

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,

to help you prepare for future natural disasters. I would also like to express my appreciation for the swift response from many other nations, including Greece, to the needs of the people of Turkey at this moment.

Mr. President, over the next 5 days, I will have the opportunity to be in your nation on the longest visit ever by an American President to Turkey. I want to express my solidarity with the Turkish people and America's commitment to Turkey's future. We will work for a future in which Turkey continues to be an ally of America, a partner in the new Europe, and reconciled with others in the region, especially our friends in Greece.

I thank you for the opportunity today to meet with leaders of Turkish democracy in Ankara and the opportunity to speak to the members of the Grand National Assembly, and then for the opportunity to go to Istanbul to participate with you and 50 other leaders at the OSCE Summit. I thank you for the opportunity to go and see some of the survivors of the first earthquake, to learn about what we in America still can do to help.

Mr. President, you mentioned that it was 10 years ago this month that the Berlin Wall fell. I want to thank you again for the partnership we have had for peace and freedom with Turkey

in the years since, especially in Bosnia and Kosovo.

I thank you for sharing the lesson we are still learning in times of agony as well as joy. We are all in this together. And to me that means, in part, we must continue to fulfill a vision of a Europe undivided, democratic, in peace for the first time in history, anchored by a stable and prosperous Turkey.

Mr. President, this week I pledge to you that I will work with you to fulfill the promise of that unified, whole, free Europe. With Europe—a Europe that includes Turkey—and a partnership with Turkey and the United States that includes our commitment to freedom and opportunity for all people, we have a chance to start a new century on higher ground. And the success of our partnership will have a lot to do with that.

Thank you again for welcoming me and for being a genuine friend to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:15 a.m. on the Lawn of the Official Residence of the President. In his remarks, he referred to President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey and his wife, Nazmiye. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Demirel.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey and an Exchange With Reporters in Ankara

November 15, 1999

President Demirel. Distinguished members of the press, I would like to welcome once again in your presence, the President of the United States, my dear friend Bill Clinton. Mr. Clinton is in our country for a 5-day visit.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to, in Mr. Clinton's person, express our thanks to the American people for the support and solidarity they have shown during the disasters that affected our country, one after another, in recent months.

The Republic of Turkey and the United States of America work together for peace, stability, and prosperity on a vast geography which extends from the Balkans to the Caucasus, central

Asia to the Middle East, Europe to the Black Sea, Caspian, and the Mediterranean Basin.

Earlier today we had an extensive exchange of views and opinions as two strategic partners. We discussed our contribution to regional peace, stability, and prosperity. We also reviewed areas where we can improve cooperation. We were pleased to note that both of us had the determination to evaluate new and broader avenues of cooperation between our countries.

We explained to the President our activities in the areas of economy, trade, and energy, and the importance we place on cooperation with the EU in this context. We also discussed defense cooperation and regional security issues. We evaluated our joint projects together. And