

# TURKEY - NATO RELATIONS AND NATO'S NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT

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**T**he world is facing a rapidly changing security environment. This process of change has gained momentum particularly with the spread of globalization.

Globalization will continue to affect security dynamics in many ways. Climate change will put many of our key resources like food, water and land under considerable strain. The global competition for energy and natural resources will redefine the relationship between security and economics. In addition, our growing reliance on information technology will make our societies more vulnerable to cyber attacks.

Increasingly, over the past few years, all our nations have come to realize that globalization is not only a means of opening up economies, lifting people out of poverty, and promoting democratic values. We have seen that globalization is also, unfortunately, a vehicle for importing radicalism, and the techniques of terrorism into our societies. It has also facilitated the free flow of material, including the most dangerous ones, supporting nuclear, biological or chemical weapons programs.

So how do we respond? There is really only one answer, and that is to pursue new approaches to security cooperation. Bold and innovative approaches, which go beyond established geographical, cultural, religious or institutional boundaries, and which promote a qualitatively new level of cooperation between nations and organizations.

Turkey is a crossing point and a central hub of three continents, with its unique location between Europe and Asia, nearby Africa across the Mediterranean Sea. It is a significant intersection point on the north-south and east-west axis from a geo-economic and geo-cultural point of view.

Therefore it is a country that has long traditional, historical, cultural and strong economic ties with the Balkans, Caucasus, the Middle East and Mediterranean, and in this context it plays a significant role.

In the period after the Cold War when the concept of geopolitics was redefined within the framework of new dynamics, new opportunities and horizons arose for Turkey. Turkey has accordingly taken on new responsibilities in world politics. With the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, Turkey ceased to be in the position of a flank country of the North Atlantic Alliance and instead was positioned in the center of the Eurasian belt connecting Europe to Asia, and thus gained a greater role and importance in political, security and economic aspects.

NATO has played a central role in the security of Turkey for 58 years. The Alliance has made significant contributions for Turkey to be integrated in the Euro-Atlantic community. Turkey has made significant contributions to the Alliance as well. It adopted the common values the allies share, and defended them keenly. With the changes occurring after the Cold War, the Alliance has been transforming and relocating itself in the world politics accordingly.

In the current security environment, it is essential for NATO to go beyond being an organization which only aims to protect the territories of the allies. The studies carried out for NATO's transformation have been successful tools in order to provide NATO's adaptation to the 21st century's evolving demands and challenges. It is of great importance that the fundamental values, preserving NATO as the primary security and defense organization, be maintained. The NATO Council has already become one of the prominent political consultation forums for the international community, where the regional and global security matters can be discussed in close cooperation with other nations and organizations.

As an ever evolving organization, NATO keeps taking over additional roles and responsibilities in order to meet continuously changing risks and prevailing instability. Additionally, significant changes in terms of creating a more effective and efficient Alliance have been taking place. Now, I would like to express my thoughts about Turkey's views on some developments regarding NATO's transformation and its operations.

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Turkey endeavors to support all the tasks and roles assumed by NATO, to the maximum extent possible. Being a member of NATO for 58 years, Turkey has clearly demonstrated her commitment to peace and security in the world. We will continue our efforts along these lines on the basis of common values and aims adopted by all Allies. NATO has always been perceived not only as a security organization but also as an important political tool due to its deterrence aspects.

In this era when the world began to discuss the future of NATO, its transformation gained importance in order to create new structures and mechanisms addressing the requirements of the new security environment. Transformation will be shaped according to the estimates of future security environment and its requirements. Structural and conceptual transformation that will add to flexibility and reduction of bureaucracy are supported by Turkey as well.

NATO is on its way of becoming a global organization. Enhanced cooperation with countries out of its conventional area of responsibility under the auspices of “Contact Countries”, with Gulf Countries as a result of “Istanbul Cooperation Initiative” and relations with Mediterranean Dialogue countries expanded NATO’s area of interest considerably. In the future this framework can be broadened. But NATO has to work more to strengthen the essence of these partnerships.

The International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) operation in Afghanistan has been a significant mission for NATO since 2003. I believe that peace and stability in Afghanistan have great importance not only for the region, but for the whole world. Therefore, we are of the opinion that failure in Afghanistan would be a serious handicap for the Alliance and the entire world.

Turkey has tried to provide support to NATO’s operations in Afghanistan from the very beginning. In this context, we assumed the leadership of both ISAF Command and Kabul Regional Command twice. As Turkey, within our capacity, we continue to give our utmost support during this new period by taking over the responsibility of Kabul Regional Command until November 2010.

Today at a time when additional troops and capabilities are demanded, we are happy to have increased the number and level of our military support already. The newly established NATO Afghanistan Training Mission (NTM-A) has an important role to play in empowering the Afghan Security Forces. The mission will also be instrumental in furthering the “Afghanization” process in the country.

We have already made personnel contributions to the NTM-A Headquarters and our contributions to Afghan Military Education Institutions will be incorporated into the NTM-A structure. We are determined to continue contributing troops, capabilities, training and educational support to Afghanistan.

The Turkish Armed Forces has trained more than 9,000 Afghan personnel either in Afghanistan or in Turkey since 2001 and additionally 11 Afghan companies (1295 Afghan personnel) are being trained in Turkey within October 2009 and December 2010 timeframe.

We are also contributing to the training of the Afghan Security Forces in Afghanistan through a facility named Gazi Military Training Center which is operated by the Kabul Regional Command. Its capacity is 600 personnel at a time and the first group of Afghan troops finished their basic training on the 31st March 2010.

We have a Provincial Reconstruction and Development Team (PRT) in Wardak Province. In addition to that, we have also been working on providing the Regional

Command North Area of Responsibility (AOR) with one additional PRT in Sheberghan.

Now I would like briefly express my views on the KFOR Operation in Kosovo. Turkey always keeps a close eye on political developments in Kosovo. Therefore, it has been one of the major contributors to KFOR operations, and has the will to continue to provide support as long as it is required.

Beside our considerable personnel contributions, we have made donations to Trust Funds run by NATO for achieving sustainable progress in security realm. Additionally we are preparing for an equipment donation to support the stand up of Kosovo Security Force. It is our hope that Kosovo will get closer to Euro-Atlantic community and become a self-reliant country soon.

Finally, I am going to touch upon acts of piracy off the Horn of Africa and Somalia which continue to pose a serious threat. NATO's involvement in counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia has brought critical added value to international efforts.

Turkey believes that the UN and the Contact Group under its auspices also play an appropriate coordinating role on operations against piracy and armed robbery. Turkey has clearly demonstrated her contribution by taking part in "Operation Ocean Shield" of the Alliance with a frigate assigned to the Standing NATO Maritime Group-2 (SNMG-2) in the region concerned.

Moreover, Turkey is supporting the international counter-piracy efforts as a founding member of the Contact Group. A Turkish frigate with two helicopters onboard is on mission in the region in the framework of Combined Task Force-151 (CTF-151).

We think that long-term involvements of the international organizations, primarily of NATO, in counter piracy activities will undoubtedly constitute an important contribution to international peace and security.

Now, I would like to express my views on the new Strategic Concept of the Alliance. The Alliance is currently in the process of updating its Strategic Concept which dates back to 1999. At the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April 2009, the Secretary General was tasked to establish a so-called "Group of Experts" that will conduct work on the new Strategic Concept in close cooperation with the allies. The Group was set up in July 2009.

In the first phase of their work, four seminars were conducted between October 2009 and February 2010. The second phase is now underway in which the Group visits the capitals of allies for sharing their experiences from the first phase.

A preliminary report on the progress is expected to be issued by the Secretary General in mid-summer 2010. After that, the third phase will be started in which the deliberations will be conducted until the Lisbon Summit on 19-20 November 2010.

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The new Strategic Concept, which is to contain the main aims and responsibilities of NATO, is expected to include revised policies on issues of vital importance such as nuclear policy, partnerships, transformation and future command and force structures of the Alliance.

the issues below have gained more importance for us in the context of NATO's New Strategic Concept:

Taking the dynamics of the changing security environment and the current economic circumstances into account,

First of all it should emphasize Alliance solidarity, unity and cohesion in the strongest terms and should also clearly define the future roles and tasks of NATO. The areas where NATO can add value in the new security environment should be defined as well.

The historical success of NATO and its uniqueness stems from its core purpose, as stipulated under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. In any case, there seems to exist a common understanding among critics that Article 5 is indeed the continuing basis for Alliance cohesion. We welcome this approach to Article 5.

Non-Article 5 responsibilities should not be allowed to overshadow this core responsibility of the Alliance.

The principle of "solidarity" is fundamental and directly related to the credibility of the Alliance.

The combination of the five fundamental security tasks enumerated in the 1999 Strategic Concept reflects NATO's nature.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, an open debate within the Alliance on how these tasks can better be carried out is much needed.

It is of key importance that NATO should remain the main forum for transatlantic dialogue. NATO should continue to be the essential transatlantic forum for security consultations among Allies.

Consensus-based decision-making is viewed as the most important cement of the Alliance by Turkey. Therefore, we also welcome the common understanding among allies on this.

We need a more politically involved NATO, not a military Alliance dealing only with military and technical details of ongoing operations. Enlargement should continue and the continuation of open-door policy should be reiterated.

New global players should be included in the network of partnerships. Thus, a geographically wider (China, India, Pakistan and Japan among others to be included) and a more comprehensive network of partnerships should be established for the ongoing relevance of NATO. Partnerships and the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) should be considered among the essential elements of the new Concept.

New threats and challenges such as energy security, maritime security, cyber security, climate change, diseases to name a few, should be given an appropriate place within the new Strategic Concept.

Terrorism must also be given a prominent place in the Strategic Concept as a threat to international security. Terrorism must remain one of the main threats on the Alliance's agenda. NATO should intensify its efforts on defense against terrorism.

Another issue of importance for Turkey is the NATO-EU relationship. The agreed framework of NATO-EU strategic cooperation as established in March 2003 is based on this balance. It is comprehensive. It covers all aspects of NATO-EU interaction. The agreed framework should thus continue to provide the modalities through which NATO and the EU cooperate on all issues related to security, defense and crisis management.

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<sup>1</sup> Security, Consultation, Deterrence and Defense, Crisis Management Partnership.