

# An Unending Tie Between Iran And Turkey

by Harun Yahya

Iran is a blessing for the Islamic world with rich and vast amounts of land that pious, courageous, hardworking and pure people inhabit. Iranians do not make distinctions regarding races or ethnicities but have an awareness of the ummah. For centuries Persians, Azeri Turks, Kurds and minorities of Orthodox Christians, Jews and Zoroasters have lived through peaceful coexistence. Turkey and Iran also share a border that has remained unchanged for 373 years. It is one of the rare borders in the Middle East that imperialist powers have not redrawn. Those who seek to exploit the region understand that the alliance of Turkey and Iran would shift power balances and thus try to pit Iran and Turkey against one another for geostrategic reasons. They often use geopolitical interests and sectarian differences to set divisions.

Turkey and Iran have overcome many plots they have encountered thus far. As the two neighbors' bond strengthened, these alienators re-surfaced. Therefore, both countries should be cautious of any plots that aim to move them apart to destabilize the region. These ruinous systems can form and develop easily. They try to foment division by using manipulative tactics that uses the sensitivities and differences of the people in the region against each other. For this reason, Turkey and Iran should embrace one another very strongly and act as one block. Having experienced similar plots throughout history, Iran and Turkey are taking solid steps to put the stability and security of the region first. The official top level reciprocal meetings have been a great blow for those who do not want the safety of the region. Rouhani made crucial remarks during the press conference with President Erdoğan: "Some foreigners plan to split the area to increase ethnic and sectarian discrimination. Both countries do not accept such acts of discrimination,"

In the Islamic world, the bilateral relations should not be based on interests because feelings such as friendship, trust, love, devotion, dignity, and compassion define the Muslim culture; that is how the two countries are behaving. The Qur'an recital right before the meeting of the Turkish Chief of Staff in Iran was very pleasing for the Muslims. It gave a sense of contentment to the hearts of the pious people in both countries. Iranian General Baqeri's recent visit to Ankara and Turkish General Akar's coming to Tehran, days ahead of President Erdoğan's visit, marked as the first visit

by top officials of Armed Forces since 1979. These exchanged visits resulted in the joint decision of keeping the territorial integrity of both Iraq and Syria intact.

Turkey and Iran are key countries in the region and their alliance have proven to be instrumental for the road to a long sought peace in Syria. With the launching of the Astana peace talks that includes Russia a cease–fire political solution for ravaged and racked Syria has been reached. Now with tensions rising in North Iraq, Turkey and Iran have taken joint steps to prevent any further conflict in the region. The increase in the frequency of the reciprocal visits indicate the overlapping concerns of Northern Iraq’s secession referendum held on September 25th, which both sides fiercely oppose. Both believe that a secession in northern Iraq will not only harm the unitary structure of Iraq but will trigger terrorist groups like the PKK, PYD or PJAK to topple Barzani and establish a communist state near the Turkish and Iranian borders. In response Turkey has carried joint military exercises with Iraqi troops near northern Iraq and Turkish Prime Minister Yıldırım called leaders from Iran and Iraq to hold a summit. Iran, on the other hand, imposed sanctions: stopping flights to Erbil and Sulaymaniya; stopping the flow of oil by stopping the tankers across the border. Turkey stopped flights to northern Iraq, as well. The Baghdad government took some punitive measures by halting the foreign currency transfer to the Kurdish banks.

KRB needs its neighbors for various reasons and is making a major mistake, which would be grave threat to the entire region. With Turkey they have high trade volumes and Turkey is the only passage for KRB to connect to the rest of the world. KRB has no support either from the West or Russia as Putin preferred to be on the side of its allies: Turkey and Iran. The referendum has no legal basis both in the international law or Iraqi constitution and therefore there is no practical way being implemented. An alliance of Iran and Turkey would be a powerful deterring force in the region. President Rouhani stated, “The Armed Forces of Iran and Turkey can develop constructive relations in addressing regional threats through development of cooperation and transfer of experiences in various sectors.” The two countries along with Russia are sending troops to Idlib as per the Astana agreement to keep security in the region, and this may expand to other regions of conflict. Sending troops to a region does not always mean escalating fights or expanding the scope of the conflict. On the contrary, the idea is for it to be a deterrent force to keep cease–fires and direct the affiliated parties to diplomacy.

Additionally, during the high-profile visit of Erdoğan, trade and the economic ties including the energy deals were discussed. The two key partners repeated their desire to increase the trade volume to 30bn US dollars just like they did in the 2016 joint declaration. According to Reza Karami, the head of Iran-Turkey Commerce Chamber, trade volume in the first eight months of 2017 was over 7.25bn dollars. Another important development during the meetings was the decision to trade with each other by using the local currencies in equal amounts to the dollar or the euro. As far as the energy is concerned, Turkey said it was ready to purchase more gas and oil from Iran.

In terms of energy deals between Turkey-Iran-Russia, a positive announcement was made in August: Russian state owned oil company JSC Zarubezhneft formed a 7 bn dollar partnership with the Turkish energy group Unit International Ltd and Iran Ghadir Investment Company to explore and develop Iran's oil fields. They will cooperate in oil production and oil selling. Ünal Aysal, the head of Unit International Company, had signed 4.2bn dollar agreement with a South Korean engineering company in Iran to establish a natural gas electricity circuit power plant in Iran.

These are certainly good developments and good news regarding the relations of the two countries since most people are used to hearing only about conflict, blood or terror in the region. By the help of God, these two countries with the support of Russia will play major roles in sustaining the security of the region to help the oppressed Muslims who try to make their voices heard. Iran and Turkey with their unyielding friendship and timeless bond are capable of doing that.

*The writer has authored more than 300 books translated in 73 languages on politics, religion and science.*

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