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## **TURKEY'S TOP DIPLOMAT SAYS CRISIS WITH RUSSIA HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF MUTUAL TIES**

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The recent crisis between Moscow and Ankara has made it clear how important the two countries are to each other, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told TASS on Monday, in the run-up to the visit of Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Turkey.

"I think that this crisis period has made it clear how important our countries are to each other. I think that this is the main lesson we have learnt from this period. If we take a broader look, we can easily understand how much Turkey and Russia have in common," he said.

According to Cavusoglu, there are "striking opportunities for joint actions in the vast Eurasian region" and "common threats and challenges that Turkey and Russia should tackle together."

"I think that our economic cooperation is perfectly complementary. Russia is Turkey's core energy supplier, while in turn Turkey can act as the best available supplier of vegetables and fruits to the Russian market," the top diplomat said, adding that Ankara also offers best conditions in the tourism industry, while Moscow prefers hiring Turkish builders for important projects.

Speaking about humanitarian and cultural cooperation, Cavusoglu said that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan participated in the ceremony for the opening of the Moscow Cathedral Mosque in September 2015.

"This was another milestone in our cooperation in the cultural field and in bolstering friendly ties. And I think that we have to increase the number of such events. They provide our peoples with the opportunity to learn about each other better and demonstrate our deep solidarity," he said.

Relations between Russia and Turkey hit rock bottom following the downing of a Russian Su-24M bomber on November 24, 2015 by a Turkish Air Forces fighter jet.

On November 28, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on measures to ensure Russia's national security and to protect its citizens from criminal and other illegal activities and to impose special economic measures against Turkey.

In June 2016, Erdogan and other representatives of the Turkish leadership took a series of steps to restore the damaged relationship.

Those efforts were positively viewed by Moscow, and the move was followed by the resumption of official contacts, demonstrating a period of normalizing relations.

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Kaynak/Source: