

Security Challenges in Asia And China - Turkey Cooperation

Prof. Dr. Manyuan DONG

**Vice President of China Institute of International Studies - CIIS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of China**

The topic issues of security challenges in Asia, China-Turkey cooperation. The major security challenges in Asia includes imbalanced economical and social development among regional countries, rising of religious extremism, ethnical separatism, and international terrorism stimulated by the turbulence in West Asia and North Africa. The majority of the countries in Asia belong to developing world, the top task for these countries is to maintain a sustainable economical and social development, failing to achieve this goal, then there will be fertile soil for the expansion of religious extremism, ethnical separatism, and international terrorism. In order to keep a sustainable economical and social development, the Asian countries need fruitful cooperation in every field, including the cooperation between China and Turkey.

For the sake of addressing security challenges in Asia, the regional countries should both engage in economic and trade cooperation within regional organizations such as 10+3, SCO, OIC, SAARC, etc. on the one hand, and at the bilateral channels at the other. Second, Asian countries should conduct the dialogue between the civilizations. Third, Asian countries should solve their disputes through peaceful means based on UN Charter and international laws. Fourth, Asian countries should reach a consensus on fighting religious extremism, ethnical separatism, and international terrorism. And fifth, Asian countries should reject the “double standard” imposed by outside powers, especially the “double standard” on Palestine-Israel conflict and on combating terrorism.

By my observation, to handle the security challenges in Asia should emphasize the respect to Islamic civilization, and encourage the dialogue between Islamic civilization and other civilizations. One of the reasons why some countries and areas in Asia are not stable, even entangled with civil wars and foreign intervention, is that some Western countries do not respect Islamic civilization and Muslims in Asia. Some persons in Western countries even attach international terrorism phenomenon to Islam. China firmly reject such perspective. The Western bias towards Islam give rise to “Islamic jihad”, so there comes some anti-Western bias events, including “9·11” attack in the US, and many civilians become victims.

China fully respect Islamic civilization and Muslims both in Asia and world, and attaches great importance to the cultural and inter-civilization exchanges between China and the Islamic world. Both our civilizations left splendid chapters in the history of world civilization. For thousands of years, they have interacted with each other and co-existed in harmony, standing as a shining example in the world history of inter-civilization exchanges.

First, exchanges between the two civilizations enjoy a time-honored history. Two thousand years ago, our ancestors overcame numerous hardships along the Silk Road to meet each other, leaving behind memorable stories and touching episodes. Six hundred years ago, Chinese Muslim navigator Zheng He made seven expeditions to various Islamic countries as an emissary of peace and friendship. Throughout the centuries, China's exchanges with the Islamic world have kept growing and deepening, giving a strong boost to the cultural prosperity and economic development of both sides.

Second, the two civilizations have developed side by side through mutual learning. China's porcelain, silk, tea and paper-making technique were introduced into Islamic countries, while the latter's advanced knowledge in math, astronomy, calendrical calculation, navigation and geography broadened the horizon of the Chinese people. Walnut, pepper and carrot, which were brought to China through the ancient Silk Road, have become commonplace on dinner tables in China. Islamic music, dance, costume and architecture have also had a profound influence on the Chinese society. Such exchanges have constantly nourished the Chinese and Islamic civilizations, which in turn contributed to the development of the world civilization.

Third, both civilizations have treated each other with equality and respect and have coexisted in peace. Tenets such as "peace is most precious", "harmony without sameness" and "do not do unto others what you would not want others do unto you" are at the core of the Chinese civilization. Likewise, the Islamic civilization also advocates peace and tolerance. The Quran, for example, mentioned "peace" more than one hundred times. Despite our different cultural backgrounds and social conditions, both sides have respected each other in their choice of development path, culture, history, religion and social convention, and always treated each other in a peaceful and amicable way. For thousands of years, there have been no historical grievances between the Chinese and Islamic civilizations. Rather, we have maintained a friendly and harmonious relationship, setting a fine example of harmonious coexistence between different civilizations for the world.

The Chinese civilization is the product of exchanges between various ethnic groups and the fusion of diverse cultures, hence its fine tradition of being open and inclusive. Since Islam was introduced to China in 7th century A.D., its followers have lived in harmony and pursue common development with believers of Taoism, China's indigenous religion, and other

foreign religions such as Buddhism and Christianity, as well as the secular community. In China, more than 20 million people from 10 ethnic groups believe in Islam. They are all important members of the big family of the Chinese nation, and their religious belief, cultural tradition and custom are fully respected. The Chinese government is firmly committed to the policy of freedom of religious belief and the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and encourages the positive role of religious personages and believers in promoting economic and social development. Muslims in China are both patriots and devoted believers. Through their hard work and wisdom, they have made important contribution to the harmony, development and prosperity of the Chinese nation.

Now, I'd like to turn my topic to China - Turkey cooperation. We are gathered here today not only to review the past, but also to plan for the future. In an era of globalization, multi-polarization and informationization, both China and Turkey face the historic task of realizing rejuvenation through accelerated development, and need to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with each other. With this in mind, I wish to make the following suggestions.

First, exchanges between the Chinese and Turks should be rooted in the people. People are the source and the driving force for the development of civilizations. China and Turkey should encourage more frequent mutual visits and more exchanges in the daily life and work among the ordinary people. In particular, we should encourage our young people to know more about each other's civilization so that our friendship will be passed on from generation to generation. Our research on exchanges between the two countries should be more relevant to people's lives, and can draw inspirations and wisdom from the people.

Second, exchanges between China and Turkey should be oriented towards the reality and the future. As two great nations, we should not only cherish our historical bond, but also bear in mind the present and the future. We should think about ways to deepen our cooperation in culture, science and technology. We should adapt to the information trend in the globalized world and strive for fresh progress so that both our civilizations will acquire new vitality in the 21st century.

Third, exchanges between China and Turkey should contribute to our respective development. Trade and economic cooperation have always been part and parcel of our exchanges. Going forward, we should continue to promote cooperation in such fields as economy, trade, energy, investment, science and technology so that our time-honored civilizations will continue to prosper and our peoples live better lives.

Fourth, we should work together to build a more harmonious world. China and Turkey should strengthen solidarity and cooperation, and jointly promote dialogue among civilizations and respect for diversity of civilizations by all parties. We should play a positive

and constructive role in addressing various regional and global challenges, jointly safeguard the purposes of the UN Charter and norms governing international relations, and promote the building of a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity.

It has been proven by history time and again that greater prosperity in China and Turkey often leads to closer exchanges between our civilizations. Let us join hands and work in unity to usher in a new chapter in the course of harmonious co-existence and common prosperity of the Chinese and the Turkish civilizations.

So, under such a situation the countries like China and Turkey should consolidate their cooperation and not only in economic field but also in area of security and anti- terrorism. The economical cooperation will be the reliable foundation for cooperation in fighting against international terrorism, religious extremism and ethnical separatism. I think I should show some numerals since the establishment of the diplomatic ties between two countries. For the past four decades, the trade volume between China and Turkey increase eighteen times. China has become Turkey's largest trade partner in the Far East and its third biggest trade partner after Germany and Russia. According to the Turkish Statistics Institute (Turkstat), the trade volume in 2011 was \$24.5 billion, up from \$19.3 billion a year earlier. While Chinese exports to Turkey were \$22 billion in 2011, its imports from Turkey were only \$2.5 billion. Now two countries made a consensus that the two countries are hoping to reach \$50 billion in 2015 and \$100 billion in 2020 in the area of bilateral trade volume, both sides seems to be aware of the urgency in balancing trade.

And since 2010 with the two exchange visits of Prime Ministers of China and Turkey, the two countries announced the establishment of various strategic cooperations. It is very obviously proved that the cooperation between two countries is beneficial to fundamental interests of two countries, two people. As a result, the cooperation between China and Turkey fight against the terrorist organizations also gave a strong impetus to the economic cooperation between two countries. Both countries are victims of international terrorists and we know very well how harmful the international terrorist is. For example, both China and Turkey agree that Kurdish Workers Party(PKK) and Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement which is very active in Afghanistan and Pakistan, are two terrorist organizations and being put into namelist of international terrorist organizations by Security Council of United Nations. This year is also important year to mark the upgradation of bilateral relations since Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan paid a very successful visit to China. So the future of bilateral relations is very bright. Thank you very much.