

18th July 2008

**PRESS COMMUNIQUE
AMBASSADORS' CONFERENCE**

1. On July 15-18, 2008 the Ambassadors representing Turkey abroad met in Ankara under the chairmanship of Foreign Minister H.E. Ali Babacan. A summary of all the issues elaborated on within the context of the Ambassadors' Conference is presented below.
2. In the Conference, discussions covered the profound transformation process in our world that has begun as a result of the dynamics of the post-Cold War period, new parameters that emerged in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, as well as the positive and negative developments globalization has brought about. In this context, potential developments in 5-10 years' time were examined.
3. In all the sessions, it was assessed that in the present complex juncture, Turkey, with its strategic location and rapid adaptation to the necessities of our age, has assumed significant forward looking responsibilities related to the issues that occupy the agenda of the international society. Also, it was expressed that in a problem-ridden geography Turkey projects security and prosperity as a respected and responsible actor whose cooperation and contributions are sought for. Considering these points, the sessions focused on the policies that Turkey should implement in the 21st century with a view to pursuing a proactive, effective and future oriented foreign policy and successfully assuming the new responsibilities it faces. It was emphasized that Turkish foreign policy should maintain its capacity for adapting to changing international conditions, as it has done so far.
4. During the Conference, the state of play with regards to Turkey's accession process to the European Union (EU) was reviewed. In this context, it was reaffirmed that accession to the EU is a strategic goal for Turkey. During the meeting, the importance of the continuation of our reform process, both in terms of its political and technical aspects, and the efforts of some circles in the EU to slow down the accession negotiations through the creation of various political agendas were elaborated on. It was emphasized that the EU should, under all circumstances, act according to the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* and fulfill the commitments it has made to Turkey. Moreover, the importance of resolutely opposing efforts to create an atmosphere of uncertainty with regards to the process was also underscored.
5. During the Conference, our strategic partnership and multidimensional cooperation with the US, which, together with the accession process to the EU, constitutes an integral part of our orientation towards the West, were discussed. During the meeting, it was reaffirmed that the agendas of Turkey and the US in our neighbourhood and beyond overlap to a large extent and that bilateral relations matter not only for the common interests of the two countries but also for the promotion and maintenance of regional/global peace, security and stability. The importance of sustaining the momentum, in the period ahead, to enhance Turkish-US relations in every sphere was also emphasized.

6. Developments concerning Iraq were evaluated in the Conference. In this context, it was once more emphasized that maintaining the territorial integrity and national unity of Iraq is of vital importance. It was also underlined that Turkey will continue to make every effort to ensure that a democratic, prosperous and sovereign Iraq, which has established its internal peace and security, takes its deserved place in the international community. The critical importance for the future of Iraq of creating a political consensus in Kirkuk where all the local communities will be able to coexist peacefully with equal rights was also stressed.
7. PKK terrorism and the ongoing existence of the terrorist organization in the north of Iraq were also discussed during the Conference. In this context, it was stressed that the primary goal is the elimination of the threat of terrorism posed against the integrity of our country, social harmony and stability. The determination to continue our multidimensional efforts at home and abroad on a permanent basis to end the terrorist activities and the existence of PKK - which is internationally accepted as a terrorist organization – was reaffirmed during the Conference.
8. In the session concerning Cyprus, Turkey's support for starting, as soon as possible, comprehensive negotiations with a view to reaching a just and lasting settlement in Cyprus in the context of the process initiated on 21 March 2008 was reaffirmed and the importance of achieving a settlement based on the realities on the Island, the established UN parameters and within the framework of the Secretary General's good offices mission was emphasized. The continuation of Turkey's effective guarantee for Cyprus was also underscored. Furthermore, the importance of ending the isolations imposed on Turkish Cypriots, who have exerted intensive efforts for a settlement, was underlined and it was pointed out that the efforts towards this end will be continued.
9. In the Conference, our approach towards settling the problems in the Middle East on the basis of the principles of dialogue and consensus and within a broad perspective that encompasses the whole region was reaffirmed. In light of Turkey's particular relationship with the parties in the region based on mutual trust and respect, the importance of continuing active policies in the region towards achieving peace were emphasized. Moreover, in the Conference, it was assessed that regional security mechanisms and increasing economic interdependence between the countries of the region would also contribute to enhancing regional prosperity and stability. On the other hand, in the Conference, the importance of developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan for regional and international security and stability was underscored and the contributions of Turkey regarding this issue were reviewed.
10. In the Conference; our relationship with the Russian Federation based on a "multidimensional enhanced partnership" and a deep-rooted history and solid foundation was evaluated, and the importance of enhancing mutual trust with this country, improving cooperation and continuing an open dialogue were stressed.
11. In the Conference, our relations with China, India and Japan which are being enhanced on the basis of mutual benefit were examined. In this context, potential steps in the period ahead towards increasing our cooperation with these countries were also discussed.
12. In the framework of the different sessions held within the Conference, the achievement of lasting peace and security in the Balkans as a whole and sustaining the orientation of all

the countries in the region towards European and Euro-Atlantic institutions; the opportunities for promoting a more intensive cooperation with the South Caucasus and Central Asian countries including Mongolia; efforts to develop the existing action plans for the countries in East Asia and Pacific region on a permanent, sound and institutional basis; the requirement for continuing the momentum in our relations with African, Latin American and the Caribbean countries and the efforts related to strengthening our interaction with these regions were discussed.

13. In the Conference, the different dimensions of our candidature to the UN Security Council for the term 2009-2010 were evaluated. The determination to enhance, in the period ahead, the efforts to realize this primary goal was emphasized.
14. In the Conference, in light of the fact that Turkey has been a member for 56 years, the comprehensive contributions of NATO to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region and beyond were underscored. Especially in view of the prevailing dynamics of the 21st century where threats have become more complex and global, the importance of maintaining solidarity between Allies in accordance with the principle of the indivisibility of security was reaffirmed. Moreover, issues such as developments in the context of OSCE and CFE, disarmament, arms control and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction were also discussed.
15. On the occasion of the Conference, the challenges Turkey faces in the international arena in the context of human rights were also evaluated. It was emphasized that in parallel with the reform process in our country, Turkey will continue with determination to contribute to the progress of human rights in the international arena and to make efforts in the period ahead to protect the rights and freedoms of our citizens abroad.
16. In the Conference, the vital importance of energy security for countries in the 21st century and efforts in the context of energy diplomacy were discussed. Furthermore, the initiatives and primary projects on promoting the role of our country as an energy transit route and transforming it into an energy hub were reviewed. Also, the potential contributions of the experiences of other countries in terms of renewable energy resources for Turkey were discussed. The discussions in the Conference also focused on the natural gas dimension of our strategy for the security of energy supply and especially on the strategies that can be developed towards the countries that supply gas.
17. In the other sessions of the Conference; developments in the context of maritime jurisdiction areas and civil aviation sector; efforts to increase the quality of comprehensive services for Turkish citizens and people of Turkish origin living abroad which number approximately five million; the illegal migration that Turkey is being exposed to due to its geographic location; foreign economic and commercial relations and the efforts to further develop these ties; efforts for the improvement, management, protection and utilization of water resources in the most effective and efficient way and for fulfilling the commitments stemming from international and regional agreements with regards to the environment; the stage that the “Alliance of Civilizations” initiative has reached as well as cultural relations and promotional activities were all evaluated respectively.
18. Deliberations in the Conference also focused on the steps that should be taken to make the efforts in the field of the public diplomacy more comprehensive and productive, our cultural relations with the third countries and promotional activities; strategies for the

countries in our neighbourhood and efforts to increase trade with these countries; a multidimensional approach to our economic relations with the Least Developed Countries; the continuation of our foreign assistance which has increased in the recent period and the acquisition of a “donor country” status; our regional efforts towards creating positive interactions between the zones surrounding our country based on mutual cooperation in various fields, and in this context, the realization of the significant cooperation potential in areas such as the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean.

19. The Conference, with its broad participation format, gave the opportunity for a detailed and thorough exchange of views on the fundamental issues on the agenda of our foreign policy. It was also useful in terms of further strengthening the coordination with the institutions that we cooperate in the implementation of our foreign policy. In conclusion, the Conference in the framework of our basic orientations and priorities in the international arena, significantly contributed to carrying our foreign policy forward and making it even more effective in the 21st century.