
Preface: NATO and Turkey – Meeting the Challenge of Change

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When Turkey joined NATO on 18 February 1952, Winston Churchill and Harry Truman were still in office. NATO was a three year-old alliance, with just 12 members. And it would be another three years before the Warsaw Pact was formed.

Over the next six decades, NATO would prove a vital instrument in the joint endeavour of the transatlantic Allies to promote freedom. And Turkey would prove itself as a key Ally- benefiting from the security provided by NATO, but also making major political and military contributions to the Alliance's effectiveness.

Strong solidarity among its member nations has characterised NATO from its very beginning. It has underpinned the Alliance's ability to adapt to changing circumstances, which has been vital to its continuing success.

NATO first prevented the Cold War from getting hot. After the Cold War ended, and when some felt NATO had lost its reason to exist, the Alliance

turned into an engine for change. It reached out to countries all over Europe and Central Asia, helped former foes to become friends, opened its door to new members, and took on a significant role in managing security crises.

NATO's very first operation, ANCHOR GUARD, was in August 1990. It was a deployment of the NATO Airborne early Warning aircraft to Konya, in Turkey, to monitor Iraq's actions following its invasion of Kuwait and to provide coverage of south-eastern Turkey in case of an Iraqi attack. A few months later, in response to a Turkish request for assistance, NATO deployed the air elements of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force and air defence assets to Turkey, to deter any possible threat from Iraq.

When Yugoslavia broke apart in the 1990s, NATO rallied a unique, multinational effort that was instrumental in bringing peace and stability to the Balkans. After "9/11", NATO invoked its Article 5 collective defence clause, demonstrating in the clearest possible terms that the attack

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on the United States was considered an attack on all the Allies.

Last year, when the United Nations Security Council appealed to the international community to protect the people of Libya, it was NATO who answered that call. And once again, that was the right thing to do.

The Alliance launched Operation Unified Protector in just six days and completed it successfully within seven months. Partner countries, including many from the region, contributed both politically and operationally. Together, we saved countless lives and prevented a massacre. This is first and foremost a victory for the Libyan people. But we helped pave the way for their journey from dictatorship to democracy.

Many of our 28 NATO Allies have made their own transition to democracy. And we stand ready to share that experience, if needed and if requested, for instance to support the reform of Libya's security and defence sectors.

Dramatic changes continue to sweep through the Middle East and North Africa. As a modern and vibrant democracy, Turkey can play a crucial role across the region. I am confident that Turkey's insights and influence will also help NATO to deepen its cooperation with interested countries.

While people in several of the countries to our south are enjoying new-

found political freedom, many people across our own NATO member nations continue to be concerned about the current economic crisis. And economy and security are closely interlinked, as high debts and growing deficits can make nations vulnerable.

With budget cuts across the board in many of our nations, we may not have more money to spend on defence. So we must all spend smarter. We can do this by investing on priority projects and focusing on our strengths, and by working together in multinational programmes, to give more Allies access to critical capabilities that they cannot afford on their own. We need to get the very best effect out of every Dollar, Euro or Lira that we spend.

NATO has already made tough reform decisions. For example, we have streamlined our staff at our Brussels headquarters. We have rationalised our agency structure. And we have modernised our military command structure. The NATO decision to locate our land command headquarters in Izmir clearly shows the importance of Turkey for NATO- and of NATO for Turkey.

Turkey has consistently made many other major contributions to our Alliance. This includes deploying Turkish forces on NATO- led operations, such as to ISAF in Afghanistan, KFOR in Kosovo, as well as to Operation Active Endeavour,

our counter-terrorist maritime operation in the Mediterranean. It includes hosting the NATO Centre of Excellence on Defence against Terrorism in Ankara. And it includes agreeing to host a radar that will form an important element of NATO's missile defence system.

The 60th anniversary of Turkey's membership in NATO is an opportunity to reflect on our relationship and to recognise the considerable benefits that Turkey gains from its membership of NATO, and that NATO draws from Turkey's active participation in the Alliance.

This important anniversary is also an opportunity to better connect our security with our citizens. We need to explain that because NATO provides security, they can go about their daily lives free from fear. We need to explain that in today's world, the risks and challenges we face- such as terrorism,

proliferation, and piracy- go beyond borders and no country can face them effectively on its own. And we need to make sure that NATO does not become taken for granted.

For 60 years, Turkey has been an invaluable member of NATO. As I look to the future, I see an increasingly important role for Turkey in the Alliance. Due to its size and location, as well as its strong historical, cultural and economic ties to its neighbours and beyond, Turkey can play a leading role in NATO's adaptation to the new strategic environment.

Our NATO Summit in Chicago this May will be the next step in that continuing process of adaptation. It will demonstrate that, after 60 years of unchanging commitment and solidarity, NATO and Turkey are still ready, and able, to meet the challenge of change.