

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Keynote Speech

First of all as the saying goes, history repeats itself. If people had drawn lessons [from past events], history would not repeat itself. It is precisely because people do not draw lessons that history repeats itself. Past efforts have been made to overcome such obstacles.

We cannot ignore that. We have seen that during the outbreak of World War II, new formations were sought in order to establish justice. However, although the United Nations was set up to establish this search for justice, we are at a point where the UN is still unable to find an answer to the issues in our world. We see the UN's efforts spanned across different parts of the world, and the Security Council has exerted many resolutions. These resolutions have not served in bringing an effective outcome. The state of Afghanistan is clear. To our south, Syria's situation is clear. Have they resolved the issue in these places? No. Why not? Because the global justice system has collapsed.

Although there are many resolutions at the UN that is unfavourable to Israel, these resolutions cannot practically be put into effect. Why? Because so long as Israel does not recognise these resolutions, no one says or can say anything. Why? There are five permanent members at the Security Council and if one of these five permanent members says no, it is settled. So, regarding Israel, do you think the United States will say yes to a resolution if it is against the will of Israel? No, that is not possible. So, what happens in the end? In the end it is again in their favour. So, what has to be done? This is what needs to be done: the time is over for the five permanent members of the Security Council. That was the conditions for the post-WWII era. We are no longer bound by the same circumstances. It is time for a new transformation and a new change. A United Nations should be formed in which all 193 members serve as permanent members. Otherwise it is impossible to establish peace and justice in the world if we only rely on these five permanent members. This is the reason why I say the world is bigger than five. The world is especially bigger than one, however, unfortunately this is not the current practice at the Security Council. If we look at all of the countries represented at the Security Council and divide them according to their continent, does it represent the world? No. We say that there needs to be a UN Security Council that represents all continents. We say that Asia should be represented, Africa should be represented and so should Europe. Let us go even further: there needs to be a UN Security Council that represents all seven continents. This is something we have to achieve. Who will achieve that? The political leaders of the world will achieve that. But will this be favoured by the five permanent members of the Security Council? Well it may or may not be. Then, this should be brought into



question in the UN General Assembly. Here, we must debate this. We have to in-stall this in the minds of people worldwide, we have to work on global perceptions, and take steps accordingly, because today's world is no longer the world of the First World War era, nor the Second World War era.

Fatih Er (Moderator): Distinguished President, our speakers and panelists said that Turkey may become even more active and even more effective globally based on its historical heritage. Over the past few weeks, there has been a diplomatic victory: the Idlib agreement. If this was not achieved then more and more refugees could have entered through our borders and then that would be further turmoil. However, your involvement and tremendous efforts with Turkey's participation in the Astana meetings and in Sochi, prevented Turkey from being subjected to this. Do you think this could be the beginning of a great global turn for Turkey?

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: In the first Sochi Summit and then in subsequent summits in Ankara and Tehran we did really good work and after this work of course the regime started bombing Idlib in Syria, and a very problematic atmosphere was taking hold in Idlib. This caused us to act swiftly. We spoke to Mr. Putin and agreed to hold a finale summit to discuss the Idlib situation. There we witnessed the signing of a 10 item Memorandum of Understanding by our defense ministers. This reconciliation agreement was put into play that very night. The decisiveness and determination of Mr. Putin and myself, and the work done by our delegation has facilitated the process. This is because Mr. Putin said that Russia will take the necessary measures to protect the de-escalation zone in Idlib and that in return we would have to ensure that the radical groups will not operate in the area under discussion. We said let's do this together. As you know in addition to the 12 observation points hosted by Turkey in Idlib, Russia has 10 observation points and Iran has six. However here, the 15 to 20 kilometer corridor is of utmost importance. Because securing this corridor means securing Idlib and we have started fortifying our observation posts. And as these observation points continued to strengthen, so has the confidence of the people of Idlib. We also required the cooperation of all radical groups in Idlib and since these steps were taken, we have not so far experienced any difficulty in conducting talks with them. Our wish is to be able to sustain the situation and this status quo, which we are striving for. And of course, more importantly in our discussions with Russia is to improve the humanitarian situation in Idlib: A region in ruins. 70/80000 people have started to return home and that was the aim of our intervention. Similarly, around 250,000 people have returned to El Bab, Afrin and other parts of northern Syria. The safe return of refugees is the fruit of all our efforts. Even though the total figure is approximately 3.5/4 million refugees, such returns indicate a very positive development. Of course, we have taken further precautions. We have taken certain steps. The 3.5 million refugees that arrived to Turkey are no longer in tent camps because these camps do not meet the needs of refugees. We are now eliminating them slowly and turning them into container towns and cities. This is what we are doing right now to serve Syrian refugees. But when we look at the West, when we look at the world, the situation there is unfortunately very different. We said we would not behave like them and we are doing our best at this point. Mr. Putin has had a positive approach to the resolution of the Idlib issue and in the same manner so has Iran on their latest decision to not be involved in any operation for Idlib. And so, we have taken steps based on that.

Now in Syria, 19,000 trailers of weapons and, ammunition equipment have been supplied to terrorist organisations by America. 3000 cargo planes brought weaponry, ammunition, equipment and devices, and they are currently being used in the north of Syria. There are 22 bases belonging to the USA and they are being consolidated with all this weaponry, ammunition, devices and equipment that have been brought here. And we know that there are five more bases belonging to Russia. So why are these bases located here? Why do we see these bases here? On the one hand we see that people talk about the integrity of Syrian soil. And then on the other hand you establish 22 bases. And again, who will be profiting from the regional oil? Whilst you are calculating gains, Syria is suffering from poverty. You refer to this poverty and then you turn to us and tell us to leave this piece of land? No we are not going to leave. Not until the people of Syria have free and fair elections. Once this takes place we will hand the country over to the real owners and leave. We do not see the US being invited by the state, but the US is there. What we are saying is that once peace and stability is established, then we will leave. This was the case in Afrin and in Idlib. We were invited and that is why we were there. Because wherever and whenever there are people in need, we do our best to go and help.

Fatih Er: Mr. President, your speech at the UN and in recent days has attracted worldwide attention. And Turkey has received messages of support in this context. You mentioned trade wars, and that we may be witnessing these types of wars more frequently in the upcoming period. In your UN speech, you said that you believe if all countries were to act in unison, all of this chaos could be prevented. What type of cooperation/union could be established?

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Simple. Currently, an iron and steel issue has surfaced, and some steps have been taken in regards to iron and steel prices. Of course, the U.S. is a monopoly, and because of that they have exercised their power on the rest of the world by imposing heavier tariffs. Even China could not withstand this and has had to take counter-measures. Russia took its own precautions. We said we are going to purchase the S400 missiles from Russia. The U.S. stated their disapproval of this purchase deal. What was their reason? Because you are a NATO member, a NATO member cannot purchase S400's from a non-NATO country. Now this is such a strange approach. Okay, well you tell me we cannot buy S400's from Russia; but Greece has purchased S300's from Russia. Why did you not tell the same thing to Greece? There is no prohibition for Greece, but we are prohibited from doing this. I'm sorry, we cannot abide by this. Thankfully, NATO's Secretary General, Stoltenberg, made an announcement. He said, as a partner of ours, Turkey is free in its preferences. And right now, due to the current conditions and for the defense of our country, we have taken this step. You may ask why we did not request these defense systems from the US. Well we asked the US for a lot of things for our defense industry but unfortunately the US gave the following response to the majority of our requests: Congress does not allow it. That is the answer they give each time. Well it does not allow us, but does it allow terrorist organisations like the PYD/YPG? 19,000 weaponry, ammunition, equipment and devices you send to a terrorist organisation. You do not sell that to us but you give it to them free of charge. Now how can that happen? It is these kinds of policies that bring on economic war. Their philosophy is: I am strong, therefore I am right. And we are saying that this is not our philosophy. We believe that if you are right, then you are strong. So therefore, as a result, we are not going to give up on this economic warfare. We are going to work together as a nation. I have tremendous faith in my nation. This nation has suffered from famine, from thirst, but they have never given up on their independence.