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**The Italian Center for Turkish Studies:
The Meaning of a New Initiative of Scientific
Cooperation**

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Speakers:

Dr. Carlo Frappi, ICTS Director

"ICTS: The Meaning of a New Initiative of Scientific Cooperation"

Dr. Giovanni Ercolani, ICTS Vice-Director

"From Defense to Security"

Prof. Gareth Winrow, Bilgi University, Istanbul

"Turkey and Energy Security: Turkey as an Energy Transit State"

Dr. Kemal Kaya, East West Studies Institute, Ankara

"Economic Significance of Turkey"

Dr. Dragos Mateescu, Izmir University of Economics

"Understanding Turkey"

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ICTS: The Meaning of a New Initiative of Scientific Cooperation

Carlo Frappi

Ladies and gentlemen,

thank you for coming tonight at the official presentation of the Italian Center for Turkish Studies.

First of all, let me thank the partners that helped us organizing such event: "Circolo Roma" – with particular reference to Dr. Maria Di Giulio – for hosting us; Embassy of Republic of Turkey in Italy for patrocining the conference and UNISU – Università Telematica delle Scienze Umane "Niccolò Cusano" – for the interest and support of our project. Let me also thank Istituto Alta Formazione-Lionardo, Start Sicurezza and Associazione Giornalismo Investigativo.

Italian Center for Turkish Studies represents a unique think tank network dealing in Italy with complex issues related to Turkish Foreign Policy. A unicity that can be presented both in quantitative and qualitative sense.

First of all in qualitative sense since, notwithstanding the growing international importance of Turkey, Italy still lacks an adequate level of knowledge and attention of the Turkish reality.

Universities have formed only few real specialists until today. Ideological and political biases are still present, fostering superficial analysis of ongoing events. This is somehow a paradox provided that if Turkey is a key player in international arena, it is even more important for Italian foreign policy. An importance, a growing importance, that is evident at political as well as economic level.

The coincidence of Erdogan's visit to Italy shows the extent to which "Italian eyes are on Turkey". Italian eyes are on Turkey both at a political level, since we share common views on the most important issues coming from international life, and at economic level, since Italy is Turkish 3rd commercial partner, showing how Italian economic world is somehow one step beyond the academic one in the understanding of Turkish realities.

ICTS unicity in Italian landscape has not however to be intended just in a quantitative sense, but – and this is crucial – even in a qualitative one. ICTS is a unique think-tank that can rely upon an extended network of Italian, Turkish, and international academicians, analysts, diplomats, and other personalities with a proven record of academic, political and economic activities and knowledge regarding Turkey.

This to say that ICTS is not just a framework, but a trasversal & dynamic structure already actively engaged in the organization of scientific exchange and cooperation with Turkish counter-party, whose activities are hence geared toward academicians, journalists, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers who want to understand Turkey's complex political and social aspects.

On this background, ICTS project wants hence to be understood in the Latin sense: *Projectum*, that's to say "being projected". ICTS wants in fact to project Turkey in Italy, letting Italians discover and understand the once "Queen of the East".

From Defense to Security

Giovanni Ercolani

If we were to look at the historical events that have followed the fall of Berlin Wall (Nov 9th, 1989) we would have expected, talking now in the 2007, a different article from the recently report published on the British weekly "The Economist". Another historical coincidence on this report is that it was published on Nov 9th, 2007, exactly 18 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. "In God's name" is the title given to this report, and it start saying "Religion will play a big role in this century's politics".

My question is this one, what happened to this mature man of exactly 18 years old which born exactly Nov 9th, 1989? If any historical events, much more the one represented by the end of the Soviet Communism (another human religious construction to replace more pretended divine religious), are accompanied by a creation of something new, i.e. the birth of a human creature with a "new" mind set" - we could conclude that this Post-Cold War Man lost himself and is suffering for the lost of God and his place in the Eden. Henry Kissinger, a realpolitik giant, admits his mistake in not having included "religion", and I would specify "God", in his famous book "Diplomacy (a masterpiece on statesmanship).

Unfortunately the "take off moment" of this reappearance (even with terrible results) on the global stage has been represented by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Terrorist attacks were perpetuated by "mature men" born before or even during the period of the Iranian Revolution (1979), then before the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Why this introduction? Because the importance of the "irrational" has been not taken in consideration for a lot of years as a "motivation" for human behaviours. But it is not only this one, the other reason is that, already before the collapse of the Berlin wall the very concept of "defence" was too much compressed in its military framework. This narrative of "trenches", was very behind the social changes the world was living, and behind the slowly infiltrations of the "globalised process" in our lives.

Threats, or, what is perceived as a threat, have changed their shapes. Since the implosion of the Soviet Union the number of intrastate conflicts have raised, and the main "motivations" or main "incompatibilities" at the base of these conflicts for the majority of the cases has been religion, identity, Glory...the need to scream to the world "I do exist". We cannot avoid to notice these enormous changes and the globalization is operating in a way that we all, in a way or another are connected and interdependent each other.

From this we come to the point that focusing our attention on the "defence" concept, as a box, is a waist of time, but we have to look at the new threats through out, I think, the lens of a critical approach. Barry Buzan,

professor at LSE, defined in the years just after the collapse of the Berlin Wall how the "security" concept is a combination of five aspects:

- Economical;
- Political;
- Military;
- Societal;
- Environmental;

And it is exactly using this prism as a tool in our hands that we should operate. But among the five aspects of the above tool we should pay particular attention to the "societal aspects". Why? Because "security is a social construction". Encapsulated between "globalization" and "identity", societies, nations, groups, and human beings react differently *vis a vis*

- Fear
- Uncertainty
- And Interpretation.

And it is exactly how this process to define what to protect, to define the enemy, and all the process connected to secure us that should be the topic of our analysis. Every society and the world is plenty of these examples. Societies look at their future with the eyes of the past, or more clearly, look at their past to see their future. Thus, this is clearly a remembering process and is a process in itself, is a "becoming". There is "dynamism" in it; there is "force" in it.

Look at the picture of Ataturk in Kayseri in 1928 (*picture 1*), he is writing on the black board using the new alphabet.



Picture 1: Ataturk, Kayseri, 1928

A different statesman probably would have signed his name using the new alphabet, but Mustafa Kemal "no", Ataturk, with a piece of with chalk wrote "SEYAHATIM"...my journey. Let's reflect on the message left by Ataturk to his people: the journey of a nation, of a people from an old alphabet to a new one, from an old mind set to a new one. This is a process, a dynamism, it is in this way that we should read this picture. Societies are not static but dynamic. Societies adapt to the historical periods, of course differently but they adapt themselves. Narratives, discourses, representations, the process of remembering, myths, religions, all of them play a major role in this political kitchen, and much more now that the "War on Terror" has demonstrated its failure to understand this process and its enemy.

ICTS approach to security studies is dynamic by nature, well conscious of how societies changes, and in our analytical job we do not accept political affiliation and we do not accept to be closed inside:

1. hermeneutical circle, provided by manipulated narratives, but we aim to interpret interpretation;
2. geographical limits imposed by the frame of geopolitical borders, but using a critical approach we will pay attention to "regional security complexes" and "nations/society constellations"...so much important as actor in the new wars (diasporas, immigrates, etc)

As Think Tank our policy is to analyse "security" and understand it, in a clinical and impartial fashion, and more, in a dynamic way, because the very processes we analyse are dynamics. In a world that is reproducing dangerous stereotypes, were the fracture between us and the other is going to be reinforced by the use of media and the manipulation of God we have to pay particular attention to this Turkish Region. In an area where an Enlarged EU overlaps with an Enlarged Black Sea region and an Enlarged Middle East, it is here that we have to concentrate our efforts to establish an open, sincere, cooperative dialogue. This is the purpose of this Center, exactly to communicate Turkey in Italy.

Coccluding I would like to quote Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the Turkish Republic:

"Mankind is a single body and each nation a part of that body. We must never say 'What does it matter to me if some part of the world is ailing?'. If there is such an illness, we must concern ourselves with it as though we were having that illness".

And I add, this is our task, we Italian and Turkish, because we are neighbours.

Biz komsuyuz. Thank you.

Turkey and Energy Security: Turkey as an Energy Transit State

Gareth M. Winrow

The topic of energy security has attracted great attention in recent years. In Europe especially, energy has become more of a "securitised" and less of a "politicised" issue as many governments have become increasingly concerned about diversifying their sources of energy imports. Over-dependence on one source for a form of energy crucial for economic development and sustainability has led officials to perceive that there may be a threat to the security of their state. In particular, fears of being exposed to possible political blackmail from an increasingly emboldened and energy-rich Russia are now being voiced. Environmental problems and the focus especially on global warming have also resulted in energy security rising to the topic of the security agenda.

This brief paper examines the potentially important role Turkey could play as an energy transit state. In future, greater volumes of crude oil and natural gas may be transported from energy producers in the Caspian and Broader Middle East regions to consumers in Europe via pipelines running across Turkish territory. The authorities in both Ankara and Brussels have repeatedly stressed how Turkey is destined to become a key energy transit state and how this will help to address the growing energy security concerns of EU member states. This is in line with the policy of the AKP government in Ankara which seeks to underline Turkey's strategic importance in the hope that this will facilitate the accession process of Turkey to the EU.

Brussels is particularly eager to diversify its imports of natural gas to avoid an over-dependence on Russia given the concern that a confident Moscow is being tempted to exploit its energy resources as a tool for political leverage. The brief suspension of Russian natural gas deliveries to Ukraine in January 2006 over a pricing dispute which had a knock-on effect on gas supplies to Europe served as a wake-up call for many in EU member states. Currently, the EU receives approximately 150 billion cubic metres (bcm) of natural gas from Russia. This accounts for about one third of Europe's natural gas consumption. Europe's energy import needs are projected to rise as local production of natural gas continues to decline.

Within this context, the significance of energy relations between Turkey and Italy must be emphasised. The Italian energy giant ENI, has established a prominent presence in Turkey. With regard to oil, ENI has a 5 per cent stake in the pipeline company operating the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export crude pipeline which carries oil from Azerbaijani Caspian oil fields to the Turkish Mediterranean coast. ENI is also involved in a joint venture with Calik Energy to construct an oil pipeline connecting Samsun on the Turkish Black Sea coast and Ceyhan. In the gas sector, ENI has participated in the construction and

running of the Blue Stream network linking Russia and Turkey with pipeline infrastructure running along the Black Sea seabed. Also, the Italian company Edison is involved in the Turkey-Greece-Italy Interconnector project to build a gas pipeline linking the three states.

Ankara has certainly raised expectations with reference to Turkey's future role as an energy transit state. However, certain projects which are presently being developed may suffer long delays or may not even be realised. One may also question to what extent Turkey may help the EU to diversify its sources of energy imports bearing in mind that Russia has indicated that it is willing to transport its natural gas to Europe via Turkey. Moscow has potential leverage over Ankara given that two thirds of Turkey's natural gas imports are from Russia. For example, Gazprom may be prepared to lower costs and ease the onerous take-or-pay obligations for its gas deliveries to Turkey in return for securing further access to the European market via a new pipeline route through Turkey. In recent years Turkish consumers have become more dependent on natural gas imports to generate further electricity as the Turkish economy continues to expand.

OIL

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which has a maximum capacity of 50 million tons per annum (mt/y), became operational in May 2006. The construction of this first Bosphorus-bypass pipeline and Russian-bypass pipeline in the region was both a political and economic success for Turkey taking into account Russian opposition to the project. This became a major prestige project for Turkey and won the full diplomatic backing of the US administration. Nevertheless, there remain questions over the long term profitability of the pipeline which is currently transporting sweet Azeri crude to the Turkish Mediterranean coast. The pipeline will need to receive substantial amounts of Kazakh crude in order to continue to operate at full or expanded capacity. With Russian and Iranian objections to the laying of Trans-Caspian pipelines and disputes among the littoral states over the status and division of the Caspian Sea, a fleet of small tankers will need to be built to deliver Kazakh crude to Baku. It is expected that this crude will be transported from the huge Kashagan oil field in Kazakhstan which is currently being developed by ENI. However, in recent months there have been disputes between ENI and the Kazakh authorities over the escalating costs and delays in the Kashagan project, and so it will probably be several years before significant volumes of Kazakh crude may enter the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.

The future of the \$1.5-2 billion, 50-70 mt/y Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline project is even more problematic. Work on constructing this pipeline commenced in April 2007. However, at present no contracts have been concluded with shippers to provide oil throughput for this pipeline. Officials in Ankara appear to have been led to believe that the pipe would be filled with Russian and Kazakh crude. Instead, though, Moscow has pushed for the construction of a Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline connecting Bulgaria and Greece to carry increased amounts of oil from Russia and Kazakhstan to European markets. The Kazakhs have been compelled to commit future volumes to the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline. Moscow would have otherwise continued to limit the flow of Kazakh crude to outside markets on the pipeline

connecting the Tengiz oil field in Kazakhstan with the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossissk. The ENI-Calik joint venture has therefore undertaken a high risk and expensive project. Failure to provide a throughput guarantee for the Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline would be a serious setback to these companies and to Ankara's plans to make Ceyhan a new Rotterdam.

NATURAL GAS

A gas pipeline connecting Turkey and Greece is about to be officially inaugurated on 18 November 2007. This pipe will be extended to Italy by 2012. Officials from the three states concluded an intergovernmental agreement concerning this pipeline in July 2007. Natural gas will be transported from Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz gas field in the Caspian Sea. Eventually, Greece will receive 3 bcm/y and Italy 8 bcm/y from this Turkey-Greece-Italy Interconnector pipeline. Turkey has already contracted to receive 6.6 bcm/y of gas from Shah Deniz. This project will further help improve relations between Turkey and Greece. It will also help Turkey and Greece to at least partially offset their dependence on Russia for natural gas and will enable Italy to diversify its imports of natural gas. Edison would be able to develop a substantial stake in the Italian gas market. But commentators have started to question whether Azerbaijan will be able to produce enough gas in the foreseeable future to fill both the Interconnector and the first phase of the much larger Nabucco pipeline project.

There are plans to construct a 5 billion Euros, 31 bcm/y Nabucco pipeline to become operational by 2011-2012. The capacity of this pipeline could later be expanded by building more compressor stations. Nabucco would connect Turkey and Austria by a route extending through Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. Officials in Brussels have designated Nabucco as a priority project and have therefore appointed a coordinator to oversee its realisation. There have been delays, though, in initiating the project. Ankara, for instance, has objected to the inclusion of Gaz de France as a necessary sixth partner apparently because of the French position on the issue of the so-called Armenian "genocide".

It is also not clear how the large-scale Nabucco natural gas pipeline will be filled. In theory, Iran could provide substantial volumes. In July 2007 Turkish and Iranian officials signed provisional agreements whereby Ankara would develop three blocks in the massive South Pars gas field in Iran. A new \$2 billion pipeline would be constructed to deliver 20 bcm/y of Iranian natural gas from these blocks to Turkey. In addition, it was announced that a further 10 bcm/y of Turkmen natural gas would also be carried to Turkey via Iran along this new pipeline. However, the threat of the imposition of US economic sanctions may discourage Ankara from proceeding with these agreements. Moreover, the Turkish authorities have already complained about the quality and cost of Iranian natural gas which is currently delivered to Turkish customers. A court of international arbitration is currently examining these issues. Tehran has also tended to reduce gas deliveries in winter to Turkey in order to feed the Iranian market, prompting complaints from the authorities in Ankara.

The Turkmen authorities have been notably quiet about the plans to transport 10 bcm/y of gas to Turkey via Iran. And continued Russian and Iranian opposition to the laying of Trans-Caspian pipelines will further complicate the problem of how both Turkmen and Kazakh natural gas could be delivered to Turkey. It will most probably not be feasible to liquefy or compress the gas and carry it across the Caspian by special tankers. Instead, the Turkmen and Kazakhs have provisionally agreed to deliver larger volumes to Russia through an upgraded and expanded Central Asia-Centre pipeline network. Furthermore, the Turkmen are also planning to transport substantial amounts of natural gas to China, and are still hoping to deliver natural gas to Pakistan and India. Commentators have also questioned how much natural gas Turkmenistan will be able to produce in the near to medium term.

Iraq and Egypt offer alternative sources of natural gas for a Nabucco pipeline. In March 2007 Shell together with a group of Turkish companies joined in a bid for a gas production license in Iraq. Previously, in 1996 the Turks and Iraqis had signed a memorandum of understanding to construct a 10 bcm/y pipeline. However, there are obvious security problems in northern Iraq which will most probably prevent the construction of new pipelines in the area for the foreseeable future. The pipeline connecting northern Iraqi oil fields with Ceyhan has been regularly sabotaged since 2003. Major energy projects involving Iraq will also not commence until the authorities in Baghdad are able to agree on a new petroleum law. Egyptian gas could also help to fill Nabucco. Work on extending the Arab Gas pipeline from Syria to Turkey is about to commence and this will enable the delivery of natural gas from Egypt to Turkey via Jordan and Syria. But the volumes of Egyptian gas which would eventually reach Turkey would be quite small.

Given these problems and constraints, the Russians have offered to provide natural gas to help fill Nabucco. Gazprom currently delivers gas to Turkey through Blue Stream and a network running through southeastern Europe. Russian gas deliveries to Europe via Turkey would not help to ease the energy security concerns of EU member states, though, bearing in mind their already heavy dependence on Russian natural gas. Moscow has also proposed alternative natural gas pipeline projects to Europe which could lead to the collapse of Nabucco. The Putin administration has lobbied for the development of the so-called Blue Stream II project, which would involve an extension of the original Blue Stream pipeline to connect Turkey with Hungary via Bulgaria and Romania. Aware of the likely negative impact of this on Nabucco, Ankara suggested that the Blue Stream pipeline should rather be extended southwards to connect with Israel via the Mediterranean. Moscow is looking to develop new pipeline routes in order to bypass Ukraine and thereby avoid a repetition of the events of January 2006 when with the price rise crisis Kyiv tapped into supplies destined for EU member states which were being transported through Ukraine.

More recently, Gazprom and ENI have agreed to undertake a feasibility study for the so-called South Stream project. This would entail the laying of a 10 billion Euros 30 bcm/y pipeline across the Black Sea connecting Russia with Bulgaria. Different branches of the pipeline would then deliver Russian natural gas to central Europe and Italy. This pipeline would bypass Turkey and could jeopardise the prospects for Nabucco. South Stream would once again also

prevent the Europeans from diversifying with regard to their imports of natural gas.

CONCLUSION

Pipeline politics are especially complicated. Economic, technical, legal, environmental and also geopolitical factors need to be considered. Delays in the realisation of projects are inevitable while pre-feasibility and feasibility studies are completed, funds raised, contracts concluded and intergovernmental agreements signed. What is clear, though, is that Turkish officials have raised high expectations on Turkey becoming a key energy transit state in the near future. But some of these expectations may be dashed, at least in the short term. The question marks over the future of the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Nabucco gas pipeline project are cases in point. There also appears to be an element of wishful thinking on the part of EU officials in Brussels. These officials have also to some extent jumped the gun and have been prematurely promoting Turkey as a major energy transit state. Russia, as a major energy producer and with a pipeline infrastructure already in place across its territory, remains for now the crucial player in the energy politics game in Eurasia. The energy relationship between Turkey and Italy is certainly assuming more significance, but one should also remember that ENI has an important strategic partnership with Gazprom which could lead to the realisation of South Stream. What is also clear is that the issue of energy security, especially with regard to natural gas, will remain prominent on the agenda of EU member states and Turkey for the foreseeable future.

Economic Significance of Turkey

Kemal Kaya

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to talk to this distinguished audience. Thank You Dr. Giovanni and Dr. Frappi inviting me to discuss about inauguration of ICTS. And having chance to give some views from my perspective about Turkey. First of all I would like to start with Turkish politics. As you very well know, 1990s were coalition and instable periods for Turkish politics. Policies applied during this period created devastating economic crises in 2000 and 2001. Public dissatisfaction from these crises resulted in a very radical change in political representation of Turkey. All moderate parties almost cleaned from political scene in 2002 elections. Newly established AKP had the majority in the Parliament and established single party Government. Although their Islamist background, in her first term AKP kept a moderate track among the radical opposition of secular circles.

During first period, especially the first three years of the governance AKP gave vital importance to the relations with EU. Erdo_an's Government was successful in relations with EU and Turkey has started accession talks. This is really a success story for AKP government. However after starting negotiations AKP lost entuhasizm and energy towards EU for several internal and external reasons. While keeping intensive relations with EU, AKP also applied a new policy course towards neighboring countries, targeting minimum problem areas and maximum cooperation. In this respect, relations with neighboring countries developed especially with Iran and Arabic countries of Middle East. It can not be claimed same thing specifically about Central Asian and Caucasian states. However relations initiated during the Ozal and Demirel's terms with both regions developed with its own entropy.

As is well known, Turkey was the first nation that recognized the independence of Central Asian Republics. However, in 1991 when the Central Asian Republics started to declare their independence one after another, there had not been sufficient preparation by the Turkish State for dealing with these new neighbors. On the other hand, during ten years of political, economic, social and cultural experiences with the region, although conceptual conflicts have occurred at the state and public level, Turkish state, private sectors and civic society groups, considering their financial resource constraint, have spent huge efforts in developing Turkey's relations with these countries. As a result, independent from any strategic and cyclical political developments, Turkey has a significant presence in Central Asia sometime on not only on government but also on social level.

In spite of the uncertainty and policy disarray at the beginning, Turkish interest in the region both at the state and public level had been stronger than

with its Western Allies. This has various reasons such as political, social, economic and so on. According to official opinion, the constructive role of Turkey in Central Asia seemed to enhance its own international image and provided an opportunity to show its good will towards allies in the West, particularly with the European Union and US.

However Turkey's relations with US, after occupation of Iraq day by day became worst. Turkish policy makers actually couldn't understand what is going on in their neighborhood. And blindness of Turkish Policy makers gave a big opportunity to Kurdish separatist in the region as well as almost an independent Kurdish administration established in the Northern Part of Iraq it seems in longer term will be a threat to Turkey. Another disagreement with US is Turkish Policy over Iran and Syria. Under the newly established good relations or zero problems with neighboring countries strategy Turkey and US have different approach both countries.

Turkey has achieved substantial progress in macroeconomic stabilization and institutional reform which constituted the foundation for strong GDP growth between the years 2002 and 2006. Despite challenges stemming from the increasing competition in global trade system, foreign trade performance of Turkey played a crucial role in the attainment of macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth.

From the macroeconomic perspective, Turkish economy has been growing continuously for 20 quarters with an average GDP of 7.1 percent, the highest growth rates of the last 40 years. This figure demonstrates the dynamic performance of Turkish economy which outperformed the average growth rate of the world economy of 4.8 percent.

Trade has become the engine for growth in an ever globalized world. In fact, the expansion in global trade has been greater than the increase in world output for years. The countries that have made use of sound export policies in a consistent manner were able to experience an edge in development. Thus, in an increasingly interdependent and competitive international trade system, implementing the right policy tools to secure a growing share for Turkish exports is of utmost importance.

The policies that are currently implemented aim both at realizing the long-term transformation and the improvement of short and medium term performance of Turkish exports. Through these policies, Turkey plans to reach 1.1 trillion dollars of foreign trade volume, with 500 billion dollars exports by the end of 2023, the 100th year of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. In this respect, every effort will be put forth to improve the engagement of Turkey with the global trade system in order to ensure that exports continue their vital role in the attainment of sustained economic growth.

In the first three quarter of 2007, Turkey made 56.6 % of its export to EU and Italy always keeping second or third place in Turkish global trade. Italy's share in Turkish trade volume average around 8%. When we consider 2023 (100th anniversary of Turkish Republic) economic targets that is 1.1 trillion US dollars trade volume, which will constitute almost 100 billion dollars

trade volume between Turkey and Italy. This figure is even big for Italian economy. In 2020s Turkey and Italy will become very important economic partners to each other. For that reason establishment of ICTS think tank will give ground to academicians, politicians and businessmen to further develop already established contacts and understand each other.

Considering the existing figures and nature of trade between Turkey and Italy, we can easily say that both countries exporting each other from raw materials to highly sophisticated high technology products. In both countries Companies and businessmen has same kind of mentality and similar with each other.

Let me share with you one of my Experience with Agusta company of Italy. At the beginning of 1990's there was a tender for the basic trainer aircraft requirement of Turkish Air force. Agusta Company won the bid with its SF260D basic trainer aircraft. During the contract negotiations with newly established Joint Venture Company with Americans, TAI complained about the approach of Agusta, blaming, standarts, drawings almost everything. However responsible authority from the procurement, SSM forced TAI to reach agreement with Agusta. Same persons who were complaining about Agusta confessed that they learnt many things from Agusta for production of a trainer aircraft. Today Agusta had third biggest defense contract of Turkish Army, Attack helicopter production. It is not only a production program it is almost a joint development program with modifications and changes to the existing platform. Although I see some bottle necks in the program however at the end of the project parties will discuss more sophisticated new programs.

After talking about all these foreign policy, economy and business issues it will be clearly understood the importance of Italian Center for Turkish Studies for future relations of both countries. I am appreciating founders of ICTS and as EWS we are ready to collaborate, support and participate to your activities both herein Turkey and Italy.

Thank you all.

Understanding Turkey

Dragos Mateescu

I want to start by congratulating the members of the "Italian Center for Turkish Studies" for initiating the excellent project and for organising, within this context, this conference. I also thank them warmly for the invitation to speak here, today.

I've come to Turkey, to Izmir more precisely, more than six years ago and have been working for more than five years now at Izmir University of Economics in the Department of International Relations and the EU as an assistant and then as lecturer. This experience inevitably marked my knowledge of the Turks and Turkey more than any other related experience before. Since we are here to give a decisive impulse to Equilibri's "Turkey Project", I presume that a good starting point would be to somehow describe the object of our research.

Of course, questions about the importance of this country have already received significant answers but I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the knowledge about Turkey and its people, particularly as constructed in the West, suffers from a problem often pointed at in our postmodern age: the problem of stability of images in an ever changing world of meanings.

The point that should be made therefore here is that our understanding of Turkey and the Turks must be open to change. The forces of change over the meaning of Turkey are both exo- and endogenous to Turkey. There is nothing special about this country at this point: all countries in the world are inevitably subject to pressures and change. What indeed makes Turkey special in this respect is that it is an extreme case where both exo- and endogenous forces of change tend to collide sometimes with intellectual violence rather than coexist in competition. A particular idea that has become common among Turkish intellectuals is the idea that there are actually many Turkeys: there is a Turkey of Western substance, an Asian Turkey, an Anatolian rural Turkey, a secular Europeanised Turkey of the future and an Islamic Turkey of the past. The fact is that these different meanings of Turkey do not denominate historical stages, as in the case of other countries, but co-exist as to define the Turkey of today. Moreover, these meanings become tools in political debates which, in turn, contribute decisively to redefinitions of Turkey on almost yearly basis. Still, this is not what some would describe as an identity crisis. Rather this is more of a particular gift and curse at the same time: a stubborn and pervasive tendency among Turks towards re-writing their own story as if there is always something wrong with the old one. The special attention they generally give to honouring beginnings in any field of activity is significant here. Every newly established project, in whichever sphere of life one can imagine, is accompanied in the Turkish culture by a significant number of wreaths of flowers celebrating that beginning. It is as if those flowers

symbolise the death of previous projects from the ashes of which the new ones must arise successfully, Inshallah.

No surprise then that Turkey is actually a permanent challenge to theory. More precisely, in the terms suggested above, Turkey tends to reconstruct and redefine itself each time a particular meaning or label is attached to it. Take, for instance, theories surrounding the very founding moment of this country. Many continue nowadays to view Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's regime as a dictatorial one in an age of dictatorships. According to some, the Turkish Republic was established with a strong hand that simply threw the past to the dust bin of history and placed the Turks on the road to modernity. Others, on the contrary, view that moment as a manifestation of the totalitarian fashion so much professed around the world in those times, with the Nazi regime in Germany, the Fascist one in Italy, or the Stalinist terror in USSR as archetypes. In an article I have written in 2006 and published by Turkish Studies, these theories were proved wrong from the very perspective of Emilio Gentile's definitions of totalitarianism. Anything but dictatorship or, even worse, totalitarianism can be associated with the Turkish political system historically. However, this does not mean that the essence of this system, its meaning, is not subject to change. This is eventually a country in which the only political force constantly present from its establishment on the public stage is the Republican Party and nobody could say what would have happened to it, had Atatürk himself not been the very founder of that party.

Classical definitions of secularism, too, as emerged and established in Europe, have been challenged by the reality of Turkish secularism. Thus, secularism is interpreted in practical terms in Turkey as the domination of the state over and protection from religion rather than as the mere separation of religion from the state. Naturally, studies of secularism are inevitably bound to follow this Turkish line, too.

There are, of course, both apparently positive and apparently negative evaluations that can be made in connection with Turkey and its stance in the international arena. However, the most important aspect is that this country is not an inert body in international politics. On the contrary, Turkey has been active in virtually all developments that were of concern to Ankara. Following closely the firm path to modernisation opened by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey is working nowadays hard to meet the EU membership criteria and a majority of Turks believe in the European future of their country. Within this context, the legislative reforms undertaken over the last seven years or so speak of a decisive option made by the Turkish political class in that direction and academics should give more attention to the meaning of this commitment.

Turkey lives currently troubled times but this is not something entirely new. There have been even more troubled times in the recent past. An important aspect that I want to underline here is that the Turkish political system has been able to respond efficiently during most of those times. It was able to pass over political crises, major threats deriving from the fight against terrorist separatism, serious economic crises, blockages over constitutional anachronisms, resurgence of both religious and nationalist fundamentalisms, perceived humiliations in relation to various political statements vis-à-vis its past, present and future. Of these, the Armenian, Cyprus and Kurdish issues

are most notorious. The Turkish political system however was able to react efficiently in all those cases and virtually none of the academic researchers involved in the Turkish phenomenon seemed interested in explaining that efficiency. Critical analyses abound and their value is, of course, unquestionable. The truth is however that many good things could be learned from analyses of the positive aspects of Turkish politics, too.

What is certain is that, on the map of Europe and particularly on the map of EU, Turkey does not appear either as a "neighbour" or as a "partner": Turkey is in line for being part of the political Europe and that should be at the centre of academic scrutiny. Within this context, the role that Turkey would play in a few particular European policy contexts may turn crucial. I am referring here especially to the energy sector, the continental security, the Black Sea Synergy, the Middle East Peace Process and the Neighbourhood Policy.

Here, again, one must mention the old description of Turkey as being situated at the confluence of worlds, a bridge between civilisations. These are not empty words. Turkey is placed geographically so that it is practically from its heart that the two fundamental vectors of Europe's foreign policy originate: the Mediterranean vector and the East European (Newly Independent States) vector. Turkey is the only country that is a neighbour of states from both dimensions and Turkey must be seriously assisted if EU's relations with its neighbours are planned to be a success. Italy, in particular, has long experienced the need for Union's support in its own Mediterranean initiatives.

The picture drawn here has no other purpose but to shed light over the multiple meanings of Turkey in the international arena and especially in the European context. As suggested above, Turkey redefines its meaning with every challenge it faces. The very rhythm of change and development in this part of the world, like in my own native country, Romania, is tremendous. Every year, observers notice that they have to adjust their parameters of evaluation, from the political to the socio-economic sectors. Serious analysis must therefore take into account these changes and, most probably, this may be the opportunity for the academics of international relations to work harder for finally developing a theory of change, too. I would personally be very proud to see one day the "Italian Center for Turkish Studies" being associated with such an important step forward.

Grazie!

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