



Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
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Press Release

on

First ICWA-TASAM Dialogue on India-Turkey Relations

The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Studies (TASAM) in New Delhi on January 21, 2013, aimed at fostering exchanges and co-operation between the two institutions, in order to intensify and broaden the bilateral relationship between India and Turkey in the changing global scenario.

Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, Director General, ICWA, and Mr. Suleyman Sensoy, Chairman of TASAM, thereafter, inaugurated a day-long Dialogue to deliberate on the setting of a new course in the bilateral relations amidst the shifting dynamics of world politics, particularly the critical political and social transformation in the Middle East and its turbulent aftermath. Ambassador Bhatia emphasized the strategic significance of the region straddling India and Turkey and the role the two countries, both pluralistic democracies, can play therein. Mr. Sensoy expressed optimism at the future of India-Turkey relationship and the positive contribution it can make to the regional stability. Eminent diplomats, and strategic experts and academics from India and Turkey participated in the Dialogue. An intensive and candid exchange of views on the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and the regional developments marked the Dialogue.

Former Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal from the Indian side highlighted the ramifications of the ascendancy of Asia, the relative decline of the West and the emergence of a polycentric world. Prof. Ali Engin OBA of TASAM dwelt on Turkey's new Middle-East policy and its quest for a pivotal role in the region. An animated discussion took place on the Arab Spring, its fallout and the continued political ferment in the Middle East. The discussion on the evolving situation in Syria, Afghanistan, and the developments in North Africa was

punctuated with concern at the growing sectarian violence and its deep impact on the entire region, and the upsurge in terrorism.

A comprehensive appraisal of the Indo-Turkish bilateral ties was undertaken, recalling historical linkages between the two countries, and recognizing the need for a more synergistic engagement. The positive impact of the burgeoning trade and commerce, with an annual turnover US\$ 7 bn. was noted. It was agreed that the ICWA and the TASAM will help catalyze the bilateral relations in a new dynamic direction through their enhanced interaction.
