



“ASPEN ATLANTIC GROUP” MEETING

DRAFT PROGRAM
24-25 April 2009
TOBB Headquarters, ANKARA



aspen strategy group

Friday, April 24th

8:30

Transfer from Sheraton Hotel to TOBB Headquarters

“TURKEY: FORGING A COMMON AGENDA FOR A DEFINING MOMENT”

DAY 1

Venue: TOBB Headquarters

Agenda Overview and Welcoming Remarks

Speakers:

9:00 – 9:15

Madeleine Albright, Principal, The Albright Group and the former Foreign Minister of United States
M. Rifat Hisarciklioğlu, President of TOBB

Keynote Address:

9:15 – 10:00

Speaker: Hon. Ali Babacan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey

I. Session:

“Defining the Moment: Turkey and the Significance of 2009”

Chair: Madeleine Albright, Principal, The Albright Group LLC
Presenter: Stephen Flanagan, Senior Vice President and Henry A. Kissinger Chair, CSIS

10:00 – 10:45

2009 will be a decisive year for both Ankara and Brussels. Since Turkey and the EU began membership negotiations in 2005, roughly ten out of the thirty-three chapters have been addressed. As if to signal Turkey’s willingness to speed up the accession process and avert what some people have referred to as “reform fatigue,” early this year, Prime Minister Erdoğan created a separate EU ministry and appointed Egemen Bağış as Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator. In addition, the government recently took symbolic steps and began broadcasting a television channel in Kurdish and promised to widen rights of the Alevis, a liberal Muslim minority. Despite these actions, Turkey faces obstacles before some EU members deem it ready for integration. Turkey is facing a deadline this year to open its airports and ports to the Republic of Cyprus in accordance with the Ankara Protocol. What are Turkey’s list of priorities? Is there a consensus among the Turkish population that EU accession is the best path for the future of Turkey? When might Ankara’s sense of reform fatigue enter a phase that will be hard to reverse?

10:45 – 11:00

Break

II. Session:

“The Long and Winding Road: Expanding the EU’s Borders”

Chair: **Jan Eliasson**, *Former Foreign Minister, Sweden*

Presenter: **Katinka Barysch**, *Deputy Director, Centre for European Reform*

11:00 - 12:15

Turkey has long carried characteristics of both an Asian and European identity. From the time of Atatürk and the 1963 Ankara agreement, the desire to cement Turkey’s ties to Europe is evident. But is the political will also there? For the EU, opposition stems from uncertainty over Turkey’s willingness to undertake key areas of reform and larger questions on future European identity. For the EU, what are the honest assessments for the prospect of accession? Some have proposed a “privileged partnership” as an alternative to full EU membership. Is this a valid alternative? If not, are there other options that should be considered? Within Europe, there are vastly different perspectives on this issue. If there is hope to conclude an agreement, is there a way to reconcile the opposition?

12:15 – 13:30

Lunch - *Venue: TOBB Headquarters*

13:30 – 14:00

Transfer to Prime Minister’s Office

14:00 – 14:45

Meeting with H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

14:45 – 15:15

Transfer to TOBB Headquarters

III. Session:

“Internal Politics, International Implications: Turkey’s Domestic Politics”

Chair: **Sir Malcolm Rifkind**, *Member of Parliament, House of Commons*

Presenter: **Bülent Aliriza**, *Director and Senior Associate, Turkey Project, CSIS*

15:15 – 16:15

Turkey has a distinctive and long-standing history as a secular, democratic nation with a largely Muslim population. However, with the land-slide victory of the conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2007, political tensions have risen. Opposition parties have declared that the AKP’s hold over the government violates the fundamental principle of secularism in Turkey’s constitution. With important municipal elections recently concluded, the divide between the secular and religious sectors of Turkey’s population has come to the forefront of Turkish politics. Despite leading the recent elections in March, the ruling AKP found that public support for their party has lessened since the 2007 elections. Can this decrease in popular support be attributed solely to the struggling Turkish economy? How has the growing debate over the role of religion in government affected the outcome? What impact will the elections have on the Parliament’s consideration of both constitutional reforms and necessary EU reforms?

IV. Session:

“The Middle East: Turkey’s Unique Role”

Chair: **Niels Helveg Petersen**, *Member, Danish Parliament*

Presenter: **Toni Verstandig**, *Executive Director, Middle East Programs, The Aspen Institute*

16:15 – 17:15

Turkey's exceptional characteristics and location have allowed it to carve out a unique role in the Middle East as a regional mediator. A strong relationship with Israel coupled with long and deep ties to Arab countries has allowed Turkey to mediate talks between Syria and Israel and send peacekeeping forces to Lebanon in 2006 following Israel's war with Hezbollah. How long can Turkey continue this difficult balancing act and be viewed as an honest broker? As a new American administration wrestles to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process, how should the various dialogues already underway by Turkey be engaged? Given recent events at Davos, has Turkey's neutral role been compromised?

Photo-shoot

17:15 – 17:45 **Transfer to Sheraton Hotel**

17:45 – 19:00 *Free Time*

19:00 Transfer to Cengelhan Restaurant

19:30 – 21:30 **Dinner** – *Venue: Çengelhan Restaurant*
Keynote Speaker: Egemen Bağış, State Minister and Chief Negotiator

21:30 Transfer to Sheraton Hotel

Saturday, April 25th

8:30 Transfer from Sheraton Hotel to TOBB Headquarters

“TURKEY: FORGING A COMMON AGENDA FOR A DEFINING MOMENT” ***DAY 2*** ***Venue: TOBB Headquarters***

V. Session:

“Partners in a New World: Transnational Cooperation”

Chair: Lloyd Axworthy, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Winnipeg

Presenter: Hugh Pope, Director, Turkey/Cyprus Project, International Crisis Group

09:00 – 10:15

With the rapid expansion of communications and transportation technologies, the world has become increasingly interconnected. Although the rise of globalization has yielded many positive results, a myriad of formerly local or region-specific challenges have crossed national borders, transforming them into global problems. Pandemics, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the severe consequences of climate change, and terrorist actions by non-state actors require the rapt attention and coordinated effort of every country in order to thwart their rapid spread. Having all faced terrorist acts, Turkey, the United States, and the EU are now joining efforts and cooperating in counterterrorism measures, such as joint naval and military exercises. But are there specific opportunities to broaden the agenda for transnational cooperation between Turkey, the Americas, and the EU? What might be the appropriate forum to coordinate such an endeavor?

10:15 – 10:30 Break

VI. Session:
“The Financial Crises: Impact on Foreign Policy”

Chair: Rosario Green, Senator, Senate of the Republic of Mexico

Speaker: Sureyya Serdengeçti, Former Governor of the Central Bank of Turkey & Director of TEPAV Economic Stability Institute

10:30 – 11:45

The interconnected nature of global markets suggests that a downturn or recession in one country affects the entire world economy. Many countries have developed stimulus packages to avert further financial deterioration. President Obama recently urged fellow G-20 leaders to increase funding for international lenders to help restore the world economy’s flow of credit to periphery countries. The final analysis on the vulnerability of the Turkish economy to this global slowdown remains unclear, but certain sectors are undoubtedly feeling the global decline. In Turkey, ongoing negotiations with the IMF have been tenuous and many components hang in the balance. For every country, the economic climate will have an effect on their domestic policy and their foreign policy ambitions. In the United States, there is concern the economic crisis will become the next great distraction and turn the Administration’s attention away from hotspots around the globe. Is this a shared concern in Europe and Turkey? On the horizon, fears of lesser burden sharing in multilateral alliances, global institutions, and multilateral lending institutions are looming. What is to be expected of the Americas, Europe, and Turkey in light of the economic crisis? Can any confidence be injected for the global outlook in 2009? How has this crisis affected foreign policy and national security priorities? Have expectations on policies been adjusted due to the crisis?

11:45 – 13:15

Lunch - Venue : TOBB Headquarters

“Defining America’s New Direction in National Security and Foreign Policy”

Speaker: Wendy Sherman, “Albright Group” Kurucusu, Emekli Büyükelçi

VII. Session:

“Energy: New Leverage in Turkey’s Rise”

Chair: Jozias van Aartsen, Mayor, City of The Hague

Presenter: Sharon Burke, Senior Fellow, CNAS

13:15 – 14:30

In January 2009, the Russian energy conglomerate Gazprom effectively shut off its supply of natural gas to Turkey and a number of European countries following Russia’s dispute with Ukraine. This episode revealed the extent of these nations’ reliance on Russian energy sources. Turkey and nations in central Europe have an inadequate supply of domestic energy sources and insufficient or non-existent storage units. Turkey, however, holds a geographically unique position as a transit country able to connect the energy producing nations in the east with the energy consumer nations in the west. Many pipelines in Turkey, such as the Nabucco, are being negotiated or have already begun delivering gas and oil. But with so many energy pipelines concentrated in one area, one catastrophic incident has the ability to halt shipments to many dependent countries. What concrete steps can Turkey take, both unilaterally and multilaterally, to protect the many pipelines running through the country? In a world of petro-powers and petro-politics, what influence will energy have on Turkey’s rise? For many countries, new energy sources and pipelines has equaled new leverage in foreign affairs. How and where might Turkey use this leverage?

14:30 – 14:45	Break
14:45 – 16:00	<p>VIII. Session: “The Way Forward: EU-US-Turkish Ties” <i>Chair: Joschka Fischer, Former Foreign Minister, Germany</i> <i>Presenter: Mark Parris, Counselor and Visiting Fellow, The Brookings Institution</i></p> <p>Despite the challenges facing the EU accession talks, the relationship between the European Union and Turkey continues to progress. In September 2008, the EU approved a spending plan to provide 4.5 billion Euros for pre-accession assistance to Turkey and some West Balkan states. Turkish ties to the American continent also show promising strength, as trade is expected to grow with Latin American and Caribbean countries. In the United States, fears that ties were frayed over the invasion of Iraq gave way to a recent series of high-level meetings between Turkish leaders and administration officials. Furthermore, President Obama’s state visit to Turkey this month was a watershed moment that reaffirmed the mutual value placed on this relationship. Going forward, it will be important to clearly define the roles for all players. What role does Turkey seek from the United States in the ongoing accession process and in broader foreign policy matters? What are short-term and long-term aspirations of the three major players?</p>
16:00	Transfer to Sheraton Hotel
17:30	Transfer to the President’s Office
18:00 – 18:30	Meeting with H.E. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey
19:00	Transfer from Hotel to TOBB Headquarters
19:30	Gala Dinner - Venue : TOBB Headquarters <i>Speaker: M. Rifat Hisarcıkhoğlu, President of TOBB</i>