

HATAY DECLARATION - 2

1 - "2nd International Middle East Congress took place in Hatay on 7-9 December in a constructive and sincere climate.

During the Congress which is organized by TASAM with the co-hosting of Hatay Governorate and Mustafa Kemal University and in cooperation with Middle East Institute of Marmara University and Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies, the main theme focused on was "Change in the Middle East". Politicians from Middle East, United States and Europe, diplomatic mission representatives, academicians and media representatives have attended the Congress. The recent developments in Middle East have been examined in detail during the meeting. Fulltime participation of Turkish Republic President Chief Advisor to the Middle East Mr. Erşat Hürmüzlü and his conveying the warm message of President Mr. Abdullah Gül to the participants has been met with sympathy.

Within this framework, the issues of "The Historical Background of Change in Middle East", "Social and Political Aspects of Transformation in the Middle East" and "Change in the Middle East and Turkey" have been addressed and ideas and opinions were exchanged regarding the political, social, economic problems that Middle Eastern countries have to overcome.

2 - During the Congress, an emphasis has been made on the importance of having chosen Hatay as the venue and also on the possibility of peaceful coexistence of communities having various identities with the inspiration of this model city's socio-economic achievement. It has been mentioned that it is an obligation that the countries of the region enter into cooperation as distinctive actors, on political, economic, cultural and strategic fields for the sake of peace in the region and the world and it has been decided with unanimity that this outcome would be presented to the considerations of the decision makers.

3 - The most important source of instability in the region at present is that there is not yet any agenda for the post regime changes era. The process has not been terminated yet in neither of the countries where the process of change continue. The decision makers are expected to behave with deliberateness, to refrain from immediate reactionary scolds, to act with the raison d'etat and to develop permanent long term unique solutions for stability and welfare. It should not be allowed that the institutions of state be dysfunctional, for not to give rise to the undermining of the perceptions of legitimacy and trust aimed at the state as an institution. The institutional structures of the states become extremely fragile. Once the old regimes based on kinship and patronage fade away, the state apparatus loses its efficiency substantially. The loss of function of the state institutions has appeared as one of the most important threats with which the states should deal.

4 - The deficiency of leadership and democratic experience paves the way for a climate which is prone to the emergence of new authoritative structures. That's why, constructive interactions between state ranks and political compositions based on the peoples of the region should be provided, thus the tensions should be removed. The honor and the dignity of the regimes are dependent to the honor and the dignity of the people. The vacuums between the regimes and the peoples should be eliminated. The power sharing and its distribution should be based upon the legitimate principles in such a manner that the stability of the region be maintained. The local patterns should be the primary source of legitimacy of the governments. In this context, assessing the region's original economic resources within the region is of great importance. Even if socio-economic reforms are important, good governance and the dignity of citizenship should be given priority.

5 - The actual borders in the Middle East have been determined via the ethnic, religious and denominational tracks in line with The British and French interests, then Western powers. Even if the grassroots movements in the region seem to be united within the framework of the idealist concepts such as freedom, welfare and dignity; the possibility of the resurgence of the degradations in question has reinforced. That's why, the change and the transformation of the region should be determined according to freewill of the regions' people, not according to strategic interests and humiliating impositions of outside powers. In order to evaluate the potential that the peoples with different ethnicity, religion and denominations have, diplomatic, political, economic and social relations should be developed among the region's countries and peoples; the interaction should be increased to the maximum level possible and ethnic, religious and denominational degradations should prevented. The increase of interdependency from the economic respect is the leading means aimed at decreasing the possibility of conflict and appeasing the tensions.

6 - The history of the region has demonstrated that the peoples of the region have the potential for the peaceful coexistence. The ethnic and denominational degradations have

deepened with the involvement of the West in the region. By emphasizing the values like justice and humanity, it would be possible to restart an acceptable process among the different ethnic, religious and denominational groups.

7 - The rise of social media on the last decade has increased the level of interaction and access to information to an unprecedented degree. Therefore, for the forthcoming period, the subsistence of the regimes that have not the capacity to meet the feasible demands of the people has become difficult. On the other hand, the people have become more subject to the manipulations via the social media. That's why, necessary steps should be taken for consciousness and for taking cautions by new administrations in order for adaption to this new situation.

8 - Outside actors should end supporting the authoritarian regimes on the grounds of preventing radical movements from coming to power. The people of the region, by controlling the street persistently, has seen that they could paint the regimes into a corner. Therefore, from this moment, outside interventions would worsen the situation. It is a truism that civil society is weak and the opposition parties is powerless and that the world of business is completely dependent to the governments. However, outside interventions would not contribute seriously to the improvement of the situation. The solution lies in establishing a reliable balance between societies and the administrations.

9 – To see the events in the region as the offset of the policies of Western countries is to escape from the responsibility and to contribute to the undermining of the self confidence among the regional patterns. The responsibility of what is happening in the regions firstly belongs to the regional patterns; hence it is these regional patterns that should act for the solution to the problems.

10 - Turkey is neither in search of being a model for the region nor is she a Trojan horse of the Western countries. Turkey is in search of being an inspiration source based on her historical background and responsibilities and of culmination of the transformation in the region for the region's peoples peacefully.

11 - The integrity of the countries in the region is closely connected with one another. Any disintegration or disorder in one of them has the power to influence the others. Therefore, the direction of the transformation in Middle East should be determined and an initiative should be started in order to take the necessary steps and the efforts should be united in this direction. A

council aimed at developing economic and political relations in order to determine correct roadmaps in line with the interests of peoples and countries of the region, aimed at emphasizing common values and aimed at evaluating the possibilities of investment should be established and this council should be supported by virtual teams.