



Turkey not to change policy regarding Iran's nuclear program

06.04.2011 10:49

Azerbaijan, Baku, April 4 /Trend, T.Konyayeva/

Turkey's confiscation of Iranian weapons and report on it to the UN Security Council does not indicate a change in Ankara's policy toward Tehran, experts say.

"There has been nothing that could change Turkey's policy towards the UN resolutions on Iran," Hilmi Ozev, expert at the Turkish-Asian Studies (TASAM), told Trend by telephone from Istanbul.

The plane was bound for Aleppo, Syria, and was given permission to pass through Turkish airspace provided it made a "technical stop" at Diyarbakir airport on March 21.

Turkey has informed a U.N. Security Council panel that it seized a cache of weapons Iran was attempting to export in breach of a U.N. arms embargo.

The report to the council's Iran sanctions committee, which oversees compliance with the four rounds of punitive steps the 15-nation body has imposed on Iran over its nuclear program, said a March 21 inspection turned up the weapons, which were listed as "auto spare parts" on the plane's documents.

Ozev said this event occurred with the direct impact of the U.S., who acted in conspiracy with NATO.

"We are convinced that the landing of aircraft has been made with the direct impact of U.S. on NATO," said he.

Ozev said that if the military direction of the nuclear program of Iran is confirmed, Turkey may change its position on this issue.

Turkey was one of only two countries that voted against the adoption of UN Security Council resolution in June 2010, which envisages tougher sanctions against Tehran because of its refusal to stop enriching uranium.

Turkey, a neighbor of Iran and one of the leading countries in the region, uniquely protested against tougher sanctions on Iran. In spring 2010, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan clearly expressed their country's position, which is the reluctance of Turkey to take further sanctions.

A U.S. expert Ted Gallen Carpenter also agrees with Ozev saying that the Turkish government is not likely to change its policy towards Iran and embrace rigorous sanctions.

"Ankara's Iran policy is merely one component of a much larger shift in Turkey's overall foreign policy over the past two or three years," Carpenter, Vice President of Defense and Foreign Policy Studies at Cato Institute, wrote in an e-mail to Trend.

He said Turkey's policy is based on greater emphasis on relations with other Muslim states and a distancing of policy from Turkey's traditional NATO allies, including the United States.

In addition, Carpenter believes one other aspect is a determination to show greater independence in foreign policy generally.

"The effort to forge a "third way" with Brazil regarding Iran was a clear example of Turkey's effort to establish itself as a major regional and global power," he said.

In May 2010, foreign ministers of Iran, Turkey and Brazil signed a draft agreement on exchanging Tehran's low-enriched (up 3.5 percent) uranium to highly-enriched (up to 20 percent) fuel for the Tehran research reactor. However, the exchange was not realized because of UN Security Council members' refusal to accept the terms of this agreement.

Carpenter said there is little in the Iranian arms issue that will alter such a fundamental shift in Ankara's foreign policy.

Iranian expert on international issues Davud Hermides Bavand said despite that Turkey voted against the adoption of UN Security Council resolution against Iran, it has repeatedly stated that it would be committed to implementing the

resolution.

"However, Turkey did not take on obligations for the implementation of unilateral sanctions against Iran, the applicable U.S. and European countries," - said to Trend by telephone from Tehran, Doctor of Political Sciences Bavand.

"However, Turkey did not assume obligations for the implementation of unilateral sanctions against Iran, introduced by the U.S. and European countries," Bavand, doctor of political sciences, told Trend by telephone from Tehran.

He believes that the recent incident with the planting of Iranian aircraft proved that Turkey, as a member of NATO, intends to maintain a balance between relations with Western countries, implementing the commitments on implementation of UN resolutions and expanding economic ties with Iran.

"The time will tell how the recent actions by Turkey against Iran will affect the relations between the two countries," said Bavand.

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