



AVİM

Türkmeneli İşbirliği ve Kültür Vakfı  
**AVRASYA İNCELEMELERİ MERKEZİ**  
CENTER FOR EURASIAN STUDIES

**TURKEY-IRAN**  
**REGIONAL COOPERATION**  
**IN AN EVOLVING EURASIAN**  
**GEOGRAPHY WITH A FOCUS**  
**ON THE CAUCASUS**  
**AND CENTRAL ASIA**

28 May 2014, Ankara



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# **Turkey-Iran: Regional Cooperation in an Evolving Eurasian Geography with a Focus on the Caucasus and Central Asia**

Ankara, 28 May 2014, TOBB ETÜ





## AVİM Director, Ret. Ambassador Alev Kılıç:

May I welcome you all to another session of AVİM in cooperation with Turkish Chambers of Commerce Economy Technology University (TOBB ETU). We are privileged today to have very distinguished key-note speakers. Two professors who came for this occasion from Iran, Tehran University and of course the Ambassador of Iran to Turkey H.E. Alireza Bikdeli, then two Ambassadors on the Turkish side, H.E. Mehmet Gücük, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Economic Affairs and H.E. Ambassador Şakir Torunlar, Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whose responsibilities cover the region comprising Iran as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Today, we are also happy to note that coincidentally our session comes before the expected visit of the President of Iran. Hence, this meeting will probably shed some additional light to us on the importance of Turkish-Iranian ties; particularly on the regional scale. This will be the focus of our meeting today.

To put it in other words, our focus will be Iran-Turkey, Turkey-Iran and how their cooperation would be beneficial for both, especially with a focus on Central Asia and the Caucasus. Our speakers will also deal, why Iran is important for Turkey in this sense, because it is a way opening to Central Asia but vice versa for Iran. Turkey is equally a transit way to a very important opening for Iran, to Western Europe, the European Union.

We will of course deal with the very early ties between Iran and Turkey as well as

emerging regional cooperation with emphasis on Central Asia where both countries are very active. The peoples of both countries have their roots in that region. In that sense, we will try to identify what similarities, what common interests these two countries have and how we can further expand on them.

After this very brief introductory note, I would like to present the order of the speakers to you. We start with Prof. Dr. Golamreza Chegnizade from Tehran University to be followed by Prof. Dr. Elaheh Koolaei also from Tehran University, Ambassador Şakir Torunlar, Deputy Undersecretary Ambassador Mehmet Gücük and Ambassador Alireza Bikdeli. The presentations will be followed by a Q and A and comments session from the floor and tea-coffee break.

I would like to give the word now to Prof. Dr. Golamreza Chegnizade.



## Tehran University, Prof. Dr. Golamreza Chegnizade:

It is a great pleasure to be here. Let me say that I was impressed by your university. I've been all around the States and Europe. I can tell you that, your university is really matching with the best universities in those countries. I wish you all the best in order to achieve your aims.

In order to address the question which the honorable chairperson actually raised, I would like to start by presenting a picture in which the question of Iran-Turkey relations will be addressed and it is a fact that Central Asia and Caucasia could also be addressed. I think, it would not be new if I tell you that we are experiencing a new strategic environment in international politics. I will try to pinpoint some of the important trends within that context which could actually affect Iranians and also Turks as well.

The first trend which is important in my view is the changing nature of great power relations in international politics. In that respect, I would immediately talk about Russia and Russian effectiveness, how that element could actually affect the whole region and Iran and Turkey as well. I believe, Ukrainian crises actually provided Russia with a good opportunity to introduce a new era in Russia's foreign policy. I do believe that Russia and the pattern of Russia's behavior tomorrow would not be the same as yesterday. Therefore, I think, how Russia would actually behave in the context of tomorrow is really important for Iran and also for Turkey to carefully observe.

The other great polar power which would also be interesting to talk about is China. I think the way China is behaving in South China Sea and East China Sea, the way China is trying to present and project is polar. In the Middle East and in Central Asia it is also very critical for us to understand the future and strategic picture of the region. Russia is trying to smoothly come into the Middle East and to Central Asia in very concrete

ways. I will not go in to detail in addressing how energy issue would also create a new projection globally by Russia and by also China. Therefore, I think China, position and role in the Middle East and Central Asia and in Afghanistan is very critical for us as Iran and I think for Turkey as well.

Another important development actually comes within European Union which could actually change the orientations of EU policy with regard the international politics in general and the Middle East and Central Asia in particular. I think, Germany's new role and new visions in EU plus the ongoing Britain's developments and problems both could affect the future pattern of projections of power by EU. As such, I believe that the EU tomorrow may be different from the EU which we used to know. I believe that, Germany's assertiveness in EU would be something different from what we used to know. I refer all of you to a study, "New Power, New Responsibility", which is done by Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) and it is presented and decides as new power's new responsibility. In that paper, the interesting point is that, Germany cannot play a minor political role as it used to play in the past. Therefore I believe that we need to carefully look at the way which the EU is evolving and how that evolution could actually bring about a new player in whole EU.

I don't want to go in detail on that issue, but I wish to present with two or three examples that the public mood within Germany itself is demanding a new political role by Germany as well as the politicians.

The new poll within last month shows that the public in Germany demanded a type of policy towards Ukraine that is different from the traditional pattern of behavior of Germany. I would conclude the first part of my talk by telling you that in my view, international politics is experiencing a major change and that major change is critical for us to understand or position all future policies.

The second topic which I would like to touch is the changing nature of the US involvement in the region, in Central Asia, in the Middle East and in Caucasia. I think that the talk is not something which we are not aware of. We know that the United States is about to undertake a drastic change in the orientations of its policies and we understand that the United States cannot do everything. They do have limited resources. Therefore, I believe, how the United States would behave in Central Asia, in Caucasia and in the Middle East is very important for us to understand the new pattern of alliances between the great powers. I think the United States would actually move towards Pacific. It is something which I think is obvious for all students of international politics. If the United States shifts towards Pacific, how that could affect the regional environment, strategic environment of Caucasia, of Central Asia and the Middle East. Therefore, I do believe that we have to be careful about the U.S. limitations in projecting its power in Central Asia, Middle East and Caucasia. Therefore, I think one

of the important elements or understanding of the future is U.S desire. Wishes and also resources are to play the future role in the region.

The third topic which I would like to touch, because I only touch them and cannot go into detail because of the limitation of time is the changing nature of international organizations like UN and also like NATO and EU, how that could affect the future strategic environment within which we have to work, we have to live in. I think NATO, UN and EU could not actually project as they used to, in the future of the region. Therefore, I would like to conclude on these three issues which I raised to tell you, that we are in the midst of a change in international politics. And that could by itself create new threats and new opportunity for all the players.

As you know, we in the past witnessed drastic change in international politics. Change which could bring new role and new patterns of positions within the international politics. And I think we are in the midst of those eras. I don't wish and I don't have time to go into detail and tell you how energy sources and the issues surrounding energy issues are evolving as consequences of those changes which I mentioned to you. Therefore, the issues related to energy cannot be addressed in the manner which we used to address. I want to tell you and I want to conclude the first part of my talk that we are in a period where we face new threats and those threats as the history of international relations tell us and as you experienced and as we in Iran also experienced that we could actually be in a position that we could lose territory, which could lead to loss of dimension which are important in international security. You can go back and look at your history and find out how those transitional periods affected your national security and I can myself go back and look at the way which those transitional eras actually affected my national security. Therefore, I think we need to be careful in understanding the situation.

How about Iran and Turkey? As you know I am not presenting the Iranian government. I am representing myself and to tell you a joke, once I was talking to Jeff Camp, who felt like asking me, "Golam, who shares those views with you?", I said, "My wife!" And I am not sure about that. And I tell you that, I am only presenting you my views. I don't represent the Iranian views and Mr. Ambassador is here to tell you about the Iranian position.

I think Iran and Turkey, in the last at least 5 years are engaging in a mutual exclusive strategy. If I can go back, I can tell you in the last twenty years, Iran and Turkey are engaging in that strategy, a strategy of denial. Where Iran is, Turkey should not be there and where Turkey is, Iran has not the right to be there. That mutual exclusive or denial strategy comes for both of them, actually endangering both countries' national security. In the Middle East and in Central Asia, in my understanding and in my view, Iran and Turkey are denying themselves. In every corner of those regions, I am



demanding you to raise the issues, how that could endanger Iranian and Turkish national security. I think if Iran and Turkey could not come to a new understanding, a new look in foreign policy both countries would actually be affected by great powers and that could actually create some problems for all national securities.

Therefore, I think, let me conclude my talk by demanding from you and myself in Iran as well. Let's look to a new future, a future different from the past. A future within which there is no fight between Iran and Turkey. There is a new understanding. And there are plenty of issues to which I think, my colleague Dr. Elaheh Koolaei would go through. In order to show you what are the main points which could actually bring Iran and Turkey together, I leave it up to the distinguished Ambassador. I know him for a long period of time and always admire him for his energy and also for his insights. I tell you that he is fighting for Turkish role and position in Iranian foreign policy, maybe more than Turkey herself. I always praise him for his efforts for bringing issues about which we don't know in Iran.

Let me finish my talk telling you that it is an honor for me to be here and I hope that I can learn from you in order to bring it back to my home. Thank you very much.



## Elaheh Koolae, Professor of Regional Studies, University of Tehran

### I. R. of Iran and Turkey's Cooperation in Eurasia

#### Introduction

Geopolitical developments in Central Asia and the Caucasus which are landlocked, has made Turkey one of the active players in the world energy trade. Turkey has become an important north-south oil transit route. The Baku-Tbilisi- Ceyhan (BTC) oil and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) natural gas pipelines makes it an important east-west route for energy transition. Analysis of Ankara's abilities shows that energy concerns rather than a reassessment of its Western ties motivate its outreach to Russia and, Iran.

The Russian Federation, while enjoying huge reserves of oil and gas, keeps trying to play a major role in energy market at regional and global levels. The Iranian oil and gas reserves are being considered as a remarkable source for securing energy of the world. There is consensus on the existence of adequate oil and gas reserve and the hydrocarbon potential of Central Asia and the Caucasus. The presence of the United States in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, has escalated the importance of Central Asia and the Caucasus in ensuring energy supply in this strategic region.

Key security challenges in Central Asia and the south Caucasus are terrorism, corrupted states, organized crimes and regional conflicts – defying borders. Another issue is energy security. The region sits on key oil and gas transit routes, and has significant oil and gas reserves. These regions are also undergoing rapid and significant change of transition to democracy.

## Iran and Eurasia

With the end of domination of Euro-Atlanticism in Russian foreign policy and with spread of Eurasianism approach in its foreign policy, Iran is perceived as a useful partner for Russians, especially in the 'Near Abroad'. From mid of 1990s their relations constantly expanded, although there were some challenges too. Iran's role in Civil war in Tajikistan and its constructive role in Chechnya War, made it clear for Russians that Tehran-Moscow ties will strengthen. Very soon this relation became the symbol of Russian independence in foreign policy making. Their cooperation in nuclear program of Iran was first economically, then politically fruitful for Moscow. For Russia, Iran's readiness to permit international inspections has always been an indicator of the transparent nature of her conduct in this domain. This is a sensitive issue because of expanded relations between Israel and Russia and the hostile relationship of Iran and Israel.

According to an early optimistic estimate, proven or recoverable amount of oil reserves under the Caspian Sea stood at 200 billion barrels, though the majority geologists accepted the figure of 40 to 60 billion barrels as the ultimate reserve base of the Caspian region. The Caspian Sea is estimated to contain 2 to 4 percent of the world hydrocarbon reserves. Multinational oil companies have initiated numerous large scale projects in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan has achieved only smaller-scale deals. Despite the high cost of energy exploitation and transportation, legal and environmental problems, and uncertainties of the surrounding governments, oil and gas companies are competing in Central Asia and the Caucasus to sign contracts, especially in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. Technical, logistical, legal, political, market, and social difficulties meant that only a few of the major oil fields have been exploited.

Energy security was incorporated into the agenda of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Several factors such as political instability and terrorism in these countries have made the attraction of capitals difficult. Despite the geopolitical location of Iran as a transit route for the transportation of energy resources, the US has set its foreign policy in the region to prevent building such routes. Energy security enjoys not only economic but also political dimension, which is more important. This led to the diversification of energy resources, as well as the transmission routes originating from the Caspian Sea region.

Geographical location and strategic significance have made the region one of the most important in the world. Because of its historical affinities and socio-cultural links with the region's peoples, the Islamic Republic of Iran has expanded political-economic cooperation with them. The active presence of regional and trans-regional actors has directly affected this relation. Iran's goals in the South Caucasus has been ending regional instability that might threaten its territory, building economic links and discouraging Western powers such as United States from gaining influence. Iran played

reconciliatory role in Nagorno Karabakh war and established some camps for refugees of this war. As regards the status of the Caspian Sea, Iran has insisted on either common control by the littoral states of the Caspian Sea or the division of the seabed into five equal sectors.

Iran's relations with the South Caucasus republics can be analyzed at two levels. At a micro-level, one can examine the crucial links between Iran and these countries as factors that help expand the relations. At the macro-level, however, there are serious problems that curb the process of expansion of these relationships. With Iranian and Russian energy routes put aside due to U.S. opposition, Caucasian routes have gained importance for Europe. Energy and security are two important issues around which will shape the future of the region. The region faces political instability, organized crimes and particularly rivalry among regional and trans-regional actors. Iran's geographical location and political-economic capabilities have turned it into one of the most important actors in the Region. Membership of Azerbaijan and Iran in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the emphasis on regional cooperation especially in energy, trade, transportation and communications have provided fertile grounds for enhanced regional cooperation.

In the Caspian basin, Iran is concerned about the rise of tension in its relations with Azerbaijan. Differences between the two countries on energy and the Caspian legal regime have obscured their relations, while relations with Armenia have been stable and sustainable. Iran's relations with Georgia are important because the country is located on the energy transit route to Europe. War in Georgia is not consistent with Iran's security interests. Russia's interests in Central Asia are both on energy transit routes and on how to exploit the region's resources. However, interaction between Iran and Russia in the south Caucasus takes shape according to the international attitudes in both countries' foreign policies particularly vis-à-vis the United States.

Russian authorities have resembled their presence in the "Near Abroad" to the U.S. role and place in Central America. While the United States has clearly set its policy as preventing Russia from reviving its influence on the region, Russia as the heir of the Soviet Union has displayed the constant behavioral pattern of Russian history in Caucasus. This region that had long inhabited diverse ethnic and religious groups became an arena for the emergence and reinforcement of nationalist tendencies and intensified regional conflicts. The Caucasus is of higher priority to Russia in comparison to Central Asia excepting Kazakhstan. It seems that Russia has shown the Azeri that if energy issues were resolved between the two nations, they would reduce support for Armenia.

It had been assumed that with the September 11th events, the occupation of Iraq and access to its oil resources, the importance of Central Asia and the Caucasus energy resources would decrease. However, the Caspian energy reserves soon gained

importance due to the rise in oil prices as a result of continued fighting in Iraq. Central Eurasia's energy resources could provide a temporary alternative supply if Persian Gulf oil becomes inaccessible, because of political instability in the Region.

To protect the security of the energy transit route from the west, the Caspian Sea turned into an opportunity for Azeri and Georgian leaders to pursue their interests. This was particularly the case with respect to Georgia, which was concerned about Russian actions following the 2003 'Rose Revolution', so that destructive policies similar to what happened in Abkhazia would not be repeated. The South Ossetia war in August 2008 confirmed such concerns.

Energy transit through the Caucasus region has attracted much attention in recent years because of the region's location on the transit route of the Caspian oil and gas to Europe. Transit of such resources can play a part in the world energy security and in tackling U.S. concerns. The Western energy transit route through Georgia and Turkey has been implemented by BP and fully supported by the U.S. The energy transit route through Georgia to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan lacked economic justification for many international investors, but the U.S. and Turkey made utmost efforts in establishing this route. The multi-route strategy for energy transition from the Caspian basin has been supported by the U.S.

### Turkey and Eurasia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey-Russia's relations have been cooperative and contradictory at the same time. The magnitude of Turkey- Russia trade has affected many political competitive policies of them in Central Asia and the Caucasus. From the end of the 1990s Moscow fundamentally revised its perception of Turkey's role in Eurasia. Moscow views Turkey primarily as a "valuable partner" rather than a threat. Russia considers Turkey as a transit country for its energy resources rather than simply an export market. Turkey appears to follow a two way energy strategy; first, it seeks to diversify its own sources of imported fuel and second Turkish strategists see their country turning into an East-West energy corridor.

Turkey made an energy deal with Iran in July 2007, as a counter-move to Russia. Russia also seeks for alternative routes. In June 2007, Gazprom and ENI signed an agreement regarding a Russian project of building a new gas pipeline from Russia through the Black Sea bed to Bulgaria and then to Central Europe and Italy through the Balkans. U.S. policy encourages the development of new Eurasian oil and gas resources to increase the diversity of world energy supplies. The second U.S. goal is to increase European energy security, so that some countries in Europe that largely rely on a single supplier (presumably Russia) may in the future have diverse suppliers. A

third goal is assisting Caspian regional states to develop new routes to market, so that they can obtain more competitive prices and become more prosperous. In order to achieve these goals, the Administration supports the development of the Southern Corridor of Caspian (and perhaps Iraq) gas export routes transiting Turkey to Europe.

However, Russia and Turkey have been rivals rather than partners with regard to the transportation of Caspian oil to lucrative Western markets. Turkey and Russia have been competing to have a main export oil pipeline constructed across their territory to carry Azerbaijani and possibly Kazakh oil and gas to the European market. While Russia has geo-economic outlook on Eurasia's issues, Turkey's focus is on political considerations.

After gaining independence, Turkey first focused on the potential of a Greater Turk State, But very soon it was clear that Ankara's priorities are in Europe and the Middle East. With respect to Russian "Near Abroad" Doctrine from 1993, energy leverage, especially its transit is one of the most important means of Russian diplomacy in these regions. Ankara's response is to use pipeline policy, and expanding relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia, meanwhile her relations with Russia always considered very important. The Georgia war (Aug. 2008) occurred at a time when both Russia and Turkey were moving toward a more unilateral conduct. Russia abandoned the idea of integration with the West and is casting itself as an independent Eurasian great power. Turkey has also experienced a dramatic strategic reorientation: it has moved "away from a role within a larger multilateral Western alliance toward a more unilateral regional power".

### **Iran and Turkey's Cooperation in Eurasia**

Iran has an important geopolitical situation, especially after the independence of Central Asia and the Caucasus republics. However, internally Iranian policy makers did not make priority for this region, and externally the US policy to isolate Iran, led to the lack of materialization of this capacity in this region. The US policy of depriving Iran from her natural benefits in these regions has been opposed to geopolitical necessities in Eurasia. But Iran's policy was always to help to consolidate peace and stability in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Iran's policy in Central Asia and the Caucasus has been based on its domestic constraints and its interests and confrontations beyond the region, including that with the United States. The United States and Europe have diverged over the role that Iran should be assigned in peacemaking efforts in the region, especially the Nagorno – Karabakh conflict, and the war in Georgia. Iran shares borders with all parties to the conflict, and its state is directly affected by the developments and outcomes. Tehran's policies in the Caucasus are guided chiefly by material state considerations and not by ideology. United States' sensitivity to Iran and the US-

Russian rivalry in the region has been very effective in preventing the implementation of many agreements between Iran and the South Caucasus states.

Cooperation between Iran and the South Caucasus republics has not expanded to a desirable degree. Relations with these nations can be more profound and extensive than just the construction of roads, much of which remain to be completed, and the trade in energy. Despite the importance of the Caucasus for Iran's national interests and security after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran as a large regional power has not pursued an active foreign policy towards its northern neighbors.

One of the practical measures for Iran's presence and influence in the South Caucasus involves economic cooperation and expanded economic ties with these republics. These countries are of significant geopolitical location, affecting Iran's national security and interests. These countries can leave adverse repercussions for Iran's security and economy. Success in establishing bilateral and regional economic relations with these nations, apart from prevention of Iran's isolation in the region, will hinder the formation of hostile alignments in Iran's neighborhood. Iran's economic influence in the region will revive Iran's geographical-economic status as the north-south and east-west corridors for connecting Europe, the Middle East, and West and East Asia to one another.

Improvement of conditions in the regional countries, because of economic cooperation, could lead to reduced instability that could lead to popular protests and endanger the legitimacy of regional governments. This would bring stability and security to the region, providing the grounds for regional development and reduced influence of trans-regional powers. One of the security-political benefits of economic cooperation with the South Caucasus republics would be to offset the U.S. containment policy in order to prevent Iran's presence in the region. On the other hand, expanded commercial relations could create employment for Iranian citizens, particularly those living in the border region. Given the cultural and historical affinities and the importance of neighbors in Iranian foreign policy, there is a huge capacity for bilateral cooperation.

Turkey's industrialization and going to be a regional hub, requires not only diversification but also good relations with all its neighbors. Turkey simply does not have the luxury to remain aloof to its neighbors, even if they are Russia and Iran. The future of Turkish-Russian energy relations and the north-south corridor depend largely on Moscow's vision of energy security for Europe and the world. Moscow uses energy as a card against its previous allies. Diversification of new energy supply routes remains crucial not only to Turkey's development but also for the West's energy security.

Turkey and Russia are strengthening their energy ties, though this cooperation

currently favors the latter in terms of trade volumes. Turkey needs Russian energy, but the country has become very dependent. Turkish energy policy should reduce this dependency. It is the core concept of the energy security that all the producers and consumers of energy follow. Turkey signed the Iran contract in 1996, and Iran became Turkey's second largest gas supplier after Russia. Turkish-Iranian energy cooperation has angered Washington because it undercuts US efforts to isolate Iran all the time after the Islamic Revolution. US always urged Turkey to bypass Iran and develop alternatives in the Caucasus and Central Asia. But it would be "out of the question to stop imports from either country [Russia or Iran, especially as Turkey's energy needs grow by almost 6 percent per year.

Both Caspian Basin oil and gas rich countries and Europeans want oil and gas export pipelines from this region to bypass Russia and have ruled out Iran as an alternative. Iran and Turkey can play very influential role in this regard. So for the first time, the European countries get Caspian gas independent from Russia's intervening. Iran's geopolitical situation and its linkages with Central Asia and the Caucasus made it one of the important options for energy transit routes. But isolation policy of the US make using this capacity difficult for these countries. Tightening the embargo can further damage the Iranian economy, but in the same time, it will also increase economic pressures on Turkey and deepen its energy dependency on Russia. The US is increasing pressure on Iran has impact on Ankara and strengthens their dependency on Russia.

I. R. of Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan have established Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) that includes Central Asian republics and Republic of Azerbaijan too. Now regionalism has spread around the globe: from the European Union (EU) to the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA),(MERCOSUR) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Indeed, a growing consensus among policy actors and economists suggests that the 'new regionalism', especially economic regionalism, benefits the population overall and has a net positive effect for the countries within the regional framework. So with respect to the previous experiences of the last two decades, Iran and Turkey can expand their relations in regional level to actualize the necessities of ensuring energy security. For both countries having secured routes to the energy markets is very crucial. However Turkey's industrialization plans have made it very important to expand cooperation with Iran in Central Asia and the Caucasus, especially in the field of energy. The pattern of early rivalry of Turkey and Russia in energy transit and its transformation to cooperation in this context is very considerable. Turkey and Iran also should cooperate in many fields in these regions. Both of them can help peace and stability in Central Asia and the Caucasus, while expanding multilateral relations in economic and cultural issues. Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has prepared useful capacity in this direction. In the era of globalization, regional cooperation has attracted critical attention of many countries around the world.





## Şakir Özkan Torunlar, Ambassador, Director General for South Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Your Excellency Ambassador Kılıç, Director of AVİM

Your Excellencies,

Dear Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to be invited to a platform where Turkey-Iran Relations would be discussed. Furthermore, it is a privilege to share the floor with the Deputy Undersecretary HE Ambassador Mehmet Güçük and two distinguished guests who came from Iran. I don't want to name HE Ambassador Bıkdeli as a guest from Iran as he has already become part of the family since the very first day he assumed his post in Ankara.

Turkey-Iran Relations is an easy topic for a Turkish or an Iranian diplomat in one way, but in another, this is a real hard item if you think that they are of exemplary natures which evolve day by day.

For us Iran is an important neighbour with which we share a border of 560 kilometers. And this border remained unchanged for the past four centuries. For academicians and diplomats who spend time and energy to learn the history of Middle

East, a border kept intact in this part of the World for four hundred years is something which deserves real study.

There is no doubt that these four hundred years witnessed ups and downs between the two nations. Neighbours do sometimes have ups and downs among them. Don't you have one with any of your neighbours? I am sure you do have. However, the two nations, Turks and Iranians had always had the will to overcome those issues themselves, without any outsider interference.

Today, in both capitals we see that there are two Governments who enjoy strong domestic popular support. The election of HE Rouhani as President of Iran a year ago with 50,7 percent of the votes in the first round, was a display of urge for a change on the part of our Iranian neighbors.

During the past twelve months we see that President Rouhani chose to use a reconciliatory tone which was received positively by the international community. This constructive approach has re-ignited the new phase of negotiations between Iran and the P5+1. The Joint Plan of Action which all the parties display goodwill around it is the product of this new approach. Compared with few years ago, the international community, today, is much more optimistic for a comprehensive settlement of the Iranian nuclear file. I have to underline that it is crucial for all parties to comply with their commitments and refrain from any steps that might derail the ongoing process. During the years ahead when the international sanctions will be lifted, Iran will take the seat it deserves among the family of nations and the Iranians will enjoy a much more better living.

Turkey, since the very beginning has always displayed a policy that not a single country in the region should possess nuclear weapons, but all countries should have the right for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Many in this room, I believe will well remember that Turkey, together with Brazil has been the party to the Tehran Declaration four years ago. Had that opportunity been seized, the international community would not have lost the past four precious years on this issue.

Today, we receive encouraging news from the parties who negotiate. Nobody claims that this is an easy path that may be walked without obstacles. But with the exception of one or two members of the international community, everybody knows that diplomacy is the main and perhaps the only tool to leave this file behind.

**Dear Guests,**

It is not only the border that these two countries and peoples share. They also have linguistic, cultural, historical and religious bonds. The Turkish and Iranian Cultural Centres, in Ankara and in Tehran are the venues where members of the respective nations improve their linguistic and cultural skills towards each other. The richness of the Iranian and Turkish cultures provide an extensive opportunity for those who are interested in them. Poetry, music, fine arts, architecture are only the few of these fields that two nations have shared throughout the centuries.

During the last nine months mutual contacts were intensified. Our President and President Rouhani had the occasion to meet each other on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

The two capitals have hosted high level visitors from each other. Our Foreign Minister attended the oath-taking ceremony of the new President of Iran. He was in Iran again in November.

The Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly visited Iran both in September and in February.

HE Prime Minister Erdoğan paid a visit to Iran in January, accompanied by five Ministers.

In November, January and in March we have hosted Foreign Minister Jawad Zarif.

In the weeks ahead we are expecting President Rouhani's visit to Turkey. As its establishment was agreed during the visit of Prime Minister Erdoğan, the High Level Cooperation Council will convene for the first time in Ankara on the occasion of President Rouhani's upcoming visit.

Besides this two-ways diplomatic traffic, both Foreign Ministers meet each other almost at least once a month on the sidelines of an international meeting, whether in China or in Pakistan or in Davos.

**Your Excellencies,**

Turkey and Iran share not only economic, but also political platforms in international organizations as well.

Agenda items of common concern are an area of cooperation between the delegations of two countries such as Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Economic Cooperation Organization and D-8.

Although Turkey and Iran do share same objectives of stability and prosperity of Syria, there may be differences of opinion on how to achieve this. Our continuous dialogue is encouraging us for a common understanding of this crucial issue.

Turkey welcomes the recent high level contacts between Iran and the Gulf countries. We believe that a stable and secure Gulf is not only in the interest of Iran and her neighbors on the opposite coast, but it is an asset for the greater region and the international community.

Both Iran and Turkey assume responsibilities when it comes to the rebuilding process of Afghanistan. Within the İstanbul Process, Iran is the Lead Country for Education CBM, whereas Turkey co-leads the Counter Terrorism CBM together with Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates. I personally believe that the historical transition of power in this country for the first time from a civilian Government to another civilian and elected one will bring new opportunities for a better cooperation of the regional powers with Afghan people and Afghanistan on their way of development.

Finally, I can only reiterate that the target of 30 billions of trade volume between our two countries is not a dream, but a realistic figure to be reached within the next few years. I believe that it can be achieved if the relations continue on their own course. The steps taken by the new Iranian Government to liberalize the Iranian economy are encouraging to achieve this target.

Thank you for your patience.



### H.E. Mehmet Gücük, Ambassador, Deputy Undersecretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Center for Eurasian Studies for the excellent organization of this brain-storming meeting on the topic of "Turkey-Iran: Regional cooperation in an evolving Eurasian geography with a focus on the Caucasus and Central Asia."

The topic covers, of course, a wide spectrum of inter-related and interdependent issues. Instead of repeating the already well-known foreign policy aspects and figures, I prefer to highlight some important points which I will later elaborate in detail.

First of all, we live in an age of rapid changes. Foreign policy issues have gained a more complex character. All countries are taking the necessary steps in order to keep up with the speed of these changes and developments.

Turkey is located in one of the important intersections of continents, regions and therefore different foreign policy dynamics. Besides traditional security issues as well as new and evolving risks and threats such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cross-border organized crime and illegal immigration, there are also opportunities emanating from globalization. In sum, the Afro-Eurasian geography where Turkey is situated at the epicenter is an area where such opportunities and risks

interact in the most intensive way. Under these circumstances, a stable and constructive foreign policy to foster cooperation becomes more crucial than ever.

It is with this understanding that Turkey aims to pursue a dynamic and visionary foreign policy.

Turkey, in pursuance of this vision, works to expand the sphere of peace and prosperity in its region; generate stability and security; help establish an order that paves the way for prosperity, human development and lasting stability.

Turkey not only develops its bilateral and regional relations in its close neighborhood, but seeks to create a positive synergy on a much wider scale and thus aims at contributing to global peace, stability and security.

We are well aware of the necessity to foster the linkages between political stability, economic welfare and cultural harmony in order to attain sustainable global peace. To this end, Turkey is committed to further enhance political dialogue with all countries, search for new economic and commercial areas of cooperation and increase its humanitarian aid and assistance to the developing countries. As an emerging energy hub and a major transit country, Turkey plays an important role with respect to global energy security. Likewise, as an active member of the G-20 which gave a new impulse to the quest for global governance, Turkey is pursuing a more representative and democratic global system. Turkey also assumes an active role in endeavors to foster mutual respect and common values among different cultures and religions. In this regard the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, cosponsored by Turkey & Spain, represents the strongest response ever to the scenarios of the so-called "clashes of civilizations".

Turkey fully supports the Alliance of Civilizations and attaches particular importance to the implementation of its national plan and regional strategies. Turkey provides financial contribution to the projects as well. The Alliance of Civilizations Institute established in Istanbul is recognized by the Secretariat of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations as a partner institution.

The Annual Focal Points Meeting of the Alliance of Civilizations was held in Doha on 29-30 April 2014. The meeting evaluated the preparations for the 6th Global Forum to be held in Bali on 29-30 August 2014 and exchanged views with the Group of Friends.

**Dear Colleagues,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

When we look at the map, to the close vicinity of Turkey, and see Iran, the Caucasus and Central Asia, we will understand that these regions lie at the crossroads between East and West and South and North, and are situated at the intersection of Eurasia's major energy and transport corridors.

Turkey has deep-rooted historical and cultural ties with Iran and the countries in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Consequently, stability, peace and prosperity in these countries have a special importance for Turkey.

Briefly, Eurasia is the political and economic reality of the 21st Century and most probably will be the epicenter of global interactions in the coming centuries and we may locate Turkey, Iran, the Caucasus and the Central Asia at the heart of Eurasia.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Turkey's relations with Iran go back many centuries and I am not going to take your time by describing the reciprocal merits of our relations with each other.

When it comes to the South Caucasus and Central Asia, we know that, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new independent states, an era of intensive cooperation has begun.

Turkey attributes great importance to the strengthening of these countries' independence, preservation of their territorial integrity and realization of their economic potential.

The strategic importance of our region has increased with regional projects such as the Turkey-Iran gas pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipeline (operational since 2006), Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline (operational since 2007) and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway (its groundbreaking ceremony was done in 2007). And now, Trans Anatolian Gas Pipeline (TANAP) is en route to realization. Of course, bigger projects are on the line, either in transport or energy sectors.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Following these introductory remarks, let me focus on the economic and commercial side of our relations.



Turkey's bilateral trade volume with Iran was 14.5 billion US Dollars in 2013 despite the sanctions and the target for 2015 is to raise this amount to 30 billion US Dollars. The main component of the trade volume consists of Turkey's oil and gas imports from Iran. This picture is, of course, far from reflecting the real economic and commercial potential.

The main driving force behind the improving economic and commercial relations is the complementary economic resources of Turkey and Iran. The trade compatibility which is strongest in the energy sector, should also broaden to cover other fields, including investment and trade in non-oil goods.

Therefore, our common aim at the moment is to balance the trade and to diversify the product base to give a boost to the trade volume.

Turkish investments in Iran have reached 1,3 billion US Dollars and we encourage our Iranian brothers to increase their investments in Turkey. I am sure that Turkish investments in Iran will increase with important infrastructure projects and privatization processes.

Iran is a major supplier of oil and gas to Turkey and our exports to Iran are considerably smaller than our imports from Iran.

We are glad to host millions of Iranian tourists every year. An estimated 2.7 million Iranian tourists visited Turkey in 2010, compared with one million in 2008.

In sum, we see an expansion of economic relations with Iran and this is part of Turkey's initiative to expand trade relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors. Consequently, Turkish-Iranian diplomatic visits in recent years have been dominated by economic issues and have resulted in several economic agreements.



Lastly, during our Prime Minister's visit to Iran on 28-29 January 2014 we managed to sign important agreements as well. Joint Political Declaration establishing High Level Cooperation Council, Preferential Trade Agreement are important in this instance.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Now, let me introduce some figures on Turkey's economic and commercial relations with the Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan (CAA).

Turkey's total trade volume with the Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan (CAA) was about 13 billion USD in the year 2013. Turkey's economic relations with the CAA countries have developed continuously and significant progress has been achieved in the fields of trade, transport and communications.

Turkey offers CAA region an important partnership in terms of economic and business ties. Turkey's economy is the world's 17th largest and has experienced a great deal of growth recently, which makes Turkey an attractive player in the region.

Turkey's policies toward CAA region aim to facilitate the region's economic integration and energy relations with the adjacent regions, mainly with the West, especially regarding transport routes.

Turkey gives priority to the timely conclusion of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project, which is named as the "Iron Silk Road of the 21th Century". This project will connect Turkey with CAA region, as well as South Asia and the Far East through train-ferry lines on Caspian Sea, along Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

Turkey having the largest road transportation fleet in Europe, gives utmost importance to the CAA countries' connection to the European and world markets.

Our aim is to further increase and diversify the areas of cooperation with these countries through intensifying reciprocal visits, encouraging effective functioning of existing mechanisms, such as joint economic commissions, joint transportation commissions, business councils, as well as establishing new ones like high level strategic councils.

The loans given to countries in the region through Turkish EximBank have reached the level of around 1.8 billion USD. Besides, Turkey provided development assistance to these countries. Turkey has been very active in providing technical assistance through various projects and training programs in the region.

Turkey is also keen to develop collaboration with the third countries, on the basis

of mutual interest and benefit, with regard to trade, investment and technical assistance projects in the region.

Turkey's commitment to the development of the CAA countries has not been confined to the public sector. Turkish private sector also played an important role in Turkey's development cooperation with CAA. Total direct investments of Turkish companies in the region reached 8,9 billion USD in 2013. The total value of projects realized by Turkish contracting companies in the region has reached around 70,6 billion USD. Over 2000 Turkish companies are operating on the ground, employing thousands of people in the region.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Since our topic is to elaborate on the perspectives to expand our relations and regional cooperation, let me first clarify these issues.

We live together for thousands of years and enjoy close links that enable us to understand each other, respect our differences and find common solutions through our dialogue.

Complementarity between our economies and our geographical location is the asset in hand to forge new partnerships in our region and in the Caucasus and the Central Asian regions.

Priority areas can easily be defined as trade, energy and transport. In the energy sector Iran is a net exporter while Turkey is a net importer. Additionally both Turkey and Iran offer an unchallenged transit country position for the flow of the energy resources to the Western markets.

On the other hand, in means of transport, again Turkey and Iran offer opportunities in the East-West and North-South Corridors. More importantly, Turkey and Iran constitute the inalienable parts of the historical Silk Road.

The growing flow of trade, the need to diversify transport routes and alternatives brought the need to revitalize the Silk Road. In this instance, to form a land transport corridor from China on the east up to Europe on the west, gave Turkey, Iran and the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asian regions an important opportunity to boost not just economic and social welfare but to fortify political stability.

This equation should also be enriched on the North-South direction, again with our contribution.

I find the transport sector as a promising field offering tangible opportunities for all of us. After a brief description of the corridors, I would like to highlight two important points. A land transport corridor's main aim is to facilitate the trade flows, because its viability depends on the increasing activity. Therefore, from technical point of view, the missing links between the transport infrastructures of the regional countries should be eliminated and from commercial point of view the traffic should be fast, the processes transparent and uninterrupted.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

By technical point of view, I mean better infrastructure, proper land and maritime connections and a solid logistics base. In terms of our topic, I can easily give domestic and international railway projects, like the ones inside Iran, Baku-Tbilisi - Kars Railway or Silk Wind Project (China-Kazakhstan-Caspian Sea and beyond), and also north-south international transport corridor lying from India up to Russia and Turkey. Efforts to develop a better transport system in the Caspian can also be included.

I should also remind transport efforts within the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which is the only regional organization that gathers Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan and the Central Asian countries under the same roof. ECO member states are on the way to take the necessary measures for removing the obstacles hindering the train services along the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad railway route and increase the volume of freight transported via this route. I would like to elaborate more on this organization later on.

By commercial point of view, I mean improved customs, less paperwork and unnecessary payments and fast passage at the customs/border gates, and of course a more competitive trade environment.

Iran constitutes an important bridge for Turkish trucks travelling to the Central Asian countries.

Let me give some figures to enlighten the current situation and the potential it possesses for our future deliberations.

### Turkey-Iran Bilateral Transportation Figures

Turkish exports to Iran	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	Loaded	Unloaded	Loaded	Unloaded	Loaded	Unloaded	Loaded	Unloaded	Loaded	Unloaded
Turkey registered vehicles	25.710	161	38.065*	104	31.288	544	23.005	1.973	9.305*	671
Iran registered vehicles	22.501	6.355	25.965	6.017	34.575	11.661	34.575	11.458	10.749	2.480

Iran exports to Turkey	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	Loaded	Unloaded	Loaded	Unloaded	Loaded	Unloaded	Loaded	Unloaded	Loaded	Unloaded
Turkey registered vehicles	6.354	43.817	8.762	57.813	9.198	49.994	12.018	34.466	6.158	12.456
Iran registered vehicles	15.771	8.205	17.568	9.292	29.332	7.351	38.210	1.787	11.031	661

The figures indicate that thousands of trucks are on the way between Turkey and Iran carrying bulks of cargo.

Let me also introduce the numbers of Turkish trucks travelling through Iran to Azerbaijan and the Central Asian countries.

Gates	2010	2011	2012	2013	January – March '13	January – March '14	Change
Turkmenistan	24.761	27.607	22.866	26.717	5.981	8.035	34%
Uzbekistan	3.992	4.751	5.004	7.352	1.530	1.887	23%
Tajikistan	2.201	2.490	2.994	3.757	968	752	-22%
Afghanistan	3.146	3.421	2.461	2.434	479	688	44%
Azerbaijan	4.536	3.321	2.297	1.960	494	417	-16%
Kazakhstan	2.484	1.820	1.281	338	133	50	-62%
Kirghizstan	943	918	577	478	153	55	-64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.159</b>	<b>45.509</b>	<b>37.892</b>	<b>43.451</b>	<b>9.783</b>	<b>11.954</b>	<b>22%</b>

Source: UND

The figures indicate that 40 thousand trucks made their way through Iran in 2013.

In return the number of Iranian trucks that transited Turkey was over 32 thousand in 2013.

Year	Number of Trucks
2011	14.325
2012	25.966
2013	32.614
2014 (March)	4.155

Of course, these figures reflect the present situation and with the necessary actions to be jointly taken, I am sure we may increase these numbers easily. However, as I mentioned before, we should think on how we can facilitate the trade flow not just between Turkey and Iran but among the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

This should include steps to overcome bilateral matters that hinder the further development of the sector, such as fastening customs processes, eliminating long waiting hours at the gates, introducing single window mechanism at the gates, revising, if possible getting rid of, charges including fuel price difference charge, introducing gas tank quotas. These steps should be synchronized with our efforts to improve the infrastructure through building up new connections or rehabilitating the existing ones.

Definitely, the same formula might be introduced into our efforts towards the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Turkey and Iran should facilitate each other's access into the markets. The best way to do so, is to conduct joint technical studies/meetings to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, to devise remedies and to propose recommendations.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

After deliberating on priority sectors of cooperation, let me come to another important area of cooperation. This is cooperation on multilateral platforms.

As I named before, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the only regional organization, is an important multilateral asset to develop new perspectives, i.e. to further develop regional cooperation. To do so, we should make ECO function properly. I know all efforts exerted by us, I mean Turkey and Iran, and I am also aware of the fact that the member states should place the ownership issue high on their agenda.

I welcome all efforts to further strengthen ECO's role in advancing cooperation and understanding between our countries, in our region and beyond. However, I know that we can do better and the signs of our willingness to do so are well reflected at the recommendations of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG).

These recommendations endorsed by the Council deserve more attention from the



Member States and we should coordinate our efforts to finalize the roadmap for the implementation of their recommendations by August 2014.

The decision of the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Regional Planning Council, recently held in Tehran on 23-26 February 2014 empowered the Secretariat to take the initiative so as to ensure the finalization and approval of the roadmap by the CPR by August 2014 with a view to its earliest implementation.

I must express our satisfaction concerning the Secretariat's "Proposed Outline for Implementation of the Recommendations by 3rd ECO Eminent Persons Group (EPG)".

As identified by the EPG Report, main impediments and shortcomings are as follows:

- i. Lack of efficient decision-making mechanism,
- ii. Minimal participation by Member States in the activities of the Organization.
- iii. Non-implementation of the decisions adopted by the decision-making bodies.
- iv. Lack of financial resources and insufficient budget.
- v. Inadequate capacity of the Secretariat due to existing recruitment measures.

Turkey supports all recommendations made by the EPG to overcome these impediments and agrees, in broad lines, with actions proposed by the Secretariat.

We are in the process of preparing our observations concerning the Secretariat's outline.

We know that by focusing on its priority areas of trade, transport, communications

and energy and by realizing concrete projects in these areas in the interests of all member countries, ECO may provide to all of us new perspectives of regional cooperation.

Moreover, in line with the decision taken at the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers and stated in the Tehran Communique, the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) should become operational, as soon as possible, among the Parties which have submitted their Lists.

I learned that there has been a breakthrough at the 5<sup>th</sup> ECOTA Council meeting held in Islamabad on 2-3 April 2014. The method of tariff reductions has been finally decided by the relevant parties following a period of discussions that lasted for the 3 to 4 years.

By fortifying ECO we may also find the opportunity to forge partnerships with other regional organizations. In this instance, I may easily cite Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, CICA.

In fact, since CICA and ECO participate in each other's' meetings and enjoy institutional relations, we may take steps to deepen that cooperation. CICA is a multi-national forum for enhancing cooperation towards promoting peace, security and stability in Asia.

In means of population and area, CICA covers over 90 percent of Asia and tries to promote security for over 4 billion people.

Within the framework of CICA, confidence building measures (CBM) are implemented under five dimensions, namely, Economic, Environment, Human, New Challenges and Threats, Military and Political Dimensions. Member States act as coordinator or co-coordinators in implementing these CBMs.

Therefore, the economic dimension of CICA and deepening regional cooperation under this dimension still remains untapped. I believe that, through ECO-CICA cooperation, we might have the chance to elaborate the opportunities to improve economic security in our region and beyond.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The final point I would like to introduce is about establishing trilateral mechanisms.

As I noted before, Turkey is fully committed to continuing to develop good-neighborly relations based on mutual respect with all its neighbors in the South Caucasus. Maintaining regional stability and security, and promoting regional and

intra-regional political and economic cooperation are among the main parameters of our policy towards the region.

With this in mind, Turkey has developed massive regional cooperation projects with its partners so far such as TR-Iran oil pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) Oil Pipeline; Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) Natural Gas Pipeline; Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway project. And now, Trans Anatolian Gas Pipeline (TANAP) is en route to realization.

Besides regional projects, Turkey has launched the process of trilateral meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs among Turkey-Azerbaijan-Iran, Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia and now Turkey-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan.

We attach special importance to the existence and continuation of the mechanism of trilateral meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Iran, Azerbaijan and Turkey. This trilateral mechanism is primarily aiming at economic development but it also provides a positive atmosphere for political dialogue and helps improve confidence among these countries.

The first and second trilateral meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Iran took place on 16 April 2011 in Urumiyah (Iran) and on 7 March 2012 in Nakhichevan (Azerbaijan) respectively. The third one was held more recently on 14 March 2014 in Van, in which a sectorial action plan consisting of detailed common projects in various sectors has been approved.

I see the process of trilateral meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs among Turkey-Azerbaijan-Iran not just an important opportunity but a successful example of introducing new perspectives of cooperation that might be multiplied through our common efforts.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The topic may make us to go on, and I am aware that there still many issues awaiting but I would like to stop my presentation here and thank you all for your patience.





## H.E Alireza Bikdeli Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkey

Iran and Turkey for centuries have been friendly and with good neighborly relations. In recent years this relationship has witnessed positive developments and moving towards a constructive interaction.

This way also provides the mutual interest in the field of bilateral relations and regional convergence in the Islamic world.

Studies and research experts of Turkish affairs in Iran have identified three discourses:

**1- Contrast discourse:** This discourse have based on the historical evidence, legal and sectarian conflict. It has been exacerbated existing cracks and eliminates opportunities for cooperation. This discourse is supported by the countries who do not want the relations of Iran and Turkey would be improved.

**2- Competition discourse:** This discourse is based on the highest gain for one side and prevents the formation of strategic ties.

**3- Interaction discourse:** This discourse is emphasized on the cultural partnerships,

public relations and Benefit from the huge current potential of the two nations. This discourse is also realized a strategic cooperation.

For example, the export of Iranian natural gas to Turkey and the establishment of Turkish-Iranian High Level Strategic Cooperation Council are the results of this discourse. In the last decade the two countries dignitaries has been focused on the axis of the increasing support given to each other.

Central Asia and the Caucasus region can be evaluated by the three mentioned above. Each discourse towards this region has its own unique perspective.

In the interaction discourse, Central Asia and the Caucasus for Iran and Turkey are and will be the main important opportunity to improve their relations. Iran is the gateway for Turkey to enter this area in the field of transit of energy and transportation and Turkey is a gateway to Europe for Iran, especially for energy and transportation.

Cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey with regional countries will bring convergence. Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), D-8 and Islamic Cooperation Conference (OIC) provide the necessary infrastructure for this convergence.

At last, supporting the discourse of the interaction between Iran and Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus regions would contribute significantly to solve the problems and increase peace and stability in the regions.

