

# WHY IS A NON-PERMANENT SEAT FOR TURKEY AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL IMPORTANT FOR HERSELF, HER REGION AND THE WORLD?

*In terms of foreign policy planning, this candidacy is a well-thought out decision, taken in firm conviction that representation in the Security Council is important for Turkey, for her region and for the world at large. As a member of the Security Council, we will be looking forward to working with all members of the international community to help replace despair with hope, poverty with prosperity, inequality with justice and violence with peace.*

**Abdullah Gül\***



\* President of the Republic of Turkey

Turkey is running for one of the two non-permanent seats allocated to the Western European and Other States Group at the United Nations Security Council for the term 2009-2010 in the elections which will be held during the 63rd session of the General Assembly in October 2008. In terms of foreign policy planning, this candidacy is a well-thought out decision, taken in firm conviction that representation in the Security Council is important for Turkey, for her region and for the world at large. In this article, I will explain the reasons why we believe we can make a difference at these three levels by being a member of the Security Council.

The United Nations is the only genuinely universal organization encompassing almost every state in the world, where all the challenges facing the international community today can best be addressed, with the necessary source of legitimacy for international action. Within the United Nations system, the Security Council is the primary organ for dealing with vital issues of peace and security, with the authority to make decisions binding on all the member states. The last time Turkey served in this important body of the United Nations was 1961, on a half term shared with Poland. This was almost half a century ago. As a founding member of this world organization, upholding the goals and principles enshrined in its Charter since the outset and participating in a wide spectrum of its activities in a dedicated manner, Turkey believes it is time for her to assume greater responsibility at the United Nations.

Turkey's membership in the Security Council will be meaningful not only for herself, but also for her wider region. The vast majority of the regional problems that are on the agenda of the Council are taking place in our immediate environment, the scene of important tensions and transformation, from the Balkans through the Caucasus and the Middle East to Central Asia. Restoration of stability in our region being our priority, we are exerting every effort to make a constructive contribution to the resolution of all those conflicts that affect Turkey, even though we are not part of any of them. As a member of the Security Council, we will be ready to offer many possibilities provided by Turkey's strategic disposition, accumulated knowledge and insight of, as well as historical and cultural ties with these regions, to the service of the Council in the deliberations and decisions regarding these problems.

Turkey's membership in the Security Council will have implications reaching further than her wider region as well. With Turkey's active interest in and influence on the global issues facing the whole international community, from terrorism through poverty to extremism, the Council will be better equipped to deal with the numerous challenges of our era.

Having suffered first hand from the bitter consequences of terrorism, Turkey had been calling for enhanced international cooperation against this threat, long before

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the international coalition against terrorism was established after the 9/11 attacks. We have always argued that terrorism cannot be identified with any religion, nation or ethnicity; it has to be condemned in all its forms and manifestations; and it is a crime against humanity regardless of its motivation, pretext or cause. We regard the United Nations as the main forum for forging international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and urge the international community to conclude the draft Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism as soon as possible. As a member of the Security Council, we believe our experience in the fight against terrorism can help expedite the work of the Council in this field.

Considering that there can be no security without a firm commitment to broad and inclusive process of human development, Turkey aims at putting particular emphasis on development issues in the United Nations. Believing that it is the common responsibility of the international community to assist to the best of our abilities developing countries to overcome the difficulties they face, Turkey is rapidly emerging as a donor country disbursing significant development, technical and humanitarian assistance in recent years. The total amount of Turkish in-cash and in-kind humanitarian assistance has exceeded 250 million U.S. dollars since 2005. The total official and private sector development assistance provided by Turkey in 2007 is estimated to be around 2.5 billion U.S. dollars. In this context, Turkey pays special attention to the needs of the Least Developed Countries. The Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries hosted in Istanbul in July last year is a concrete expression of our desire and determination to raise the awareness of the international community regarding the development related concerns of these countries.

Energy is another issue that is related to the development agenda. Recurrent energy crises that have taken place in our region in recent years have demonstrated the need for ensuring energy security through diversification of supply sources and routes. Turkey is geographically located in close proximity to 71.8 percent of the world's proven gas deposits and 72.7 percent of oil reserves, in particular those in the Middle East and the Caspian basin, forming a natural energy bridge between the source countries and consumer markets. Major pipeline projects in operation or under construction are enhancing Turkey's role as an important transit country on the Eurasia energy axis and as an energy hub in the region. As a member of the Security Council, Turkey will be in a position to highlight the intrinsic ties between energy and development, placing the need for energy security higher on the United Nations agenda.

In our globalizing world, we unfortunately witness increasing extremism, intolerance and polarization between different cultures and religions. Here lies a potential to create new conflicts. The need for a true dialogue, greater inter-cultural understanding and mutual respect is high on the agenda of the international community. The rich perspectives Turkey has cultivated by virtue of being part

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of different geographies and providing home to various cultures throughout her history enable her to act as an interface that promotes dialogue and harmony among different cultures and religions. It was with this understanding that Turkey co-sponsored, along with Spain, the Alliance of Civilizations Initiative, which has now become a project of the United Nations. If elected to the Security Council, Turkey will endeavor to bring this perspective into the work of the Council.

Reform of the United Nations is yet another issue on the agenda of the international community. As the most appropriate place to find common solutions to our global problems, it is incumbent on the Member States to furnish the Organization with the necessary means and structures, so that it can live up to this task. As a supporter of effective multilateralism, Turkey would like to see the role and capacity of the United Nations enhanced in dealing with the challenges of our times. Being a member of the Security Council, Turkey will further her contribution to ongoing efforts aimed at rendering the United Nations stronger and more effective in serving the international community.

The account of the reasons why Turkey can make a difference for the world by being a member of the Security Council can be further expanded, to include her contribution to international peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, her leading role in fighting drug trafficking and organized crime as well as her membership and experience in other international organizations. In view of all these factors, we are convinced that the argument for Turkey in the Security Council is strong and that we are well qualified to serve in this body of the United Nations after an interval of nearly half a century. As a member of the Security Council, we will be looking forward to working with all members of the international community to help replace despair with hope, poverty with prosperity, inequality with justice, and violence with peace.