



# TURKEY AND THE BOMB

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Transcript by Way With Words

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**SINAN ÜLGEN:** This really forms one of the fundamental features of Turkey's relationship with Iran. The fact that there has been uninterrupted peace since 1659. That doesn't mean that the relationship is easy, far from it, but it is a very complex relationship. So, when Turks look at Iran, and especially from the policymakers' perspective, we don't perceive a threat from Iran. From the Turkish policymakers' perspective the threat of a nuclear Iran is not so much a threat that a nuclear Iran would threaten Turkey but it's really about the regional consequences of a nuclear Iran.

Yes, it is about this domino effect of proliferation but it's also about seeing a more assertive Iran, possibly more aggressive in its foreign policy. And it's certainly about the threat of a military confrontation in the Middle East, and we certainly see signs of that nowadays between Israel and Iran. That is one aspect of how Turkey views its relationship with Iran.

The second aspect that has tended to shape, influence Turkish diplomacy is Turkey's own position, not so much with regard to non-proliferation but with regard to peaceful use of nuclear energy. Because in the middle of this past decade, when the Bush administration started to speak about the fact that Iran should in no way have the right to enrichment, that sent alarm bells to Turkish policymakers. The Turkish position is that Iran does have the right of enrichment, which is a right that stems from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, provided that Iran complies with its commitments from the NPT. But to argue that in no case, because Iran would have no right to enrichment, has tended to be an uneasy message for Turkish policymakers because, at the end of the day, Turkey is also a state that is only now starting its nuclear programme and it does not want to see the rights enshrined in the NPT - one of them being the right to peaceful nuclear energy - being impeded or being constrained. Of course this is not an absolute right, it comes with commitments, but nonetheless the position of the US administration in the middle of the past decade was certainly an element.

What Turkey tried to do with regard to Iran is that it first and foremost, and almost exclusively to this day, prioritises the diplomatic track. That is the reason why Turkey did take the initiative last year to conclude a deal, which is on the Tehran Research Reactor, which, today, when we look back - and I'm sure Pierre will talk more about it or even we know - at what are the elements that today are shaping the negotiations between P5+1 and Iran, one of the core components is essentially confidence-building. There was an attempt, at the time, by the Turks and the Brazilians to do exactly that: to achieve a deal, not to really address the core issue of Iran's nuclear programme, far from it, but to have confidence-building measures. That is how it was portrayed, but the politics around it, and especially the timing - at a time when the UN Security Council was getting ready to impose a new set of sanctions against Iran - was certainly not very congruous. But nonetheless that's Turkey's position; Turkey does not want to see this to be or to open the spectre [inaudible] towards military conflict in the Middle East, which would certainly be very destabilising for the whole region.

Turkey does put emphasis on the diplomatic track, with the fact Turkey has now drawn the conclusions, or some conclusions, from its past initiative, where it wanted to act as a mediator between the international community and Iran. That, in essence, is how we should read the Tehran Research Reactor deal. Today, Turkey's position has changed; it's not willing any more to act as a mediator but more as a facilitator, to facilitate the dialogue between the Iranian leadership and the international community. So it is not an accident that the renewed talks did take place in Istanbul and again, it is not a coincidence that just before the talks the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan visited Iran. He is the only NATO leader to talk to the Iranian Foreign Minister, the Iranian President, and the Iranian Supreme Leader within a day, and to talk about the nuclear programme of Iran. It is this role of facilitator that, going forward, Turkey will, I think, continue to espouse.

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The second fundamental reason, apart from how Turkey views Iran, which I've tried to summarise very briefly - although it's a very complex relationship, a relationship which lately has also turned sour, in fact, because the two countries found themselves at opposing ends on Syria. The Turkish leadership has become very hostile to the regime in Syria and Damascus, asking openly for regime change, and even being an outlier in the international community for continuing to ask for regime change at a time when the international community has put itself behind the Annan Plan. And Iran being in a very different position of continuing to give support to Assad, for a number of different reasons. The second reason why the relationship turned sour is the missile defence issue, which I'll come back to in a second.

But the reasons why I think Turkey will not proliferate, apart from the threat perception with regard to Iran, is that by and large Turkey feels secure as a member of NATO. So the extent of deterrence that NATO has granted is an element that enters, obviously, Turkish calculations about what to do with regard to Iran, and how to respond to a potential Iranian nuclear threat. Turkey's a NATO country; it's one of the five where US forward-deployed technical nuclear weapons are still in place and unlike some of the other countries in Western Europe that have actively lobbied for the removal of those technical nuclear weapons, Turkey's position is, on the contrary, there is no willingness on the Turkish side for a unilateral removal of those weapons.

The understanding is that these weapons do actually serve a purpose of, firstly, deterrence, but secondly, to solidify US commitment to the security of Europe, the political commitment. So they have a rich political... It's their embodiment of the political commitment of the US. So the Turkish position is if there is a consensus within NATO for the removal of those weapons Turkey will not block that consensus. But Turkey's certainly not as ambitious as some of the other countries, like Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, for the removal of those weapons. I think we will see signs of that at the Chicago Summit.

The third element of why Turkey feels comfortable and will not proliferate is the missile defence issue. Turkey did take a very significant step last year at the Lisbon Summit by, firstly, agreeing for the missile defence as a NATO initiative. But secondly, and more importantly, accepting to host the early warning radar system of missile defence on Turkish territory. And here there is somewhat of a dilemma for Turkish policymakers, which still remains, in a way, unaddressed. The dilemma is the following: the Turkish government has, on occasion, especially in the NATO meetings regarding missile defence, insisted on the fact that the Alliance should not view Syria and Iran as threats. It has engaged - some of you within NATO would know this very well - in enormous diplomatic fights to eliminate references to those countries, within NATO documents, as threats. And by and large this has succeeded, so when we look at the outcome of the Lisbon Summit last year there were no direct references to those countries, or there was no naming names in the documents.

That being said, the Turkish government also accepted to host the missile defence on the Turkish territory. So public opinion in Turkey is in a quandary because obviously the radar system and missile defence system as a whole is going to be set up defensively, some argue, but nonetheless against the countries that have the capability of ballistic missiles. On the one hand the Turkish government is arguing that Syria and Iran is not a threat; on the other hand, it is accepting to host a very significant pillar of the missile defence on Turkish territory. And this is a dilemma that, so far, it's been difficult for the Turkish government to explain. But nonetheless we are now a fundamental part, core part of missile defence, and that's certainly a linkage that tends to give greater assurance to Turkey about NATO's ability to protect her.

My final point is that Turkey has a very strong record of non-proliferation. It is party to all the international treaties, including the additional protocol, in all the areas, in the nuclear area, in the

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chemical weapons, biological weapons convention, all of them. Turkey has even taken part, as an active player, in the outreach initiatives of some of these instruments, the Proliferation Security Initiative, for instance. There is absolutely no reason why Turkey should put at risk this very good track record of non-proliferation.

My answer to this question has essentially been no. Would Turkey proliferate under the conditions of a nuclear-armed Iran? The answer is no, for all of those reasons. There is one caveat to that answer, and that caveat is the unlikely scenario of a breakdown in Turkey's security relationship with the US and, by extension, with NATO. If you can imagine a scenario of a full breakdown in Turkey's security relationship with the US then yes, then we should revisit the question of whether Turkey should proliferate. But short of that extreme scenario, unlikely scenario, my answer remains no, Turkey will not proliferate.

**EVA GROSS:** Thanks very much, Sinan. May I give the floor to Pierre Goldschmidt for reaction?

**PIERRE GOLDSCHMIDT:** Thank you, Eva. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I don't know if everyone has read Sinan's paper but as usual it's very well written, very informative and when I was asked to comment on it I was initially embarrassed but finally I found a few sentences that can be the subject of discussion. This is why I will read my paper because I will quote him very often.

As you said, your title is provocative and the answer is also very clear. I will make a few remarks on Turkey's nuclear programme, which is part of your paper, then I will discuss more extensively what Sinan's written on Turkey's non-proliferation policies and finally, if I have still some time, I will discuss the weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East and the potential consequences for NATO.

The aqueous site on the Mediterranean coast will comprise four Russian VVER-type reactors, 1200 megawatt electric each. I've been working for 30 years for the Belgium nuclear electric utilities and I can tell you that I've never seen, in my life, such a favourable deal as the one Turkey has been able to sign with the Russian supplier. It covers the construction, the operation, waste management and decommissioning of those plants; it's absolutely incredible. Of course, as written in your report, I have to quote because it's important: this project is highly political in nature and has been directed and supported by the Russian government. It has to be considered in the context of the developing energy partnership between Turkey and Russia, and a recent Turkish decision to give the green light to the Russian-sponsored South Stream pipeline project, a competitor to the EU-backed Nabucco pipeline. So you see that nuclear is always linked to a considerable amount of other political aspects.

Turkey is now calling for bids from other suppliers for the construction of many more nuclear power plants but I think it is doubtful that South Korea, Japan, China or even Canada would be able to provide nuclear power plants at such favourable terms as the Russians did, if only for the reason that those countries will probably not be legally allowed to take back the spent fuel of those reactors, contrary to Russia. And I think it's very wise of Russia to have adopted the law allowing to do that. By the way, Sinan, when considering China as a potential supplier Turkey should examine the Nuclear Power Plant Exporters' Code of Conduct, because all the other suppliers have adopted those principles, but China hasn't yet. I also thought, until very recently, that Turkey had wisely decided that initially, at least, all its nuclear power plants would be of the pressurised water reactor type and suddenly I saw that they are now calling for bids for CANDUs from Canada, and I wonder whether that's a logical step to go. That's all on the nuclear power plant topic.

On non-proliferation policy: as indicated in the report, and you just reminded us, Turkey is a signatory of the NPT, the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, and in

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general Ankara promotes nuclear disarmament. In your report you write that, I quote, Turkey has a long history of supporting international policies designed to stop proliferation. This, however, needs to be examined more closely and I will discuss four issues, and I'm quoting you each time.

First, you write, Prime Minister Erdogan has supported Tehran's controversial enrichment and nuclear programme. Moreover, the government views the West's demand that Iran halt enrichment as a clear violation of Iran's rights under the NPT to pursue peaceful nuclear activities, end quote. First of all, it's not the West which demands that Iran suspends, not halt, suspends its enrichment activities. It is five UN Security Council resolutions under Chapter 7, which are legally binding. Also, to claim that this is a violation of Iran's right under the NPT is, I believe, both incorrect and unhelpful. It is unhelpful because it supports the attempt by Iran and a few other countries to delegitimise the UN Security Council; it is incorrect because - you mention it - Iran's rights under the NPT are clearly contingent on Iran's compliance with Article 2 of the NPT, and Iran has been found by the IAEA to be in non-compliance with its safeguards agreement. As long as the IAEA has not concluded that Iran's declarations are correct and complete, and that there are no nuclear maturing [inaudible] activities in Iran, it is logical and legal for the Security Council to require the temporary suspension of Iran's enrichment activity.

Two, I quote again: when the multilateral fuel bank initiative was discussed by the IAEA Board of Governors in September 2009, Turkey did not voice its support for the initiative. And in 2009 the multilateral fuel bank initiative was resisted as a violation of the rights granted to signatory states of the NPT. If this is really the view of the Turkish government I'm afraid it is wrong. The only purpose of the fuel bank is to increase confidence of any nuclear power plant operator that if fuel supply deliveries are suspended by the supplier for purely political reasons, and no other source is available in time on the market, then the IAEA will deliver the needed quantity. It doesn't violate any right under the NPT and I would say does anyone believe that ElBaradei would have supported that initiative if it was a violation of the NPT or the rights under the NPT.

Third, I quote: Turkey will continue to fight within the NSG to maintain a more flexible regime for international technology transfer. In addition, there is a fear that these NSG restrictions will make recipient states dependent on the nuclear suppliers for energy, thus negating the oft stated desire to achieve energy independence, end quote. As you probably all know, one of the beauties of nuclear electricity generation is that the cost of fabricated fuel elements is extremely small in the total cost of producing electricity. And it is therefore relatively cheap, for instance, to store [inaudible] fuel elements for two years, compared to 90 days for oil. In Belgium, which depends on nuclear power plants for more than 50% of its consumption, security of supply is extremely important but Belgium never thought that it needed to have enrichment plants on its territory and feels comfortable with reliance on the market. I know that some countries have had bad experiences in the past, and certainly Iran is one of them, but there has not been one case in the world where a nuclear power plant had to stop operating because of lack of fuel supply.

Four, I quote: Turkey has thus far refused to support American and European sanctions because it believes that would only strengthen the Iranian hardliners and disproportionately affect the Turkish economy. Moreover, there is a belief that sanctions are simply the prelude to military intervention by either the United States or Israel. That's an interesting comment. To oppose strong sanctions by arguing that sanctions are a prelude to military intervention is, I believe, questionable. Because, if we exclude a military action, as we should, what is the alternative to sanctions when Iran refuses to comply with legally binding UN Security Council resolutions? Is it laissez faire? I don't think it would be a responsible option. Personally, I would argue that it is because the sanctions adopted by the Security Council were

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too soft and came too late, and therefore had little impact on Iran's lack of transparency and cooperation with the IANEA, that the risk of a military intervention increased.

I don't want to take too much time, but I have a few examples where I can show that also, on the issue of sanctions, Ankara's position has not always been consistent, but I will skip that. Except that even recently I think Erdogan and Obama in Seoul agreed on the case of Syria that there wouldn't be any military operation in Syria, but that they will place stronger sanctions. So sanctions are used also by Turkey. In summary, Ankara must be praised for adhering to all major non-proliferation agreements, including the additional protocol and the CTBT. But it should be a little more careful not to make public statements that could undermine the legitimacy or the effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Now I come to the last point, which is nuclear weapons free-zone in the Middle East, and NATO. I start by quote again: in recent years, Ankara has been advocating the implementation of a regional nuclear weapons-free zone, which officials see as part of an overall strategy to decrease tensions in the region. But I think it will be the reverse. Serious progress on a nuclear weapons free-zone in the Middle East can be achieved only once tensions in the region have significantly decreased. There is no example of a nuclear weapons free-zone in the world, and I think there are six presently, in which one state is not recognised by other states of the same region. This being said, it would be very useful for Turkey to officially - I don't know if it has been done - officially say that if one day there is a nuclear weapons free-zone in the Middle East they will definitely be part of this nuclear weapons free-zone. Because, funnily enough, if you look into the definition of what is the Middle East, in the IANEA reports on establishing a nuclear weapons free-zone, you will find countries like Mauritania or the Comoros but not Turkey; Turkey's not there. So the first practical step that Turkey could and should promote, in order to diminish nuclear tensions in the region, would be to require all states of this region to ratify the CTBT and in particular Iran, Israel, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, as Turkey has already done, more than ten years ago, which is great [inaudible].

Establishing a nuclear weapons free-zone in the Middle East, including Turkey, would raise some questions related to NATO. Some states and experts have argued that NATO's nuclear sharing arrangement violates Article 1 of the NPT and this issue came again during the last 2010 NPT Review Conference. I find reassuring what you said and what you wrote, that Turkey indicated that it would support the withdrawal of American tactical nuclear weapons if it was consulted beforehand and NATO was operating in consensus. And that's really great. What is less clear to me is why, as a member of NATO, I quote again: Ankara has actively sought an independent missile shield to counter the growing threats posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles. A few months ago Prime Minister Erdogan has ordered the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey to develop a long-range missile shield, which will be built domestically by the Turkish industry. The main objective is to produce a long-range missile system that has a range of 2,500 kilometres, in the near future. Isn't it that such missiles are only relevant - Bruno will answer that - if they carry WMD warheads? I also wonder whether developing such missiles is totally consistent with Turkey's commitment, under the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and I look forward to hearing the answers. Thank you.

**EVA GROSS:** Thank you, Pierre, for that very in-depth and thorough critique. I now hand this over to Bruno.

**BRUNO TERTRAIS:** Thank you very much. I was a little concerned that Pierre's comments would overlap with mine; it turns out it's not the case. We don't disagree but I cover different ground. On your question about missiles, Pierre, I have a very careful reply because I think many in the United States, in Europe and elsewhere, have a tendency to do mirror imaging: what we do with our missiles, others will

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do the same thing. So I would be very careful and cautious in applying mental [inaudible] and strategic schemes to what other countries would do, Turkey, Iran or South Korea, or whatever. So I'm not sure the answer to your question is yes.

But now, to Sinan. First of all, I'd like to congratulate my friend Sinan for going against the tide of intellectual laziness; that's exactly what he attempted to do and he succeeds very well. It is indeed intellectual laziness to claim, in the same breath, that if Iran goes nuclear then Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, generally in that order - I don't know why - will go nuclear. No, it's not obvious and even if you consider that there is a chance that the three of them could be tempted to go nuclear, it would certainly not be in that order. So, you did a great job for the intellectual community, I think you are right, on many accounts there are disincentives, very strong disincentives, for Turkey to go nuclear. You rightly point out that Iran is perceived more as a competitor than as an enemy.

Turkey does benefit from what could be called the double security guarantee, the seatbelt and the airbag, the nuclear guarantee and now the missile defence guarantee, including because Turkey will physically host elements of that symbol of the defence guarantee, on its territory. It is true that Turkey has a very good non-proliferation record although in your paper you used the expression, stellar; and the word stellar, when you remember the whole story of the A Q Khan network, may not be entirely... I am aware that this was not a government policy. But in terms of export control, true, at the time when many European countries did have very good export control too. But I think the word stellar in your paper is slightly exaggerated.

You could have added another argument to your paper, which is to say that perhaps one constituency could have been tempted by a nuclear programme, in a different time, in a different era, had the military been still central in Turkish politics and the Turkish state, as they were 20 years ago. Then maybe things could have played out differently. But of course we know that they are no longer in the same role. However, perhaps I would not be as sanguine as you have been in your demonstration, which is very logical and very convincing, and maybe I'll take the glass half empty side of the story.

Iran not considered a threat. Well, if Iran was to get the bomb, believe me, it would feel different in Turkey. It's one thing to devise hypothetical scenarios and it's a different thing to feel it and live it, as your next door neighbour now has the bomb and starts behaving differently, starts projecting a different image. I think the hypothetical situation is one thing; believe me, when you feel it, it may be a little different. So I would just be a little more cautious than you are. You're saying that the US guarantee would be enough to deal with that hypothesis: well, you do point out, in your paper, that there have been at least three major crises of confidence in the way the defence guarantee has been handled. One in 1062, one in 1991 and one in 2003 with very different elements, one which involved the Belgian, French, German hesitancy in applying Article 4. Then the whole protocol hoopla about the transit of US forces etc. But three crises is significant, so could Turkey still believe as much as it did in the past, as perhaps it does today, in the long-term solidity and validity of the US/NATO guarantee? Perhaps the US guarantee more than the NATO one, if I am correct. I'm not entirely certain; perhaps I'm certain than you seem to be.

Another thing that you did not mention in your paper but which I think could have been another element in defence of your own thesis is that implicitly, at least, you're saying that Turkey would not be tempted to go nuclear for, quote, status reasons, which is often, not always, but often an important element of a drive for the bomb. It depends on your view or perception of the Middle East. If one believes that there is room in the Middle East or that particular corner which is Europe and the Middle East at the same time - I'm not trying to go back to the debate on whether Turkey is Middle East or not. If you believe that there is enough room for two ambitious regional powers, which have sometimes legitimate ambitions,

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sometimes more than just legitimate ambitions, especially one of them and that is not Turkey, then the question of the status is indeed irrelevant or largely not relevant. But again, wait until they get there, if they get there. You might be in the same situation, all things equal, mutatis mutandis, as Iran felt when Pakistan became nuclear. Suddenly that country next door that they saw as mostly a backward, not very bright country, suddenly they had something that Iran didn't have. That jolted some in the Iranian elite; I'm talking 98, this was mostly 98, not mid-80s, 98, when there was a visible demonstration of Pakistan's nuclear power.

You're saying that Turkey has very little know-how in the nuclear domain. I think Turkey has a little more than what you say. I'm speaking under the control of Pierre here but there's a small nuclear research reactor, a small trigger reactor; there's also an industrial know-how in Turkey, which could be useful for some of the components that are needed for a nuclear programme. So it's not totally irrelevant. There's also three generations of Turkish pilots which have been trained to handle nuclear weapons. Today, the Turkish air force, the know-how about how to handle nuclear weapons, is very limited because the level of training is very low. But still there's something that remains; it's not as if Turkey had never handled nuclear weapons, so to say.

In a nutshell I'm not saying that Sinan is wrong, I think he's right on most accounts. And I like the way Sinan presented his thesis at the end. It would indeed take extraordinary circumstances for Turkey's path to be different from the one Sinan is presenting. But I think - it's a cheap comparison - the chances of Turkey going nuclear are still extraordinarily higher than the chances of Belgium going nuclear. In relative terms, I would not put Turkey on the same level as with most European countries. So what extraordinary circumstances... In your paper, Sinan, you have a sentence that says it is hard to imagine or it is hard to devise a scenario under which... I don't think it's that hard, in fact I can imagine two scenarios. One, which is very close to the one you did mention: when there is the major strategic rift with the US, but also probably with Europe. I would say a major strategic rift with the rest of the West. It's an unstated assumption that it would be impossible for a candidate to EU membership to engage in military nuclear activities, and unfortunately a country withdrawing from the NPT. So that dimension has to be added too.

If you have that major rift, for one reason or another, the defence guarantee does not appear as relevant as it used to. I think the nuclear debate in Turkey would probably be different. I'm not saying that Turkey would go all the way but the debate would certainly be - correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm submitting that the debate would certainly be different. I have very little knowledge about Turkey; I have pretty good knowledge of the history of nuclear debates and the history of national nuclear programmes all around the world, and there are many parallels, which are interesting.

The second scenario is the one that I call the free for all; the one where as a design [inaudible] assumption, there is no NPT any more, or that there have been several withdrawals from the NPT and the NPT is not the global norm, the cornerstone. In my free for all scenario you have, for instance, a country like Brazil, which has embarked on a military nuclear programme. Tell me if I'm wrong, but it would not be contradictory with what I understand is Turkey's vision of itself, that a Turkey in a world without the NPT as the cornerstone, where other aspiring major regional powers or minor world powers to which Turkey can relate, are driving towards a military nuclear capability. Then I can't imagine that the question would not be raised very seriously in Turkey too. So then it finds itself in what some could call a French scenario: a country member of NATO, which benefits from a security guarantee but does not believe in the security guarantee and has a certain instinct for status through nuclear weapons.

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But this can't be the French scenario because at the time when France became nuclear the NPT did not exist. So, by definition, it would not be the same. But also, by definition... In fact, my two scenarios have to be conflated.

**EVA GROSS:** Thanks, Bruno. Before opening it up to the floor for your questions, I'd like give Sinan the opportunity to respond.

**SINAN ÜLGEN:** Let me start with Bruno: that was exactly what I was going to say. Initially you started out as intent on describing two different scenarios but I think it's only one scenario, because the condition for the second scenario, even in a world without NPT - let's imagine such a world - for Turkey to take this step would be tantamount to breaking its security relationship with the rest of the West. There's no other definition. Even in a world without NPT proliferation would put heavy stress on relationship with the rest of the West, including the US. So, in a sense, and that would only happen if that relationship is already very strained, if there has already been a major strategic rift, so the two scenarios are the same and therefore my conclusion's standing.

Turning to Pierre, a couple of answers: let me start with your last one. That's a misunderstanding; that's not what the Prime Minister said. The Prime Minister asked the Turkish to be tasked [inaudible] to develop this civilian... Basically, Turkey's own national infrastructure for sending satellites, not ballistic missiles. Now, you can argue where the difference lies but it's essentially for the non-military, civilian use of space; that's the programme that the PM asked the Turkish Scientific Board to support. On the nuclear weapons free-zone, Turkey has taken a lead; there is a group of ten foreign ministers, which was set up after the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in 2010. It's called the NPDI, I don't know what it stands for, it's one of those nice acronyms. And within that group Turkey has taken the lead on a nuclear weapons free-zone in the Middle East.

Incidentally, there was a meeting of those ten foreign ministers a couple of days ago, in Istanbul; that was their third meeting. They had one in Berlin, one in Washington and this time in Turkey. So there is already a willingness to take that forward. Just to be somewhat provocative I would tend to think that this is not totally irrelevant to Turkey's relationship with Israel, namely, the reason why suddenly Turkey is becoming much more intent on taking this idea forward is also indirectly to put pressure on Israel and Israel's programme.

That being said, in relation to your other comments, Iran sanctions: Turkey does comply with the UN sections, it just said it would follow down the route of the EU and the US in complying with their own unilateral sanctions, for the reasons that I've tried to explain, essentially because of willingness to put emphasis on the diplomatic track. But it is again wrong to think Turkey is totally against the sanctions, they just feel that just sanctions in itself is not the way forward, that it needs to be combined. I think today perhaps, accidentally, we find ourselves in exactly that situation, whereby there are sanctions but there is also the diplomatic track and I think that's the situation that Turkey would certainly support.

On the nuclear suppliers group, the issue there is that, as a late starter to this game of nuclear technology, Turkey does not want its rights to be impeded for the transfer of technology. It's not just for the enrichment part but in general, because when we look at what NSG, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, tried to do, they tried to pass a proposal which would seriously limit the transfer of nuclear sensitive technologies to countries, on the basis of not objective but very subjective criteria, that was the whole deal, as you know very well. And both Turkey and South Africa were the two countries that were categorically against the amendment, and eventually a consensus emerged where more objective criteria were put forward, so I think that thing has been resolved.

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On the multilateral fuel bank, the impression - and I was in Vienna a couple of days after the Board meeting in September 2009, where that proposal was discussed and adopted - there was very little preparatory work. The feeling was that suddenly this proposal was launched and without giving enough time for the Board members to discuss what it means, it was adopted. And therefore, when you combine that with, at the time, the still quite categorical view of the US, which was trying to impose this new conditionality of non-enrichment, the UAE deal, for instance. That was the reason, not so much that in itself the multilateral fuel bank is a bad idea, it's a very good idea; but they don't want it to be seen as a prelude to imposing a set of conditionalities that are in a sense a violation of the NPT rights.

**PIERRE GOLDSCHMIDT:** NPDI stands for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. I had to check it on the web, so that's just to prove that contrary to what some people think, I am not a non-proliferation expert, now people will believe it.

**EVA GROSS:** Who has a question?

**PAUL FLAHERTY:** I'm Paul Flaherty, a retired UK bureaucrat living in Brussels. Two questions: first of all, thank you for the papers and thanks for the opportunity to discuss it now. It seems to me your thesis is based on a certain continuity of Turkish policy. I just wonder to the extent that we can rely on that, given that to most of looking at this, Turkish foreign policy and security policy in just about every area, is in flux. So why do we sign up to the notion of continuity? And secondly, a point on missile defence: I well recognise your point about Turkey's desire not to mention various countries. I've got the fingernails just about left from those discussions, but the fact of the matter is that one of the things that's going to happen, in this missile defence piece that the Americans are talking about, is we're going to have US forces based in Europe, for the first time, in defence of the US. The sort of deterrent piece that the founding fathers of the Alliance would probably have given their back teeth for. And that seems to me to be completely game changing, and it is something I don't think we've tried to drag out, even including in your argument. But this is something which is very different about the strategic relationship. It's now going to be in the US's interest to stay in Turkey as part of this missile defence piece. That changes the way in which we look at things, I think.

**IAN:** Thank you too, for your paper and your talk. And my question relates to Paul's in a way: you present Turkey's view as a singular view. I'm interested too in the range of opinions in Turkey. Bruno Tertrais mentioned the military opinion and the fact that that's less relevant perhaps in Turkish life nowadays. But there must be a range of political opinions and the development of political opinions; there must be still a military opinion, which is still a relevant point. And there must too be political opinion. I know certainly in South Korea there is a majority in favour of developing a nuclear weapons programme; I thought I'd read something similar about Turkish public opinion but I may have misremembered that. So I'm interested in your views on the range of opinions in Turkey and the development of those views.

**EVA GROSS:** Sinan, do you want to take those two questions?

**SINAN ÜLGEN:** Yes. You're absolutely right in pointing out that Turkish foreign policy is in a flux. But it's in a flux within a sphere that's well bounded, and that sphere is the West. So what is happening in Turkish foreign policy is essentially a rebalancing of its relationship with the West, but not a drift away from the West. What we see is essentially much more focused on Turkey's own neighbourhood but definitely not the willingness to break away from the West. Nobody's challenging within Turkish policy circles Turkey's eligibility for EU membership even though that is somewhat stalled; nobody's challenging Turkey's membership in NATO and so on, or even the relationship with the US, which, again,

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if I can use a term that Bruno has been allergic too, is stellar. The political relationship with Washington is brilliant, or so it seems. I think that, yes, Turkish foreign policy is in flux but there's a limit as to how much drift that relationship can trigger. I think what we're seeing is essentially the rebalancing without endangering Turkey's relationship with the Western community as a whole.

**BRUNO TERTRAIS:** Can I press you a little bit on this, Sinan, because, as a follow up to that question. It seems to me that although I do not have all the latest data at hand, the evolution of the Turkish public opinion and public discourse and the Turkish media, the way the United States is perceived, even after Bush. The way the popular culture has been describing the US, the Americans, has changed significantly in the past 15 years or so. I'm not sure I would - you're right to say that the relationship at the top today is maybe not stellar but at least excellent, that's entirely true - but it would be interesting to have you dig a little further into the argument because it seems to me that you cannot take for granted that this relationship will be as stellar as it is today, given the evolution of Turkish society, given the evolution of international relations in general, Turkish self-assertiveness, for understandable reasons. So I'm not entirely satisfied with your answer at this point.

**SINAN ÜLGEN:** Just to respond to what Bruno has raised. I think we can't definitely know what's going to happen in the future. But since the early republican times Turkish society has been brought up on the basis that Turkey's part of the West. And even with a government that traces the truth to political Islam [inaudible], which has now been in power for ten years, that fundamental feature, that fundamental core characteristic, has not been challenged. That gives reassurance that even if we can... There are going to be difficulties in the relationship, and there have been difficulties in the relationship, even in the Cold War years but in the post-Cold War years. In 2003 there was a major drift, with Iraq. But despite that the relationship held; there was no debate within Turkey of enough with the West, we leave the West and we go and design our political future with establishing partnerships with BRICS or with China and Russia. You did hear one or two people saying that but it was totally disregarded in the public discourse. So fundamentally I don't really see or I'm pretty confident, let's say, that Turkey's direction will remain fully wedded to its Western location [inaudible]. There will be ups and downs in this relationship but I think the fundamental framework will not change.

Talking about missile defence: you're absolutely right but the way that the Turkish policymakers have portrayed this is a double-headed initiative. So every time they talk about missile defence and the facilities in Malatya, they talk about how Turkey will also have a finger on the button, how the Turkish military will also be there. How the real-time intelligence will also be connected to the Turkish system. And that shadows the US presence and that's how they deal with this aspect.

On public opinion - and here I'm just going to say something that will totally discredit all my previous statements. We had a survey in Turkey, a recent survey; I also had a think tank in Turkey, called EDAM, so we did a survey on what would be the Turkish public opinion's reaction to a potential threat from a nuclear Iran. And the answers were [a] Turkey should acquire its own nuclear weapons, [b] Turkey should rely on NATO, and that would be sufficient, and [c] Turkey's own defences would be sufficient. We got 54% support for Turkey acquiring its own nuclear weapons. Now, how do I explain this?

This is an area where, obviously, public opinion does not write policy. It is somewhat perhaps naïve to expect public opinion to reply to a very speculative question without knowing full well the consequences of what that means. So I think it's wrong to rely on public opinion to argue that there is a constituency in Turkey championing and lobbying for a nuclear programme. I'm not going to say there is no such constituency; there might be some people. But they're certainly not within the policy world; they're not influential; they're not instrumental. And I'll come back to what I said, I think that decision to proliferate,

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if that happens, it will not be because of the few people that champion such a programme. It will be because of these enormous structural changes in the geopolitics that will affect the country's future.

**EVA GROSS:** If I can just jump in and ask my question. I just wanted to push you a little on... You dismissed this notion of BRICS and geopolitical power relationships and implicitly the idea that Turkey might be some sort of regional role [inaudible] in the future, but I think to outside... You explain also the position on Iran exclusively on the basis of a bilateral relationship that Turkey has with Iran but to outside observers it also looked as if Turkey was attempting a more, not just also a regional but also a global role on this non-proliferation debate. I'm just curious where... There also is a debate, Brussels is perennially a bit depressed with the way the slowness of the institution building. But there's also a sense that the West is in decline, so is there no debate in Turkey that you might - a different voice?

**SINAN ÜLGEN:** Switch sides?

**EVA GROSS:** Yes, as it relates to the nuclear file [inaudible] but also more broadly, where does Turkey stand there?

**SINAN ÜLGEN:** If the question had been EU versus Turkey then it's much easier to contemplate a scenario where Turkey would switch sides, and that's already happening because of all the problems that we have in the relationship. But when you frame it West versus Turkey it is a very different paradigm; to switch sides and to leave the Western community and to establish a political alliance with the BRICS is, as things stand, a very far fetched [inaudible]. Because the BRICS in themselves are a motley crew; you have Russia, you have China that are not particularly known for the state of their democracy. You have Brazil, South Africa, so it's already - within the South there is no real cohesive group. We talk about the BRICS; it's more of a - they share more of their economic prowess than anything else. So today it's not really a political bloc that has the captivating dimension.

**THOMAS GRUNERT:** If I may, just to continue on the last argument. My name is Thomas Grunert, I work for the European Parliament. I don't believe, as you do, that Turkey will drift away from the West but still I would like to know your opinion on Turkey-Russia relations, in specific, not the BRICS, that's too large. But you're well aware of the project of the Eurasian Union; you're well aware that the leadership and the state of democracy in Russia and in Turkey shows similar patterns. I wouldn't compare the two. So I could imagine a temptation by Turkey, also against the background of what was mentioned by Mr Goldschmidt, the growing energy partnership, Turkey-Russia, and to counterbalance [inaudible] is there. I'm quite confident that Turkey will stay in the Western camp but if you could just comment on the temptation to consider the Eurasian Union as an alternative option. Thank you.

**SINAN ÜLGEN:** Turkey's relationship with Russia, a bit like Iran, has traditionally been a relationship beset by difficulties, obviously during the historical times but also during the Cold War era. Now that has changed; there is quite a bit of economic interdependence developing in the energy field, in [inaudible], in Turkish businesses investing in Russia. But fundamentally there's a limit to this relationship; there's a limit to this relationship essentially because of what the two political systems and where they want to go. Despite our own shortcomings, and we are all very aware of Turkey's own shortcomings in the field of democracy, Turkey's aspirations have really been to build a better democracy. Even rhetorically, even though in deeds it hasn't really translated as of late, but rhetorically that's still the goal.

That has also been an element in Turkey's relationship with the West, and in particular with the EU; it is not a coincidence that we're seeing this backsliding in Turkish democracy at a time when the negotiations have stalled, whereas we have seen a much more dynamic uplifting of Turkish democratic standards

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when the negotiations process was in full force. So I think that limits Turkey's relationship with Russia, there is an inherent limit of what that political relationship can be. Nobody's talking about Eurasian Union, in Turkey.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm [inaudible] in Boršov. I think the topic is very useful and exactly chosen by Mr Sinan, and Mr Sinan has done very well the research and concluded that Turkey cannot go to nuclear weapons production if Iran, for example, is perceived as a threat. But I think it's not complete, and maybe somebody else has to complete this. Because in case that Turkey wanted to go to this way, maybe there are other factors and not just Iran. I think it's not related to Iran and we can consider it as some efforts to propaganda against Iran, Iranophobia, that it's normal. And in case everything is in the region related to the Iran and some countries and some groups are going to distribute Iranophobia and related everything to threats of Iran, but it's not right.

I think some people complete this research that in case Turkey wanted to go to this area, for nuclear non-proliferation, it's not related to Iran and all people know the good relation between Turkey and Iran despite some disagreement regarding some regional matters. But considering old historical relation between the two countries I think both countries cannot see each other as a threat.

Regarding some matters, some points that Mr Goldschmidt raised regarding Iran nuclear programme. I think he knows better than every people because Mr Goldschmidt was working in IANEA and I think there are many cases to be mentioned regarding Iran nuclear programme and proving that some sanctions and some - all sanctions, not some sanctions - and all efforts that Western countries have been taking against Iran, is illegal. Because, for example, anybody knows regarding the concluded between Iran and IANEA regarding modality in 2007, and according to that agreement all categories outstanding matters and subjects have been raised and Iranian authority respond to all of them. We have received all proven documents from IANEA that there are no more outstanding matters and nobody knows that why, after this process, at least [inaudible] some countries wanted to refer the dossier to the Security Council? It is not fair and it is not legal, and I have many...

**EVA GROSS:** We can continue that conversation at the end of the panel. I'm wondering whether Pierre or you, Sinan, wanted to respond to those comments?

**PIERRE GOLDSCHMIDT:** He didn't have time to say it all but it's not the place to discuss whether sanctions adopted under Chapter 7 by the Security Council, are legal or illegal. This is what I mentioned, some countries have an interest in trying to delegitimise the Security Council and the whole UN system. I think it's a risk and so it has to be considered very seriously and I understand what you say about the Workplan of 2007 and that most of the issues have been resolved; all this is true.

But my point on sanctions was I hope not misunderstood. I'm not saying sanctions per se has any meaning, they cannot be meaningful. It's always with a diplomatic effort; I've been myself, and you know because I'm sure you read what I write, I know that my Iranian friends do read what I write, if anyone else. I have suggested many times the solutions and proposals to try to resolve the crisis, which would be hopefully acceptable to all parties, face saving, even allowing Iran to pursue some enrichment and all this. And for P5+1 to deliver the fuel for Tehran Research without preconditions, so I think I've been reaching very much in that direction.

But sanctions, you cannot say sanctions are leading to war, that's what was written in your report and I disputed that, because I think if there is no sanction and you let things go, first you are creating a terrible precedent. You're opening the door for others to follow the same example that is given, I won't say by

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Iran, let's say at least by North Korea, and it cannot be just done like that. But diplomacy is - you can only solve problems with diplomacy. But sanctions are useful, in the long run.

**EVA GROSS:** We're almost out of time so I want to give Sinan the opportunity for any last words or comments.

**SINAN ÜLGEN:** I hope that next time you read analysis of the consequences of a nuclear Iran and if you see the word Turkey there, you'll remember this conversation.

**EVA GROSS:** On that note let me thank you all for coming, for listening, for asking perceptive questions. Join me in thanking our speakers for their insightful...