

**Other Statements and Messages by Deputy prime Minister and Minister of  
of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül,**

**Speech Delivered by H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and  
the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the Occasion of the 2nd Istanbul  
Conference on Democracy and Global Security, Istanbul, 14 June 2007  
(Unofficial Translation)**

Your Excellency,

Speaker of Parliament,

Distinguished Ministers,

Dear Guests,

It is my distinct pleasure to be with you here on the occasion of the 2nd Istanbul Conference on Democracy and Global Security. Welcome to Istanbul.

Today the relationship between security and democracy is discussed thoroughly. It is a pleasure to see such widespread participation in our conference which, I believe, will contribute to the ongoing discussion on this issue. Our Government attaches utmost importance to this conference. Taking this opportunity I would like to express my thanks to the Ministry of Interior and to the General Directorate of Security in particular for organizing this meeting.

Distinguished guests,

It is the responsibility and objective of all governments to create a safer and viable world for their citizens.

A better world, by definition, is a safer world, free from terror, where our citizens would not face bomb attacks, where our children do not become victims of narcotics, where violence and extortion do not prevail, briefly, a safe place where our citizens live in peace.

A safer world can only be secured by the rule of law. States are the guardians of the rule of law to which they should themselves adhere, observe and promote.

Distinguished participants,

Today, threats to our security have increasingly become transnational, sophisticated and asymmetrical. None of us could have foreseen the 9/11 attacks. It is also not easy to foresee what could happen in the future. This situation obliges us to develop multi-dimensional, coordinated and sophisticated policies commensurate with the threats we face.

Facing these threats and the measures which we devise to protect our nations from these threats, the international community rightly has begun to discuss whether or not security and democracy are in conflict.

Such a debate is certainly necessary and welcomed for a democratic world. During this conference ideas will be put forward which will contribute to this debate.

However, as Turkey, we are of the opinion that only a positive and complementary relationship exists between security and democracy. Although democracy and democratization are not enough to prevent terrorism, they can at least isolate terrorists.

By the same token, we should also avoid from falling into the trap of backing off from democracy while combating terrorism.

Distinguished guests,

Against terrorism, along with proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and organized crime, billions of dollars are spent every year in order to prevent and eradicate problems which threaten national and international security.

Our governments mobilize all their assets to combat violence and crime and feel obliged to allocate for this purpose very valuable economic resources from their budgets which should normally be spent for welfare and development.

I am aware that as politicians, academics, administrators and experts, you are all very familiar with these ideas that I have just mentioned.

These ideas and archetypes are the guiding principles for our countries in efforts to enhance democracy and the rule of law as well as in taking measures for the security of our citizens.

The legal and administrative reforms which our Government has undertaken during past years and the international agreements to which we have become party are proofs of our sincere commitment to fight against terrorism and crime in all forms, while at the same time enhancing fundamental rights and freedoms in Turkey.

Distinguished guests,

Turkey, as a country which has been fighting against terrorism since the 1970s and as a state geographically situated at the crossroads of organized crime routes has always been an ardent advocate of international cooperation and solidarity in combating such threats.

The efforts spent by Turkey and the success achieved, mainly through her own resources, not only served to her people, but also brought about beneficial results for other countries. In this vein, I wish to point out several positive results which we have recently achieved.

- The Turkish Police and Customs Administration seized 8200 kg heroin in 2005. This amount equals 91% of the heroin seized cumulatively in 25 EU countries and %53 of the total heroin intercepted on the "Balkan route" in the same year.

- In the past 3 years, more than 170.000 illegal migrants have been detained in almost 11.000 operations carried out by the Turkish authorities against crime networks. In the same period, close to 800 victims of human trafficking were identified and assisted by our relevant authorities.

While achieving formidable success in her fight against organized crime, Turkey has also been combating terrorism in all its forms for decades.

Turkey has been suffering for a long time from the scourge of terrorism.

Armenian terror organizations have assassinated 34 Turkish diplomats and their family members starting from the mid-1970s.

Turkey has also been among the victims of the Al Qaeda terrorism which killed 57 people in its 2003 Istanbul bomb attacks.

In addition, PKK/KONGRA-GEL terrorist organization which began its bloody attacks in 1984, mercilessly continues, targeting innocent civilians and security forces.

More than 35,000 Turkish citizens, among whom were many women, children and babies, lost their lives in 23 years as a result of the attacks carried out by the PKK/KONGRA-GEL.

In 2006, the amount of plastic explosives seized during counter terrorism operations against the PKK/KONGRA-GEL has reached a total of two tons, as a result of meticulous work of our security forces. As participants of this conference, you are in a position to better understand and evaluate the potential of this amount.

We know that currently between 3,500 to 3,800 PKK terrorists operate in the camps located in the north of Iraq where they obtain logistical support, arms and ammunition.

Although Turkey has mobilized all her assets in order to contribute to the security, welfare and stability of Iraq, it is regrettable to observe that the

Iraqi authorities do not make any effort to prevent PKK activities in their territory.

I would like to remind you that Turkey had received with open arms and hosted for years the people from northern Iraq, escaping from the hostilities of the Saddam regime.

It is Turkey's expectation that the Iraqi Government controls its borders.

In case it cannot realize this, the Coalition Forces should undertake this responsibility. And if this cannot be achieved, then, the Iraqi Government should cooperate with those who could bring a solution to the problem.

On this occasion I would like to stress once again that Turkey does not have territorial claims against any country. We do not have any border problem with our neighbour Iraq. Nevertheless, Turkey is determined to take all necessary measures for ensuring the security of her citizens. Turkish people, like all nations of the world, have the right to live free from terror. We are determined to take every step to provide security for our people.

Dear guests,

In light of our experiences gained in the fight against PKK/KONGRA-GEL and other terrorist organizations, I would like to share with you some of our An integrated approach that covers a broad range—observations and priorities: of measures is essential to counter terrorism.

- At the national level, the fight against terrorism should be conducted in line with the principle of supremacy of law in a resolute manner. All segments of the society should assume a collective responsibility in this fight. Those who lend financial, logistical and propaganda support to terrorists should be obstructed and exposed. Media organs should also avoid serving, intentionally or unintentionally, as instruments for the objectives of the terrorists.

- At the international level; terrorist organizations should be deprived of their international support. Those countries that support terrorism should be politically exposed. Cooperation between law enforcement units should be strengthened and joint operations should be promoted.

Making no distinction among terrorist organizations and among victims of terror attacks is crucial in achieving sound cohesion among nations in the global fight against terrorism. Any sort of double-standard, such as “good terrorist-bad terrorist” should be avoided. Selective counter-terrorism measures in tackling this problem would inevitably prevent success in the global fight against terrorism. It should not be forgotten that any single country’s weakness in combating terrorism would bring about adverse results for all of us.

All countries should give up the mentality which can be summarized as “Long live the snake which does not harm me.” and abide by “aut dedere aut judicare” (prosecute or extradite) principle. Although freedom of expression is absolute, this freedom should not be used by terrorist organizations for depriving innocent people of their right to life.

As requested by the binding UN Security Council Resolutions, States should not let their territories being turned into safe haven for terrorists.

- The geographic regions exposed to terrorism should be economically supported, special encouraging measures must be implemented and the efforts of the terrorist groups for recruiting new sympathizers from less developed regions should be prevented.

- Judicially, investigation and prosecution of cases relating to terrorism should be conducted swiftly and through specialized agencies. Penalties should be deterrent and enforced promptly.

Dear guests,

The targets of terrorists are the shared values and common symbols of our free world. Sending shock waves to the world, intimidating nations, shattering peoples’ confidence and belief in the democratic system and pitting nations against each other constitute the main objectives of the terrorists.

Today, terrorist organizations also try to create artificial fault-lines between civilizations.

It is a fact that there are terrorist groups that claim to act in the name of Islam. We should not fall into this trap either. Terrorism has no particular religion, race, nationality and is not confined to any specific geography. No culture, religion or faith – in this context Islam – should be equated with terrorism. Any attempt to couple terrorism with any religion would only play into the hands of terrorists.

Turkey will continue to work vigorously with the international community to bring about an atmosphere of common understanding and cooperation based on shared values among nations belonging to different faiths. Through the tradition of tolerance and non-discrimination, peoples of different languages, religions and races have lived in peace and comfort for centuries in this land of ours. This should constitute a prevailing example for the entire world.

Distinguished guests,

The threat of terrorism can only be countered if the international community displays a uniform posture against terrorism. The international community must adopt a coherent approach in identifying, defining, condemning, isolating and bringing to justice those who perpetrate terrorist acts as well as the countries that sponsor and harbor them.

It will only be possible to overcome this serious challenge if we, the members of the international community, work together in a determined manner. I believe that this Conference will make serious contributions to the efforts in this field. On this occasion, I would like to express my appreciation to all security forces in Turkey and around the world which combat terrorism selflessly and resolutely with their hearts and souls. I also present my heartfelt gratitude to the ones who have lost their lives in Turkey and in the other regions of the world in the fight against this scourge. I wish you a successful conference. Thank you for your kind attention.

**Message Issued BY H.E. MR. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the Occasion of May 9 Europe Day, 9 May 2007**

The European Union today is a source of inspiration for many regions and countries in the world. The far-sighted leaders who fifty years ago had the courage to embark on this journey have left an exceptional heritage.

At the 50th anniversary of this immense project founded on democracy, freedom and peace, we believe that it is necessary to draw impetus from this anniversary in order to overcome the uncertainties of the present and give hope to the future generations of Europe.

The challenges of the 21st century require the European Union to adopt a broader vision.

In this respect, it is difficult to overstate the significance of enlargement. The fall of the Berlin Wall rewarded the Union with new member states that have embraced the values of liberal democracy. Each new member has brought unique inputs to the Unions's cultural diversity, values and more significantly to its future vision.

A culture embracing diversity as richness, mutual tolerance and understanding as a way of life and solidarity as well as a code of conduct to address issues of common concern is an approach upheld by Turkey. This inclusive mindset should be a role model for Europe and beyond. Turkey has much to offer to further this process.

Turkey attaches great importance to the role a stronger EU will play in creating a more peaceful, stable, harmonious and prosperous environment in a wider region and in the world.

With this understanding, Turkey will show utmost effort to finalize the accession negotiations with success and take the place it deserves in the unification of Europe. In this respect, we expect the EU to also honor its commitments.

For democracy and peace to prevail on the European continent, integration must be seen as a responsibility rather than a necessity. This can only be achieved when Europe embraces those who are willing to be united around the common values.

In the age of globalization Turkey and the EU have a historical mission in realizing this objective.

Without renouncing their unique characters, Europeans have learned to live in peace. Our vision of Europe is to promote unity and respect diversity. This will give the EU a more stronger political, economic and strategic dimension which will naturally also help to amplify the voice of each member state.

I wish the citizens of Turkey and EU an enjoyable "Europe Day".

**Speech of H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül Deputy Prime Minister And Foreign Minister Of  
Turkey, on the Occasion of the 87th Anniversary of the Founding of the Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs, 2 May 2007**

I would like to warmly welcome Excellencies and other guests. You are kind enough to be with us today on the occasion of the 87th anniversary of the founding of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The exhibition on display at our Art Gallery for this occasion is a compilation of the works by 37 active and retired staff members of our Ministry.

I hope you will enjoy this showcase of our many hidden talents. I thank you for joining us in our gathering. Now I would like to make a few comments to my staff in Turkish to mark this special occasion.

**Address by H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Luncheon with the Ambassadors of the member and observer countries to the BSEC, Ankara, 1 February 2007**

Excellencies,

Let me first welcome all of you, particularly those who have travelled from Istanbul to attend this lunch.

As you know, BSEC will be celebrating its 15th Anniversary on the 25th of June this year with the Istanbul Summit to be held during Turkey's chairmanship of the Organization. Today, I would like to share with you some thoughts and our vision about Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) to which your countries are either members or observers.

The initiative was launched fifteen years ago as a regional cooperation project in the wider Black Sea area. The vision behind this initiative was to promote economic cooperation in an area that had been subject to political, ideological and economic divisions for over 50 years.

Since then, BSEC has developed into a mature regional economic organization with a broad institutional basis. It proved its worth and withstood the test of time.

Encompassing an area of approximately 20 million square kilometers with 330 million people, BSEC has a huge economic potential. Its vast natural and human resources enabled the BSEC countries to have remarkable economic growth and development. Over the past five years, the BSEC region as a whole has been one of the fastest growing in the world, with 6% annual GDP growth. Total GDP of BSEC countries amounts to about 3.4 trillion USD in 2005, which represents 7.6% of the overall world economy. The share of the BSEC countries in the world economy is increasing steadily.

BSEC countries have an increasingly important place in our foreign trade as well. Turkey's trade volume with BSEC countries was 6.5 billion USD in 1999. It was 29 billion USD in 2005. The figure keeps increasing. As part of our policy of developing trade with our neighbours, we attach utmost importance to our economic cooperation with the BSEC countries.

One of the most essential elements for regional economic cooperation organisations is existence of a bank to finance projects. The BSEC has this opportunity. The Black Sea Trade and Development Bank based in Salonica was created to contribute to the goals of BSEC. Another important pillar of regional economic cooperation is trade and the most essential infrastructure of trade is transportation. The two MOUs which will hopefully be opened for signature in a short while under the BSEC framework, namely, Black Sea Ring Highway and Motorways of the Sea, will constitute two important pillars for the establishment of this infrastructure.

Due to its strategic importance, the Black Sea basin has become the focus of growing interest of major international actors including the EU. BSEC can take advantage of this new interest

to explore new horizons. Today we have some new EU members among the BSEC member states and we welcome their full membership. Their role is important. In our view, they should not underestimate BSEC because of their EU membership. On the contrary, they should strengthen the linkage between the EU and the Black Sea, because the power of the EU will thus be enhanced. Therefore it is inevitably for the EU to increase its interest to this area.

Indeed, while the resources of BSEC are limited, the region faces important challenges. It is, therefore, vital to promote constructive relations with other international actors who possess resources and expertise to move ahead with regional projects.

BSEC is a unique platform. The organisation provides an advantage not only to coastal countries, but also for the ones who are not sharing the same shores. We may belong to different political and economic groupings. However, countries that may have political differences could meet at this platform around a common theme and exchange views in a friendly environment. Even though some of us could have bilateral differences among us, this is a unique platform for us to come together and engage with each other.

This Organisation should bring each of us closer and enrich our strategic vision. We should assume the ownership of our region and BSEC more. We should leave the status quo behind and bring new thinking and dynamism to the Organisation.

After all, our common goal is same: stability, economic prosperity and a secure environment for all.

Today's world is much different than the one when BSEC was established. The importance of Black Sea and Eurasia is on the rise. Black Sea basin is becoming a centre of gravity regarding oil, energy and trade. We have every reason to believe that this trend will continue. BSEC countries are historically and culturally close to each other. In addition, increasing political contacts, trade and tourism will bring the region to a more central position.

We should not, therefore, underestimate the importance of the Black Sea dimension in world politics and the Organisation itself. That is why we have to show our political will to improve the Organisation.

With this understanding, the 15th Anniversary Summit to be held in Istanbul will provide an invaluable opportunity to reassess BSEC. There, we could define our new vision for the future of the Organization. We can support this vision with realistic targets. We can enhance and modernise this Organisation's place in today's world.

The summit will also offer us an occasion to focus our attention on those issues that need to be tackled, in order to lay the ground for a new and promising era for the BSEC. We now have to take further steps to improve its place in today's political context and set some realistic targets for the future.

In concluding, I would like to emphasize that attendance to the Istanbul Summit at the highest levels will let the political leaders to design a new vision for the Organisation. Since we will assume the Chairmanship soon, my Government will continue to give high priority to our task and to the Summit. I expect you will work closely with my Ministry during the preparatory phase of this decisive Summit.

Now I invite the Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to take the floor as the current chairman of BSEC.

Thank you.

**The Message of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister H.E. MR.  
Abdullah Gül on the Occasion of Human Rights Day, 10 December 2006**

Today, we are commemorating the 58th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, which, for the first time ever, elevated human rights from national to international level, in line with the common basic principles of the modern world.

Turkey, as one of the founding members of the U.N, is among the first 50 countries that adopted the Universal Declaration.

Our resolve for further protecting and promoting human rights in a spirit of transparency and cooperation has been confirmed by nine reform packages including comprehensive sets of Constitutional amendments conducted by the Government in recent years. Our endeavours, in this regard, first and foremost, stem from the principal responsibility of the state to respond, in the most possible effective way, to the democratic needs and expectations of its citizens.

The reform process implemented with determination, focusing on advancing fundamental rights and freedoms, democratization and functioning of judiciary, rests on three pillars: namely, screening the national legislation with necessary amendments, implementing them in due manner and becoming party to international instruments and mechanisms.

In this sense, human rights remains among the priority issues in the Turkish foreign policy. Today, observance of contemporary standards pertaining to human rights, democracy and the rule of law has indeed become a fundamental criterion for the members of the international community to be respected.

In this connection, the momentum in adhering to international instruments in the field of human rights has reached its culmination in 2006. Turkey, in fact, is party to all core UN Conventions in the field of human rights.

Turkey's policies in this realm serve the aim of elevating the fundamental rights and freedoms of our citizens to the highest possible level. Corollary to this, they are testimony to the fact that in international politics Turkey envisions the modern world and embraces common goals, through the same lenses with the other distinguished members of international community, of which we are indeed an indispensable part. Our Government is determined to continue these policies.

With these considerations in mind, I extend my best wishes to our people and those of the international community in celebrating the Human Rights Day.

**Message Issued by H.E. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of May 9 Europe Day, 8 May 2006**

Europe Day is being celebrated with various activities in Turkey since the confirmation of Turkey's status as a candidate country to the EU at the Helsinki Summit of 1999.

Today we are celebrating Europe Day as a country negotiating accession to the EU.

The ideal of a United Europe was enshrined in our minds with the speech made on 9 May 1950 in Paris by Mr. Robert Schuman, French Foreign Minister of the time. In the past half century, the European integration process has made rapid progress and has succeeded in overcoming various challenges and difficulties. As a result, today's European Union has gained a unique place in the world as a common space of peace, democracy, freedom and prosperity.

Despite its current difficulties, past experiences have proven that the EU will continue its great march towards a future full of hope.

At the age of maturity which today's Europe has reached, it is becoming increasingly difficult to define Europe on the basis of a single geographical space, system of thought or culture. The values and experiences derived from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment clearly prove that there is room in Europe for the colours and reflections of other cultures.

In this regard, Turkey's membership to the EU will transform the Union into a global source of inspiration as regards the principle of "unity in diversity".

Turkey regards the EU as a civilisation project in line with the ideals expounded by Atatürk more than eight decades ago. We appreciate the Union's leading role in preventing new division lines in Europe and the strengthening of stability and prosperity in the Continent within and beyond the new borders of the EU. Turkey takes pride in working together with its EU partners in the realization of these common objectives, which we fully share.

The security and stability of Turkey and the EU and their strategic, political, economic and social interests are fully complementary to each other. Genuine interests form the basis of our relations.

With the opening of accession negotiations, Turkey and the EU have entered a new phase where they will come ever closer to each other. This historic step has also reaffirmed that the ultimate goal of Turkey-EU relations is Turkey's accession to the Union.

With the consciousness and responsibility this process requires, Turkey has taken bold steps, particularly in recent years. We have realized reforms which have been truly historic in character. Our reform efforts aimed at raising standards and practices in all areas of public life to the highest contemporary standards will resolutely continue.

Turkey will fulfill all its responsibilities under the accession process to achieve alignment with the EU acquis. We are confident that our EU partners will show due care to ensure that

our accession negotiations are conducted in a positive spirit and on the basis of the principles which were applied to other candidate countries.

I offer my sincere congratulations to all our citizens and to all Europeans on the occasion of Europe Day.

**Message by H.E.Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Symposium Organized by TESEV on “Gender Equality & Political Participation  
in the Middle East and North Africa”, Istanbul, 6-7 February 2006**

Dear Guests,

Distinguished Representatives of Civil Society Organizations,

At the outset I would like to express my regrets for not being able to greet you in person. I was indeed looking forward to being with you on this important occasion.

However, given TESEV’s commitment to the issue at hand and their well-known hospitality, I rest assured that you are in safe and able hands.

Furthermore, a delegation from my Ministry, led by our BMENA Coordinator, will be with you throughout the meeting in order to provide counsel and assistance as and when necessary.

Dear Participants,

It has only been seven months since we had our first meeting in Istanbul within the framework of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD), and yet, an extremely encouraging dynamic is already set in motion.

Indeed, as we have witnessed during the recent Forum for the Future meeting in Bahrain last November, the DAD is well-received by the BMENA countries, and as such, it proves to be a useful instrument in bolstering the reform processes that are increasingly gaining momentum in the region.

As one of the co-sponsors of this new mechanism, we are determined to take it forward in consultation with our co-sponsors and partners in the region.

While doing so, and in line with the underlying philosophy of the DAD, we will show utmost care to fully cooperate with both civil society and Government representatives so as to make our efforts more effective and result-oriented.

This is why we attach great importance to such meetings where the representatives of civil society bodies bring in their intellectual contributions and share their experiences. Your views and suggestions will provide a most useful guidance for our common work ahead.

Distinguished Guests,

The past seven months have also proven to us all the wisdom of our choices for the initial themes of dialogue within the DAD framework. In particular, the issue of gender equality and how best to promote it.

Indeed, every aspect of the current reform agendas in the region touches upon the need to improve the way we treat women in our societies. In this regard, it is becoming increasingly obvious that women's role in public life is essential for a sound and sustainable development.

Unfortunately, there remain many problems preventing women in the region from playing their full part in the advancement of their societies. In fact, this phenomenon is somewhat universal, but in this region, the problem is further compounded by a misrepresentation and/or misinterpretation of cultural and religious values.

In this respect, we do not believe that Islam is inherently against gender equality. However, we also can not ignore the fact that the current practice in many Islamic countries indeed conjures up such an image.

Therefore, we need to be even more active than others in breaking not only legal, administrative and physical impediments but also social and psychological barriers that deny our women a level playing field in public life.

This is why I greatly appreciate an open, frank and action-oriented dialogue to address diverse aspects of the issue at hand.

At the first symposium in Istanbul last June, we have witnessed a very lively and constructive debate in this direction. Since then, there has been a number of meetings and conferences both within the framework of the DAD and elsewhere that dealt with this issue.

In retrospect, it is most satisfying to see that there is an emerging consensus on this issue, and in particular, on the need to take urgent measures to clear the hurdles before our women.

As representatives of civil society in general and various women's movements in particular, you are now expected to translate this common will into concrete and practical steps in the form of recommendations.

We will then make sure that these proposals and suggestions are seriously taken up by the Governments in the region.

To this end, we will host a conference on 22-23 May 2006 whereby representatives of civil society and Governments will have the opportunity to engage in an open dialogue and hopefully come up with a coordinated strategy setting out concrete measures and actions.

Dear Participants,

As you all know, Turkey participates in the G-8's BMENA initiative as a democratic partner of the region. Our role in this framework is thus to encourage and facilitate the local reform efforts mainly through experience sharing and project partnership.

What we try to do now as regards the question of gender equality is no different. In this domain too, I believe we have much to offer to our partners in the region, particularly in terms of experience sharing.

Of course, that is not to say that Turkey has solved all its problems in this area. Although Turkey was one of the first countries to grant women the right to vote and be elected in 1934,

we have yet to cover a lot of ground in terms of women's rights and in particular as to their participation in political life.

Our Government is well aware of this fact and that is why we are committed to taking all the necessary measures to further enable our women to participate in every aspect of public life fully and equally. Particularly within the last few years, we have taken important steps in not only reforming our legal framework in this direction, but also translating it into practice.

Furthermore, and maybe more importantly, I believe we have managed to build a close and productive working relationship with our civil society in this area. In fact, in addition to the commitment of our Government, we very much owe the relative success achieved in Turkey in recent years to this cooperative relationship.

Now we stand ready and willing to share this experience with our partners in the region. While doing so, I am sure we will learn a lot from your own experiences and achievements as well. And that is what the DAD is all about as a framework of dialogue where we all give and take from each other, and eventually, advance towards our common goals in a spirit of partnership.

Turkey is certainly committed to such a fruitful cooperation in every relevant forum. In this regard, the meeting held last week in Istanbul on "Women's Role in the Alliance of Civilizations" is a case in point. In April, another important meeting, this time of the "World Businesswoman Council", will also be convened in Istanbul. Finally, in the last quarter of the year, we will host the first OIC Conference on Women.

We hope that as a result of these meetings, the issue of gender equality and women participation in public life receives the attention and action it deserves.

With these thoughts I wish you all the success in your deliberations and look forward to receiving your conclusions which will form the basis of our discussions next May.

**Message of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Abdullah Gül  
on the Occasion of Human Rights Day, 10 December 2005**

We are commemorating the 57th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the document which has laid the foundations of the modern human rights regime and offered guidance in the conclusion of many human rights instruments in the past 57 years. Its proclamation as a United Nations instrument has granted the Declaration a universal character. Today, the Declaration still constitutes the most important reference document regarding fundamental rights and freedoms.

Being one of the first countries that adopted the Declaration, Turkey takes pride in being among the countries which from the outset have embraced the modern human rights regime founded by the Declaration. As of today, Turkey has become party to all the principal human rights conventions opened for signature by the United Nations. Since 1954 Turkey has been party to the European Convention on Human Rights which has arguably established the most developed international human rights protection system in the world.

Having been overshadowed for many years by the Cold War and having failed, until not too long ago, to take its well-deserved place among the priorities of states concerning international politics, human rights have increasingly had a larger share in international politics starting from 1990s following the end of the Cold War era. Today, the level of compliance with contemporary norms regarding human rights, democracy and the rule of law has become a fundamental criterion for being labeled as a respected member of the international community.

Maintaining its desire for being regarded as a respected member of the international community since its inception, Turkey has displayed its resolve to this end also by the importance it has attached to human rights. Respect for human rights is, according to the Constitution, among the core characteristics of the Republic which shall not be amended or the amendment of which shall not be proposed.

The promotion and protection of human rights are among the core political goals of our country. Our government regards respect for human rights as an indispensable element in the process of democratization and development. In recent years, as a consequence of the reform process significantly expedited by the support given by our people and by Turkey's accession process to the European Union, there has been a remarkable progress in institutionalizing human rights norms and standards in Turkey. In addition to legislative regulations, the Constitution was amended in 2004 so that, in the case of a conflict between international agreements in the area of fundamental rights and freedoms and the domestic laws due to differences in provisions on the same matter, the provisions of international agreements would prevail. Reform Monitoring Group, which was established in order to review and follow the implementation of the legislative changes on human rights, will continue to monitor the reform process closely.

The Government acknowledges the importance of cooperation with international human rights mechanisms to ensure that human rights are thoroughly institutionalized in Turkey. Within this context, close cooperation is maintained with treaty and non-treaty mechanisms of particularly the United Nations and the Council of Europe. In addition, human rights training programs, tailored particularly for members of the judiciary and law enforcement forces, are implemented in cooperation with the European Union, the Council of Europe and several European countries. We intend to finalize the legislative procedures for the establishment of the Ombudsman Institution in the shortest possible time frame.

The progress achieved as a result of the human rights reforms in Turkey has been widely acclaimed by the international community. Naturally, executive organ, namely the Government, has the responsibility of implementing the reforms. Continued contribution of the legislative and judicial bodies as well as the civil society is equally important for the success of the reform process. The Government is resolved to maintain its efforts in this field.

On the occasion of Human Rights Day, I wish all our citizens and all the people of the world a bright future where respect for human rights takes root across the whole world and all men may enjoy their birth rights.

**Speech by H.E. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, TASAM, 23 November 2005**

Your Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare,

Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union,

You Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

It gives me great pleasure to address the First International Turkish-African Congress.

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to the Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Studies for taking the initiative to organize this timely and topical Congress.

The attendance of His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare will surely be an important contribution to the Congress.

His Excellency's visit to Turkey has been the first visit by the Head of the Organization of African Unity since the Organization was founded in 1963.

Turkey's bonds with the African continent dates back to the times of the Ottoman Empire.

Turks have had traditionally good relations with this continent.

The relations and interactions of the Ottoman Empire with this continent covered a vast geography, stretching from West to East Africa, and from the Kanem Bornu Sultanate of Central Africa to Zanzibar of today's Tanzania.

Turkish and African peoples have established strong humanitarian, moral, cultural and political ties with each other.

The Turkish War of Independence that followed the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire had been a source of inspiration for African peoples' struggle for freedom and national independence.

Turkey has taken an active stance in the relevant organs of the United Nations such as the Namibia Commission.

Turkey recognized all newly independent countries of Africa in the 1960s. It established diplomatic relations with them and opened resident embassies in many of them. Today, we have 12 Embassies and more than 20 Honorary Consulates throughout Africa. Despite this

long and opulent historical past, the present level of our political, economic and cultural relations with Africa is far from reflecting its existing potential. For this reason, our government is determined to first restore and then enhance these historically good relations.

In the framework of our “Opening up to Africa Policy” and the “Strategy for Developing Economic Relations with the African Countries”, which were adopted in 1998 and 2003 respectively, Turkey wishes to further develop in all fields its ties with the countries of the continent in the forthcoming period.

In addition, our Government declared the year 2005 as the “Year of Africa”. In this context, His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey visited Ethiopia and the Republic of South Africa in March 2005. However, our new endeavours towards Africa will not terminate with the Year 2005. Our policy will not be restricted to calendar years.

TICA (Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency) Program Coordinator Office in Addis Ababa was officially inaugurated by the Turkish Prime Minister during his visit to Ethiopia.

This office will lend support development projects not only in Ethiopia, but in the whole region.

The TICA office will be a vehicle for Turkey to share its experience with African countries in the field of economic and social development.

Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have today become one of the fundamental elements of contemporary economic and social life.

We believe that our joint projects towards supporting SMEs will make a significant contribution to achieving sustainable development in the continent. Promotion of human resources constitutes another important element of sustainable development.

To this end, we desire to promote further cooperation between our educational institutions and their African counterparts.

The scholarship, training, student exchange and similar programs that will be implemented within this framework will also present a good opportunity for our peoples to get to know each other better.

Also within this framework, Turkey is presently looking into the possibility of becoming a member of the African Development Bank.

Distinguished guests,

Our government is well aware that good intentions are not enough to bring about tangible results unless they are supported with concrete economic and commercial steps. For this reason, trade is a field to which we attach great importance.

The persistent efforts of the Turkish side in the recent past have already rendered positive results.

Our trade turnover with the African countries, which was 5.5 billion dollars in 2003, increased by 40 percent in 2004, reaching 7.7 billion dollars.

Our trade with the sub-Saharan African countries alone increased by 122 percent during the period 1999-2003 and reached 1.4 billion Dollars.

However, in view of the fact that Turkey's trade with the entire world amounts to 160 billion dollars, the share of Africa is still far from satisfactory.

Thus, we expect to increase our trade volume with sub-Saharan Africa, for example, to 4 billion dollars by the year 2008.

Turkey is a country which follows liberal economic policies and maintains a freely functioning market economy. Hence, the responsibility of increasing trade with Africa falls upon the shoulders of our private sectors.

By signing the basic agreements on trade, investment, technical cooperation and avoidance of double taxation with several African countries, our government has largely prepared the necessary legal ground for our private sectors to increase trade and economic cooperation.

Undoubtedly, occasions like today's International Turkish-African Congress will lead to a better understanding between -- and will generate a better flow of information among -- our two sides.

Distinguished guests,

In the political realm, the African Union is a concrete manifestation of the efforts aimed at leading Africa to a new path which will help the continent erase its previous unfortunate image as the continent of wars and crises, of diseases and catastrophes.

We are pleased that the African Union has already taken important steps and recorded great achievements in this direction.

We are convinced that the African Union will continue to play a vital role in reinforcing national conciliation processes in Africa and in shaping up Africa's achievements for a better future.

The establishment of the African Union is a clear step towards bringing the African nations together to pursue common goals such as good governance and the rule of law.

In the past, Turkey has always acted in solidarity with the peoples of Africa during their legitimate struggle for liberty and independence. Today, we continue to actively support the African Union and the African nations in their efforts for achieving peace, democracy, development and prosperity.

This is why we are very pleased that Turkey has been granted an "observer" status in the African Union on 12 April 2005. We would like to express our appreciation to His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare for his personal contributions in achieving this result.

We accredited our Embassy in Addis Ababa to the African Union on 5 May 2005. This will facilitate our work and will give a new impetus to our desire to work closely with African nations and States. Turkey aspires to be a partner of the African peoples and to work with them in order to achieve regional cooperation, peace and sustainable development.

We are determined to assist Africa in dealing with all of its serious problems, ranging from poverty and unemployment to epidemics and ethnic conflicts. We are resolute in continuing our support at an increasing pace.

Throughout history, Africa's natural and human resources have been used in order to build up material wealth in western civilizations. The African culture has contributed to the world culture. In the past, Africa has embraced artisans, refugees, explorers and others with friendly arms.

Consequently, as I conclude my speech, I would like to give the following message: Mankind is indebted to Africa. We all owe it to Africa.

This is the time for solidarity and cooperation with Africa.

Thank you.

**Address By H.E. Abdullah Gül, Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
at the Iftar Dinner Given in Honour of the Ambassadors of the OIC Countries in  
Turkey, 25 October 2005**

Excellencies Ambassadors,

Distinguished Representatives of the International Organizations,

Members of the Parliament,

Honorable guests

First of all, I would like to extend to you my warmest wishes and congratulations on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

May this Holy Ramadan bring prosperity to the Muslim world and the entire mankind.

Unfortunately this year's Ramadan started with a saddening event. The earthquake in brotherly Pakistan caused us profound grief. On this occasion, once again I would like to reiterate our heartfelt condolences to the people of Pakistan. In these difficult times, Muslim people of Pakistan need our support more than ever. I am therefore inviting all OIC Member States to sustain and increase their emergency and longer-term assistance to the earthquake victims in Pakistan. On that note, I would also like to highlight that the Donor Conference which will be held in Geneva by the United Nations tomorrow will provide an excellent opportunity to demonstrate our solidarity with Pakistan.

On the occasion of the Ramadan, I would also like to draw your attention to the continuing hunger and famine disasters in Africa. It is essential that the OIC countries continue extending their hand to Africa.

A new era has started in Palestine, which I deem our essential cause. Yet, the sufferings of the Palestinian People still continue. We need to make better use of the new conditions that have occurred in the region. We should extend maximum economic and political support to the People of Palestine. We must also continue backing Palestinian Authority's reform efforts. I would like to underline once again that the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza needs to be a step towards the full implementation of the Road Map.

Meanwhile we should also keep in mind that from Kashmir to Nagorno-Karabakh, numerous outstanding political and humanitarian issues await resolution.

Currently the unfair sanctions and restrictions imposed on the Turkish Cypriot People continue unabated. Although UN Secretary General's settlement plan supported by the international community has been refused by the Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriot People continue to be penalized. This is an extremely unfair situation. Our Government, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot People have time-and-again proven their peaceful intentions. The report submitted by the UN Secretary General following the referenda needs to be adopted by the UN Security Council. I invite all OIC Member Countries to respond to Secretary General's appeal contained in his report to lift the restrictions imposed upon the Turkish Cypriots. I avail myself of this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation through Your Excellencies, to the OIC Member States who have been acting in solidarity with the Turkish Cypriot People, advancing their contacts with the Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and extending support to the resolution of the Cyprus problem under the auspices of the United Nations. We earnestly hope that these efforts continue.

We have to continue providing strong support to the political processes in Iraq and Afghanistan. These countries are in dire need of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. And the efforts and contributions of the OIC countries are of vital importance.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

As you all are aware, Turkey has gained a new status vis-a-vis the European Union as of October 3rd this year. It gives me profound pleasure to observe that this development has been received positively by the Muslim World. Obviously this new status of Turkey in Europe will become a positive element in Europe's relations with the Muslim World. Therefore, as a country walking on the path towards integrating with the EU, Turkey's relations with other regions with which she has historical, geographical, humanitarian and religious bonds will continue to further strengthen.

We are happy to see that there exists an international consensus over the contributions of the EU embracing Turkey to the regional and international peace, harmony, stability and welfare.

21st century will be the stage where efforts to achieve values such as transparent and accountable administration based on rule of law, protection of human rights including women and children rights, institutionalization of democracy, respect to religious and cultural

diversity will intensify. I strongly believe that these values are not only the common values of the EU, but they are in harmony with the core Islamic cultures and traditions as well.

Today , while endeavoring to realize the values that contribute to the human development, we have to combat the ideologies which undermine the coherence among peoples.

We are all aware that in recent years, a new menace “Islamophobia” was unfortunately added to the known threats of racism, xenophobia, ethnic and religious discrimination, hatred and prejudices. Some circles deliberately strive to identify Islam with violence and terror. However, the prudent governments and the public opinion in Europe and in the West are also worried about this malevolent development. As Muslims, it is our shared duty to stand up to these tendencies, as well as combat all sorts of terror and violence.

We are all happy to see that the OIC, as a revered actor of the international community, is keen on increasing its activities and role in the fields of humanitarian, economic, political and cultural developments. We strongly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General of the OIC in this direction.

We hail the endeavors of the Secretary-General to reform the organization and further develop the dialogue and relations with the UN, African Union, Arab League, European Union, OSCE and the Council of Europe.

As Governments, we need to increase our contributions to the ongoing efforts towards the OIC reform.

I once again congratulate your Holly Ramadan and wish peace and prosperity to the Muslims of the world.

**Message by H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Professor Ayşe Soysal, President of Boğaziçi University, Sent in Response to the Invitation for the Conference Entitled “Ottoman Armenians During The Collapse Of The Empire: Scientific Responsibility and Democracy Problems”, 22 September 2005**

Professor Dr. Ayşe Soysal

President, Boğaziçi University

İstanbul

Thank you for your invitation to the Conference “The Armenians during the Collapse of the Ottoman Empire”, to be held in your University.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to convey some views of mine.

The last era of the Ottoman Empire is subject to discussion and research in academic circles, with increased interest. Nearly every day new documents from that era emerge and new books, articles and research papers are published. Yet, it is not possible to say that all data and documents related to those times have been properly analyzed. With an aim to help redress this shortcoming, our Government is in the process of taking important steps to enable the Ottoman Archives to serve researchers, in modern conditions. Our Archives have begun to serve scientists through documents converted to a digital medium, since 2003. Within this context many researchers, coming from 75 different countries have completed their research on the Ottoman Archives. These activities are ongoing.

We want not only our own archives, but at the same time all other archives that will shed light on the history of the day to be opened in an organized fashion, that will serve all researchers. We believe that deeper research into that era will bring new historical facts to light and serve an improvement in relations between countries and peoples. Thus, we have proposed to the Government of Armenia to establish a historical commission between our two countries, which will research the joint Turkish-Armenian history and which will make its findings public. We hope to reach a conclusion on this subject.

The history of Turkish-Armenian relations is one of co-existence and common life of almost 1000 years. During the course of this period, the Turkish and Armenian peoples have contributed to each other’s culture, prosperity and security. We should not ignore this reality when we examine the tragic period when the Ottoman Empire was crumbling and the Turks and Armenians were deeply suffering, like all other peoples of the Empire.

It is a fact that in some chapters of history, or even today, some societies cannot tolerate one other’s language, religion, identity or even very existence. It is an unfortunate reality that such intolerance can turn into a deep-rooted and destructive ideologies and prejudices, which gets ingrained in the social subconscious. Some serious and very dangerous trends, from Xenophobia to racism and from anti-Semitism to attitudes against Muslims are present and are on the rise today, even in societies which represent the highest level of contemporary civilization.

It is a source of pleasure that such a psychology does not exist between the Turks and Armenians. This also constitutes a major advantage for the future of relations between the two peoples.

Another issue I want to draw your attention to is that, many studies so far held on the theme of the Conference, particularly outside Turkey, have been conducted with political motivations, in a manner inconsistent with scientific ethics and objectivity. Regretfully, humanitarian issues have been sacrificed to political designs, and double standards have been applied in determining and presenting human suffering. There have been attempts to impose subjective, non-legal and artificial claims upon Turkey and the Turkish people, with political motivations. Furthermore, there have been situations in which some foreign circles could not even tolerate scientific skepticism.

Young generations from all nations must know and draw lessons from the facts that during the last era of the Ottoman Empire the imperialist-colonial powers ruthlessly exploited peoples' ethno-religious sensitivities for their own interests and that some elements, knowingly or unknowingly, became instruments to these provocations. I hope that your Conference will be a contribution to raise awareness also on this issue.

The Turkish people is at peace with itself and with its history. The approaches of our Government and our people towards our past, including Turkish-Armenian relations, constitute an indication of our confidence in ourselves and our future.

I convey my best wishes to all participants and hope that the Conference will be a success.

Abdullah Gül

**Address of H.E. Abdullah Gül, Minister of Foreign Affairs & Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey to the “First Global International Studies Conference” Organized by Bilgi University, İstanbul, 25 August 2005**

**New Challenges in the International System and Turkish Foreign Policy**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address this important scholarly gathering.

I welcome you all to Turkey.

I would like to commend the “World International Studies Committee” and the “Turkish Political Science Association” for convening the “First Global International Studies Conference” here in Istanbul.

I hope the spirit of Istanbul will inspire you in your work. I hope it will convince those among you coming from abroad to visit us again in the future for pleasure or for professional interest.

And it is a particular pleasure for me to see a young Turkish university hosting this major international conference. Istanbul Bilgi University has indeed made very quick academic progress since it was established less than 10 years ago. It proved to be an influential institution of not only academic world but also a wider social and cultural life in Turkey.

Distinguished Guests,

It is really difficult to give a precise name to the new international system. Yet, we know that it brings with it uncertainties, making it hard for us to predict events and take precautions.

New actors are on the international scene, but we are not yet fully used to dealing with them.

Moreover, globalization presents us with new risks as well as opportunities.

Therefore we feel the need to understand where the world is heading.

Making sense of the on-going change is a task for both you, the academic world, and us, politicians and Governments.

This requires both sides to be competent in their own merits. But we can also engage in joint ventures when appropriate.

Personally, I highly value the input academics are making to policy formulation by way of providing expert information and advice, as some of you are already doing.

At a more general level, we have also been witnessing democratization of foreign policy in many countries, including Turkey.

This is a welcome fact, for a foreign policy that enjoys the support of the public is stronger and more credible.

Indeed, diplomacy in the 21st Century is a collective effort.

It is collective at the national level, in the sense that there are many groups and institutions contributing to the conduct of a country's overall foreign policy.

Foreign Ministries have to lead, but others can do much to help.

Increasingly, diplomacy is collective also at the international level. The complexity and the trans-national nature of international problems, risks and challenges call for greater cooperation among states.

The globalized world with its high levels of interdependence requires societies to understand one another in greater depth than ever before.

Consequently, employing cross-cultural skills that facilitate mutual understanding among societies have become a key condition for peaceful relations in the 21st Century.

In this respect, Turkey is uniquely placed – historically and culturally – to contribute to a better mutual understanding among societies in its region and beyond.

With this advantage in mind, we try to help build a culture of reconciliation and compromise in our region.

Turkish foreign policy approach recognizes interdependence as a confidence building dynamic.

Thus, Turkey plays a leading role in establishing regional cooperation, extending from the Black Sea, through the Balkans and reaching beyond the Middle East, extending to a wide Eurasian landscape.

Distinguished Guests,

While peace and stability are ever important, they need to be bolstered by values such as democracy, rule of law, human rights and good governance.

True; in today's world one cannot afford to lose sight of the realist perspective in foreign policy. This is especially valid in Turkey's neighbourhood.

In facing serious threats such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and armed conflicts, we need to remain strong.

Yet, a static understanding of “realism” alone does not meet our needs. We also need to take account of ideas, norms and values as important elements of international politics.

I believe that a realistic perspective supported by a reasonably idealist vision is not impossible. On the contrary, it can be more productive.

Turkey, for its part, aims to act as a generator of stability and security in its region, but also works to promote positive change.

In this respect, we stress the importance of the rule of law, human rights, good governance, transparency, accountability, good use of resources and economic opportunity. Indeed, Turkey’s call for reform and democracy in the Middle East and more generally in the Islamic World has been well received.

Turkey’s own experience in political, economic and social development makes our case stronger. The credibility of our message is further strengthened by the fact that we have historical and cultural ties with the wide group of nations around us.

Indeed, Turkey proves that a well-functioning democracy, serving a largely Muslim society, living under a secular regime can prosper, preserve its identity and also be a part of Western institutions.

Distinguished Guests,

Although I have many reasons to be hopeful, I also know that caution is not a luxury in our world.

Terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, armed conflicts and anachronistic rivalries are still with us.

On top of these, we have poverty as a consequence of increasing gap between the rich and poor nations, ecological problems, illegal migration, organized crime, epidemics, trafficking of narcotic drugs and human beings. Unfortunately, we still have famine in regions not so far away from ours. We can not deny the link between these problems and the moral or ideological ones still haunting the world such as fanaticism, religious and ethnic discrimination in the forms of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or prejudices against Muslims.

There are no magical formulas for these problems. We will have to fight them for years to come.

Yet we know that this fight has to be at the national, regional and international levels.

And it must reflect a sense of collective responsibility.

In our interdependent world, seeking narrow self-interest will only bring minimal and elusive benefits, if any.

Nations still seek power: Hard power, but, increasingly, soft power as well.

“Power of force” is relevant and in many cases necessary, if only for the purposes of deterrence in most cases.

Yet, the “power of persuasion” without the use of force can also be highly effective and is comparatively very low in cost.

Today, wielding power in its classical sense cannot be effective without regard to the complex nature of international politics.

Such complexity is not necessarily bad. But it requires states to be more responsive to the growing strength of the human factor in international politics.

Societies and their subjective notions such as identity, pride, recognition are now more visible on the international scene than in the past. The difference today is less about the nature of societies, than the fact that their numbers and weight as actors on the international scene have grown.

Consequently, sense of justice – a social value deeply entrenched in all regions of the world – demands greater regard from international politics. As such, the critical balance between “power and justice” awaits to be better managed.

States cannot forgo power altogether. But, we can harness it in more legitimate ways that give due regard to justice.

Similarly, while advocating freedoms, justice cannot be ignored.

This inter-woven set of principles and priorities also have to take into account the relationship between “freedom and security”, reminding us again of the importance of power.

These notions are traditionally employed in domestic politics. Yet, in our globalized village, they have acquired growing international relevance.

Hence, we speak of “global governance” and even “global democratic governance”. This requires us to work together towards increasing the democratic legitimacy of the international system.

We still have to work mainly through nation-states, as they are the most legitimate and dominant actors. But the nature of international problems go beyond the capacity of any single country to deal with them.

In this sense, “effective multilateralism” can be a promising way of dealing with this challenge.

For its part, Turkey follows a foreign policy that reflects a positive line of thinking.

Constructive approach and win-win understanding in dealing with problems make a lot of sense, especially if trust can be established among the parties.

This is difficult in our neighbourhood. But it can work.

I believe it is increasingly understood that Turkey follows such an approach not out of weakness, but, on the contrary, out of strength.

In this respect, our own accomplishments at home, our democratic and open regime, the dynamism and the aspirations of our population, the potential of our economy, and the rich history of our nation allows us to pursue a multi-dimensional foreign policy.

The transatlantic dimension of our foreign policy, including relations with the US, and the priority we attach to the process of European integration form the core of our orientation.

And we consider our relations with our neighbourhood with other regions and institutions not as alternatives, but as reinforcing dimensions within our overall foreign policy.

Moreover, the significance of Turkey as a facilitator of harmony of cultures and civilizations, helping to spread universal values to a wider geography, is now recognized by many.

This has become more evident especially after the attacks of September 11 and other terrorist acts which continue to threaten us all.

Distinguished Guests,

Turkey's positive input to regional and international politics will be further facilitated by its accession to the EU.

We are only weeks away from starting accession negotiations with the Union on 3 October. This will be possible due to the success of Turkey's impressive reform process, especially in the last few years.

Opening the negotiations with Turkey will also be a strategically and culturally farsighted move by the EU in remaining true to its post-modern promise.

In conclusion, Turkey will continue to be a force for good in its region and continue to make positive contributions to the establishment of a better international system.

I wish you all a good stay in Istanbul and hope for fruitful discussions in the days to come.

Thank you.

**Statement by H.E. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey (Exeter University/Degree Congregation/12 July 2005)**

Vice-Chancellor Professor Smith,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and privilege for me to accept the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Exeter.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation and profound thanks to the Council and Senate of the University for conferring this honour on me.

The excellent academic standards here at the University of Exeter, greatly increase for me the significance of receiving this Honorary Degree.

Let me also offer my congratulations to all the graduates.

You have earned a valuable diploma from a fine University.

I am confident that the experience you gained here will be of great help to you in your future professional lives.

On this occasion, I would also like to pay tribute to British academia as a whole.

The contribution of British academia to increasing understanding between various cultures and raising awareness of global problems is truly unique.

We in Turkey greatly value the long tradition of academic exchange and dialogue that we have with the United Kingdom.

Indeed, more than 40 Turkish students are studying here at Exeter.

They are the best example of the long-standing human contacts between our two countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank Prof. Niblock for his kind words of introduction.

I regard the honour bestowed upon me today as a valuable gesture; a gesture that acknowledges my dedication to the cause of nurturing a peaceful and prosperous regional and international environment and promoting democracy and human rights at home.

As such, this expression of appreciation is a source of great personal gratification and inspiration to further pursue my efforts to this end.

This is indeed a challenging task.

This is a challenging task particularly in a period when a set of phenomena continue haunting and threatening humanity at large.

Phenomena such as military conflicts, poverty, terrorism, fanaticism, religious and ethnic discrimination in the forms of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or prejudices against Muslims, environmental degradation, epidemic diseases, trafficking of narcotic drugs and human beings need a collective and global response.

Yesterday morning I was in Srebrenica to commemorate the tragic events of ten years ago.

This morning I was in London sharing the grief of the victims of the terrorist attack of only few days ago.

I condemn in strongest terms these despicable acts of terrorism and stand in resolute solidarity with the United Kingdom and its people in the combat against this scourge.

In the face of these challenges we all need better solidarity among us.

Moderates must be more courageous than extremists.

Dialogue and understanding should gain more space at every level of our lives against use of force, violence and terror.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In today's turbulent world Turkey is a force for good.

It is a moderating and stabilising actor in areas as diverse as the eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus and others.

My conviction

- to promote good neighbourly relations with all,
  - to replace disagreement with cooperation,
  - to seek innovative mechanisms and channels to resolve regional conflicts,
  - to encourage positive change in our region and
  - to build cross-cultural bridges of dialogue and understanding.
- will continue to give strong direction to Turkish foreign policy.

Another issue of personal priority and cornerstone of Turkish foreign policy is our integration process with the European Union.

I strongly believe that Turkey's membership will be an asset both for Turkey and for Europe.

It will prove, once and for all, that Europe is defined not by geography only or religion, but by common values.

I am proud of my Government's accomplishments in our political and economic reform agenda.

I am proud of having contributed to the achievement of an upgraded democracy and a transparent and accountable administration at home.

Our ambitious reform agenda will continue with even more intensity in the period ahead.

I know that we may face many difficulties on our way.

I do not underestimate the challenges.

But I am confident that with genuine political will on both sides, we will achieve a truly historical moment when Turkey joins the EU.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this note I conclude my remarks by expressing once again my genuine appreciation for the honour you have given me today and thank you for your kind attention.

**Address of H.E. Abdullah Gül, Minister of Foreign Affairs & Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey to the D.A.D. Symposium Organized by TESEV, İstanbul, 20 June 2005**

Honorable Government Representatives,

Distinguished Members of Civil Society Organizations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a distinct pleasure for me to address the first issue-focused meeting of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue which we co-sponsor.

I also wish to recognize the representatives from the two other countries co-sponsoring the Democracy Assistance Dialogue, Yemen and Italy. I am pleased to see such a prominent group of people from all over the region, as well as the US and Britain, participating in this important gathering.

The well-selected topic for this inaugural meeting certainly adds up to the occasion. Women are in fact the better half of our societies, although this is not always sufficiently appreciated. Their role in advancing democracy deserves no less importance.

I therefore thank the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation for organizing this symposium. I am confident that the exchange of ideas among such a distinguished group of participants will provide solid impetus to the work ahead.

Dear Friends,

Before I focus on the issue at hand, the empowerment of women in social and political life, I would like to dwell briefly on what brought us here. What is the significance of this meeting and how it fits into the bigger picture?

It all started with an increasing awareness of the need for reform and modernization in the Middle East to meet the challenges we face. This awareness first of all reflects the experience and aspirations of the people in the region. It is also recognized by the international community.

Indeed, all studies made in the region or elsewhere indicate that, despite its great potential, the Middle East is steadily falling behind the global trends of social and economic development.

To turn that around and promote sustainable growth requires both political and economic reforms. This reform agenda includes embedding the rule of law, transparency, good governance and accountability, as well as encouraging political pluralism.

And it is no other than the people of the region themselves who can do that.

I remember the discussions we had two years ago in an OIC meeting in Tehran where I called on my colleagues to rapidly take the necessary steps to start putting our own houses in order.

Today, I am glad to see that the reform dynamic in the region is increasingly gaining momentum. The enthusiasm of the people to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives is clear across the whole region.

The international community is also more receptive and supportive to the needs and aspirations of the people in the region.

That said, we should not expect miracles overnight. Indeed, change is rarely quick or simple. Moreover, democracy is always a work in progress. Therefore, we have to be patient but resolute, and continue to work in a spirit of partnership for positive ends.

The pace and nature of this process will be determined by the needs and expectations of the people and governments of each country in the region. Because, democracy comes from within, and the shape it takes will depend on the circumstances and traditions of each country.

A one-size-fits-all model can never work.

What is universal is the aspiration for democracy and the benefits it brings to all. Indeed, principles of democracy do not conflict with any religion or culture. On the contrary, members of all faiths and cultures come together around the universal tenets of democracy.

As such, democracy is the single largest umbrella that presents a most-inclusive framework for the common good of all.

Therefore, we must set democracy and the environment of freedom it yields as our main direction and work patiently to foster it.

It is true that the road to full democracy can at times involve difficult choices. It has always been so all around the world. But in the final analysis, we must allow foresight and always take the long view rather than letting short-term considerations rule the day.

For democracy is the best possible guarantee of sustainable, long-term security and prosperity. It is a tool for the realization of the human potential as well as for the fair and rational use of resources.

That is what our own experience taught us. Greater freedom and political pluralism leads to accountability and thus good governance. It then generates social and economic dynamism, producing welfare and prosperity

Distinguished Participants,

Having spoken at some length on the need for democracy, allow me to clarify how the issue of women's role in public life fits into this picture.

Simply put, empowering women in public life is a matter that has direct bearing on the quality and viability of democracy. Without the contribution and participation of our better halves, no country can ever hope to march towards full democracy.

This is why we have chosen at this meeting to focus on the struggle of women in the region.

Unfortunately, the women all over the world are still subject to numerous forms of discrimination. As a result, they participate poorly in social, economic and political life.

To be sure, concern for the status of women has increased in recent years. Political discourse regularly addresses the issue of gender equality. But there is still little progress on the ground.

This is especially true in terms of women's status in the family and society as well as their participation in the development process.

Now is the time to adopt and implement concrete programs to that effect.

Women can not be excluded from enjoying their fundamental rights equally. Nor can discrimination against women be justified along religious, cultural or legal lines.

In the past, women in many parts of the world including the Islamic countries happened to be at the forefront of political social, economic and cultural life. The current situation of women has nothing to do with religion or traditions.

Therefore, we must work to clear all legal, political and psychological obstacles in front of women and their participation in public life and education. And we have to take all the necessary measures to encourage women in this direction.

To this end, laws and regulations should be reviewed as necessary. Besides, misleading prejudices should also be cast aside. In this regard, we should not compel women to follow certain stereotypes, but let the process unfold by its natural course.

What is essential is to clear all hurdles before women's participation in public life.

I hope that our efforts within the framework of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue will provide a valuable input to our efforts.

Along this road, I attach great importance to the role of civil society. For democracy is not built only by Governments from the top down. It is achieved and supported by people themselves, by the society which they form and by the institutions they create and maintain.

Civil society organizations, political parties, academic institutions and the media all have a role to play in this endeavor.

This is why we have to build networks among these groups and facilitate a meaningful dialogue which will enable concerted and focused action.

The fundamental objective of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue is precisely that.

We aim at bringing together civil society organizations and government representatives to share experiences, best practices and lessons learned. The idea is to develop a constructive and open dialogue.

And on the basis of that dialogue we hope to develop joint activities and programs in all areas underpinning a democratic system.

Looking at the list of participants of this symposium, I can not think of a better start to this important venture.

I am confident that your contributions will be instrumental in taking this process forward and building a culture in which democracy can further rise in our region and beyond.

In that regard, this symposium is just a first meeting.

There needs to be an effective follow-up to our deliberations here in Istanbul. The exact nature and modalities of this will be determined by your suggestions and the achievements of this meeting.

At this point, I can only say that Turkey's dedication to supporting democracy and reform efforts in the region will continue.

Democracy Assistance Dialogue will be an important conduit of our engagement to that effect.

Working in close cooperation with respective Governments and NGOs, we will encourage, facilitate and support positive change in the region and beyond.

Thank you.

**Interview Given by H.E. Abdullah Gül Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs to Bahrain Tribune (30 May 2005, Bahrain)**

**1.Question: Could you briefly tell us about the significance of your visit to Bahrain and your impressions?**

First of all, let me tell you that I am very pleased to visit your beautiful country. Turkey and Bahrain have excellent relations and I am happy to observe our cooperation is expanding in every field.

As you know during the Gulf War and the ensuing decade, tensions, conflicts and international sanctions had driven our region into a period of stagnation where security concerns prevailed over other needs. This state of affairs consequently had turned into a stumbling block inhibiting development, trade, political interaction, as well as social and cultural relations among the countries and the peoples of the region. The same strains have also undermined Turkey's relations with her neighbors and friends. Our transit trade with Gulf states had come to a standstill, and our development cooperation with those countries had grossly declined due to the unfavorable regional political environment. The result had been obvious, "instability" and "insecurity".

Eversince the dramatic changes that have taken place, the stumbling blocks that undermined the interstate relations in the gulf region have also started falling apart one by one. The way ahead is still long and thorny, yet, the time has come to recover and revive the relations to the level that our peoples and countries truly deserve.

Last year, my Dear Brother Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, paid an important visit to Turkey. Now, I am returning his visit. I have recently paid an official visit to the United Arab Emirates, and in the near future, I am intending to visit other brotherly Gulf states as well. In addition to the excellent relations and the deep-rooted cultural ties that we enjoy with the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Framework Agreement that we will be signing during this visit will serve as a locomotive that, I believe will carry our economic relations to new horizons. This is very significant because this protocol will actually start the process to conclude a Free Trade Agreement, hopefully in the near future. As you know ,Turkey is already part of the European Customs Union and we shall be starting accession negotiations with the EU in October this year. Turkey is the gate between continents and civilizations. Throughout millennia Anatolia has been the bridge between East and West. And currently, Turkey's location, cultural heritage and solid institutional relations with Europe, Asia and the Middle East will once again provide a unique opportunity to bring the states and the peoples closer.

**2. Question: Could you tell us about Turkey's perspective on the Middle East Peace Process in view of the recent developments that occurred in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?**

The new sense of hope for a lasting solution to the Middle East conflict is a welcome sign for everybody. We support the steps taken by the parties since the Sharm el Sheikh Summit held on 8 February.

In view of the earlier experience, this time, the parties and the international community have to refocus their efforts to make sure that terror and violence will not derail the tentative process again. Both parties should proceed on the understanding that the steps and actions they take now will eventually lead them to the long-desired negotiated settlement, based on the vision of two states living securely and in peace, side-by-side. Therefore, Israel's withdrawal plan from Gaza should be coordinated with the Palestinian side and implemented within the context of the Road Map. If this could be done effectively, I believe the prospects to revitalize the peace process will become stronger.

Obviously the international community also will have to vigorously support the efforts of the parties. Turkey, on her part, has already initiated a number of projects to provide direct assistance to Palestinian institution-building and rehabilitation. We have recently donated 25 thousand police uniforms to the Palestinians and currently we are in the process of expanding our training program for the Palestinian police force. During Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to the region on 2 May 2005, the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA) opened an office in Ramallah.

We also encourage Turkish private sector to help strengthen the dialogue between the parties.

### **3. Question: How do you see the current situation in Iraq and the future of the country ?**

The fact that two years after the downfall of the Baath regime, violence still continues in the form of terror or armed insurrection, and constitutes a serious threat to the political process in Iraq. Escalation of the attacks against the civilians and officials since the establishment of the new Iraqi Transitional Government raises concerns. But there are also other facts that would allow us to look from a more favourable angle to the situation in Iraq. Despite the unfavorable conditions and shortcomings, by holding the elections the Iraqis have made tangible progress towards instituting democracy. Currently, a new elected leadership and a transitional government which enjoys strong support of the parliament are in place. I think these are momentous steps for Iraq.

The success of the political process is the only recipe that can pave the way for a stable Iraq under the present circumstances. Obviously this brings a heavy responsibility on the Iraqi Transitional Government. They will have to face the challenge of achieving inclusiveness in the political process. The drafting of the new constitution will also be equally important in this respect. Because a democratic constitution would require the collective vision of all segments of the Iraqi society. While confronting these challenging tasks, the national interests of Iraq must obviously prevail over ethnic and sectarian considerations. In addition to the on-going efforts, there may also be merit in seeking UN's expertise and contribution for the success of the constitutional process.

The meetings of Iraq's neighbors, initiated by Turkey before the War, have proven to be instrumental in helping the political transition in Iraq. With Bahrain's active participation in this initiative, we successfully convened the 8th official meeting of the Foreign Ministers of

Iraq's neighbors in Istanbul and gave strong messages for a united stable and democratic Iraq.

It goes without saying that the international community should continue supporting the Iraqi Government in this critical phase. The International Conference which will be held in Brussels in the second half of June may provide a valuable opportunity to bolster international support for Iraq.

In addition to its participation in the efforts at the international level, Turkey also extends support to the Iraqi Government on a bilateral level. We reiterated our commitment to the political process during Prime Minister Jafari's official visit to Ankara the previous week. This visit has been a timely demonstration of Iraqi Government's determination to lift the country back on its feet by restoring stability and order through dialogue and reconciliation. The people of Iraq deserves a much better future, and, in my opinion, Prime Minister Jafari's visit confirmed that Iraq is moving in that direction. Both Prime Ministers voiced their determination to intensify relations in all fields. Turkey will stand firm by the brotherly people of Iraq in their search to build a stable, democratic, politically united and prosperous future.

**4. Question: As the Foreign Minister of a country which sustains close ties with the West, your views on the issue of Islamophobia bears significance. Could you elaborate on this subject ?**

The relationship between Islam and the West matters today more than ever before, because of the need for the eastern and western civilizations to co-exist peacefully in our increasingly interdependent world. This is crucial for lasting peace, security and stability at the international level. However, in recent years the degree of the misunderstanding between Islam and the West unfortunately increased. Consequently the Muslim world is facing a serious challenge caused by the prejudices in western societies. The perception on the part of certain policy makers and the public opinion in the west, of Islam, as a source of intolerance and extremism is totally unfounded. Furthermore there is also a small but powerful and rather vocal constituency that goes to the extent of defining Islam as a root-cause for terrorism. As a result of the public debate that has been continuing for some time, one can say that those who tend to relate certain extreme cases with the general tenets of Islam and try to identify isolated incidents with the Muslim world, created a smoke-screen around our holy religion and traditional life-styles. Sadly, September 11 aggravated this misrepresentation.

Poverty, oppression, corruption and other unfavorable social, political and economic circumstances breed the ground for radical elements, who then exploit religion for their ill-designs. Radicals and terrorists may exist in every society and culture, and surely, they must be dealt with determination in accordance with the law. Yet drawing up generalized conclusions and attributing evil ideas and actions to a sacred religion would be great mistake which may have far-reaching dangerous repercussions. On the other hand, one would also caution against sweeping generalizations expressed toward the west. Turkey on her part, refuses to blame "others" for all the shortcomings that may prevail in the Muslim world. One has to recognize also that Turkey and many other countries have benefited, and continue to

benefit from the rewarding process of association and integration with the west on the basis of mutual respect and interests.

Terrorist acts violate human life, fundamental rights and undermine public order, just as they offend religious values and freedom. The Islamic world is in no way behind the West in condemning and combating all sorts of terrorism. Islam is a profound source of wisdom, ethics, knowledge and values that complements and enriches the common heritage of the human civilization. As an integral part of the diversity inherent in Western societies, which we consider as an asset and not disadvantage, Islam deserves to be studied, understood and represented correctly today by those who bear the responsibility of enlightening the public.

## **5. Question: Where does the Islamic Conference stand in this picture?**

Today, the establishment of a meaningful dialogue between the Islamic World and the West is a necessity that is felt more profoundly than ever before. Dialogue may help western societies comprehend different aspects of the Muslim civilization in their true sense. Such an approach could also be useful in containing the damage that Islamophobia inflict upon the relations among civilizations and cultures and developing a more balanced mutual understanding between the East and the West. I believe that it is high time that international organizations work collectively in this direction.

Through its broad membership, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has an important role to play in this regard. OIC's recent Summit level decisions to move collectively towards an age of "Enlightened Moderation" are clear signs of the growing consciousness of the need for dialogue among civilizations. This is a very important step forward. OIC member states are committed to genuine and pragmatic reforms that will render the Islamic Conference a more effective, transparent and forward looking organization. It is the second largest international organization in the world after the United Nations. The member states agree that the OIC should promote greater interaction with other international organizations such as the Council of Europe the OSCE, and the European Union. Broadening of OIC's relations would be an asset in promoting the spirit of dialogue and understanding at the global level. This topic will carry high priority on the global agenda in the foreseeable future. We have full confidence in Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu and his efforts in this direction.

Turkey is committed to the concept of reform and renovation, provided that the move comes from within and not dictated from outside; that the reforms are gradual, pragmatic and carried out with a perspective taking stock of the global scene and the requirements, also in appreciation of every country's peculiar characteristics and history.

As a country with a predominantly Muslim population enjoying centuries-old solid ties with the West, Turkey will continue playing a constructive role in building bridges, as well as in combating Islamophobia and other forms of intolerance.

We do not underestimate the difficulties and the challenges ahead, but we have every reason to be hopeful and optimistic.

**Address by Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, to the "International Conference of Islamic Civil Society Organizations: In Search of a New Vision in a Changing World" (1 May 2005, Istanbul)**

Distinguished Guests,

I find it very meaningful that we meet today in this conference organized by the Foundation for Volunteer Organizations in Turkey (TGTV). I often ask myself why, while many civil society organizations are actively involved in so many meetings around the world on so many issues, similar organizations from the Islamic world do not take part in these platforms. Therefore, this conference is very important as it mobilizes civil power in the Islamic world.

I am very pleased to see that civil society organizations from the Islamic world meet here in Istanbul - a city which has for centuries been a venue of interaction and sharing among cultures and civilizations - and that I am able to address you on this meaningful occasion.

I also congratulate the TGTV for spearheading the idea of establishing a network of dialogue and communication among civil society organizations in the Islamic World.

As Turkey, we have expressed on many occasions the need to benefit from the contributions of civil society organizations in overcoming the problems infecting the countries in the Islamic world.

Indeed, the most valuable asset we have today in resolving the problems created by the phenomenon called globalization, and in benefiting from the opportunities it presents, is our human resources. Therefore, states must establish and further strengthen free, open and participatory structures in order to make the most out of this human potential. In this regard, civil society organizations are of great assistance to us.

The Islamic world has the capacity to catch up with our times on the basis of its rich culture and the universal values which Islam has also contributed to. We now need to mobilize this potential at the level of both Governments and societies.

We see that the urgency of achieving the desired development in political, economic and social fields is increasingly reflected in our public opinion. Muslim countries have to assume their responsibilities and be more active to find their own solutions for their problems and to pave the way for positive change. The need for reform is being openly expressed in our societies. We have to recognize this demand and assume the ownership of the necessary process of change.

On the other hand, in order to be practicable and sustainable, the process of change should be responsive to the expectations of our societies and must be owned by them. Civil society will play an indispensable role in successfully pursuing this endeavour. Adaptation of societies to the realities of our age while preserving their own identity will be possible only with the active involvement of civil society. Acting as a bridge between Governments and the people, civil society organizations carry great potential to facilitate the reform processes.

We recognize that the problems of the Islamic world which are yet to be resolved date back

before the geopolitical changes that we have witnessed in recent years throughout the whole world and particularly in the Middle East. However, it is also a fact that the developments affecting international order, and in particular the increasing power of globalization to influence all walks of life have rendered the need to find solutions to our problems even more urgent.

In today's world, technological and scientific advances affect our lives in all fields. Through television and the internet, events in far away corners of the world can be watched. Access to information has become ever easier. As information becomes globalized, everyone can follow everyone else. Consequently, with the phenomenon of globalization, the classical notion of sovereignty has also changed. States are now responsible for their actions not only to their people, but to the whole international community.

Therefore, we need to have a wider and more realistic perspective in order to accurately diagnose the problems. The important thing is not to be led by a simplistic approach that contents itself with presenting our problems solely as others' faults. Clearly, societies are adversely affected by certain problematic elements of international politics. External factors should, of course, not be ignored. However, putting the blame on others for every issue will not solve our problems. To see the causes of our problems we have to look at ourselves as well. Representatives of civil society have an important responsibility in this regard.

Obviously, the growing role of civil society organizations in political life is a relatively new phenomenon. Accordingly, the "state" which is increasingly confronted by these new actors in its traditional domains of sovereignty shows certain reflexes against them.

At times, civil society organizations, in their capacity as the advocate of individual and societal rights, criticize the state. This is an important function, and, in the final analysis, contributes to improving the administration of societies.

In our era, the so-called "third sector", the power of the community which ensures that decisions affecting daily life are shaped by the input coming from the people, is articulated through civil society organizations. As such, the public itself is given a say in the equitable and rational allocation of resources.

Civil society organizations enjoying a strong position in the West also perform the function of controlling Governments and, as such, play a guiding role without seeking merely their narrow self-interest. They function as opinion formers, highlighting the priorities of the people. The strengthening of civil society in Muslim countries too will improve the quality of public services and their efficiency.

In international meetings, declarations by government representatives make an impact up to a certain point, whereas, initiatives and/or statements coming from the civil society can sometimes be more credible and direct.

Volunteerism, sacrifice, and serving the public interest are important features of Islamic tradition and faith. It is therefore a significant shortcoming that, despite this fact, civil society organizations in Muslim countries are not adequately strong in our modern age.

Governments have to function in line with what the responsibility of governing requires, but they should also attend the advice and criticism coming from civil society. On the other hand,

it is also important that civil society organizations express their criticisms in a constructive manner.

Distinguished Participants,

In terms of the problems of the Islamic world, two main categories come to mind. The first category relates to the problems or misperceptions that arise in the relations between the countries with Muslim populations and others, in particular the West.

For sure, in our world today terrorism cannot be condoned in any way. It has unfortunately had a negative impact on the image of the Islamic world. This important issue which needs to be well-addressed, puts responsibility on both sides. I sincerely believe that the platform you intend to develop today in this meeting can be of great help in this regard.

Recently, the international interest in the Islamic world has increased throughout the entire world. However, in many cases, we observe with great dissatisfaction that the point of departure for this interest derives rather from the negative considerations or perceptions regarding the Islamic world. I believe that we have to turn this international interest into an opportunity so as to better present Islam and the Islamic community to the world at large. Today, particularly in the West, the Islamic world is being studied from various perspectives and certain projections are being made.

In order to benefit from this interest and to paint a more accurate picture of Islam and Muslim, we should not turn our backs to these efforts, but on the contrary, contribute to them as equal intellectual partners. The higher the scientific and philosophical level and the representative quality of contributions emanating from within Islam, the more their chances will be to influence the debate around the world. It is, therefore, of great importance that, based on the fundamental principles of the Islamic tradition, such as tolerance and moderation, we take an open-minded, realistic but equally visionary approach.

Another important issue which I would like to draw your attention to is the risk of generalizations and reductionism that certain parts of the West demonstrate towards the Islamic world, to creep into our view of the West as well. Our relationship with the West should not develop on an adversarial basis.

Turkey's Islamic identity has not prevented it from having a close interaction with the West and from being an important member of the Western institutions and organizations. We pursue and further develop our integration with the West on the basis of mutual interest. The successful completion of Turkey's EU membership process will signify yet again the harmony of a Muslim society with the European peoples by coalescing around common, universal and democratic values.

Distinguished Participants,

In relation to problems, the second, and I believe the more important, category points to a more essential and comprehensive issue: The problems that the Islamic world faces within itself. We see that these relate primarily to matters of human development that have political, economic and social dimensions.

Civil society organizations are among the main driving forces that contribute to forming an environment of freedom where human creativity can be mobilized so as to find rational solutions to problems.

In seeking solutions to their problems, it may be possible for Muslim societies to form rules and concepts appropriate to their own circumstances. However, the universal values and principles that aim to promote human development are well known and are inseparable parts of Islamic belief. Therefore, universal values, which have been fed by mankind's collective wisdom and conscience as developed through the interaction among different civilizations throughout history, serve as guiding principles for Muslim societies as well.

There is indeed a rich and useful common core shared by Muslim societies. This core is in full harmony with universal values. Principles such as justice, sense of helping and sharing, compassion, moderation, equality, struggle with injustice and corruption and respect for diversity that are at the root of Islam have contributed to universal values throughout centuries. In this respect, what needs to be done is to approach the issue with self-confidence and an open mind and without any complexes.

Surely, there is no one single formula in attaining the aspired goal of development of our peoples. The different historical experiences and the qualities of different societies need to be taken into consideration. What is important is to remain in the right direction and follow the path of reason that the Islamic tradition also indicates.

Distinguished Participants,

Turkey has been drawing attention to the need for reform within the Islamic world for a long time. I, too, since the beginning of my term in office, have emphasized on various occasions, including in OIC meetings, that time has long come for addressing the political, economic and social shortcomings of our societies.

In this connection, underlining the importance of universal values, I pointed to requisites such as democracy, rule of law, human rights, good governance, transparency, accountability, gender equality, the rejection of violence, and economic structures that function more effectively and freely.

I made the point that, it is our responsibility to put our house in order, and that no one else can accomplish this better than us. If we cannot do this ourselves, others will do it for us. And the way to put our house in order is to engage in a healthy process of change, that is, to put in place a realistic reform agenda.

Clearly, the reform that is needed here pertains to the governance of Muslim societies, not to Islam itself. Islam does not, of course, need to be reformed. The need is for governments to respond to the demands of change. In this sense, one should not fear the phenomenon of reform.

We have to diagnose our problems freely, and engage in a responsive and constructive exchange of views. Problems that social reality presents us in the form of multi-variable equations need to be addressed with a multi-disciplinary approach. To the degree that we are

successful in this, we will be able to defend the interests of our nations in a stronger way.

Therefore, I believe it is very important that the initiative you are launching today be developed on a basis that responds to the needs of your societies.

However, if this initiative is limited to a single political aim or reflects one single perspective, it will hardly provide added value, as has been the case with other similar attempts. Civil society is, after all, a phenomenon which enriches itself with diversity.

In this connection, I believe it will be more useful if the network that you are planning to establish among civil society organizations is designed, not as a regulatory body, but as a facilitating platform that helps to strengthen civil society organizations in the Islamic world.

The platform must not assume a rigid character. It must develop as a pluralist structure that respects differences. We cannot reach anywhere merely with ideological slogans and repetition of official views. The issue of the representation of the platform on the international scene must also be given due importance.

The development of civil society institutions is, in fact, a process, and its pace of progress may differ from country to country. The important thing is to support this process in a constructive and realistic way by sharing each other's experience through structures that encourage and facilitate. I believe that the real added value of the platform you are establishing here lies in this fact.

I am confident that the intellectual accumulation and the public support that is represented at this conference will produce successful outcomes. I extend my very best wishes to all the participants.

**Message Issued by H.E. Abdullah Gül Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of May 9 Europe Day, (8 May 2005)**

Every year we celebrate Europe Day on the 9th of May, but this year is particularly important due to the recent developments in our relations with the EU.

The accession negotiations will start on the 3rd of October in line with the decision taken at the December 2004 European Council.

Turkey, aiming to fulfill the Copenhagen political criteria, has adopted reforms of revolutionary nature that foresee the complete transition of the society. The work carried out during this process was supported by an overwhelming majority of the nation. Our nation wants to see its' future in the European Union, and this was proven by their strong support to the reform process.

It goes without saying that with the opening of the accession negotiations our relations with the EU will reach an important turning point and gain new momentum. Turkey will undertake what is necessary for the successful completion of the negotiations and obtain the place it deserves in the European structure.

I believe that the EU will abide by its promises in this critical period ahead of us. Our primary expectation is the timely opening of the accession negotiations after the necessary preparations have been completed. Within this framework, the Luxemburg Presidency, the forthcoming UK Presidency and the EU Commission also have important undertakings.

On May 9, 1950 the then French Foreign Minister Schuman delivered a speech about the concept of a united Europe that still remains in our memories. This concept has evolved through several stages up to our day. However the common denominator has always been the recognition of peace and stability as the core value. Those countries that have accepted this understanding have shown their readiness to play a role in shaping the European structure by joining the Union.

It is not possible to say that the process of composing a united Europe has concluded at present. Turkey's membership to the EU will help finalize this process. Turkey with its present structure will enrich Europe's mosaic of diversity and will add strength to the EU with its political, economic, cultural, social, as well as its security and defense dimensions. Thus, it will make a significant contribution to peace, stability and harmony in the World.

On the other hand, I have been observing that in some of the EU countries there are concrete differences of opinion on the Constitutional Treaty. I believe that Europe will overcome these differences with common sense.

Availing of this opportunity I would like to congratulate the Europe Day of our citizens and all of the Europeans.

**Speech by His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of the Eighty-Fifth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2 May 2005)**

Esteemed Colleagues,

Honorable Guests,

Today, we are celebrating the eighty fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Turkey. We are also inaugurating our new building which will enable us to work under the same roof after having served in multiple locations for over forty years.

Since the establishment of our Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been responsible for conducting our international political relations at both bilateral and multilateral platforms, as well as for the coordination of our international economic and cultural relations. As such, it has contributed to the well-being of our people and to international peace, stability and prosperity, particularly in our region.

Over the years, our Ministry has always pursued a proactive and peaceful foreign policy following the great leader Atatürk's timeless maxim: "Peace at home, peace in the world". In that sense, our Ministry has not only secured and exalted the founding principles of the Republic's foreign policy, but also performed successfully in adapting to the rapidly changing circumstances of our age. In this process, our Ministry has been in close coordination with the TGNA, the General Staff, other ministries and public institutions and collaborated with non-governmental organizations and universities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has always played a pioneering and effective role in the modernization process of Turkey in terms of both ideas and approaches. It has contributed not only to our relations with the external world but also to our economic and social reform processes.

Turkey pursues a multi-dimensional foreign policy reconciling both the East and West, and the North and South. This multi-dimensional characteristic of Turkish Foreign Policy is evident in her membership to various international and regional institutions. In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has played a leading and creative role.

As a matter of fact, our relations with international organizations extending from the United Nations to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, from the European Union and the Council of Europe to the Organization of Islamic Conference, from NATO to the Economic Cooperation Organization etc. have developed with the foresight of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Honorable Guests,

The Republic of Turkey, which had 39 representations abroad in 1924, has 162 foreign missions today, comprising 93 Embassies, 11 Permanent Representations and 58 Consulates General.

The most prominent assets of my Ministry are its human resources and its institutional accumulation.

Indeed, the well-deserved prestige of my Ministry emanates from its career-based professionalism which relies on merit; and also from maintaining its traditions with a contemporary understanding; and holding national interests above all other considerations.

Many great names that Turkey has raised have served in this Ministry over the years. Some of them later played crucial roles at senior levels of state administration. I am glad to see that former members of our Ministry are still active today in the media, non-governmental organizations, think-tanks, universities and the private sector.

Also, the Solidarity Foundation, Members' Association and the Wives' Association of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conduct important activities in areas related to professional, humanitarian, social and cultural issues.

Honorable Guests,

With the forming of the first National Government right after the opening of Turkish Grand National Assembly on 23th April 1920, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established on 2nd May 1920 under the name of "Hariciye Vekaleti".

In fact, the Turkish Foreign Ministry rests upon long standing and deep-rooted Ottoman tradition of diplomacy. It had inherited the professionalism and institutional accumulation of Ottoman diplomacy.

Since its establishment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has operated in dire conditions and with limited staff. Our members have worked under challenging circumstances in a self-sacrificing manner.

Furthermore, for the last thirty years, our members working abroad have been subject to vicious terrorist acts and as a result of that, 39 colleagues of ours, among whom are 5 Ambassadors, have fallen martyrs.

Their names live in the corridors and meeting rooms of this Ministry, but above all, in the hearts and minds of all members of the Ministry. In our new building we will have several venues dedicated to their memories.

On this occasion I would also like to recognize the self-sacrificing and brave humanitarian efforts of our diplomats which were vital for the salvation of Jews from the Holocaust during the Second World War, and for the alleviation of the suffering in Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and natural disasters in various countries.

Honorable Guests,

I believe that turning the activities of May 2nd into a tradition and holding similar commemoration/celebration events every year from now on will enable our Ministry to reach out to the public at large and will help create a better understanding of our policies.

I believe that the media will be our strongest partner in this process and I am very happy to see members of the media among us today. In today's globalizing world, the distinction between domestic and foreign policy is rapidly eroding. This has increased the governments' need to have public support for their foreign policy actions. In this regard, media functions as a bridge between decision-makers and public opinion. This is a highly important role. Accordingly, in our new building, we will try to provide better facilities to the media members in carrying out their duties.

Honorable Guests,

With this ceremony, we are formally inaugurating our new annex-building. Hence, while celebrating the anniversary of the foundation of our Ministry, it is a source of great pleasure to be able to provide better facilities to our members.

Our new building, which has 26 thousand m<sup>2</sup> of utility space, has been constructed as a horizontal low lay-out framework. This provides better inter-unitary coordination, which is part of our Ministry tradition. In the building there are eight meeting rooms, two of which are auditoriums. These auditoriums have been constructed to hold mid-sized international meetings. Besides, the new building houses social areas such as a dining hall and cafeteria, as well as a computer training center, two education centers, various offices, archive rooms and the library of the Ministry.

In conclusion, with the new building, the members of our Ministry who have worked in limited and difficult conditions over the years will finally have more favorable conditions. In addition to that, our Ministry has become a more secure complex with green areas and parking lots.

In this context I would also like to underline that my Ministry is working hard to modernize its consular services which constitute one of its core functions.

I would like to convey the gratitude of my Ministry to everyone, and foremost to my predecessors, who have exerted every effort for the creation of these facilities.

I would also like to express heartfelt thanks to my esteemed friends, Ministers of Finance and Public Works and Settlement as well as to the Mayor of Metropolitan Municipality of Ankara for their significant contributions.

I would like to thank all the Ministry personnel, engineers, architects, workers and technicians who have contributed to the construction of our new building.

Dear Colleagues, Honorable Guests,

It is a source of pride for me to lead a Ministry which has played prominent role in the evolution of the Turkish Republic and which has produced people of great stature. At the

beginning of the 21st century, I am working with people who have great visions. I know that I have a team who defends and advances the interests of Turkey in the best way, seeks knowledge, works to sustain universal peace and harmony, and has a high degree of spirit of solidarity.

Before concluding my speech, I would like to stress once again that my Ministry will continue to function with a high level of patriotism, excitement, enthusiasm and will not abstain from any sacrifice required for the common good of the Turkish people.

I wish you all the best and present my best regards.

**Speech Delivered by H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Turkish Grand National Assembly Plenary Session Regarding the Armenian Allegations, April 13th, 2005**

Mr. Speaker, Distinguished Members of Parliament,

I deem it very useful that Parliament is holding a plenary debate on Armenian allegations, an issue which our nation is highly sensitive about.

Under the pretext of this year being the 90th year of the so-called genocide, activities against Turkey have been intensified.

I believe that this plenary debate being held at this juncture will contribute significantly to our country's fight against these allegations.

Distinguished Members of Parliament,

First, I would like to underline one point.

The word „Armenian“ which I shall use in my speech in no way refers to our citizens of Armenian origin. Our citizens of Armenian origin are sincerely loyal to our state. They meet all the obligations of citizenship and fulfill to the utmost their civic duty to carry their country to a better future.

On this occasion, I would also like to pay homage to the Armenians who have contributed in fields such as the arts, science and trade to our 800-year common heritage stretching from the Seljuk and Ottoman periods to the Republic.

On the other hand, we have many brave and upstanding Armenian friends among Armenians living outside Turkey who value friendship with the Turkish nation and are making efforts to that end, and who are trying to maintain their cultural and human bonds with our country. I would like to extend our feelings of appreciation and friendship to them.

Mr. Speaker, Distinguished Members of Parliament,

For a long time, Turkey has faced an extremely well organised campaign regarding genocide allegations which has not refrained from using any available opportunity. This organised campaign is based on prejudices, slander, lies, exaggerations and fabrications concerning our nation and our country which began to be disseminated nearly one century ago.

For instance, you are aware of the infamous „Blue Book“, which was published by the British War Office's propaganda bureau during World War I and propagated that the Armenians were being killed en masse to secure the entry of the United States into the war.

Also, the American Ambassador in Istanbul at the time, in order to prepare a bright political future for himself, published memoirs full of lies which he based on information he obtained

from several extremist Armenians working for him. He thus contributed to the spread of prejudices against our nation and our country.

When such books and propaganda material is read, the impression that emerges is that on a day in 1915, Armenians living in Turkey were all of a sudden massacred. The worst of it is that even though such propaganda material has been exposed as inconsistent, fabricated and serving ulterior motives, it is still regarded as authoritative. It is even more distressing that these publications have been quoted as source material or basis for so-called academic works.

On the other hand, some academics have identified the fabrications and exaggerations in these allegations as a result of their objective and honest research. They have announced their balanced conclusions to the world.

Distinguished Members of Parliament,

In order to accurately assess the events that took place in 1915, I believe that it is necessary to analyse what happened prior to 1915.

For a period of more than 800 years from the time the Turks first set foot in Anatolia in the 11th century to the end of the 19th century, Turkish-Armenian relations were characterised by peace and mutual confidence.

Following the conquest of Istanbul by Fatih Sultan Mehmet, the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were organised as a „nation“. They began to live in peace and freedom provided by the state under the administration of their own religious leaders. The Armenians were regarded as the „loyal nation“ by the Ottomans. Armenians rose in the Ottoman bureaucracy to hold high offices of state as ministers, generals, ambassadors, governors and judges. They were not subjected to discrimination in any shape or form.

However, after the 1820s, Tsarist Russia and the British and French Governments of the time, in the context of the struggle for interest and influence between them, began to regard the Armenians as an important tool which could be used against the Ottomans. These powers promised the Armenians an imaginary Armenia in East Anatolia. Independence movements in the Balkans also gave impetus to these efforts. As a result of provocations by these powers, various Armenian committees began to be formed from the 1880s. Hinchak Committees were set up in 1887 in Geneva, and Tashnak Committees in Tbilisi in 1890.

The common objective of both Committees had been the establishment of an Armenian State covering the regions inhabited by the Armenians within the Ottoman territories.

Armenian rebellions against the Ottomans started as a result of provocations of these Committees which got organized later on within the Ottoman borders as well. Through the methods of assassinations and bank raids, they had become the forerunners of terrorism which is now a serious menace to the world and mankind.

Some Armenian groups had risen up in several regions of Anatolia, particularly in Erzurum, Kayseri, Yozgat, Çorum, Merzifon, Van and Adana. The main objective of the rebellions which had been started by the Armenian Committees was to portray the efforts of the Ottoman Empire to quell the riots as massacres and to encourage the great western powers to intervene for the benefit of the Armenians.

The start of the First World War and the entrance of the Ottoman State into the war against the Allied Powers was seen by the extremist Armenians as a great opportunity. In this context, voluntary Armenian regiments engaged in massacres of civilians including women and children, attacking Turkish cities, towns and villages, which were rendered defenceless following the Russian army's advance towards Eastern Anatolia. They backstabbed the Ottoman forces. They prevented the operations of Ottoman troops. They cut off the supply routes. They ambushed the convoys of wounded soldiers. They facilitated the Russian occupation through staging riots in the cities.

Under these circumstances, the Ottoman Government summoned the Armenian Patriarch, Representatives and other prominent personalities and informed them that if they continued murdering Muslims, the Government would take necessary precautions. Since this warning did not produce any result, the Government closed the Armenian Committees on 24 April 1915, arrested 235 people for activities against the state. April 24th, the date commemorated by the Armenian circles every year as the „so-called Armenian genocide“, is in fact the date when these committee members were arrested.

The Ottoman Government, on 27 May 1915, in the face of this enormous internal and external threat, resorted to a defence measure that all countries which encountered similar dangers did not hesitate to take. It decided to transfer the Armenians who live in war areas to the Ottoman territories in the south. The Armenians had been timely informed about this decision. The transfer started after necessary preparations. The Armenians who lived in Istanbul and Ankara, the regions far from the war area were kept out of the scope of this transfer decision.

During the relocation of those Armenians to the regions out of the war area, the Ottoman Government instructed that necessary security measures be taken so that no harm could be done to the Armenians. The orders which were issued to this effect are available in the Ottoman archives. These orders are the tangible proof of the situation. On the one hand, the ongoing World War I and on the other, internal uprising and rebellion; the war atmosphere, local hatred and revenge feelings had caused some attacks towards the convoys during the transfer process. The Government tried to prevent this situation. As a matter of fact, there were very limited attacks on the Armenian convoys in the regions where the state authority was relatively high. Approximately 1390 people who did harm to the Armenian convoys and disobeyed the instructions of the Government were tried. Many of them were sentenced to punishments including death.

At this point, I wish to ask this question: Does a State which intends to annihilate Armenians, try and punish its own citizens and officials for the maltreatment of Armenian convoys? Furthermore, insufficiency of fuel, vehicle, food and other means in war days, heavy climatic conditions and outbreaks of epidemic diseases like typhus had also led to the increase of loss of human lives. In fact, the said time period was an era in which all Anatolian people shared the same fate.

The activities of the Imperialist powers with an aim to provoke Armenians continued during the First World War and the War of Liberation. In November 1918, the French forces which occupied certain parts of Southeastern Anatolia and Kilikia had an agreement with the Armenians promising them to establish an Armenian State in the region. First, Armenian voluntary battalions, then an Armenian legion as part of the French Foreign Legion was established. These Armenian troops under the French command committed bloody massacres in the region until 1921. This point is on record in French documents.

Distinguished Members of Parliament,

The efforts to depict the events of 1915 as genocide by distorting all these historical realities are also devoid of any legal basis. The term „genocide“ is defined in Article (2) of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948. According to the Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Only the actions compatible with this definition can be considered as a crime of genocide. Within this definition, the part underlining „the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group“ should be particularly highlighted. It is absolutely evident that there was no such intent. The destruction of a certain group just for the sake of being part of that group could only be possible after centuries-long prejudices. However, Anatolia is a piece of land on which various identities had lived in peace side by side for centuries. There are no such sort of prejudices as we see in other places, among peoples towards each other. The circles claiming genocide, despite their 90 year long tremendous efforts, could not find a single document suggesting the intent of the Ottomans to destroy Armenians . What they call documents proved to be fake.

As a matter of fact, Armenian allegations were investigated right after the First World War. The British who invaded Istanbul after the war exiled 144 Ottoman officials to Malta for trial, among whom were ministers and high level civilian and military personalities. They were held responsible by the British for various crimes including massacre on grounds of the reports of the Armenian Patriarchate. However, despite the fact that the Ottoman archives were under their control, the British, inspite of all their efforts, could not find any proof to blame these people. In view of this, they had released all Malta exiles. Therefore, the invalidity of Armenian genocide allegations had been established even as early as that time.

Distinguished Members of the Parliament,

Armenian allegations were not on the agenda for half a century after the foundation of the Republic. It seems that these allegations were accelerated after 1965 and turned into a campaign. Views and speculation about the motives behind it are various.

Some Armenian groups chose terrorism as a vehicle for promoting their so-called genocide allegations in world opinion. Those who raised new generations full of hatred and prejudice against our country and people launched terror attacks in 1973 against Turkish diplomats and targets by means of some several terror organisations such as ASALA. More than 200 attacks

were carried out against Turkish targets. Attacks took place in 21 countries and 4 continents. As a result of the abovementioned terrorist attacks, more than 30 of our diplomats, civil servants and their family members were killed until 1985.

With this opportunity I once more remember our beloved martyrs with grace and respect.

You will remember that the foreign media which reported these murders did so with small headlines, such as „a Turkish diplomat was killed“ in their newspapers. However under the small headlines, they wrote long, detailed and one sided accounts that almost amounted to a racist view, of the events that took place in 1915. Although some members of these terror organisations were captured, they were not punished. Those who knew of the activities of these terror organisations chose to prevent them only after their citizens were harmed.

Now we would like to ask this question: If these terrorists were captured on time and brought to justice, would terrorism constitute such a big threat today?

Armenian circles who carried out this terrorism changed tactics in their campaign against Turkey when they realized that this did not yield results and tried to pressurize Turkey by means of getting recognition for the so-called genocide in some national and local parliaments. After Armenia gained independence these kind of activities increased significantly. Until today the parliaments of Argentina, Belgium, France, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Canada, Lebanon, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Uruguay, Greece, the Greek Cypriot Administration and the European Parliament passed either resolutions or accepted statements with regard to the so-called genocide. In addition, some local parliaments in the USA, Canada, Australia, and Switzerland passed decisions in this respect. History will prove that these decisions are wrong and that they are unjust and disrespectful vis-à-vis the Turkish nation

Recently, a draft motion regarding Armenian allegations was presented to the German Federal Parliament by the Union of Christian Democrat Parties, CDU/CSU who are in opposition. Recently in France, for the same purpose, three different draft motions were presented to the Parliament. Additionally, the Armenian diaspora in the USA has long been running an intensive campaign in order to be able to pass a resolution regarding the so-called genocide at the Congress. It has also come to our knowledge that there are activities aimed at passing a resolution to recognize the so-called Armenian genocide in Congress before 24th April 2005. The activities of some Armenian circles were not succesful until now because of the solid stand of the US Administrations. Similar initiatives are also going on in different countries. We are working actively in the diplomatic field at all levels against these initiatives.

Once more I would like call upon those who began such initiatives: Parliaments are not institutions which can take decisions on historical events. Historians alone can assess history. Whatever the motives behind them, such draft motions submitted in foreign parliaments which support the Armenian allegations hurt us as well as create some question marks in Turkish public opinion vis-à-vis the intentions behind such initiatives. These actions are also not helping our relations with Armenia. I invite our fellow parliamentarians to give up such initiatives. There is no benefit from what they are doing.

Another important goal of these extremist Armenian circles is to create a precondition for our membership of the EU. As you are aware, the Armenian President Mr Kocarian, in a letter sent to heads of states or governments of EU countries requested that accession negotiations

should not be started with Turkey. We noted with satisfaction that Heads of states or governments of the EU countries did not take this letter into consideration and some even criticised the letter.

How can the events that took place in 1915 be regarded as genocide as they conflict with the historical realities. The most important reason behind it is the widespread activities of the Armenian diaspora, which for years have been very well organized and have extensive financial means at their disposal. The activities of the diaspora are supported by the Armenian state, either openly or secretly. It is known that Armenian Ambassadors carry out activities so that the so-called genocide be recognised in national Parliaments. Diaspora try to get the publication of many books on the so-called genocide and articles written by authors close to Armenian views in important magazines and newspapers. Diaspora also orchestrates many meetings, conferences and symposia regarding the so-called genocide. The diaspora makes sure that researchers and authors close to the Armenian views take part in these meetings so that the issue always remains on the agenda. The diaspora, similarly, facilitate the making of documentary films that discuss Armenian claims. They also encourage the broadcasting of these films in many tv channels. Recently a film called „Ararat“ directed by Atom Egoyan was shown in many countries. It has come to our knowledge that the cost of making that film was 15,5 million US Dollars whereas 3 milion Dollars raised by ticket sales. The diaspora could spend such amount of money just for the purpose of propaganda. This sum, I think, gives an idea about the propaganda power of the circles that we are fighting against. Public opinion especially in western countries is affected by these films, books and articles published every year and their Parliaments are left under serious pressure to recognize the so-called genocide.

Distinguished Members of Parliament,

At this point I have to make a self-criticism. Turkey, unfortunately, followed a defensive policy against Armenian allegations for a long time. Necessary archive work has not been carried out in time to enlighten world public opinion about the truth. Or the desired level of service could not be rendered due to a lack of the necessary infrastructure or classification. Outside Turkey, this situation has led to the formation of a belief as if Turkey was hiding something. The needed financial sources have not been provided. This struggle, to a great extent, was tried to be carried on by a small budget provided by the state. While we were not educating our youth in our schools and universities concerning the historical realities on the subject matter, the Armenian diaspora was finding a place for the so-called genocide in the school curriculums in a variety of countries and thus helped to create the formation of prejudices in the minds of young generations.

By saying all this I do not wish to say that nothing has been done. That would be an injustice to our people and institutions which fought with great sacrifice against these fraudulent claims. However, what is needed today is to base this struggle on a well prepared, consistent and active new strategy.

Distinguished Members of Parliament.

Due to all these I deem this general debate today very important. All our institutions, including the Turkish Grand National Assembly, have indicated the necessary sensitivity on the subject matter. The struggle against the Armenian allegations is not a subject to be carried

out merely by the state successfully. We can only be successful in this field with the common endeavours of all the sections and individuals of our society.

The joint declaration of 8th March 2005 by our distinguished Prime Minister and the distinguished Chairman of the main opposition party has been an important turning point in indicating our perseverance of struggle in fighting against the Armenian allegations. Turkey has shown the whole wide world that she will commence a common struggle both with its political parties in power and opposition. The distinguished Prime Minister and the distinguished opposition party chairman have made a historical call that Turkish and Armenian historians and other specialists form a group to carry out research in all pertinent archives including the Turkish archives on 1915 in order to find out the realities.

I wish to disclose that on this subject, in order to indicate the seriousness and sincerity of Turkey, a further initiative has been taken. The distinguished Prime Minister is conveying our proposal through an official letter addressed to Mr. Koçaryan, Head of State of Armenia. In his letter, the distinguished Prime Minister while conveying our proposal of founding a joint commission, has also informed that if our proposal is acceptable, we are ready to negotiate with Armenia the modalities of the establishment and terms of reference of the joint committee and that such an initiative will be a step to facilitate the normalization of relations between the two countries.

I wish to particularly stress that we are expecting from the countries in which the parliaments have adopted a resolution recognizing the so-called genocide, to encourage Armenia to respond positively to the proposal made. I believe this is a responsibility that the above mentioned countries should fulfill.

Distinguished Members of Parliament.

I wish to briefly dwell upon our relations with Armenia. Especially the western countries suggest us that we establish diplomatic relations with Armenia and open the borders. As is known, on 16th December 1991 Turkey recognized the independence of Armenia along with all former Soviet Republics. In the aftermath, Turkey has provided humanitarian relief to Armenia when she faced economic difficulties. Turkey has also made another significant gesture to Armenia: as Turkey was initiating the process of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Turkey has exceptionally invited Armenia to join this Organization although Armenia is not a littoral Black Sea state. Armenia now has a permanent mission to the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation in Istanbul. However, as I have already mentioned above, due to the policies persistently followed by Armenia and its diaspora on distorting the realities it was not possible for Turkey to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia. Are these normal attitudes for a state which desires normal neighborly relations?

How can it be expected from any state to normalize its relations with another state which does not officially recognize its boundaries? Moreover, in contravention of the United Nations Security Council resolutions Armenia continues not to recognize the territorial integrity of fraternal Azerbaijan and occupy 20 percent of Azerbaijani territory. Hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani refugees still live in the camps in miserable conditions.

Turkey is actively taking part in putting an end to this conflict. During the last two years, me and my Azerbaijani and Armenian counterparts have met many times. Our endeavors will continue. Turkey wishes to normalize her relations. However, Armenia's attitude in

contravention of United Nations Security Council resolutions and the fundamental principles of international law and her attitude which is not in line with good neighborly relations do not enable Turkey to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia. Despite all this, permission has been given to charter flights between Turkey and Armenia. Thousands of Armenian citizens come to Turkey and they can work. There are relations between the two countries at the level of Non-Governmental Organizations.

Armenia's positive response to our proposal which will bring the historical realities to the daylight will undoubtedly contribute positively to the process of normalization of relations between the two countries. I am once again repeating our call on Armenia.

Distinguished Members of Parliament.

One of the points asserted by those circles which bring to our attention the Armenian allegations due to a variety of reasons is to reconcile Turkey with her history. Turkey is in conciliation with her history. Turkey does not have a problem with her history. Never should anyone have a doubt about this. It is correct that perhaps we have left some of the pages of our history vague. For example, during the last century of the Ottoman Empire our next of kin who lived in the Balkans have been forced to migrate from the territories in which they have lived for centuries; they were faced with massacres and other tragedies; the expulsion of those from the Caucasus to the Ottoman territories; and the hundreds of thousands of Turks or other Muslims who lost their lives during the First World War have not been spoken out about, sufficiently to the world.

During our war of independence the details of the massacre and cruelty with which the inhabitants of our cities under occupation came across have not been dwelled upon thoroughly. During the last years of the multicultural, multi ethnical and multi religious Ottoman Empire, how the missionaries sent by the leading nations in order to expedite the fall and disintegration of the Empire, divided the non-Muslim population, and following the division of the peoples how each section of the divided people is used as a tool in order to realize the political interest of the relevant country are events which have not been dwelt upon in our history. This is not due to a weakness. This has been done for a noble cause: by the establishment of the Republic through the Lausanne Treaty both in our history and in the international relations history pertinent to Turkey it was assumed that a new page had been turned and the succeeding generations should be brought up in the future not with the sufferings of the past but with expectations of a bright friendship full of peace. Otherwise all the information relating to the sufferings are in the memories and can be found in the documents. I am repeating that we are in conciliation with every page of our history.

We believe that one has to consider one point very carefully. At the centre stage of the subject matters we have taken up today is, whatever the reason, the human beings, their sufferings and their losses. We will respect the solemn commemoration of the mutual suffering which caused sorrow for all of us at that era on these lands be it of Muslims or non-Muslims or Turks or other nations. However, we can never accept the political exploitation of these sufferings as a tool for lies and calumny in order to create feelings of revenge, prejudices and hatred against our people and country.

Distinguished Members of Parliament.

Turkey will pursue a policy on the Armenian allegations which take initiatives and deploys every effort in order to bring to light the historical realities. At all times, Turkey is ready to face its history and there has never been an era which we should be ashamed of in our history. We are resolute to go until the end in our struggle. Which conditions have brought about the events of 1915 and how? What has happened in 1915? What has been the outcome of the practices of expulsion? All the factors will be researched in depth by the expert historians. Our endeavor will be conducted in the most extensive manner and in an efficient cooperation and coordination among our institutions. The infrastructure for this is being formed. Our people will be informed and be conscious about the realities. Parallel to the domestic endeavors we shall deploy active efforts abroad in order to disseminate information on the realities, and fight against injustice. In this process, some other countries will be compelled to face their own history as much as Turkey, or even more, and they will have difficulty in explaining their policies at that era to today's generations. This process requires an extensive struggle. This struggle will be conducted by the Grand National Assembly, the Government, bureaucrats, academics, scientists, media, businessmen, in short by our nation. Turkish nation in unity and as a whole will come out of this struggle successfully. I am confident about it.

I salute the Grand National Assembly with profound respect.

**Address of H.E Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister And Minister Of Foreign Affairs  
Of The Republic Of Turkey To The Co-Sponsors Meeting Of The Democracy Assistance  
Dialogue  
(Rome, 25 November 2004)**

Dear Colleagues,

Distinguished Guests,

I would like to thank my Italian colleague, the eminent statesman Signor Fini, for his warm hospitality. Taking this opportunity, I would also like to congratulate him for taking up his new position as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I am confident that we will highly benefit from his contributions to our work. On this occasion, I am also pleased to meet with my Yemeni colleague and friend here.

Long before 2004 when the Broader Middle East project gained significance, in my address to the OIC Foreign Ministers Meeting in Tehran in May 2003, I encouraged the ongoing efforts to upgrade the standards of contemporary good governance and the level of fundamental rights and freedoms within the Islamic countries, and emphasized my confidence that the Islamic societies were capable of achieving those objectives. It is gratifying to see that, since then these themes have been further developed in both these countries and the international community.

Hence, we are here today to officially launch the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD). We attach great importance to this initiative and I am very hopeful of what we can all achieve.

As the three co-sponsor countries, Yemen, Italy and Turkey, we have an excellent working relationship. We have the same understanding of and expectations from the initiative. Therefore, it has been rather easy to draw the outline of the initiative and prepare the ground for its inception.

The aim of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue is to bring together civil society groups and governmental institutions from all interested parties to share experiences, best practices and lessons learned. And, on the basis of this intellectual common ground, we hope to realise joint activities in the field of democratization.

How the process will be taken forward will of course be decided by the countries of the region. We, as the co-sponsors, aim at only helping to facilitate the process. Eventually, it would be the regional states, organizations and peoples that will be the real owners of these activities. That is because, successful reform depends on home-grown efforts and that change should not and can not be imposed from abroad.

These principles, which have also found expression in several other international and regional fora, are crucial for the success of this initiative. Accordingly, Turkey, along with other co-sponsors, will strongly respect those principles.

In terms of the substance of our initiative, I believe the Democracy Assistance Dialogue holds an important place within the overall Broader Middle East initiative. As we see and

experience it, a democratic dispensation is the basic element of economic and social progress. As such, what we aim to achieve through the Democracy Assistance Dialogue can be considered as the overarching basis for the whole reform process.

Allow me to elaborate on this point. Because, the term “democracy” is often used without really grasping its full content. Here, what we mean by democracy is not merely holding of free elections. It goes much beyond that.

Indeed, democracy is a way of thinking, which encompasses a wide array of issues. It is about freedom of thought and expression. It is about ability to freely associate for the common good. It is about women’s role in the society and politics. It is about education. And it is about accountability...

What flows from this logic is that democracy is an infinite pursuit on the part of the human societies irrespective of how developed they may be. Indeed, it is a never-ending process. It is a constant interaction. The importance and relevance of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue lies in this very logic.

We in Turkey are fully aware of this reasoning. This is why our Government continually aims at higher standards of democracy. In doing that, we primarily address the needs and aspirations of our own people. We do take into account the specificities of our society and try to achieve what is best for us.

However, we also benefit a lot from the experiences of others. In this respect, our relationship with the EU and our candidacy to become a full member, give us useful directions and impetus. Indeed, within the last two years, we have undertaken landmark reforms in Turkey to broaden the individual liberties, democratic accountability and transparency. Yet, we know that there is still room for progress.

Our experience in Turkey is a convincing proof of the fact that a country with a predominantly Muslim population can, by preserving its spiritual/cultural identity--and by even benefiting from it--achieve contemporary democratic standards. Justice, equality, consultation, law and respect for the individual are in fact inherent in our spiritual and cultural heritage.

This is why we are hopeful that the Democracy Assistance Dialogue will also help willing countries to build and benefit from a collective wisdom through experience-sharing and focused cooperation. We also believe that such an interaction will naturally bring out a renewed impetus and synergy for the reform efforts in the region.

Distinguished Guests,

Our experiences and observations tell us that NGOs have to play an important role in this process. Indeed, the process of building democracy will only be reinforced if a constructive interaction between Governments and NGOs takes place. Therefore, the Democracy Assistance Dialogue is designed to facilitate this through its activities.

In Turkey, the civil society has been flourishing and growing in strength. As such, Turkish NGOs have been very helpful in our reform process. Therefore, we are encouraging them to become our partners in the Democracy Assistance Dialogue as well.

Besides, it is quite encouraging to see that the number and interest of local NGOs, that are willing to play a role, are on the rise. I consider this a very important development as their contribution will be essential to understand and interact with the popular dynamics of reform.

Dear Colleagues,

Distinguished Guests,

The Broader Middle East is on the verge of profound change. In the coming decades, the pace of economic and social transformation will inevitably increase in the region, in line with the aspirations of the people. At times this would be a rather cumbersome process. But there is no alternative. More democracy, more stability, higher standards of life and utilization of national resources in the most optimum way and to the benefit of the peoples... These are what the peoples of the region deserve.

They have in the past contributed greatly and so positively to the world civilization. But, lately, they have suffered a lot. Now is the time to change that direction. However, this can not be an automatic process. We have to work hard to that end. International cooperation is essential to make this endeavor a success.

Of course, the existence of political/military conflicts in the Middle East makes a negative impact on the psychological, political and social environment of the region. For instance, it is obvious that the Arab-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq, negatively effects the reform efforts. However, while doing more for the resolution of these problems, we should also be able to carry on with our reform agenda. Because, even if these conflicts are resolved today, we will still be needing those very reforms for the benefit of our peoples.

Dear Colleagues,

In the final analysis, I am confident that we will succeed in this important task. My optimism mainly derives from the demand and determination for reform that I observe in the region. Regarding the reforms, there is an interesting debate underway at both popular and official levels, as well as among the academics, intellectuals and scholars of religion. Besides, a number of countries have embarked on useful initiatives building upon their own circumstances.

Our next step should be to help translate these initial experiences into concrete and productive work with the involvement of the governments and civil societies. My Government is determined to actively engage with the countries of the region, as well as the rest of the international community, to realize this objective.

The Democracy Assistance Dialogue will be an important asset in this process.

Through this dialogue, we will talk with each other, share our experiences and reflect on our shortcomings and achievements. We will learn from each other and thereby will produce common objectives. Finally, we will explore what we can do collectively and individually, and help each other to reach our common goals.

Thank you very much.

**Press Statement by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, Abdullah Gül, Regarding the Harassment of the Turkish Military Aircraft by Greek Military Aircraft in the International Airspace of the Aegean, 10 November 2004**

Turkey aims to improve its relations with Greece in every field, and sincerely wishes to settle all Aegean disputes through peaceful means and without causing any tension. At this sensitive period which we are passing through, we also expect our Greek friends to reciprocate our desire in the same manner and to take necessary measures in order to prevent the occurrence of any unfortunate incident.

However, yesterday (9 November), two F-16 type Turkish military aircraft, conducting reconnaissance mission within the framework of “Doğu Akdeniz-04” Exercise, under the supervision of NATO, were harassed twice in the international airspace of the Aegean at the north of the Island of Lemnos. First harassment took place at 11:04 a.m. by two F-4 type Greek military aircraft departing from Lemnos Island, that approached to the Turkish aircraft at the rear as close as 500 feet. The second harassment was at 11:12 a.m. as two F-16 type Greek military aircraft that took off from N. Ankhialos very dangerously approached to the same Turkish aircraft from the tail.

The Turkish aircraft duly informed the NATO AWACS early warning aircraft of the above-mentioned harassments and declared suspension of their mission under those circumstances. The NATO AWACS aircraft urgently called the Greek aircraft, reminding that the Turkish aircraft were on a NATO mission and ordered the Greek aircraft to leave the exercise area immediately. The Turkish aircraft recommenced their mission after the Greek aircraft left the area.

Besides, the Island of Lemnos that the two Greek F-4 aircraft took off is under demilitarized status.

Ambassador Baki İlkin, Deputy Undersecretary, and Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, Director General, are now in Athens to have contacts with their counterparts within the framework of ongoing Confidence Building Measures process between the two countries at the level of political directors of the two Foreign Ministries. I have instructed them to convey to the Greek authorities our ideas to reach an understanding.

With these thoughts in mind, I also touched upon possible means for such an understanding during the phone conversation that I had with my Greek counterpart yesterday.

**Address by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Gül at the  
Conference on “The Transatlantic Alliance at a New Crossroads” , Istanbul, 26 June  
2004**

Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Becker, Dr. Paker,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a particular honor for me to address this distinguished audience.

This conference provides a timely opportunity to look at the future of the Transatlantic Alliance.

I should extend my congratulations to the organizers, TESEV and the German Marshall Fund, for bringing in this highly select group.

I can see that the key asset of the transatlantic alliance is the power of new ideas it can generate.

This has kept the alliance effective; even as the world and thus our initial premises changed.

And in return, this alliance has paid back by guaranteeing our right to produce this intellectual vitality in freedom.

A great majority of the European allies have built a space of peace and prosperity under this Alliance.

Several have escaped tyranny and joined this space.

But, there is certainly more job to do.

The task now is to protect this space against the new threats and challenges.

The task now is to promote peace and prosperity in a wider area.

I can see from the Program that specific strategic issues in front of the Alliance will be elaborated throughout this conference.

Therefore, I would like to dwell on our responsibilities in confronting the new threats and challenges in a more general and wider sense and Turkey's role in this respect.

The core threats that our security faces range from terrorism to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

On the other hand, chronic political, economic and social problems within or outside of our geography create a fertile ground for these threats and challenges.

These range:

-from racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism to religious prejudices and discrimination;

-from corruption and organized crime to human trade and drug problems;

-from poverty to illiteracy;

-from lack of good governance to human rights violations;

-from epidemics to ecological and natural disasters.

All these require our collective response.

However, I believe that each member of our community has individual abilities and responsibilities in responding to the serious problems inflicting us.

Some of us may be better equipped in being a remedy to the grave humanitarian problems of Africa.

Another of us can be more instrumental in helping the Latin American nations in their chronic problems.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey also has a role to play in this regard.

Our geographic location and historical-cultural background offer us opportunities to contribute to regional security, cooperation and progress.

We have not missed these opportunities.

My country has taken a leading role in most of the international and regional initiatives:

From the United Nations and NATO to OSCE,

from Black Sea Economic Cooperation to Economic Cooperation Organization.

Turkey has established a strong partnership with the United States.

This almost sixty years old partnership has been based on values.

It has flourished in many areas from defense to energy, from education to tourism.

Turkish-American ties have proved to be an important asset for Trans-Atlantic relations. It continues to be so.

Turkey's determination to be a part of the European integration has given result: I am confident than ever that we shall begin accession negotiations next year.

I am happy to see that real visionaries in Europe and elsewhere welcome such a prospect.

As a candidate country to the European Union and a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Turkey will host for the second time the OIC-EU Joint Forum soon. This unique Forum will be another opportunity to emphasize the necessity and the possibility of a harmony of cultures.

Turkey's humanitarian and military contributions to the international peace-keeping efforts in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo and Afghanistan have been praised by all.

My Government is doing its best to contribute to the stability in Southern Caucasias.

We are working with the new Government in Georgia in many ways (political, humanitarian, economical) for the consolidation of stability in Georgia.

We have been offering to play a role in the solution of the Karabag conflict.

I am in constant contact with my colleagues from Azerbaijan and Armenia for this purpose.

I hope the coming Summit in İstanbul will provide a new opportunity in this dialogue.

Turkey's resolute attitude for a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem have surprised many.

By accepting the UN Plan on Cyprus, We have clearly disproved the claims that we were after military or strategic benefits in Cyprus.

We have clearly demonstrated that we had one and a legitimate cause: The security and the rights of the Turkish Cypriots.

Turkish Cypriots have courageously and overwhelmingly voted for the Peace Plan.

They now expect from the international community lifting of the unfair trade and other restrictions on them.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is one of our major concerns.

Turkey has deep-rooted and strong relations with the parties of this conflict.

I believe that such relations are not about bilateral interests only.

They constitute a real asset for peace in our region.

My Government is determined to maintain and further develop these relations to the benefit of our peoples and peace.

We have offered on many occasions our contribution to the Peace Process in general, in the implementation of the Road Map in particular.

Although the situation in the field frustrates us, we shall continue to be at the disposal of the parties and the Quartet for peace.

We are in the eve of a new period in Iraq.

Turkey will continue to lend her full support to the Iraqi people which is very dear to us with all its components.

We are at a critical stage where all the parties need to behave in a responsible manner far from miscalculations.

A democratic Iraq, with its integrity and unity intact, with its resources being used by and for its people as a whole would be a pillar of peace and prosperity in our region.

Success of the transition process in Iraq will be to the benefit of all.

I agree that the ongoing political conflicts in Iraq and Palestine are not helping the perspectives of social and economic reforms in the region.

However, these political problems should neither be an excuse for some urgent tasks.

In May last year in Tehran I shared with my fellow Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference my opinions on the urgent need to upgrade the political and social standards and a better use of resources at the member countries.

I also expressed my confidence on our peoples' ability to do so.

This year my colleagues from the Islamic countries and I have agreed the Istanbul Declaration, which showed this call is a shared call in the Muslim world.

Now there is in place a Tunis Arab League, an Istanbul OIC, a Sea Island G-8 as well as a host of civil society documents that cry out the same.

While Turkey has been supporting the idea of change in the Muslim world, we are also listing conditions all the same.

We have been saying:

No intervention but Partnership

No imposition but Regional Ownership

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey has no aspirations or illusions about being a model for anyone.

We are what we want to be.

We are first to admit and act upon our shortcomings.

We are fully conscious that democracy is a process of constant perfection.

However, we cannot prevent anybody from being inspired from what we have achieved.

Indeed, Turkey is a living proof of a predominantly Muslim society, which has achieved to be a modern democracy: plural, civic, transparent and accountable...

My Government has implemented a spectacular political and economic reform program in the past one and a half year.

- We have raised our standards to higher levels.

- Fundamental rights and freedoms have been further consolidated.

- Cultural and religious rights were secured.

- Zero tolerance for torture and mistreatment was targeted. Independent reports show that this is being fulfilled.

- Capital punishment was practically not being implemented in Turkey since decades.

We made it a history removing it fully from our legislation and from the Constitution.

- Civilian character of the administration and judiciary was also consolidated.

- Full parliamentary scrutiny of all public expenses was guaranteed.

- On the other hand, our public administration reform is designed to make the Government more efficient, streamlined and de-centralized.

- Press Law has been modernized.

- Penal Code is being changed.

- We became party to the major international conventions in fighting corruption.

I would like to draw your attention to an important fact: We dared to implement this reform program at a very peculiar atmosphere:

- A war was going on in our neighborhood;
- International terrorism was on rise;
- Most liberal countries had to take some restrictive measure effecting certain freedoms.

Another dimension of our reforms was that political and economic ones went hand in hand.

Economic indicators are there.

World Bank and IMF Statements are there.

These show a functioning market economy solving its structural problems.

Market confidence is increasing every day.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should conclude by commending the authors of the Istanbul Papers presented at this conference, and indeed all the distinguished participants who have brought the finest thinking on the important issues that we face.

In a couple of days NATO's Heads of State and Government will discuss the issues raised here.

I expect the NATO Istanbul Summit to lay the foundations of the future NATO that has built new bridges with regions of strategic importance and remains a capable actor in extending the space of peace.

Your intellectual energy will continue to support this Alliance, as it looks in solidarity to the future.

Thank you.

**Statement by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, at the Thirty-First Session of The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers - (Istanbul, 14 June 2004)**

Dear Colleagues,

Mr. Secretary General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank you for electing me to the Chair. I shall draw strength from your support. I pay tribute to my dear friend and colleague Minister Kharrazi for his wise and skillful chairmanship of his term. I also thank Secretary-General Dr. Belkeziz for the excellent work he has accomplished and also the entire OIC Secretariat under his able guidance.

I warmly welcome you in İstanbul for the Thirty-First Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, the session on “Progress and Global Harmony”. You are indeed very much at home in İstanbul. This city is a living monument of our common Islamic heritage. Throughout centuries, İstanbul has also become a symbol of cultural and religious harmony.

Dear Colleagues,

We meet again at a very crucial time. The Arab-Israeli conflict with the question of Palestine at its core is bleeding hopes away. Iraq has yet to show a genuine sign towards stability. Africa’s problems remain to be solved. Terrorism is expanding its scope and intensifying in ferocity. Sense of security is fast diminishing. The continuing political, social and economic deprivation is bringing greater instability. Those preaching clash of civilizations are winning more attentive ears. Prejudices, fanaticism and discrimination are everywhere. And, insecurity is now threatening a global economic downturn.

On the other hand, enhancing solidarity among peoples through international organizations and civil societies as well as benefiting from technological and scientific advances offer new opportunities.

We, as the Islamic countries, are effected by all these issues directly. Therefore, we need to rise to the challenge. This is not a matter of choice; it is a mission dictated by our common heritage and our deep sense of history.

Our task may be difficult. However, we must not fall to desperation. We must take strength from our common heritage which offers a rational and humanistic understanding of the world. This quality of Islamic culture and tradition has produced remarkable achievements in the past. But it is not enough to content ourselves with the old times. Our present challenge is to work for similar achievements today and in the future.

You may recall what I stated one year ago in Tehran and elsewhere since then. I referred to the Islamic heritage of justice, tolerance, affection and solidarity. I suggested that it should strengthen our inspiration for more democratic, transparent, open societies. I argued that only well-governed and functioning societies can ensure efficient and fair distribution of resources and economic-social stability. I cautioned that, unless we take the initiative to put our own house in order, outer pressure would be felt.

It is gratifying to see that many fellow OIC members feel the need for improved quality of political and social standards. Even within the past one year, we have witnessed individual and collective efforts towards this end.

To mention a few;

- The Alexandria Library Statement described democracy as “a system in which freedom is both fundamental and paramount.”
- The San’a Declaration stated; “democratic systems protect the rights and interests of everybody without discrimination, especially the rights and interests of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.”
- The Arab League Summit, chaired by Tunisia last month, declared its determination for reform and modernization, and to keep pace with the rapid world changes.
- Intellectual contributions by President Hatami of Iran and President Musharraf of Pakistan on the task of reform have been particularly noteworthy.
- Also, last week, the G-8 Summit took a substantive step in engaging its members with their partners in the Middle East in moving towards certain common objectives. Turkey’s emphasis during the meeting was on the need for local and popular ownership of social change.
- On the eve of our conference of today, Turkey hosted an international symposium on the “Muslim World in the 21st Century”. It ended with a strong call for a positive change in our political, economic and cultural lives.

These are important steps in the right direction. All of us should build on this momentum. The OIC has the capacity to contribute to this debate and actions to this end.

Meanwhile, there has been an increasing interest both in the West and the East in Turkey’s experience in harmonizing contemporary values with the traditional identity. Indeed, human rights, gender equality and accountability have recently reached their high standards in my country. Realization of universal standards, including the European political criteria by a Muslim society has been welcomed by all.

Dear Colleagues,

Let us benefit from our meeting now. Let us put forward our vision for reform and better future. I propose to chart our joint efforts based on our shared objectives in the following manner:

Common values:

- The sovereign nations that make up the OIC are determined to further the political, economic, social and cultural progress of their societies.
- Equality and freedom of their citizens is their cherished principle.
- Transparency and accountability are guiding principles of good governance.
- Broadening the representative nature and democratic practices of government is a constant objective.
- Providing contemporary education to all its citizens is an essential function of the government.
- Sustainable economic and social development should be pursued vigorously and efforts should be deployed in reducing poverty.

Collective efforts:

- The OIC members should assist each other in their efforts for progress and reform.
- The OIC, as an institution, should devise ways and means for supporting the reforms in a collective framework.
- Also for the purpose of shouldering these tasks, the OIC needs to make a determined effort!to adapt its Secretariat to the growing demands of today.

Wider international cooperation:

- The OIC should develop and increase institutional relations with other regional organizations such as the Arab League, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the D-8, Gulf Cooperation Council, the African Union, the ASEAN, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, for the purpose of fostering intra and inter-regional cooperation and for drawing expertise and resources for the OIC members' national projects.
- These institutional relations should also help strengthen global harmony and attract meaningful interest in the settlement of the regional disputes.

I also look forward to the convening of the second OIC-EU Joint Forum in Istanbul next October. This meeting will take place at a time when the need for cooperation and mutual understanding becomes more important than ever.

Dear Brothers,

The question of Palestine has become even more acute over the past year. Violence claimed many more innocent lives. The destruction brought by the policies of Israel deprived thousands of more Palestinians of even minimum requirements for living. The Palestinian Authority remains mainly incapacitated. Turkey has all along stated that the employment of terror, suicide missions, targeted assassinations and deliberate destruction can bring no good to any party either now or in the longer run. I would like to draw the attention of the

international community once more to the urgency of the solution of this problem which, coupled with the situation in Iraq, continues to undermine global peace and harmony.

In this regard, I commend the initiative taken by Malaysia, the OIC Summit Chairman. The Special Ministerial meeting held last April has led to a well-organized diplomatic activity. The OIC Ministerial delegation, including Turkey, has thus far met three of the four Quartet partners. Our message to the sponsors of the road-map has been clear. The OIC will actively stand behind genuine movement towards settlement, and the OIC will be watchful of all concerned parties.

Inspired also by the Arab Peace Initiative, based on the wise ideas of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, the OIC can oversee the process to achieve the two-state solution between Israel and Palestine. We can do the same for Israel's peace with Syria and Lebanon, based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. This can be achieved through the OIC mechanisms already available. Thus, the OIC, from its political and moral high ground, can offer full normalization and cooperation in the region.

Dear Colleagues,

Iraq now has an interim Government that will assume sovereignty by the end of this month. We wish this Government to be successful. We wish they prove to serve the collective interests of the Iraqi people in their entirety. We wish they remain conscious that the source of legitimacy of this interim Government ultimately lies with the people.

I commend Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Advisor of the UN Secretary-General, in helping move forward the transition in Iraq. I hope the UN will be able to play its independent and effective role in assisting the Iraqis in institution-building and election preparation in the months ahead.

Iraq meanwhile remains insecure and volatile. Violence and terror in Iraq need to be dealt with. This is essential for the transformation and the rebuilding of the country.

The international community should support the Iraqi people in this process. It is a moral obligation for us. It is also an investment for regional peace and stability. In this respect, we welcome the unanimously adopted UN Security Council resolution 1546.

The neighboring countries of Iraq have supported this country's free and peaceful future since the onset of the Iraqi crisis. This continuing joint initiative is a great asset for the integrity and the stability of Iraq.

The OIC has a meaningful role to play in Iraq. Furthermore, UN Security Council Resolution 1546 calls upon international and regional organizations to contribute to Iraq's stability. Therefore, we should elaborate on ways on how to assist the political process as well as the humanitarian needs in Iraq. Turkey, during its Chairmanship of the ICFM, will pay particular attention to this point.

Dear Colleagues,

Africa needs our particular attention. The longstanding problems of economic development, health and famine continue to undermine the nations of this continent. Regional conflicts

make their challenges even more difficult. The need to support sustainable development and social progress in Africa is an international responsibility of which we need to take our share.

Concerning Afghanistan, we are pleased that the Bonn process is being implemented successfully despite difficulties. Adoption of the new constitution is an important step towards the establishment of a new political structure in Afghanistan. With the upcoming elections in September, a new chapter will be opened. To maintain the pace of this progress, Afghanistan needs the continued commitment of the international community. Turkey will continue its support to Afghanistan.

We remain concerned by the ongoing situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Its people have already suffered greatly. This question undermines the stability of the whole region. We look forward to a peaceful solution to this question through dialogue, on the basis of international legitimacy. The human rights of the Kashmiri people should be fully respected and their will honoured as mandated by the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The recent moves made by both Pakistan and India and the process of “composite dialogue” have increased our hopes. We commend Pakistan for its continued efforts to sustain this dialogue. We wish to see that these efforts will be crowned with success this time.

The Azeri-Armenian conflict still stands as one of the principal obstacles to regional stability, prosperity and cooperation in Southern Caucasia. The time has come to find a peaceful solution to this conflict within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territories has to be brought to an end. This is in the interest of the regional countries as well as the international community. Turkey is ready to play its role in settling this issue.

International terrorism is widening its reach and increasing in ferocity. It continues to claim lives and hopes around the world. Terrorism has no religion, ethnicity or culture. It is an affront to the humanity. Therefore, it must be fought back resolutely.

Dear Brothers,

Regarding Cyprus, the UN Settlement Plan was overwhelmingly rejected by the Greek Cypriot side on 24 April 2004, while the Turkish Cypriots approved it with a clear majority. This vote has fundamentally changed the circumstances in Cyprus. The international organizations and many countries expressed regret over the Greek Cypriot attitude. They all welcomed the Turkish Cypriots’ determination for the settlement. Our Secretary-General Dr. Belkeziz reported that the international community, and the Muslim countries in particular, should work together to address the plight of the Turkish Cypriots by supporting them materially and politically. Also, the first ever official visit of the OIC Secretary-General on 28 May 2004 to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was most timely and meaningful. I commend this action of solidarity with the Turkish Cypriots.

The UN Secretary-General, in his recent report, calls on all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development.

Now it is high time for the international community to give full backing to the Turkish Cypriots by engaging in direct economic, commercial, social and cultural contacts with them.

The EU and the USA have already taken some steps with a view to putting an end to the isolation of Turkish Cypriots.

Our current meeting is an opportunity for this organization and the Islamic World to extend full support!to Turkish Cypriot Muslim brothers, so as to put an end to their isolation.

For many years, the OIC has been monitoring the conditions of the Turkish Muslim minority in Western Thrace. This minority has vested rights based on bilateral agreements and international instruments. However, they are not yet able to enjoy these basic minority rights to the full extent. The OIC therefore needs to continue to follow the Turkish Muslim minority's plight closely. I hope my Government's improving relations and dialogue with Greece will also contribute to the betterment of this minority's conditions.

Dear Colleagues,

The economic and commercial activities of the OIC constitute one of the main pillars of our cooperation. The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), chaired by the President of Turkey, has been a highly effective instrument in this respect. And, this year marks the 20th anniversary of its inception. A special meeting of Ministers of Economy and Trade will be organized to mark this and to evaluate the perspectives of further economic-commercial cooperation among us.

This year, we are also pleased to see the Framework Agreement for the Trade Preferential System among the Member Countries of the OIC coming into force. This is indeed a landmark. The Trade Negotiating Committee formed under this Agreement has also held its first meeting recently in Turkey.

In this respect, I would also like to express my Government's continued support!for the activities of the two successful subsidiary organs of the OIC hosted by Turkey, namely IRCICA and SESRTCIC.

Dear Colleagues,

I tried to address a number of major issues for our Organization. Many more vital matters constitute part of our agenda. Dealing with these requires year-round dedication and hard work. That is where the role of the Secretariat becomes crucial.

My Government has an increasing interest in revitalizing the OIC and its Secretariat. The OIC needs to continue to move forward as an institution.

We want to contribute to this in every possible way we can. It is in this spirit that my Government has decided to nominate a candidate for the post of Secretary-General of the OIC.

Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu has long been a household name for our Organization as the successful Director General of IRCICA. I do not need to repeat here what we all already know about his professional, academic and administrative credentials. I am confident that he will have more to offer as the Secretary- General of the Organization.

Turkey will do its utmost over the next year as the Chairman of the ICFM to rise up to the challenges facing the Organization. We are confident that we can count on your full support.

## **The Statement of Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül on International Combat Against Corruption, (10 December 2003)**

Combat against corruption, which constitutes an important issue for the international community and especially for developing countries has an important priority on the agenda of our Government.

Within this framework, active participation in international efforts is taking place while nationwide efforts on combating corruption are being stepped up in Turkey.

United Nations Convention Against Corruption which constitutes the first global international legal instrument on the combat against corruption has been opened for signature today (10 December) in Merida, Mexico. The Convention is being signed on behalf of the Republic of Turkey by the Turkish Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office at Vienna, Ambassador Aydın Şahinbaş. Thus, Turkey will be among the first countries to sign this Convention.

The Convention stipulates a number of preventive measures in combating corruption. It obliges member states to establish as criminal offences such acts as bribery, embezzlement, money-laundering, obstruction of justice which already are established as criminal offences in the Turkish legislation. The Convention further encourages member states to promote legislation which establishes as criminal offences such acts as the abuse of functions and position, illicit enrichment, bribery in the private sector, embezzlement of property in the private sector and laundering of the proceeds of crime and concealment. The Convention also establishes an efficient international cooperation mechanism. It brings an efficient system regarding the return and disposal to the prior legitimate owners of assets acquired through corruption, a mechanism which does not exist in previous international legal instruments.

Within the framework of the importance that our Government attaches to combating corruption, our country, has taken an important role in the preparation of this Convention. Our Delegations, have actively participated in the negotiations regarding the preparation of the Convention text. As a matter of fact, embezzlement in the private sector which is one of the eleven corruption crimes stipulated in the Convention has been proposed by our country. Thus, the relevant article (22/3) of the Turkish Law on Banks (Law no: 4389) which establishes as criminal offence such acts as “the embezzlement of any funds and other such assets by the president and members of the governing board and other officials of banks, entrusted to them for their responsibility in safekeeping and inspection” has been included in the Convention Against Corruption. As such, international cooperation has become possible regarding the inquiries of such acts. Embezzlement of property in the private sector is for the first time stipulated in an international instrument.

Furthermore, the article (46/9) regarding international cooperation has been broadened upon the proposal of our country. As a result, where consistent with the basic concepts of its legal system, even in the case of absence of dual criminality, the member states shall undertake to render assistance that does not involve coercive action. Thus, with the entry into force of this Convention, it will be possible to request for legal assistance regarding corruption acts which constitute a crime in only one of the countries involved. The Convention with this article

stipulates a more efficient legal cooperation mechanism than the one laid down in United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

The signing by our Government of the Convention, will give a new impetus to the comprehensive combat against corruption in our country and will strengthen our efforts within the framework of international cooperation. Our active participation in the preparation of this Convention which is signed today, is an indication of our country's determination at the international level to combat corruption.

You are no doubt aware that our Government this year has carried out the ratification procedures regarding the Council of Europe Conventions on Corruption.

The first of these Conventions, the Council of Europe's Civil Law Convention on Corruption has been approved by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 17 April 2003. This Convention for the first time defines international rules in the area of private law and corruption. It includes national and international cooperation and a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the Convention. It stipulates that the member countries adopt the principles and rules of the Convention in their internal law.

The other convention, which is expected to be soon approved by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, aims to coordinate the punishment of corruption. The mechanism which is set up to monitor the implementation of the Convention which covers public and private sector corruption and money laundering issues, has started to function. The Convention includes measures complementing the articles in criminal law as well as the promotion of international cooperation regarding the inquiries of corruption crimes.

Within the context of other international institutions, our country fully implements all decisions and recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force of the OECD which gives priority to efforts regarding bribery and corruption.

The OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions has been approved by Turkey and the necessary arrangements in our internal legislation have been carried out.

Within the framework of the Center of the OECD Istanbul Multilateral Centre for Private Sector Development, the fifth meeting of Anti-Corruption Network for Transition Economies has taken place in Istanbul during 10-12 September 2003. High level Government officials from the Central and Eastern European countries and former Soviet Union Republics as well as experts from OECD member countries, donor countries and civil society institutions have participated in the meeting which has been carried out as round table discussions and seminars where exchange of information on combating corruption, regional partnership and common priorities have been discussed.

Our Government is determined in combating corruption. We are displaying our determination both by national arrangements and by our active efforts in the international field. We emphasize at every opportunity the need to define common rules and principles and to realize international cooperation and collaboration on combating corruption which in our times has transformed into a transnational phenomenon and has become an element threatening democracy and the stability of countries.

**Message Issued By Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül on the Occasion of the  
58th Anniversary of the United Nations (24 October 2003)**

This year we celebrate the 58th anniversary of the United Nations, which was founded on 24 October 1945 with the aim of maintaining peace and security as well as improving the welfare of humanity, particularly in the fields of human rights, health, education and environment.

Having supported UN efforts towards safeguarding peace and security and the socioeconomic advancement of the world, Turkey has made important contributions to the activities of the Organization in many fields.

The serious global problems that we are encountering today are more challenging than ever before. In the new global security environment, there is a clear and pressing need to strengthen the United Nations. The many challenges that the world faces today underline the central role of the United Nations. The efforts to adapt this unique organization to the realities of today's international life should resolutely be pursued. The world needs a more representative, effective and functional United Nations to face the major problems of peace and security and other challenges which remain to be addressed: poverty, illiteracy, violence, terrorism, organized crime, narcotics, ecological disasters, epidemics, refugees, gender inequality, corruption, racism, anti-semitism, prejudices against certain faiths and peoples among them Muslims, xenophobia and others.

International terrorism also remains to be an important issue. The recent attacks on the UN headquarters and the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad have demonstrated once again how terrorism threatens international peace and stability and violates fundamental human rights, first and foremost the right to life. Within this framework, increasing the security of the UN personnel is a crucial issue. Better working conditions should be provided for these devoted people so that they can perform their duties with minimum risk. With this understanding, we have recently taken the necessary steps to become a party to the "Convention on the Security of UN Personnel".

Aware of her international responsibilities, Turkey will carry on her supportive approach to the United Nations. Having declared her candidature to the UN Security Council for the term 2009-2010, Turkey believes that she will be better equipped to bring further contributions to international peace and security as well as to cooperation and development, which are ever so closely interlinked.

Whilst celebrating the 58th anniversary of the United Nations, I would like to express my belief that the Organization shall continue to be successful in its efforts towards the advancement of mankind.

**Statement Made After the Meeting of Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül with Greek Foreign Minister George Papandreou on 9 October 2003 in Antalya in the Margins of Mediterranean Forum (FOROMED) Meeting**

Planned military exercises Barbaros and Toros are annually conducted in the Eastern Mediterranean region by the Turkish Armed Forces on a regular basis. Likewise, Greece performs Toksotis and takes part in the Nikiforos military exercise. As is known, in conformity with the mutual understanding reached between Turkey and Greece during the years 2001 and 2002, the Toksotis and Barbaros military exercises had not been conducted. Besides, neither the Turkish nor the Greek air and naval components had participated in the Toros and Nikiforos exercises.

Similarly, in accordance with the common understanding reached between Turkey and Greece, it has been decided to maintain last year's practice this year as well.

**Address by Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül at the Foreign Policy Association, World Leadership Forum, New York, 25 September 2003**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure to speak at the Foreign Policy Association's World Leadership Forum.

Foreign policy is commonly regarded as the domain of the expert few. In many cases, the public feels a distance to the events unfolding in other parts of the world, involving people that they have not met and perhaps not likely ever to meet.

However, in a democratizing world a successful foreign policy can only be sustained by an engaged and informed public opinion.

And, in the "globalized" world, foreign affairs do affect the daily lives of the electorate.

This effect may at times be indirect or latent. But, in a multitude of issues ranging from international commerce to the fight against terrorism, the well-being and security of the individual is influenced by the whims of world affairs.

Against this backdrop, my Government's Program of Action has specifically underscored the key role of the non-governmental community in every field, including educating domestic public opinion in foreign policy issues.

As such, the Foreign Policy Association stands tall as a successful model to be emulated.

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Forum takes place on the margins of the UN General Assembly meetings where the human race as a whole is united in reflection to address the problems and issues of our global community.

Currently, we are passing through a specific stage in which the world is searching for peace, stability, better forms of government, as well as more equitable distribution of prosperity, increased well-being for the individual, a healthier environment, in many parts of the world.

Increased international cooperation and robust international organizations and institutions are needed as never before.

It is an irony that in spite of so much discussion and action at the world stage to increase security, the conflict map of the world remains more or less the same.

- The fight against terrorism is yet to be won.
- Peace in the Middle East is yet to be achieved.
- The so-called frozen conflicts in various parts of the world, are yet to be resolved.
- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is yet to be contained.
- And, various forms of extremism are yet to be removed from the minds and deeds of people.

All of these issues pose a global challenge that can only be met by international solidarity. The UN is one key instrument, among several others, to generate such international cooperation.

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As security threats become more asymmetric and complicated, the need for international solidarity, cooperation, and for flexibility in institutional response mechanisms become more obvious.

The transatlantic alliance between North America and Europe represents the largest community of shared democratic values. This alliance has vowed to protect these values whenever threatened, and promote them further when it is opportune. It was thanks to the transatlantic solidarity that our societies have safely put the Cold War behind and overcome difficult challenges in the Balkans. The transatlantic oath remains valid today and into the future.

In the fifty-four years since the signing of the Washington Treaty, it has become almost customary to debate NATO's relevance. The upside is that each debate resulted in adaptations that have made NATO stronger than before.

I have no doubt that the current discussion will too lead to a NATO that is more robust and more effective in meeting the security requirements of the day.

In order to remain vital, NATO does not need to be the sole instrument at our disposal. Strengthened European capabilities and institutional mechanisms, when conceived as a complement to NATO, can only strengthen the objectives of our common security architecture. Yet, NATO is our priority and bottom-line. Remember that the transatlantic community rushed to NATO on first impulse on September 11, before we mobilized other instruments and coalitions in the fight against terrorism. In addition to its conventional role of collective defense, NATO will continue to evolve with specific emphasis on peace support and security building in and outside of Europe. NATO has already assumed the command of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF), a mission which has been successfully performed by my country last year. The newly developing EU common security instruments will continue to develop concurrently with those of NATO. The EU must play a more significant role for peace and security in Europe and beyond.

Turkey's full membership will contribute to the EU's efforts to increase its capabilities, its reach and indeed contributions in international affairs.

The European Union cannot and must not be conceived in opposition to the United States. Instead, the transatlantic link and cooperation will have to be reinforced and revitalized with the efforts of all parties.

I believe the upcoming NATO Istanbul Summit in 2004 will be a milestone in that regard. As the host of this historic Summit, Turkey is committed to promoting the vision of "stronger NATO, stronger EU and stronger transatlantic cooperation."

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For Turkey, membership to the European Union and partnership with the United States are complementary policies.

In fact, the desire to reconcile various aspects of our multi-dimensional foreign policy holds true for the entire spectrum of Turkey's foreign relations.

Turkey has moved beyond being a bridge between East and West, but is rapidly turning into a point of convergence. Last year Turkey hosted the only meeting that brought together the Foreign Ministers of the European Union with those of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Next year, in addition to the NATO Summit, Turkey will host the Foreign Ministerial meeting of the Islamic Conference. I think this is significant.

Our efforts to create a better regional and international atmosphere goes hand in hand with our efforts to upgrade the situation at home.

My government achieved a spectacular economic and political reform programme in less than a year. Our experience is basically about a relentless effort to promote democracy, civil rights

and liberties, respect for the rule of law, civil society, transparency, good governance and gender equality. I am gratified to observe that our achievements have been perceived in its proper perspective in Europe, in our region and in the USA. In his recent article in Foreign Policy, Mr. Chris Patten, the EU Commissioner for External Relations, describes Turkey as a bold demonstration of how democratic development can be combined with moderate Islam and suggests that Turkey ought to serve as a beacon to the rest of the Muslim World.

The Turkish message will be more resilient when Turkey joins the European Union. Turkey is on its way to become a full member of the European Union. The next step on the path to EU membership will be the opening of the accession talks with the EU in accordance with the expected decision in December 2004.

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude my introductory comments, I should underscore in strongest terms that Turkey's partnership and alliance with the United States is robust, firm and effective in a multitude of issues and range of geographies. This is a partnership based on values. Values of freedom, human rights and market economy.

Turkey and the US cooperate closely in the spirit of their partnership in:

- promoting transatlantic security and cooperation;

- the fight against terrorism;
- the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict;
- encouraging stability and economic recovery in the Middle East and beyond;
- the unification of Europe of which Turkey is a part;
- conflict resolution and regional cooperation in the Caucasus;
- consolidation of independence and security in Central Asia;
- maintaining stability in the Balkans,

just to name a few examples.

The habits of cooperation between Turkey and the US have stood the test of time since the Korean War, through the Cold War into the global war against terrorism.

The moral responsibility and historical imperative of the Turkish-US partnership that we seized effectively in the last half century are not diminished.

To the contrary, our strategic cooperation and partnership means more now than ever before.

As we strive for stability in Afghanistan and Iraq; encourage peace and security between Arabs and Jews; stop proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means; and generate harmony of civilizations, it is hard to think of other times in history when working together has been more important.

Turkish-US partnership does and will continue to make a difference in the world.

Turkey and America must further develop their vital alliance on the basis of mutual respect to each other's points of view and particularities.

We should spend greater energies not only in consultation, but also joint-thinking.

Our publics should be encouraged to have greater faith in our shared objectives even if at times our methods might differ.

We should make sure that our partnership is developed in all fields, including in economic, cultural and intellectual. The US investors should be encouraged to show greater interest in producing in Turkey and transferring technology.

We will count on the efforts of our respective leaders, parliaments, businessmen, academics and media to extend our partnership to broader segments of our societies.

As one prominent US scholar observed: "No nation that has maintained close relations with the United States for the last generation is so little understood by well-informed Americans as is Turkey."

Therein remains a mission for both the Turks and the Americans to overcome this deficiency in public awareness.

Thank you for your attention.