

Iran has ancient cultural and religious relations with Turkey. The two neighbors have historically maintained generally friendly links in the past. They were once allies during the Cold War period in the now defunct Central Treaty Organization. Political relations had soured because of Turkey's ties with Israel. However, Turkey's neutral stance with regards to the disputes between Israel and Iran has secured the maintenance of friendly bilateral relations.

Turkey's relations with Israel have deteriorated after the Gaza War (2008–09), the Gaza flotilla raid (2010) and the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict. Since 2010, Turkey has no diplomatic relations with Israel at the ambassadorial level. Another bone of contention between Iran and Turkey remains the Syrian civil war issue.

Iran firmly backed the Syrian government of Shia Bashar al-Assad , while Turkey supported the Syrian Sunni opposition .During the 2015 military intervention in Yemen, Iran and Turkey supported rival groups, which led to official arguments between Mohammad Javad Zarif and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Erdoğan stated that "Iran and the terrorist groups must withdraw" and Zarif replied "Turkey makes strategic mistakes". However, a few days later, Erdoğan went to Tehran for talks on improving Turkish-Iranian trade relations and was received by both Rouhani and Khamenei .

Unver, giving the Turkish viewpoint, maintained that:

Topping the list of reasons to worry is Syria; both in terms of President Bashar al-Assad's future and the perceived security threat of an emerging "Kurdish belt" in the north of the country. Ankara has repeatedly expressed its discomfort with the link between the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Democratic Union Party (PYD), and fears that Kurdish gains in Syria will spill over into Turkey as an emboldened and less conciliatory PKK....Adding the sectarian dimension to Iran's potential reach across the Kurdish corridor would also complicate Turkey's ability to influence the political future of Iraq and Syria as it would be essentially cut off from both countries. Iran's sectarian point of view, influences across the "Kurdish belt", and the substantial Alawite dominance in Latakia, sets Turkey up for nearly complete isolation. The Sunni Muslim majority Turkey would be predominantly bordered by Shiite states.

Beeny and McInnis maintained that:

The evolving conflict in Syria may be stretching the limits of Turkish-Iranian cooperation. In Syria, Turkey has been supporting Ahrar al-Sham, an ally of Al Qaeda affiliated Jabhat

al-Nusra, against the Iranian backed regime of Bashar al-Assad. Supplies, intelligence, and weapons heading to those groups presented a challenge to Iran's Syria policies, but Turkey's decision to launch strikes against Islamic State (ISIS) — and Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) — targets in Syria represents an important shift in the conflict. Repairing and advancing Iran's regional relations is a key objective of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani following the nuclear deal. Iran knows that finding a political solution to the civil war in Syria and halting attacks on Iranian assets in Turkey will require Turkey's buy in. If given a chance, Iran will seek to deescalate and mend ties. Tehran does not want another bitter zero-sum contest, like it has with Riyadh now. A workable relationship with Turkey is far more important to Tehran than the public relations value of a bitter media campaign

Undoubtedly, Iran was now in competition with Turkey for regional influence. This competition was expected to increase in the near future. However, Turkey will rise as the primary regional power, not Iran. Notwithstanding aspiration of other countries in the region, Iran seeks to establish itself as a regional power. It also seeks to protect other Shias in the region. The Iranian aspiration of regional power can be tracked to the earlier period of the Shah before the Islamic republic.

Despite tensions in the political arena trade and economic ties between Iran and Turkey continue to expand and are likely to flourish even further. Iran's ties with Turkey are old. Both countries, along with Pakistan, were members of the now defunct Regional Cooperation for Development in the 1960s. Iran and Turkey were also both founding members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Bilateral trade between Iran and Turkey had increased from \$1 billion in 2000 to \$4 billion in 2005. Bilateral trade was now in the range of \$10 billion (2010), and both governments have announced that the figure should reach the \$20 billion mark in the not too distant future. Iranian First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Rahimi had stated in October 2012 that the speed of trade exchanges between Iran and Turkey has accelerated and was close of reaching the goal of 30 billion dollars per year. He added that the growing trade relations between Iran and Turkey "indicate the two countries' willingness to strengthen mutual ties".

It was reported that Iran's gas export to Turkey would be increased. At present, the rate is at 50 million cubic metres per day. Turkey imports about 30 percent of its needs which is about 10 billion cubic metres a year of gas from Iran. Turkey had long been interested in Iran's gas fields in South Pars

Turkey hoped that with the lifting of sanctions, South Pars fields would be opened for foreign investment, and eventually be developed to provide for a large European market through Turkey acting as an energy hub. Turkey planned to invest \$12 billion in developing the South Pars gas field. Half of the gas from Iran's South Pars gas field would be re-exported to Europe. Turkey was investing \$650 million (2008) in Iran's petrochemical industry. Meanwhile, every year one million Iranians visit Turkey. The growing trade between Turkey and Iran indicate the two countries' willingness to strengthen mutual ties.

Iran and Turkey will maintain somewhat cordial relations. Bilateral ties will expand in the future in the commercial and economic spheres. However, relations may be yet be somewhat strained because of the Syrian civil war issue.

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