

TURKEY - INDIA
STRATEGIC
DIALOGUE PROGRAM



TURKEY - INDIA

ROUND TABLE

MEETING - 3

**"India-Turkey Relations in
Current Geopolitical Context:
Scope and Challenges"**





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STRATEGIC VISION DOCUMENT

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“India-Turkey Relations in Current Geopolitical Context: Scope and Challenges”

(2019, New Delhi)

SCOPE

The existing phase of international affairs has reflected the realities of transition of power. Today, power and influence is no longer monopolised by a single entity but disseminated among several international actors including non-state actors. The shift in the global pivot is mainly towards Asia-Pacific thus increasing the focus of the global community in the region. The economic growth, military modernization, huge global market potential, geographical proximity for connectivity, infrastructural development and global engagements of Asian countries such as China and India has resulted in the shift of global pivot to Asia-Pacific region.

India and Turkey are an integral part of the Asia-Pacific region and important players in international affairs. The two countries are not only active members in the United Nations and G20 but also share common interests to contribute in global and regional security and stability, combat non-traditional threats such as terrorism, climate change, cyber security etc.

Notably, both India and Turkey are prominent players in their respective regions. The current regional and global geopolitics such as the Syrian crisis, the Brexit, Afghanistan security issue, the proposal to withdraw INF Treaty, the withdrawal of Iran nuclear deal have posed a security challenge to international community at large including India and Turkey.

In the current global context, understanding the role, perspectives, approach and influence of India and Turkey is of paramount importance as their multi-faceted geopolitical position gives both the countries considerable leverage in engaging in the Asia-Pacific region.

The engagement of both the countries with major international players is also a significant aspect of their respective current foreign policy behaviour. The diversification of foreign policy interests to balance all major players is the new norm adopted many countries including India and Turkey. In fact, both India and Turkey are important partners of both the US and Russia.



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The situation makes the bilateral engagement even more relevant in today's context as the current hostility and tensions between the US and Russia such as the US' proposal to withdraw from INF Treaty, the imposition of unilateral sanctions on Russia poses greater challenge to common allies such as India and Turkey. In the European periphery, Turkey is likely to face the most visible challenge of Brexit and an impact on its aspirations to gain permanent membership in the EU.

West Asia has been a geopolitical asset and a source of competition for various international players due to its geostrategic position, oil resources, water resources, military capabilities, potential energy transit routes, trade and economic prospects. The Syrian crisis, the revival of Russia's West Asia foreign policy, the US decision to withdraw from Syria, and the reimposition of sanctions on Iran and other such developments, the region continues to remain contentious.

Given the fragile nature and security concerns, the region has become an international fixture as repercussions of geopolitical consequences are likely to stretch far beyond the West Asian region. Subsequently, the role, interests and influence of regional players and extra-regional actors in West Asia including Turkey and India's becomes crucial for assessment.

In South Asia, the geopolitics of the region has played an important role in diplomacy and maneuvering India's foreign policy approach towards its neighborhood. The developments in Afghanistan are an important aspect in determining the strategic calculus of major players especially post US drawdown in 2014. The security and stability of Afghanistan, depends on the efforts of both regional and extra-regional players including India to maintain political, economic and security interests in the region.

At the bilateral level, both India and Turkey have enjoyed historical connections and strengthened by exchange of visits of leaders of both countries in recent times. India-Turkey economic and commercial cooperation has been an important sphere of bilateral relationship. Several bilateral agreements and institutional mechanisms, at the governmental level as well as B2B have been the focus for economic and commercial ties. India and Turkey share traditional cultural overlap and bilateral cooperation has enhanced over the years.

Energy dimension is identified as another potential area of cooperation between India and Turkey. As members of UN and G20, India and Turkey have aligned interests and concerns in these global platforms. The participation of Turkey- in a non-Western organisation's event such as BRICS summit 2018 has reinforced the perception of multipolarity as advocated by its members-states including India. Cultural exchange and soft power diplomacy is an important tool to strengthen the bilateral relations between India and Turkey.



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MEETING

Turkey - India Round Table Meeting is an alternate periodic annual calendar event jointly organised by the Indian Council of World Affairs (**ICWA**) and Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Studies (**TASAM**).

The main objective of the Meetings is to provide an opportunity to identify various spheres of potential cooperation to enhance the bilateral relations between India and Turkey. The previously held two Meetings have reflected India and Turkey's interest to deliberate on various issues to address the scope, prospects and challenges in strengthening the bilateral engagement including understanding the geopolitical developments in West Asia, South Asia and the European periphery.

Turkey - India Round Table Meeting - 3, that is to be hosted by ICWA, will look at India - Turkey bilateral relations and also aim to reflect upon the emerging geopolitics in West Asia, South Asia and European periphery. The Meeting will also discuss about the current developments at the global and regional level. The Meeting is also keen to formulate and identify potential areas of regional cooperation, energy security, trade and economic relations, soft power diplomacy, and establish global stability and security as important areas of strengthening bilateral relations between India and Turkey.

In this context, **Turkey - India Round Table Meeting - 3**, themed “**India-Turkey Relations in Current Geopolitical Context: Scope and Challenges**” will have the following agenda:

1ST SESSION

“**Current Global Geopolitical Context: Approach and Perspective of India and Turkey**”

The session aims to discuss the growing shift of global pivot to Asia-Pacific region. In this context, the session will focus on understanding the role of international players in promoting their respective foreign policy interests in current global context. In the context of partnership with great powers, the diversification of foreign policy interests, approach and perspectives of both India and Turkey will be discussed. Developments in international affairs such as the current hostility and tensions between the US and Russia such as the US' proposal to withdraw from INF Treaty, the imposition of unilateral sanctions on Russia and the visible impact of Brexit for instance poses greater challenge to countries such as India and Turkey. The emergence and role of multilateral organizations such as SCO, EU and BRICS focusing on political, economic and security aspect in today's global context is another area of focus of the session.



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2ND SESSION

“Role and Engagement of Regional and External Actors in the Geopolitics of West Asia and South Asia”

The West Asian region has been a geopolitical asset and a source of competition for various international players. The Syrian crisis, the revival of Russia’s West Asia foreign policy, the US decision to withdraw from Syria, and the reimposition of sanctions on Iran and other such developments, the region continues to remain contentious. Subsequently, the role, interests and influence of regional players and extra-regional actors in West Asia becomes crucial for assessment. The South Asian region on the other hand has played an important role in maneuvering the foreign policy interests of regional and external actors. The developments in Afghanistan are an important aspect in determining the strategic calculus of major players especially post US drawdown in 2014. The focus of the session therefore is to understand the role and engagement of regional and external actors including India and Turkey in the geopolitics of West Asia and South Asia.

3RD SESSION

“India-Turkey Bilateral Relations: Agenda of Cooperation”

In order to strengthen the bilateral relations between India and Turkey, this session aims to focus on identifying potential areas of cooperation between the two countries. At the political level, both India and Turkey have enjoyed historical connections and strengthened by exchange of visits of leaders of both countries in recent times. In the economic sphere of cooperation, India-Turkey economic and commercial cooperation has been an important sphere of bilateral relationship. Several bilateral agreements and institutional mechanisms, at the governmental level as well as B2B have been the focus for economic and commercial ties. Energy dimension is identified as another prospective area of cooperation between India and Turkey. Both India and Turkey have aligned interests in combating terrorism and other non-traditional threats such as climate change, cyber security which is to be discussed in the session. The session will also explore soft power diplomacy and traditional cultural overlap between India and Turkey.

MAIN THEME

India-Turkey Relations in Current Geopolitical Context: Scope and Challenges

SUB-THEMES

Current Global Geopolitical Context: Approach and Perspective of India and Turkey

Role and Engagement of Regional and External Actors in the Geopolitics of West Asia and South Asia

India-Turkey Bilateral Relations: Agenda of Cooperation