

(STRATEGIC VISION DOCUMENT)

TURKEY - RUSSIA ROUND TABLE MEETINGS - 4

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

(23 - 24 October 2013, Moscow - Russia)

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, Russian Federation is a recognized power in global arena with its acreage, population of 140 million, development in industrialization and technology, growing economy, natural resources, historical accumulation, veto power in the United Nations, position in CIS and SCO.

There are strong historical, cultural and geographical ties between Turkey and Russia which share both European and Asian characteristics. Turkey recognized USSR in 1920 and Soviet Union was the first major power to recognize Ankara Government during Turkish War of Independence. Despite ideological polarization during Cold War; the relations between Russia and Turkey have always proceeded on a certain level. After the Cold War; diplomatic relations between two countries have been strengthened by bilateral official visits and new Russian foreign policy.

Turkish-Russian relations have gained a different perspective and new opportunities of cooperation have occurred with Russia's tendency towards pluralistic democracy and market economy. Both countries have taken steps to improve their relations, strengthen mutual trust and diversify the areas of cooperation. Within time these steps resulted in signing "Eurasia Cooperation Action Plan" under the theme "From mutual cooperation to multidimensional partnership" in November 2001. With the plan; the dialogue and cooperation in Eurasia is believed to resolve conflicts peacefully and permanently. Developing mutual economic relations between Russia and Turkey were also mentioned in the plan.

Main frame of the economic relations between Turkey and Russia have been determined by signing "Trade and Navigation Agreement on 8th of November 1937. After the collapse of the USSR, legal ground on economic relations between Russia and Turkey have been determined by signing "Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement" on 25th of February 1991. Trade volume between two countries had reached to 38 billion dollars in 2008. However; due to global crisis and certain problems between two countries, the trade volume decreased to 27 billion dollars in 2010.

Turkey exports food products (25%), textile products (20%), chemicals (9.6%) and automobile industry products (7%) to Russia and imports oil(37.6%), natural gas (32.4%), iron-steel (8%), coal (5.8%) from Russia. Despite global crisis 2.7 million tourists from Russia visited Turkey in 2009. In 2010, the number of tourists from Russia had reached to 3.1 million.

The biggest problem in trade between Russia and Turkey is that; this relation has begun to shape in favor of Russia. In long term; this situation may cause political and economical problems with regards to sustainment of relations. Turkey's growing need for energy and high energy prices are some of the reasons behind this unbalanced trade relation. Russia's specific rules on foreign trade are also deepening this problem.

Turkey and Russia; in the areas of geopolitics and security in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Middle east have common interests. Considering energy security and growing terrorism; maintaining peace and security in these regions are vital for both countries.

Both Turkey and Russia as growing economies have to take each other in to account. For Russia, Turkey is a good economic partner in Balkans, Middle East and Central Asia. Turkey sees Russia as a partner in the areas of politics, economy and security. In order to develop its relations with Asian countries; Turkey gives special importance to its cooperation with Russia. In this regard, Turkey gives great importance to CIS, CICA and SCO. By becoming a member to these organizations Turkey aims to develop mutual relations with Russia in many fields including international trade and security cooperation.

Turkey has been trying to gain the support of Russia (as a permanent member of UN Security Council) in many international disputes including the issue of Cyprus. In the following term; in parallel with Turkey's growing influence in international platforms; as members of UN, CICA, CIS and SCO, both countries will find to develop their cooperation in the fields of politics, economy, culture and security.

Both countries can develop strategic cooperation with regards to sustaining long term interests. At this point, a wider geographical point of view is needed to look at the events.

In order for Turkey-Russia 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 the annual Turkey-Russia Round Table Meetings are to prepare a civil, institutional and intellectual strategic base to improve and strengthened the Turkey-Russia Relations.

Main Theme and Sub-Themes are as follows.

Main Theme

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

Sub-themes

Turkey-Russia Economic Relations: Opportunities and Obstacles

ASEAN Region and Turkey-Russia

Energy Security, Energy Supply Policies and Opportunities

Technology Sharing

Turkey-Russia Security Cooperation

Middle East- African Countries and Turkey-Russia

Central Asian Countries and Turkey-Russia

Academic and Cultural Cooperation