



## Is Turkey Warming Up To Iran?

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**Dimitri Lascaris (DL):** Good day, this is Dimitri Lascaris coming to you from Toronto, Canada, for Reason2Resist on December 2nd, 2025. A couple of days ago, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan completed a visit to Tehran, Iran's capital, where he held talks with his Iranian counterpart, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Western corporate media have almost completely ignored their joint press conference, and with good reason – at that press conference, the foreign ministers of Iran and Turkey identified Israel as the greatest threat to stability in the region, and also talked about their desire to increase trade and cooperation between their two nations. Neither of these sentiments will sit well with Western governments, and particularly the Trump regime in Washington. To discuss what all of this means for the region, we've invited back onto our program Dr. Foad Izadi, a professor of world politics at the University of Tehran. Thank you very much for joining us again today, Professor.

**Foad Izadi (FI):** Thank you. Thank you for having me.

**DL:** So, Dr. Izadi, I'd like to begin by talking to you about the reality of Turkey's relations with Israel. Despite massive opposition to Israel among the Turkish people, President Erdogan's opposition to Israel's genocide has been, I think we can say more rhetorical than concrete. The one aspect of his criticisms of Israel that I find most difficult to take seriously is this: all sensible people know that Israel could never get away with its crimes in the region without massive support from the US government and military. So it seems to me that if you are truly opposed to Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people and other peoples of West Asia, then you would have to criticize Washington and oppose its support for Israel. But Erdogan remains closely allied with Washington, and indeed Turkey is not only a member of NATO, which is dominated by the United States, but the US military has a key air base at Incirlik, which houses about 5,000 US military personnel in Turkey. And it has been reported that that military base houses dozens of nuclear weapons, US nuclear weapons. So, in your opinion, Dr. Izadi, what is the reality here? Is Turkey's government truly opposed to Israel's efforts to dominate the region with massive US support? Do you think there's a real shift happening in Turkey's relations with Israel and the United States?

**FI:** I don't see any real shift especially since we have a fragile ceasefire. I don't think they are going to change anything. They didn't change anything at the height of the genocide. We were losing a hundred people every day almost, and the Turkish government was trading with Israelis at full capacity. And we also need to remember Azerbaijan is supplying Israelis with fossil material, oil and gas. And they reach Israel through Turkey. So this is a joint Azerbaijan-Turkey-Israeli venture. So you can safely say that it was the United States that provided the weapons for the genocide in Gaza and it was Azerbaijan with Turkish help that provided the fuel for the tanks and fighter jets and other American-made weapons that were used during the genocide. And they continue to attack Gaza on a daily basis, even today.

So overall, we in the Muslim world are quite shameful that some of the major countries in this part of the world are run by such people. And then we have non-Muslims in the United States, Canada, Europe that are concerned about the plight of Palestinians in the manner that you see, that they're willing to pay a price – we have had students, professors, others that have lost jobs that they have been expelled from universities, people who have been working in the media. People lost jobs because of support for Palestine. And then we have these governments that are willing to be part of the genocide. And it's not just Turkey and Azerbaijan – UAE welcomed the Israeli president with red carpet treatment during the genocide. And others in this part of the world more or less did the same thing. So this is quite disturbing for us here and I'm glad that you are distinguishing between what Turkey is doing, what Azerbaijan is doing and what others are doing. Because they're not all the same.

**DL:** So last Thursday, just a few days before Turkey's foreign minister traveled to Tehran, the Turkish government denounced a new maritime demarcation deal between Lebanon and Cyprus, saying that the deal violates the rights of Turkish Cypriots. The Cyprus Lebanon deal is designed to pave the way for potential exploration of offshore gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean, and both Greece and Cyprus have aligned themselves deeply with Israel in military and energy cooperation in the region.

So one possibility to explain Turkey's sudden warmth towards Iran is that Turkey has decided to at least appear to enhance its relations with Iran as a way of registering its discontent, its unhappiness with its isolation in energy exploration in the eastern Mediterranean. So I guess with that as background, my question to you is: do you believe that the Turkish government is serious when it talks about increasing as it did trade relations with Iran and adopting a more cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with the Islamic Republic? Or do you think this is just politicking by Erdogan because he's unhappy with his isolation in the Eastern Mediterranean energy business?

**FI:** I think he's unhappy with what's going on in that part of the world. And if you look at the history of Iran-Turkish relations, it's quite complicated because the two countries have managed to work with each other in one area and disagree seriously on other issues. So they have managed to do both. And I think some people at least in Turkey realize that the foreign policy that they have been conducting at the end of the day is going to damage Turkey more than anything else. Because remember what Turkey did – they wanted to overthrow the

Syrian government. And they more or less were successful in doing that. And then this overthrow put pressure on Hezbollah in Lebanon. The Israelis realized that they had a chance to attack Lebanon, attack Hezbollah, and they did. And that resulted in Iran's vulnerability, because when Hezbollah was at its full capacity, Israelis realized that attacking Iran would be a huge mistake because Hezbollah had large sums of weapons, missiles in southern Lebanon ready to be used against Israel. So that resulted in Israelis attacking Iran.

What the Israelis want to do is overthrow the Iranian government, balkanize Iran, and then have full domination in this part of the world. And if they're able to do that, then Turkey is going to be next. So Turkey, in a way, started a process that is going to damage Turkey in a serious manner if Iran is not able to withstand American and Israeli pressures. I think Iran will withstand American-Israeli pressures, but that doesn't lessen the huge mistake that Mr. Erdogan made in helping the Middle East, West Asia, to be more accurate, to reach the current situation. So if Turkey was thinking long term they would have realized that having a puppet government in Syria is not going to be good for Turkish interest because sooner or later Americans and Israelis and the Saudis, some of the regional competitors with Turkey will push the new government in Syria to move towards Israel. And that's not going to be good for Turkey.

You see a similar thing with regard to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Taliban came into power with the help of Pakistan and now they're fighting. Why? Because this is the same mistake Pakistan has made. They thought that if they support the Taliban, then they can control Afghanistan. That was a mistake. Supporting Julani in Syria by Turkey was a mistake. And whatever Turkey does to compete with Iran – sometimes they do that, many times they do that – it's not going to be good for Turkey in the long run because that will result in Israeli domination. And to be honest with you, if the Israelis get away with what they want to do in this part of the world, then they can more or less dominate the whole world with the help of the United States. So Iran is fighting for humanity against a genocidal regime that wants domination and is helped by people in Washington. So Iran is fighting for Iran and Iran is fighting for the free world, a world that does not want to be dominated by imperialism or Zionism.

**DL:** I'd like to talk to you about conditions on the border between Turkey and Iran. They share a 534 kilometer border. As I mentioned, there are US military forces in Turkey, in Incirlik. What generally speaking are the conditions at that border? Is it a highly militarized border? Do you think that there are US military assets on the Turkish side of the border very close to Iranian territory? Or is the border more or less peaceful and stable with more or less free movement of goods and people across the border?

**FI:** On the surface that last option that you mentioned is the more accurate one – that people go across the border without much problem. Iranian citizens don't need a visa when they want to go to Turkey, they just show their passports. And a lot of trade goes through that border. But as you said, Turkey is a member of NATO. They have been cooperating with the United States for many decades. And we have no doubt that the CIA, and other American entities,

the Mossad, are fully not only watching that area, they are based, they have elements, people who are based in that part of Turkey because they want to use that area to put pressure on Iran. During the 12-day war against Iran, we had Mossad agents infiltrating Iranian borders to come in to attack Iran from within using drones and other devices. And the Turkish border is generally an easier border to use when you compare it to other other borders. And I'm sure they did. Now, how much the Turkish government knew about this, how much cooperation they had, we cannot be 100% sure. But we know that for many decades they have provided a huge base in Turkey. And when you do that, when you have 5,000 American troops officially in your country, then you're going to have hundreds more unofficially doing things that may not be in the national interest of Turkey.

**DL:** Right. So let's switch to another part of the region. Last week the genocidal Israeli entity murdered Hezbollah's chief of staff, Ali Tabatabai and the reaction of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps was swift and harsh. It put out a statement that, quote, "the right of the axis of resistance in Lebanese Hezbollah to avenge the blood of the brave fighters of Islam is unquestionable", close quote. How do you interpret this statement, Dr. Izadi?

**FI:** Of course you expect Iran to issue such a statement at this time, but the reality is that Hezbollah's abilities have been damaged extensively. They're supposed to be in a ceasefire with Lebanon and they're attacking Lebanon on a daily basis, so they have no limitations in terms of following agreements or ethical limitations of any sort. They just conducted two years of genocide in Gaza. And there are issues with regard to Lebanese political parties, factions that also oppose Hezbollah. So you have pro-western parties, organizations, politicians that are putting pressure on Hezbollah from within Lebanon, and then you have Israelis that are attacking Hezbollah officials sites. So they are going through a tough time. Generally when a country is attacked, the way Lebanon was, you would expect a rally around the flag effect among all parties, politicians. But unfortunately Lebanon is an exception to that general rule, because you had people that didn't mind their country being attacked by the Israelis, unfortunately. So they're in a tough situation. Iran has been trying to help Hezbollah for many, many years. But the decision on what to do next, how to save Lebanon, how to respond to these types of attacks, that's a decision that the Lebanese have to make. Iranians can help, but the decision is theirs and that's what you have so far.

**DL:** Now, since the so-called 12-day war between Iran and Israel was suspended in June of this year, there have been multiple reports that Russia and China have increased their military aid to Iran. At the same time, however, neither Russia nor China vetoed this abominable UN Security Council Resolution 2803, which effectively put Donald Trump, who clearly is a genocidal war criminal, in charge of the Gaza Strip. And as a result of their failure to veto that resolution, some of us have significant doubts that Russia and China are truly willing to come to the aid of the axis of resistance, of which, of course, Iran is the most powerful member. Because this presumably would cause serious friction in the relations between Russia and China on the one hand and Israel and the United States on the other. In your opinion, can Russia and China be counted upon to support Iran if Israel and the United States resume their war of aggression against the country? And your answer may not be the same

for each country. You might think that there's a different answer for Russia than there is for China. I'm interested in your views about to what degree the Islamic Republic can rely upon them.

**FI:** As we speak, Israel's number one trading partner is actually China. The Israelis have provided a port for the Chinese government to be used for whatever the Chinese government wants to do with that port. And you know, there is a good portion of the Israeli population that is Russian speaking. This is what Mr. Putin said a few months ago. There are extensive links between Russia and Israel. So this is the point that I had earlier that it's Iran that is standing for humanity when it comes to resisting Israel. China is not going to do that. China is going to accommodate Israel, Russia is going to accommodate Israel. They could do more during the time of genocide. They did some, but obviously not enough. And as you said, they didn't veto the Trump resolution. Of course, we had these Arab government, some Muslim governments that supported that resolution. So that was another problem.

When it comes to Iran – the 1979 Islamic Revolution had this famous slogan: "Neither East nor West". Of course, this was during the time of the Soviet Union. Iran's revolution was against American imperialism because the Shah was an American puppet, who came into power in an American-British coup d'etat. And the Soviet Union was looking to increase its influence not only in Afghanistan, they invaded Afghanistan, but they were not friendly towards the new revolutionary government in Iran. And one of the main ideas behind the revolution was a true independence for the country. So from the beginning, the country's leaders, the people decided to not rely, not be a satellite state of anyone. And this has been the practice up to today. So this is why Iran's military uses indigenous technology. The missiles that hit Tel Aviv and Haifa were domestically made, Iran did not buy them.

China is helping Iran as we speak. They are buying Iranian oil. So that is a help that we should not forget. China realizes that if the Americans dominate West Asia with Israeli cooperation, then this is bad news for China because they – remember what happened with the trade war between the United States and China. The US currently doesn't have any cards, to quote Trump, to put serious pressure on China. And they more or less stay silent when you know China is getting about 50% of its fossil energy from the Persian Gulf. And they don't put a lot of pressure on countries like Saudi Arabia or Iraq or Kuwait or UAE because if they want to limit the oil sales of these countries, then the value of Iranian oil will increase. They don't want to do that. But if they manage to overthrow Iran's government and take over Iran then they would have completed their full domination in West Asia. And then they would have serious cards to put pressure on China. And I think Chinese government officials realize that.

The same thing is true with Russia. They realize that if Iran is broken into different pieces, then at least one of those pieces, maybe more, would become another Ukraine to put pressure on Russia the same way Ukraine is used to put pressure on Russia that's on the Western borders. The Americans and Europeans will have allies on the southern border of Russia. And one of the things that Russia is interested in is this north-south corridor linking Russia to the

Indian Ocean. They're having lots of trade with India and other Asian countries. And why is that a good option? Because the other option is going to the Suez Canal, which is under American domination.

**DL:** And also the Black Sea where they have to pass through the Bosphorus Strait.

**FI:** Not a good option.

**DL:** Yeah.

**FI:** So because of their own interests, both Russia and China realize that having good relations with Iran is a good idea. But Iranians have learned many years ago not to rely on outside powers because you never know. So there's this spirit of independence. The country is trying to survive on its own.

**DL:** And lastly, I'd like to ask you, Dr. Izadi, about the snapback sanctions. This is the United Nations Security Council sanctions, which came back into effect, I think at the end of September. In the weeks leading up to those sanctions, there was a lot of discussion in the Western media about them. But then after they came into effect, we've barely heard a word about the snapback sanctions in the corporate media. I'm curious, have you yourself, your colleagues and friends and family, have you noticed a difference in the quality of life in Iran since they came back into effect? Are they having, as far as you can tell, a practical impact on the day-to-day lives of Iranian citizens, or has their impact been difficult to discern?

**FI:** We have had in the last number of months serious inflation, the value of Iranian Rial is not doing well. But I don't think this is because of a snapback. A snapback meant the UN resolutions would become alive again. But the UN resolutions were not dealing with Iran's economy, they were dealing with other issues. And there was this trend – we are experiencing a serious economic warfare, which has very little to do with this snapback issue. So to answer your question, are there economic difficulties in Iran because of this economic warfare? Yes, it's not getting better. But are they because of a snapback? No. I don't think it's because of a snapback. This was a claim that the Europeans and United States had that they would activate these UN resolutions against Iran. But this is a good place that Russia and China helped. They said they don't believe in a snapback, the United States or Europeans are not in a position to use a snapback.

And in October, when the snapback was supposed to happen, Russia was the rotating president of the UN Security Council. They had a very strong statement opposing what the Europeans said. Because this is international law. You cannot pick and choose parts of an agreement that you're part of. So either you implement it all, or you cannot say that we use the snapback mechanism of JCPOA, but are not interested in sanctions relief. You cannot do that. And this is what Europeans wanted to do. And it wasn't just Russia and China that opposed it. Others – Pakistan, Algeria, these are non permanent members of the UN Security Council. Even South Korea that tabled the initial resolution did not vote for which is very

strange because if you table a resolution, it's expected that you have a yes vote, but they abstained.

And then after about a week, you had this non-aligned movement summit in Africa, 121 countries in the resolution they had in that summit, they sided with Iran. And so we have about 121 countries saying that they don't accept this idea of a snapback, the majority of countries don't. So basically the countries that were cooperating with Iran before the snapback continue to cooperate, and the countries that were not working with Iran, they continue not to work with Iran. So the snapback didn't have any serious effect. But that doesn't mean Iran's economy is doing well.

**DL:** Right. Well, thank you again, Dr. Izadi, for joining us today. And please stay safe. I recently received an invitation to the Sobh Media Festival, which will be held in April, and I intend to come and I hope we can meet personally while I'm in Tehran.

**FI:** Let me know, we'll come and pick you up from the airport.

**DL:** That would be a great pleasure. Thank you very much.

**FI:** And let me just say one last sentence that we are in solidarity with the people of Venezuela. They are experiencing American aggression as we speak. And I've been to Venezuela a few times. They're good people. I think they can make the Americans go away sooner or later.

**DL:** And do great service to us all. Thank you very much today, Dr. Izadi.

**FI:** Thank you.

**DL:** It's December 2nd, 2025. Thank you.

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