

TURKEY AND NATO'S APPROACH TO COOPERATIVE SECURITY

The current security environment is defined with uncertainty. The risks are increased and threats are varied. NATO needs not only new 21st century capabilities but also new ways of thinking and working. It must be the primary forum for strategic debate among the allies; and in doing so, it must be remembered that building contacts with countries within and beyond Euro-Atlantic area and stronger relationships with all international organizations are more important than ever today. Turkey has proximity to many of the partner countries and supports the Partnership Policy of NATO. Turkey also believes that the enlargement of the Alliance contributes to the consolidation of security and stability in the whole Euro-Atlantic area. For this reason, we support the accession of new members.

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urkey has been a member of NATO since 1952. There has been much change since that time. Through this change, Turkey has and will continue to contribute to international peace and security. As the Republic of Turkey, we pursue a multidimensional foreign and defense policy, having strong ties with our friends, allies, and partners in the

world.

NATO is an important enabler of the security and defense policy of Turkey. Having the longest borders with the Warsaw Pact, Turkey contributed to the security of the Alliance and Western Europe during the Cold War. It also helped reduce the tension between eastern and western blocks with its policies in this period. In the post-Cold War era, it made significant contributions to NATO operations and supported the process of transformation.

As confirmed in the new Strategic Concept, reform is a continuous process. The current security environment is defined with uncertainty. The risks are increased and threats are varied. At the same time, the means used to respond to the threats have also become diverse and complicated. Ideas such as “common security,” “shaping the strategic environment,” and “preventing crises” have replaced the principle of “defending the country.” Because of the multitude of uncertainties and complexities, NATO Allies agreed on a strategic flexibility in countering the new threats.

The concept of “security” has also changed fairly. The School of Copenhagen considered the concept of “security” as having five dimensions; namely military, political, economical, social, and ecological security. Economical crises, global warming, nuclear incidents, water scarcity, natural disasters, organized crime, diseases and inequality are included in today’s security concept. The broadening of the scope of these concepts, which are generally referred to as ‘securitization,’ caused the missions of NATO and other military forces to be broadened as well.

According to the new understanding, both security and insecurity cross the borders of states easily, meaning unrest in any corner of the world is felt in other corners of the world. Furthermore, no nation or organization is able to face the new threats alone. For this reason, “cooperative security” gained importance and the content of the term “security” began to mean “security for everyone,” as opposed to “security for one nation/one organization.”

International society has realized that actors who seem at odds with each other may find common interests, and former enemies may one day end up working together; and, therefore, one should interact and work in coordination with all actors, pro or contra. This is a shift of paradigm. NATO is on its way to being the first model of this new understanding among security and defense organizations.

With increased awareness of this reality, NATO has given more importance to its partnerships under the new Strategic Concept, and renewed its Partnership Policy after the Lisbon Summit. The new policy is a more flexible and more effective one. No doubt, the partners have different requirements and different expectations to be met. Because of this difference, areas of practical cooperation are being specified.

As a consequence of the new understanding presented in the new Strategic Concept, it is strongly implied that the promotion of Euro-Atlantic security can be best assured through a wide network of partner relationships among like-minded countries and organizations around the globe. Furthermore, there is an intention to further develop the Mediterranean Dialogue and to strengthen the cooperation in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. Partnership for Peace (PfP) nations will certainly have their place in NATO forum as much as they contribute to NATO operations.

The Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative are partnerships demanding, both from NATO and the partner countries, serious effort to overcome the perception of “other”.

The same expectation also applies to the partnerships with Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. It is important for these partnerships to function effectively for global security and stability; and, participation of new members to them would be beneficial and welcomed.

Turkey is an ally who has been supporting the Partnership Policy of NATO from the outset due to its central location and its proximity to many of the partner countries.

Some principles we attach importance to in this context are inclusiveness, flexibility, and transparency. Additionally, Turkey believes that the enlargement of the Alliance contributes to the consolidation of security and stability in the whole Euro-Atlantic area. For this reason, we support the accession of new members.

Turkey has succeeded to become a country of stability at the center of instable regions. Due to its democracy, growing economy, and active foreign policy, it has become a prominent and pioneer country in its region. Turkey assumes the role of a natural bridge between north and south, west and east, among Europe, Asia, Africa and Middle East, embracing all of these cultures. To this end, mediation activities are a natural task for us.

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Since the end of the Cold War era, the developments in the Balkans, Mediterranean Basin, Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East, which could be considered the most sensitive regions of the world, have brought a new dimension to Turkey's role. There is no doubt that the developments in this geography play a specific role for global peace and security.

Due to its strong economical and cultural ties with the Middle East and due to the effect of Turkey's regional aspirations on its domestic and foreign policy, Turkey can not ignore developments in this region. Taking account of this context, Turkey gives priority to the solution of the problems in the Middle East through dialogue and consensus. We aim to make coordination and cooperation the dominating principles for code of conduct. We believe that the destiny of the region should be determined by the countries of the region and regional problems should be solved through the establishment of an inclusive and long lasting dynamic of peace.

Current developments in Middle East and North Africa once again highlighted that change and transformation are inevitable in these regions. We observe that the

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most significant reasons for this wave of transformation in Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Libya and Syria, which affected the whole Middle East and North Africa, is poverty, unemployment, and policies of pressure forced on societies by non-democratic regimes. Unless change and transformation towards democracy are achieved in an orderly manner, chaos and radicalization will inevitably follow. That is why Turkey is continuing to monitor the developments, play its part, and cooperate with other partners.

The situation in Libya is an example: the operation in Libya was initiated by Coalition Forces on 19 March 2011 and taken over by NATO on 27 March 2011. It has three dimensions: arms embargo, No-Fly Zone, and the protection of civilians. The forces allocated by Turkey to the Operation Unified Protector came under NATO's operational control on 29 March 2011 and they are being assigned to duty solely under the framework of the arms embargo.

Besides military contributions, Turkey supports the transportation of humanitarian aid. For example, it contributed to the evacuation of civilians and treatment of injured people significantly.

The first meeting of the Libya Contact Group, which later took the name ‘Friends of Libya,’ was held on 13 April 2011 in Doha and the last one on 15 July 2011 in Istanbul. The Group decided on 25 August 2011 to recognize the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC) as the only legitimate government of the country. Support towards the reconstruction in the post-conflict era will be led and coordinated by the United Nations. Once a democratic government in Libya is established, it will be possible to invite this country to the Mediterranean Dialogue of NATO.

NATO's success should not be underestimated. Its efforts are guided by the long-term goals of contributing to regional security and stability, enhancing political dialogue, and developing defense reforms. NATO supports states in their efforts to achieve democratic governments respectful of human rights; to disable terrorist groups; to solidify the authority of government; and to become stable and self-sufficient countries. These efforts have reached the point of yielding fruits. Nevertheless, the near future will demand much more than today.

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