

The Restoration of Turkey: Strong Democracy, Dynamic Economy, and Active Diplomacy

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He is the author of many books and articles on foreign policy and international relations in Turkish and English. His books and articles have also been translated into several other languages including Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Persian, Greek and Albanian. Professor Davutoğlu is married with four children and speaks English, German and Arabic.

His publications include *Alternative Paradigms* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), *Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World* (K.L.: Quill, 1994), *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic Depth) (Küre Yayınları, 2001) and *Küresel Bunalım* (Global Crisis) (Küre Yayınları, 2002). He has pursued a multi-disciplinary approach in his work on such fields as international relations, regional analysis, comparative political philosophy, and comparative history of civilizations.

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THE RESTORATION OF TURKEY: STRONG DEMOCRACY, DYNAMIC ECONOMY, AND ACTIVE DIPLOMACY

INTRODUCTION

We have been going through a highly dynamic process on a regional and global scale. The history of humanity has rarely seen an era in which such rapid changes have been experienced so intensely. If an attitude maintaining the same dynamism is not adopted at this time, the dynamic international conjuncture will not only drag societies along against their wills, but will also do so in ways that may ultimately destroy those societies' wills. Therefore, at a time of such dynamic conjuncture, countries and actors hoping to play a role in determining the future and to develop a vision oriented towards this future, have to meet this dynamism with an equal social and political dynamism above all, comprehend the logic, tissue and nature of this dynamism, and respond to it. This is not easy however, as societies are confronted with many challenges in such periods of systematic transformations. To produce an appropriate response to these challenges is only possible if one maintains an attitude consistent with the dynamism of the transformation current without losing yourself in that current. Those who adopt a static attitude in dynamic conditions will soon after become victims of that dynamism. On the other hand, societies with a self-renewing reflex show instead the ability to manage these processes and introduce a better prepared world and country to future periods and even to future centuries and generations.

Turkey, with its geography, historical background and dynamic human factor, is among those countries which have the capacity to serve a key role in all these processes. This capacity depends, however, on Turkey's ability to adapt dynamically into the elements brought about by her historical and geographical depth, and utilize each aspect of this adaptation process without separating them. To put it more clearly, if Turkey fails to keep up with the rhythm of the dynamic changes it has been through, it will also run the risk of being left outside of history or of being the victim of history's flow. The responsibilities brought about by its history and geographic location make it almost impossible for Turkey to define and participate in this dynamic process with a passive attitude. Thus we need to plan how to respond to the changes in the global system with a national capacity that reflects a correct and meaningful perspective.

Comprehending the transformation of the global system depends initially on understanding how Turkey positions itself in this transformation and how it should adjust itself to this process from this point onwards. Turkey has been through a wide range of restoration on economic and social levels over the last 10 years. This period in the 2000s, though not the first in Turkish political history, has been among the most significant restoration periods in Turkey's political history since the "*Tanzimat*". There

were various restorations during the Ottoman period, but in Turkey's modern era, after the time of the French Revolution and the *Tanzimat*, there have been three important ones; that of the 2000s has been the fourth important restoration.

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The basic idea behind these restorations is “to catch up with the spirit of the times”, not simply to assume a dogmatic attitude. This spirit has manifested itself in different places and ways; in the French Revolution, in the concept of democracy, in the bipolar structure of the Atlantic axis, to the Middle East, where the voice of the people is more sonorous and makes a tremendous impact. The main point here is the effort to be able to capture the soul and dynamic of the time, even if it appears in different forms and locations.

This restoration necessitates taking initiatives which will lead the transformation; not just standing by passively or resisting against the transformation. Turkey's historical restoration in the areas of social, economic and foreign policy, which will enable it to adopt an active attitude in the transformation of the global system, is built upon three

main concepts: Strong democracy, dynamic economy and active diplomacy, of which, strong democracy and dynamic economy may be considered as preconditions. In a period during which the global and regional systems along with Turkey have been in a transformation, policies related to Turkey's historical restoration should be enacted and applied by taking into consideration all three areas of politics, economy and diplomacy holistically, not separately. It is very difficult for Turkey to make original contributions to the transformation of the global system without acting effectively within these three areas. Such a mistaken attitude would not just render Turkey unable to contribute, it would also turn her into a passive actor in the global and regional transformation.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF TURKEY'S RESTORATION

Turkey's reactions to the various historical transformations in the international system have constituted crucial beginnings for the different forms of restoration in Turkish history. As mentioned above, throughout the history of modern Turkey, there have been three significant restorations so far: the *Tanzimat*; the Republic; and the transition to democracy and a multi-party system. Each restoration should be considered as Turkey's efforts to adapt to the transformation of the global system.

Each was realized after a great battle; and while the world was being reshaped, Turkish intellectuals made an effort to catch this spirit at a rate consistent with Turkey's power and capacity at the time. The *Tanzimat* introduced new terminology and concepts raised by the French Revolution into the



Ottoman language. Efforts to achieve a harmony between the classical, archaic concepts and these new ones led to many terms, for example, “homeland”, being included into our literature and vocabulary. This effort to adapt was also revealed in the many new mechanisms in social life, including the first local elections. Many of today’s contemporary institutions, from the fire department to the postal service, were formed at those times. While the institutions were being transformed, the state tried to maintain its presence. There was also economic restoration, meaning the transition to another economic paradigm, beginning with the Turkish – British Trade Agreement in 1838, just before the Imperial Edict of Gülhane (*Tanzimat*) in 1839.

Foreign policy restoration was intended to incorporate the state into the European system of the time and then attempt to transcend the state’s own foreign policy by

the balance of power. We could say that the 19th century was shaped around this struggle. The parallelism between almost every international congress and Ottoman reforms, such as the Congress of Vienna and the conditions that emerged thereafter, as well as the Paris Convention and the Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856, illustrates the Ottoman Empire’s efforts to adapt to the international structures of the period. As such, these efforts were in full compliance with the spirit of that time. This early restoration included many changes ranging from the changes in institutional structures to changes in military technology, as well as the introduction of new terminology. However, these steps, which originated in a showdown with the past, gave birth to a natural resistance. Thereafter, two separate veins began to emerge in Turkish society: the proponents of ancient values and the proponents of modernity. The roots of this competition, which still continues stubbornly

and intransigently to this day, can be found in the first attempts of the Young Ottomans in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars.

After WWI, the establishment of the Republic and the effort to form a nation in the frame of a 'nation-state' were attempts suitable to the spirit and soul of the time. Similar trends occurred in Europe with the collapse of empires, not only the Ottoman, but also the Russian, German, and Austria-Hungarian. For the Ottomans it was a time of great trauma, and thus the overall Ottoman-Turkish experience cannot be compared with that in countries like Greece, Bulgaria, Iran, Syria or Brazil. The political structures that could be compared with Turkey are those of nations that entered the 20th century with great imperial state structures and then struggled to transform into nation-states. These are large-scale states such as Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. The Ottomans encountered similar challenges to what those structures faced in their disintegration periods. If one asks which political units should Turkey be compared to, the answer would not be former empires like England or France empires, which struggled with problems of geographical distance and maintenance; but rather imperial structures in which ethnic groups lived naturally together, or side by side, in which the imperial powers were mixed with the ethnicities they controlled, such as the empires of Austria-Hungary and Russia.

The forming of the Republic was also a movement of restoration; however, this time not the state institutions, but the overall state regime was transformed. The same institutions continued, a move that was completely suitable to the spirit of the time. It

is debatable whether the principles followed during the *Tanzimat* and Republican eras were right or wrong, but these remain dynamic structures and principles, and can vary in accordance with changes in the international system.

In the background of the restoration that Turkey has accomplished over the last 13 years, lies the restitution of the self-confidence of the people and citizens of this land, by building a dignified future for them. It is a reminder to them: 'you have existed throughout history, you will continue to exist. Your culture is not a secondary and passive culture; it is rather a nation which has shown its will to be an agent'.

Again, the transition to democracy and a multi-party system in the aftermath of another war, World War II, was a restoration. This time, there was a clear parallelism between the choice to align internationally with one of the blocks of the bipolar structure, and the domestic transition to democracy and a multi-party system. We also experienced a new restoration in the economic realm, from the industrialization of agriculture to the phenomenon of urban immigration. The term "national economy," which was implemented after the İzmir Economic Congress, is a clue to the extent of the Republic's economic restoration.

If we look at the targets set for the 100th year of the Republic, we see a new restoration



again after a major war –this time not a hot but a cold war. This time, unlike after previous wars, and for the first time in the modern period, Turkey was clearly on the winning side of the international system. Nevertheless, in the 1990s, we acted as if we had lost. For this reason, we should consider the 1990s as the lost years.

After the Cold War, there was again a need for restoration. The breakthroughs for freedom and democratization since 2002, the improvements in the EU integration process, and the steps taken on Cyprus in 2004, which paved the way for EU membership, should all have occurred in 1991. If integration with neighboring countries had been completed before entering the Gulf War, a significant portion of the targets set for 2023 would have already been achieved. All possible reasons for delaying the restoration took place in the 1990s: short-term coalition governments, economic crises; and the failure of economic and political gain to unite and establish an

objective and transparent state decision making mechanism were the most crucial reasons for this delay. By comparison, as occurred in the periods between the Charter of Alliance until the *Tanzimat*, or between the Second Constitutional Era and the Republic, several opportunities were missed in the 1990s.

And today, the transition period we are in is again a process of establishing a new order in the international system. The restoration which Turkey has been going through in this transition period represents the fourth in the modern era. There are three main pillars on which Turkey's restoration stands: domestic policy, economic policy, and foreign policy. The fact that Turkey has deepened its democracy via the fundamental political principles in domestic policy implemented over the last 10 years, that it has consolidated its economic power with an active economy, and that it has provided a sustainable dynamism in its proactive foreign policy,

will all lead to its completing this restoration process and becoming an active agent in the transformation of the global system.

STRONG DEMOCRACY: DOMESTIC POLITICAL RESTORATION

Throughout the history of humanity, no matter what the society, politics, the economy, diplomacy and culture have always sought to support one thing: human dignity. No political system that fails to appeal to human dignity, no economic approach that is not based on human dignity, and no international system that ignores human dignity, can prevail. In a similar manner, a quick look through the history of human thought reveals that the basic issue always emphasized by those philosophers and religious leaders who achieved big breakthroughs, was human dignity.

Today the spirit of Turkey's political restoration, which centers on human dignity, is the development of freedom and democracy. Therefore, in the background of the restoration that Turkey has accomplished over the last 13 years, lies the restitution of the self-confidence of the people and citizens of this land, by building a dignified future for them. It is a reminder to them: "you have existed throughout history, you will continue to exist. Your culture is not a secondary and passive culture; it is rather a nation which has shown its will to be an agent". The basis of this restoration is to enable them to show such a will again, and to seek for a strong democracy, dynamic economy and active diplomacy. Above all, the foundation is the will of the nation, which is also the most important principle of democracy, and the strong democracy on which the will of the nation relies.

Accordingly, rendering a balance between freedom and security and erasing from all minds and from political life the so-called contradiction between these two, should be one of the most fundamental aims of the domestic political restoration.

Democracy is the most essential value of the modern period for Turkey, and we are now facing the necessity to protect it. While our democracy was being built in the 1950s, there is no doubt that many challenges were encountered. We experienced military coups which delayed Turkey's democratic consolidation, and other interruptions in the political transition process that further aggravated the situation. However, the voting practice, the power to reflect one's own will in politics and the sense of democratic awareness arising from this power, have always been influential in Turkey. Considering this, the response to the transformation of the global system is Turkey's democratic political restoration; and the foundation on which the principles of a strong democracy to form this restoration is based, is the providing of a balance between freedom and security. Accordingly, rendering a balance between freedom and security and erasing from all minds and from political life the so-called contradiction between these two, should be one of the most fundamental aims of the domestic political restoration. The most effective tool for doing this is the constitution. Writing a new constitution is the most important step to capture the spirit of the era. Just as the Edict of Gülhane strove to put into a text the spirit of that time, just as the first constitution of the first assembly

following the Republic tried to fit in with the spirit of its time, just as the “quartet motion,” the texts which would lead to the birth of the Democratic Party and the multiparty system captured the spirit of that time; today, once again, we need similar texts. These texts need to reflect that a strong democracy has three foundations: philosophical, moral and institutional.

The Philosophical Foundation

The philosophical foundation of a strong democracy is accepting that even a single human has the capacity to assert his/her will based on his/her own mind and preferences. If a political system does not accept the right of any one of its citizens to express a political preference, it qualifies as an authoritarian system. Therefore, the philosophical foundation of democracy is to embrace each citizen's, each individual's right to make a political choice, and the principle that no one is superior to another in this respect. No one can claim any superiority based on his/her status or position; such a claim would contradict the fundamental principles of both the republic and of democracy.

The philosophical foundation of democracy is the belief that a collective mind can be created out of the rational preferences of individuals. If you destroy this belief, the philosophical approach that a common mind can arise from the wills of individuals, democracy cannot survive. Democracy cannot be guaranteed by directing people and forcing them to think in particular ways. In this respect, the most fundamental principle of democracy is the state's trust in each citizen and belief that they can know their own preferences. This trust

mechanism can only be realized if no ethnic, sectarian or religious discrimination is made between citizens. Therefore, human dignity gains value and becomes an indispensable principle of a strong democracy as long as it applies equally to each individual equally.

You cannot build democracy unless you contend with prohibitions, maintain the freedom-security balance and extend each field of freedom. And so Turkey will maintain its position of being a state that contends with every kind of prohibition that restricts the freewill of humans.

All prohibitions should be rescinded in order to implement this philosophical basis. No prohibition should be made an obstacle in the way of individuals' right to express preferences. A system which subjects people to prohibitions solely because of their personal preferences actually means a system that rejects their right of choice and insults their mental capacity. Hence there has been a great struggle in Turkey against prohibitions over the last 10 years, and various democratization packages, the last of which was in September 2013, have been announced. Until 10 years ago, there were no objective criteria which could claim that Turkey's democracy was developing. The trust of the Turkish Republic in its own citizens has increased and citizens' sense of belonging to the state has gained strength. You cannot build democracy unless you contend with prohibitions, maintain the freedom-security balance and extend each field of freedom.

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The Moral Foundation

The moral foundation of democracy is built upon accountability and transparency. Without these two fundamental principles, it is not possible to build democracy in society. This moral foundation, which forms the key dynamic of Turkey's political restoration, has been at the centre of the Ak Party government's struggles, particularly against corruption. The principles of accountability and transparency are a must for politics and all bureaucrats equally. People should be accountable for their positions and their power. Turkey has come a long way in this regard over the last 10 years, particularly when compared with the 1990s.

The Institutional Foundation

Institutional foundation forms the third pillar of a strong democracy, and at the core of institutional foundation lies the concept of legitimacy. Legitimacy exists only when its source and ways of being used are clearly expressed. If power comes from and is under the control of the people, then it is legitimate. The process of deriving strength from nation is obvious; objective and democratic processes, which are elections, referenda and other mechanisms reflecting the will of nation. Only power that arises from the nation can be rendered legitimate.

Constitutional boundaries are intended to determine the basic criteria of rendering the power legitimate, relying on a legitimate

source, and keeping it within legitimate boundaries. In this regard, the principle of separation of powers should initially be defined correctly. The relations between the legislature, executive and judiciary bodies function effectively and justly only if each area exercises the power it has been given within the boundaries of the Constitution. Any disruption of this balance would decrease the effectiveness of execution, and an imbalance to the detriment of the judiciary would harm the deepening of democracy. Therefore, ensuring the functionality of the principle of separation of powers would not only consolidate the deepening of democracy in a state, but would also lead the state in its adapting to the global systemic transformation.

There is a direct relation between societies which have a dynamic economy following the deepening of democracy and strong welfare of individuals, and rising states.

Without a strong democracy we cannot obtain a dynamic economy and an active diplomacy. Our diplomacy will be as effective as long as democratic processes operate in Turkey, and as long as governments that have been tested by the national will design their policies within such democratic processes.

ECONOMIC RESTORATION: DYNAMIC ECONOMY

Just as Turkey's domestic political restoration is based on democratic consolidation and a deepening of freedoms, economic restoration is what can turn this base into



a steady continuity. In this regard, there is a direct relation between societies which have a dynamic economy following the deepening of democracy and strong welfare of individuals, and rising states. The dignity of both individuals and the state depends on having the economic prospects for self-sufficiency. To protect your own citizens' dignity, you first have to provide them with economic sufficiency at a basic level. When there is economic insufficiency and when citizens live under difficult conditions, it is difficult for them to maintain their dignity. States are similar; it is more difficult for a state

with a weak economy to protect its dignity. The development which has been achieved in the last 10 years in Turkey's economy is highly important in this respect.

It is useful to examine some statistics which reveal this development. In 2002, the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day was between 0.5-1%. In other words, nearly 5% of our population was getting along on only one dollar a day. In 2012, there is no one living on under one dollar. In 2002, those living on less than two dollars per diem were approximately 3-4%. Today there is no Turkish citizen living on

under two dollars. An income of less than four dollars a day is an important benchmark of fair income distribution around the world. In 2002, the number of people whose income was less than four dollars was 30%. Today this rate has been reduced to 2.3%.

Another important pillar of Turkey's economic restoration is to accurately capture the spirit of the time in the economic realm. In the current economic restoration, the spirit of the time has two main aspects: the first is the rebirth of ancient economic basins – the Silk Road, energy routes, China, India and so on; the second is the new momentum brought by combining global economic tools with technology.

The strengthening of democracy is not possible if Turkey's economic development does not reflect back on the society through an equal income distribution. Democracy can survive only in societies in which the middle class gets stronger. Turkey has now risen above international standards in terms of distribution of income. Democracy cannot blossom and a state cannot be powerful in its external representation when there is an economy in which the masses are getting by on less than three dollars a day, nor is it possible in such a context for human dignity to be protected. In this respect, Turkey has leapt forward in the last 10 years. In line with the schedule we have made according to this main principle, in the upcoming years there

will be no one living on less than four dollars in Turkey. It is possible to grasp Turkey's economic dynamism by looking at the macroeconomic indicators. While only ten years ago Turkey was a country which had to borrow from the IMF, it now contributes to the IMF in the amount of five billion dollars.

Moreover, our GNP has increased four-fold over the last 10 years, reaching 800 billion dollars annually. It has exceeded one trillion dollars in terms of purchasing power parity. Income per capita has increased by 3.5, and reached \$10,500; which, calculated by PPP, corresponds to around \$17,000. Our foreign trade volume has reached 400 billion dollars. In parallel with this economic development our foreign exports have reached 150 billion dollars and cross-border investments have reached 130 billion dollars in the last 10 years. Even considering only these statistics, we can easily see the expansion of Turkey's dynamic economy.

Today, in a period when the world economy is more fragile than ever, Turkey's gains should not be lost for any reason, and sacrifice or renunciation should never be considered. During this period, Turkey has successfully passed through all kinds of tests and crises, both domestic and international. Some observers may make analyses, also elections-indexed, about how fragile the Turkish economy is or how long it will endure some crises in the upcoming months. For the past 13 years, Turkey has experienced and felt a strong democracy arising from the national will and a dynamic economy based on economic independence. Hence, it should not be assumed for even a moment that the Turkish people would ever sacrifice these gains. Moreover, Turkey, which is rising

up on the two bases of a strong democracy and a dynamic economy, will continue with its active diplomacy, which also rests on these two foundations. Continued active diplomacy will further pave the way for a dynamic economy, and indeed accelerate that dynamism, thus strengthening even more Turkey's democracy.

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Overall, the main aim is to ease the processes of integration with the EU, the neighboring basins and the global arena.

ACTIVE DIPLOMACY: THE RESTORATION OF FOREIGN POLICY

The third and final pillar of Turkey's restoration is its foreign policy. During periods of dynamic international conjuncture, it is essential to pursue a dynamic foreign policy. The most significant element of dynamism in Turkey's foreign policy is its human resources. "Humanitarian diplomacy", which has formed the main philosophical basis of Turkey's foreign diplomacy over the last 13 years, is a good example of incorporating the human factor. Managing human resources properly and remaining internationally mobile has become more important than ever. It used to be the goal of most states, though in particular authoritarian ones, to keep people in sight, and under control. Thus states imposed travelling restrictions at all times. As Turkey believes that dynamism in foreign policy depends on the freedom of its people, it recognizes as a principle that each one of its 75 million citizens is able to produce value to the extent at which he or she is able to move about. Hence Turkey considers human mobility not as a risk, but as a matter of freedom.

It is unimaginable that a state would restrict human mobility in a period in which the global system and world politics are so highly dynamic, because if human mobility is stopped, so will social dynamism end. Now that history runs dynamically, our people should be equipped in a way to keep up with this dynamism and be mobile within it,

because we, as all humankind, face greater risks.

The core principle of Turkey's diplomatic stance is highlighting and protecting human dignity and struggling for it all around the world.

The world entered into the last 10 years of the 20th century with an international system, diplomacy and governments in place. Democracy was quite widespread, and freedoms – remembering Fukuyama's well-known “end of history” thesis - and liberal democracy began spreading widely, leading to economic growth. However, when we look at the first 14 years of the 21st century, there is, unfortunately, the opposite trend. We have witnessed a period worldwide marked by very heavy crises and challenges, beginning with the September 11 incidents, and followed by the Iraq and Afghanistan interventions, the global economic crisis, the European crisis, and finally, the Arab Spring. In such a dynamic conjuncture, the diplomacy conducted by states should first have a stance with principles and it should be active.

Assuming a particular attitude is only possible if one has human dignity. A diplomat who does not respect human dignity, no matter which color, religion or sect he is of, cannot be active or prestigious. Yet if we take a glance at the 20th and 21st centuries; it is easy to understand that respect towards human dignity has been lost in international politics. First there was the rise of Nazi ideology and fascism, then we witnessed the events of Bosnia, Rwanda and now Syria... The

main source of the pessimism arising today is these bad historical experiences. All these events have revealed the weaknesses of the international system—one constructed upon the bad experiences following the Second World War. In Bosnia, a nation was subjected to ethnocide for three years, yet United Nations (UN) mechanisms were only able to step in much later. A similar ethnocide was experienced in Rwanda, calling into question the policies of many powerful states. At this moment, no solution and no policies that can protect human dignity in Syria have been determined.

There are four main steps of active diplomacy on which Turkey centers human dignity and these are very significant in rendering the historical restoration which has been made in foreign policy in the last 12 years permanent.

The core principle of Turkey's diplomatic stance is highlighting and protecting human dignity and struggling for it all around the world. There has not been any step or any initiative in Turkey's foreign policy of the last 10 years, which is not in line with this principle of human dignity. On the contrary, Turkey's priority has been to glorify human dignity with an alliance of civilizations, mediation attempts, peace efforts, humanitarian aid missions in Somali, Myanmar and many other countries, and recognizing Palestine as a state. Today, around the globe, the Turkish Republic defends all the values supported by whoever has protected human dignity throughout the history of humanity. This



emphasis on human dignity forms the base of Turkey's active diplomacy.

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EU and Transatlantic Step

The first stage of active diplomacy is the EU and Trans-Atlantic step. Considering our relations with the EU within this framework, it is the main step of our most important strategic relations. As Turkey experiences economic and political transformation and mobility domestically, it is also a part of the historical transformation in Europe. This outcome is both a part of Turkey's history and reality as well as its political choice. However, Turkey is not part of only Europe, but it is also an essential element of Asia, Africa and neighboring regions. Accordingly, instead of the orientalist view of a settled European country towards the Middle

East and Central Asia, Turkey positions itself as a part of that history. On the other hand, as a country situated in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus, instead of regarding Europe as an 'other' world, Turkey considers itself as an inseparable part of European history. This duality is one of the most important gains of Turkey's geography and history and it is among its key original qualifications. Just as Turkey has a synthesis between modernity and tradition, it also has a special position in its centrality and in its relations with Europe, Asia and Africa. Therefore, perhaps the most important development of 2013 in terms of being a part of European history and as one of the EU countries conducting negotiations, was the step taken by Turkey about visa exemption.

This development once again shows the humanitarian side of Turkey's foreign policy, which is one of its central elements. The more you provide your own people mobility with their heads held high and freely, the more it shows you respect them. During the EU-Turkey journey of the past 60 years, this is the first time we have come to this

point. In spite of all the obstructions within the EU, and double standards applied in Cyprus, it was again and again confirmed by our addressees how Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) are eager to reach a solution for the Cyprus problem. As Turkey, we will continue to adopt our proactive manner for solving the Cyprus problem.

As a country situated in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus, instead of regarding Europe as an 'other' world, Turkey considers itself as an inseparable part of European history. This duality is one of the most important gains of Turkey's geography and history and it is among its key original qualifications.

Moreover, there is no doubt that our relations and attitude about NATO and the Transatlantic Economic Partnership will be maintained with the same effectiveness. In this context, our relations with the United States are perhaps the most institutionalized relations of the modern period. On any ground, the relations of the USA as a global power and Turkey as a gradually rising power, will continue to significantly affect not only binational bonds but also the development of world policy.

Our Relations with Neighboring Countries and Regions

Our relations with the European Union and the USA have long been institutionalized, but our relations with regional countries have

encountered many challenges, especially in the post-Cold War period. Similar processes have been experienced in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and in Iraq following the USA intervention. In the past 10 years however, we have witnessed important advances in the nature of political, economic, and cultural relations with our neighboring countries. Prior to the year 2004, there had never been a visit of head of state from Russia, Turkey's largest neighbor, to Turkey. Since then however, every year at least one reciprocal visit takes place. In the last four years the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HSCC) has been formed, joint cabinet meetings have been held, and our foreign trade has increased almost 10-fold.

Greece is another significant example of our restoration processes with neighboring countries. Our two countries have faced many mutual prejudices throughout the history of the Republic. Both used to act with a very firm reactionary foreign policy. When Greece became a candidate for something, Turkey used to obstruct it; and when Turkey became a candidate for an international organization, Greece used to obstruct it. However, today the relations between the two countries are conducted with both high intensity and trust. Just 35 agreements with Greece were signed throughout the history of the Republic, but in the last four years alone we have signed 50 agreements with Greece in two meetings of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council. This environment of trust reveals the importance of creating a stable, and, perhaps more importantly, Mediterranean and Aegean-based order.

It is now possible to communicate Turkey's new understanding to all countries in the

neighboring geography. Thanks to the HSCC and its 16-country membership including all neighboring countries, Turkey's foreign trade with Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Egypt has increased by 10 times. Turkey's foreign trade with 13 neighboring countries was 13 billion dollars in 2002, now it has reached 98 billion. Behind all these developments lies the fact that Turkey has abandoned its practice of a threat-based foreign policy.

During a period when the global system has been going through a highly important transformation, Turkey is virtually at the center of this transformation. The geography where Turkey is situated has been both the target as well as the source of transformation throughout all periods of history. It can also be said that the geography where Turkey is situated is a geography across which history has flowed. In the Middle East today we face some of the same challenges which we faced in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Central Asia in the 1990s. Thus it is evident that the geography where Turkey is situated exposes Turkey to social, political, economic and foreign political challenges.

At this point, any observers who might have criticized our foreign policy moves after the Arab Spring should remember that during this period Turkey has adopted an attitude which centers human dignity. If human dignity is the foundation of all politics, thought, and social life, standing against the regime in Syria in the name of human dignity is certainly a legitimate attitude for Turkey. The fact that Turkey adopted a very clear and principled attitude against the methods of the Syria regime will be remembered as a policy about which future generations around the

world will be proud. Just as it is undeniable that Turkey's standing by Milošević in the 1990s was incompatible with human dignity – aerial bombardment, chemical weapons and Scud missiles were not used then – today it would be equally incompatible with human dignity to stand by the Assad or other similar regimes.. Herein, our foreign affairs community will never hesitate in protecting and pioneering human dignity and the matters arising in the name of this dignity. No matter of what others may say or do, Turkey is the sibling, mate and protector of the oppressed, of people with damaged dignities, of the Somalian who cannot find bread, and of all the regions who await the response or solution of the international system.

Turkey used to be known as a Eurasian state, but for the past five to six years we have been calling ourselves an 'Afro-Eurasian state', because we are at the center of the mainland of all human history.

What happens in the Middle East often brings about great suffering. For example, concerns have been expressed that the Arab Spring and the subsequent developments have turned into a "winter". Turkey did not initiate the Arab Spring, and it was not initiated with Turkey's will, but there have been some in the Arab world who gained inspiration from Turkey. Turkey will continue to serve as an inspiration whenever possible, yet it will not attempt to force anything on others because of our mutual fate with them. Thus, Turkey did not stand against the demands of the local community as they are consistent with our

key principles of democracy, but for similar reasons, Turkey objected to the military coup in Egypt.

What is going to determine the future is not standing by the powerful, but standing by human dignity and humanity, right and justice. One may face difficulties, but should never keep one's head down. Those who submit to cruelty in the name of reality may, in the short term, hold their heads high or think that they have successfully made diplomatic manoeuvres, but they will get embarrassed in the medium and long term.

Turkey, while protecting human dignity, does not ignore realistic policies. Our stance does not mean drifting away from reality. Therefore, we struggle to find a solution for Syria with a realistic and rationalistic diplomacy in Geneva II, together with the Friends of Syria Group and the Syrian National Coalition. In this way we tried for months to convince Bashar al-Assad to change his policies. While most of the countries thought to have an influence over Syrian policy failed to make even the slightest intervention, suggestion or effort, we spent the year 2011 trying to convince Bashar al-Assad that we were afraid of the possible consequences of his actions, and urged him not to create a conflict between the army and nation. None of the countries thought to be active in Syria were there at that time. Today we know that diplomacy which does not protect human dignity for the sake of rationalism and reality will not be active. Accordingly, our moral principal policy will continue alongside a rationalistic policy.

Active diplomacy is also prestigious diplomacy. The moment we lose this prestige,

our activeness declines. Sincere criticism always exists within diplomacy. However, we should never forget that one of the bloodiest wars of the Middle East in the modern period is occurring right in front of our faces. If we put aside the Iran-Iraq War, the number of human lives lost in Syria is now more than the combined losses of the War of 1948, the War of 1967, the War of 1973, and the Lebanese Civil War, which itself lasted for 14 years. Today we host around 1 million of our Syrian siblings. Turkey has been making history in terms of its efforts to protect human dignity and support refugees, and in doing so has been winning the general approval of the international community.

Already now, we are taking action in order to be a country which can be found all around Africa with its culture, economy and business people.

Although the developments in the Middle East come to the forefront within this framework, Turkey follows an active policy in the Caucasus and in Central Asia as well. One of the biggest steps taken for the region after the Cold War was the founding of the Turkic Council as a part of Turkey's foreign policy concept. As part of this policy, high level strategic cooperation councils with all countries in the Middle East were put into practice. Turkey has materialized a parallel policy in economy and energy. Building the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP) with Azerbaijan, one of the most crucial energy projects of this century, is highly important from this point of view. Turkey will go on walking shoulder to shoulder with the people

of countries situated in its neighboring geography to discover the beauties of our mutual history.

New Initiative Areas: Africa, Latin America, Asia

Another step of an active foreign policy is comprised of the new initiative areas such as Africa, Latin America and Asia. Turkey used to be known as a Eurasian state, but for the past five to six years we have been calling ourselves an “Afro-Eurasian state”, because we are at the center of the mainland of all human history. With this in mind, we have undertaken great initiatives towards Africa, and continue doing so unflinchingly. In January 2014 we brought together in Ankara the permanent representatives of Africa with the heads of our Grand National Assembly of Turkey friendship groups. While just four to five years ago there were only 10 African embassies in Turkey, now there are 27.

On the other side, Turkey now has 35 embassies in Africa, making it among the most represented countries on the continent. The embassies we have opened all around Africa have three main aims. The first one is to increase Turkey’s visibility in the region. The second aim is to develop a common fate with African people. Turkey does not go to Africa only for reasons of economic interest. When we opened our embassy in Eritrea, for example, the authorities there said that “we understood that we were not abandoned as you opened an embassy, while everybody else was closing theirs in Asmara”. Thirdly, Africa is going to be the rising continent of the 21st century, especially in the second half of the 21st century. Already now, we are taking

action in order to be a country which can be found all around Africa with its culture, economy and businesspeople.

The initiatives of the 1990s towards Africa and Latin America, which were based on economic constraints, failed. Our current initiatives do not fail, because they are backed by a dynamic economy. Six years ago in Ethiopia there was only one Turkish company and investment of 50 million dollars. Now there are 341 Turkish companies and investment levels of 3,5 billion dollars. Turkish Airlines flies to 38 destinations in Africa, making it the second airline company in terms of the number of destinations in Africa. Behind this policy of Turkey lies the fact that it has formed an Africa strategy integrated with all its institutions. Although Turkish Airlines is officially a private company, it may fit into the strategic vision of the state. The concept of activeness in Turkish diplomacy is built upon this fundamental strategy. The dynamism and activeness in diplomacy necessitates that Turkey exists in the world arena. Over the last 3-4 years, 35 new embassies in total were opened in Africa, Asia and Latin America; clearly, while coping with the crises in its near geography, Turkey continues to act with a global vision.

International Organizations

The last step of Turkey’s active diplomacy is our work within various international organizations, primarily the UN. We were a member of the Security Council in 2009-2010, an important milestone as it was the first time after more than 50 years. We are again a candidate in the elections to be held in September 2014, for the 2015-2016 period.

To be a candidate again in such a short period of time is an act of courage, and there is no doubt that the elections will be tough. Indeed, this candidanship will be harder than the previous one because we made a mutual support agreement with many states during the 2009-2010 elections and thus used our mutual right with those states. Therefore, to be a candidate again in a short time is highly risky, yet I believe that the Republic of Turkey and its embassies are going to turn this huge risk into an advantage. Moreover, initiatives such as the Alliance of Civilizations and the Conference on Mediation will continue unabated.

We are also resolutely committed to our aim of making Istanbul the center of the UN. We have signed an agreement with the UN Development Program (UNDP) and their office has opened in Istanbul. The United Nations Women and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has also opened its office in Istanbul. Istanbul is becoming a

city of the United Nations. After New York, Istanbul is now the second city in the world in terms of the number of foreign representative offices; because everybody knows that foreign representatives are opened wherever history flows.

Foreign representative offices are closed in countries which are losing significance, while their numbers increase in countries which are gaining importance. With this in mind, the number of foreign embassies in Ankara has now reached 127, and the number of our representatives abroad has increased from 166 to 221. We are now the seventh most represented country in the world, but our aim, in no more than three years, is to be among the first five. I have borne close witness to how great an effort has been made to achieve this. I also know how high the self-confidence of our foreign affairs community is and am conscious and proud of the fact that we come from such a deeply rooted tradition.

Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (SAM) is a think-tank and a research center which is chartered by law and has been active since May 1995. SAM was established as a consultative body to provide Turkish Foreign Policy decision makers with scholarly and scientific assessments of relevant issues, and reviews Turkish foreign policy with a futuristic perspective.

SAM conducts research, organizes scholarly events relevant to the ever expanding spectrum of Turkish Foreign Policy in cooperation with both Turkish and foreign academicians, its counterparts from around the world as well as various universities and government agencies. SAM provides consultancy to the foreign ministry departments as well as some other state institutions in foreign policy issues while also establishing regional think-tank networks.

In addition to its role of generating up-to-date information, reliable data and insightful analysis as a think-tank, SAM functions as a forum for candid debate and discussion for anyone who is interested in both local and global foreign policy issues. Increasingly, SAM has become a center of attraction since it successfully brings scholars and policy makers together for exchange of ideas in panels, in-house meetings, seminars and training programs for young diplomats.

SAM has a widening range of publications. Along with its traditional publication, Perceptions, which is a quarterly English language journal that hosts distinguished Turkish and international scholars within its pages, SAM recently initiated Vision Papers which expresses the views of H.E. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, and SAM Papers that will cover the current debates of foreign policy by various scholars.

With its commitment to contribution to the body of knowledge and constructive debate particularly in Turkish Foreign Policy, SAM will continue to serve as an indispensable think-tank and research center given its role promoting interaction and mutual benefits among the MFA, NGOs, other think-tanks and the broader scientific community and hence strengthen the human and intellectual capital of Turkey.

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