

RESPONSE TO THE STUDY DAY OF IRES

Rabat, on January 20, 2011

Turkey exhibits a dynamism that holds the interest of international community. This dynamism is appreciated around the Arab Muslim world, emerging countries and African states but also by the Western world that began to better analyze the new Turkish strategy.

The country's political stability, economic performance, its proactive foreign policy and the membership process to European Union are the main keys to the Turkish dynamism.

Political stability

Since the 2002 parliamentary elections, Turkey has a stable government which has implemented economic reforms and policies necessary for the country's social and economic development and for its European integration.

This continuity has allowed the government to review several times the constitution. The last revision was the referendum conducted on September 12th, 2010, the implementation of new organic laws (criminal code, civil code, etc.), the acceleration of the democratization process, strengthening individual and fundamental rights, and spectacular development of civil society (60,000 in 2005, the number of associations has exceeded 85,000 in July 2010).

Economic performance

We must remember that Turkey has experienced a severe financial and economic crisis in 2001, and thus several structural reforms in several areas of finance, economy and justice were introduced in 2001 and continued until today. The main articles of these reforms can be illustrated in the central independent bank, autonomous institutions to supervise banks, markets and different sectors of the economy, a more flexible job market, a legal system which integrates the international mechanisms of law and arbitration, taxes favoring investments, and a privatization program.

We should not forget however some other important social reforms. The Ministry of Housing (TOKI) launched large programs across the country, in cooperation with the private sector to satisfy the needs of the middle and lower classes with regards to housing. This construction effort also propelled the construction and public works sector and has therefore created many jobs.

In 2002, the national budget for education has outpaced the budget dedicate for national defense. Such fact is the in the history of the Republic. The literacy rate has exceeded 88%. The R & D of companies and universities have been supported with loans, donations and tax cuts. The number of universities has reached 141. These efforts in teaching and education have facilitated the creation of employment in industry and service sectors.

With these reforms, but also due the process of accession to the EU, which I will discuss in a moment, Turkey has managed to increase its production, improve its productivity, boost its exports and especially attract foreign investment.

Proactive foreign policy

Foreign policy is also a vital key not only in the political dynamism, but also in the economic dynamism of Turkey. There are three factors that may explain the growing influence of Turkish foreign politics.

First, Turkey draws all its influence from the country's search and eagerness for stability. The *modus operandi* of Turkey lies in its search for stability, balance, peace and prosperity. Besides, Turkey always wanted to extend a stabilizing influence in its region.

For this reason Turkey currently plays a constructive role in almost all conflicts and disagreements in its region, whether in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Black Sea or the Mediterranean. This role is actually the pursuit of stability. We should remember here that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey, declared his national objective as "peace in the country, peace in the world." therefore, the *zero-problems-with-neighbors* policy of the government is, on the one hand, a continuity of the country's historical will to establish peace and stability, and on the other hand, represents a new momentum with its new initiatives.

In its bilateral relations, Turkey has started a rapprochement with Greece, Syria and Iraq, intensified relations with Russia, Iran and other Arab countries, including Morocco, and engaged in broader increase of activity targeting Africa and Latin America. Turkey has set up cooperation and consultation mechanisms with several neighboring countries. It continues a policy of mutual abolition of visas with Russia, countries of Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa including Yemen as the last example. Turkey decided to open 18 new embassies in Sub-Saharan Africa (there are 12 existing embassies) and two in Latin America (there are five existing embassies) and has increased its development technical assistance (one billion dollars in 2009).

Second, the geographical position of Turkey requires a multidimensional foreign policy. This is a country located between Europe, Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Asia. As with any country, as Morocco, Turkey must also meet the requirements of its geographical position.

In addition to its geography, we should add the new global balances of the 21st century. The world is no longer in a bipolar system. There are various possibilities for cooperation between countries and organizations. Turkey pursues a foreign policy that meets this new given. Accordingly, the sayings that Turkey change of ideological axis and is about to leave the Western world are not accurate. It is the world that changed and each nation must take such change into consideration.

In addition to being a member of NATO, OECD and other European organizations, with the exception of the European Union (EU) which it hopes to join and with which it has a customs union, Turkey is also member of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the G-20, the Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) (Turkey, countries of Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan).

In addition, 70% of the world's known energy reserves are located near or transit Turkey. A growing share of energy transport in the Middle East and the Caspian region targeting Europe and the rest of the West has to pass through Turkey.

- Turkey has sought in recent years to expand and enrich its regional and multilateral initiatives. The Turkish-Brazilian initiative for the Iran's nuclear program; or the intermediary role Turkey played between Syria and Israel until the Israeli military intervention in Gaza are the best known of our initiatives. But still there are others:
- Turkey co-sponsored the project of Civilizations Alliance with Spain.
- Assuming the presidency of the Cooperation Process of Countries of South East Europe, Turkey has contributed to improving the relations between Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina thanks to its two tripartite initiatives, Turkey, Croatia and Bosnia- Turkey- Serbia and Bosnia.
- Turkey has initiated the process of Iraq's neighboring countries who contributed significantly to improving the situation of this country and relations with its neighbors.
- Turkey was an active non-permanent member of UN Security Council in 2009 and 2010, particularly with regards to 'supporting the developing countries, especially the most poor countries', 'promotion of fundamental rights and Woman and Child rights', 'energy security', 'fight against terrorism and organized crime', and 'Afghanistan'.
- It initiated the process of Ankara to promote cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In their last meeting in Turkey, the presidents of both countries have agreed to open a liaison office to facilitate dialogue between Taliban and Kabul.
- Turkey is currently the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the European Council and is seeking to attract attention to cultural dialogue, the fight against racism and xenophobia and the fight against terrorism.
- Turkey has actively worked within the Security Council on problems encountered by the less developed countries. It began to open up to sub-Saharan Africa countries. Therefore, it has every intention to deepen its cooperation with the least developed countries. In this context, the 4th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries will be held from May 9th to May 13th, 2011 in Istanbul.
- It wants to chair the OIC in 2014 and does not want to wait 50 years to return to the Security Council.
- Turkey is a candidate for the post of the Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
- Turkey also wants to host the G-20 Summit in 2014. We consider that the G-20 is an essential forum for global governance. It reflects the new balance of power for the 21st century, while maintaining its informal and flexible characteristics as well as its current constitution. The G-20 can and should become a more effective mechanism not only to provide answers in times of crisis but also to provide solutions for global problems.

It initiated the Forum for Cooperation with African countries and Forum for Cooperation with the Arab countries. We welcome the presence of Morocco in these two Forums. Morocco will host this year the Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Turkey-Arab Forum.

The membership process to enter the European Union

A third factor of foreign Turkish policy and which has greatly contributed to the dynamism of Turkey is the process of EU membership. This process is a catalyst for political, economic and social transformation of Turkey and a major asset to our foreign policy. The accession of our country to the European Union shall continue to be a strategic priority for the Turkish foreign policy.

Turkey has developed a dense network of relations with the European Union starting with the signing of the Association Agreement in 1963 which already explicitly evoked the prospect of European membership.

In 1996, the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU, the most advanced form of integration with respect to trade relations, was implemented; all customs and other barriers on the industrial trade were lifted, while tariffs of EU Common Customs were applied in trade with third countries. In other words, the free movement of industrial products between Turkey and the EU was established in 1996. The EU countries are the first economic and trading partner of Turkey (46% of our Exports to EU countries and 55% of our country imports from EU countries).

The Helsinki European Council in 1999 declared Turkey as a “candidate country”. Since 2000, ambitious reforms have been implemented to achieve European standards. A General Secretariat for European Affairs was established in 2000. The Brussels European Council in 2004 decided to start membership negotiations.

Membership negotiations have actually started on October 3rd, 2005. The Screening of 33 out of 35 chapters of the EU acquis was completed in October 2006 (the last two chapters are negotiated at the end of the process). Of the 33 chapters, 13 chapters have been opened, and one of which was (temporarily) closed.

However, few countries are opposed or reluctant to the entry of Turkey into the EU. Nevertheless, our application is registered in EU legislation (the EU acquis). For Turkey, there is no way to waive this right and it is impossible for us to accept to change the rules of the game.

We will continue negotiations. We hope that the EU will solve its internal problems and accelerate the process of negotiations. Conversely, at the end of these negotiations, each party is free to take whatever decision that is most suitable for it.

Negotiations on eight chapters are suspended and no Chapter may be closed due to a EU decision concerning the Cyprus issue. France is blocking five chapters (one chapter already suspended and one of two chapters is not negotiated). In addition, five other chapters are blocked due to various political considerations (The Greek Cypriot, Germany and Austria)

These obstacles make, of course, our lives more difficult, but we will continue our membership process by focusing on chapters that can be opened to meet the criteria of openness and Chapters already open to meet the criteria for closure. We have our priorities which are listed in our National Program for the adoption of the EU acquis, our 2007-2013 Legislative Harmonization Program and our 2010-2011 Action Plan.

Moreover, in many areas, from relations trade to foreign and security policies, Turkey is consistent with the EU objectives and policies. Thus, it is already integrated with the EU.

It's a natural aspiration to want to join the EU which includes most countries of European continent, with which Turkey shares common values. There is no doubt that Turkey is an actor, not to say a European power. Barriers created by certain member countries are artificial in nature and Turkey will join the European Union when fulfilling the membership criteria. This will be as soon as the European Union solves its current problems, or why not, we can help resolve its problems.

Turkey intends to pursue the process of reforms not only to meet the membership criteria, but because Turkey is deeply convinced that such reforms are before anything in the interest of the Turkish people. The EU membership is not a simple participation in an international organization but a modern social, democratic and secular project and, indeed, a strategic choice.

Relations between Turkey and Morocco

I would like to conclude by highlighting some important aspects of relations between Turkey and Morocco.

Relations between Turkey and Morocco, which goes back to the early 16th century, are old, strong and based on good friendship. Our Bilateral relationships have known a remarkable burst for almost a decade.

Morocco and Turkey, two countries that lie on opposite extremes of the Mediterranean, have converging positions on the international issues. Our countries cooperate even more than before at the level of multilateral bodies.

The Free Trade Agreement, which has been in force since January 1st, 2006, has given a boost to our business relationships. The trade volume between Turkey and Morocco, which had quadrupled in recent years to transcend a billion dollars in 2008, will increase even more while erasing the negative effects of the world crisis (934 million dollars in January-November 2010 {566 million dollars of Turkish exports, 368 million dollars of Moroccan exports}). However, despite our free trade agreement, we have unfortunately not been able to achieve product diversification in this trade exchange. Turkey mainly sells iron and steel and purchase mainly phosphate.

Investments by Turkish companies in Morocco have reached \$ 250 million, especially in the sectors of furniture, plastic, kitchen equipment, fire extinguishers.

The value of work achieved by the Turkish companies in Morocco will achieve with the current work, four billion dollars. Several Turkish companies participated and continue to participate in Morocco's efforts to construct highways and urban infrastructure. The Abattoir

of Casablanca is operated by a Turkish company; another Turkish company will build the OCP phosphorus pipeline. Another great company participates in the first and third phase of the Casablanca tram.

The Renault plant under construction in Tangier, which will be directed by the newly appointed Turkish Director, may also be an opportunity for new cooperation. The Renault in Turkey and other Turkish companies working with it already participates in the formation of Moroccan labor.

Hundreds of young Turkish and Moroccan studying in universities in both countries, daily scheduled flights between Casablanca and Istanbul, thousands of Turkish and Moroccan tourists visiting the two countries each year are the other key elements that proves how relations between Turkey and Morocco is well developed. Oh, yeah, let's not forget the Turkish soap operas broadcast by Moroccan Television!

Turkey and Morocco are two countries with rich cultures. They are both Mediterranean countries. They both have interests in several continents, and have special and specific relationships with the European Union. They both have strategic visions for peace, stability and the development of their regions.

Therefore, there exist new opportunities for cooperation in the economic field and the vast politic field between the two countries. The two countries can explore these opportunities and build new cooperation and new partnerships between them, on the one hand, and between them and other countries and actors, on the other hand.

Given the difference in the level of development between the two economies, we cannot immediately think of achieving balance in trade exchange. However, in my opinion, we can extend more efforts on partnerships and attract direct investment to Morocco. For instance, we can establish partnerships in different sectors such as energy, food processing and construction.

In fact, we can think of a Turkish-Moroccan cooperation in Africa. Why don't we extend effort for a Mediterranean cooperation in the field of defense industry, exchange of experience concerning relations with the EU and the membership process and advanced status.

We shall work with our Moroccan friends to create a new synergy between our countries, for we would like to further develop our bilateral relationships as well as promote peace, stability, prosperity and development in our regions.