
THE AGENDA:
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS,
REPORTS AND EVENTS
MARCH 2010 - MAY 2010

By Richard Giragosian

1. “CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW”

17 May 2010: After delicate mediation by Turkish and Brazilian leaders, Iran agreed to a deal to send low-enriched uranium abroad in return for nuclear fuel. In a diplomatic victory for Turkey and Brazil, the deal, which was signed in Tehran by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Brazil’s President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, would bolster a United Nations-backed proposal aimed at easing the international standoff over Iran’s disputed nuclear program. The U.S. reacted cautiously, with a White House spokesman warning that “the proposal should be submitted directly to the IAEA to evaluate” and added that “it does not change the steps that we are taking to hold Iran responsible for its obligations, including sanctions.” Under the agreement, most of Iran’s stockpile of low-enriched uranium would be sent to Turkey in return for 120 kilograms of nuclear fuel for a medical research reactor. The uranium transfer would take place within a month of the agreement’s approval by major powers, who would then deliver the fuel to Tehran within one year. Speaking at a news conference in Tehran, Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran “agrees to deposit 1,200 kilograms of low-enriched uranium in Turkey” and said that “while in Turkey, this LEU will continue to be the property of Iran.” Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoğlu hailed the agreement as a victory that makes further punitive measures against Iran unnecessary, explaining that “for us, now, there are no grounds anymore, for new sanctions or measures.”

17 May 2010: Speaking at a press conference with visiting Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Baku, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced that the signing of a new agreement on Azerbaijani gas exports to Turkey would be postponed until Aliyev’s planned visit to Ankara on 7-8 June. The new agreement follows months of difficult negotiations over the price and volume of the natural gas exports. Azerbaijani and Turkish officials met on 10 May for negotiations in Baku to finalize the terms of Turkish gas purchases from Azerbaijan’s Shah Deniz gas field. Turkey currently pays 120 dollars per 1,000 cubic meters of Azeri gas, though consumers pay 300 dollars per 1,000 cubic meters.

12 May 2010: During a visit to Turkey, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev announced that Russia will build Turkey’s first nuclear power plant. In comments during a joint news conference with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Russian president said that the 20 billion dollar project, which aims to build and operate the nuclear facility at the Turkish Mediterranean Sea port of Akkuyu, was one of some 20 new bilateral agreements signed during the visit. Plans for

Turkey's first nuclear power plant were delayed by a decision last year by a Turkish court last year that annulled a tender won by a Russian-led consortium, but the new agreement calls for the Russian construction of four reactors with a total capacity of 4,800-megawatts at Akkuyu. According to Sergei Kiriyyenko, the head of the Russian nuclear corporation Rosatom, Russia would own the nuclear facility, making it the first Russian-owned plant outside the country. The visit of the Russian president also marks an attempt to bolster bilateral trade and investment, reflected in a new agreement on the lifting of visa requirements for visits of up to 30 days for both Russian and Turkish citizens. Bilateral trade last year reached 22.9 billion dollars, making Russia one of Turkey's leading commercial partners. Russia is also Turkey's major supplier of natural gas, providing about 60 percent of the total volume of Turkish imported gas, and Turkey also plans to utilize both the Russian South Stream gas pipeline and Europe's planned Nabucco pipeline.

7 May 2010: Azerbaijani officials reaffirmed their commitment to supplying natural gas exports for the European project to construct the new Nabucco pipeline, despite Russia's mounting interest in Azerbaijani gas. Azerbaijani officials stated that they intend to deliver nearly half of its natural gas reserves to the Nabucco pipeline for Europe. For its part, the Russian energy firm Gazprom agreed to purchase some 35 billion cubic feet of gas from Azerbaijan this year, with a planned increase to 70 billion cubic feet of gas in Russian imports next year. The 10.5 billion dollar Nabucco pipeline aims to transport natural gas from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and possible Middle East suppliers to European markets. To date, however, gas producing nations have been reluctant to commit their exports to the planned 2,000-mile pipeline, although construction is set to start next year and is hoped to become fully operational by 2014.

12 April 2010: In an attempt to overcome a deadlock in diplomacy, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met in Washington with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan on the sidelines of a nuclear security conference. Prime Minister Erdoğan, prior to his departure to Washington, sent Feridun Sinirlioğlu, an under-secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Armenia to discuss bilateral issues and the meeting seeks to resolve differences over the Armenian genocide and Nagorno Karabakh issues.

29 March 2010: In comments over proposed sanctions against Iran, Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan argued that he does not favor imposing economic sanctions to pressure Iran, adding that sanctions are "not a healthy path" and noting that diplomacy is "the best route" for dealing with Iran. The Turkish prime minister discussed Iran with visiting German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who urged Turkey "to be ready to support the imposition of sanctions through the United Nations unless Iran shows transparency to assure the international community that it has no ambitions for nuclear weapons." As a nonpermanent member of the UN Security

Council, Turkey said that it has not yet reached a position regarding a U.S.-backed resolution on imposing tougher sanctions on Iran.

12 March 2010: Turkey recalled its ambassador to Sweden and canceled bilateral meetings after Swedish parliamentarians adopted a resolution on the Armenian genocide. Turkey also canceled a planned Turkey-Sweden summit meeting set for 17 March, timed with the planned visit to Stockholm of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

4 March 2010: In a narrow 23-22 vote, the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee adopted a non-binding resolution entitled the “Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide.” Turkey responded by recalling its ambassador to Washington and even U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton opposed the measure, saying that “the Obama administration strongly opposes the resolution that was passed by only one vote in the House committee and will work very hard to make sure it does not go to the House floor.” Prior to the vote, Turkish leaders warned that the resolution would damage U.S.-Turkish relations and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stressed that the resolution would “damage bilateral relations between countries, their interests and their visions for the future” and “impede the efforts for the normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations.”

2. REPORTS OF INTEREST & NEWS FROM THE “THINK THANK” WORLD

New Report: “NATO’s New Strategic Concept,” was released on 17 May 2010 the NATO Secretary-General’s Group of Experts, providing recommendations on the future of the NATO Alliance. Prepared by a distinguished group of senior international experts chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and that included Turkey’s Ambassador Ümit Pamir, the report was delivered on 17 May 2010 to NATO headquarters in Brussels. The main recommendations included an underlying demand that NATO ensures that “all its allies feel secure as it pursues its aims in the world.” The report further noted that the alliance “must balance its increasingly global concerns with reassurances to members with more traditional security concerns, such as the potential threat posed by Russia.” During the formal ceremony marking the handover of the report to NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the group’s chairwoman stressed that although NATO “faces a complex array of global challenges, the alliance must not lose sight of its core purpose – which is collective defense,” adding that “in order to be effective on the world stage, NATO allies must renew their vows.” After receiving the report, NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen explained that the report would be used in the preparation of a new NATO strategic concept, to be approved by allies during a planned Lisbon summit in November 2010.

A summary of the report follows:

New Perils, New Resolve

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) enters the second decade of the twenty-first century as an essential source of stability in an uncertain and unpredictable world. Looking ahead, the Alliance has ample grounds for confidence. The democratic principles that initially brought it together remain valid. The Cold War rivalry that once stirred fears of nuclear Armageddon has long since disappeared. NATO's role in maintaining the unity, security and freedom of the Euro-Atlantic region is ongoing. Its status as the globe's most successful political-military Alliance is unchallenged. Yet NATO's past accomplishments provide no guarantee for the future. Between now and 2020, it will be tested by the emergence of new dangers, the many-sided demands of complex operations, and the challenge of organizing itself efficiently in an era where rapid responses are vital, versatility critical, and resources tight. NATO needs a new Strategic Concept because the world has changed significantly since 1999, when the current concept was adopted. Most dramatically, the 9/11 and subsequent attacks demonstrated the deadly connection between technology and terror, triggering a response that has drawn NATO troops far from home, illuminated the need for timely intelligence-sharing, and complicated planning for defense. Further, the global nuclear non-proliferation regime is under increasing stress; incidents of instability along Europe's periphery have revived historic tensions; innovative modes of gathering, sending and storing information have brought with them new vulnerabilities; the security implications of piracy, energy supply risks and environmental neglect have become more evident; and a worldwide economic crisis has spawned widespread budgetary concerns. Meanwhile, the Alliance has grown to twenty-eight, enlarging both NATO's capabilities and its commitments. Clearly, the time is right to take a fresh look at the Alliance's missions, procedures and plans.

The new Strategic Concept must also serve as an invocation of political will or – to put it another way -- a renewal of vows, on the part of each member. Threats to the interests of the Alliance come from the outside, but the organization's vigor could as easily be sapped from within. The increasing complexity of the global political environment has the potential to gnaw away at Alliance cohesion; economic headaches can distract attention from security needs; old rivalries could resurface; and the possibility is real of a damaging imbalance between the military contributions of some members and that of others. NATO states cannot allow twenty-first century dangers to do what past perils could not: divide their leaders and weaken their collective resolve. Thus, the new Strategic Concept must clarify both what NATO should be doing for each Ally and what each Ally should be doing for NATO.

The full report is available at: www.nato.int

New Report: “Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive,” was released on 1 April 2010 by the U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS), the internal research and analysis arm of the U.S. Congress. The 15-page report was written by CRS analyst Vincent Morelli. Although this internal report was not publicly released, it is available for TPQ readers by contacting our staff.

The following is a brief summary of the report:

Attempts to resolve the Cyprus problem and reunify the island have undergone various levels of negotiation for almost 40 years. Prospects for a settlement that would end the political division of Cyprus appear to have reached a stalemate and may now enter a period of retrenchment possibly dominated by harder-line views by both sides and more difficult negotiations.

Despite a positive and concerted effort over the past 18 months and through 60 meetings between Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias, a Greek Cypriot, and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat to reach some type of acceptable solution, time and politics appear to be no longer on either’s side. On April 18, 2010, Turkish Cypriot leader Talat faces reelection as “president” of northern Cyprus; by all accounts by observers of the Cyprus issue, he could have a difficult time winning. Polls taken in late March show Talat at least 15 percentage points behind his rival. His likely successor, Dervis Eroğlu of the National Unity Party (UBP), while insisting that negotiations would continue, appears to have taken a harder-line posture toward a negotiated settlement, and there are even some in his party who are advocating a permanently divided island and international recognition for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

For his part, Republic of Cyprus President Christofias has recently experienced his own internal political difficulties as one of his governing coalition partners, the Socialist Party (EDEK), quit the governing coalition on February 9, 2010, reportedly over disagreements with the President’s negotiating strategy. Almost immediately following the EDEK decision, hard-liners in the other coalition partner, the Democratic Party (DIKO), forced a vote of the party’s central committee on whether to abandon the coalition as well. DIKO hard-liners had also criticized Christofias for what they considered to be too many concessions to the Turkish Cypriot side. In the end, DIKO voted to remain in the coalition, but the outcome of both votes seemed to indicate that Christofias was no longer guaranteed support for whatever negotiated solution he could have achieved in the near term.

Despite these political setbacks, and although both sides appeared to remain far apart on the most critical issues for any settlement, both Christofias and Talat pledged to continue the negotiations right through the end of March. With the last formal negotiating session on March 30, Talat left the negotiations in order to step

up his political campaign in a final attempt to win reelection.

Some observers were hoping that at the last negotiating session a joint statement would have been issued by both sides outlining the extent to which progress has been achieved on the major issues under consideration. And, while both sides did issue a statement at the conclusion of the session, it did not contain any details or outline of the “important progress” both sides continue to refer to.

The United States has long maintained a position of strong support for a negotiated settlement. This has been reaffirmed by the Obama Administration. Hearings (in the U.S. Congress) could be anticipated on the future of the negotiations in the aftermath of the April elections in northern Cyprus.

New Report: “Islamist Gülen Movement Runs U.S. Charter Schools,” was published in the Middle East Forum’s “American Thinker” publication on 29 March 2010. The essay, written by Stephen Schwartz, explains that the Gülen Movement is a “secretive foreign network of Islamic radicals (that) now operates dozens of charter schools –which receive government money but are not required to adopt a state-approved curriculum– on U.S. soil.” The article also states that “the inspirer of this conspiratorial effort is Fetullah Gülen, who directs a major Islamist movement in Turkey and the Turkish diaspora, but lives in the United States,” and is identified as “number 13 among the world’s 50 most influential Muslims.”

The full article is available at: www.meforum.org/2628/islamist-gulen-movement-charter-schools

New Report: “Turkey- Guide to Ergenekon,” was prepared on 19 March 2010 by the DNI Open Source Center (OSC), which was founded in 2005 by the U.S. Director of National Intelligence and that defines itself as “the US government’s premier provider of foreign open source intelligence.” The 22-page report provides an overview of the “Ergenekon” case, which it defines as “the name of an alleged illegal neo-nationalist organization accused of planning to oust the pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP) government through a military coup.” The report also notes that the Ergenekon “organization, in turn, has been linked to the so-called ‘Deep State,’ alleged to be a vast, underground network of secular Turks plotting criminal acts to destabilize the government.” Although not publicly available, the unclassified report can be obtained by contacting the TPQ staff.

Event of Note: “CSIS HOSTS ROUNDTABLE MEETING FOCUSING ON DEVELOPING THE US-TURKISH MODEL PARTNERSHIP.” The CSIS Turkey project hosted a discussion on 20 May 2010 focusing on U.S.-Turkish economic relations with Zafer Çağlayan, Minister of State Responsible for Foreign Trade. Çağlayan is one of the two Turkish ministers charged by Prime Minister Recep

Tayyip Erdoğan with the responsibility to implement the “Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation” designed to provide meaning to the model partnership concept following his meeting with President Barack Obama at the White House in December 2009. Prior to assuming his current portfolio in May 2009, Çağlayan was previously Minister of Industry and Commerce. He was elected to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 2007 after having been a successful industrialist and served for over a decade as the president of the Ankara Chamber of Industry and vice president of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey.

For Çağlayan’s remarks, go to: http://csis.org/files/attachments/100520_Caglayan_Remarks.pdf

Event of Note: “CSIS HOSTS VISITING DELEGATION OF TURKISH PARLIAMENTARIANS.” The Washington-based CSIS think tank hosted a delegation from the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Washington on 18 May 2010. The members of the delegation were: Justice and Development Party (AKP) parliamentarians Murat Mercan, Deputy from Eskisehir and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Sadık Yakut, Deputy from Kayseri and Parliamentary Deputy Speaker, Yusuf Ziya İrbeç, Deputy from Antalya, Edibe Sözen, Deputy from Istanbul, Ali Rıza Alaboyun, Deputy from Aksaray; Nevin Gaye Erbatur, Deputy from Adana and member of the Republican People’s Party, and Faruk Bal, Deputy from Konya and member of the Nationalist Action Party.

For more information, go to: www.csis.org

Events of Note: “BROOKINGS HOLDS SEVERAL EVENTS ON TURKEY”. The Brookings Institution in Washington held a series of events dealing with Turkey. In the sixth annual Sakip Sabancı lecture, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Gordon gave an address on 17 March 2010 entitled, “The United States and Turkey: A View from the Obama Administration.” The event was sponsored by Brookings’ Center on the United States and Europe at Brookings (CUSE). The Assistant Secretary of State, is a former Brookings Senior Fellow, presented the “Obama Administration’s perspective on Turkey, its relations with the United States and the European Union and its role in the region and across the globe.

The full transcript is available at: http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2010/0317_turkey/20100317_turkey_sabanci.pdf

In another event, held on 1 April at Brookings, renowned author Hugh Pope, the Turkey/Cyprus project director for the International Crisis Group (ICG), discussed the current state of Turkey-EU relations, with a special focus on recent developments

in Cyprus. The transcript of the briefing, which was hosted by Brookings' Center on the United States and Europe, is available at: www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2010/0401_turkey/20100401_turkey_cyprus.pdf

On April 20, the Center on the United States and Europe hosted another discussion focusing on the current political dynamics in Turkey. Panelists included Gareth Jenkins, nonresident senior fellow with the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Etyen Mahçupyan, director of the democratization program at the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV). Brookings Nonresident Senior Fellow Ömer Taşpınar provided introductory remarks and moderated the discussion.

The full transcript is available at: www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2010/0420_turkey_politics/20100420_turkey_politics.pdf

The Brookings Institution also published an analytical paper on 30 April 2010, entitled "Turkey's Constitutional Dilemma and EU Ambitions," by Emiliano Alessandri, Visiting Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center on the United States and Europe, and Ömer Taşpınar, Nonresident Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center on the United States and Europe. According to the paper, "nearly three years ago, when Turkey's moderately Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP) won early elections in a landslide and firmly consolidated its hold on power, the country appeared ready for a new and more democratic constitution – one that would finally replace the 1982 document written under military rule. Yet, what emerged shortly after the elections was not a new constitution but a major political crisis. Unable to establish a parliamentary consensus, Prime Minister Erdoğan opted for a minor constitutional reform package, which nearly cost the closure of the AKP and ended his political career. Giving major ammunition to his secularist critics, the AKP passed (with the support of the Nationalist Action Party) a law that lifted the ban on Islamic headscarves in Turkish universities. This constitutional amendment led to the Chief Prosecutor's indictment demanding the closure of the AKP on the grounds that it exhibited an Islamist agenda."

The full paper is available at: www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2010/0430_turkey_alessandri_taspinar/0430_turkey_alessandri_taspinar.pdf