

MARC GROSSMAN

TOBB - Brookings Speech

Ankara, Turkey

October 14, 2005

My relationship with Turkey is one of “kismet,” fate and destiny.

In 1975, I was invited for an interview to become a United States diplomat. The panel to decide my fate was chaired by Ms. Elaine Smith, then the Desk Officer for Turkey at the State Department, and perhaps remembered by some of you as one of our best diplomats in Turkey in the 60's. I passed. My relationship with Turkey had begun.

I first visited Turkey in 1983. I spent a day in Istanbul, wandering the streets and bridges, taking the ferry, eating my first Imam Bayildi. I went to Ankara, covered in snow, and visited the Ataturk Mausoleum. In 1985, returned to Turkey with Lord Carrington, then Secretary General of NATO. Trip to the then eastern-most border of NATO: a geo-political division that seemed it would last forever.

In 1989, more kismet: Ambassador Abramowitz asked me to join him in Turkey -- it could only have been destiny which sent us home in 1992 with a new member of our family.

And surely fate influenced my return just over two years later to represent the United States of America as the Ambassador to Turkey. Have had since the good fortune in the years since 1997 to have worked closely with Turks – private and official.

* * * * *

When people ask me what makes Turkey so compelling, I say that it is a place where you can hear the future debated every day. Turkey's political conversation is about: "Who are Turks? What role should Turks play in this modern world? What makes Turkey Turkey?"

I am not an historian, anthropologist or archeologist. But I want to share today my impressions of these questions, even though the answers belong only to Turks.

Many observers, including Roger Crowley and Hugh Pope, remind us that Turkish history is a Western journey. From origins in Asia, through the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic, Turks have moved west (and

south) and they made an early connection to Europe. As the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, said in a speech September 8, "Of course, the land which is now Turkey has been part of European history for centuries. The great armies of Darius and Xerxes were ferried across the Hellespont in one direction; Alexander the Great and his army in the other."

When I first served the United States in Turkey in 1989, I knew little about this history and had to start by reading about the great migrations from the land between Oxus and the Jaxartes. I then tried to fill the gaps in my knowledge about Byzantium.

Next, so much to learn about the Ottomans. One of history's great empires: based on Sunni-Islam, Turkish tribalism, a Persian legal system, Byzantine administration and a mixed Turkish-Persian-Arabic language. An empire that could value merit because it could value participation and conversion above national origin. An empire that, without washing away the complexities or negatives of its history, could rule with a kind of tolerance that even today has an important echo in the Turkish world view.

As Roger Crowley writes in his book 1453, "Although Constantinople would become a more Islamic city over the centuries, Mehmet set the tone for a place that was astonishingly multicultural. It was a stark contrast to the religious wars that fragmented Europe during the Reformation. The flow of

refugees after the fall would be largely one way: from the Christian lands to the Ottoman Empire.”

This tradition manifested itself 500 years ago when the Ottoman Empire welcomed the Jews fleeing persecution in Spain. Jews fleeing oppression during the Second World War found safe haven in Turkey. In 1988, there were refugees from Halabja. In 1989, Turks from Bulgaria. In 1991, the United States and Turkey collaborated in one of the most successful refugee rescue efforts in history in Northern Iraq.

The desire to “be modern” is also crucial to Ottoman and Turkish thinking. Even the quickest review of the English language literature, including Lord Kinross’s The Ottoman Centuries, Bernard Lewis’s The Emergence of Modern Turkey, and Erik Zürcher’s Turkey: A Modern History, conveys this sense about the Tanzimat, first and second constitutional periods.

And the idea of a uniquely Turkish cultural “fusion” between East and West is not new. Zürcher highlights the ideas of Namik Kemal. Kemal believed in the 1860s that next phase of Ottoman/Turkish life “lay in the introduction of representative, constitutional and parliamentarian government in the Empire, instilling a true feeling of citizenship and loyalty to the state among all Ottoman subjects, Muslim and non-Muslim.” Although the Empire would be following the example of liberal European states in doing this, Zürcher

says, the Young Ottomans believed it would “at the same time mean a return to the principles of Islam, which recognized popular sovereignty.”

As an outsider, one of the great mysteries of end of the Ottoman Empire and the pre-Republican period is what happened to the ideas of freedom and tolerance between the remarkable few weeks after the Revolution of 1908, when the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress declared, as Kinross recalls the scene, “the elimination of arbitrary government with the slogan, ‘henceforth, we are all brothers, there are no longer Bulgars, Greeks, Roumans, Jews, Muslims; under the same blue sky we are all equal, we all glory in being Ottomans.’ Euphoria swept through the city of Istanbul,” says Kinross. “Newspapers burst into celebration as the censors were chased from their offices. For several days the rejoicing continued, with organized carriage processions in which Turkish mullahs, Jewish rabbis, and the prelates of discordant Christian faiths sat side by side in fraternization.”

How did this moment, so new and yet so much part of the perceived tradition of tolerance, degenerate into a return to authoritarianism, the decision to side with the Germans in World War I and the killing of Armenians in the bloody disaster for all in the East?

Part of the answer is that the Ottoman vision of a mixed society – a pre-modern pluralism if you will -- collided with the rising ideology of nationalism, which was about exclusivity. Although Turkish scholars are just beginning to rediscover this period, I suspect that for many Turks, this time is the start of one question debated today: What are we all about as Turks?

Thus the importance and greatness of Atatürk. He answered this question with a positive vision at what seemed the most hopeless moment. Atatürk part of the continuum. Ottoman general at Gallipoli to revolutionary at Samsun to one of the most important and influential figures in the 20th century. Revives the pre-Ottoman past. Commitment to modernism.

Roger Crowley talks about four key effects that Ottoman history has on today's Turkey.

First, the strategic implications of straddling Asia and Europe defines a set of options for Turks and their leaders. The holder of this land is both strong and weak: Byzantines, Ottomans were, and Republican Turkey is, "always on someone else's frontier."

Second, the Ottoman heritage helps define the character and aims of modern Turkey. It is no accident that a favorite of both Turks and of the

foreigners present is any appearance of the Janissary band. The lessons of end of empire for modern Turkish diplomacy are distilled in Ataturk's adage, "Peace at home, peace abroad." Turkey's desire to be a modernizing country is also an Ottoman legacy, as is the struggle to decide the proper place for religion in society.

Suspicion is part of this legacy as well. It is a foolish American policymaker, for example, who says she or he can understand Turkish anxieties about the possibility of a Kurdish state in Iraq – which America opposes – without understanding the continuing political impact of the Treaty of Sevres.

Turkey today is the descendent of all of this history and more. Crowley's description of the city of Constantinople: "The city lived under siege for almost all of its life; its defenses reflected the deepest character and history of the place, its mixture of confidence and fatalism, divine inspiration and practical skill, longevity and conservatism."

These traits speak to me about the Turkish character today.

* * * * *

The history we have lived and learned as Turks and Americans is the foundation we draw on as we together face a key question: what will define national greatness in the 21st century?

Since the Berlin Wall fell in November of 1989, there have been many signs that we need to think in new ways about what really makes countries strong. As allies, Turkey and the United States have recognized some of the signs of this new world and taken action.

-- September 11 underscored what Turks long understood: that terrorism is a strategic issue, not a tactical program.

-- Supporting democracy around the world is part of the effort to defeat terror.

-- We must keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of terrorists.

-- And to be successful, all countries must keep up with the rapid pace of change in the global economy.

Twenty-first century greatness will not be defined by military conquest of territory or catalogues of bombs or bombers. Nor will it be defined only by economic wealth; wealth without purpose is decadence. Freedom is the

21st century's biggest test. A great nation will find its highest purpose in empowering its people.

Each country will find its own way forward: democracies need not all look alike and they will not all be organized in the same way. But it is fair to say that functioning, free and successful societies contain certain common elements: a commitment to the rule of law; respect for human rights, including those of women and minorities; accountable governments; protection of private property; free markets; freedom of speech and religious expression.

The key to meeting the 21st century challenge is to recognize that all of these elements are interconnected.

Living in Turkey convinced me that this is true. In a speech in Istanbul in March of 1995, I said, "Change is now simultaneous. Change links concepts that were separate before. There is a connection between peace, freedom, democracy and economic development. More democracy will help fight terror and you can't have more democracy without fighting terror. Freedom boosts the economy. Democracy reinforces economic prosperity."

Meeting these standards challenges all countries, including the United States. Hurricane Katrina revealed our needs in sharp relief: caring for

vulnerable citizens, dealing seriously with poverty and the environment; continuing to invest in success through competitiveness; continuing to win the war on terrorism. We can't respond as if we are only confronted one-by-one. 21st century success requires that nations give equal attention to each of these elements.

How will Turkey achieve 21st century greatness? By living up to the promise embedded in its history of tolerance and pluralism and by accelerating its dash to modernity. By increasing Turkish self-confidence about doing what is right to meet 21st century standards.

Let me give you several examples.

The OECD has called Turkey's recent economic progress "stunning." At the end of 2004, Turkey's inflation rate fell into single digits for the first time since 1972. The Economist reported that Turkey's GDP in 2004 was "probably up more than 8 percent on the year before – a rate that no country in the EU came close to matching."

But Turkey still has work to do in dealing with the gap between rich and poor, unemployment, corruption, a substantial unregistered economy, and attracting foreign investment. As a proportion of GDP, Turkey's stock of Foreign Direct Investment is lower now than it was in the 1980's. Annual

inflows of FDI have hardly risen above \$1 billion. This is ten times less than Mexico attracts.

Minister of Economy Babacan has said that Turkey must create 500,000 jobs per year just to keep the unemployment level constant.

The Turkish government is working on important structural reforms in order to increase public-sector transparency, improve efficiency, decrease budget deficits and settle commercial disputes. Some have already paid off, such as the decision to give Parliament broader supervision over public revenues and expenditures. But there is still much more to do. It will be important for the government to stay focused on its plans to reform the personal income tax, social security, and public sector wage and employment structures.

As Turkey's economy becomes increasingly successful, and the social and economic synthesis that we can see in the "Anatolian tigers" becomes increasingly "the Turkish way," Turkey's relations with its neighbors become the next plateau for increased modern self-confidence.

The phrase "Turkey lives in a tough neighborhood" is no less true for being oft repeated.

Relations with Russia have improved and the kind of armed conflict that I worried about as I looked into Georgia in 1985 seems inconceivable today. But even as we increase our trade with Russia, Turkey and the United States must press for the fullest democracy in Russia. Turks, like Americans, will want to keep NATO strong. Lord Carrington: "You don't stop paying your fire insurance just because you've never had a fire."

Developments in Ukraine should give confidence to Turks that democracy in this area can thrive after years of authoritarianism.

I had the good fortune as Ambassador to Turkey in 1995 to announce US support for the Baku-Tbilisi/Ceyhan pipeline. The East-West Energy Corridor should revolutionize relations in the Caucasus. Sorry that this pipeline does not include Armenia. Hope it will some day.

Crucial that Turkey press forward on relations with Armenia, including solving Nagorno-Karabakh and continuing the discussion about shared history. I supported the joint history project between Turks and Armenians, and this interaction offered many opportunities yet to be pursued. It is right that public figures in Turkey – including Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul --came to the defense of the September 24 meeting in Turkey to discuss the terrible events of 1912-1917. The failure of those who

wished to stop the seminar was both good for history, good politics and a recognition that self-confidence promotes tolerance and pluralism.

And so today, why not a unilateral, no conditions, opening of the land border between Armenia and Turkey?

Coalition action in Iraq is deeply unpopular, but Turkey needs the new Iraq to succeed and must do all it can to help. As Professor Henri Barkey has written, "Turkey and the United States share basic goals in Iraq. They would both very much prefer to see Iraq remain united and not break up. They both would like a strong central government that is capable of bringing back political and economic stability. Neither would like to see the emergence of any form of fundamentalist state in Iraq." We should act together on this analysis.

Turkey and the United States also share a common interest in containing Iran's nuclear ambitions and a desire for a more democratic Iran, an Iran that is not an exporter of terrorism but one that becomes a stable, successful society in the region. At the same time, Turkey has interests in maintaining relations with Tehran, not just to keep energy options open. Turkey and the United States should be having a strategic conversation about Iran so that we can support each other and recognize our differences where they exist.

We can also both promote a more democratic Syria. The assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri has led to a series of events which have exposed Syrian “old thinking.” Turkey has pursued various policies with Damascus: ranging from the successful military threat to have Abdullah Ocalan expelled from Syria to attempts to engage the Syrians in dialogue. Here, like Iran, Turks and Americans need to elevate their conversation and work together.

Relations with Greece are as good as they have ever been in my experience. Great credit to not just the leaders of Turkey and Greece, but also to business people and citizens as well. Key that this relationship prosper and that remaining historical disputes in the Aegean and Mediterranean are solved. A self-confident Turkey would know that now is the time to do just that.

Cyprus. Worked hard for the April 2004 referendum to bring the stars into proper alignment; all who hoped for two “yes” votes were disappointed. Still believe we were right to draw together prospect of Cyprus’ EU membership as part of the solution to the Cyprus problem. Have come to conclude no solution this week or next. Greek Cypriots need to feel more deeply the security found in being an EU member. (They are the ones in need of self-confidence in this example.) At the same time, more needs to be done to

end the isolation of Turkish-Cypriots. EU should meet its obligations. US actions.

* * * * *

As we have also set ourselves the standard of social cohesion as an element of 21st century greatness, what domestic challenges face Turkey?

As the Turkish and German archeologists reveal at Patarah, Parliamentary democracy has been part of this land's cultural history since the Lycian League.

MG: "No problem that I know of in Turkey cannot be solved with more democracy rather than less democracy."

As Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, and a regular visitor to Turkey, has said, "The barometer of democracy is how the majority treats the minority."

Kurds, Jews, Armenians, Patriarch, church property, Halki.

Finally, what about the role of religion in society?

The issues of religion and democracy are difficult for everyone. America's separation of church and state is enshrined in our Constitution and yet is among the most controversial parts of our politics. In April, 1966 Time Magazine's cover asked: "Is God dead?" The September 5, 2005 issue of Newsweek has on its cover the story "Spirituality in America: Our faith today: What we believe, how we pray, where we find God." So Americans should be especially humble in approaching this debate.

In the New York Times last July, Professor Michael Ignatieff describes the journey he took to Iran to teach and lecture. He wrote: "It became apparent that what I should have been teaching during my visit was the history of the Protestant Reformation. Iranians need to know what the Reformation and the bloody religious wars that followed it taught the West. Democracy arises, not just to enthrone the people, but also to separate religion and politics, establishing rules of tolerance that allow all religions to enjoy freedom and creating a political system in which religious and secular arguments compete on equal ground." Ignatieff says he found himself cautioning Iranians "against going too far, being hostile to religion. Secularism doesn't mean crushing religion, it means creating a neutral space in which arguments between religious and secular people are settled by evidence, not dogma."

Turks come to this debate with historic and cultural memory which includes both the Caliphate and Ataturk's Republic. Ataturk was right to recognize in his time that religion had become linked to "backwardness." It was crucial for the new Turkish Republic to give women the right to vote, to create one secular law for all Turks and to lay the foundation for a modern, democratic Turkey.

But in today's world, must belief necessarily mean "backward?" Ignatieff argues that there must be rules of tolerance that allow all religions to enjoy freedom and that politics needs to be competitive so that citizens can decide their own beliefs.

This means in turn that there are arguments about religion which cannot be tolerated in a tolerant democracy. The religious can't arrive at this debate and say simply: "This is the word of God, I therefore trump all others." And those we might call "secular fundamentalists," cannot similarly appear and declare they only have received wisdom and therefore trump all others. Indeed, the fundamentalism of both the secular and the religious encroach on personal freedom in ways that cause future trouble.

Turkey is a multicultural and multireligious society. That should be a central starting point in the debate about what it means to be a citizen of this great nation. Drawing on the strength of Turkey's historical and cultural

connection to religious tolerance, Turkey can create politics where people of various beliefs are free to compete for the allegiance of citizens and then citizens make judgments in a democracy.

One of the reasons that it is so important that Turkey be successful in this quest is because Turkey is a beacon for those around the world who want simultaneously to be secular and religious and democratic. This is especially true in the Middle East.

What I believed then, what I believe now.

My trip to the Middle East pre-Sea Island G-8 meeting.

Crucial themes: Not imposed. All countries will find their own way to their own democracy. Patient (in my own country, it took generations to defeat slavery, and legal racial segregation and other practices that violated our ideals). Need for Israel-Palestinian peace based on two states.

Turkey and the United States collaborated on defeating a Communist ideology that poisoned peoples' minds. Defeating today's extremism – where “backward does reign” --may not be so easy. As David Rieff wrote in the New York Times on September 4, “The conflict with Jihadism is a contest between modernity and anti-modernity, and, as we are discovering

to our cost obscurantism has a far larger constituency and a far more powerful hold on the popular imagination, certainly in the Islamic world, than most people imagined a generation ago.”

Those seeking democracy in the Middle East now have powerful supporters: the G-8, the EU, Turkey and NATO. One thing clear: Turkey not the object of this policy but a proponent of the belief that this is a destination worth striving for: societies that value freedom.

* * * * *

There are two other topics I want to discuss before I close: Turkey’s relations with Europe and Turkey’s relations with the United States.

It is a strategic victory for Turks, Europeans and Americans that negotiations for Turkish membership – not a privileged partnership –began October 3.

One of the European Union’s most remarkable accomplishments has been its strategy to spread democracy and prosperity to Europe’s east and south through expansion. This is especially true of Turkey.

The last three American Presidents have promoted Turkish EU membership. Why has the United States put such effort into this?

-- Because while there is more to do, Turkey has taken significant steps – such as loosening the government’s grip on the political system, improving relations with Greece, and freeing its economy – in pursuit of EU membership.

-- Because an EU-embraced Turkey is a beacon for others aspiring to freedom, democracy and economic success.

-- Because the EU’s own future success depends on shedding the image of a “Christian club.”

Europeans need to appreciate the enormous changes they have sparked in Turkey. Turks, in turn, should be confident of their successes in political and economic transformation and not be grudging about further reforms.

In a world where there is debate about whether it is possible to be democratic, secular and Muslim, we must pay attention to a country that is trying to answer “Yes!”

* * * * *

Relations between Turkey and the United States have been through a very bad period. Differences over Iraq have been accompanied by what people describe as the worst anti-Americanism ever seen in Turkey.

There have been some recent positive developments. Prime Minister Erdogan's trip to the United States in June marked a beginning of the return to a more sensible dialogue. Secretary Rice made Turkey one of her first destinations in her new job. Her successor as National Security Advisor visited Turkey September 24. These are all useful steps, but I agree with Ambassador Mark Parris that we have not yet achieved a "new dawn" in US-Turkish relations.

There is no kismet involved in the US-Turkish relationship. Just hard work. So like Ambassador Parris, I think it is important when discussing US-Turkish relations to go back to first principles.

-- First, Turkey is important to the United States; Turkish cooperation is vital to achieving US interests.

-- Second, the United States is an important partner for Turkey. American cooperation is vital to achieving Turkish interests.

-- Third, Turkey and the United States share much, but in so many ways are not natural partners.

-- Fourth, we tend to focus on the things that divide us – the Johnson letter, Cyprus, human rights, Iraq, and forget to emphasize what has united us for so many years – the modern partnership that began with President Truman's decision to return Ambassador Ertegun's body home on the Missouri that helped defeat Communism, that promotes the fight against terrorism, and that is showcased by our work now in Afghanistan.

-- Fifth, to keep the positives on top of the agenda, leaders on both sides need to pay attention to the US-Turkish relationship. If I had one rule to describe US-Turkish relations it is this: When people pay attention every day – the partnership works. When people are diverted or focus on the negative, US-Turkish relations suffer.

There have been many suggestions over the past few months about what can be done to improve this relationship if both sides want to.

First, we must get Iraq right. Turkey needs the new Iraq to succeed and must do all it can to help. The United States should immediately do the work necessary to get the leaders and members of the PKK/Kadek out of northern Iraq and on their way to face justice, either in Iraq or in Turkey.

The United States has waited much too long to take this action. I was glad to see the comments made by National Security Advisor Hadley on this subject on September 24 in Ankara and hope the Administration follows through.

Second, top leaders of both countries need to continue to pay attention to this relationship. The exchange of senior visits should continue. The dialogue between Secretary Rice and Foreign Minister Gul and other senior leaders should intensify. As Prime Minister Erdogan did when he was in Washington in June, our leaders should speak out in favor of the US-Turkish relationship.

Third, the United States Administration needs to develop a new agenda for the US-Turkish military relationship to put the argument about Iraq behind us. I know there are some people in the United States who can't forgive Turkey for denying access to Northern Iraq before the way, and more US troops from any direction would have been a plus. (Ngohakan story.) There are Turks I am sure who believe that no US-Turkish military relationship can ever be in Turkey's interests. But it is time for both sides to focus on protecting Turkish and American larger interests. We must upgrade the military-to-military relationship with Turkey because there is more work to do in Iraq. There is more work to do in Afghanistan. There is work to finish in

the Balkans. There is more work to do to protect the Baku/Tbilisi/Ceyhan pipeline.

Fourth, we need to return to an idea Turks and Americans launched in the late '80s and pursued through the '90s: that we should increase the percentage of the US-Turkish relationship that is not controlled by either government. To do that, we need to continue to broaden the economic and people-to-people dimensions of our relationship. Trade between the U.S. and Turkey has more than doubled since 1989. Travel between the U.S. and Turkey has – for the most part – risen steadily over the past 15 years. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 23,449 Turkish citizens traveled to the U.S. in 1989. This number more than quadrupled by the year 2000, but fell back to about 76,000 in 2004. The number of U.S. visitors to Turkey rose from 96,000 to a high of half a million in 1997, then fell off to 274,000 last year.

If we can continue down this path to “privatize” the US-Turkish relationship, we can then have a more normal set of ties that hold together when the inevitable government-to-government disagreements arise.

Fifth, we need to keep focused on our commitment to our values and to our democracies. We have been working to perfect American democracy for 240 years. We still have work to do. One needs only to see the pictures from Abu Gharib or the Louisiana Superdome to know how true that is.

Turks have work to do as well. Need to keep the focus on more individual liberties for all of the citizens in Turkey, no matter their ethnic origin or religion. Turkey has made important progress in this area, especially with the introduction of its new penal code in June. But in the first nine months of 2004, Turkish courts still tried 416 people on charges relating to spoken or written expression.

Charging Orhan Pamuk with a crime is not a 21st century act.

Freeing those parts of society yet to be liberated from state control, promoting zero tolerance for anti-Semitism, implementing the remarkable reforms enacted over the past few years.

Our societies can go down this path of more democracy together. Doing so will further strengthen our commitment to one another and put our partnership in both its historic and modern context. If, as Richard Bernstein wrote in the New York Times on September 19 about Patara, the drafters of the American Constitution took the ancient Lycian League as an early example of the form of Republican government they envisaged, surely we can fashion 21st century ways to promote these great ideals.

* * * * *

How to bring all of these impressions about Turkey and Turkey's connection to America together?

Turkey has a crucial role to play in the 21st century. I believe that Turks will play that role positively by meeting their 21st century challenges and increasing their self-confidence for having overcome them.

I remember sitting in my house in Ankara one afternoon talking with one of the most astute Turks I know. I asked him: What is your vision of a successful Turkey? He said that he hoped one day that Turkey would be on the list of the world's problem solving countries and get off the list of problem creating nations.

Much has been done to achieve that goal. Turkey's command of the International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan for example. Turkey's encouragement of Turkish-Cypriots to vote "yes" on the Annan Plan is another. Turkey's commitment to promoting Middle East peace is a third.

* * * * *

When I lived in Turkey, I took every opportunity to travel to cities like Denizli, Karaman, Marash, Gaziantep. It was a chance to observe the fusions that make up Turkish life today: Turkish beliefs, a modern democracy and freer economy.

I see a next step that fuses Turkey's Central Asian, Ottoman and Republican history to create a beacon of pluralism for the 21st century.

Pluralism is generally defined as "toleration of diversity within a society or state." The word first showed up in 1818, but began to evolve as a concept in the early 20th century.

The idea of pluralism perhaps best captures the aspirations we share for freedom, self-government, the space to live our own lives, to make our own decisions, and to be tolerant of others as they do the same. It also captures the recognition that each country will do this in their own way.

Pluralism and tolerance can be the watchwords for a 21st century Turkey.

No nation's history is a perfect guide to the future. And no nation's history is perfect. Slavery. Injustice done to Native Americans. Turks can similarly recognize the injustices of their past. But we must live with our histories and accept them and learn from them to progress. America's diversity is

among our most fundamental strengths. And our attempt to create a pluralistic and tolerant society is a value worth promoting.

And so too for Turkey. Kismet -- our fate, our destiny -- can be affected by our actions. Our actions today must be to support a world of freedom, tolerance and pluralism. Prime Minister Erdogan said in 2002 in Washington, "The Turkey in our ideal will be an urban and industrialized society, which has not broken with its past or fallen into a rootless present. Tolerance and pluralism will be present."

* * * * *

I am proud of my connection to Turkey and look forward to its continuation. Our nations should also be proud of their connection and work every day to make it more successful. And Turks, if I may be allowed this piece of advice, should go forward into the 21st century with a self-confidence based on their commitment to the great values -- freedom, pluralism, tolerance -- of history and of your time.