**DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO TURKEY**

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*To be shared with MS without assessment*

To:EEAS MD Angelina EICHHORST, Acting COM NEAR DG Maciej POPOWSKI

**Subject: Turkey: A “strategic perspective” in the strengthening of TR-PAK relations - Prime Minister Sharif’s visit to Turkey**

**Summary**

***The Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif paid his first official visit to Turkey on 31 May to 2 June. In his tête-à-tête meeting with President Erdogan agreed to strengthen further their bilateral relations with a “strategic perspective” in particular in the fields of economy, defence industry cooperation and counterterrorism. President Erdogan reiterated TR’s support for the resolution of the Kashmir issue while his counterpart underlined PAK’s full support to the Turkish Cypriots and TR’s efforts in fighting terrorism. The two leaders re-affirmed their commitment to work together for peace, security and stability in Afghanistan. President Erdogan will be visiting Islamabad in September 2022 and will co-Chair the 7th High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC).***

***TR has become one of PAK’s biggest defence industry supplier after China and the two countries have been jointly producing ADA class corvettes. PAK has procured 30 Turkish ATAK helicopters and TR has modernised PAK’s French built AGOSTA class submarines and has assisted in the maintenance of PAK’s F-16 fleet. The two countries collaborate in the co-development of the TF-X 5th generation fighter jet, “the first big fighter jet of the Muslims”.***

***The annual bilateral trade volume reached 1B USD in 2021 and the target is set to 5B USD over the next three years. A Joint Task Force under their Ministries of Trade and Commerce is established for the development of a comprehensive road map to address issues of bilateral trade. TR businesspeople are invited to invest in PAK, in particular in the fields of alternative energy, agriculture and tourism. The two countries signed seven agreements in various fields.***

***TR has tightened its policy on the issuance of visa and temporary residence permits for Pakistani nationals following an increase of incidents in Turkey’s soil which were initiated by Pakistanis. These incidents also led a part of the TR population to perceive them as disrespectful of the Turkish culture, values and women. TR has repeatedly appealed to PAK to curb the illegal outflow, yet unsuccessfully.***

**Assessment**

Throughout the years, the Turkish-Pakistani relations seem not to be affected by the change in their respective domestic scenes and have steadily stood by each other as reliable allies since the 19th century. The two countries share similar views on many regional and international issues, including in multilateral fora and strive to increase their strategic autonomy. With the current enhancement of their strategic and military-defence cooperation, Turkey aims to find the sustenance it needs to strengthen its influence in Asia in line with its foreign policy ambitions.

Both countries need to attract foreign investment to face their respective finanacial challenges hence geo-economics is an important element of their foreign policy. Pakistan’s energy sector and in particular the hydro, thermal, coal, wind and solar areas could be attractive to TR’s investment who in return could share expertise in the building and management of dams that PAK needs. While there is potential in strengthening their economic collaboraiton, the two countires need to work in building robust cooperation mechanisms to face the growing international challeges.

Since 2018 the cooperation between the two countries in defence industry has been boosted significantly and TR became PAK’s second biggest arms supplier after CIN. Through the cooperation with PAK, TR could indirectly or even directly seek Chinese military technology as PAK has been assisted by CIN in the development of fighter jets, missiles, warships etc. In any case both countries aim to diversify their options and counter their weapons dependency to the West.

On regional connectivity it remains to be seen whether it will bear fruits PAK’s proposal to CIN to expand the China-Pakistan corridor into a “trilateral arrangement” including TR. The latter has shown interest in this initiative since 2016 in line with its development strategy. PAK’s attempt, although not the first one, seems more timely now as it comes a day after the CIN FM announced his intention to expand BRICS.

**Detail**

EUDEL (Papadimouli) held a meeting with MFA’s Head of Department for Pakistan at the Deputy Directorate General for South Asia.

The Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif paid his first official visit to TR between 31 May to 2 June, which coincided with the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation that included FM Zardar, MoD Asif and Minister for Commerce and Investment Qamar. PM Sharif held a tête-à-tête meeting with President Erdogan and discussed the enhancement of bilateral cooperation at all levels including in international platforms and exchanged views on regional and global issues of common concern.

At the joint press conference, the two leaders stressed that the meeting was “very productive” and agreed to strengthen further their bilateral relations with a “strategic perspective in line with the history, friendship and potential of the two countries” giving priority to the economic cooperation and the joint efforts for eliminating terrorism. President Erdogan said, “PAK’s security, stability, and prosperity is equal to that of Turkey”. He reiterated TR’s support for the resolution of the Kashmir issue “in line with the legitimate expectations of the Kashmiri brothers and within the framework of the UN resolutions”. His counterpart underlined PAK’s full support for the Turkish Cypriots (even though PAK has not formally recognised) and on TR’s efforts in the fighting of terrorism including “FETO” and PKK, saying “enemies of TR are the enemies of PAK”. The two leaders affirmed their commitment to work together for the peace, security and stability in Afghanistan.

President Erdogan will be visiting Islamabad in September 2022 and will co-Chair the 7th High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC). It is likely that at the same time the two countries will hold the 7th meeting of the TR-PAK Military Consultative Group (MSG) which is a high level military dialogue mechanism.

The PAK PM also met with FM Cavusoglu who said that this visit would bring “a new dimension” in their bilateral relations. Sharif praised Cavusoglu for his personal contribution in the strengthening of existing institutional mechanisms of cooperation between the two countries.

Earlier in May, TR and PAK scholars and militaries held a four-day conference “TR-PAK Security Dialogue” on bilateral, regional and global security issues. The conference took place in Istanbul’s Aydin University with the participation of SETA and Bahcesehir University. The two sides exchanged views on how to work together on common challenges and opportunities and strengthen their solidarity.

During his visit, the PAK PM met also with TR MoD Akar with whom discussed regional defence and security issues and exchanged views on cooperation opportunities in defence industry. President Erdogan had earlier stressed that TR will provide “all support needed for the strengthening of PAK’s military infrastructure”.

In recent years, TR has become one of PAK’s biggest defence industry supplier after China, in particular in the fields of aviation and navy. TR and PAK have been jointly producing ADA class corvettes as part of TR’s National Ship Project (MILGEM)[[1]](#footnote-1). In 2018, the sale of such warship to PAK was recorded as the “largest single item deal in the history of the TR defence industry”, of a value of 1B USD. PAK has also procured 30 ATAK helicopters of a value of 1.5B USD and TR has modernised PAK’s French built AGOSTA class submarines while assisting PAK in the maintenance of its F-16 fleet. Moreover, the two countries have developed a training exchange programme between their armed forces, which enhances their military-to-military cooperation.

In August 2021, the Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) and the Pakistani National Engineering & Scientific Commission (NESCOM) signed a contract for the production of TAI ANKA Medium-Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) combat drone. Certain reports claim that PAK has procured TR’s Bayraktar TB2 drones and also Akinci Attack Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (TIHA) drones which are still under development. In late May, a satellite imagery showed the silhouette of TB2 combat drone in PAK’s air base in Murid, however is not confirmed whether PAK is operating it or the drone was there for demonstration, evaluation or other similar purposes. TR and PAK are currently collaborating in the co-development of the TF-X 5th generation fighter jet, “the first big fighter jet of the Muslims”. TR has invited Malaysia to also join this project.

In 2021, the annual bilateral trade volume reached 1B USD showing an increase of 22.5% from the previous year. The two leaders set the target to 5B USD for the next three years. During his visit, PM Sharif met with the TR Minister of Trade Mus and agreed to establish a Joint Task Force under their Ministries of Trade and Commerce to develop a comprehensive road map to address issues of bilateral trade including logistics, banking, customs and agriculture.

The two sides also discussed connectivity projects and in particular, the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul cargo train and the opportunities that could offer in conducting business efficiently and expeditiously and boost regional trade. Earlier in May, the PAK PM Sharif, during the launch of the 3rd ADA Class corvette, proposed to expand the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)[[2]](#footnote-2) to a trilateral cooperation and include TR. This announcement came a day after the CIN FM Yi proposed the expansion of BRICS.

PM Sharif addressed the TR-PAK Business Council and invited TR businesspeople to invest in PAK in particular in the fields of alternative energy, automobile industry, agriculture, tourism, education, logistics, civil aviation, communication and information technologies. PM Sharif emphasised on the potential the textile industry could offer and the need for development of a joint strategy in this field. Moreover, he asked TR’s support and cooperation in the field of hydropower generation and renewable energy and underlined the potential of a collaboration in the oil and gas fields, not only in exploration and production but also in the building of refineries and pipelines.

The PAK PM said that the economic barriers and obstacles should be resolved, one being the visa application process.TR has tightened its policy on the issuance of visa and temporary residence permits for Pakistani nationals following an increase of incidents in Turkish soil which were initiated by Pakistanis. The TR authorities noted an increase of illegal Pakistani immigrants coming to TR via Iran. Reportedly, 3.681 Pakistanis are under administrative detention at removal centres and law enforcement facilities these days. TR has repeatedly appealed to PAK to curb the illegal outflow, yet unsuccessfully. Despite the good “brotherly” relations between the two countries, the Pakistani immigrants are perceived by a part of the Turkish population as disrespectful of the Turkish culture, values and women. The latest incidents against women and the kidnap of a Nepalese tourist, led Turkish population to an anti-Pakistani campaign in the social media using the hashtag “Pakistan Get Out”. As a consequence, the Pakistani Consulate in Istanbul advised its “ressortissants” to be careful and remain vigilant.

The two countries signed a total of seven bilateral agreements/MoUs/Protocols (in Annex) related to public debt management, cooperation between credit guarantee institutions for small and medium enterprise financing, housing, public-private partnership models, knowledge sharing in economic and social policy planning and technical cooperation on highway engineering.

**SIGN-OFF: N. MEYER-LANDRUT, HoD**

**ANNEX**

**List of Agreements**

1) Memorandum of Understanding between the Turkish Presidency of Strategy and Budget and Pakistan’s Public-Private Partnership Authority.

2) Framework for Knowledge Sharing Program between the Government of Turkey and the Government of Pakistan.

3) Memorandum of Understanding on Highway Engineering between the Turkish Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure and Pakistan’s Ministry of Communications.

4) Joint Ministerial Statement on Developing Bilateral Trade and Economic Relations between Turkey and Pakistan.

5) Technical Cooperation Protocol between the Turkish Ministry of Treasury and Finance and Pakistan’s Ministry of Finance.

6) Cooperation Protocol on Debt Management between the Turkish Ministry of Treasury and Finance and Pakistan’s Ministry of Economic Affairs.

7) Memorandum of Understanding between the Turkish Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change and NAYA Pakistan Housing and Development Authority (NAPHDA) on cooperation in the field of housing.

1. According to the contract signed in July 2018 between the Pakistani Navy and TR’s state-run defence firm ASFAT, PAK would acquire four MILGEM-class ships (two build in TR and two build in PAK). The contract also included the transfer of technology. TR is one of the 10 countries in the world that can build, design, and maintain warships. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The CPEC is a 3.000 km long route project of 60B USD value, connecting China’s northwest Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region with Gwadar Port in Western Pakistan. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)