

REAR ADMIRAL KADIR SAGDIC: Admiral Sagdic, from the Turkish navy.

Turkey, apart from being a “Big Bird,” in English, is also a country, a population which is nearly one-quarter of the United States, as well as in geography, and around sixty thousand manpower in the navy, and around 150 ships and vessels, quite new and still ongoing, restructuring and renovation of the ship-building. And it’s in the midst of three continents. It’s a gateway between from the north, Europe, from the south, Africa, and from the east, by Asia.

Some statistics which was replicated several times here, but I would like to put them forward to you Admiral Wilcocks stated, over 150 of the U. N. Members, nearly eighty percent, are the coastal states now. Maritime domain provides an ideal medium for the new type of risks, and ...(inaudible) all maritime are increasingly concerned about maritime security and safeguarding the maritime domain.

As globalization takes both its positive and negative effects over the seas, this stand is likely lot continue in the future. The new global security environment has had implications for Turkey’s surrounding seas, and this has brought forward Turkish navy, along with the Turkish coast guard, as ...(inaudible) and dynamic defense and security provider, and turns from some of its commercials tasks into non-commercial naval tasks, including the conservative ones.

Sea transportation carried over 90 percent of the Turkish exports, as was the case for other states. Last year, a quarter of a billion tons of goods are handled in the Turkish ports. That figure has doubled since 1997. Istanbul and Churnicala (?) Straits do not only provide a wider link between Turkey’s maritime flanks, but also constitute a main artery for the global economy. Turkey, starting in the Caspian basin, and Europe, forms a natural energy bridge between the resource rich countries and the energy hungry world markets. Due to its geographical location, as well as existing and prospective oil and gas pipe line networks, Turkey casts itself as an energy hawk in the region.

You may see from the map, the growing importance of sea-based energy corridor crossing the Black Sea, Aegean, and Mediterranean Sea through the Turkish Straits, along with blue stream gas pipelines ...(inaudible) as well as the ...(inaudible) and in the near future, ...(inaudible) pipelines. This will make Turkey's maritime jurisdiction areas more vital and important than before.

The Black Sea is gaining greater significance, particularly within the context of wider Euro-Atlantic security. As Black Sea regional politics are becoming increasingly relevant in the international value. The main reasons expressed by three important words, energy and security. During the last decade, as the Caspian Sea and the Central Asian Hydrocarbon resources opened up to global markets, the Black Sea has become one of the most important energy corridors of the world. In this context, Turkish approach to the Black Sea maritime security is based on two pillars.

First, full cooperation and coordination among all Black Sea regional states should be attained, so that regional stability could be further enhanced. Secondly, the maritime security of the region should be complementary, not a competing one to the Euro-Atlantic security system, as maritime security is indivisible.

As an average, three hundred ships move in the Black Sea on a daily basis. 150 of this figure cross Turkish Straits, with the rest of the operations in mainly east-west access in the Black Sea. Last year, fifty-five thousand merchant ships, belonging to one or two states, have navigated through Turkish Straits, either to or from the Black Sea. They carried almost have a billion tons of goods, one-third of which was petroleum products, needing higher risk of a safe passage through the Straits. Possessing Turkish Straits, and longest coastline in the Black Sea, Turkey has always promoted peace and stability in this important area. In this respect, the main role of the Montreux Convention has played, in the last 71 years, cannot be denied. With all that, there are no threats, but some risks in the Black Sea maritime domain. However, these risks may have potential to transform themselves into security threats if not checked and deterred.

When the Cold War was over, preventing security vacuum in the Black Sea area, Turkey has pioneered a series of initiatives in the last decade, starting with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, namely BSEC initiative, in 1992. Within the security framework, Turkey led the Black Sea initiative in 2001, confidence and security-building measures in the naval field in 2002, launched Operation Black Sea Harmony in 2004, initiated Black Sea coast guard, border guard cooperation forum since last year.

To summarize each of these initiatives: in 2001, in order to revitalize regional cooperation activities, improve relationship between Black Sea countries, and increase peace and stability in the region, a multi-national naval on-call task group was established and named as Black Sea Forum. This has been activated for the tenth time, altering the command post among six participant nations, and this year it was activated again, second time under the Turkish naval command.

Turkey regards Black Sea Forum as a unique and exemplary regional initiative, promoting peace and stability in the maritime domain, as well as an instrument increasing inter-operability, putting together former adversaries, namely NATO and Russia part (?) in a military domain, where each participant can take the lead in turn. At the operational level, Black Sea Forum has already achieved the inter-operability of different units belonging to different security systems. This is a unique success, further encouraging the idea to consider Black Sea Forum as a regional security tool, with a larger mission spectrum, including human domain and social domain.

Operation Black Sea Harmony is another initiative. This is an iron fist in a velvet glove, in terms of challenging the risks. Turkish navy, in close cooperation with Turkish coast guard, launched a maritime security operation, named Operation Black Sea Harmony, as of first of March, 2004. The aim of this operation, in compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1373, 1566, to establish presence, operations in contribution to overall efforts for deterring, disrupting, and preventing the risks and potential threats of terrorism and illicit trafficking, and weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery and related materials in the maritime environment.

Mission of Operation Black Sea Harmony is to achieve and maintain maritime domain awareness in the designated patrolled areas, enabling prompt identification of, and reaction to suspect vessels, as well as to conduct active presence operations along vital sea lanes of communications in Turkey-based maritime jurisdiction area, and the Black Sea, as a whole. With these aspects, Operation Black Sea Harmony is a vital maritime security operation, composed of maritime domain awareness, as well maritime interdiction operation's pillars. This operation is affiliated with NATO-led operations, active in the Mediterranean, regarding information and intelligence sharing, as well as suspect vessel shadowing and interdiction. Operation Black Sea Harmony consists of regular patrols with frigates, patrol boats, in pre-defined surveillance areas in the Black Sea. Helicopters, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft, and coast guard vessels assist in this activity.

According to last three year's statistics, Operation Black Sea Harmony has detected approximately 475 thousand contacts, and identified 98 percent of them. An integrated network of coastal surveillance radar stations, also equipped with AIS, has been activated in the Black Sea. So maritime situation awareness of the Black Sea has been dramatically improved.

This system is also integrated with the Turkish Straits Vessel Traffic Management System. The data gathered from these stations is currently disseminated to NATO, which includes United States and EURCOM platforms. Maritime Situation Awareness has been developed not only in the Black Sea, but also in the Aegean and the Mediterranean through AIS and BTS systems, all of which are collated and fused under the Turkish navy Maritime Surveillance system. All suspect vessels, and vessels carrying hazardous material, have been shadowed during their transit through the Turkish Straits, as well as in the Black Sea. This operation is open to all Black Sea countries, and Turkey has extended the invitation to all Black Sea countries to participate in. Russian Federation officially participated to those operations, as of 27 of December, 2006. Additionally,

Ukraine has participated in the operation, as of 25 April, 2007. And we expect Romania will participate soon.

Another initiative which is dealing with coast guards, within the aim of promoting the stability, safety and security in the Black Sea area, and improvement of cooperation and coordination of maritime law enforcement activities, in order to prevent terrorism, illegal immigration, smuggling of drugs, or arm, radioactive substances, and other kinds of illegal activities in the Black Sea. For this, vital states signed an agreement and it's called as the Black Sea Vital States Coast Guard Cooperation Forum. This agreement was another milestone to improve existing legislative base of cooperation and coordination among parties and border coast guard issues. Turkish navy also makes collaborative efforts to increase new NATO allies in the Black Sea. And I should speed up. I got the point.

And another one, similarly, Operation Mediterranean Shield, in the ...(inaudible) area, BTC region, and you will have the copies of the ...(inaudible) further on. And should I follow? Okay. This is relevant as of April, 2006. Okay, let me go little bit faster. Okay. Operation Active Endeavor, as mentioned before, since it's beginning in 2001, Turkey has provided maximum number of assets, to introduce security operation and modern intonations. And Operation Mediterranean Shield, Active Endeavor are complimentary, to provide an uninterrupted presence in the area. So, in addition to our contribution in the maritime domain, we also-- We were very active in the IMO, to sustain the legal basis in international maritime cooperation. And starting from the convention for suppression of unlawful acts, in 1988, after the incident of 9/11, we were very active along U. S. to bring these bases up to challenge the new situation.

And Turkey, as of 1 July, 2004, was among a few countries trying the implementation of AIS upgrade and long-range identification and trading Turkian (?) project. To come to an end, in conclusion, following the disastrous earthquake in Turkey and 9/11 events in the U. S. A., which were the shaking phenomena of the post-Cold War era, Turkish Navy

adjusts its infrastructure and redeploys forces to meet new security risks. In our current maritime strategy, we have devoting special emphasis on human dimension and public relations, as well. Port visits, and maritime festivals are examples of such components of the strategy, which help tremendously as an ice-breaking party, putting together the neighboring people, which were divided through an Iron Curtain during the Cold War, as well as convincing Turkish public opinion, and our political masters. So, our current strategy's main components, to sustain U. S. maritime strategy and our allies, to maintain and sustain regional stability, based on good neighbor relations, fulfill allied commitments, in NATO and U. N., prior to all human dimension, and be prepared to meet the new security challenges, including environmental disasters, new tasks, and new roles. Close cooperation and coordination with coast guard and other services. Thank you for your patience.