

a stand against torture and to generally increase protection of human rights. There are some non-torture areas that we hope there will continue to be progress in, like freedom of expression. But President Demirel has faithfully stated, I think, the policy of the Turkish Government. And we are encouraged that the human rights issue is moving in the right direction in this nation.

Turkey-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to ask, have you observed a rapid development in the Turkish-American relationship, especially in the last years? Can you briefly describe the current status of the Turkish-American relations from the point of view of America?

President Clinton. Well, I would say from the point of view of America, they are very good. And I could give you some specific examples—one, our partnership in the Balkans, first in Bosnia and then in Kosovo, to stand up for human rights; two, our commitment to energy security in the region, and the support of the pipelines projects I mentioned earlier; three, the improvement in relationships between Turkey and Greece, something which has always been a little bit of a limitation on our partnership, because of our ties to both countries; and four, the economic and political reforms undertaken by Turkey in the last year and several months have been very impressive to us.

So, for all these reasons, I would say that the state of our partnership is strong, and I just want the United States to be in a position to give more economic assistance and more political support as we move toward our shared objectives.

Turkey and the European Union

Q. Mr. President, could you please tell us how determined you will continue to be in supporting Turkey's efforts with EU?

President Clinton. Excuse me. Did you ask me how determined am I to do that, or in what ways will I do that, or both?

Well, let me say first of all, I am very determined to support Turkish membership in the EU for a very good reason. I think if you—any of you, including my American colleagues here—if you were to go home tonight

and make a list of the big problems you think the world could face in the next 10 or 20 years, every one of them would be strengthened if Turkey were a full partner in a Europe that respected religious and cultural diversity and shared devotion to democracy and human rights.

I might say that's one of the reasons I am so pleased by the recent improvement in relationships between Turkey and Greece and why I think it's so important to continue to make progress there, because the difficulties between the two nations are small when compared to the benefits of cooperation and European integration, both to Turkey and to Greece.

As to how I intend to express my support, I will continue to talk to the leaders of Europe. I take every opportunity that I have to have this discussion. I feel very strongly that one of the four or five key questions to the future of this whole part of the world is whether Turkey is a full partner with the European Union. So I will continue to advocate it.

President Demirel. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:15 p.m. in the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey. President Demirel spoke in Turkish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara

November 15, 1999

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, distinguished members, it is a great honor for me and my family and for our delegation to appear before this body, the repository of Turkish sovereignty which, as the words behind me affirm, belongs unconditionally and without exception to the people.

I have come to express America's solidarity with the Turkish people at a time of national tragedy and to reaffirm our partnership for a common future. We have been friends for a very long time.

In 1863 the first American college outside the United States, Robert College, opened its doors to the youth of Turkey. It was the

only foreign institution allowed along the Bosphorus, precisely because America had never encroached upon Turkish sovereignty. I'm very proud that Prime Minister Ecevit is an alumnus of Robert College.

Earlier in this century, the great founder of the Turkish Republic, Kemal Ataturk, captured America's imagination with his bold reforms. He was called a second George Washington. He appeared on the cover of our Time magazine. He corresponded with Members of our Congress. And we moved our Embassy here to Ankara, the capital of his new republic.

In 1927, in a 6-day speech before this body, Ataturk surveyed Turkey's relations with the countries of the world. And he paid America what I believe was a compliment when he said, and I quote, "The United States is more acceptable than the rest." In an effort to remain more acceptable to you, I promise not to speak for 6 days. But I would like to review our relationship and our future.

At the dawn of the cold war, President Truman committed America's resources to protect Turkey's sovereignty. The Truman doctrine sealed our partnership and laid the basis for the Marshall plan and for America's entire postwar engagement with the rest of the world. Over 50 years now, our alliance has stood the test of time, and passed every other test, from Korea to Kosovo. On behalf of all Americans, I thank you for half a century of friendship, mutual respect, and partnership.

Since the cold war ended, we have learned something quite wonderful. We have learned that our friendship does not depend upon a common concern with the Soviet Union, and that in fact, in the post-cold-war era, our partnership has become even more important. Together we are adapting NATO to the demands of a new century. We are partners for peace in the Balkans and the Middle East. We are developing new sources of energy to help the entire region. Last year our trade was over \$6 billion. It has risen 50 percent in the last 5 years alone.

Thanks to the vision of your former President Turgut Ozal, the continuing leadership of President Demirel and Prime Minister Ecevit, and the dynamism of the Turkish people, Turkey has become an engine of re-

gional growth. In the months ahead, together we will launch new projects worth billions of dollars, mostly in the energy sector, to bring jobs to Turkey and to bring our two nations even closer.

This assembly has taken bold steps to lead Turkey into the new century. I want the American press to listen to this. Between June and September, this assembly passed a remarkable 69 laws. I'm going to tell our Congress about that when I get home. *[Laughter]* But I will say this, it is not just the quantity of those laws that count; it is the quality. Landmark legislation on Social Security, an international arbitration law, banking reform—laws that took courage and vision. Now, you face a difficult budget decision that requires courage and vision. If you do pass a sound budget, it will strengthen your economy and advance the prospects of a standby IMF agreement, something the United States strongly supports.

On the edge of a new millennium, we have a rare opportunity to reflect upon our journey—two nations that started in very different places, with a shared commitment to democracy, who now must forge a partnership relevant to the new era.

In a sense, we are all here today because of Kemal Ataturk. Not only because he chose Ankara to be the capital, not only because he chose Ankara to be your capital, but because he pledged Turkey's future to the democracy symbolized by this proud assembly. Ironically, he accomplished much of what he did with no help from the Western powers, indeed, against the opposition of most of them. Many tried to carve up Turkey, to reduce it to a rump state. In the face of this, however, Ataturk responded not by closing Turkey up but by opening Turkey to the rest of the world, a decision for which we must all be very grateful.

For better and for worse, the events of that time, when the Ottoman Empire disintegrated and a new Turkey arose, have shaped the history of this entire century. From Bulgaria to Albania to Israel to Arabia, new nations were born, and a century of conflict erupted from the turmoil of shifting borders, unrealized ambitions, and old hatreds, beginning with the first Balkan war and World War

I, all the way to today's struggles in the Middle East and in the former Yugoslavia. Turkey's past is key to understanding the 20th century. But, more importantly, I believe Turkey's future will be critical to shaping the 21st century. [Applause] Thank you.

Today I want to take a few minutes to explain why I believe that is true, and what we can do together to realize the future we both want.

Since people have been able to draw maps, they have pointed out the immutable fact of Turkey's geography—that Asia Minor is a bridge between continents. Less than a kilometer separates Europe from Asia at the nearest point along the Bosphorus. And, in reality, there is no separation at all, thanks to the bridges you have built—to the commerce that spans Turkey every day to the communications revolution that links all parts of the world instantaneously.

Turkey's ability to bridge East and West is all the more important when another fact of Turkey's geography is considered. You are almost entirely surrounded by neighbors who are either actively hostile to democracy and peace or struggling against great obstacles to embrace democracy and peace. To the southeast, Iran is witnessing a remarkable debate between proponents of a closed and open society, while Iraq continues to repress its people, threaten its neighbors, and seek weapons of mass destruction. I thank Turkey for its support of Operation Northern Watch, which allows us to deter Saddam's aggression, protect the people of northern Iraq, and avoid another refugee crisis like the one you so courageously met in 1991.

To the south, the Middle East is still roiled with violence but blessed with an historic opportunity to build a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace. Turkey is a force for that peace, as well, through its ties to Israel and the Arab States.

To the northwest lie the Balkans, where in the last decade, seven new democracies have been born, and four wars have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. Turkish forces in NATO helped to end those wars and, thus, to end this century with a powerful affirmation of human dignity and human rights. Today, we are working side by side for an enduring peace in the Balkans, one

which not only ends ethnic cleansing but builds genuine cooperation, progress, and prosperity.

To the east, 12 independent nations have emerged from the ruins of the Soviet empire. There is no more important challenge today than helping them to develop stable, independent, democratic societies. Turkey here also has been a leader, reaching out in particular to nations that share ties of language, culture, and history.

There is still much to be done. We must help Russia to complete its momentous democratic revolution. We must be clear with Russia that its fight against terrorism is right but that the use of indiscriminate force against civilians is wrong, likely to exacerbate the very tensions Russia wants to resolve. We must keep working together to resolve the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. We must secure the region's energy resources in a way that protects the Bosphorus, helps newly free states to stand on their feet, empowers Turkey and Europe's future growth. We'll have a chance to address all these challenges when nearly a third of the world's nations gather at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul this week.

When we step back and look ahead, it is possible to imagine two very different futures over the next generation. Without too much trouble, a pessimist might foresee a dark future, indeed, a Middle East with the peace process shattered, Saddam's aggression unchecked, democracy collapsed in the Caucasus in central Asia, extremism and terror spreading across the region, more violence in the Balkans, military coups, unstoppable nuclear tensions in Pakistan and India.

But there is another vision, one that requires a strong Turkey playing its rightful role at the crossroads of the world, at the meeting place of three great faiths. It is possible to see that brighter future, one of rising prosperity and declining conflict; one in which tolerance is an article of faith; and terrorism is seen, rightly, as a travesty of faith; a future in which people are free to pursue their beliefs and proclaim their heritage; in which women are treated with equal respect; in which nations see no contradiction between preserving traditions and participating in the life of the world; a future of growing

respect for human rights that protect our differences and our common humanity; and, specifically, a future in which nations that are predominantly Muslim are increasingly partners with nations that are not, acting in concert in ways, large and small, to realize the shared hopes of their people.

I hope that the next time an American President addresses a nation with a Muslim tradition, he will be able to say that the progress of Indonesia and Nigeria and Morocco, all very different nations, has helped all of us put the lie to the tired claim of an inherent clash of civilizations. As Ataturk said 75 years ago, "Countries vary, but civilization is one." President Kennedy said the same thing in Berlin when he said, "Freedom is indivisible."

All told, there are now billions of people around the region and the world whose future depends upon decisions made in this very room over the next 25 years. Each has a stake in Turkey's success in defining itself as a strong, secular, modern nation, proud of its traditions, fully part of Europe. That will require hard work and vision. You have done much of it already through Ozal's reforms, through the actions of this assembly, through the thousands of ways in which the Turkish people daily are forging an energetic and responsive civil society.

The future we want to build together begins with Turkish progress in deepening democracy at home. Nobody wants this more than the people of Turkey. You have created momentum and edicts against torture and a new law that protects the rights of political parties, in the achievements and vitality of this assembly. Avenues are opening for Kurdish citizens of Turkey to reclaim that most basic of birth rights—a normal life.

But there still is far more to be done to realize the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articulate at the very moment our two countries entered into close relations 50 years ago. That progress will be the most significant sign of Turkey's confidence in looking to the new century, and in many ways, the most meaningful measure of your progress.

We agree with something that was never said more clearly than by the founder of the Turkish Republic—sovereignty should not be

built on fear. Neither America nor Europe nor anyone else has the right to shape your destiny for you. Only you have that right; that, after all, is what democracy is all about. We raise these issues because for all the reasons I have mentioned, we have a profound interest in your success, and we consider ourselves your friends.

Keep in mind, I come from a nation that was founded on the creed that all are created equal; and yet, when we were founded, we had slavery; women could not vote; even men could not vote unless they owned property. I know something about the imperfect realization of a country's ideals. We have had a long journey in America, from our founding to where we are, but the journey has been worth making.

And in our own troubled century, about to close, we have clearly learned that when writers and journalists freely express themselves, they exercise not only a fundamental right but fuel the exchange of ideals essential to prosperity and growth. When peaceful outlets exist to express normal human differences, the peace is preserved, not shattered. When people can celebrate their culture and faith in ways that do not infringe upon the rights of others, moderates do not become extremists, and extremists do not become misguided heroes.

A second way to shape the future lies in reducing tensions in the Aegean, something that will require hard work by both Turkey and Greece. Believe me, I appreciate how much history lies behind this troubled relationship. But people are beginning to see the possibilities that can be created by a new and better history. Prime Minister Ecevit's government has taken important strides in that direction. I agree with something he once said to me, "There is just as much as history and geography uniting you across the Aegean as there is dividing you."

Greece is also taking some risks for peace and recognizing as never before that Turkey's destiny lies in Europe. You came together to promote stability in the Balkans, something that was, in fairness, far more difficult for them to do than for Turkey or the United States. The people of both nations were movingly joined again when tragedy struck you

both in the form of earthquakes, first in August and then, horribly, again last week. Every person who lost a loved one or a home to those earthquakes knows that there was no such thing then as a Turkish or a Greek tragedy. They were human tragedies, and the world will never forget the humanity each nation displayed toward the other.

We must also work hard to reach a just settlement in Cyprus, and I am very pleased that yesterday the parties accepted Secretary-General Annan's invitation to start proximity talks in New York on December 3d. Their goal is to prepare the ground for meaningful negotiations, leading to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. I hope these talks will bring us a step closer to lasting peace. I believe a negotiated settlement is the best way to meet the fundamental interests of all the parties, including real security for all Cypriots and an end to the island's division.

Finally, the future we want to build together will require foresight on the part of our other allies in Europe. The foresight to see that our vision of a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in all of history will never be complete unless and until it embraces Turkey. The United States is not a member of the European Union, but I have consistently urged European integration to move further and faster—and that includes Turkey.

There are still those who see Europe in narrower terms. Their Europe might stop at this mountain range or that body of water or, worse, where people stopped to worship God in a different way. But there is a growing and encouraging consensus that knows Europe is an idea as much as a place—the idea that people can find strength in diversity of opinions, cultures, and faiths, as long as they are commonly committed to democracy and human rights; the idea that people can be united without being uniform, and that if the community we loosely refer to as the West is an idea, it has no fixed frontiers. It stretches as far as the frontiers of freedom can go.

Ten years ago this month the Berlin Wall tumbled; a curtain lifted across Europe. The best way to celebrate that anniversary is to rekindle the feeling of liberation for a new

generation. The best way to complete the unity glimpsed in 1989 is to integrate all of southeastern Europe into the idea and institutions of Europe in 1999 and the years ahead. That means democracy in Serbia. It means peace in the Aegean. It means a successful democratic Turkey fully welcomed into the European community.

At the beginning of this new century, in which we have so much hope, there is great optimism for both our countries. We have much to be proud of, but we must never forget that Turkey is built on the ruins of many ancient civilizations that once were every bit as optimistic as we are today. To avoid their fate, we must back up our words and our hopes with deeds. We must acknowledge the challenges still before us. We must not relinquish the confidence that brought us everything in this century as it becomes our history, but we must not lose the humility that this century's great troubles leave to every thinking person.

Turkey has come so far over so many barriers in so short a time. It was, after all, only 61 years ago this week that Atatürk died. Prime Minister Ecevit was one of the schoolchildren who filed into the palace to pay their respects to the fallen leader. All of you are the youth he advised in his most unselfish mandate near the end: to continue to think for yourselves, to always reexamine your beliefs, and to reshape democracy, generation after generation after generation.

What Turkey has generated in this century is a living example of what all people can do to claim a better destiny for themselves. A new century now lies untested before us. It is an enormous opportunity. By deepening the democratic revolution embodied by, and still emanating from, this very chamber, Turkey can do more than serve its own people well. By your example and your exertion, you can truly inspire the world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. in the General Assembly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Turkish Grand National Assembly Speaker Yildirim Akbulut; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey; and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Statement on Federal Regulations Concerning Health Insurance for Children

November 15, 1999

Today I am proud to announce a new rule that will make it easier for children to get health insurance coverage—and tougher for noncustodial parents to avoid paying for it. This regulation, issued by the Department of Health and Human Services, streamlines the process of holding noncustodial parents to child support agreements that require them to provide for their children's health care needs. The Department of Labor also published a companion regulation today providing guidance to group health plans about this new process. With these rules, we are helping to guarantee that children get the health insurance they have been promised.

These new steps build on my administration's longstanding commitment to effective child support enforcement. Since 1992, collections have increased by 80 percent, and the number of families receiving support has increased by 60 percent. Just last year approximately 2.8 million parents delinquent in child support payments were identified, and child support enforcement measures that I signed into law are projected to increase collections by billions of dollars over the next 10 years. We all have a responsibility for the well-being of the next generation. Today's action helps ensure that parents paying child support meet that responsibility.

Statement on the Interim Report on Implementation of the Good Friday Accord

November 15, 1999

I am heartened by George Mitchell's interim report issued in Belfast today, stating that he is increasingly confident that a way will be found to resolve the current impasse in implementing the Good Friday accord. I look forward to the parties' statements on their positions in the next day or so.

Senator Mitchell has concluded that the pro-agreement parties and the governments share the view that devolution should occur and the political institutions should be estab-

lished at the earliest possible date. He has also concluded that it is common ground that decommissioning of paramilitary weapons should occur as quickly as possible and that the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, led by General de Chastelain, should play the central role in achieving this, under the terms of the Good Friday accord.

I applaud the persistence that the parties have shown through the last 10 weeks of grueling negotiations. Now the parties must move forward to implement the agreement in full and carry out their obligations as spelled out in the Good Friday accord.

I want to express my personal appreciation to George Mitchell for his remarkable work.

Statement on United Nations Sanctions Against the Taliban

November 15, 1999

Today the President of the United Nations Security Council certified that the economic sanctions against the Taliban laid out in Resolution 1267 one month ago are now in effect. These sanctions are being implemented because the Taliban has spurned the unanimous demand of the Security Council and refused to deliver Usama bin Ladin to a country where he can face justice for his acts of terrorism, including the bombing of America's Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

The international community has again spoken with one voice, and its resolve to combat the threat of international terrorism is clear. The U.N. sanctions parallel the unilateral ones that the United States placed on the Taliban in July and will result in the restriction of landing rights of airlines owned, leased, or operated by or on behalf of the Taliban, the freezing of Taliban accounts around the world, and the prohibition of investment in any undertaking owned or controlled by the Taliban. I ask all the nations of the world to do their utmost so that these sanctions are implemented fully and swiftly.

The message to the Taliban is unmistakable: bin Ladin's training camps must be closed; the threats and operational activity must cease, and bin Ladin must answer for