

# Turkey opposed to nuclear proliferation in Middle East

Issues like Iran should be solved through diplomacy, minister says

- By Habib Toumi, Bureau Chief
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Manama: Turkey's foreign affairs minister has said that his country is opposed to nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and Gulf region.

"We do not want to see nuclear proliferation in our region and we do not want to see any nuclear weapons power in our region," Ahmet Davutoglu told the Manama Dialogue security conference. "Therefore, a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East is the essential backbone of our policy."

Problems and disagreements, like in the case of the Iranian nuclear programme, should be solved through diplomacy, he said.

"More diplomacy, more transparency, more international effort, more contributions from the Iranian side and from the international community are needed for a solution. Therefore, we are very happy that next week the nuclear talks will restart between P5+1 and Iran. We work very hard to contribute to this process and we will continue to support it," he said.

Davutoglu insisted that the nuclear issue was not only a regional issue.

"The nuclear issue is a global issue. If we do not have a fair approach to this nuclear issue based on international law, it is difficult to solve it," he said.

The minister reiterated that Turkey will keep its policy consistent on Iran's nuclear programme.

"From the first day, we declared three principles regarding this issue. One is that all nations have the right to obtain peaceful nuclear technology and energy, based on the principles of the NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty] and the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency].

"The second principle is that Turkey is against nuclear weapons, wherever they are. The last dimension is the cultural dimension in the sense of the relationship between regional and global peace.

"As I said, our region is the backbone of world civilisation and we should not allow a clash of civilisations in our region. If there is cultural peace in our region, there will be cultural peace in the world. This region can contribute a lot to the cultural, political and economic future of humanity," Davutoglu said.

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