



## MEETING WITH A DELEGATION FROM THE TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

headed by

**Kamran Inan**

Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee

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"Turkey will get out of this economic crisis with its own efforts and the help of its allies" argued Mr. Kamran Inan, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), in a wide ranging talk at a CSIS Turkey Project meeting on April 4. Inan was accompanied by five other leading members of the TGNA delegation representing all the parties in the TGNA.

Although he was inevitably drawn into a discussion of Turkey's current economic difficulties, Inan focused on the main issues in Turkish foreign policy, namely the Middle East, Northern Iraq, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the evolving relationship between Turkey, the United States and the EU, with particular emphasis on differences on the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

With respect to relations with the EU, Inan argued that despite Turkey's "sincere efforts and the strong support of Turkish public opinion for full membership," the EU has failed to show the necessary reciprocal political and economic commitment. "While Poland has been given 950 million euros a year, Turkey has been offered 170 million euros. There is a clear double standard and discrimination towards Turkey although Turkey does its best to comply with the Copenhagen criteria," Inan complained. According to Inan, EU is not sincere about wanting Turkey as a full member. "Sometimes I jokingly ask my European counterparts whether they would be ready to accept Turkey into the EU by the year 3000," he added.

On EU efforts to develop its own defense policy while using NATO assets, Inan pointed out that excluding Turkey, a trusted strategic NATO ally for nearly 50 years, from the decision making in ESDP "does not make sense." He continued, "Four non-engaged countries during the Cold War who spent not a penny on common defense will have more say on NATO assets than Turkey. That is unacceptable." However, Inan expressed the hope that Washington would pursue a clearer and firmer policy on the European defense initiative. If the Europeans wanted to develop a purely European defense arrangement, Inan argued, they had to rely on their own assets and capabilities.

According to Inan, it is essential for the West to redefine its traditional attitude vis-à-vis Turkey so that Turkey is "regarded as a full partner rather than as the frontline of European defense." He said "Especially, some voices coming from the EU say that you have been excellent soldiers during the Cold War but now the Cold War is over. Just give your number and address so we might call you tomorrow." However, Inan stated bluntly, "That call will not be responded to. We have learned a very bitter lesson. It took us 50 years."

Nevertheless, Inan remained confident that Turkey's Western-oriented foreign policy would not change. "Our triangle of cooperation among Turkey, Israel, and the U.S. will continue" Inan said and added that Turkish-U.S. relations have always been solid since the Truman doctrine, despite diverging views on the Cyprus and Armenian issues.