



(DRAFT VISION DOCUMENT)

TURKEY - IRAN ROUND TABLE MEETINGS - 6

"New Term Turkey-Iran Relations: Opportunities and Risks"

(23-26 December 2012)

Turkey with its population of 75 million, growing economy and its geostrategic position in the middle of Afro-Eurasian main continent has become a prominent country. Turkey has political, historical and cultural ties with Europe, Black Sea, Caucuses, Asia, Middle East and Africa. It is an important member of NATO, OSCE and CICA, and with its recent active foreign policy it has become an important player in global arena.

On the other hand Iran, with its historical and cultural accumulation, population of 75 million and strategic position in Southwest Asia, attracts the attention of the world. Iran is the 2nd biggest natural gas owner (17%) and 3rd biggest oil owner of the world. Iran as member of OIC, CICA, ECO and UN; with its recent policies is one of the candidates to become a regional power of 21st century. In near future, it is predicted that the importance of Iran will grow.

Historical and cultural interaction between Turkey and Iran goes back a long way. The border between Iran and Turkey has never changed since 1639. Both countries have common historical and cultural values, interests and good neighborhood relations. Turkey-Iran political relations have indicated a consistent rise since 1979. Apart from bilateral political, economical, commercial and cultural relations; international issues are on the agenda of both countries.

Recently there has been a considerable increase in commercial and trade relations between Turkey and Iran. The trade volume between two countries was 1.2 billion dollars in 2001. This had risen to 10.6 billion dollars in 2010. Trade volume between Turkey and Iran is expected to reach 15 billion dollars in 2011. Authorities of both countries have expressed their intentions to increase this number to 30 billion dollars in 2015. The main problem between Iran-Turkey economic relations is that the trade has growing disadvantageous to Turkey. By 2010; foreign trade deficit of Turkey with regards to Turkey-Iran economic relations reached to 4.6 billion dollars. Turkey's growing energy demand and high energy prices are the reasons behind this phenomenon. As a matter of fact; Turkey's main imports from Iran consist 90% of oil and natural gas. Main exports of Turkey to Iran are industrial machinery and equipments, textile products, Iron and steel, automobile and furniture.

"Tourism" is a growing phenomenon between two countries' relations. In 2010, 1.9 million Iranian nationals visited Turkey, putting them at 4th place among the foreign tourists that are



coming to Turkey. The number of Turkish tourists visiting Iran is low. Nevertheless cultural cooperation between two countries is growing.

Both countries can develop an efficient strategic cooperation with regards to sustainment of critically important long term interests. At this point, a wider geographical point of view is needed to look at the events. In order for Turkey-Iran relations to be carried to an ideal point in today's multi-dimensional world order; every parameter should be taken into consideration.

The aims of round table meetings are to know related institutions and foundations, increase the effect of civil society, contribute to the development of both countries, benefit from the experiences of experts on development of resources and study areas, development of academic cooperation and to determine a strategy in order to evaluate all these studies in harmony.

At this point the aims of the annual Turkey-Iran Round Table Meetings which have been organized since 2008 are to prepare a civil, institutional and intellectual strategic base to improve and strengthened the Turkey-Iran Relations. Depending on the results the possibility of transforming these round table meetings into a Forum should be evaluated.

Main Theme and Sub-Themes are as follows.

Main Theme

"New Term Turkey-Iran Relations: Opportunities and Risks"

Sub-Themes

Turkey-Iran Economic Relations: Opportunities and Obstacles

Nuclear Program and Strategic Dialogue

Middle East and Central Asia and Turkey-Iran

Technology Sharing

Energy Security, Energy Supply Policies and Opportunities

Turkey-Iran Security Cooperation

Academic and Cultural Cooperation