanat Saudabayev, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu made a brief statement to reporters, the Anatolia news agency reported.

Turkey and Kazakhstan should coordinate their future assistance to Kyrgyzstan together, Davutoğlu said, while recalling that Turkey last week dispatched a special envoy, Fatih

Ceylan, to Kyrgyzstan to meet with Otunbayeva and Kyrgyz Deputy Prime Minister Almazbek Atanbayev.

The minister said the results of Ceylan's meetings with Kyrgyz officials were discussed with Kazakh officials during Monday's talks in Astana.

Turkey and Kazakhstan have agreed on a joint action plan to be implemented following the referendum scheduled to take place on June 27. This agreement came following talks on what could be done for Kyrgyzstan in regards to the fields of politics, diplomacy, economy and security, Davutoğlu said, without elaborating.

He noted that the two countries would share the details of this plan with friendly and brotherly countries after finalizing their studies, Anatolia said.

"We hope the June 27 referendum in Kyrgyzstan will take place. Immediately after the referendum we plan, together with Kazakhstan, to prepare joint activities to show our commitment to assistance to Kyrgyzstan," Russian news agency RIA Novosti quoted Davutoğlu as saying.

"As the incumbent OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] and CICA [Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia] chairmen, we will prepare joint action in the spheres of economics, diplomacy and security," Davutoğlu continued.

Turkey is determined to do "everything possible to stabilize the situation in Kyrgyzstan," the minister reiterated.

In earlier remarks delivered to Anatolia on Sunday, Davutoğlu noted that if circumstances allow, he would pay a joint visit to Kyrgyzstan with his Kazakh counterpart, Saudabayev, following the scheduled referendum.

"There, we will put the joint action plan into force by personally getting in contact with people there," he added.

Davutoğlu also firmly denied comments that Turkey has not shown sufficient interest in issues regarding Central Asia.

"Everybody should be fair," he told Anatolia. Referring to Turkey's diplomatic talks with Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and with the Turkic world in general as a concrete example of the country's intensity in contacts with Central Asian countries, he listed examples such as Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Turkey in November, his own visit to Kazakhstan in February, President Abdullah Gül's visit to Kazakhstan in May and Nazarbayev's visit to Turkey earlier this month on the occasion of Turkey taking over the rotating presidency of the CICA.

22 June 2010, Tuesday  
TODAYS ZAMAN

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### **Italy says doors of EU 'open' for Turkey**

Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini has said the European Union's doors are open for Turkey, reiterating EU leaders' pledges to pursue full membership for Turkey.

The doors of the EU are open to Turkey. We will not break our promise. The route to full membership is continuing," Frattini said while delivering the opening remarks at the European People's Party's (EPP) foreign ministerial-level meeting.

Pointing to parliamentary EU Harmonization Committee Chairman Yaşar Yakış, whom Frattini said was attending the meeting on behalf of Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet

Davutoğlu, the Italian foreign minister called this a sign of the positive and constructive interest of the EU in Ankara. The Justice and Development Party (AK Party) is an observer member at EPP meetings. The EPP is an umbrella organization of Christian Democrat-style political establishments in Europe and accepted AK Party as an observer member due to its similar structure as a conservative party representing Muslims instead of Christians.

EPP leader Wilfried Martens, who visited Turkey last week to attend the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON)-sponsored World Trade Bridge meeting, also participated in the meeting. Speaking to Today's Zaman last week, Martens said that he has very good relations with AK Party officials. European policy-makers were expected to discuss the EU enlargement process, particularly regarding the Balkans, and the Middle East peace process during the two-day meeting in Assisi, Italy.

21 June 2010, Monday

## TODAY'S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

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### **Cyprus talks can't last forever, President Gül warns**

President Abdullah Gül has said talks between Turkish and Greek Cypriots on the island's fate must be concluded this year, warning that failure to meet the deadline could spell the end of Turkish efforts to reunite the island.

There has to be a deadline," Gül told reporters on Friday at a joint news conference with Derviş Eroğlu, who is paying his first official visit to Ankara after his election as the Turkish Cypriot president in April. "We wish that the talks had been concluded last year, but they were not. This year, this must end."

He suggested that the Turkish Cypriot state, now recognized only by Turkey, could go alone as an independent state if talks do not produce a result. "The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus [KKTC] is a country that has proven itself. It has a democracy that has proven its maturity and its economy is growing stronger," he said. "And Turkey will continue to offer support."

Prior to the April election, Eroğlu's predecessor, Mehmet Ali Talat, had more than 70 rounds of talks with Greek Cypriot leader Dimitris Christofias. The two sides reported progress but nothing that could be considered a breakthrough in efforts to reunite Cyprus as a federal state after decades of division. Contrary to Talat, who repeatedly expressed commitment to the reunification of Cyprus, Eroğlu is promoting a more nationalist line and demands equal sovereign rights for the Turkish Cypriots. But he said he was ready to continue talks, and the negotiations resumed in late May.

On an unusually upbeat note, the United Nations said following the resumption of talks that it believed a peace deal in Cyprus could be brokered within months. "The international community is committed to continuing its support for this Cypriot-led process. I truly believe that you can reach an agreement in the coming months," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement to Eroğlu and Christofias. Gül welcomed the UN's optimism and support for a quick settlement in Cyprus, saying the opportunity to resolve the decades-long dispute should not be missed again. In 2004, the Turkish Cypriots approved a UN plan to reunite the island, but the plan collapsed because the Greek Cypriots voted against it in a simultaneous vote. A few days after the vote, they joined the European Union as the official representative of the entire island, acquiring the right to veto candidate Turkey's accession talks. In 2006, the EU suspended talks on eight

of 35 negotiating chapters with Turkey due to Ankara's refusal to open its ports and airports to traffic from Greek Cyprus.

"A big opportunity was missed in 2004 when the Turkish Cypriots said 'yes' but the Greek Cypriots said 'no.' Now, the negotiations have resumed, and Mr. Eroğlu is continuing with them in a positive and constructive style. This should be understood well by the Greek Cypriots and the international community, and everyone should fulfill their responsibility in good faith so as not to miss the opportunity this time," Gül said, underlining that a particularly big responsibility falls on the shoulders of the EU. Eroğlu said he aimed to achieve a lasting and sustainable deal, urging the Greek Cypriots to show the same commitment and enthusiasm. Eroğlu also had talks with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu.

19 June 2010, Saturday

TODAY'S ZAMAN ANKARA

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### **FM dismisses axis shift, says Turkey follows principles**

Criticism against Turkey suggesting that it has been moving away from the Western world because of inappropriate foreign policy moves on the part of the government is without merit, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu has said, underlining that principles are the backbone of Turkey's foreign policy.

If the ground of the world is changing, then we cannot stand fixed on that ground, but we will always stand firm on our principles," Davutoğlu was quoted as saying by the Anatolia news agency late on Thursday. He listed those principles as peace, stability, welfare, security, Turkey's policy of having "zero problems with neighbors" and its co-sponsorship of the UN-led Alliance of Civilizations initiative.

The minister's remarks on debates and arguments questioning the appropriateness of Turkey's foreign policy moves came at a ceremony held in İstanbul on Thursday evening where he received the Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service for his efforts in "advocating strengthening relations with Turkey's hinterland and increasing its importance in the region and throughout the world."

The public service award is given by the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars to individuals who have served with distinction in public life and have shown a special commitment to seeking out informed opinions and thoughtful views.

"We stand by whoever stands by global peace. We favor whoever stands by regional peace. We stand against whoever is taking steps that threaten peace. This is where we hold on in idealism," Davutoğlu said. "In the last seven years, neither the president [Abdullah Gül] nor the prime minister [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan] used irrational political language. Nobody can say we assumed an ideological or mono-cultural approach," he said, in apparent reference to the government of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party), which has been in power since 2002.

Gül was the foreign minister of the AK Party government before being elected president in August 2007, and Davutoğlu, a well-regarded professor of political science and international relations, was the prime minister's chief foreign policy adviser from 2002 until he was appointed to his current post in May 2009.

"In this regard, those who believe today that we turned towards the East should not forget that the EU [membership] negotiation process has started and most comprehensive

reforms have been carried out during this period. Those who think today, ‘Where is our direction moving?’ should not forget that Turkey has made the greatest contribution [of all members] to NATO,” Davutoğlu said.

19 June 2010, Saturday

TODAY’S ZAMAN ANKARA

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### **Turkey, Iraq refugee problem unresolved despite resettlement**

Some 43.3 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide at the end of 2009, the highest number of people uprooted by conflict and persecution since the mid-1990s, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR) 2009 annual Global Trends report, released on June 15. In addition, the number of refugees voluntarily returning to their home countries has fallen to its lowest level in 20 years. The report indicates that more refugees from violence-wracked Iraq are being resettled but that the country’s displacement problem is not going away. The Middle East and North Africa region hosted 19 percent of the world’s refugees, mainly from Iraq. “Many have been living in limbo for years. This will increasingly be the case if states don’t continue to welcome Iraqi refugees for resettlement,” said Antonio Guterres, who is in Syria to mark World Refugee Day on June 20.

Guterres said around 52,000 Iraqis have been resettled, mostly in the United States, since 2007. The refugee agency has recommended that another 48,000 should be accepted by host countries.

The bulk of refugee applications have come from Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey, where most of the 1.8 million Iraqi refugees abroad live. The UNHCR report shows that only 251,000 refugees went home in 2009, the lowest number since 1990. This compares to a norm over the past decade of around a million people repatriating each year. Turkey saw a decrease in new applications in 2009 as the country only received 7,800 applications, excluding appeal and review claims. In Turkey, there are about 19,408 refugees including 2,739 stateless persons. In contrast, there are 156,012 refugees, including more than 300 stateless persons, whose country of origin is Turkey.

19 June 2010, Saturday

TODAY’S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

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### **Turkey's foreign policy sparks debates in EU**

Talk of Turkey's “axis shift” away from the West has prompted European Union officials to reconsider whether continuing Turkey's EU membership process at the possible lowest speed is a useful policy.

EU members have started to question whether they risk losing Turkey following the latter's vote against a US-backed UN Security Council resolution for tougher sanctions on Iran, adopted on June 9, and its harsh reaction against the May 31 raid by Israeli naval forces that led to the deaths of 9 people in an aid flotilla in the eastern Mediterranean. Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip, ruled by Hamas, topped the agenda of a foreign ministerial meeting of the 27-nation bloc, joined by both EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton and Tony Blair, the Middle East envoy representing the quartet of international powers -- the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and

Russia -- seeking Mideast peace. The meeting was to discuss a strategic perspective on Turkey, yet due to long debates on Gaza this discussion was shorter than planned. Two approaches to Turkey's vote against the Iran sanctions emerged during the meeting, diplomatic sources told Today's Zaman. While one group, angry with Turkey's vote, argued that the process of Turkey's EU bid should be "frozen," another group argued that it was the EU's fault for leading Turkey to move away from the bloc due to its inappropriate approaches toward the candidate country.

The first group is not numerous, but their voices are "loud," diplomatic sources highlighted. EU diplomats told Today's Zaman that a longer debate was expected to be held on Turkey and its membership process during a foreign ministerial meeting next month. Last week Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini stated that there is a need to "reflect" on the errors made by Europe in relation to Turkey. One of them is the "pushing the Turks away towards the East instead of trying to attract them towards us," Frattini said in an interview with the German daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

18 June 2010, Friday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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## **ECONOMIC NEWS**

### **Energy plays key role in Turkey's integration with Europe**

Wednesday, June 23, 2010

ANKARA – Hürriyet Daily News

An international conference that comes upon a joint initiative between USAK and German Konrad Adenauer Stiftung brings local and foreign energy experts as well as government officials together in Ankara. 'With Arab countries in the south, Iran in the east and Russia in the north, Turkey has a very strategic location, which makes it more important than those nations that have oil sources,' says Sedat Laçiner, president of Ankara-based think tank USAK

A one-day international conference Wednesday regarding Turkey's role in European energy security brought analysts and officials to the conclusion that energy plays a major role in Turkey's integration with Europe and helps lessen dependence on Russian supplies.

"Turkey is like an island surrounded by energy-rich regions," Sedat Laçiner, president of the Turkish think tank USAK, said in opening remarks. "With Arab countries in the south, Iran in the east and Russia in the north, Turkey has a very strategic location, which makes it more important than those nations that have oil sources."

The three-session conference, which came as a joint initiative between USAK and the German Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, brought local and foreign energy experts as well as government officials together. Turkey's Energy Minister Taner Yıldız, who was originally scheduled to address the event, was unable to attend due to a last-minute change in his program. Yıldız attended Wednesday a funeral ceremony for the soldiers killed in the recent terrorist attacks in his hometown of Kayseri in central Anatolia. Deputy Undersecretary of the Energy Ministry Yusuf Yazar, who represented Yıldız instead, said Turkey was coming after China in terms of countries with increased demand for energy sources. He explained that local resources were not sufficient to meet the increasing energy demand, prompting the need for energy diversification.

“The objective of our energy policy is diversification,” Yazar said. He added Turkey was importing oil from Russia, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, importing natural gas from Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan, importing LNG from Nigeria and Algeria and working on a long-term contract with Qatar to expand LNG imports.

One of the panelists, Thomas Bareiss, German deputy and director of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group’s energy policies, said the current global financial crisis has shown the wealth of countries is not based on reality.

“The German government, along with other European governments, is trying to find solutions and establish a system where countries can base their economies on real terms,” he said. “Energy policies are at the center of that structuring. We need to come up with best solutions for our people.”

The German official hailed Turkey as an important business partner in energy security. “We are collaborating with Turkey, which has good relations with the supplying countries, and we need to further deepen that.”

Another panelist Can Suphi, Turkey country president of British Petroleum, said the world has an increasing appetite for energy and predicted that natural gas would play an important role in satisfying this appetite. In his speech, the company official said as far as energy security was concerned, critical energy infrastructure security - namely the physical security of pipelines - was as important as diversity and the reliability of suppliers.

“Turkey has a far-reaching energy strategy for the future. The issue of critical energy infrastructure security is very important. Turkey is in the process of learning. I am confident it will develop a strategy consistent with the objective of becoming a major energy conduit,” he said.

Dr. Heiko Schuss of the University of Erlangen, said energy targets of the EU and Turkey were overlapping, adding that Turkey’s involvement in the Nabucco project proves once again what a large potential it offers. Touching upon Turkish energy cooperation with Iran, he said Turkey is taking the role of negotiator through which it is bringing Tehran to integration.

According to Eva Tvarozkova from the EU Commission, Turkey without doubt has huge potential to be an energy transit hub. She similarly said the Turkish role can be illustrated in the EU-backed Nabucco project, but she noted that Ankara could not open an energy chapter, even though it was found eligible, because of political reasons.

“In 2007, the EU Commission presented a screening report on the energy chapter,” she said, adding that Turkey was able to open that chapter. “The EU, however, has rules. The opening of that chapter has to be agreed to by all member states. Despite the efforts of several term presidencies, that goal has not been reached,” she said. Greek Cyprus blocks the opening of the energy chapter in Turkish-EU accession talks.

The one-day conference was sponsored by BP, TRT, the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review and daily Habertürk.

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## **Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria Eye Deeper Trade Cooperation, Their Gdp Expected To Total 1.13 Trillion Usd In 2010**

Thursday, 17 June 2010

USAK PUBLICATIONS

Gross domestic product figures at purchasing

power parity of Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria are expected to total 1.13 trillion US dollars in 2010 according to IMF estimates as the four countries have pledged to intensify cooperation in trade and commerce.

The four countries signed last week a declaration on the sidelines of a Turkish-Arab business forum meeting in Istanbul, expressing determination to boost their strategic partnership with an eye to achieve economic integration. The declaration vows to establish a high level cooperation council and to set up a free trade and free movement zone.

According to IMF data, Turkey is the biggest in economic terms among the four countries with an expected GDP of 932.2 billion USD for 2010, and the estimations put the country to stand as the 16th largest economy in the world. Syria follows Turkey as the 66th biggest economy with an estimated GDP of 105.2 billion USD, as Lebanon and Jordan would have estimated GDP of 58.5 billion USD and 35.2 billion USD, respectively, in 2010.

According to figures of the TurkStat, Turkey's statistics authority, Turkey runs trade surplus against the other three countries.

The trade volume between Turkey and Syria in 2009 was 1.75 billion USD as Turkish exports to Syria totalled 1.42 billion USD.

The trade volume between Turkey and Lebanon last year was 795.25 million USD with Turkish exports to the country was around 686.54 million USD.

The trade volume between Turkey and Jordan in 2009 was 476.28 million USD as Turkish exports to Jordan totalled 455.92 million USD.

Below is a chart wrapping up major economic indicators of the four countries:

. Turkey Syria Lebanon Jordan

	Turkey	Syria	Lebanon	Jordan
Population (million)	71.0	21.0	3.9	6.1
PPP-GDP (\$billion)	932.2	105.2	58.5	35.3
PPP-Per Capita Income (\$)	13,051	5,043	14,988	5,758
GSDP(\$billion)	710.7	60.0	37.0	24.9
Per Capita Income (\$)	9,950	2,877	9,479	4,062
Growth Rate (%)	5.2	5.0	6.0	4.1
Employment (million)	21.2	5.8	1.5	1.7
Jobless Rate (%)	13.7	9.2	9.2	13.5
Inflation (%)	9.7	5.0	5.0	5.3
Current Deficit (\$billion)	28.3	2.3	4.7	2.2
Foreign Debt(\$billion)(x)	271.1	14.2	7.6	21.0
(x): 2009 Q4				

### **Turkish defense industry grows despite crisis**

In spite of the fact that the global financial crisis has taken a huge toll on nearly all sectors around the world, the Turkish defense industry has continued its upward trend, achieving a 16 percent year-on-year growth in its exports.

According to data from the Defense Ministry and the Defense Industry Manufacturers Association (SASAD), exports and turnover for Turkish defense companies have been

constantly rising since 2005. A survey conducted by the SASAD showed that the sector's turnover surged by 45 percent in 2009 compared to five years before. Last year companies in the sector registered \$2.3 billion in turnover, up from \$1.6 billion in 2005. Exports were also up by an incredible 98 percent during the same period. Companies earned \$669 million from exports last year, while this figure was only \$337 million in 2005. The rise continued last year despite the global economic meltdown. Companies in the sector sold 16 percent more goods from 2008 to 2009.

The share of budget allocated for research and development activities also soared by 162 percent, from \$79 million in 2005 to \$206 million in 2009.

The Turkish defense industry's exports mainly go to Middle Eastern or Far Eastern countries. The US and European countries also started purchasing from Turkish defense companies a few years ago.

21 June 2010, Monday

#### TODAY'S ZAMAN ANKARA

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#### **Turkey's hopes growing in oil, gas exploration**

Turkey has always complained of an inadequate amount of fossil fuels to meet its own energy needs but has recently been encouraged by what it actually has beneath its own soil.

Turkish exploration activities in 143 wells that started drilling last year resulted in the discovery of oil in 53 wells and natural gas in 30; 33 of the wells were dry, and the work on the remaining 27 is still ongoing.

According to the activity report of the General Directorate of Petroleum Affairs (PIGM) for 2009, the companies with a license to conduct exploration within Turkish borders drilled 51 wells in prospecting, 50 for determination of amount and 42 for production. The total distance drilled in the 143 wells was 242,357 meters.

There are currently 103 oil production fields in Turkey, with the total 2009 domestic crude production 2.4 million tons, or 16.65 million barrels. In addition, the country produces gas in 49 fields with total production for last year amounting to 729.4 million cubic meters.

The Treasury's coffers enjoyed an inflow of TL 168.2 million from domestic crude production and TL 41.6 million from natural gas extraction in royalties payable to the state.

The activity report indicated that there were 48 companies in Turkey last year actively conducting drilling activities in search of oil and gas on land and offshore. Half of these companies were domestic and half were foreign entities.

The state granted 68 oil exploration licenses against 85 applications while extending the terms of 98 exploration licenses; 79 previously granted licenses were either terminated or had expired, and 120 applications were turned down.

The PIGM stated its intention to grow exploration and production activities by 10 percent annually until 2013. It also pledged to provide the necessary conditions to increase crude production by 1 percent and natural gas production by 5 percent every year in the next three years.

23 June 2010, Wednesday

#### TODAY'S ZAMAN ANKARA

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## **Turkey, Russia collaborate in auto industry**

Thursday, June 24, 2010

ISTANBUL - Anatolia News Agency

HURRIYAT

The Automotive Industry Exporters' Association, or OİB, signed a collaboration agreement with the Samara Region Industry Energy and Technology Ministry, according to a statement issued Thursday.

OİB organized a five-day sector-specific trade committee program regarding Moscow and the Samara region in Russia on Sunday, with the coordination of the foreign trade undersecretary, during the course of which the agreement was reportedly signed.

OİB president Orhan Sabuncu said the deal would lead to many collaborative projects between Turkey and Russia, which he described as a "strong partner in terms of production."

Noting that he has expectations about Turkish companies investing in Russia, Sabuncu said firms could be active in the Samara region to maintain effective use of resource potential. "We will guide our companies with investment plans in Russia in order to have a better place in the developing Russian auto sector. These [recent] developments will be beneficial both to our companies and to our exports."

Sabuncu particularly underlined that the Samara region and the Togliatti Industry and Technology Park have offered important collaboration opportunities for Turkish auto industry exporters. "The collaboration agreement involves developing mutual projects. The Samara Region's Industry, Energy and Technology Ministry will also support OİB member companies in their investments in the region."

Samara Region's Industry, Energy and Technology Minister Vladislav V. Kapustin said Russia needs the experience of the Turkish automotive industry. "We really want to take solid steps immediately within the framework of the agreement," he said.

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## **Global markets view Turkey as investment grade**

Thursday, June 24, 2010

SEDA SEZER / MICHAEL PATTERSON

ISTANBUL / LONDON – Bloomberg

HURRIYAT

Credit rating agencies insist on viewing Turkey as an economy below investment grade, but the markets do not seem to bother. Credit default swaps insuring Turkish bonds against default for five years cost 1.84 percentage points, while contracts for Russia, whose BBB rating from Standard & Poor's is three steps higher than Turkey's BB, trade at 1.845 percentage points. While the eurozone grapples with budget deficits, Turkey posts a huge surplus in May on surging tax revenues

Turkey is trading as an investment-grade nation in the credit-default swaps market after its dollar bonds outperformed European developing nations by the most since 2008 on accelerating economic growth.

Turkey's debt returned 2.6 percent this quarter, compared with a 0.4 percent gain in notes sold by emerging nations from Ukraine to Poland, according to JPMorgan Chase indexes.

Credit default swaps insuring Turkish bonds against default for five years cost 184 basis points, or 1.84 percentage points, CMA DataVision prices show. Contracts for Russia, whose BBB rating from Standard & Poor's, or S&P, is three steps higher than Turkey's BB, trade at 184.5. Swaps on AA-rated Spain are higher at 265.

While government budget deficits widen across Europe, Turkey posted its biggest surplus in almost two years in May as tax revenue surged. The government estimates the economy grew 12 percent in the first quarter, the fastest pace in more than a decade, giving Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan room to limit spending, according to analysts at Nomura International.

"We have a very strong view on Turkish credit quality for the next six to 10 months," Luis Costa, an emerging market strategist at Citigroup in London, said in an interview. "It's positioning itself for an upgrade."

### **Rating upgrades**

Turkey, which needed about \$53 billion in loans from the International Monetary Fund, or IMF, from 1999 to 2008 to finance budget deficits that had swelled to more than 20 percent of gross domestic product, has had its credit rating upgraded by S&P, Moody's Investors Service and Fitch Ratings since an evaluation December.

Moody's rates Turkey Ba2, two levels below investment grade, after lifting the country in January. Fitch raised its rating to BB+ in December, or one step below investment grade, while S&P boosted its ranking in February.

The EMBI Global Index of Turkish bonds has outperformed the emerging Europe gauge by the widest margin on a quarterly basis since the last three months of 2008, according to JPMorgan data.

Turkey's credit default swaps rose 4.2 basis points this quarter through till Tuesday, compared with an increase of 34 for the Markit iTraxx SOVX CEEMEA Index of credit-default swaps for emerging Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Contracts in Russia climbed 33 basis points, while Spain's soared 130 basis points.

Credit default swaps are used to speculate on the creditworthiness of a company or government, or to hedge against losses on bonds and loans, and let buyers demand payment from sellers if the underlying borrower fails to adhere to its debt agreements.

### **Markets ahead of rating firms**

"The market is taking an opinion about Turkey that is more sanguine" than ratings companies, Bill O'Neill, chief investment officer for Europe, the Middle East and Africa at Bank of America Merrill Lynch's wealth-management unit, said in an interview.

Erdoğan ended almost two years of talks on a possible loan program with the IMF in March. The government reduced spending 2.1 percent in May and boosted tax income 28 percent to produce the budget surplus.

The budget committee of Turkey's Parliament approved plans for a fiscal rule on June 18 that would force the government to target a budget deficit of 1 percent of economic output. The legislation, which aims to reduce the ratio of debt to gross domestic product to 15 percent in the long term from about 49 percent in 2009, will be discussed in the assembly in Ankara in the coming days.

Fitch wants to see "prudent" implementation of the rule before considering an increase in Turkey's rating, Ayşe Botan Berker, head of Fitch Turkey, said in Istanbul on June 16. The rule may contribute to a revised rating, Moody's said in a report e-mailed May 28.

Turkey's credit rating gives investors an accurate reflection of default risk, said Frank Gill, a London-based S&P analyst who focuses on the country. Credit default swaps aren't "a reliable indicator of any country's borrowing costs," Gill said. "Our ratings reflect credit fundamentals."

While Turkey's "positive" outlook implies a one-in-three chance of an upgrade in the next two years, the country's "external balance sheet remains a key weakness, in part because of the foreign debt of Turkish companies," Gill said.

Turkish firms had a total of \$120 billion of foreign loans in April compared with \$121.4 billion the previous month, according to Central Bank data.

Credit default swap prices show that debt ratings on some developed countries are too high, not that Turkey's are too low, said Paul McNamara, who oversees about \$3.5 billion of emerging-market bonds and currencies at Augustus Asset Managers in London. There's "no glaring anomaly" between Turkey's credit default swap levels and the country's debt ratings, McNamara said in an interview.

### **Sustainable public debt**

Turkey's 49 percent debt to GDP ratio last year compares with 75 percent in Portugal and 50 percent for Spain, data compiled by Bloomberg show. Russia, the world's largest energy exporter, has a ratio of 6.9 percent.

Turkey's GDP expanded 6 percent on an annual basis during the final three months of 2009, after four quarters of contraction. The economy may have expanded 12 percent in the first quarter as the lowest interest rates on record helped boost consumer confidence and industrial production, Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek said in Brussels on June 3. China's economy grew 11.9 percent in the period, the fastest pace among Group of 20 industrialized nations that reported official figures.

Nomura's emerging-market strategist in London, Olgay Büyükkayalı, recommends investors buy Turkish debt. Yields on the country's 10-year lira bonds will fall to below 9 percent from about 9.8 percent, while credit default swaps may drop 40 basis points should the country be raised to investment grade, Büyükkayalı said.

A basis point on a credit default swap contract protecting \$10 million of debt from default for five years is equivalent to \$1,000 a year.

Bonds will get a boost from "stronger fiscal policy, debt dynamics decoupling from other countries and slowing inflation," Büyükkayalı said. That "will all be supportive for more tightening of CDS spreads."

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### **Social news**

#### **Two dead, one missing, 25 wounded as flood hits Turkish town**

Thursday, June 24, 2010

Doğan News Agency

HURRIYAT

Heavy rainfall across Turkey has caused havoc after a downpour hit the northwestern provinces Wednesday causing at least one death and numerous injuries. As the torrential rainfall recedes a further three people remain unaccounted for.

The body of Özgür Doğan was found on the coast of the district of Gebze after the waters receded at around 10 a.m. on Thursday in Turkey's northwestern province of Kocaeli, according to a report by the Doğan news agency. Özgür Doğan, an inhabitant of the Çarıyova district, was in a car with his wife, Esin Doğan, when they were struck by

flooding caused by the downpour. Esin Doğan is still missing, believed to have also drowned in the coastal waters and relatives have asked diving teams to start searching for them, as they think the pair might have been swept along violent currents out to sea. According to Kocaeli's Meteorological Directorate, the rainfall began at 10:15 p.m. on Wednesday. Along the Gebze-Bayramođlu highway, more than 500 houses and workplaces, as well as some factories, remained under water as a result of the downpour and the mud brought with it in the districts of Gebze and ayırova. The police were also notified that the flood had carried away two children.

A shepherd was also lethally struck by lightning as he was tending to his sheep in the Hilvan district in the southern border province of Őanlıurfa.

Nusrettin Yükkaldıran, 29, was married and had 5 children. He went out Thursday morning to put his sheep out to pasture in the mountains surrounding Hilvan's Yukarı İncirli village. He was returning home after it started raining when the lightning bolt hit him.

Meanwhile, in the Kavak district in the northern coastal province of Samsun, 25 people were wounded after a bus tipped and rolled during the downpour. Flooding rains washed a dog into the middle of the road Thursday. The bus, which was heading from Istanbul to the northern province of Giresun, toppled as the driver turned the wheel hard when the dog appeared on the road immediately in front of the bus. The wounded people's conditions are good, however the dog was killed in the accident.

The High Technology Institute, situated in the Istasyon neighborhood, remained under water as well, and the mud and water has not been extracted from the building yet. The institute, where 3,500 undergraduate and graduate students continue their studies, has also remained under waters during the floods caused by heavy rainfalls on June 8.

Many houses and workplaces also remained under water in the district of Tuzla in Istanbul as a result of the downpours. Tens of vehicles remained stuck in the D-100 highway due to the floods caused by the heavy rains. The emergency teams assisted inhabitants' own efforts to take water away from their homes in the late hours. The people who remained stuck on the highways were also brought out of the flood by the emergency teams.

Representatives of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's Center for Coordination of Emergencies, or AKOM, reported that 42 addresses had sent a notice that they remained flooded after the heavy rain, and that emergency teams had rescued 18 people who were stuck in their vehicles.

According to the website of the Turkish State Meteorological Service, or DMI, the stormy weather, heavy rainfall and thunderstorms in most parts of Turkey will continue into next week.

The DMI warned that the downpours would become more intense in the eastern Marmara region, effecting Istanbul, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Yalova, Balıkesir, Bursa and Bilecik, the central and eastern Black Sea regions of Samsun, Ordu, Amasya, Tokat, Trabzon, Giresun, Gümüşhane and Bayburt and other provinces including Zonguldak, Bartın, Düzce, Sivas, Erzincan, Tunceli, Bingöl, Bitlis, Muş, Malatya, Elazığ, Őırnak, Batman and Őiirt.

The DMI said the inhabitants of Rize and Artvin should take extra precautions because their regions were expected to be the hardest hit.

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## **Turkey's headscarf ban ties knots in women's job prospects**

Thursday, June 24, 2010

ISTANBUL - Hürriyet Daily News

Discrimination against professional women who wear a headscarf keeps millions of qualified female employees out of the workforce and hampers women's economic progress, according to a recent report on the issue.

Sociologist Dilek Cindoğlu's report focused on women with university degrees and professional titles, including lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, pharmacists, journalists and bankers. Women in these fields who wear a headscarf are "banned in the state [sector] and limited in the private sector," she said.

The long-controversial issue has been a polarizing one in Turkey. "It is doubtlessly clear today that the Republic's founding principle of gathering around national unity and creating a homogeneous nation has failed," Can Paker, the president of the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, or TESEV, said Thursday at the opening of a two-day conference the organization is hosting in Istanbul.

The report by Cindoğlu, a scholar from Bilkent University who conducted her research in urban areas of Istanbul, Ankara and Konya, was the first to be discussed at the conference. The event, "Is it Possible to Live Together?" deals with "politics, institutions and citizenship in a changing Turkey."

Speaking about her report, "Headscarved Women in Professional Jobs: Redefining Discrimination in 2010 Turkey," Cindoğlu said covered women are not allowed to attend most universities in Turkey and cannot be employed as civil servants. She cited statistics from surveys conducted in 2008 by polling companies Konda and Metropoll, which found that more than 70 percent of women in Turkey wear a headscarf. According to the Metropoll data, 11 percent of these women are university graduates.

Cindoğlu said both state prohibitions and the attitude of the private sector about employing women who wear a headscarf contribute to the fact that women's employment rates in Turkey are constantly dropping. According to 2009 research by the State Planning Institute, or DPT, and the World Bank, she said, the women's employment rate was around 50 percent in the late 1980s and decreased to 38 percent in 2006.

When it comes to the headscarf ban at universities, the rules change from campus to campus, Cindoğlu said, noting that some schools do not allow headscarved students on campus at all while others let women cover on campus but not in class. The researcher said the women she interviewed reported having a hard time finding employment in the private sector, even at known conservative establishments, in the event that they manage to obtain a degree. When they do find work, she said, they are paid smaller salaries and kept in the background so as not to harm the company's image.

Educated women who wear a headscarf are not a homogenous group, Cindoğlu said, adding that some are quite politicized and active members of a political party, association or religious community while others are not interested in politics at all. Other differences extend from their personal concept of religion to their economic and social statuses, she said, adding that her research attempted to focus on how to define together the business world and the non-homogenous group of women who wear a headscarf.

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### **COMMENTARY**

#### **The tragic fraying of the Turkey-Israel relationship**

Wednesday, June 23, 2010

Abraham H. Foxman

HURRIYAT

These are sad times indeed for those with a strong attachment to Israel and an equal and longstanding respect for Turkey. The unique relationship shared by these two countries, through history and into the present, is being undermined in a stormy environment of disagreement and charged rhetoric.

We need not rehash the much-discussed events and diplomatic rows that brought us to this point. The strongly critical remarks by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, first at Davos in response to Israel's December 2008 invasion of Gaza, and more recently over the flotilla episode and the deaths of eight Turkish activists and one American of Turkish descent aboard the Mavi Marmara, have cast a deep pall over the Israeli-Turkish relationship.

The echoes of Davos and the flotilla affair seem to be prevailing over calm heads and good will, and we can only wonder, why?

Sadly, an historic era of cooperation may be slipping away, as Turkey appears on the verge of abandoning a role it so proudly played as a bridge between the Muslim world and the West. The intergovernmental and people-to-people relationships are fraying, and the tangible benefits they have brought to both sides are at serious risk.

This is a shared history based on mutual interests and concerns. In March 1949, Turkey became the first Muslim state to recognize Israel, and in 1958, Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion met in secret to sign a military and intelligence cooperation agreement. Ben-Gurion later wrote to U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower that Israel's "links with the government of Turkey have grown more intimate in secret channels."

Turkish-Israeli relations have always had ups and downs. Yet, until recently, the unmistakable trend for the prior two decades was growing trade and investment, more cultural exchanges, increased tourism, ever greater military and intelligence cooperation and more frequent political meetings.

The relationship was much more than strategic. Both Israeli and Turkish societies benefited from close ties that transcended the politics of the moment. Israelis found in Turkey a beautiful country for vacations and struck up close friendships in Turkey. After a disastrous earthquake struck Turkey in 1999, Israel was one of the first countries to extend emergency assistance by sending sophisticated equipment and search-and-rescue crews. The Israeli public launched a spontaneous campaign to assist the victims, as thousands of Israelis stood in line across the country to donate more than 25 tons of blankets, clothing and food.

There was also the memory of history. Turkey, and the Ottoman Empire that preceded it, served as a safe haven for Jews, from the time of the expulsion from Spain and Portugal and into the Holocaust years. And Turkey's protection of its own minority Jewish community was admirable and unique among nations – particularly in the aftermath of the 2003 bombing of two synagogues in Istanbul, when Turkish leaders stood up to publicly decry anti-Semitism.

Until recently, Turkey was held up as proof that a Muslim-majority country could have warm and significant relations with the Jewish state. Turkey now seems to shun that globally important role.

Today, the relationship is in steep decline. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu has compared the Gaza flotilla incident to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Turkey recalled its ambassador to Israel, and President Abdullah Gül has left open the possibility of breaking off relations altogether.

Israeli tourism to Turkey has plummeted, and Israeli supermarkets are boycotting Turkish products. Turkey has cancelled joint military exercises. Israel and Turkey have clashed over policies toward Iran, Hamas and Syria. Erdoğan is reported to have angrily proclaimed in public remarks that the Star of David is the same as the Nazi swastika. A Turkish delegation of teachers and scholars, scheduled to participate in an event at Yad Vashem on the lessons of the Holocaust, failed to show.

Beyond the bilateral relationship, Turkey is in the process of losing other roles and friends. For many years, Turkey has sought to leverage its geographic linking of the Middle East and Europe to create connections between different religions and cultures. Today, however, its rapprochement with Iran, Hamas and Syria generates doubts, not confidence, in the U.S. and elsewhere.

The American Jewish community has long been supportive of Turkish interests in the United States, as a NATO ally and based on its strategic relationship with Israel, a premise that many politically active Jewish organizations may have to revisit.

Turkey, Israel and the international community would benefit from a reversal of this downward spiral. An investigation into the flotilla affair with international observers has been commissioned by Israel, and hopefully it will provide a base from which to rebuild the relationship. Until then, both Israelis and Turks should exercise care with their rhetoric and their actions.

However, should that investigation uncover Turkish government involvement with the Humanitarian Relief Foundation, or İHH, the Istanbul-based charity that was one of the major sponsors of the Free Gaza flotilla, and its preparations for violently confronting Israeli soldiers – as some information now suggests – the report could be the death knell for the relationship.

Hopefully, what we are seeing today from Turkey is a temporary detour from the path it has pursued so successfully for years. Hopefully, the friendship we had come to know and to rely on will re-emerge.

Hopefully, the instincts of the Turkish people, which wrote a magnificent chapter in Jewish history more than 500 years ago as a haven and refuge for those expelled from Spain, will bring Turkey back from the brink.

Then we will be able to continue to celebrate our long-held affection and respect for Turkey.

\* Mr. Abraham H. Foxman is the national director of the Anti-Defamation League. This article originally appeared in The Huffington Post on June 18.

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## **EU both supports and jibes the constitutional amendment package**

Wednesday, June 23, 2010

SEDAT ERGİN

## HURRIYAT

The European Commission seems to be generally content with the constitutional amendment package the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, prepared. The commission, however, considers that the process should've been more inclusive. Along with a couple of colleagues of mine yesterday I met the European Union Enlargement Commissioner Stephan Füle. The above is a summary of what we talked about.

'More could've been done'

The European Commission has adopted a balanced attitude from the beginning towards the constitutional amendment package of Turkey and described it in general as a "right step in the right direction," though they kept thoughts about the content to themselves. The commission also expressed expectations "for an environment of dialogue and consensus among all political parties and civil society organizations in order to have reforms in the most comprehensive way".

The commission adopted a distant approach to the government's strategy to take the package to a popular vote after reaching conciliation with opposition parties.

Though Füle followed this critical yet subtle line of conduct yesterday, he introduced a few nuances. The Enlargement Commissioner first said the package would take Turkey closer to the block and then added that it is important for the EU to have the package as a product of a comprehensive process.

To the question "Did the government conduct the process in line with your expectations?" Füle responded "More could've been done..."

Positive aspects of the package

After jibing a little, Füle emphasized positive aspects of the package:

"But this doesn't negate positive elements suggested in the package. If changes are put into practice, this could make positive contributions to Turkey's performance in the enlargement process. It could have a positive impact on our assessment report to the European Parliament and the European Council in November about the progress Turkey makes," he added.

I asked, whereupon, what he thinks over the two chapters because which consensus has been reached on most parts of the package but split comes with the composition of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, or HSYK, and the Constitutional Court.

Füle answered:

"I cannot get into the details of our conversations with Turkish officials but we said that it could be better if some critical issues are worked comprehensively. Therefore, we told, a total support can be reached over most of the package. There are many positive ideas along with question marks, such as the involvement of justice minister and deputy justice minister in the said boards. We will continue to discuss these with the Turkish government," he said.

Immediately after though, Füle set the balance again. "We think that the recommendations of the Venice Commission, under the Council of Europe, are mostly covered in the package. Besides, I talked to the CHP officials and told them that we expect for them to act constructively and be part of this process," he added.

Homework on freedom of press

In the meantime, the freedom of the press was also discussed in the meeting yesterday. Füle focused on the freedom of the press as well. "In the area Turkey has made

remarkable progress and there is a general progress. Taboos are being discussed in the press now. However, not everything is covered. There is a lot more to be done. And we bring some concrete issues to the table,” he said.

A foreign correspondent asked about Füle’s positive assessment, “Which issues do you specifically bring to the agenda of the Turkish government?” Interestingly though, Füle avoided getting into the details of press freedom issues. As the imprisonment of journalists was discussed, Füle seemed unaware of the imprisonment decision against İrfan Aktan, for instance.

To the British correspondent, Füle said “We will examine specific issues of the press’ freedoms and we’ll return to you within 48 hours.” The Enlargement Commissioner said “I have homework to do,” and left the meeting.

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FATMA DISLI ZIBAK

### **Fate of the Kurdish initiative**

The latest attacks by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), which claimed the lives of a dozen soldiers, have given ammunition to opponents of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government’s Kurdish initiative, which was launched last year in the hopes of solving Turkey’s long-standing Kurdish problem.

Opponents of the initiative, which aims to solve the Kurdish problem through democratic and peaceful means, urged the government to abandon the already-stalled initiative process. Despite the year that has passed since the government first revealed its intention to solve Turkey’s most pressing problem, not many significant steps have been taken.

Now that these circles are using the latest PKK violence as a tool to dissuade the government from the initiative and embrace a hawkish and forceful approach in dealing with this problem, the fate of the Kurdish initiative remains a subject of debate.

Sabah’s Mahmut Övür thinks Turkey needs the Kurdish initiative today more than ever, although some are afraid of mentioning it at a time of escalated terror. “We do not have any other chances, other than pushing ahead with the initiative process,” he says.

Recalling the 1990s, when Turkey used force to stop terrorism, he notes: “Where did we get to, despite the numbers of people we lost? The way to end terrorism is not by killing more and more people. We know this experience best. We have all witnessed that this is not the right way. For once, we should try the democratic solution process.”

Milliyet’s Derya Sazak also points out the importance of Turkey’s not using force in trying to end PKK terrorism and solve the Kurdish problem, saying that Turkey’s use of force just serves the interests of the PKK. He thinks if Turkey can find political solutions to the problem instead of referring it to the military, the Kurdish movement will become politicized and the war will end. In this regard, he calls on the opposition parties, mainly the Republican People’s Party (CHP), to reveal their proposals for a solution to the problem if they think the government is incapable of solving it. “We will restart talking about a solution from the very beginning; there is not another solution,” says Sazak.

No matter how violent terrorism gets, the only way to end it is democratization,” says Star’s Mustafa Karaalioğlu, who thinks the current debate in Turkey on whether the government’s Kurdish initiative has ended or not is meaningless considering the fact that Turkey has no option other than the use of democratic means to end terrorism.

“Let’s admit that Turkey has paid the price of every single step it has failed to take for the solution of this problem for decades with more bloodshed and it is paying this price again today,” argues Karaaliolu.

23 June 2010, Wednesday

TODAYS ZAMAN

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