

Remarks to the American Embassy Community in Ankara, Turkey November 15, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Good morning. Ambassador Parris, it's hard for me to say—you may know, Mark worked for us in the White House for a long time and, you know, it's difficult for me to be sufficiently respectful of him now that he's here with this vast array of support. [Laughter] I do want to thank you, Mark, and all of you for the wonderful job you've done under particularly adverse circumstances. And I thank Ambassador Albright for her representation of the United States here in Turkey, after the terrible first earthquake.

China-U.S. Agreement on World Trade Organization Accession

I think I should give you an explanation for why we're running a little late this morning. We have been up late last night and early this morning, following the 11th hour of negotiations between the United States and China. And I am pleased to say that the United States and the People's Republic of China have now successfully concluded a strong accession agreement for China to enter the World Trade Organization.

This agreement is a major step forward in bringing China into the WTO and a profoundly important step in the relationship between the United States and China.

[At this point, there was technical difficulty with the room's lighting.]

The President. Somebody apparently doesn't like it very much. [Laughter] Have we put too much strain on the lights? [Laughter] Yeah, what do you say? Can you guys pick this up with this light if I go on? Okay.

The China-WTO agreement is good for the United States; it's good for China; it's good for the world economy. Today China embraces principles of economic openness, innovation, and competition that will bolster China's economic reforms and advance the rule of law. President Jiang Zemin and Premiere Zhu Rongji have shown genuine leadership in committing China to open its markets and abide by global rules of fair trade. In opening the economy of China, the agreement will create unprecedented opportunities for American farmers, workers, and companies to compete successfully in China's

market, while bringing increased prosperity to the people of China.

The trade agreement is part of a broader agreement, designed to bring China into global systems on issues from nonproliferation to regional security to environmental protection to human rights. With this agreement, the overall relationship between our countries is strengthened.

I want to thank profusely our United States Trade Ambassador, Charlene Barshefsky; my National Economic Adviser, Gene Sperling; and the entire United States negotiating team, including USTR officials Robert Novick and Robert Cassidy, for their hard work and dedication.

On the basis of this excellent agreement, I will do my best, working with other countries, to gain China's entry into the WTO and undertake an all out effort to work with our Congress to secure permanent, normal trade relations with China. This is a very good day for American diplomacy.

American Embassy

Let me say again to all of you here in Turkey, during the recent earthquake, and even in the last few days, when we have seen the terrible news of the other quake, it has been profoundly moving to me to know that our Embassy was involved with the people of Turkey on a human level, as well as on a political and diplomatic level. I am grateful for the work that Mission personnel here have done to raise money to aid victims of the quake, to organize trips, to give out food, clothing, and other supplies. I understand one of your Embassy employees, Azize Ozturk, has been particularly active in that, and I thank you very much.

I hope that the visit that we're making this week will inspire more Americans at home to join your efforts to help the people of Turkey recover from these natural disasters.

I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation for the role any of you have played in the warming of relationships between Turkey and Greece. You know, I have long supported the entry of Turkey into the European Union. I have long supported the alliance of the West with Turkey. But I have always believed that

ultimately there had to be a reconciliation between Turkey and Greece and a resolution of the major issues in the Aegean in order for the long-term success of this dream that we all share to be assured.

Every day, everything you do, in ways small and large, to build the bonds between our two people is very important. If you look at a map of the world and imagine the future in the 21st century, I think it is ironic and interesting that this country, at the center of the Ottoman Empire, played such a large role for centuries through the empire and then in the way that empire broke up after World War I and before—just before and after World War I and the way the 20th century worked out. I think if you look at the map and underlying political realities, still Turkey is going to have a great deal to do with the way the world is in the 21st century.

It is very important that we maintain our partnership and our friendship and to continue to make progress on those issues that are so important to all of us.

Finally, let me say to all of you who work here at the Embassy, both Americans and Turkish nationals, I am very proud of your work—the daily work you do, which may or may not grab the headlines. I understand that one of your employees, Sait Otus, just retired after 45 years with the United States Government, beginning with USAID in 1954, transferring to USIS in 1974. Thank you for those 45 years. We are very grateful to you.

Now, in closing, I would like to present to all of you at the United States Embassy here, the State Department's Superior Honor Award, recognizing your extraordinary efforts and accomplishments, from coordinating relief after the earthquakes to advancing our objectives in the region to preparing for this visit which, in some ways, may be the biggest headache of all. [*Laughter*]

Congratulations, Mr. Ambassador.

We are adjourned. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Mark R. Parris.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony in Ankara *November 15, 1999*

Thank you very much, Mr. President, Mrs. Demirel, distinguished friends. I thank you for your reception and for the invitation to come to Turkey. I'm delighted to be here in a place I have wanted to visit for a very long time, to deepen America's ties with one of our most important partners and allies.

For most of this century, as Turkey and the United States come closer together, our relationship has been distinguished by an increasing sense of how much, together, we can do to improve the lives of our people.

The recent earthquakes have humbled us, reminding us that for all of the advances and our own capacity to shape the future, there is much in life that lies utterly beyond our control. No one could have foreseen or avoided the terrible tragedy that struck Turkey on August 17th, or the earthquake which came again just last week.

I want to express, on behalf of the American people, again, our profound sympathies and condolences to all the people of Turkey for all that you have lost. We have been honored to stand with you as you have worked so heroically to clear the damaged areas from the first earthquake and to return as best as possible to the cadence of normal life. And we pledge to work with you as you deal with this natural tragedy, as well. The United States is proud to stand with Turkey in good times or bad, against cruel natural calamities, terrorism, or other threats to freedom and democracy.

With regard to the earthquake, we have dispatched a search-and-rescue team to the area and sent tents to house 10,000 people made homeless. Our Export-Import Bank has allocated \$1 billion in lending authority to help Turkish businesses finance projects related to reconstruction. We will continue to do all we can to speed your recovery, to encourage private investment,