

### TURKIYE AT 100: A SYMBOL OF PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT

By  
**Sarah Akram**  
Research Fellow

*Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA), ISSI*

Edited by  
**Amina Khan**

November 17, 2023

*(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do  
not represent those of ISSI)*



October 29, 2023, marked a milestone for the Republic of Turkiye, as the country celebrated one hundred years since its founding as a Republic. The Republic was established in 1923 under the visionary leadership of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The centennial commemorates Turkiye's journey as a symbol of progress, not only for its citizens but also as an example of advancement within the Muslim world. Turkiye's global position is evident, particularly seen in its economic growth and its enduring connections with nations worldwide, notably its strong ties with Pakistan. Turkiye is a constitutional secular state, combining history and modernity. With the majority of its population adhering to the Muslim faith, Turkiye holds a legacy of once being the center of a powerful Muslim empire, the Ottoman. The present day Republic of Turkiye has been successful in safeguarding the vision of its founder, Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, under whose leadership the country began its journey of progress.

Turkiye's remarkable transformation into a regional center, characterized by a robust economy and rich cultural heritage, over the past century is a testament to its dynamic and influential role on the global stage. The transformation of Turkiye's economy has been extraordinary, driven by diversification, innovation, and visionary leadership. Its strategic geographical location as a land bridge between Europe and Asia enhances its global significance. The 'Century of Turkiye' vision,

unveiled by its current leadership, outlines ambitious goals for Turkiye to become one of the world's leading economies by its centennial anniversary.<sup>1</sup> The vision serves as a manifesto for a 'new world order,' positioning Turkiye as a regional leader and a significant global influencer.<sup>2</sup> The country experienced an average growth rate of 7.4 per cent between the years 2010 and 2015, which later slowed down due to a number of domestic and international pressures.<sup>3</sup>

President Erdogan's leadership has been instrumental in driving Turkiye's economic transformation, with comprehensive reforms aimed at fostering economic growth and stability. Initiatives like the 2023 vision plan have set ambitious targets, promoting foreign direct investment and facilitating trade. The country has witnessed a marked growth in its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in recent years, reflecting a vibrant economy. While Turkiye's economic progress is commendable, it has not been without challenges, including issues such as inflation, fiscal deficits, and currency fluctuations. Nonetheless, Turkiye's leadership remains committed to overcoming these challenges and seizing further opportunities for growth. Turkiye's foreign policy has been centered around the policy of 'zero problems with neighbours,' however, cataclysmic shifts in the region have posed significant challenges. While recent years have witnessed the growth of foreign policy challenges, the country still retains an important position. Turkiye's significance in terms of its geographical location as well as a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) member cannot be overlooked or under-estimated.

Turkiye's deep-rooted relations with Pakistan have great significance for both countries. The Khilafat movement received a lot of support from the Muslims of the Sub-continent, and this is remembered by the Turks even today. Bilateral ties between Islamabad and Ankara encompass trade, defence, education, and cultural exchanges. Initiatives such as the 'Pakistan-Turkiye Free Trade Agreement,' which is in the pipeline and also collaborative projects like the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) train service and the 'Pakistan-Turkiye Cultural Year' have strengthened the fraternal bonds between the two nations. Notably, the 'Trade in Goods Agreement' signed in August 2022, and came into effect in May 2023, is seen as a major step towards enhancing bilateral trade.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, Türkiye at 100: Inspiring progress in changing world, Daily Sabah, October 28, 2023 <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/turkiye-at-100-inspiring-progress-in-changing-world>

<sup>2</sup> The Century of Tukiye: A New Foreign Policy Vision for Building the Turkish Axis, Insight Turkey, Summer 2023 / Volume 25, Number 3, <https://www.insightturkey.com/article/the-century-of-turkiye-a-new-foreign-policy-vision-for-building-the-turkiye-axis>

<sup>3</sup> Turkey Country Report 2022, Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2022 <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/TUR>

<sup>4</sup> Ghulam Abbas, Pakistan and Turkey's trade in goods agreement comes into effect, boosting bilateral trade, Pakistan Today, May 4 2023 <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/05/04/pakistan-and-turkeys-trade-in-goods-agreement-comes-into-effect-boosting-bilateral-trade/>

The 'Trade in Goods' Agreement ushered in a new era of preferential market access for Pakistan, granting it favorable import tariffs on 261 tariff lines encompassing traditional and non-traditional sectors, including leather, rice, dates, mangoes, cutlery, sports goods, seafood, processed agricultural products, rubber tubes and tires, plastics, and engineering goods. Reciprocally, Turkiye gained preferential access to Pakistan's market under 130 tariff lines, covering products such as black tea, processed food products and flavorings, industrial raw materials and parts of machinery, and parts of electronic equipment. This reciprocal tariff reduction agreement complemented the 'Framework Agreement for Establishing a Free Trade Area between Pakistan and Turkiye' signed on March 22, 2016, in which both parties pledged to gradually establish a comprehensive free trade area encompassing trade in goods.<sup>5</sup> The current bilateral trade volume of \$1.3 billion is way below the true potential and both countries must increase the volume.<sup>6</sup>

Turkish investments in Pakistan have significantly contributed to its economic development, particularly in sectors such as construction, energy, telecommunications, and textiles. Educational and cultural exchanges have further solidified the Turkiye-Pakistan partnership, which continues to grow and thrive.

Defence ties between the two countries are also increasing, with enhanced defence cooperation and collaboration. Pakistan has procured Kemanke cruise missiles, capable of deployment from unmanned aerial vehicles, from the Turkish manufacturer Baykar.<sup>7</sup> Pakistan currently employs three distinct models of Turkish UAVs. This collaboration between Pakistan and Turkish Aerospace Industries has been strengthened through the formal agreement inked between the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex Kamra and Turkish Aerospace Industries. As a component of this collaboration, specific Kaan subsystems will be manufactured within Pakistan, paving the way for the establishment of a joint production line.<sup>8</sup>

Contemporary Turkiye stands as a dynamic nation, embodying diversity and enterprise, bridging two continents and playing a pivotal role on the global stage. Its leadership is committed to progress and development. Turkiye's journey is not just its own; it is an enduring proof of the concrete outcomes that emanate from resolute dedication to progress and multifaceted collaboration. The Turkish

---

<sup>5</sup> Mushtaq Ghumman, Pakistan-Turkiye trade in goods agreement comes into force, Business Recorder, May 5, 2023 <https://www.brecorder.com/news/40240456>

<sup>6</sup> Pakistan, Turkey aim to boost trade to \$5 billion with new deals, The News, October 18 2023, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1120310-pakistan-turkey-aim-to-boost-trade-to-5-billion-with-new-deals>

<sup>7</sup> Pakistan buys cruise missiles from Turkey, Militarnyi, August 4 2023, <https://mil.in.ua/en/news/pakistan-buys-cruise-missiles-from-turkey/>

<sup>8</sup> Nazia Sheikh, The new era of Pakistan-Turkey Defence ties, Pakistan Today, August 25 2023 <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/08/25/the-new-era-of-pakistan-turkey-defence-ties/>

model of growth and development inspires many countries, including Pakistan, which has a long-standing, strong and robust relationship with Turkiye and its people. Turkiye's journey serves a guiding light for nations, demonstrating the outcomes achievable through dedication to progress, socio-economic growth, and mutually-beneficial international cooperation.